

ELIZABETH URBAN

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EDUCATION

- 2012 **PhD**, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
The University of Chicago, with departmental honors
- Dissertation: "The Early Islamic *Mawālī*: A Window onto
Processes of Identity Construction and Social Change"
- 2006 **MA**, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
The University of Chicago
- 2004 **BA**, Department of Religious Studies
Rice University, *cum laude*, with departmental honors

ACADEMIC POSITIONS HELD

West Chester University, West Chester, PA

2019–present Department of History
Associate Professor of the Islamic World

2014–2019 Department of History
Assistant Professor of the Islamic World

Williams College, Williamstown, MA

2013–2014 Department of History
Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Middle Eastern History

Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

2012–2013 Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies
Visiting Assistant Professor in the Islamic and Middle
Eastern Studies Program

The University of Chicago, Chicago IL

2009 Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
Lecturer

2006–2009 Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
Arabic Teaching Assistant

PUBLICATIONS

Monographs

- 2020 *Conquered Populations in Early Islam: Non-Arabs, Slaves and the Sons of Slave Mothers*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP.

Articles

- 2020 "Gender and Slavery in Islamic Political thought," in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Political Theory*, ed. Murad Idris, Leigh Jenco, and Megan Thomas (Oxford UP, 2020).
- 2018 "Scribes as Scapegoats: Language, Identity, and Power in *Jahshiyārī's Book of Viziers and Scribes*," in *Scribal practices and the social construction of knowledge in Antiquity, Late Antiquity and Medieval Islam*, ed. Myriam Wissa (Leuven: Peeters, 2018).
- 2017 "Hagar and Mariya: Early Islamic Models of Slave Motherhood," in *Courtesans and Concubines in Islamic History*, ed. Matthew Gordon (Oxford UP, 2017)
- 2013 "Humble in Word and Body: Abu Bakra as an Early Islamic Exemplar," *Interdisciplinary Humanities*, Spring Issue 2013
- "The Foundations of Islamic Society as Expressed by the Qur'anic Term *Mawlā*," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 15.1 (April 2013)
- 2012 "The Identity Crisis of Abū Bakra: *Mawlā* of the Prophet, or Polemical Tool?" in *The Lineaments of Islam: Studies in Honor of Fred McGraw Donner*, ed. Paul M. Cobb (Boston: Brill, 2012)

Encyclopedia and Bibliography Entries

- 2020 "Slavery in the Medieval Islamic World," Oxford Bibliographies, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com>
- 2016 Slave Armies, *Encyclopedia of Empire*, Wiley-Blackwell.
- Rashidun Caliphate, *Encyclopedia of Empire*, Wiley-Blackwell.

Book Reviews

- 2020 (submitted) Review of Taef El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661-1257* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), submitted to *Medieval Encounters*

- Review of Bernard K. Freamon, *Possessed by the Right Hand: The Problem of Slavery in Islamic Law and Muslim Cultures* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), submitted to *American Journal of Islam and Society*
- 2016 Review of Mohammad Rihan, *The Politics and Culture of an Umayyad Tribe: Conflict and Factionalism in the Early Islamic Period* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), in *Journal of Islamic Studies* online, May 6, 2016, doi:10.1093/jis/etw024
- 2014 "Remembering and Forgetting the Persian Past: Elizabeth Urban on Sarah Bowen Savant's *The New Muslims of Post-Conquest Iran: Tradition, Memory, and Conversion*," *Marginalia Review of Books*, August 19, 2014. ([hyperlink](#))
- 2013 "The Construction of Islamic Iran in Abbasid Historiography: A review of *The Arab-Sasanian Narrative in the Early Islamic Historiographical Tradition*, by Scott Savran." *Dissertation Reviews*, November 4, 2013 ([hyperlink](#))

GRANTS and PROPOSALS

- 2018 "A Social History of Early Islamic Sex Slavery: Analyzing Rates of Concubinage and Demographics of Concubines in Early Arabic Genealogical Literature," Research and Creative Activities (RACA) Grant awarded by College of Arts and Humanities, West Chester University

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS and INVITED TALKS

- 2020
(accepted) "Slavery in the Medieval Islamic World through the Lens of Human Trafficking," 55th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, MI, May 7–10, 2020
- 2018–19 Thematic discussion participant, *Global Histories of Slavery in the Premodern Middle East and Beyond*, Middle East Studies Association (MESA) Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX, November 15–18, 2018; MESA Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, November 14–17, 2019
- 2018 "Slaves and Siblings: The Function of Family Ties among Slaves in the Abbasid Harem," *Medieval Unfreedoms: Slavery, Servitude, and Trafficking in Humans before the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade*, Binghamton, NY, October 19–20, 2018

Invited by Dr. Noël Voltz to guest teach a class on Comparative Slavery and present a public research talk, University of Utah, September 17, 2018

- 2017 Roundtable participant, *Histories of Slavery in Medieval Islamic Societies*, MESA Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, November 18–20, 2017
- 2016 Panel Discussant, *Approaches to Historiography in the Early Islamic World*, MESA Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, November 17–20, 2016
- "The Practice of Slave-Prostitution in Early Islamic Urban Centers," MESA Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, November 17–20, 2016
- "Two Competing Narratives of Slave Prostitutes in Early Islam," American Historical Association (AHA) Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, January 7–10, 2016
- 2015 "Text, History, and Communal Identity in Exegeses of Quran 33:4–6," MESA Annual Meeting, Denver, CO, November 21–24, 2015
- 2014 Panel Organizer, *Identity, Lieux de Mémoire, and Cultural Memory in Early Islam, Part I*, MESA Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, November 22–25, 2014
- "The Two Sides of Abu Bakra: What's in an Identity?" MESA Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, November 22–25, 2014
- "Why Does Anyone Listen to Abu Bakra? A Study in Authority and Historical Memory," Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA), Washington, DC, October 30–31, 2014
- "Slave Mothers in Early Islamic History," Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Toronto, Canada, May 22–25, 2014

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

West Chester University, West Chester, PA

2014–present (4/4 load) HIS 100: Global History Since 1900
HIS 101: History of Civilization to 1500
HIS 300: Varieties of History (history majors' methods course)
HIS 308: Introduction to the Islamic World

HIS 375: The Arab-Israeli Conflict
 HIS 381: The Forgotten Queens of Islam
 HIS 397: Women & Gender in the Islamic World
 HIS 400: History Senior Seminar (topic: voyages of exploration)
 HIS 411: The Pre-Modern Middle East
 HIS 412: The Modern Middle East
 HIS 509: The Modern Middle East and the West (graduate level)

Williams College, Williamstown, MA

Spring 2014 History of the Pre-Modern Middle East to 1500
 Fall 2013 Women and Gender in Middle Eastern History

Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

Spring 2013 Classical Islamic Political Thought
 Early Islamic History from Muhammad to the Mongols
 Fall 2012 Slavery and Concubinage in Islamic History

The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Fall 2009 Unfree People in Classical Islamic Society
 Winter 2009 Classical Islamic Social Categories

SERVICE

2017–present WCU History Department Drayer (scholarships) committee, elected position, chairperson
 2019-present WCU History Department Undergraduate committee, elected position
 2017–2019 WCU Curriculum and Academic Policies Council (CAPC), elected by WCU faculty body, representing history department
 2017 Organizer, WCU's 5th Annual One-Day History Conference, Topic: "Pennsylvania's Global Connections," October 26, 2017
 Summer 2017 WCU General Education Assessment evaluation team (helped review and re-write general education goal on ethical and informed decision-making)
 2016 "Breaking down the Barriers," talk given at WCU's second annual Women's Leadership Conference, November 12, 2016

- 2014–2016 Middle East Medievalists (MEM) board, nominated by MEM board and confirmed by MEM membership
- WCU Women's and Gender Studies Program, community, steering, and curriculum committees
- 2015 "The Perils of Perfectionism," talk given at WCU's first annual *Women's Leadership Conference*, November 7, 2015

OTHER TRAINING & EXPERIENCE

- Summer 2018 Faculty-Led Study Abroad to Amman, Jordan (supervised students in classes and on excursions)
- 2016 Distance Education Online/Blended Faculty Development Program
- 2015 WCUPA Green Dot Faculty Training (bystander training to help prevent sexual violence on college campuses)

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, and HONORS

- 2017 Honors College Outstanding Faculty Recipient
Omicron Delta Kappa Academic Advising Appreciation Award
- 2015 WCU Center for International Programs Turkey Initiative
- 2013–2014 Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in History
- 2011–2012 Whiting Dissertation-Year Fellowship
- 2005–2009 The University of Chicago Century Fellowship
- 2007 Foreign Language and Area Studies Summer Fellowship, Arabic
- 2005 Center for Arabic Study Abroad (CASA) Summer Fellowship
- 2004–2005 Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship in Humanistic Studies

LANGUAGES

Classical and Quranic Arabic: advanced reading
 Modern Standard Arabic: advanced reading and intermediate speaking
 Colloquial Egyptian and Jordanian Arabic: basic speaking
 German: advanced reading and intermediate speaking
 French: intermediate reading
 Persian: basic reading and speaking
 Syriac: basic reading