

# Kevin Blankinship

Brigham Young University | 3058 JFSB | Provo, UT 84602 | (801) 422-4684

[kevin\\_blankinship@byu.edu](mailto:kevin_blankinship@byu.edu) | [Academia](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [MuckRack](#)

## SUMMARY

I am a scholar, poet, critic, and translator. I research and teach Arabic language and literature within the context of the Mediterranean world. I also review books and comment on Middle Eastern culture for general readers, write original English language poetry, and work as an Arabic translator.

## APPOINTMENTS

Brigham Young University (Provo, UT), Asian and Near Eastern Languages <i>Assistant Professor, Arabic Language and Literature</i>	Aug. 2018-Present
Middlebury College (Middlebury, VT), Summer Arabic School <i>Instructor, Arabic Language and Literature</i>	2019
University of Utah (Salt Lake City, UT), World Languages and Cultures <i>Instructor and Program Coordinator, Arabic</i>	July 2017-Aug. 2018
University of Chicago (Chicago, IL), Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations <i>Instructor, North African Culture and Society</i>	Feb.-Mar. 2017
<i>Teaching Assistant, Arabic and Islamic Studies</i>	Sept. 2012-Mar. 2014

## EDUCATION

University of Chicago (Chicago, IL): MA, PhD, Arabic Language and Literature <i>Dissertation: "Thresholds of Doubt: Negotiating Authorship in the Paratexts of al-Ma`arri"</i>	2018
Middlebury College (Middlebury, VT): MA Arabic Studies, Arabic Language Pedagogy	2015
American University in Cairo (Egypt): Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA)	2010
University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, NC): MA Comparative Literature	2009
Brigham Young University (Provo, UT): BA Comparative Literature, Portuguese Minor	2007

## PUBLICATIONS

### Refereed Academic Articles & Chapters

<i>Journal of Abbasid Studies</i>	Forthcoming July 2021
• "Al-Ma`arri's Anxious Menagerie: <i>The Epistle of the Horse and the Mule</i> " (solicited)	
<i>Oxford Bibliographies</i>	Accepted, scheduled publication Summer 2021
• "Classical Arabic Poetry" (solicited)	
<i>Religions</i> 11, no. 8, special issue: Animals in Islam (pages 1-20) (solicited)	2020
• " <a href="#">Suffering the Sons of Eve: Animal Ethics in al-Ma`arri's Epistle of the Horse and the Mule</a> "	
<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i> 140, no. 1 (pages 19-37)	2020
• " <a href="#">Giggers, Greeners, Peyserts, and Palliards: Rendering Slang in al-Bukhala of al-Jahiz</a> "	
<i>Insatiable Appetite: Food as a Cultural Signifier in the Middle East and Beyond</i> (Brill, 2019), ed. Bilal Orfali, Kirill Dmitriev, Julia Hauser (pages 260-291)	2019
• " <a href="#">Missionary and Heretic: Debating Veganism in the Medieval Islamic World</a> ," pp. 260-91	
<i>Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean</i> 31, no. 3 (pages 253-271)	2019
• " <a href="#">Al-Ma`arri's Esteem in the Islamic West: A Preliminary Overview</a> "	

## Academic Book Reviews

---

- Al-Abhath: Journal of the American University of Beirut* 62-63, pp. 148-154 Sept. 2018
- Work reviewed: James T. Monroe, *The Mischievous Muse*, 2 vols. (Brill, 2017)
- Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 76, no. 1 Apr. 2017
- Work reviewed: Christian Peltz, *Der Koran des Abu l-`Ala'*, 2 vols. (Harrassowitz-Verlag, 2013)

## Public Essays & Reviews (selected; full list at [KBlankinship.com](http://KBlankinship.com))

---

- Kirkus Reviews* Oct. 2020-Present
- Freelance writer, non-bylined reviews
- Prospect Magazine UK* Planned publication Oct. 2021
- Review of *Dune* reboot (dir. Denis Villeneuve, Warner Bros. 2021)
- Newlines Magazine* Planned publication June 2021
- Essay on the translation history of pre-Islamic Arabic “hanging odes” (solicited)
- Prospect Magazine UK* 14 Apr. 2021
- “[What a Free-thinking Medieval Muslim Can Teach Us About Animal Welfare](#)” (solicited)
- Words Without Borders* 13 Apr. 2021
- “[Najwan Darwish’s Poems Turn Self-Doubt into Inner Resolve in ‘Exhausted on the Cross’](#)”  
Review of [Exhausted on the Cross](#) (trans. Kareem James Abu-Zeid, NYRB Poets 2021)
- The Spectator* 13 Nov. 2020
- “[A 13<sup>th</sup>-Century Guide to Fraud and Skulduggery](#),” review of *The Book of Charlatans*, trans. Humphrey Davies (NYU Press, 2020); featured in [The New Criterion](#) weekly roundup
- Public Books* 7 Oct. 2020
- “[Surviving Hard Times with al-Hariri](#),” essay about *Impostures: Fifty Rogues’ Tales Translated Fifty Ways*, trans. Michael Cooperson (NYU Press, 2020); review featured in [JSTOR Daily](#)
- Al-Jumhuriya English* 21 Aug. 2020
- “[Jinn and tonic: Medieval Islam’s celebrity doctors](#),” review of [A Literary History of Medicine: The `Uyun al-anba’ fi tabaqat al-atibba’ of Ibn Abi Usaybi`ah](#) (Brill, 2020)
- The Hedgehog Review* 1 Mar. 2020
- “[A Grand Turk in Washington](#),” review of *Jefferson’s Muslim Fugitives: The Lost Story of Enslaved Africans, Their Arabic Letters, and an American President*, by Jeffrey Einboden (Oxford Univ. Press, 2020); featured in [RealClearBooks](#), a daily book news aggregator, and [Prufock News](#), a daily email newsletter on books and ideas
- The Millions* 26 Nov. 2019
- “[Lost in Translation: Classical Arabic Literature](#),” essay about current trends in classical Arabic literature; featured in [Poets & Writers Magazine](#)
- The Times Literary Supplement* 22 Nov. 2019
- “[Full-Bodied](#),” review of *The Praiseworthy One: The Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Texts and Images*, by Christiane Gruber (Indiana University Press, 2019)
- The Los Angeles Review of Books* 30 Jan. 2019
- “[Rushdie’s Deal with the Devil](#),” 30<sup>th</sup> anniv. review of *The Satanic Verses*  
-Featured in [The Banned Books Reader](#), an anthology of essays from *The Los Angeles Review of Books* in honor of Banned Books Week 2020; arts and culture digest [Arts Journal](#); and news daily [Jewish Journal](#)
- The Atlantic* 9 Dec. 2018
- “[The Benefits of a Foreign-Language Tattoo](#)”; featured in [The Tattoo Forum](#)

## Literary Translations & Original Poetry

---

- Al-Qafila Magazine*, King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Saudi Arabia) May-Sept. 2020
- [English translation](#) of four out of ten foundational pre-Islamic poems in classical Arabic
  - [The Mu`allaqat Project](#), Saudi initiative to promote Arabic literature and culture
- ArabLit.org*, [Arabic Translation Challenge](#) (host and curator) May 2020-Oct. 2020
- Tuesdays I post an Arabic text to translate, then invite translations in English, or any other language. Saturdays I do a highlights roundup (not a contest; this tries to be inclusive). Semiannual writeup of the results in *Arablit Quarterly*.
- The Society of Classical Poets*
- [“My Sickness is a Mistress”](#) (original poem) 31 Aug. 2020
- Poetica Review* Spring 2020
- “Pruning the Apricot Tree”; “Ouroboros, or Writer’s Block”; “Majnun, or To Have” ([three original poems](#))
- Blue Unicorn* Spring 2020
- [“Free Enterprise”](#) (original poem)
- Lighten Up Online* June 2020
- [“To Arabic, an Abortive Dear Jane”](#) (original poem)
- The Society of Classical Poets*
- [“On Hearing of Hosni Mubarak’s Death, 25 February 2020”](#) (original poem) 26 Feb. 2020
- Gingerbread House* 30 Nov. 2019
- [“Bourgeois Prometheus”](#) (original poem)
- The Ekphrastic Review* 2 Aug. 2019
- [“Frenzy”](#) (response poem to painting of same title by Władysław Podkowiński, 1893)
- Peaks of Madness*, Utah Horror Writers Association Poetry Anthology July 2019
- “Behind the Wall” (original poem)
- Jadaliyya* 20 Sept. 2015
- [“An Elegy by al-Ma`arri,”](#) Arabic-to-English translation plus introduction; -Featured on [ArabLit.org](#), daily website for Arabic literature, 21 March 2018

## Collaborative Projects

---

- Al-Ma`arri Poems Set to Music (lyricist and translator) Oct. 2020-Present
- Collaboration with Seattle-based composer William C. White, to set medieval Arabic poetry to classical choir music
- “Language, Philology, Culture: Arab Cultural Semantics in Transition” Apr. 2018-Jan. 2019
- Contributor, European Research Council (ERC)-funded digital database of Arabic poetry

## Work Submitted or In Progress

---

- “An Underworld Poem by Andalusí Jurist `Umar al-Malaqí (d. CE 1440)” TBD
- Submitted to *Arabica: Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* (revise and resubmit)
- “Safeguarding Texts in the Self-Commentaries of John Tzetzes and al-Ma`arri” TBD
- Submitted to *Philological Encounters*, co-author Aglae Pizzone (revise and resubmit)
- “Mirrors for Princes” (in preparation) TBD
- Solicited chapter for *Routledge Handbook of Islamic Ethics* (ed. Mohammed Ghaly et al)

- “Rising in the West: Reception of Abbasid Arabic Poetry in Iberia and North Africa” TBD
- Solicited chapter for *Routledge Companion to Arabic Poetry* (ed. Fakhreddine, Stetkevych)
- “As Barren as Mother Eve: Why Some Poems End Better than Others, According to Classical Arabic Critics” (in preparation) TBD
- Solicited chapter for *How to End Things in Arabic Literature* (ed. Orfali)
- “A Book like a Painted Garden: Script as Metaphor in Classical Arabic Poetry” TBD
- Solicited conference paper, for presentation Spring 2021, joint Harvard/Saudi Arabia meeting
  - in preparation to submit to *Muqarnas: Visual Culture of the Islamic World*

## ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

### Invited Academic Solo Lectures

- University of Chicago, Center for Middle East Studies (CMES, Chicago, IL) May 2021
- “**كِتَابٌ كَوْشِي الرُّوضِ: صُورُ الْخَطِّ وَالْأَقْلَامِ وَالْحُرُوفِ فِي الشِّعْرِ الْعَرَبِيِّ الْقَدِيمِ**” (A Book like a Painted Garden: Script, Pen, and Letter Imagery in Classical Arabic Poetry) (lecture in Arabic)
- University of Southern Denmark, Center for Medieval Literature (Odense, Denmark) Apr. 2021
- “Counted Among the Dead: Pious Self-Detachment (zuhd) in Medieval Islamic Thought and Literature”
- Bard College (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY) Oct. 2020
- “Al-Ma`arri and Dante,” guest lecture, first-year seminar on literature, Prof. Nora Zaki
- University of Chicago, Center for Middle East Studies (CMES, Chicago, IL) Apr. 2020
- “**الْحَيَوَانُ فِي الْمِيزَانِ: رِسَالَةُ الصَّاهِلِ وَالشَّاحِجِ**” (Animals in the Balance: *The Epistle of the Horse and the Mule*) (lecture in Arabic)
- University of Pennsylvania, Department of Romance Languages (Philadelphia, PA) Nov. 2019
- “Spark Showers Way Out West: Forging an Author Through Self-Commentary in Andalusī Arabic Poetry”
- Middlebury Summer Arabic School at Mills College (Oakland, CA) June 2019
- “Night, Horses, and the Desert: My Strange Journey with Arabic”
- Georgetown University (Washington, DC) Apr. 2019
- “Memento Ma`arri: The Art of Dying in Classical Arabic Literature”
- Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center (Washington, DC) Apr. 2019
- “Dust’s Embrace: Al-Ma`arri and the Art of Dying in Classical Arabic Literature,” for the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center’s quarterly Poetry and Prose lecture series

### Invited Academic Conference Papers & Presentations

- American Oriental Society planned for March 2022
- “An Evening of Poetry,” original translations from Arabic poetry (one of four readers)
- The Royal Swedish Academy (Stockholm) planned for Jan. 2022
- “Like a Camel’s Afterbirth: Al-Ma`arri’s Refusal to Write Arabic Poetry for Patrons”
  - Conference, “The Poetics of Occasional Literature in the Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond”

- Saudi Arabia Ministry of Culture and the Adab Foundation Apr. 2021
- “كِتَابُ كَوْشِي الرُّوضِ: الخَطُّ رمزاً بلاغياً في الشعر العربي القديم” (A Book like a Painted Garden: Script as Rhetorical Symbol in Classical Arabic Poetry) (talk in Arabic)
- University of Chicago, Center for Middle East Studies (CMES) Oct. 2020
- “[Careers in Literary Translation: Challenges and Opportunities](#),” career talk for MA students
- Middle East Studies Association Oct. 2020
- “A Little World Made Cunningly: Al-Ma`arri and the Verse of Cosmic Principle”
  - Panel on “Metapoesis in Pre-Modern Arabic Poetry,” organized by David Larsen (NYU)
- Freie Universität Berlin, European Research Council (ERC) May 2019
- “Al-Ma`arri’s Anxious Menagerie: *The Epistle of the Horse and the Mule*”  
-Presentation plus seminar, “Animals, Adab, and Fictivity,” for ERC project AnonymClassic with Beatrice Gruendler (principle investigator) and Matthew Keegan, Freie Universität Berlin
- Princeton Institute for Advanced Study, Casa Árabe (Córdoba, Spain) Apr. 2018
- “‘Impartially Have I Judged’: Contests of Poetry and *Adab* in the Medieval Islamic Court”
  - Conference on *The Majlis Revisited: Inter- and Intra-religious and Cross-Cultural Disputations*
- University of Southern Denmark, Center for Medieval Literature June 2016
- “Literary Self-Defense: The *Zajr al-nabih* of al-Ma`arri,” conference on self-commentary

## Academic Panels Convened or Chaired

---

- American Oriental Society** **Various**
- Organizer and presenter* Mar. 2021
- *Panel Title:* “Literature II”
  - *Discussant:* Avigail Noy (University of Texas at Austin)
  - *Co-panelists:* Jennifer Tobkin (George Washington University), Nicola Carpentieri (University of Connecticut), Ailin Qian (Southern University of Science and Technology)
  - *Paper Title:* “Al-Ma`arri’s Anxious Menagerie: *The Epistle of the Horse and the Mule*”
- Chair and discussant (solicited)* Mar. 2021
- *Panel Title:* “Poetry I”
  - *Discussant:* Kevin Blankinship
  - *Panelists:* Catherine Ambler (Columbia University), David Larsen (NYU), Avigail Noy (University of Texas at Austin), Azeem Malik (UCLA)
- Organizer and presenter* Mar. 2019
- *Panel Title:* “The Maghrib”
  - *Discussant:* Paul Walker (University of Chicago)
  - *Co-panelists:* Mohamad Ballan (SUNY Stony Brook), Andrea Castonguay (Notre Dame), Arshad Hadjirin (Cambridge), Nick Harris (UPenn)
  - *Paper Title:* “A New, Andalusí Witness of al-Ma`arri’s Poetic Self-Commentary *Daw’ al-Saqt* (The Light of *The Tinder-Spark*)”

## Other Conferences

- American Literary Translators Association (organizer, presenter) Nov. 2020
- *Panel Title:* “The Arabic Translation Challenge”
  - *Discussant:* Kevin Blankinship
  - *Panelists:* Marcia Qualey (ArabLit.org), Rachel Schine (CU Boulder), Youssef Rakha
- Middle East Studies Association (organizer, presenter) Nov. 2017
- *Panel Title:* “Literary Genealogy in Medieval and Modern Iberia and North Africa”
  - *Discussant:* Suzanne Stetkevych (Georgetown)
  - *Co-panelists:* Gretchen Head (Yale), Nizar Hermes (UVA), Enass Khansa (AU Beirut)
  - *Paper Title:* “Al-Ma`arri’s Menagerie in the Maghreb”

## Individual Academic Conference Papers (unsolicited)

---

- School of Abbasid Studies (University of Oxford) planned for July 2022
- “Explain Yourself! Al-Ma`arri and the Art of Self-Defense in Classical Arabic Literature”
- American University of Beirut (Lebanon) planned for June 2021
- “As Barren as Mother Eve: Why Some Poems End Better than Others, According to Classical Arabic Critics”
  - Conference, “How to End Things in Arabic Literature,” AU Beirut and Uni Bamberg
- Medieval Association of the Midwest Oct. 2019
- “Banu Sasan: A Medieval Arab Underworld Society”
- International Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, MI) May 2018
- “Repenting of Poetry: Al-Farazdaq’s Notice to the Devil,” Great Lakes Adiban Society
- International Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, MI) May 2018
- “A Form Most Foul: Transgression and Shapeshifting in Arabic and Icelandic Popular Belief”
- American Academy of Religion, Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Region Mar. 2018
- “Repenting of Poetry: Al-Farazdaq’s Notice to the Devil”
- University of Colorado Boulder, The Mediterranean Seminar Apr. 2017
- “The Mediterranean and the Dream of Comparative Literature”
- University of Seville (Spain), Three Cultures Foundation Nov. 2016
- “A Persian *Jarcha* by Ibn Sana’ al-Mulk,” conference on Heritage of Al-Andalus: Iberia-Persia
- American University of Beirut, Arab-German Young Academy May 2016
- “Veganism and the Ethics of Medieval Authorship in Ma`arri’s Personal Correspondence”
- American Oriental Society Mar. 2016
- “Al-Ma`arri’s Imitation as Literary Reading of the Qur’an”
- American Comparative Literature Association Mar. 2016
- “Al-Ma`arri as Signifier of Modernity in Neoclassical Arabic Literature”
- Middle East Studies Association Nov. 2015
- “A Second Matching Brocade: Medieval Theologians on Emulation of the Qur’an”
- American Comparative Literature Association Mar. 2015
- “Did al-Ma`arri Really Try to Imitate the Qur’an?”

- American Oriental Society Mar. 2015
- “Absent Commentary and the ‘Qur’an’ of Syrian Poet Abu'l-`Ala' al-Ma`arri”
- Modern Language Association Jan. 2013
- “‘Tell Me Humorous Anecdotes of Misers’: Rendering the Kitab al-Bukhala' Into English”

## GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS & FUNDRAISING

### External

- University of Arizona, *Step Up for CASA fundraising campaign* Feb. 2021-Present
- Member of 8-person fundraising committee to anchor the Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) program. Campaign goal: \$3 million in three years
  - My targeted work with directors of university Middle East centers led to *Director's Circle*, a plan for larger donations from businesses and universities
  - Emails, calls, thank-you notes to donors; maintain fundraising website page
- Independent Research Fund Denmark (DFF) Project 1 Grant (\$433,000) Apr. 2019-Present
- Three-year funding for research on comparative self-commentary (Latin, Greek, Arabic)
  - Co-authored with Aglae Pizzone (principle investigator) and Lars Mortensen
  - *Project: Medieval Self-Commentaries Beyond Europe: A Transcultural Perspective*
- American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS) Research Grant (\$2,250) Mar. 2019
- Funding for short-term archive work in Tunisia, fall 2019
  - *Project: Al-Ma`arri's Admirers in the Maghrib: Classical Arabic Literature East and West*
- American Institute for Maghrib Studies (AIMS) Jeanne Jeffers Mrad Award (\$150) Sept. 2017
- Travel award to annual Middle East Studies Association (MESA) meeting (Washington, DC)  
*Presentation Title: Al-Ma`arri's Menagerie in the Maghrib*
- University of Southern Denmark, HUM SEED Research Grant (\$12,750) Mar. 2017
- Short-term research grant, University of Southern Denmark (with Aglae Pizzone)
  - *Proposed Project: Medieval Self-Commentary East and West (Arabic and Greek)*
- Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Award (DDRA) (\$33,500) 2016-2017
- Full-Year (12 months) PhD research grant to Morocco (Rabat, Tangier, Tetouan)
  - *Proposed Project: Recovering African Literature in Arabic: Al-Ma`arri in North Africa*
- Middlebury College Betty Jones Fellowship (\$8,500) June-Aug. 2015
- Merit-based fellowship, full tuition and stipend, Summer Arabic School
- Middlebury College Betty Jones Fellowship (\$7,500) June-Aug. 2014
- Merit-based fellowship, full tuition and stipend, Summer Arabic School
- Middlebury College, Kathryn Davis Fellows For Peace (\$8,500) June-Aug. 2013
- Competitive fellowship for peace through language, Middlebury Summer Arabic School
- Foreign Language/ Area Studies (FLAS) Grant (\$7,500) June-Aug. 2012
- U.S. Department of Education grant, Middlebury Arabic School
- Foreign Language/ Area Studies (FLAS) Grant (\$7,500) June-Aug. 2011
- U.S. Department of Education grant, Persian study, University of Wisconsin
- University of California Santa Barbara, Conference Travel Grant (\$500) Apr. 2011
- Travel grant to UC Santa Barbara Islamic Studies Conference
  - *Presentation Title: The Fate of the Soul in Abu Ya`qub al-Sijistani's Thought*

- Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) I (\$40,000) 2009-2010
- Full-year fellowship, advanced Arabic training, American University in Cairo
- Foreign Language/ Area Studies (FLAS) Grant (\$7,500) June-Aug. 2008
- U.S. Department of Education grant, Middlebury Arabic School

## Internal

---

- University of Utah, Department of World Languages and Cultures (\$1,100) Sept. 2017
- Travel grant to annual International Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, Michigan)
  - *Presentation Title*: Repenting of Poetry: Al-Farazdaq's Notice to the Devil
- University of Chicago Humanities Division Fellowship (\$50,000/year X 5 years) 2010-2015
- Graduate Aid Initiative (GAI) PhD Fellowship, full tuition, stipend and insurance
- University of Chicago Graduate Council, Conference Travel Grant (\$500) Nov. 2015
- Travel grant to annual Middle East Studies Association (MESA) conference
  - *Presentation Title*: Medieval Theologians on Emulation of the Qur'an
- University of Chicago Humanities Division, Conference Travel Grant (\$500) Jan. 2013
- Travel grant to Modern Language Association (MLA) annual conference
  - *Presentation Title*: Rendering the *Kitab al-Bukhala'* Into English

## GRANTS & FELLOWSHIPS (DECLINED)

- Brigham Young University, Kennedy Center for International Studies (\$1,000) Nov. 2018
- Travel grant to Mediterranean Studies Association meeting (Rethymnon, Greece)
  - *Presentation Title*: Holy Terror: Byzantium in the Eyes of an 11<sup>th</sup>-Century Arab Poet
- Foreign Language/ Area Studies (FLAS) Grant (\$7,500) June-Aug. 2015
- U.S. Department of Education grant, Middlebury Arabic School
- Foreign Language/ Area Studies (FLAS) Grant (\$7,500) June-Aug. 2014
- U.S. Department of Education grant, Middlebury Arabic School
- Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) II (\$40,000) 2013-2014
- Full-year fellowship, independent graduate research, intensive language study
  - *Proposed Project*: Abbasid-Era Poetry (750-1258 AD) and Arabic Literary Theory
- Foreign Language/ Area Studies (FLAS) Grant (\$7,500) June-Aug. 2013
- U.S. Department of Education grant, Middlebury Arabic School

## MEDIA APPEARANCES

- "Arabic Dictionaries and Glossaries: A User's Guide," *Bottled Petrichor Podcast*
- "المعلمات لجيل الألفية: إعادة إحياء للشعر العربي القديم" (The Mu'allaqat for Millennials: Reviving Ancient Arabic Poetry), interview in Arabic with *Raseef22*, 27 March 2021
- "[Millennials Invited to Rediscover Timeless Literature of Arabia](#)," *Arab News*, 12 March 2021
- "[Arabic Professor Dr. Kevin Blankinship: Arabic Dialects, Poetry, and Tips for Learners](#)" *Interview with translator and media professional Shannon E. Maher*, 22 January 2021



- [“A Spring of Classical Arabic Poetry: A Twelve-Part Series with Kevin Blankinship,”](#) *Abbasid History Podcast*, 2 January 2021-Present (biweekly podcast episodes)
- [“إعادة إحياء المعانيات العشر لجيل الألفية”](#) (Reviving the Ten Mu’allaqat Poems for Millennials), *Thmanyah Magazine*, 18 December 2020
- [“What Do You Know About ‘The Mu’allaqat for Millennials?’”](#) *Sekka Magazine*, December 2020
- [“Michael Cooperson in Conversation with Kevin Blankinship,”](#) *Words are Bridges* (Jaipur Literature Festival digital series), 5 November 2020.
- [“‘History is Better When it’s Alive’: Professor Kevin Blankinship on Public Humanities as Ambassadorship for the Past,”](#) *BYU Humanities Center*, 5 October 2020.
- *The Los Angeles Review of Books* showcases essay by Kevin Blankinship, professor of Arabic,” *BYU Humanities College Newsletter*, 28 September 2020.
- [“New Arabic Translation Challenges are Published Each Tuesday with Roundups on Saturday,”](#) *Bulaq Podcast*, Episode 49: Locked-In Lit, 22 May 2020.
- [“Independent Research Fund Denmark Awards Kevin Blankinship and Colleagues Substantial Research Grant,”](#) *BYU Humanities College Newsletter*, 31 March 2020.
- [“Dr. Kevin Blankinship on the Life and Works of Poet-philosopher ‘Heretic’ Abū al-‘Alā’ al-Ma‘arrī \(d. 1058\),”](#) *Abbasid History Podcast*, 29 March 2020 (interview series about classical Islamic history and civilization with academics, archivists, artists, and more)
- “A research trio including professor of Arabic Kevin M. Blankinship (BA ’07) won a \$430,000 grant from the Independent Research Fund Denmark to study writings from the medieval period at the Royal Library of Copenhagen,” *BYU Magazine*, July 2019.
- [“CML’s Aglae Pizzone Awarded Research Project 1 Grant from Independent Research Fund Denmark,”](#) *Centre for Medieval Literature* (University of Southern Denmark), 13 May 2019
- [“Poetry and Prose Lecture with Professor Kevin Blankinship,”](#) *Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center Newsletter*, April 3, 2019.
- [“Fulbright-Hays Fellow Spotlight: Kevin Blankinship,”](#) *UChicagoGRAD Digest*, May 16, 2018.
- Chloé Conrich, [“U of U Professor Hosts Lecture on Arabic Language and Culture for Utah Humanities Book Festival,”](#) *The Signpost, Weber State University*, 29 September 2017.

## TEACHING

### Brigham Young University

IHUM 242	Humanities of the Islamic World	Various (to present)
ARAB 495R (II), 411	Arabic Texts Seminar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Adab: education, society, writing</i></li> </ul>	Various (to present) Spring 2021
ARAB 495R (I)	Advanced Arabic Writing	Winter 2020
ARAB 425	Classical Texts in Arabic	
ARAB 362	Classical Arabic Literature in Translation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Arabic Literature of Islamic Spain</i></li> </ul>	Various (to present) TBD
MESA 398R/ ARAB 490	Directed Readings in Middle East Studies/Arabic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature</i></li> </ul>	Various (to present) Spring 2021

ARAB 311R	Third-Year Arabic Conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Qur'an, Text and Context</i></li> <li>• <i>Arabic Language House Dinner Conversation</i></li> </ul>	Various (to present) Fall 2020 Fall 2019
ARAB 101, 102	First-year Arabic	Various (to present)

### Middlebury Summer Arabic School, Mills College

ARAB 1B	First-year Arabic, Level 1B	Summer 2019
---------	-----------------------------	-------------

### University of Utah

ARAB 4050	The Qur'an, Text and Context	Spring 2018
ARAB 3020	Third-year Arabic II	
ARAB 4040	Advanced Arabic Writing	Fall 2017
ARAB 3010	Third-year Arabic I	
ARAB 2010	Second-year Arabic I	

### University of Chicago

SOSC 19051	North African Culture and Society (solo instructor)	Spring 2017
ARAB 30202	Advanced Modern Standard Arabic (teaching assistant)	Winter 2014
ARAB 30303	Advanced Classical Arabic (teaching assistant)	Spring 2013
ISLM 30601	Islamic Thought and Literature (teaching assistant)	Fall 2013
ARAB 20101-2-3	Second-year Modern Standard Arabic (teaching assistant)	2012-2013

## ADVISING

### Graduate Research (as reader)

Zinnira Sheikh, MA Islamic Studies, Hamad bin Khalifa University (Qatar)	Sept. 2020-Feb. 2021
--	----------------------

## SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

### National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Apr. 2021-Present

*Grant Application Reviewer, NEH Fellowships Program and NEH Summer Stipends Program*

- Read, review 25-30 applications per cycle (fields: Middle East Studies, Middle East literature)
- Write evaluation reports, assess applications in coordination with other panelists

### National Book Critics Circle (NBCC) Nov. 2019-Present

*Reading Committee Member, John Leonard Award for Best First Book*

- Nominate books for selection, read and vote on best book from 5-7 finalists

### Journal Article Manuscript Referee Aug. 2019-Present

*International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES), Journal of Islamic Ethics (Brill), Publications of the Modern Language Association (PMLA), Middle Eastern Literatures (MEL), Al-Abhath: Journal of the American University of Beirut, Annales Islamologiques, The Hispanic Review (University of Pennsylvania), Enarratio: Journal of the Medieval Association of the Midwest*

### Book Manuscript Referee June 2018-Present

*Brill Publishers, Routledge, Palgrave Macmillan, Gorgias Press*

## University of Utah

---

J. Willard Marriott Library; Department of World Languages and Cultures June 2017-Present

- Assess and promote Arabic manuscripts, papyri: draft collaborative grant proposals

## SERVICE TO THE INSTITUTION

### Brigham Young University

---

Middle East Studies/Arabic, Department of Asian & Near Eastern Langs. July 2020-Present  
*Consulting Editor, Al-Buhuth Student Journal for Middle Eastern Studies*

- Edit Arabic-language submissions, work with students, editors to provide feedback

Departments of History, Political Science, Asian & Near Eastern Langs. Mar. 2020-Present  
*Chair, Publicity and Promotion, BYU Fall 2021 Conference on Modern Islamic World*

- General: Generate panel topics and conference schedule, invite speakers, coordinate with steering committee members, university administration. Total budget: \$100,000
- Publicity: press releases, social media and event website, posters and promotional material

Foreign Language Student Residence (FLSR) Aug. 2019-Dec. 2020  
*Faculty Supervisor, Arabic Language Immersion Housing*

- Lead weekly discussions in Arabic, advise resident heads, FLSR administrative staff

International Vice President's Office Nov. 2018-Present  
*Member, Advisory Council for Jordan Affairs*

- Inform, advise faculty and staff about in-country programming, local conditions, concerns

### University of Chicago

---

Center for Middle East Studies (CMES) June 2016-May 2017  
*Lead Co-Organizer, Middle East History and Theory (MEHAT) Conference*

- Reviewed 100+ abstracts, formed 18+ panels, secured funding, managed \$7,500+ budget

Division of the Humanities Oct. 2014-June 2015  
*Member, Student Advisory Committee (SAC), Dean of Students*

- Developed policies to increase academic, financial support for 1,000+ students

Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Sept. 2014-Apr. 2015  
*Graduate Student Liaison, Modern Arabic Literature Hiring Search Committee*

- Reviewed candidates, advertised lectures, facilitated student views, wrote reports

Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations Sept.-Dec 2013  
*Student Coordinator, Visiting Lecture Series*

- Planned, executed guest lectures, coordinated travel, food, social events, facilitated feedback

Student Government Graduate Council Jan.-June 2013  
*Representative, Division of the Humanities*

- Discussed, voted on funding proposals (\$100,000+); worked on student mentoring initiatives

Center for Middle East Studies (CMES) Sept. 2011-June 2012  
*Director, Arabic Circle Weekly Lecture Series*

- Coordinated, promoted schedule of 30+ speakers, recorded talks, maintained website

## SERVICE TO SOCIETY

### Public Lectures

- Taylorsville Public Library (Taylorsville, UT) (upcoming) 4 May 2021
- “[The 1,001 Arabian Nights: Talking Fish, Drug-filled Polo Sticks, and Other Serious Matters](#)”
  - Public education lecture for librarians, teachers, and the general public
- AMIDEAST Rabat, Morocco; National Security Language Initiative for Youth (NSLI-Y) 18 Dec. 2018
- “My Journey with Arabic,” informal careers talk, high school and gap-year Arabic students
- Utah Humanities Book Festival; Utah Symphony and Opera (Ogden, UT) 21 Sept. 2017
- “Imagination, Orient, and the *1,001 Arabian Nights*,” public lecture for Utah Humanities

## TRANSLATION & CONSULTING WORK

### Expert Witness

Nov. 2020-Present

- Provide expertise on Arab/Middle Eastern culture and society for family law cases
- Firms worked with: *Utah Legal Services*

### Independent Consulting

Oct. 2019-Present

- Provide Middle East and North Africa expertise to clients (Fortune 500 companies, NGOs, law firms, public sector agencies), as part of global knowledge-sharing platform
- Firms worked with: *AlphaSights, GlobalWonks Consulting*

### Freelance Arabic-English Translator

Sept. 2009-Present

- Past clients: *Marhaba Language Expertise, University of Chicago Law School/Neubauer Collegium, King Saud University, Christian Solidarity International (CSI), Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), The Tafsir Project (Office of the Grand Mufti of Egypt)*

## AFFILIATIONS

National Book Critics Circle; Rock Canyon Poets; The Society of Classical Poets; Heterodox Academy; American Oriental Society; Middle East Studies Association; American Institute for Maghreb Studies; Middle East Medievalists; International Congress on Medieval Studies

## LANGUAGES

- *Reading and speaking:* Arabic (Classical, Modern Standard, Jordanian, Egyptian, and Moroccan Colloquial), Portuguese, Spanish
- *Research proficiency:* Persian, French, German, Latin

## ACADEMIC INTERESTS

### *Arabic Language and Literature*

- Premodern poetry and poetics, especially of the Islamic West (Iberia and North Africa); rhetoric, grammar, rhyme, meter; dialect literatures; Arabic manuscripts and varia

### *Comparative Literature*

- Arabic literary history, e.g. genre, reception, translation, comparative poetics, semiotics, literary pragmatics; and textual cultures, e.g. authorship, commentaries, textual variance

*Religious Studies*

- Ethics of writing, literature and philosophy, moral status of poetry in Islam, intellectual foundations of literary commentary, Qur'an and literature, wisdom and ascetic literature

