

[2015 Eleanor Tufts Book Award Winner](#)

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This year's committee received an unprecedented 22 entries that all merit high praise for their contributions to the history of art and architecture in Iberia. As a committee, we unanimously voted Glair Anderson's *The Islamic Villa in Early Medieval Iberia: Architecture and Court Culture in Umayyad Córdoba* the winner of the 2015 Eleanor Tufts Book Award. Anderson's book, which examines the aristocratic villas and court culture of Córdoba during the Umayyad dynasty, is unique in several respects. A deeply synthetic study, it draws on a wide range of material including - but not limited to - medieval Arabic texts, ivory carving, agricultural treatises, and archaeological findings to shed light on this important facet of Umayyad architectural patronage. As well as reconstructing the Islamic villa as an architectural entity, Anderson's book presents it fully within a rich social and political context; considerations of decor, ceremony, and agricultural productivity are key to the study. Of particular importance is Anderson's nuanced analysis of the villa's patronage, which fell to members of the "unfree elite." A major theme of the book is its recognition that the *munyas* of Umayyad Córdoba belong to the long tradition of Mediterranean villas which began in the Roman era and continued in Christian European and New World locales.

This publication met and surpassed the stipulated award criteria of "originality of conception, thoroughness of research, rigor of argument, brilliance of insight, significance of findings, and clarity of expression." Although the book will engage and satisfy specialists in Islamic art and architecture, Anderson's clear prose makes it accessible and valuable to anyone with an interest in a host of related fields.

Respectfully,

The 2015 Eleanor Tufts Book Award Committee

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