

ABIGAIL KRASNER BALBALE

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D., History and Middle Eastern Studies
Harvard University, 2012
- A.M., History
Harvard University, 2007
- B.A., with distinction in Humanities and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
Yale University, 2003

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

- 2018-present Assistant Professor, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and History
New York University
- 2015-2018 Assistant Professor, Islamic History, Art, Material Culture
Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture
- 2015-2019 Unbesoldete Lehrbeauftragte (Unpaid Lecturer), Abteilung für Geschichte und
Kultur des Vorderen Orients (Dept. of History and Culture of the Middle East)
Universität Hamburg, Asien-Afrika-Institut
- 2014-2015 Assistant Professor, Medieval Mediterranean History
Department of History, University of Massachusetts, Boston
- 2012-2014 Postdoctoral Fellow in Islamic Art and Material Culture
Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture

PUBLICATIONS

Books

- [in progress] *The Wolf King: Constructing Power in al-Andalus*
- 2008 Jerrilynn D. Dodds, María Rosa Menocal and Abigail Krasner Balbale. *The Arts of Intimacy: Christians, Jews and Muslims in the Making of Castilian Culture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008, Paperback, 2009. Winner, Outler Prize of the American Society for Church History, 2010. Short-listed for the ACE/Mercers' International Book Award, 2009. A Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year, 2009.

Edited volumes

- 2017 Intisar A. Rabb and Abigail Krasner Balbale, eds. *Justice and Leadership in Early Islamic Courts*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- 2013 Yuen-Gen Liang, Abigail Krasner Balbale, Camilo Gomez-Rivas and Andrew Devereux, eds. *Spanning the Strait: Studies in Unity in the Western Mediterranean*. Leiden: Brill.

Peer Reviewed Articles and Book Chapters

- [forthcoming] “Gold, Islam and the Spanish ‘Reconquista,’” in Thomas Cummins, ed., *Gold: The Universal Equivalent of Global Dreams, Desires, Arts and Values in Early Modern History*, forthcoming from Harvard University Press.
- 2019 “Magical words: Arabic amulets in Christian Spain,” in Suzanna Ivanic, Mary Laven and Andrew Morall, eds., *Religious Materiality in the Early Modern World*, Amsterdam University Press, pp. 211-228.
- “Genealogía y teleología en la historiografía árabe de al-Andalus: el caso de Ibn Mardaniš,” in Carlos de Ayala Martínez, Isabel Cristina Ferreira Fernandes and J. Santiago Palacios Ontalva, eds., *La Reconquista: Ideología y justificación de la guerra santa peninsular*, Madrid: La Ergástula, 2019, pp. 259-279.
- 2018 “Affiliation and Ideology at the End of the Almohad Caliphate,” in Michael Lower and Uri Shachar, eds., “Voices of Conflict and Collaboration in the Medieval Mediterranean,” a special issue of *al-Masāq* 30:3 (2018): 266-283.
- 2017 “Bridging Seas of Sand and Water: The Berber Dynasties of the Islamic Far West,” in Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu, eds., *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 356-377.
- 2014 “Jihād as a means of political legitimation in thirteenth-century Sharq al-Andalus,” in Amira Bennison, ed., *The Articulation of Power in Medieval Iberia and the Maghrib*. Oxford: Oxford University Press/Proceedings of the British Academy, pp. 87-105.
- 2013 Yuen-Gen Liang, Abigail Balbale, Camilo Gomez-Rivas and Andrew Devereux, “Unity and Disunity across the Strait of Gibraltar,” *Medieval Encounters* 19:1 (2013): 1-40.
- “Cacophony” (A contribution to a cluster of essays treating the legacy of María Rosa Menocal), *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 5:2 (2013): 123-128.

NATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS

- 2019-2020 National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship to complete a book-length project, “Memory, Genealogy and Power in al-Andalus: A Study of Rex Lupus, Medieval Islamic Ruler in Southern Spain.”
- 2018 Selected as emerging scholar participant for series of Getty-funded research workshops, “Mediterranean Palimpsests: Connecting the Art and Architectural histories of Medieval and Early Modern Cities,” in Cyprus, Spain and Greece, May 2018-May 2020.
- 2016 Olivia Remie Constable Award, Medieval Academy of America
- 2011-2012 ACLS/Mellon Early Career Dissertation Completion Fellowship
- 2010 National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute, “Cultural Hybridities in the Medieval Mediterranean,” Barcelona, Spain
- 2005-2006 Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship in Humanistic Studies
- 2003-2004 Fulbright Fellowship, Islamic Civilizations Initiative, Syria

UNIVERSITY FELLOWSHIPS

- 2019 Visiting Faculty Fellow, Global Research Institute NYU Madrid (Spain)
Humanities First Book Colloquium Award, New York University
- 2010 Real Colegio Complutense Research Grant, Harvard (Spain)
Moroccan Studies Summer Research Grant, Harvard (Morocco)

- 2009 Harvard Summer School Tuition Waiver Grant (Intensive Latin)
2008-09 Foreign Language and Area Studies Academic Year Fellowship, Harvard (Hebrew)
2008 Foreign Language and Area Studies Summer Fellowship, Harvard (Arabic)
GSAS Graduate Society Summer Pre-Dissertation Fellowship, Harvard (declined)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Islamic rulership and the caliphate
Material culture and art of the Islamic world
Medieval and Early Modern Iberia and the Maghrib
Coexistence and violence among Muslims, Christians and Jews in the Mediterranean

INVITED TALKS

- 2020 “‘The Clue to Moroccan Art’: Almoravid and Almohad Peripherality,” joint lecture with Abbey Stockstill, Silsila: The Center for Material Histories, NYU, February 12, 2020.
- 2019 “Memory, Genealogy and Power in Twelfth-Century al-Andalus,” Medieval Club of New York, CUNY Graduate Center, February 1, 2019.
- “‘The Worst Unbelievers by Far’: Almohad Violence against Fellow Muslims in the Medieval Western Mediterranean,” at *Mediterranean Violence*, a conference of the Mediterranean Collective at the University of Minnesota, April 25-26, 2019.
- “Conflict, Resistance and Accommodation in the Twelfth-Century Western Mediterranean,” at the Islamic Studies Graduate Workshop, Department of Religious Studies, Princeton University, April 18, 2019.
- “Problems in the Arabic Historiography of al-Andalus,” at the Islamic Studies Interdisciplinary Reading Group, New York University, March 1, 2019.
- 2018 “Muslims vs. Christians: al-Maqqarī’s reimagining of Ibn Mardānīsh’s story,” at *Jornadas Internacionais La Reconquista: Ideología y Justificación de la Guerra Santa Peninsular*, Palmela, Portugal, November 29-December 1, 2018.
- "Reimagining the Reconquista: Problems in the Arabic Historiography of al-Andalus," Near Eastern Studies Brown Bag Lunch Series, Princeton University, December 2018.
- 2017 Book Talk on *Justice and Leadership in Early Islamic Courts*, with Intisar Rabb, as part of Harvard Law Library’s Fall 2017 Faculty Book Talk Series. November, 2017.
- 2016 “Gold, Islam and the Spanish ‘Reconquista,’” at the conference *Gold: The Universal Equivalent of Global Dreams, Desires, Arts and Values in Early Modern History*, at Villa I Tatti, Florence, Italy, June 2016.
- “Contesting the Caliphate: Ibn Mardānīsh’s fight with the Almohads in Twelfth-Century Iberia,” in the lecture series “Topics in the Art of Andalusia,” Department of Art History, University of Pennsylvania, April 2016.
- “Continuities and Ruptures from the Umayyad to the Abbasid Caliphate,” at the conference *The Global Eighth Century*, Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, NYU, April 2016.

- 2015 “Constructing Legitimacy: Ibn Mardanish's Quest for Power in Sharq al-Andalus,” Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University, March 2015.
- 2014 “Christian kings and Muslim vassals in Late-Medieval Iberia,” *Muslims, Christians and Governance in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, Massachusetts Center for Interdisciplinary Renaissance Studies, University of Massachusetts Amherst, November 2014.
- “What architecture can teach us about interfaith interaction in Medieval Spain: The Synagogue of Samuel Halevi Abulafia, the Alcazar of Seville and the Alhambra,” Resnick Distinguished Lecture Series in Jewish Studies, SUNY New Paltz, October 2014.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Conferences organized

- 2019 “Contact and Convergence: An Interdisciplinary Conference in Islamic Studies,” (co-organizer) New York University, May 2019.
- “Antiquarianism in the Islamic World,” (co-organized with Peter Miller) Bard Graduate Center, May 2019.
- 2016 “Art and Ideology in the Twelfth-Century Western Mediterranean,” third annual *Trehan Symposium in Islamic Art and Material Culture*, Bard Graduate Center, October 2016.
- Co-Convener of “Courts and Judicial Procedures in Islamic Law,” a conference in honor of Roy Mottahedeh at Harvard Law School, May 2016.
- 2015 Convener of “Fustat and the World in the year 1000,” the second annual *Trehan Symposium in Islamic Art and Material Culture*, Bard Graduate Center, November 2015.
- 2014 “Objects and Power: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Islamic Material Culture,” first annual *Trehan Symposium in Islamic Art and Material Culture*, Bard Graduate Center, April 2014.

Panels organized

- 2014 “Muslim Subjects and Clients in the Pre-Modern Christian Mediterranean,” (with Brian Catlos), Middle East Studies Association Annual Conference, Washington DC, November 2014.
- 2011 “Is Iberia a Middle Eastern Topic?” Roundtable, Middle East Studies Association Annual Conference, Washington, DC, December 2011.
- “Almohad Religion and Political Ideology,” Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies Annual Conference, Lisbon, Portugal, June 2011.
- “Peoples on the Periphery: Religion and Culture on the Frontiers of Late Medieval Empires,” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, January 2011.

Papers presented

- 2020 “Exile, Nostalgia and the Reconquista: How Arabic chronicles about al-Andalus changed after the expulsion of the Moriscos,” American Historical Association, New York, January 4, 2020 (Presented in absentia).
- “Palimpsests and Pastiches: The Shriners’ American Alhambras,” Getty Workshop on Mediterranean Palimpsests, Thessaloniki, Greece, January 10, 2020.

- “The European Almohads,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 2020.
- 2017 “Muḥammad ibn Sa‘d ibn Mardānīsh’s Imagined Genealogies,” Society for the Medieval Mediterranean annual conference, Ghent University, Belgium, July 2017 (Presented in absentia)
- “Genealogies of Power in Twelfth-Century al-Andalus,” Lineage, Loyalty and Legitimacy in Iberia and North Africa mini-conference, Saint Louis University Annual Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies, June 2017.
- 2016 “Reflections on the Medieval Mediterranean NEH Summer Institutes (A Panel Discussion)”, International Congress of Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Michigan, April 2016.
- "Wolf King of Glorious Memory: Culture and Ideology in Twelfth-Century Spain and North Africa," Bard Graduate Center Works in Progress Seminar Series, New York, February 2016.
- 2014 “*Rex Lupus, uasallus regi Ildefonso*’: Vassalage and clientage across religious lines in twelfth-century Iberia,” Middle East Studies Association Annual Conference, Washington DC, November 2014.
- “Jihād between Muslims at the time of the Reconquista,” American Historical Association Annual Conference, Mediterranean Seminar/Medieval Academy of America sponsored session, Washington DC, January 2014.
- 2013 “ ‘Good fortune and prosperity:’ The transformations of a well-wishing Arabic inscription from Fatimid Egypt to Christian Castile,” Society for the Medieval Mediterranean Conference on Trade, Travel and Transmission in the Medieval Mediterranean, Cambridge University, July 2013.
- “Ibn Mardānīsh's coinage and the Dinar of Alfonso VIII: A comparative study,” Seminar in Central Asian and Middle Eastern Numismatics, Hofstra University, March 2013.
- 2012 “The Travels and Transformations of an Arabic Inscription in Medieval Spain,” Bard Graduate Center Works in Progress Seminar Series, New York, November 2012.
- 2011 “Between Kings and Caliphs: Religion, Authority and Allegiance in Thirteenth-Century Sharq al-Andalus,” Political Legitimacy in the Islamic West Workshop, Cambridge University, September 2011.
- “Theology and Political Legitimacy in the Almohad period,” Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies Annual Conference, Lisbon, Portugal, June 2011.
- “The Almohad in the Aragonese Court: Abū Zayd and his search for power,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, American Academy of Research Historians of Medieval Spain sponsored session, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2011.
- “Toward a Trans-Regional Medieval History,” Harvard Medieval History Seminar, March 2011.
- “Religion, Ethnicity, and Allegiance in Almohad Iberia,” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, January 2011.
- 2010 “Processes of Political Legitimation in Medieval Iberia: The Case of Sharq al-Andalus,” at MediterráneoS: International Conference of Junior Researchers in Mediterranean and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, CSIC, Madrid, Spain, December 2010.
- “Rex Lupus and other Saracens: Shifting alliances among the kings of 12th century Iberia,” NEH Summer Institute “Cultural Hybridities in the Medieval Mediterranean,” Barcelona, Spain, July 2010.

“Ibn Mardānīsh and the Politics of Allegiance in Twelfth Century Iberia,” International Congress on Medieval Studies, American Academy of Research Historians of Medieval Spain sponsored workshop, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2010.

2009 “Poetry as Propaganda: The Rise of a New Cultural Form in Umayyad Damascus,” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, New York, NY, January 2009.

2008 “The Writing on the Wall: the travels and transformations of an Arabic inscription in Medieval Iberia,” New England Medieval Studies Consortium Conference, Providence, RI, February 2008.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Editorial Board, Arabic and Islamic Studies Book Series, Editorial Comares de Granada (Spain). (2020-present)

Advisory Board, RomanIslam Center for Comparative Empire and Transcultural Studies, University of Hamburg, funded by the German Research Foundation. (2020-present)

Bishko Prize Committee, Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies (ASPHS), 2018, 2019.

Elected Secretary of the Historians of Islamic Art Association (HIAA), 2014-2017.

Founding member, elected Executive Board member (2010-2016), advisory board member (2016-present), Spain-North Africa Project (SNAP), an organization that promotes scholarly work spanning the Strait of Gibraltar. Co-organized special issues of *Medieval Encounters* and the *Journal of North African Studies*, as well as sessions at international conferences and one-day symposiums in Washington DC in 2011 and Los Angeles in 2014. See: spainnorthafricaproject.org

Co-editor by invitation of SNAP special issue of *Medieval Encounters*, “Spanning the Strait: Studies in Unity in the Western Mediterranean,” 19: 1 (2013).

UNIVERSITY SERVICE

Committee Member for Farah Dih, New York University, 2018-present.

PhD Advisor for Courtney Stewart, Bard Graduate Center, 2016-present.

External examiner for PhD thesis of Javier Albarrán, “Los discursos de guerra santa y la memoria de las primeras batallas del Islam, al-Andalus, siglos X-XIII,” Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2019.

External advisor for MA Thesis of Diana Luber (Art History), University of Texas at Austin, 2019-20.

Advisor for the following MA Qualifying Papers at Bard Graduate Center: Meredyth Winter’s “Hand-craft and Handicraft: Exploring the Material Culture of Late Antique Zafar,” (second reader, 2013), Jennifer Levy’s “The Morgan Casket” (2014); Alana Jiwa’s “Singing Girls and Spoliated Goddesses: The Transcultural Movement of Musical Practices to Umayyad Cordoba” (2016); Aleena Malik’s “Uthmanic Codex: From religion to political legitimacy” (2016); Kaitlin McClure’s “Symbols of Authority: Impressions and Expressions of Caliphal Power” (2016), Meghan Lynch’s “Ambiguous Script: The Efficacy of the Written Word across 12th-century Faṭimid Lands” (2018), Cassandra Celestin’s “The Ornament of 19th-century Athens” (2018).

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Reader for Denise Cain's MA thesis, "The Textiles of the Turkmen: In Turkestan and Early Twentieth Century New York City," College of Staten Island, CUNY, 2012-2013.

Convener, *Trehan Lectures in Islamic Art and Material Culture*, Bard Graduate Center, 2012-2013.

Member, Undergraduate Committee, UMass Boston, 2014-2015.

Member, Graduate Committee, Bard Graduate Center, 2012-2014; 2015-present.

Member, Admissions Committee, Bard Graduate Center, 2016, 2018.

Member, Departmental Nominating Committee for GSAS Summer Fellowships, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University, 2019.

Member, Berthelot Grant Selection Committee, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University, 2019.

Member, Admissions Committee, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University, 2019.

Member, Faculty of Arts and Science Committee on Information, Technology, and Library Services, New York University (elected three-year term), 2020-23.

PEER REVIEWER

History Compass

University of Toronto Press

Brill

Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies

West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture

Perspective: actualité en histoire de l'art (INHA)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate seminars

"The History of the Middle East, 600-1200," New York University (Fall 2020)

"Topics in Islamic Studies: Al-Andalus," New York University (Fall 2018)

"What is Islam? New Approaches to Religion and Culture," Bard Graduate Center (Spring 2018)

"The Social Life of Islamic Textiles," Bard Graduate Center, a hybrid seminar/webinar in conjunction with the University of Hamburg, Germany (Fall 2017)

"Approaches to the Object," co-taught with Jeffrey Collins, Bard Graduate Center (Fall 2017)

"Ornament and Crime: Decoration and Its Discourses from Late Antiquity to Today," co-taught with Freyja Hartzell, Bard Graduate Center (Fall 2016)

"Telling the Sogdian Story: A Freer|Sackler Digital Exhibit Project," Bard Graduate Center/NYU (Spring 2016), co-taught with Kimon Keramidas (NYU)

"The Material Culture of the Caliphate," Fall 2015 – at Bard Graduate Center as a hybrid seminar/webinar in conjunction with the University of Hamburg, Germany; Fall 2019 as a standalone 7 session webinar.

"Court Culture Compared," Bard Graduate Center (Spring 2014)

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“Al-Andalus,” Bard Graduate Center (Fall 2013, Fall 2015)

“Courtly Culture in the Medieval Mediterranean,” Bard Graduate Center (Spring 2013)

“A Survey of Islamic Art and Material Culture,” Bard Graduate Center (Fall 2012, Fall 2016)

“A Practicum on Teaching History,” Harvard University, co-taught with History Department chair, (2008-2009, 2009-2010)

Undergraduate courses

“The Making of the Muslim Middle East, 600-1400,” New York University (Fall 2020)

“Topics in Islamic Studies: What is Islam? New Approaches to Religion and Culture,” New York University (Fall 2018)

“Globalization in Historical Perspective: The Global Middle Ages,” University of Massachusetts, Boston (Spring 2015)

“World History to 1800,” University of Massachusetts, Boston (Fall 2014, Spring 2015)

“The Later Middle Ages,” University of Massachusetts, Boston (Fall 2014)

“Islam: Civilization and Institutions,” Brandeis University (Fall 2009)

TEACHING AWARDS

Five Certificates of Distinction in Teaching, Bok Center, Harvard University, for course evaluations of 4.5 out of 5 or higher (Fall 2007, Fall 2009, Spring 2010, Fall 2010, Spring 2011).

PUBLIC HISTORY

“A brief history of Jews in Islamic Spain and Morocco,” Congregation Sukkat Shalom, Chicago, January 22, 2020.

Opening and discussion of the forthcoming PBS documentary, *Ornament of the World*, with director Michael Schwarz and Jerrilynn Dodds, Films at the Whitney Humanities Center, Yale University, February 2019.

Historical consultant and “talking head” in public television documentary, “Ornament of the World,” (Kikim Media), 2003-2019. The movie was broadcast nationwide on December 17, 2019.

“The Arts of the Lands of Islam,” for “Bard Graduate Center’s History of Design and Decorative Arts,” a Public Learning Program, May 2017.

“The Caliphate and the Transformation of Culture from the Near East to Europe,” Dean’s Hour Lecture Series, Bard High School Early College, March 2016, March 2018, March 2019.

“The History of al-Andalus,” for Yale Summer Institute “Worlds of Islam: Regional Perspectives on Unity and Diversity,” July 2014.

“Islamic Art and Architecture,” University of Chicago Outreach program on Islamic Civilization and the Modern Middle East, February 2011.

“Echoes of Cordoba,” *The Islamic Monthly: Politics, Culture, Society; 2011 and Reflections on the Past Year*, January 2011.

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Facilitated discussion on documentary film, "Inside Islam: What a Billion Muslims Really Think," with filmmaker Alexander Kronemer and Prof. Tarek Masoud. Harvard Kennedy School of Government, November 2009.

"Thoughts on al-Andalus and its relevance for our times," Keynote address, Harvard Kennedy School of Government Annual Eid Dinner, September 2009.

Facilitated book discussion on Moroccan novel for secondary school teachers, Middle East Initiative, Primary Source, Watertown, MA, February 2008.

LANGUAGES

Classical Arabic, French, Spanish, Latin

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Spain-North Africa Project (SNAP)

Historians of Islamic Art Association (HIAA)

Middle East Medievalists (MEM)

The Mediterranean Seminar

American Historical Association (AHA)

Middle East Studies Association (MESA)

Medieval Academy of America (MAA)

American Academy of Research Historians of Medieval Spain (AARHMS)

REFERENCES

Roy P. Mottahedeh, Gurney Professor of History, Harvard University. mottahed@fas.harvard.edu, (617) 495-1036.

Daniel Lord Smail, Professor of History, Harvard University. smail@fas.harvard.edu, (617) 496-0149.

Jerrilynn Dodds, Professor of Art History, Sarah Lawrence College. jdodds@sarahlawrence.edu, (914) 395-2303.