



DMES PUBLIC TALKS

The Classical Arabic Hunting Poem

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The Arabic poets of antiquity were keen observers of nature. Their poems abound with descriptions of horses, camels, onagers, oryxes, ostriches, eagles and snakes. In this lecture, I will talk about my project to collate, edit and translate a corpus of poems known as *ṭardiyyāt*: for two centuries, from the second to the fourth century hijri, poems devoted exclusively to descriptions of the hunt and the animals of the hunt, were very popular: more than 200 have survived. They describe all manner of animals, from saker and peregrine falcons, to goshawks, saluqis, and cheetahs; and there are poems on hunting with nets and hand-held bows. The poems reveal an intimate familiarity with the physiology and ethology of the animals they feature, and prompt some intriguing considerations about human–non-human animal interaction, about poetry as an expression of political comportment, and about humanity's persistence in conceiving of the natural world as a mirror of human concerns.

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5.15-6.45pm (tea & biscuits from 5.00pm)

Room 8/9

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