

# Kevin Blankinship

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## SUMMARY

I am a Middle East expert, and my mission is to bring classical Islamic civilization to a wider public through scholarship, teaching, journalism, translation, events, publicity and promotion.

## PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Brigham Young University (Provo, UT), Asian and Near Eastern Languages <i>Assistant Professor, Arabic Language and Literature</i> Graduate faculty status (approval to advise MA and PhD students)	Aug. 2018-Present Fall 2021-Present
New Lines Magazine (Washington, DC) <i>Contributing Editor</i>	Sept. 2021-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

## 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>Al-Abhath: Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, American University of Beirut</i> • "As Barren as Mother Eve: Why Some Poems End Worse than Others, According to Premodern Arabic Critics" (solicited)	TBD
<i>Routledge Companion to Arabic Poetry</i> (ed. Suzanne Stetkevych, Huda Fakhreddine) • "Our Goods Restored to Us: Rare, Spurious, and Forgotten Abbasid Poetry in Iberian and North African <i>Adab</i> Anthologies" (solicited)	TBD
<i>Oxford Bibliographies</i> • "Classical Arabic Poetry" (solicited)	Accepted, scheduled publication Fall 2022
<i>Philological Encounters</i> • " <a href="#">Self-Commentary as Defensive Strategy in the Works of John Tzetzes (d. 1180 CE) and Abū l-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī (d. 1057 CE)</a> " (co-authored with Aglae Pizzone)	Online Aug. 2022; Print 2023
<i>Journal of Abbasid Studies</i> 8, no. 1 (pages 142-171) • " <a href="#">Al-Ma`arri's Anxious Menagerie: The Epistle of the Horse and the Mule</a> "	2021

- Religions* 11, no. 8, special issue: Animals in Islam (pages 1-20) (solicited) 2020
- [“Suffering the Sons of Eve: Animal Ethics in al-Ma`arri’s Epistle of the Horse and the Mule”](#)
- Journal of the American Oriental Society* 140, no. 1 (pages 19-37) 2020
- [“Giggers, Greeners, Peyserts, and Palliards: Rendering Slang in al-Bukhala of al-Jahiz”](#)
- Insatiable Appetite: Food as a Cultural Signifier in the Middle East and Beyond* (Brill, 2019), ed. Bilal Orfali, Kirill Dmitriev, Julia Hauser (pages 260-291) 2019
- [“Missionary and Heretic: Debating Veganism in the Medieval Islamic World,”](#) pp. 260-91
- Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 31, no. 3 (pages 253-271) 2019
- [“Al-Ma`arri’s Esteem in the Islamic West: A Preliminary Overview”](#)

## Academic Book Reviews

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- Journal of the American Oriental Society* planned publication 2022
- Work reviewed: Jokha Alharthi, *The Body in Arabic Love Poetry: The `Udhri Tradition* (Edinburgh University Press, 2021) (solicited)
- Journal of Arabic Literature* planned publication 2022
- Work reviewed: R. Kevin Lacey, *All the World is Awry: al-Ma`arri and the Luzumiyat Revisited* (Syracuse University Press, 2021) (solicited)
- Middle Eastern Literatures* Nov. 2022
- Work reviewed: [Ibn `Arabi, \*The Translator of Desires\*](#) (trans. Michael Sells, Princeton University Press, 2021) (solicited)
- Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)* Aug. 2022
- Work reviewed: Emily Selove and Geert Jan van Gelder, trans. [The Portrait of Abu l-Qasim al-Baghdadi al-Tamimi](#) (Gibb Memorial Trust, 2021) (solicited)
- Al-Abhath: Journal of the American University of Beirut* 62-63, pp. 148-154 Sept. 2018
- Work reviewed: James T. Monroe, trans., *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)

## Selected Journalism (full list: [KBlankinship.com](http://KBlankinship.com))

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### *New Lines Magazine* (as associate editor)

- “Medieval Self-Commentary” planned publication Nov. 2022
- [“What Happens if You Meet a Jinn?”](#) 31 Oct. 2022
- [“New Film is like Aladdin for Adults”](#) 25 Aug. 2022
- [“The Mad Prophet of the Airwaves”](#) 15 Apr. 2022
- [“Women Warriors of the Early Muslim World”](#) 25 Aug. 2021
- [“The Seven Hanging Odes of Mecca”](#) 28 May 2021

### *Other* (as contributing author)

- BYU Humanities Center Blog* Nov. 2022
- [“Golden Odes and Ruby-Red Letters: Why Classical Arabic Literature Matters Today”](#)
- Lapham’s Quarterly* 31 Oct. 2022
- [“The House of His Desires: The Life and Legacy of al-Hallaj”](#)
  - Featured by *Arts & Letters Daily*, a web portal of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* linking to news stories, features, and reviews from across the humanities, 5 Nov 2022

- Aeon Magazine* 11 Mar. 2022
- “[Tales of Two Jackals](#),” about Islamic animal fables in *Kalila and Dimna*
- The Los Angeles Review of Books* 9 Jan. 2022
- “[Feast and Fight: A New Adaptation of Samak the Ayyar](#)”
- Foreign Policy Magazine* 1 Aug. 2021
- “[In Alaa al-Aswany’s New Novel, Dictatorship Keeps Winning: ‘Republic of False Truths’ defers any happy ending to the Arab Spring](#)”
  - Featured in *Enterprise Press*, a widely-read Egyptian news briefing, 2 August 2021; and *The Business Standard*, an Indian English language daily newspaper, 3 August 2021
- مجلة سرد أدبي الإلكترونية (Literary Narrative Online) 28 June 2021
- “[في البدء كانت ... البداية](#)” (“In the Beginning Was ... the Beginning,” essay in Arabic)
- Kirkus Reviews* Oct. 2020-June 2021
- Freelance writer, non-bylined reviews
- Prospect Magazine UK* 14 Apr. 2021
- “[What a Free-thinking Medieval Muslim Can Teach Us About Animal Welfare](#)” (solicited)
- 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
- Al-Jumhuriyah English* 21 Aug. 2020
- “[Jinn and Tonic: Medieval Islam’s Celebrity Doctors](#)”
- 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)
- The Millions* 26 Nov. 2019
- “[Lost in Translation: Classical Arabic Literature](#),” essay about current trends in classical Arabic literature in translation; 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
- The Atlantic* 9 Dec. 2018
- “[The Benefits of a Foreign-Language Tattoo](#)”; featured in [The Tattoo Forum](#)

### Selected Literary Translations & Original Poetry (full list: [KBlankinship.com](http://KBlankinship.com))

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- Marhaba Language Expertise* 1 June 2022
- “[Flight of the Camel](#),” joint translation with Melanie Magidow of a classical Arabic ode of praise by celebrated wine poet Abu Nuwas (d. 814 AD)
- The Road Not Taken* Spring 2022
- “[Grad Student’s Lament](#)” (original poem)
- Pulsebeat*
- “[Bonnevillle](#)” (original poem) May 2022

- Better Than Starbucks* May 2022
- “[Cancer Scare](#)” (original poem)
- Wine Cellar Press* 7 Jan. 2022
- “[Lazaruslike](#)” (original poem)
- 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
  - Reviewed in [Asymptote Journal](#), [Middle East Eye](#)
- ArabLit.org, Arabic Translation Challenge* (host and curator) May 2020-Oct. 2020
- Tuesdays I posted an Arabic text to translate, then invited translations in any language. Saturdays I did a highlights roundup; two semiannual writeups of results in *Arablit Quarterly*.
- The Society of Classical Poets*
- “[My Sickness is a Mistress](#)” (original poem) 31 Aug. 2020
- Blue Unicorn* Spring 2020
- “[Free Enterprise](#)” (original poem)
- Lighten Up Online* June 2020
- “[To Arabic, an Abortive Dear Jane](#)” (original poem)
- Gingerbread House* 30 Nov. 2019
- “[Bourgeois Prometheus](#)” (original poem)
- Jadaliyya* 20 Sept. 2015
- “[An Elegy by al-Ma`arri](#),” Arabic-to-English translation plus introduction

## Blurbs, Introductions, Afterwords

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- The Tale of Princess Fatima* (trans. Melanie Magidow, Penguin Classics) (**blurb**) Aug. 2021
- “The iron Valkyrie Princess Fatima joins a whole cast of female champions out for blood and honor in this fluidly translated epic that is part battlefield saga, part *chanson de geste*, part family drama, and all heroine’s journey, one worthy of inclusion with the great warrior women classics.”
- Barra and Zaman: Reading Egyptian Modernity in Shadi Abdel Salam’s The Mummy* (Youssef Rakha, Palgrave Macmillan) (**blurb**) Dec. 2020
- “Egyptian novelist Youssef Rakha captures the personal relationship with art that lies beneath all scholarly endeavor, but which too often gets lost in academic analysis. The aphoristic prose recalls Derrida and the sad-faced irony of Vonnegut is never far away. Nezar Andary’s foreword adds to the effect by calling up veils and cocoons to imagine how audiences get ‘wrapped up’ in cinema. A thoughtful and moving work of creative nonfiction.”

## Collaborative Projects

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- Al-Ma`arri Poems Set to Music (lyricist and translator) Oct. 2020-Present
- Collaboration with composer Will 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

## ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

### Invited Academic Solo Lectures

- Renaissance Weekend (invitation-only ideas festival, Charleston, SC) planned for Dec. 2022
- “Deep Dive” solo lecture: “Emotions and Diseases of the Soul in Islamicate Literatures”
  - “Cornerstone” solo lecture: “What Americans Don’t Understand About Islam and Arab Cultures”
  - Panel moderator: “Is the Middle East More Combustible than Ever?”
- Brigham Young University, Dept. of Asian and Near Eastern Languages (Provo, UT) 3 Nov. 2022
- “The Medieval Islamic Bestiary”
- Georgetown University (Washington, DC) 15 Sept. 2022
- “Abbasid Arabic Literature,” guest lecture, Islamic studies course with Prof. Jonathan Brown
- University of Brasilia (Brasilia, Brazil) 1 Aug. 2022
- “‘Não mais roube da natureza: Animais e o veganismo nas obras árabes clássicas de Abu al-`Ala’ al-Ma`arri (m. 449/1057)” (lecture in Portuguese, “‘Steal no More from Nature’: Animals and Veganism in the Classical Arabic Works of Abu al-`Ala’ al-Ma`arri”)
- University of Chicago, Center for Middle East Studies (CMES, Chicago, IL) May 2021
- “*كِتَابٌ كَوْشَنِي الرَّوْضِ: 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
- “*الحيوان في الميزان: رسالة الصاهل والشاحج*” (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 Andalusí 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

- New York University, Abu Dhabi Campus (Abu Dhabi, UAE) planned for 28 Sept. 2023
- “A Debutante Ball for Classical Arabic Literature”
  - Panel, “Futures of LAL,” Library of Arabic Literature (NYU Press) 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration

- Middle East Studies Association (Denver, Colorado) planned for 3 Dec. 2022
- “A Banu Sasan Underworld Poem by Nasrid Andalusi Jurist, Umar al-Malaqi (d. after 1440 CE)”
  - Panel on “Classical Matters: Periodization, Diversity, and Inventiveness” (chaired by Muhsin al-Musawi, with papers by Nizar Hermes, Suzanne Stetkevych, Huda Fakhreddine)
- Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich (Germany) May 2022
- “Al-Ma`arri’s Defense of Veganism in Letters to al-Mu’ayyad fi al-Din al-Shirazi”
  - European Research Council-funded conference, “Animals in Islamic Theology and Literature” (dir. Peter Adamson)
- University of California, Berkeley (Berkeley, CA) Apr. 2022
- “A Banu Sasan Underworld Poem by Nasrid Andalusi Jurist, Umar al-Malaqi (d. after 1440 CE)”
  - [Symposium](#) on Islamic Spain and North Africa in honor of James T. Monroe
- American Oriental Society (Boston, MA) Mar. 2022
- “An Evening of Poetry,” original translations from Arabic poetry (one of five readers)
- The Royal Swedish Academy (Stockholm, Sweden) 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”
- National Book Critics Circle (NBCC) Nov. 2021
- “[The Art of Reviewing Literature in Translation](#),” panel discussion in honor of the new NBCC Greg Barrios Book in Translation Prize
- Frankfurt Book Fair, Sheikh Zayed Book Award (Frankfurt, Germany) Oct. 2021
- “[The Untapped Potential of Arabic Literature](#),” Zoom panel on untranslated Arabic works (first segment of this longer [video](#))
  - Moderated by Porter Anderson, editor-in-chief of Publishing Perspectives Magazine
  - Covered in [The National](#) (English language newspaper in Abu Dhabi, UAE), 22 October 2021
- Saudi Arabia Ministry of Culture and the Adab Foundation Apr. 2021
- “[كتاب كوشى الرّوض: الخطّ رمزاً بلاغياً في الشّعر العربيّ 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”
- 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
- 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”
- 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

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### American Oriental Society

Various

*Co-convener and presenter (with David Larsen, NYU)*

Mar. 2022

- *Panel Title:* “Literature: In Memory of Jaroslav Stetkevych”
- *Discussant:* Bruce Fudge (University of Geneva)
- *Panelists:* Jennifer Tobkin (George Washington U), Erez Naaman (American University), David Larsen (NYU), Beatrice Gruendler (FU Berlin), Julie Ershadi (UCLA), Raashid Goyal (Cornell), Yusuf Unal (Emory), Mina Yazdani (Eastern Kentucky U)
- *Paper Title:* “As Barren as Mother Eve: Why Some Poems End Better than Others, According to Classical Arabic Critics

*Chair and discussant (solicited)*

Mar. 2022

- *Panel Title:* “Non-Muslim Communities Under Islam”
- *Discussant:* Kevin Blankinship
- *Panelists:* Thomas Benfey (Oxford), Kayla Dang (Yale), Andrew Magnusson (U of Central Oklahoma), Charles Häberl (Rutgers), Kevin van Bladel (Yale), David Hollenberg (University of Oregon)

*Convener 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)

*Convener 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, Andalusi Witness of al-Ma`arri’s Poetic Self-Commentary *Daw’ al-Saqt* (The Light of *The Tinder-Spark*)”

### Other Conferences

American Literary Translators Association (convener, 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 (convener, 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)

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- American University of Beirut (Lebanon) 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 work with Middle East centers led to “Director’s Circle” plan for institutional gifts
- 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
- 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

### 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

### Radio, Podcasts & Videocasts

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- [“Bedouin Poetry and Culture through the Ages, with Marcel Kurpershoek”](#) | *New Lines Magazine* podcast, 20 May 2022
- [“What Happened in Baghdad, episode 3: Al-Ma`arri”](#) | *What Happened in Baghdad* podcast, 18 May 2022
- [“A Life in Translation, with William Maynard Hutchins”](#) | *New Lines Magazine* podcast, 6 May 2022
- [“Poetry Still Happens,”](#) *RadioACTIVE* on KRCL 90.9 Salt Lake City, Utah, 25 August 2021
- [“A Spring of Classical Arabic Poetry: A Twelve-Part Series with Kevin Blankinship,”](#) *Abbasid History Podcast*, 2 January 2021-15 December 2021 (semiannual podcast episodes)
- [“Arabic Professor Dr. Kevin Blankinship: Arabic Dialects, Poetry, and Tips for Learners”](#) *Interview with translator and media professional Shannon E. Maher*, 22 January 2021
- [“Michael Cooperson in Conversation with Kevin Blankinship,”](#) *Words are Bridges* (Jaipur Literature Festival), 5 November 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)

### Written Media Coverage

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- [“Rediscovered Poetry Inspires New Music”](#) | BYU College of Humanities, 16 August 2022

- [“Moneera al-Ghadeer reviews \*The Mu`allaqat for Millennials: Pre-Islamic Arabian Golden Odes\* translated by Kevin Blankinship et al”](#) | *Asymptote Journal*, 21 April 2022
- [“National Book Critics Circle in the U.S. Announces ‘Greg Barrios Book in Translation Prize’, ”](#) *ArabLit.org*, 4 November 2021
- [“المعلقات 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
- [“إعادة إحياء المعلقات 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
- [“‘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
- “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 Conorch, [“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	Bi-annually (to present)
MESA 250	Introduction to Islam	Various (to present)
ARAB 495R (II), 411	Arabic Texts Seminar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Qur’an, Hadith, Stories of the Prophets, Moral Tales</i> Spring 2022</li> <li>• <i>Adab: Education, Society, Writing</i> Spring 2021</li> </ul>	Various (to present)
ARAB 495R (I)	Advanced Arabic Written Composition	Various (to present)
ARAB 425	Classical Texts in Arabic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Medieval Islamic Bestiary</i> Winter 2023</li> </ul>	Various (to present)

ARAB 362	Classical Arabic Literature in Translation • <i>Arabic Literature of Islamic Spain</i>	Various (to present) TBD
MESA 398R ANTHR 694R	Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature (directed readings) Islamic Thought, Religion in North Africa (directed readings)	Spring 2021 Fall 2022
ARAB 311R	Third-Year Arabic Conversation • <i>The Qur'an, Text and Context</i> • <i>Arabic Language House Dinner Conversation</i>	Various (to present) <i>Fall 2020</i> <i>Fall 2019</i>
ARAB 101, 102	First-year Arabic	Various (to present)

### Middlebury Summer Arabic School, Mills College

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

## ADVISING

### Graduate Research (as committee member)

Clayton van Woerkom, MA Anthropology, Brigham Young University	Sept. 2021-Present
• "Negotiating Identity in the Rural Muslim Community of Gien, France"	
Caleb Deppermann, MA Comparative Studies, Brigham Young University	May 2021-Present
• "Christ in the Gospels and the Qur'an: The Clay Birds Miracle Episode"	

### Undergraduate Research (as primary advisor)

Garrett Maxwell, BA Comparative Literature and Arabic	Feb. 2022-Present
• BYU Humanities Grant project (\$1,200 for mentored research): "Oaths in the Qur'an"	
Austin Ball, BA Comparative Literature and Arabic	Feb. 2022-Present
• BYU Humanities Grant Project: "Causation at a Distance in Al-Kindi's Physics"	

## SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Editorial Boards & Other Editorial Work	Mar. 2022-Present
• Editorial Board, <a href="#">Rocznik Orientalistyczny</a> (Yearbook of Oriental Studies, Univ of Łódź, Poland)	

American Oriental Society	Various to Present
• Member, Nominating Committee (2-year term; solicit nominations to elected offices, submit election ballot to general membership, consult with society officers, board of directors)	
• "Creating Your Digital Presence," professionalization talk for graduate students, March 2022	

**American Institute for Maghreb Studies (AIMS)** Oct. 2021-Present

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*Board of Directors, Institutional Representative for Brigham Young University*

- Three-year term of service; attend annual board meeting, Middle East Studies Association
- Grants committee (review 30+ applications, work with committee to award funding)
- Graduate student committee (give written & oral feedback on job application materials)

**National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)** June-July 2022

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*Grant Application Reviewer, NEA Translation Project Fellowship Applications*

- Read, review 35-40 applications per cycle (fields: literary translation in multiple languages)
- Write evaluation reports, assess applications in coordination with other panelists

**National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)** May-June 2021

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

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

**National Book Critics Circle (NBCC)** April 2019-Present

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*Translation Prize Working Group*

- Solicit book nominations; form long- and shortlists; vote on best book from 5-8 finalists
- Organize, promote translation-related events, including award ceremony

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

- Nominate books for selection, read and vote on best book from 5-8 finalists

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

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*International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES), Journal of Arabic Literature (JAL), Journal of Islamic Ethics (Brill), Publications of the Modern Language Association (PMLA), Middle Eastern Literatures (MEL), Al-Abhath (American University of Beirut), Al-Markaz (Arabic-language scholarly journal, American University of Beirut), The Hispanic Review (University of Pennsylvania), Rocznik Orientalistyczny (Yearbook of Oriental Studies, University of Łódź, Poland), Religions (MDPI), Annales Islamologiques*

**Book Manuscript Referee** June 2018-Present

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

## SERVICE TO THE INSTITUTION

### Brigham Young University

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College of Humanities Feb. 2022

*Faculty Judge, [Three-Minute Graduate Thesis Competition](#)*

- Listen to 6-8 humanities grad students give thesis in 3 minutes. Work with other judges to award first, second, and third place. First place goes on to compete at the University level.

Kennedy Center for International Studies; Various Departments Jan. 2022-Apr. 2022

*Faculty Reviewer, Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) Grant Applications*

- Evaluate 25+ student applications for academic-year foreign language studies funding
- Consult with Asian Studies coordinator regarding final rankings, awards

Middle East Studies/Arabic, Department of Asian & Near Eastern Langs. Jan. 2022-Present  
*Faculty Supervisor, Al-Buhuth Student Journal for Middle Eastern Studies*

- Edit English and Arabic-language submissions; work with authors, student editors, and faculty readers to provide timely feedback; oversee final production of journal

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

- Generate topics and schedule, invite speakers, coordinate with other members, university administration. Press releases, social media, other promotional items. Budget: \$100,000

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, Middle East Affairs*

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

## University of Chicago

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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

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 & Readings

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Utah Arts Festival (Salt Lake City, UT) 27-29 Aug. 2021

- Original poetry reading, part of Rock Canyon Poets group performance

Taylorville Public Library (Taylorville, UT) 4 May 2021

- [“The 1,001 Arabian Nights: Talking Fish, Drug-filled Polo Sticks, and Other Serious Matters”](#)

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

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Nov. 2020-Dec. 2021

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

### Independent Consulting

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Oct. 2019-Present

- Provide Middle East expertise to clients (NGOs, law firms, public sector agencies)
- Firms worked with: *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

American Institute for Maghreb Studies; American Oriental Society; Heterodox Academy; Middle East Medievalists; Middle East Studies Association; National Book Critics Circle; Renaissance Weekend; Rock Canyon Poets; School of Abbasid 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*

- Classical poetry and poetics; reception of Abbasid “golden age” authors in the Islamic West (Iberia and North Africa); rhetoric, grammar, rhyme, meter; dialect literatures

### *Comparative Literature*

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

### *Religious Studies*

- Asceticism, ethics, Qur’an and literature, literature and philosophy, moral status of poetry in Islam, intellectual foundations of literary commentary