

Dr. Michelle Armstrong-Partida specializes in the study of gender, sexuality, and women's history in Iberia and the Mediterranean. Her current project is a comparative study of concubinous unions among the merchant class, urban poor, and peasantry across the late medieval Mediterranean. Based on archives in Barcelona, Mallorca, Valencia, Marseille, Palermo, Venice, and Genoa, this research exposes the significant population of enslaved, single, and married women who by circumstance or choice, ended up in an informal union to weave the experiences of women at the lowest levels of society into an account of medieval people who remained on the margins of marriage. She has also embarked on a collaborative project on singlewomen—both enslaved, formerly enslaved, and free—in the late medieval Mediterranean with fellow medievalist Susan McDonough and together they have written articles on women who lived on the spectrum of singleness, prostitute-concubines, and laboring class masculinity. They have also used a Mediterranean framework to write about a shared sexual culture of same-gender relationships and gender fluidity in medieval Christian and Islamic societies.