

**“Die Buchwelt zu Gast in Frankfurt”**  
**Understanding the Impact of the Guest of Honour Presentation**  
**at Frankfurt Book Fair on the German Literary Marketplace**

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Article abstract

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**“*DIE BUCHWELT ZU GAST IN FRANKFURT*”:<sup>1</sup> Understanding the Impact of the Guest of Honour Presentation at Frankfurt Book Fair on the German Literary Marketplace**

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ABSTRACT

Since 1976, Frankfurt Book Fair (FBF) management has pinpointed a focus theme for the fair, starting out with a focus on Latin America. From 1988 onwards, FBF has annually invited one country/region to present itself and its authors, literature and culture at the fair as “Guest of Honour.” This paper will discuss the effects of the Guest of Honour presentation, using as its basis a dataset that compares number of fiction translations into German from the source languages of the Guests of Honour. Overall, the contribution will consider the way the Guest of Honour status shapes the literary field in Germany in the year of the presentation and in the years following the presentation. It is also meant as an impulse for further research on the Guest of Honour presentations at FBF.

RÉSUMÉ

Depuis 1976, année où l’Amérique latine fut mise en évidence, la direction de la Foire du livre de Francfort articule chacune de ses éditions autour d’un thème central. À partir de 1988, ce sera un pays, ou une région, qui y sera reçu à titre « d’invité d’honneur », ses auteurs, sa littérature et sa culture y faisant l’objet de présentations. La présente contribution cherche à évaluer les retombées de se voir conférer ce statut, par la comparaison du nombre d’œuvres de fiction traduites en allemand à partir de la langue source des invités d’honneur. De façon plus générale, l’article analyse la manière dont ce statut façonne le champ littéraire allemand l’année de la présence d’un pays ou d’une région à la Foire et dans les années qui la suivent. Il se veut enfin une incitation à poursuivre les travaux sur les présentations de l’invité d’honneur à la Foire du livre de Francfort.

**Keywords**

Frankfurt Book Fair, translations, Germany, fiction, Guest of Honour

## Mots-clés

Foire du livre de Francfort, traductions, Allemagne, fiction, invité d'honneur

Frankfurt is semi-jokingly called “Mainhattan” by Germans, since it is the only German city with any hint of a skyline, and it is situated on both sides of the Main river. It is home to the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, and famous for its Ebbelwoi (apple cider) and Grüne Soße (green sauce). For book and literature aficionados, however, Frankfurt has another important connotation: Frankfurt Book Fair (FBF), held annually in the first half of October. Every year the *Buchwelt* (book world) comes together for FBF. It is the largest trade book fair in the world, and simultaneously a major cultural and even political event in Germany, as we will briefly discuss below.<sup>2</sup> FBF also marks the beginning of what Germans call the “*Bücherherbst*” (book autumn), the intense period of new publications that occurs near the end of each calendar year (and sales of new titles in the run-up to Christmas).<sup>3</sup>

FBF is a fascinating topic of research for literary scholars as well as book and cultural historians and cultural sociologists. As suggested by the focus of this special issue of *Mémoires du Livre/ Studies in Book Culture* and other recent publications, book events including book fairs are an emerging field of inquiry.<sup>4</sup> The dynamics and hierarchies in the global book industry, and their manifestation at international industry events such as FBF, have piqued the interest of researchers across disciplines. Rosanna Gonsalves has recently discussed the dynamics of physical stand location at FBF in relation to the geographical origin of the participating publishers, focusing on Anglophone Indian publishers and their role at a fair that centres the German publishing industry, as she writes, “understandably [...], given that the fair takes place in that country.”<sup>5</sup> But FBF is a global event, as evidenced by participation from 104 countries in 2019 and also, arguably, by the Guest of Honour role.<sup>6</sup>

Naturally, the increased attention to book events and book fairs has lately also led to more scholarly interest in the Guest of Honour role at FBF. In Flensburg (Germany), there is a research project led by Marc Thomas Bosshard that considers book fairs in relation to the Spanish-speaking markets in particular.<sup>7</sup> The contribution by Luise Hertwig

in this special issue, which looks more closely at and compares two specific Guest of Honour presentations (Argentina 2010 and France 2017), is associated with the Flensburg research project. Numerous unpublished B.A. and M.A. dissertations at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz have dealt with the topic; three recent dissertations on Guest of Honour presentations have informed this paper. Helmi-Nelli Körkkö's groundbreaking PhD dissertation (2018) *FINNLAND.COOL. – zwischen Literaturexport und Imagepflege: Eine Untersuchung von Finnlands Ehrengastauftritt auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse 2014*, emphasizes the broad potential of this emerging field of interest.<sup>8</sup> Körkkö discusses the reception of Finland's presentation in the German press and contributes to the evaluation of short-term and mid-term effects of the presentation. She also questions whether the Guest of Honour status is really about national/regional literature or whether it is more a question of "nation branding."<sup>9</sup> This is an ongoing debate, which also relates to current discussions in German literary and cultural studies about the "Eventisierung" (eventization) of literature.<sup>10</sup> Körkkö also gives examples of problematic nation branding. The Brazilian organizers, for instance, were criticized for allegedly misrepresenting their literary field.<sup>11</sup>

This paper engages with these strands of emerging research to sketch out the significance of the Guest of Honour status at FBF. It will circumscribe the impact of the Guest of Honour status at FBF on the German literary field by drawing on quantitative data from *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen*, the statistical instrument of the German book trade. Collation and comparison of these data reveal the impact of the Guest of Honour presentation on fiction translations into German. Finally, to supplement the quantitative analysis, the independent German publisher Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt (FVA) and its relationship to the Guest of Honour presentations will be considered briefly.

### **The Guest of Honour Status: A Brief Introduction**

Peter Weidhaas, director of Frankfurt Book Fair from 1975 to 2000 and credited with the conception of the Guest of Honour status, has written a highly readable account of the fair's history.<sup>12</sup> Following in the footsteps of his predecessor Sigfried Taubert,<sup>13</sup> Weidhaas also wrote a memoir of his activities in the book trade,<sup>14</sup> but his historical account of FBF is much wider in scope and more objective in its representation of FBF. *Zur*

*Geschichte der Frankfurter Buchmesse* (On the history of Frankfurt Book Fair) covers the pre-history of the fair from the fifteenth century, with hiatus periods and relaunches, until the beginning of the twenty-first century.<sup>15</sup> Weidhaas offers a retelling of the fair's history, and as he moves forward into the second half of the twentieth century, he sketches out the development of the annual themes and later the Guest of Honour idea. As he writes, FBF decided to choose focus topics for the fair in 1976. The motivation was twofold: on the one hand, visitor numbers and media interest were stagnating, and FBF wanted to generate more non-trade visitors and increase media attention. On the other hand, it was felt that the Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels had a cultural responsibility to foreground “*eben am Rande liegende Themen*” (marginal issues).<sup>16</sup> FBF started out with a focus on Latin America in 1976, and several other thematic and regional focus choices followed, including for instance children's literature (1978). From 1988 onwards, FBF annually asked one country/region to present itself and its authors, literature, and culture at the fair as Guest of Honour. Early presentations were met with mixed reviews,<sup>17</sup> but the idea has stuck. This is an attractive opportunity for the guest countries/regions, though the price tag is hefty. While the Guest of Honour receives the prime presentation space (approx. 2,300m<sup>2</sup>) at the fair free of cost, the guest country or region nevertheless pays for all of the preparation, marketing, design, transport, and so on.<sup>18</sup> For instance, the 2017 Guest of Honour, France, had a budget of 4.8 million Euros, 70 percent of which was publicly funded, 30 percent sponsored privately.<sup>19</sup> The 2019 Guest of Honour, Norway, wrote in their application document that their budget was 5.5 million Euros, with approximately 60 percent publicly funded.<sup>20</sup>

Most Guest of Honour presentations are joint efforts between trade organizations (publishers' or booksellers' organizations), national cultural organizations, cultural councils or ministries, tourism agencies, and other sponsors. Each sponsor and participating organization approaches the Guest of Honour presentation with slightly different expectations, and each sponsor and participating organization makes a different commitment and (financial) investment toward the success of the enterprise. Both sponsors and participating organizations hope for an economic upturn, however—whether based on increased tourism or other types of economic transactions. Many participants from the culture sector, as well as political entities, hope for an increase in translations from the language area and an

increase in sales of translated titles. In 2016, for instance, Flanders and the Netherlands clearly stated their goal was a marked increase in translations<sup>21</sup>—building upon their experience from a previous presentation in 1993, which is generally considered one of the most successful and enduring in the fair’s history.<sup>22</sup> Carolin Fortin, president of Canada FBM2020, said in an interview that Canada had “set ... the target of having 200 works translated into German.”<sup>23</sup>

It is difficult (if not outright impossible) to measure a return on investment as far as reputation is concerned, at least with respect to the Guests of Honour themselves. This would necessitate widespread empirical research on shifts in the perception of the country/region by trade and non-trade visitors to FBF, as well as readers. However, Holger Ehling, a former employee of FBF, knows who profits from the Guest of Honour presentation, year after year: “And that is Frankfurt Book Fair itself. The guest of honour is its most important PR instrument by far, judging by the column inches in newspapers, airtime on the radio and TV and events that are devoted to it.”<sup>24</sup>

The correlation between tourism data and the Guest of Honour status is similarly hard to prove conclusively, though tourism agencies have been involved in most of the presentations over the several last years. However, some of the Guests of Honour have published their own research on this issue. The New Zealand Ministry of Culture and Heritage made an extensive report public on their website about the immediate impact of the 2012 presentation. This included impressive tourism data that shows that there was an increase in tourism from Germany after 2012. The data also emphasized that “New Zealand’s brand image” had been affected by the Guest of Honour presentation. After FBF 2012, prospective tourists to New Zealand from Germany increasingly considered New Zealand as offering “rich local arts and cultural experience.”<sup>25</sup> Another albeit anecdotal indication of the relevance of the Guest of Honour status to the tourism industry is the collaboration between the Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels and the Internationale Tourismus Börse (ITB) Berlin, the largest tourism fair in the world. The ITB Berlin Book Award, which recognizes travel guides and travel books relating to the FBF Guest of Honour country or region, has been awarded since 2018.<sup>26</sup>

## Methodological Approach

The immediate impact of this status on the German literary marketplace is easier to track by looking at titles connected to the Guest of Honour presentation that are made available to readers in the year of the presentation. It is important to note that different strands of inquiry are possible here. Case studies such as Lili Amtmann's analysis of the Georgian presentation include not only translated fiction titles, but also translated children's literature and poetry. For reasons of comparability across Guest of Honour presentations, accessibility, and reliability of data, this contribution will limit itself to statistics for fiction translations from the source language associated with the FBF Guest of Honour, focusing on the way the Guest of Honour status shapes the literary field in Germany in the year of the presentation and in the years following the presentation.

This paper uses statistical data relating to the number of translations into German from the source languages of the Guests of Honour. Using translation statistics from the annual German trade publication *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen*, this paper considers the last 10 iterations of the Guest of Honour presentation (table 1).<sup>27</sup> All numbers mentioned here and in the following without further referencing were extracted from *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* (volumes 2007 to 2019).

Year	Guest of Honour	Earlier Guest of Honour presentations
2009	China	no
2010	Argentina	Focus of Interest 1976: Latin America
2011	Iceland	no
2012	New Zealand	no
2013	Brazil	1994
2014	Finland	no
2015	Indonesia	no
2016	Flanders & the Netherlands	1993
2017	France	1989
2018	Georgia	no

2019	Norway	no
2020 (not in dataset)	Canada	no
2021 (not in dataset)	Spain	Spain in 1991 and Catalonia in 2007
2022 (not in dataset)	Slovenia	no

**Table 1:** Overview of Guest of Honour Presentations since 2009.

For each presentation/year and wherever available, data on translations from the Guest of Honour source language into German has been compiled. The focus is on fiction titles (German subject group *Sachgruppe DK Literatur, B Belletristik*), and the data include information on the five years prior to the Guest of Honour presentation to establish a baseline. The statistics are shown for the year of the presentation and the five following years, based on the assumption that the effects of the Guest of Honour presentation are ongoing for at least one or two years. This contribution also uses the listings in *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* for the Top 20 most important source languages for translations into German across all genres, as well as the numbers for translations of fiction (German subject group *Sachgruppe DK Literatur, B Belletristik* data available from 2009 onwards) among the Top 20 most popular source languages overall.

There are a few caveats related to availability of data and certain language areas. For instance, the source region of English-language translations has not been specified in *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* since 1974, and even then, *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* only differentiated between American and British English.<sup>28</sup> So, for New Zealand (Guest of Honour 2012), it is virtually impossible to separate the statistics for English-language translations from those for the translations licensed for Kiwi publishers. Furthermore, regrettably, no statistical data is available for Indonesia (Guest of Honour 2015), which may reflect the multitude of Indonesian languages, but may also reflect the minor impact that that particular Guest of Honour presentation had on the German literary field.

Finally, as mentioned, a brief case study of the German independent publisher Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt will supplement the statistics from *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* to sketch out the engagement of German publishers with the Guest of Honour presentations.



## Theoretical Underpinnings

As Leslie Howsam has remarked, “[s]cholarship in book history has been peculiarly resistant to theory.”<sup>29</sup> German book historian Ursula Rautenberg has argued similarly.<sup>30</sup> Before delving into the numbers, tables, and charts, let us briefly consider which theoretical underpinnings and models we can build on to reach a wider understanding of the workings and impact of the FBF Guest of Honour role within the book industry and within book culture more generally. Howsam adds elsewhere that “[n]o model has yet been introduced that can explain everything we need to know about the book in social, economic and cultural context.”<sup>31</sup> While this may be the case, we can draw on existing models to better understand book industry structures and organizations. While Bourdieusian terminology (economic, cultural, symbolic capital) has become mainstream in book historical studies, this paper seeks to harness a different sociological theory to further our understanding of the Guest of Honour presentations at FBF.

German book historian Axel Kuhn, drawing on Niklas Luhmann’s supertheories, applies systems theory to publishing and publishers’ histories. He situates book publishers as organizations within the system of mass media. We can draw upon his ideas to conceptualize the role of the book fair and the Guest of Honour status.<sup>32</sup> I believe that a systems view can help grasp the multidirectional role that FBF plays. The book fair, I would argue, is a space that can be analyzed within at least three different systems in Luhmann’s terminology. The first two systems at play are the system of art (where the currency is artistic, i.e., literary value) and the system of economics (where the currency is money). Consecration of literature and the demonstration of literary value (and/or popularity), are two important aspects of FBF’s events: award ceremonies, author readings, book signings, and so on. The fair’s main focus is on its status as a trade fair, and it is indeed one of the two most important fairs for licensing deals (besides London Book Fair). Within the system of economics, it is also interesting to note that FBF plays an economic role in the city of Frankfurt, especially for tourists from within Germany (in 2018, 69.9 percent of non-trade visitors were from within Germany).<sup>33</sup>

The third system that is relevant to the analysis of FBF, though maybe not quite as obviously, is the system of politics (where the currency is power).

FBF, and the Guest of Honour role, are political. Historically speaking, there are plenty of examples which underline FBF's status as a political space, many of which pertain to the awards ceremony for the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, which is awarded annually on the last day of the fair (Sunday) in the (historically relevant) Paulskirche in downtown Frankfurt. Traditionally, the German president and other political dignitaries are present at this ceremony. The role of FBF in the political sphere is detailed closely by Ulrike Seyer in her work on FBF in the 1960s.<sup>34</sup> More recently, discussions surrounding right-wing publishers presenting at FBF have surged, proving that FBF is and has been an important political platform.<sup>35</sup> Claire Squires and Beth Driscoll bring these historical and current political strands together in their forthcoming minigraph about FBF.<sup>36</sup>

The Guest of Honour role is also political for the presenting country or language region. Political dignitaries—even royalty, depending on the guest nation or region—are in attendance when FBF is officially opened. For 2019, for instance, Crown Princess Mette-Marit arrived in Frankfurt in a much-anticipated chartered train filled with Norwegian authors and even schoolchildren.<sup>37</sup> Political dignitaries representing the following year's Guest of Honour traditionally come to the closing ceremonies, when the motto for the upcoming fair is officially announced, and the so-called GuestScroll, inscribed with a quotation from each Guest of Honour, is passed to the next group of organizers.<sup>38</sup>

From the point of view of FBF, the selection of the nations/regions is clearly political as well.<sup>39</sup> In 2008, with Turkey as a Guest of Honour, and in 2009, when China was the Guest of Honour, there were discussions about the decision to highlight book industries which are heavily influenced by censorship and repression.<sup>40</sup> FBF defended its decisions, emphasizing that FBF is a forum for discussion; the Guest of Honour's own presentation, Jürgen Boos said, can be contradicted within the safe confines of FBF. Boos indicated that several renowned critics and Chinese expatriates had been invited to FBF 2009 to speak, including Nobel Prize winner Gao Xingjian, whose works are forbidden in China.<sup>41</sup> Further research is necessary to explore the political implications of the Guest of Honour status.

When, for instance, the Netherlands and the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium banded together across national boundaries to present their slogan “This is what we share” in 2016, it was a statement that linguistic unity was more meaningful than political unity in French- and Flemish-speaking Belgium. Georgia’s “Made by characters” presentation in 2018 emphasized the Georgian alphabet, which resisted Soviet attempts to eradicate the language. As Lili Amtmann recently underlined, Georgia understood its Guest of Honour status as an opportunity to reposition the country within the context of world politics and to strengthen its ties to Eastern Europe, as part of their campaign for admission to the European Union.<sup>42</sup>

By framing FBF and especially the Guest of Honour presentations in this way, using the systems of art, economics, and politics and considering the currencies aesthetic/literary value, money and power as equally important, we can more fully understand the position of the Guest of Honour presentations within the book industry and within cultural and political history.

### **The Financial Investment of Guests of Honour**

As indicated above, the price tag of a Guest of Honour presentation is undeniably high. Of course, this money is not always easy to come by, and similarly not easy to budget years in advance. International financial crises can have an impact on budgets, as in the case of South Korea, where half of the events were canceled for financial reasons in 2005.<sup>43</sup> For joint regional presentations involving multiple countries, there have also been issues surrounding equal participation, as with the Arabian presentation in 2004, which featured books from 22 nations.<sup>44</sup> Over the past decade, the Guests of Honour have, by their own accounts, spent anywhere from 2 million Euros (2011) to 10 million Euros (2015). It is important to note that depending on which country or region is involved, currency fluctuation can be an issue when planning the budget. This was particularly relevant for Iceland during the financial crisis. Table 2 lists the budgets as indicated by the Guests of Honour and publicized in trade and other publications. Direct comparison is difficult due to currency fluctuation and inflation rates, which varied between 0 percent and 3.1 percent annually in the EU between 2009 and 2018.<sup>45</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Further information</b>
2009 China	no data available	500,000 Euros for translation subsidies by government agency General Administration of Press and Publication <sup>46</sup>
2010 Argentina	no data available	Additional translation budget: 720,000 US Dollars <sup>47</sup>
2011 Iceland	2 million Euros <sup>48</sup>	
2012 New Zealand	6 million USD <sup>49</sup>	
2013 Brazil	10 million USD <sup>50</sup>	Plus 35 million USD for translation subsidies, managed by the Centro Internacional do Livro (CIL), to be distributed until 2020
2014 Finland	4 million Euros <sup>51</sup>	Additionally, translation subsidies were given by the organization Finnish Literature Exchange (FILI); for instance, 728,000 Euros for translation subsidies across all languages in 2013 <sup>52</sup>
2015 Indonesia	10 million Euros <sup>53</sup>	Including a budget of 720,000 Euros for translation subsidies <sup>54</sup>
2016 Flanders & the Netherlands	5.7 million Euros <sup>55</sup>	
2017 France	4.8 million Euros <sup>56</sup>	
2018 Georgia	6 million Euros <sup>57</sup>	
2019 Norway	5.5 million Euros <sup>58</sup>	

**Table 2:** Overall budgets for Guest of Honour presentations, 2009 (China) to 2019 (Norway).

Over the years, the costs have often included the establishment of centres and institutions for the promotion of literature such as the Centro Internacional do Livro in Brazil or the Georgian National Book Center (GNBC). These centres are responsible for planning and programming, and often also assist in the distribution of translation grants and subsidies, which make up an important part of the budget for the Guest of Honour presentation. The team involved in Finland's Guest of Honour presentation was interviewed in 2019 for their five-year anniversary. The director of the Finnish Literature Exchange, Tiia Strandén, explained that:

in a smaller nation like Finland, pulling together so many elements of a national book industry is hardly easy, but that's what it takes to have a successful guest of honor experience on the big stage of Frankfurt. The idea now is not to let that sense of unity and cohesion be lost to the big effort of half a decade ago.<sup>59</sup>

This is an important point: can Guests of Honour keep up the momentum within their home book industry and globally? And if so, how? Regarding the question of the impact and sustainability of the Guest of Honour program on an international scale, a future study could look at whether the centres established for the Guest of Honour presentation are still active or not. For instance, the GNBC was under threat of being closed down less than a year after the Guest of Honour presentation. This led to a wave of protest in the German book industry in May 2019.<sup>60</sup>

### **Statistical Analysis of Translation Data (2004 to 2018): Summary of Results**

In the remainder of this essay, I will focus primarily on the translation of Guest of Honour titles into German. German is one of the most important transfer languages worldwide for authors writing in languages that are less visible in the global marketplace; once texts have been translated into German, their chance of being translated into other languages increases.<sup>61</sup>

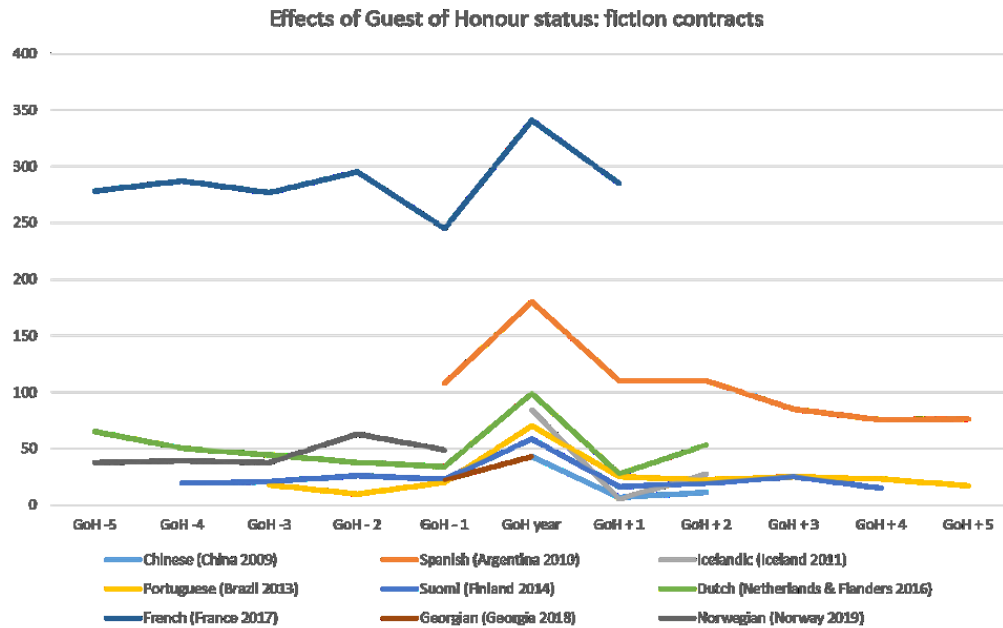
While other, especially Anglophone, markets, deal with the so-called Three Percent Problem,<sup>62</sup> the German book market has faced criticism for its overabundance of and preference for translations.<sup>63</sup> Since 2009, approximately 13 percent of all new titles published in Germany annually have been translations (2018: 13.7 percent); roughly one third (2018:

36.5 percent) of these translations were fiction titles (*Sachgruppe DK Literatur, B Belletristik* in the German category system). In 2018, 25.7 percent of new titles in the fiction category (again: *Sachgruppe DK Literatur, B Belletristik*) were translations into German, and 68.5 percent of all fiction titles published in translation were translated from English.

From what we have reviewed above and from anecdotal evidence, we can expect Guest of Honour presentations to have a visible impact on the number of translations. *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen 2012* introduced the term “*Gastland-Rückenwind*” (Guest of Honour momentum) for the Icelandic translations boom.<sup>64</sup> *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen 2009* credits the Guest of Honour presentation with the steep increase in the number of translations into German from Turkish between 2007 and 2008: “*Eine steile Karriere, die dem Gastlandauftritt auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse 2008 zu verdanken ist*” (A steep career ladder thanks to the Guest of Honour presentation at FBF 2008).<sup>65</sup> Immediately after this, however, *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen 2009* also hints at the lack of longevity for these increases in translations by looking at the example of Catalonia (Guest of Honour 2007): “*Dass solche Aufstiege vor allem bei kleinen Sprachen nicht von Dauer sind, zeigt das Beispiel Katalanisch*” (The example of Catalan shows that these increases do not endure, especially for small languages).<sup>66</sup>

Figure 1 compares the data for individual contracts in the fiction segment across a period of eleven years for each Guest of Honour presentation from 2009 to 2019. To set a baseline for the impact of the Guest of Honour presentation, the graph starts at “GoH minus five years” (GoH = Guest of Honour presentation highlighting literature in a given language) and moves forward until “GoH plus five years.” Naturally, less data is available for the newer Guest of Honour presentations. French, for instance, is only shown for 2011 (five years prior to the presentation) to 2018. Unfortunately, *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* only started publicizing the number of individual fiction contracts in 2009.

Even given the limitations of the data, it is clear at a glance that the individual number of translation contracts for fiction titles spikes in the presentation year for each Guest of Honour.



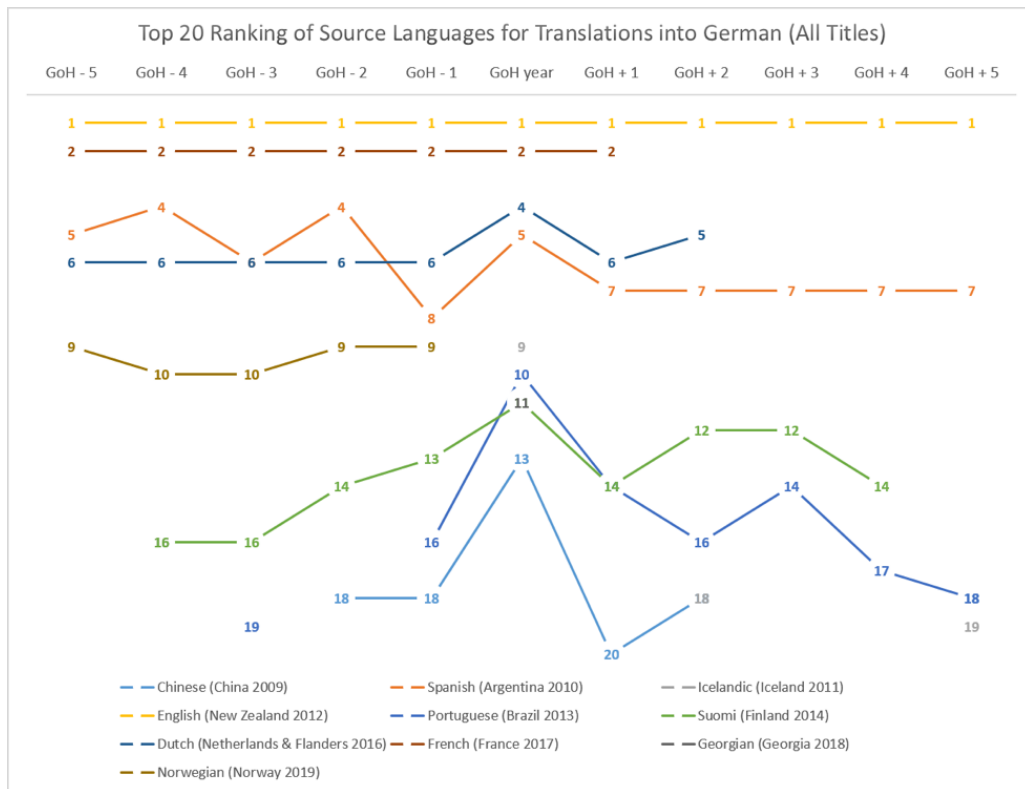
**Figure 1:** Impact of Guest of Honour status on number of individual fiction contracts per language p.a. (Number of individual fiction contracts per language p.a. not publicized before 2009. 2012 [English/New Zealand]: data not conclusive. 2015 [multiple languages/Indonesia]: data not available).<sup>67</sup>

Let us look at two particular spikes as examples. The spike for Brazil in 2013 may be interesting here. While it may be true that Portuguese titles could also be licensed from Portugal and thus not directly connected to Brazil's Guest of Honour presentation, the numbers tell a different story. In 2011, Portuguese was not listed as a Top 20 source language. In 2012, picking up momentum in preparation for the Guest of Honour year, 20 fiction titles in Portuguese were licensed by German publishers. In 2013, the year of the presentation, this number had more than tripled, with 70 contracts. The effect, however, was radically diminished in the subsequent years, with only 72 contracts for fiction titles in the three years following the presentation combined. Brazil was a repeat contender after its first Guest of Honour presentation in 1994. When the contracts for the Guest of Honour presentation 2013 were signed in 2010, more German titles were licensed to Brazil than to any other country in the Western hemisphere.<sup>68</sup>

A second example is the joint presentation in the Dutch language of Flanders and the Netherlands in 2016. Although one might assume that the shared border between Germany and the Netherlands, and the linguistic and cultural similarities, would lead to steady licensing numbers, the line spikes

noticeably (GoH minus one: 34 contracts; GoH year: 99 contracts; GoH plus one: 27 contracts). A recent M.A. dissertation in Book Studies at JGU Mainz compared the 2016 and 1993 Netherlands/Flanders Guest of Honour presentations, finding the 2016 iteration to have profited from institutions that were set up originally for the 1993 Guest of Honour presentation, such as the Dutch Foundation for Literature/Nederlands Letterenfonds. However, as Sabrina Holitzner has argued, the 1993 iteration was more effective overall.<sup>69</sup>

Figures 2 and 3 compare the rankings of source languages across a period of 11 years for each Guest of Honour presentation from 2009 to 2019; Figure 2 shows the number of translations overall, while Figure 3 shows only fiction translations.

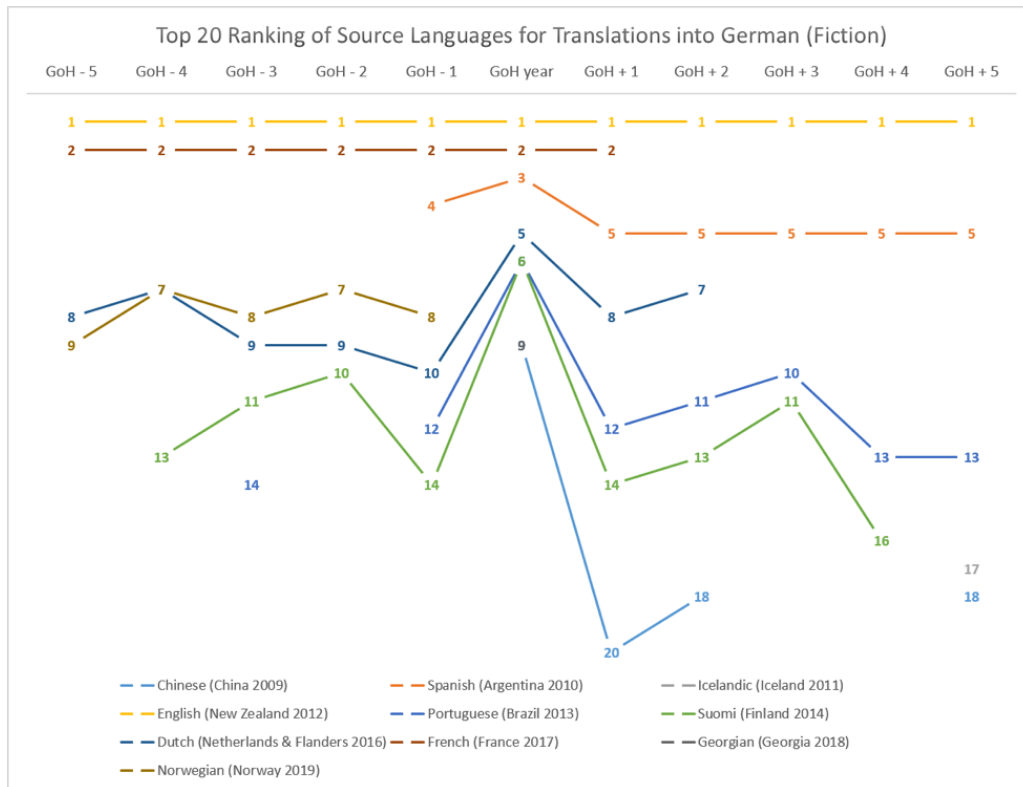


**Figure 2:** Top 20 Ranking of Source Languages for Translations into German (All Titles). Indonesia (2015, multiple languages): no data available.

It is important to note that data is only available for the Top 20 source languages.<sup>70</sup> That means that for years in which the source languages are ranked lower than 20th, the spot in the table is left blank. For example, before its Guest of Honour presentation, Iceland was not ranked in the



Top 20. With its presentation, it managed to enter the Top 20 and landed on rank 9 for translations across all genres; the only other times it made it into the Top 20 were 2013 (rank 18) and 2016 (rank 19). Georgia, similarly, first entered the Top 20 in the year of its presentation, ranked 11th, and is only visible at rank 11 in its Guest of Honour year (2018) here.



**Figure 3:** Top 20 Ranking of Source Languages for Translations into German (Fiction). Indonesia (2015, multiple languages): no data available.

Evidently, based on the source language ranking, the Guest of Honour status, combined with generous translation subsidies, can catapult languages (and national literatures) to new heights in the German market. However, most presentations do not generate sustained momentum. Clearly, the combined effect of translation subsidies and media attention generated by the Guest of Honour status are necessary for a lasting impact on the presence of translations from a given source language in the German market.

It is additionally important to note that the languages that make it into the Top 20 fluctuate significantly, but only the top few source languages regularly produce more than 100 titles in translation per annum. In the

decade considered here, the number of new fiction publications annually was around 14,000 (2009: 13,931; 2018: 13,897). In other words, the impact of the Guest of Honour status is marginal if we look only at the numbers. The top fiction source languages and number of contracts in 2018 have been listed in table 3 to provide a better overall understanding of the impact of the Guest of Honour status.

Ranking	Language	Number of translations
1	English	2,448
2	French	285
3	Italian	112
3	Swedish	112
5	Spanish	90
6	Russian	57
7	Dutch	53
8	Norwegian	49
9	Georgian	43
10	Danish	38

**Table 3.** Top 10 source languages for fiction translations (*Sachgruppe DK Literatur, Belletristik*) in 2018. Compiled from: *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen 2019*, 98.

To a certain degree, the Guest of Honour presentations for New Zealand (2012) and France (2018) underline Peter Weidhaas’s 1976 statement that a US Guest of Honour would be “*witzlos*” (foolish).<sup>71</sup> English and French are the top two source languages for the German market, across all titles and for fiction. English consistently ranked first over the entire dataset period. However, while French consistently ranks second, the numbers clearly document the gargantuan lead of translations from the English language. For instance, in 2018, English as a source language made up 63.1 percent of all translations (6,187 titles) and French, despite France’s status as Guest of Honour, came in second with 10.3 percent (1,008 titles). For fiction, the difference is even more pronounced, with English making up 68.5 percent of fiction translations (2,448 titles) and French 8 percent (285 titles) in 2018. Yet by choosing New Zealand as Guest of Honour in 2012, it is obvious that FBF does not conflate matters of linguistic diversity with overarching questions of bibliodiversity<sup>72</sup> and underrepresented national literatures in the global literary marketplace. For New Zealand, for instance, the Guest of Honour presentation was a unique opportunity to foreground

English-language books from a national market that is under-represented in a market otherwise saturated with English books in translation. The then-director of the New Zealand Publishers Association, Kevin Chapman, proudly stated in May 2012 that rights for 66 titles had already been sold that year, outperforming previous annual numbers by a whopping 600 percent.<sup>73</sup> With Canada's bilingual presentation coming up in 2020 (Guest of Honour motto: "Singular Plurality"), it will be interesting to see whether there will be a measurable impact on the statistics for French; for English, this is not expected.

### **German Independent Publishers and the Guest of Honour Status**

The translation statistics in *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* come with a big caveat: they do not reveal print runs or sales, or critical and public reception. Körkko quoted a survey published in 2015: approximately half of the German publishers who published Finnish titles in translation in 2014 had hoped for higher sales numbers.<sup>74</sup> Although, to be honest, which publisher in the world does not hope for better sales? As is often the case in book and publishing studies research, we are challenged to find other ways to analyze the success in terms of aesthetics/literary value in the system of art and in terms of money in the system of economics.

The Guest of Honour can spend millions of Euros (in our theoretical framework: within the system of economics). The Guest of Honour can build upon a rich literary value its national/regional literature has (within the system of art). The Guest of Honour can have political support with dignitaries and politicians present at FBF (within the system of politics). However, to realize the goals of the presentations, German publishers (and later booksellers) must be willing to engage actively with the Guest of Honour's literary tradition to bring its books to the German literary market.

Research has shown that independent publishers are particularly active in publishing translations in the German market. Because English-language titles are so dominant and have such strong commercial potential, their licensing fees are particularly high. Hence, independent publishers often specialize in translations from languages other than English.<sup>75</sup> Anecdotal evidence seems to indicate that German independent publishers make particular use of the additional media attention and translation subsidies

offered by the Guest of Honour status. The brief observations sketched out here substantiate the anecdotal evidence, and highlight the need for further research on the relationship between independent publishers and the Guest of Honour presentations.

For the past 25 years, the German independent publisher Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt (FVA) has made a name for itself as a home for international fiction. Joachim Unseld, son of the famous publisher Siegfried Unseld (Suhrkamp), bought and relaunched FVA in 1994.<sup>76</sup> We compiled a database of all the publications published by the small German publisher Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt (FVA), with a particular focus on the presence of titles connected to the annual Guest of Honour presentations.<sup>77</sup> The numbers, especially in recent years, are striking. In 2018, for instance, FVA's fall list consisted of six new publications. Four of these publications—more than half—were either translations or connected to the Georgian Guest of Honour presentation in other ways. In 2017, seven new publications appeared in the fall: three of them were French titles, and one was already a Georgian translation in preparation for 2018. So again, more than half of the fall publications had a Guest of Honour connection.

We can further substantiate this evidence by looking at the Kurt Wolff Foundation's annual catalogue *Es geht um das Buch*, which offers independent publishers who are members of the Kurt Wolff Foundation the chance to present their lists.<sup>78</sup> The 2018/19 catalogue presents the programs of 65 individual independent publishers. Twelve of those publishers presented works related to Georgia, nine of which were translations (on seven publishers' lists). In sum, 20 percent of the translated fiction from Georgia in 2018 was published by a select group of seven independent publishers. Amtmann's list does not differentiate between conglomerate-owned and independent publishers. Nonetheless, the dominance of independent publishers over conglomerate imprints is visible.<sup>79</sup> Her list covers all Georgian literature and literature in German by Georgian authors published between 2014 and 2018, including poetry and children's literature. Amtmann documents 134 individual titles. Tellingly, only one of these 134 titles was published by a German Random House imprint (btb, which is a paperback imprint), though Random House currently has 47 imprints and is the largest publishing group in the German marketplace.<sup>80</sup>

Within our systems theory framework, we can understand the economic motivation for independent publishers to focus on Guest of Honour titles: they can decrease the financial risk of translation through translation subsidies, which are easier to come by in connection to the Guest of Honour status. In the system of art, literary value and aesthetics are the central currencies, but without marketing and attention, the titles will not be received by the general public. The Guest of Honour status is an attractive marketing opportunity that is especially interesting to independent publishers, whose marketing budgets are small.

## Outlook and Conclusions

As Martin Maria Schwarz wrote for an article published by the Goethe Institute, “The book fair’s special focus on a particular nation certainly appears to drum up plenty of business, but what remains of the hype once the fair comes to an end again five days later?”<sup>81</sup> Drawing on a small dataset based on a decade of Guest of Honour presentations—the most recent decade possible, from 2009 to 2018—Schwarz’s essay considered the role of the Guest of Honour presentations in shaping the German literary field. This comparative study showed that the presence of the Guest of Honour in the literary marketplace, as evidenced by number of translations and ranking of the Guest of Honour language, is relatively high in the year of the presentation. However, these numbers pale in comparison to the fiction translations annually coming in from English-speaking countries. Overall, the Guest of Honour role does not seem to have a long-lasting effect in terms of contracts for fiction translations into German.

More research is necessary, because the number of translations is naturally small in comparison to the overall number of new publications flooding the market every year.<sup>82</sup> Larger datasets could also include translations licensed worldwide after Guest of Honour presentations, and could also look at the impact of the Guest of Honour presentations on the export of fiction from the German literary marketplace into the Guest of Honour countries—in other words, German titles licensed to the Guest of Honour country. The data in *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* could be a starting point for this type of analysis. A further source for comparison and analysis would be the Translation Database, which has tracked “all original publications of fiction

and poetry published in the US in English translation” since its foundation by Three Percent and Open Letters Books in 2008.<sup>83</sup>

Other approaches to the Guest of Honour presentations at FBF are also possible, especially those that draw on empirical methods such as content analysis. Some of these approaches have been tried and tested in existing case studies: K orkko analyzes the press reception of the Finnish presentation in 2014 and Mona Klinkhardt uses content analysis to consider the trade journal reception of the 2009 Chinese, 2010 Brazilian, and 2017 French presentations.<sup>84</sup> Other studies focus on cultural history, such as Holitzner with her astute comparison of the 1993 and 2016 presentations of Dutch and Flemish literature. Amtmann, by contrast, embeds her analysis within comparative literary studies. Case studies, however, while worthwhile and important, do not live up to Alistair McCleery’s recent challenge to book historians to focus on “patterns and principles” instead of on “unique events and experiences.”<sup>85</sup> This brief contribution has illustrated, I hope, that the Guest of Honour presentations at FBF are a fascinating area of research, and that they merit overarching and comparative study. Looking forward, scholars could also draw upon and analyze the Guest of Honour presentations at other book fairs, such as the annual Guest of Honour presentations at Leipzig Book Fair since 2017, in order to increase the dataset and compare impact.

This essay has argued that in order to understand the role of the Guest of Honour presentation, we can look toward the systems theory approaches suggested by Axel Kuhn. By embedding FBF and the Guest of Honour presentations in a multidirectional model, we avoid oversimplifying of the complex expectations and forms of investment that different parties bring to the table. And data concerning this emerging field of interest will only continue to emerge. Even in our globalized world, and despite the benefits of digital communication, FBF and its Guests of Honour will continue to play an important role in the German as well as the international book industry—at least for the foreseeable future.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Transl.: Hosting the book world in Frankfurt. All translations are mine. Silke Bartlick, “Die Buchwelt zu Gast in Frankfurt,” *Deutsche Welle*, October 5, 2010, <https://p.dw.com/p/PW82>.

<sup>2</sup> Over the course of five fair days in 2019, FBF welcomed 302,267 visitors, with 7,450 exhibitors from 104 countries present onsite at the fairgrounds. 25,000 additional visitors were counted at events linked to the fair in downtown Frankfurt and at the literary festival BOOKFEST. See FBF, “Frankfurter Buchmesse endet mit deutlichem Besucherplus [press release]” (October 21, 2019). <https://www.buchmesse.de/presse/pressemitteilun/gen/2019-10-21-frankfurter-buchmesse-endet-mit-deutlichem-besucherplus>.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Stefan Hauck, “Sehen, staunen, lachen. Bilderbuch-Highlights,” *Börsenblatt*, September 21, 2017, [https://www.boersenblatt.net/2017-09-21-artikel-sehen\\_staunen\\_lachen-bilderbuch-highlights.1368127.html](https://www.boersenblatt.net/2017-09-21-artikel-sehen_staunen_lachen-bilderbuch-highlights.1368127.html).

<sup>4</sup> See for instance Millicent Weber, *Literary Festivals and Contemporary Book Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Roanna Gonsalves, “The Survival of the Friendliest: Contemporary Indian Publishing in English at the Frankfurt Book Fair,” *Cultural Sociology* 9, no. 3 (2015): 425–46, DOI: [10.1177/1749975515590244](https://doi.org/10.1177/1749975515590244).

<sup>6</sup> FBF, “Frankfurter Buchmesse.”

<sup>7</sup> See Marco Thomas Bosshard, *Buchmarkt, Buchindustrie und Buchmessen in Deutschland, Spanien und Lateinamerika* (Berlin/Münster: LIT, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Helmi-Nelli Körkkö, *FINNLAND.COOL. – zwischen Literaturexport und Imagepflege: Eine Untersuchung von Finnlands Ebrenngastaufrtritt auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse 2014* (Munich: Iudicum Verlag, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>10</sup> See for instance Stephan Ditschke, “Das Publikum hat getobt!,” in *Literaturbetrieb in Deutschland*, eds. Heinz Ludwig Arnold, and Matthias Beilein, third edition (Munich: edition text + kritik, 2009), 316–18.

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<sup>11</sup> See Körkko, *FINNLAND.COOL.*, 85.

<sup>12</sup> See Peter Weidhaas, *Zur Geschichte der Frankfurter Buchmesse* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Sigfred Taubert, *Mit Büchern die Welt erlebt* (Stuttgart: Hauswedell, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> Published as Peter Weidhaas, *Und kam in die Welt der Büchermenschen* (Berlin: Christoph Links, 2007).

<sup>15</sup> FBF has been ongoing since its relaunch after the end of the Second World War. The division of the German territories into American, British, French, and Soviet occupation zones and later into the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic had reinvigorated Frankfurt's rusty status as a centre of book production, and revived its claim to a book fair. Leipzig had dominated as a book production centre with its popular book fair in the first half of the twentieth century, but Leipzig had been hit hard by the air raids of WWII and was now tucked away behind the Iron Curtain. For more context, see for instance Sabine Niemeier, *Funktionen der Frankfurter Buchmesse im Wandel – von den Anfängen bis heute* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001).

<sup>16</sup> “Statt 5a jetzt Halle 6. Einschneidende Änderungen bei der Buchmesse,” *Börsenblatt*, February 20, 1976, 261.

<sup>17</sup> See Marion Lütten, “Die Länderschwerpunkte ab 1988: Fallbeispiele Italien und Frankreich,” in *50 Jahre Frankfurter Buchmesse*, ed. Stephan Füssel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1999), 139–49; and Ernst Fischer, “Geglückte Imagekorrektur? Bilanz des Schwerpunktthemas Österreich 1995,” in *50 Jahre Frankfurter Buchmesse*, ed. Stephan Füssel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1999), 150–62.

<sup>18</sup> For more context, see Niemeier, *Funktionen der Frankfurter Buchmesse*, 53.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Roesler-Graichen, “Die Sprache der Gastfreundschaft. Francfort en Français: Pressereise nach Paris,” *Börsenblatt*, January 29, 2017, <https://www.boersenblatt.net/2017-01-29-artikel-francfort-en-fran-ais-pressereise-nach-paris.1283363.html>.

<sup>20</sup> See NORLA, *Norway as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2019* [bid document]. (n.d.) <https://norla.no/attachments/ca2a976ef08ac94a80e011f3d5eeb6b982f4b7cf/226-20190312122549549656.pdf>, 3.

<sup>21</sup> See Sigrid Rautenberg, “Flandern und Niederlande an der Spree. Politisch-literarischer Abend,” *Börsenblatt*, September 22, 2016, <https://www.boersenblatt.net/2016-09-22-artikel-politisch-literarischer-abend.1238807.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Holger Heimann, “Deutschland liebt die niederländische Literatur. Buchmesse-Gastland Niederlande & Flandern,” *Börsenblatt*, September 5, 2016, <https://www.boerse-nblatt.net/2016-09-05-artikel-buchmesse-gastland-niederlande-flandern.1235339.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Roger Tagholm, “Canada Previews the ‘Colorful Fabric’ of its Frankfurt 2020 Guest of Honor Program,” *Publishing Perspectives*, October 18, 2019, <https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/10/canada-previews-the-colorful-fabric-of-its-frankfurt-2020-guest-of-honor-program/>.



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<sup>24</sup> Martin Maria Schwarz, “From Guest of Honour to Literary Star. Frankfurt Book Fair,” *Goethe Institut*, trans. Chris Cave (September 2014). <https://www.goethe.de/en/kul/lit/20430303.html>.

<sup>25</sup> New Zealand seems quite interested in the long-term impact of the presentation, as evidenced by this article comparing the Kiwi and Dutch/Flemish presentations: Mark Broatch, “Selling New Zealand in Frankfurt,” *ANZL* (n.d.). <https://www.anzliterature.com/feature/selling-new-zealand-frankfurt/>. Broatch also mentions, however, that there was no budget for systematic research on the impact following 2012.

<sup>26</sup> “Reisebuchpreis starker ins Licht rücken. Börsenverein kooperiert mit ITB BuchAwards,” *Börsenblatt*, August 24, 2017, <https://www.boersenblatt.net/2017-08-24-artikel-boersenverein-kooperiert-mit-itb-buchawards.1359939.html>. See for instance the brochure with the 2019 winners for the Guest of Honour Norway here: [http://www.buero-philipp.de/Resources/ITB\\_BuchAwards\\_19.pdf](http://www.buero-philipp.de/Resources/ITB_BuchAwards_19.pdf).

<sup>27</sup> I would like to thank Johanna Hoppe for her assistance in preparing this data.

<sup>28</sup> See Corinna Norrick-Rühl, *Internationaler Buchmarkt* (Frankfurt: Bramann, 2019), 51–52.

<sup>29</sup> Leslie Howsam, *Old Books and New Histories: An Orientation to Studies in Book and Print Culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 39.

<sup>30</sup> See Ursula Rautenberg, “Buchwissenschaft” in *Reclams Sachlexikon des Buches*, ed. Ursula Rautenberg (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2015), 102.

<sup>31</sup> Leslie Howsam, “Book history in the classroom,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Leslie Howsam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 263.

<sup>32</sup> Axel Kuhn, “Überlegungen zu einer systemtheoretischen Perspektive des Kulturbegriffs in der Verlagshistoriographie,” *Verlagsgeschichtsschreibung. Modelle und Archivfunde*, eds. Corinna Norrick and Ute Schneider (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012), 113–35.

<sup>33</sup> FBF, “About Us” (n.d.). <https://www.buchmesse.de/en/about-us>.

<sup>34</sup> For more context, see Ulrike Seyer, “Die Frankfurter Buchmesse in den Jahren 1967–1969”, in *Die Politisierung des Buchmarkts: 1968 als Branchenereignis. Hans Altenhein zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet*, ed. Stephan Füssel (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007), 159–242.

<sup>35</sup> See for instance Hannah Johnson, “Frankfurt Book Fair: Booming Business for Trade Visitors, Reflections of German Politics Play Out,” *Publishing Perspectives*, October 20, 2017, <https://publishingperspectives.com/2017/10/frankfurt-book-fair-booming-business-visitors-german-politics/>.

<sup>36</sup> Beth Driscoll and Claire Squires, *Publishing Bestsellers: Buzz and the Frankfurt Book Fair* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2020).

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<sup>37</sup> “75 Autorinnen und Autoren und ein Literaturzug mit Mette Marit. Frankfurter Buchmesse: Pressekonferenz Gastland Norwegen,” *Börsenblatt* June 4, 2019, <https://www.boersenblatt.net/2019-06-04-artikel-75-autorinnen-und-autoren-und-ein-literaturzug-mit-mette-marit-frankfurter-buchmesse-pressekonferenz-gastland-norwegen.1667594.html>.

<sup>38</sup> FBF, “Guest of Honour France (2017) handed over the GuestScroll to Georgia (2018)” [press release] (2018), <https://www.buchmesse.de/en/press/press-releases/2017-10-15-guest-of-honour-france-2017-handed-over-guestscroll>.

<sup>39</sup> For more context see Norrick-Rühl, *Internationaler Buchmarkt*, 15. Körkkö briefly discusses debates surrounding the choice of Iceland for 2011, which critics believed had a connection to politico-economic developments. Iceland and Finland had both bid for 2011, and the Finnish company Nokia had closed a factory in Bochum, Germany, right before the decision was made. FBF denied these allegations. See Körkkö, *FINNLAND. COOL*, 81.

<sup>40</sup> See Holger Ehling’s criticism in “Gerhard Beckmann und Holger Ehling über den Sinn (und Unsinn) von Buchmessen,” *Buchmarkt*, March 2, 2008, <https://www.buchmarkt.de/meldungen/veranstaltungen/buchmessen/gerhard-beckmann-und-holger-ehling-uber-den-sinn-und-unsinn-von-buchmessen/>.

<sup>41</sup> See Jürgen Boos, “Zensur findet nicht statt. Buchmesse,” *Börsenblatt*, September 15, 2009, <https://www.boersenblatt.net/2009-09-15-artikel-zensur-findet-nicht-statt-buchmesse.339426.html>.

<sup>42</sup> See Lili Amtmann, *Georgiens Gastlandauftritt auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse 2018 im Lichte von Casanovas Weltliteraturtheorie* (master’s thesis, University of Mainz, 2019), 33.

<sup>43</sup> “Südkorea speckt Rahmenprogramm zur Buchmesse ab,” *Buchmarkt*, January 28, 2005, <https://www.buchmarkt.de/meldungen/veranstaltungen/buchmessen/sudkorea-speckt-rahmenprogramm-zur-buchmesse-ab/>.

<sup>44</sup> “Für Arabien-Auftritt in Frankfurt fehlt Geld,” *Buchmarkt*, April 6, 2004, <https://www.buchmarkt.de/meldungen/veranstaltungen/buchmessen/fur-arabien-auftritt-in-frankfurt-fehlt-geld/>.

<sup>45</sup> Bruno Urmersbach, “Inflationsrate in EU und Euro-Zone bis 2018,” *Statista*, January 28, 2019, <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/156285/umfrage/entwicklung-der-inflationsrate-in-der-eu-und-der-eurozone/>.

<sup>46</sup> Wolfgang Höbel and Andreas Lorenz, “Controversy as Frankfurt Book Fair Fetes Beijing. China, the Unwelcome Guest,” *Spiegel*, October 13, 2009, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/china-the-unwelcome-guest-controversy-as-frankfurt-book-fair-fetes-beijing-a-654713.html>.

<sup>47</sup> “Blau-weiß-blauer Literaturherbst. Verlage publizieren argentinische Literatur,” *Buchreport*, June 30, 2010, <https://www.buchreport.de/news/blau-weiss-blauer-literaturherbst/>.

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<sup>48</sup> Alva Gehrman, “Insel der Bücherfreunde. Buchmessengast Island,” *Zeit*, October 12, 2011, <https://www.zeit.de/kultur/literatur/2011-10/island-literaturbetrieb>.

<sup>49</sup> Broatch, “Selling New Zealand in Frankfurt.”

<sup>50</sup> “‘Brazil in Every Word’ – der Ehrengast 2013,” *Börsenblatt*, October 13, 2012, <https://www.boersenblatt.net/2012-10-13-artikel-brazil-in-every-word--der-ehrengast-2013-frankfurter-buchmesse.553272.html>.

<sup>51</sup> JF, “Finnland erreichte bisher größtes mediales Echo eines Ehrengastes,” *BuchMarkt*, October 11, 2014, <https://www.buchmarkt.de/meldungen/veranstaltungen/buchmessen/finnland-erreichte-bisher-grosstes-mediales-echo-eines-ehrengastes/>.

<sup>52</sup> “Fördertopf für Übersetzungen aus Finnland. Buchmesse-Gastland 2014,” *Börsenblatt*, August 22, 2013, <https://www.boersenblatt.net/2014-04-25-artikel-zahlen-zum-buchmarkt-des-gastlands-der-frankfurter-buchmesse-2014.794586.html>.

<sup>53</sup> Markus Junianto Sihalo, “Indonesian Lawmakers Question Frankfurt Book Fair Budget, Presence of ‘Certain Groups’,” *Jakarta Globe*, November 1, 2015, <https://jakartaglobe.id/context/indonesian-lawmakers-question-frankfurt-book-fair-budget-presence-certain-groups/>.

<sup>54</sup> “Indonesien wirbt für Übersetzungen. Gastland FBM 2015,” *Börsenblatt*, March 15, 2014, <https://www.boersenblatt.net/2014-03-15-artikel-gastland-fbm-2015.786628.html>.

<sup>55</sup> Giulia Trentacosti, “The Netherlands & Flanders as Frankfurt Book Fair Guest of Honor,” *2SeasAgency*, February 2019, <http://2seasagency.com/netherlands-flanders-frankfurt-book-fair-guest-honour/>.

<sup>56</sup> Roesler-Graichen, “Die Sprache der Gastfreundschaft,” *Börsenblatt*, January 29, 2017.

<sup>57</sup> “Morchiladze und Haratischwili reden zur Buchmesseeröffnung,” *Buchjournal*, May 9, 2018. <https://www.boersenblatt.net/archiv/1465565.html>.

<sup>58</sup> See NORLA, *Norway as Guest of Honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2019* [bid document], 3.

<sup>59</sup> Porter Anderson, “‘Finnland: Cool & Happy’ Opens at Helsinki Lit 2019: ‘We Can’t Sit Back’,” *Publishing Perspectives*, May 6, 2019. <https://publishingperspectives.com/2019/05/tia-stranden-fili-cool-and-happy-may-17-launch-2019-five-years-after-frankfurt/>.

<sup>60</sup> See for instance the letter of protest published by the Kurt Wolff Stiftung, which promotes bibliodiversity in Germany: Kurt Wolff Stiftung, “Letter to the Georgian Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport,” May 18, 2019 [http://www.kurt-wolff-stiftung.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Georgien\\_Brief\\_Original\\_dt.pdf](http://www.kurt-wolff-stiftung.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Georgien_Brief_Original_dt.pdf).

<sup>61</sup> See David Bellos, *Is That a Fish in Your Ear? The Amazing Adventure of Translation* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), 216. For more information on German literature in translation, see also Corinna Norrick-Rühl, “Deutsche Literatur im globalen Buchmarkt. Statistiken, Paratexte und Kontexte,” in *Globalgeschichten der deutschen Literatur*, eds. Urs Büttner and David Kim (Stuttgart: Metzler, forthcoming 2020).

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<sup>62</sup> For more context, see Corinna Norrick-Rühl and Melanie Ramdarshan Bold, “Crossing the Channel: Publishing Translated German Fiction in the UK,” *Publishing Research Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2016): 125–38. DOI: [10.1007/s12109-016-9458-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s12109-016-9458-3).

<sup>63</sup> See Ernst Fischer, “Übersetzungen auf dem Markt: Institutionen und Steuerungsfaktoren,” in *Streifzüge im translatorischen Feld. Zur Soziologie der literarischen Übersetzung im deutschsprachigen Raum*, eds. Norbert Bachleitner and Michaela Wolf (Münster: LIT, 2010), 37–40.

<sup>64</sup> Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels, *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen 2012*, 92.

<sup>65</sup> Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels, *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen 2009*, 82.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>67</sup> NB: For better readability of the line graph, two numbers were added to the graph where no data is available. We do not have data for Portuguese in 2011/GoH – 2 and Icelandic in 2012/GoH + 1; in other words, these languages did not make it into the Top 20 ranking. Based on *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen*, a maximum of 10 fiction translations from Portuguese must have been published in 2011, and a maximum of 5 fiction translations from Icelandic in 2012. These numbers were thus chosen as a placeholder/visualization aid.

<sup>68</sup> See “Der Ehrengast der Frankfurter Buchmesse heißt Brasilien,” *Börsenblatt*, June 23, 2010. <https://www.boersenblatt.net/2010-06-23-artikel-der-ehrengast-der-frankfurter-buchmesse-2013-heisst-brasilien-frankfurter-buchmesse.387568.html>.

<sup>69</sup> See Sabrina Holitzner, *Flandern und Niederlande als gemeinsamer Ehrengast auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse 1993 und 2016 – Auswirkungen auf die Präsenz flämischer und niederländischer Literatur in Deutschland* (master’s thesis, University of Mainz, 2019).

<sup>70</sup> Additional notes on the dataset:

The Top 20 dataset is based on the numbers published in *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* (annual issues 2007 to 2019). The Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels bases the Top 20 data on information from the German National Library/German National Bibliography and from the Verzeichnis Lieferbarer Bücher (VLB, the directory of German books in print).

The ranking is based on source languages for translations across all genres; since 2009, an additional column lists the total number of translations in the fiction segment for the Top 20 languages listed across all genres. Thus, it is possible, though highly unlikely, that the ranking for fiction omits languages that are particularly strong in the fiction segment but not overall.

Additionally, before 2009, *Buch und Buchhandel in Zahlen* also did not differentiate between ancient and modern Greek, though this has next to no effect on the rankings of Guest of Honour languages in the given period.

<sup>71</sup> “Statt 5a jetzt Halle 6.,” *Börsenblatt*, February 20, 1976, 261.

<sup>72</sup> The concept of bibliodiversity has come into play to describe the “cultural diversity associated with the realm of books” (Étienne Galliard, “Editorial,” *Bibliodiversity Indicators* [January 2011], 6). The term was developed in the Spanish-speaking world in the 1990s

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and is now widely used throughout the international book industry. See also Norrick-Rühl, *Internationaler Buchmarkt*, 81.

<sup>73</sup> “Lizenzwelle für Ehrengast Neuseeland,” *Börsenblatt*, May 7, 2012, [https://www.boersenblatt.net/2012-05-07-artikel-frankfurter\\_buchmesse.528403.html](https://www.boersenblatt.net/2012-05-07-artikel-frankfurter_buchmesse.528403.html).

<sup>74</sup> See Kōrkko, *FINNLAND.COOL.*, 184.

<sup>75</sup> See Markus Kessel, “Importartikel Buch: Zwischen Nischengeschäft und ‘heißen Titeln’,” *Literaturbetrieb in Deutschland*, eds. Heinz Ludwig Arnold and Matthias Beilein, third edition (Munich: edition text + kritik, 2009), 428–30.

<sup>76</sup> See FVA, “Verlagsgeschichte” (n.d.). <https://www.fva.de/Verlag/#publisherhistory>.

<sup>77</sup> I would like to thank Franziska Morgenstern for her assistance in preparing this data.

<sup>78</sup> Kurt Wolff Stiftung, *Es geht um das Buch 2018/19* (2018). [www.indiebook.de/wp-content/uploads/kws\\_katalog\\_2018-19.pdf](http://www.indiebook.de/wp-content/uploads/kws_katalog_2018-19.pdf).

<sup>79</sup> See Lili Amtmann, *Georgiens Gastlandauftritt auf der Frankfurter Buchmesse 2018*, Table 1 in the digital appendix.

<sup>80</sup> Iunona Guruli, *Wenn es nur Licht gäbe, bevor es dunkel wird*, translated from the Georgian by the author (Munich: btb, 2018).

<sup>81</sup> Schwarz, “From Guest of Honour to Literary Star.”

<sup>82</sup> See also Victor Ginsburgh, Shlomo Weber, and Sheila Weyers, “The economics of literary translation: Some theory and evidence,” *Poetics* 39 (2011): 228–46 for an innovative approach to modelling the literary translations market.

<sup>83</sup> See “Translation Database,” *Publishers Weekly* (n.d.). <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/translation/home/index.html>. I would like to credit the anonymous reviewer with making this suggestion.

<sup>84</sup> See Mona Klinkhardt, *Gastlandauftritte in der Branchenpresse – Eine Inhaltsanalyse zur Resonanz in Börsenblatt, BuchMarkt und buchreport* (undergraduate thesis, University of Mainz, 2018).

<sup>85</sup> See Alistair McCleery, “The book in the long twentieth century,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. Leslie Howsam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 163.

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