

Leor Halevi

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EDUCATION:

Ph.D. in History and Middle Eastern Studies, **Harvard University**, 1996-2002.

M.A. in History, **Yale University**, 1994-96.

B.A. in Near Eastern Studies, **Princeton University**, 1990-94.

- *Summa cum Laude*.
- *Phi Beta Kappa*.

EMPLOYMENT:

Associate Professor of History, **Vanderbilt University**, 2008-present.

Assistant Professor of History, **Texas A&M University**, 2002-2008.

PUBLICATIONS:

Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

- * *Winner of Phi Beta Kappa's 2008 Ralph Waldo Emerson Award*.
- * *Winner of the 2008 Award for Excellence in the Study of Religion in the Category of Analytical-Descriptive Studies*, American Academy of Religion.
- * *Winner of the 2007 Albert Hourani Book Award*, Middle East Studies Association. View the [Hourani Award Announcement](#)
- * *Short-listed Finalist for the Best First Book Prize in the History of Religions*.
- * *Long-listed Finalist for the Cundill International Prize in History*.

View [Book Description](#)

View [Interview About the Book](#)

View [Blurbs and Reviews](#)

“Lex Mahomethi: Christological Representations of Islamic Law and Ritual in a Twelfth-Century Dialogue.” Forthcoming in a Festschrift for Michael Cook.

“Christian Impurity vs. Economic Necessity: A Fifteenth-Century Fatwa on European Paper.” [Speculum](#) 83 (2008) 917-945.

“The Paradox of Islamization: Tombstone Inscriptions, Qur’anic Recitations, and the Problem of

- Religious Change.” History of Religions 44, no. 2 (2004) 120-52.
- “Wailing for the Dead: The Role of Women in Early Islamic Funerals.” Past & Present 183 (2004) 3-39. [Read Article \(PDF Format\)](#)
- “The Theologian's Doubts: Natural Philosophy and the Skeptical Games of Ghazali.” Journal of the History of Ideas 63, no. 1 (2002) 19-39. [Accesss Article \(JSTOR Archive\)](#)
- “Bernard, Explorer of the Muslim Lake: A Pilgrimage from Rome to Jerusalem, 867.” Medieval Encounters: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Culture in Confluence and Dialogue 4, no. 1 (1998) 24-50.

OP-ED, ENCYCLOPAEDIA & REVIEW ARTICLES:

- “The Torture of the Grave: Islam and the Afterlife.” International Herald Tribune, 4 May 2007, Opinion Page. View [Op-ed](#)
- “Death and Dying” and “Funerary Practices: Muslim.” Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia. Routledge, 2006.
- Review of “The First Muslims: History and Memory,” by Asma Afsaruddin. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. Forthcoming.
- Review of “The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State,” by Noah Feldman. *The Historian*. Forthcoming.
- Review of “Mecca and Eden: Ritual, Relics and Territory in Islam,” by Brannon Wheeler. Bulletin of the Middle East Studies Association. Forthcoming.
- Review of “The Development of Islamic Ritual,” edited by Gerald Hawting. Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 70, no. 3 (October 2007) 611-613.
- Review of “Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages,” by David Nirenberg. Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review 4 (1997-98) 180-184.

FELLOWSHIPS:

- American Council of Learned Societies’ Charles A. Ryskamp Research Fellowship, 2010-2011.
- National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, 2008-2009.
- John W. Kluge Fellowship at the Library of Congress, 2005-2006.
- SIAS Summer Institute Fellowship. Funded by the Alexander-von-Humboldt and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundations, and hosted by the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, this workshop on the theme of “Hierarchy, Marginality, and Ethnicity in Muslim Societies” met in Berlin in 2005.
- Franklin Research Grant by the American Philosophical Society, 2005.
- The Library of Congress Fellowship in International Studies by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), Spring 2004.
- Texas A&M University Grants (Selected): Melbern G. Glasscock Center’s Internal Faculty Fellow, Spring 2008; Program to Enhance Scholarly and Creative Activities, 2003 and 2005.
- Packard Dissertation Fellowship in the Humanities at Harvard University, 2001-2002.
- Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Grant for Research in Arabic, 2000-2001.
- Dissertation Fellowship at the Center for the Study of World Religions, 1999-2000.
- Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholar, 1994-96.

OTHER PRIZES & HONORS:

Junior Scholar Award, Southwest Commission on Religious Studies, 2005.

Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index selected my 2004 *Past & Present* article, "Wailing for the Dead," as the May 2005 Article of the Month.

The Middle East Studies Association's 2003 Malcolm H. Kerr Award for the Best Dissertation in the Humanities. Dissertation entitled "Muhammad's Grave: Death, Ritual and Society in the Early Islamic World." Advised by Roy Mottahedeh.

Princeton University 1994 Senior Thesis Prize for "The Life of the Dead: Imagined Afterlives in Ancient Mediterranean Texts." Advised by Michael Cook.

TEACHING at Texas A&M:

History 103: World History to 1500

History/RELS 221: A History of Islam, 600 to the Present

History 347: Rise of Islam, 600-1258

History 348: Modern Middle East, 1800 to the Present

History 481-W: Muslim Empires, 1258-1800

History/RELS 489: Topics in Islamic History

History 685: Islamic Political Thought

INVITED TALKS & COLLOQUIA:

"Death and Burial in the Muslim World: The Role of Islam." Conference on "Death, Burial and the Transition to the Afterlife" held at The British Museum, November 2008.

"Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society: A Retrospective by the Author." The University of Texas, Islamic Studies Lecture Series, February 2008.

"The Case of Rumi Paper: Islamic Law, Western Goods, Cross-Cultural Trade." Invited talk delivered at the University of California, Davis (November, 2007), the University of Maryland (December, 2007), Brown University (December, 2007), the University of Iowa (December, 2007), and Vanderbilt University (January, 2008).

"Commerce with Infidels: Muslim Attitudes to Foreign Goods." Lecture at the Library of Congress, July 2006.

"Christian Impurity vs. Economic Necessity: A Muslim Response to a New European Product in the Fatwa on Rumi Paper." (1) Talk presented at the SIAS Summer Institute workshop on "Hierarchy, Marginality, and Ethnicity in Muslim Societies." Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, 2005. (2) The History Department at the Catholic University of America devoted a colloquium to my paper (circulated in advance) in October, 2005. (3) Revised talk presented at an Interdisciplinary Conference on "Elephants, Silk, and Paper: Global Trade and Cultural Exchange in the Middle Ages." Hosted by the University of Colorado's Center for Medieval and Early Modern Studies in November 2005, I was one of four featured speakers. (4) The Department of Near Eastern Studies at Cornell University devoted a colloquium to my paper (circulated in advance) in February, 2006.

"Washing the Corpse in Arabia and Mesopotamia." (1) Presented at the conference, "Shaping the Middle East: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in an Age of Transition, 550-750 C.E." The University of Maryland, April, 2005. (2) Revised version presented at a colloquium on

the theme, "Death and the Hereafter." The Medieval Studies Program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, February, 2006.

"Mournful Memories: Death Rites and the Question of Women in Early Islam." (1) Presented at the University of Maryland, College Park, in April, 2004. (2) Revised version presented at the Library of Congress, in May, 2004.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

"Rumi Paper: Christian Impurity vs. Economic Necessity in a Fifteenth-Century Fatwa." Presented at the *American Oriental Society*, Annual Meeting. San Antonio, March 2007.

"The Paradox of Islamization: Tombstones and the Problem of Religious Change." (1) Presented at the American Academy of Religion, Annual Meeting, Atlanta, November, 2003. (2) Revised talk presented at the conference, "Documentary Evidence and the History of the Early Islamic Mediterranean," organized by the International Society for Arabic Papyrology, held in Granada, Spain, 2004.

"Rites of Mourning: Women's Laments and the Reaction of Islamic Law." Presented at the *Middle East Studies Association*, Annual Meeting. Washington, D.C., November, 2002.

"Remembrance of Muhammad: Washing the Dead beyond Medina." Presented at the *American Historical Association*, Annual Meeting. Cambridge, January 2001.

"Wailing in the House of Islam." Presented at the *Center for the Study of World Religions*, Colloquium. Cambridge, March 2000.

"Petrus Alfonsi and the Representation of Muslim Reality." Presented at the *Medieval Studies Graduate Colloquium*. New Haven, March 1996.

ACADEMIC SERVICE:

Presentations on Campus:

Lecture on "Western Goods in Islamic Thought: Toilet Paper and Phonographs in Modernist Fatwas, c. 1910." Delivered at the Symposium, "Citizens of the World," Nov. 2007.

Lecture on "Basic Tenets of Islam" for LBAR 489: Special Topics – International Relations. September, 2007.

Presentation for the University Libraries Diversity Program on "Muslim Rituals: Origins and Transformations." July, 2007.

Panelist in the Humanities Faculty Grant Writing Roundtable, sponsored by the Melbern Glasscock Center and the Office of Proposal Development, April, 2007.

Lecture on "Death Rites and the History of Islam" in the Anthropology Department's Brown Bag Speaker Series. October, 2006.

Lecturer on the "Pillars of Islam" to the entire Midshipmen Battalion of Texas A&M University's Department of the Navy. February, 2005.

Public Lecture, "Women and the Shari`a: Strategic Issues Facing the Middle East." Addressing the Academy for Future International Leaders at Texas A&M University. February, 2002.

Departmental Service:

Library Representative, 2007-08.

Graduate Committee Member, 2006-07.

History Club Advisor, 2004-05.

Member of the Medieval History Search Committee in 2003-04.
Organizer of the Junior Faculty Workshop in 2004-05.
Representative of the History Department at Graduation Ceremonies. December, 2002.

Conference Panels Organized:

“Religious Authority in Early Islamic Historical Writing” (AHA 2001)
“Ritual, Law and Society in Early Islam” (MESA 2002).

Peer Reviews:

Panelist for the National Endowment of the Humanities, Reviewing Applications to the Fellowships Program in African and Middle Eastern Studies.
Reviewer of article submissions for the *Journal of the History of Ideas* and for the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.
Reviewer of book proposals for Cambridge University Press.

Other Service:

Participant in an ACLS seminar on Advocacy for the Humanities, September, 2008.
Development of Texas A&M University’s library collection of books in English and Arabic on Islam and the Middle East. Ordered so far about thirty thousand dollars of essential books, scholarly monographs and general reference works to benefit students and scholars at the university. Worked closely with Dr. Wyoma van Duinkerkeren on proposals for further development.
Member of the Selection Committee for MESA’s Graduate Student Paper Prize, 2007.
Adviser of a research paper on “Islam and the Internet” by students of Texas A&M University’s Academy for Future International Leaders. Spring, 2005.
Co-organizer of “Religion in Film” series for fellows at the Center for the Study of World Religions, 1999-2000.
Graduate Resident Fellow at Yale University's Calhoun College, 1995-96. Helped find speakers for the Master's Teas and organized a “History and Film” cycle involving faculty, graduates and undergraduates.
Co-chair of the Speakers' Committee of the Andrew's Society, Yale University's forum for graduate students in history, 1995-96. Invited several historians from across the country for this lecture series.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:

American Academy of Religion
American Historical Association
American Oriental Society
Medieval Academy of America
Middle East Medievalists
Middle East Studies Association

PROFILES:

Ann Marie Deer Owens, "Noted historian of early Islam makes past come to life."

[Vanderbilt View](#) 2, 1 (October 2008) 7.

Tamim Choudhury, "Leor Halevi: The Historian of Islam at Texas A&M." Texas A&M News and Information, Division of Marketing and Communications, Dec. 5, 2007. Story profiled on [Texas A&M's homepage](#).

Olivia Abernethy, "Diversity begins 'Here,'" featured article on my course "A History of Islam." [The Cornerstone Magazine](#) (2007), an undergraduate publication in the College of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M.

LANGUAGES & CULTURAL BACKGROUND:

Born in Montreal, Canada to Israeli parents of Moroccan and Hungarian descent, I grew up and received most of my primary education in Puebla, Mexico. Since 1990 I have lived primarily in the United States, but spent two years abroad, in Jerusalem and Paris. As a result of these wanderings and a passion for languages, I have native fluency in Hebrew, Spanish and English; proficiency in Arabic, Latin and French; and a working knowledge of German.

REFERENCES:

1. Roy P. Mottahedeh
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Center for Middle Eastern Studies
Harvard University
1430 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138 US
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2. Michael Cook
Cleveland E. Dodge Professor of Near Eastern Studies
Near Eastern Studies Department
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110 Jones Hall, Princeton, NJ 08544-1008 US
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3. Wolfhart P. Heinrichs
James Richard Jewett Professor of Arabic
Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
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4. William Graham
Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies and Professor of the History of Religion
Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations
Harvard University
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5. Everett K. Rowson
Associate Professor of Medieval Islamic Literature, Law, and Theology
Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies
New York University
50 Washington Square South
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6. Prosser Gifford
Rhodes Scholar and Former Director of Scholarly Programs at the Library of Congress
59 Penzance Road
Woods Hole, MA 02543
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7. Daniel Bornstein
Professor of the History of Christianity, Stella K. Darrow Chair in Catholic Studies
Department of History
Washington University in St. Louis
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