

Student Handout iv: Biographies of Experts Appearing in Cities of Light

Teachers may find it useful to let students know the qualifications of the experts who appear in the documentary through the brief biographies provided in the following pages in alphabetical order.

Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf

Feisal Abdul Rauf was born in Kuwait in 1948 into an Egyptian family steeped in religious scholarship. He was educated in England and Malaysia and has a degree in physics from Columbia University in New York.

He is founder and CEO of the American Society for Muslim Advancement (ASMA Society <http://www.asmasociety.org>). He is also the Imam, or prayer leader, of Masjid Al-Farah, a mosque in New York City, which is located

twelve blocks from Ground Zero. Imam Feisal has dedicated his life to building bridges between Muslims and the West and is a leader in the effort to build religious pluralism and integrate Islam into modern society. He also designed the Cordoba Initiative, an interfaith plan for improving relations between Muslims, Europeans and Americans through international dialogue and cooperation. He places special emphasis on finding a peaceful and just solution to the Israel/Palestine issue. Imam Feisal speaks frequently at national and international conferences, and teaches about Islam, appearing frequently on in the media. He is a member of the World Economic Forum Council of 100 Leaders (Islamic-West dialogue), the Board of Trustees of the Islamic Center of New York, and advises the Interfaith Center of New York. His books include *Islam: A Search for Meaning*, *Islam: A Sacred Law*; and *What's Right With Islam: A New Vision for Muslims and the West*.



Lourdes Maria Alvarez

Dr. Lourdes Maria Alvarez is Director of the Center for Catalan Studies and Professor of Spanish at Catholic University in Washington, DC. The main focus of her research and scholarship is cultural and literary relations between Muslims, Christians and Jews in medieval Spain, and Hispano-Arabic poetry from the same time period. She is also interested in studying the influence of Islamic Spain in the contemporary Arab political and cultural imagination.



Before teaching at Catholic University, Prof. Alvarez taught at Yale University at the Yale Summer Language Institute in 1992. She received her B.A. from University of California at Berkeley, her M.A. from San Francisco State University, and her Ph.D. from Yale University. In addition to English, she is fluent in Spanish and Arabic. Prof. Alvarez is a CASA III fellow (Center for Arabic Studies Abroad) at the American University in Cairo, Egypt, and in 2000, she was awarded a Fulbright Senior Research

Fellowship which she used to complete research in Morocco. Prof. Alvarez has published numerous articles in her research field.

Brian Catlos

Brian Catlos is associate professor of history at the University of California, Santa Cruz, with a doctorate from the University of Toronto. He spent six years in Barcelona, Spain, where he was a research fellow at the Spanish National Research Council and held a postdoctoral fellowship from Boston University. He is co-winner of the 2005 John Edwin Fagg Prize from the American Historical Association for his book *The Victors and the Vanquished: Christians and Muslims in Catalonia and Aragon, 1050-1300* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).



Professor Catlos is interested in studying ethnic and religious minorities in medieval Europe, and in researching the interactions among Christians, Muslims, and Jews in medieval Iberia, Europe and the Mediterranean region. He believes that his historical research helps improve understanding among religious groups in the world today, by showing that seemingly deep conflicts among religious groups are usually based on issues other than religion. "Ethnicity and religion becomes the language with which we speak about our aims and politics, but I don't think it's what's actually behind them," Catlos says. "We have to critically analyze the present in the same way that we critically analyze the past." Catlos has published several books and numerous articles in his field.

Olivia Remie Constable

Remie Constable is Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame. She received her B.A. from Yale University in Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, and her Ph.D. from Princeton University in Near Eastern Studies. Professor Constable is interested in the economic, social, and urban history of the medieval Mediterranean region, and especially in the contacts between Muslims, Christians, and Jews. She has published several books, including *Trade and Traders in Muslim Spain: The Commercial Realignment of the Iberian Peninsula 900-1500* (Cambridge University Press, 1994)



1994) which won the John Nicholas Brown Prize from the Medieval Academy of America; *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); and *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), in addition to many articles. She has won several awards for excellence in teaching.

Professor Constable is currently working on a book about Muslims living in Europe during the thirteenth century, comparing different regions of Spain, France, and Italy. She says that this period is important because it was a time when European attitudes towards Islam were affected by the crusades in the Near East and territorial conquests in Spain.

Ahmad S. Dallal

Ahmad Dallal is Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies and Chair of the Arabic and Islamic Studies Department at Georgetown University. He has taught at Stanford University, Yale University, and Smith College. He has a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from Columbia University and a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from the American University of Beirut. His academic training and research cover the history of the disciplines of learning in Muslim societies, including both the exact and the traditional sciences, as well as early modern and modern Islamic thought and movements. He has written books and articles on the history of science, Islamic revivalist thought, and Islamic law, including *An Islamic Response to Greek Astronomy: Kitab Ta'dil Hay'at al-Aflak of Sadr al-Shari'a* (E.J. Brill, 1995). He is currently finishing a comparative study of eighteenth-century Islamic reform entitled *Islam Without Europe: Traditions of Reform in Eighteenth Century Islamic Thought*. He has also written and lectured about the September 11 attacks.



Mustapha Kamal

Dr. Mustapha Kamal is a native of Morocco who received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. He is Lecturer in Arabic in the Department of Classics and Mediterranean Studies at the University of Illinois, Chicago. His major focus is instruction in Arabic language and literature, and he has lectured on Classical and Modern Arabic Literature, Arab Intellectual History, and the literature and history of Medieval Iberia. He also lectures on Arabic literature and music from Spain and Morocco. He has published many translations of French and English works, including articles in *Structuralism and Semiotics* by Terence Hawks (1987), *Towards a Semiotics of Authoritarian Discourse* by Alain Goldschläger (1987), an anthology of the works of Jacques Lacan (1988), *Mythologies* by Roland Barthes, (1988), and writings from Umberto Eco, Noam Chomsky, Fernand Braudel, Jean Piaget, and Edward Said, among many others.



Chris Lowney

Chris Lowney is the author of *A Vanished World: Medieval Spain's Golden Age of Enlightenment and Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company that Changed the World* (Loyola Press, 2003). He lives in New York, where he serves part-time as Special Assistant to the President of the Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB), the leading U.S.-based Catholic charity providing health care programs and services to people in need around the world. Mr. Lowney



was a Jesuit seminarian for seven years, teaching and studying at Jesuit institutions in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. He is a *summa cum laude* graduate of Fordham University, where he also received his M.A. He holds honorary Doctoral degrees from Marymount Manhattan University and from the University of Great Falls. He serves on the Board of Directors of Nativity Middle School and on the Board of Regents of St. Peter's College. He has served as Managing Director of J.P. Morgan & Co. and held senior positions in New York, Tokyo, Singapore and London. He served on Morgan's Asia-Pacific, European and Investment Banking Management Committees. Mr. Lowney lectures frequently on leadership, business ethics, and inter-religious dialogue in the U.S. and in the Philippines, Mexico, Indonesia, Colombia, and Spain.

David Nirenberg

David Nirenberg is Charlotte Bloomberg Professor of the Humanities at the Johns Hopkins University, where he teaches medieval history. His research and writing focuses on Spain and the Mediterranean, and on social and cultural relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims during that period. He has published books and articles, such as *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages* (Princeton University Press, 1996), on violence and co-existence of Muslim and Jewish minorities with the Christian majority in the fourteenth-century Crown of Aragon, and on French and Iberian Christian attitudes toward non-Christian minorities. He is currently working on two projects, one on the collapse of religious pluralism in Spain from the massacres of 1391 up to the beginning of the Inquisition, and the second on medieval ideas about communication, exchange, and social relations, which is a cultural history of poison from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance.



Dede Fairchild Ruggles

D. Fairchild Ruggles is Associate Professor at the University of Illinois, Urbana in its program on landscape history. She studied Islamic art and architecture and wrote her dissertation on the tenth-century palace city outside of Cordoba (Spain), called Madinat al-Zahra. Her first book was *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain*, and she has published essays and given lectures on the cultural conditions that gave rise to the art, architecture, and landscape of the Hispano-Islamic kingdom called al-Andalus. Her research interests are the visual culture and built environment of the Islamic world. She is the author of *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (2000) and edited the volume *Women, Patronage, and Self-Representation in Islamic Societies*, and most recently, *Islamic Gardens and Landscape* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).



D. Fairchild Ruggles is a pioneer in the field of landscape history who is especially interested in the way palaces and gardens were intertwined in al-Andalus, and what these gardens meant to the people who built them. She has also studied Arabic agricultural technology and scientific writings from the tenth through fourteenth centuries. She has taught architectural, art, landscape, and cultural history at Cornell

University, Binghamton University, and Harvard, and she gardens herself. Her current research interests extend her work to South Asia, especially the palace and tomb gardens of the Mughals and the Rajputs, appearing in the book, *Islamic Landscape and the Built Environment*, soon to be published, and she has written many articles on these subjects.

Raymond P. Scheindlin

Raymond P. Scheindlin received a B.A. in Oriental studies from the University of Pennsylvania, a Masters of Hebrew Letters and rabbinic ordination from International Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from Columbia University. He was a Guggenheim Fellow and served for three years as part-time Rabbi of the Kane Street Synagogue in Brooklyn.

Dr. Scheindlin is Professor of Medieval Hebrew Literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary and director of its Shalom Spiegel Institute of Medieval Hebrew Poetry. He teaches and conducts research on the interactions between Hebrew and Arabic cultures in Spain, especially in the poetry of the two traditions.



An expert on Arabic literature, Dr. Scheindlin is the author of a reference book for students of Arabic, titled *201 Arabic Verbs*. His thesis, a study of a medieval Arab poet from Spain, was published as a book in 1975. He has also published translations of literature, including a Yiddish novella by Mendele Mocher Seforim, a book on secular Hebrew poetry in Muslim Spain titled *Wine, Women, and Death: Medieval Hebrew Poems on the Good Life* (1986), followed by a companion volume on religious poetry titled *The Gazelle: Medieval Hebrew Poems on God, Israel, and the Soul* (1991). He also translated Ismar Elbogen's history of Jewish liturgy (1993). Other books include *The Book of Job* (W.W. Norton, 1998) and *A Short History of the Jewish People* (Macmillan, 1998). He has written many articles in Spanish and English, and is also fluent in Hebrew and Arabic. Dr. Scheindlin was co-editor of a volume of the *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature* entitled *The Literature of Al-Andalus* (2000).