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LIMINAL CRAFT, EXCEPTIONAL LAW: PRELIMINARY NOTES ON MIDWIVES IN MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC WRITINGS

In his monumental "Introduction to History," *al-Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldun, the well-known Muslim historiographer and philosopher of history (d. 1406 A.D.), dedicates a whole chapter to midwifery (*ṣināʿat al-tawlīd*) that is as original in conception as it is rich in detail. The chapter is included in Part V, which offers a survey of professions and crafts—"the 'accidents' of sedentary culture"—that for Ibn Khaldun reflect the sophistication of urban life.[1] Within this survey, midwifery ranks among the most basic crafts (*ummahāt al-ṣanāʾiʿ*), being "something necessary in civilization and a matter of general concern, because it assures, as a rule, the life of the newborn child." Moreover, like "the art of writing, book production, singing, and medicine," midwifery is regarded as a noble craft because of the subject that is at the heart of it (*sharīf bi-l-mawḍūʿ*).[2]

Ibn Khaldun first defines three areas of the professional expertise of the midwife (*qābila,* pl. *qawābil,* "she who receives," that is to say, receives the newborn infant, or *muwallida,* she who helps a woman to give birth)[3]: (1) "how to proceed in bringing the newborn child gently out of the womb of its mother"; (2) "how to prepare the things that go with that"; and (3) "what is good for (a newborn child) after it is born," that is to say, how to treat it.[4] With striking familiarity and in great detail, probably the result of extensive and meticulous reading in medical manuals and/or information he had collected from female informants,[5] Ibn Khaldun describes female anatomy and physiology and outlines the techniques of midwifery. He is aware that, given what we today would call "the modesty code," this "craft is as a rule restricted to women since they, as women, may see the pudenda of other women" (*al-ẓāhirāt baʿḍahunna ʿalā ʿawrāt baʿḍ*).[6] Moreover, "midwives are better acquainted" with obstetrics than others,[7] and "we likewise find them better acquainted than a skilful [male] physician with the means of treating the ills affecting the bodies of little children from the time they are sucklings until they are weaned."[8] Observing that, due to God's way of creation, "the [mother's] opening is too narrow for it, and it is difficult (for the embryo to come out)"[9] or, as physical anthropologists today put it, "human beings have a difficult birth because evolution has matched the size of the new-born human brain very closely to the limits

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of the mother's body,"[10] Ibn Khaldun concludes the first part of his chapter by saying that "this craft is necessary [essential] to the human species in civilization. Without it, the individuals of the species could not, as a rule, come into being."[11]

Rather unexpectedly, Ibn Khaldun then turns to a philosophical argument about the possibility of re-creating the human species if it became extinct.[12] He brings in al-Farabi (d. 950 A.D.) and "Spanish philosophers" who argue that the end of created beings, especially the human species (*al-nawʿ al-insānī*), is inconceivable because that would make "a later existence of them . . . impossible. Their existence depends upon the existence of midwifery (*li-tawaqquf ihi ʿalā wujūd hādhihi al-ṣināʿa*), without which man could not come into being[!]."[13] Although he does not accept their theory, Ibn Khaldun's philosophical deliberations take him far from his initial discussion of the practical aspects of the craft and lend the role of the midwife an almost cosmological-existential dimension, placing her, at least theoretically, in a highly elevated position. To what extent is this view shared by other thinkers or based on earlier sources from the Islamic world? In answering this question through a survey of some branches of mainly theoretical (including legal) and literary writings, here I trace the attitudes toward midwives on the part of male Muslims—biographers, physicians, and jurists—to an ambivalent mixture of awareness of the midwife's essential role in society with obvious marginalization that sometimes results in total absence of midwives in those texts where I expected them to appear. Thus, I hope to draw a better understanding of the gender relations that existed in medieval Muslim societies.

When I began looking for sources for a sociocultural history of midwifery in premodern Islamic contexts, I found myself browsing through the rich contemporary Arabic biographical dictionaries. There, and particularly in biographies devoted to women either in early Islamic history or in the late Middle Ages, I hoped to locate materials on midwives and female physicians whose achievements had earned them a special entry.[14] For instance, some of the biographical collections from the Mamluk period contain information on personalities, including women, engaged in a wide range of occupations and professions.[15] However, much to my disappointment, I discovered that none of the compilers of such collections—all of them men, of course—shared Ibn Khaldun's high opinion of midwifery and its practitioners. In other words, midwives, including those of the first generations of Muslims and "professionals" of later periods, are almost totally absent.[16] For example, among the 1,075 women featured in a separate part (*Kitab al-Nisaʾ*) of Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Sakhawi's biographical collection, *al-Dawʾ al-Lamiʿ* (compiled in 15th-century Cairo), only three can be clearly identified as midwives: Umm al-Khayr bint Ahmad b. Muhammad b. Muhammad (d. 1456 A.D.),[17] Faʾida (or Hajar) bint Muhibb al-Din (?) (d. 1467 or 1468 A.D.)[18] and Khadija bint Muhammad b. ʿAbdallah Bulkam (no death date mentioned).[19] All three were well educated and involved in religious activities, and it is probably this, not their occupation as midwives, that secured each of them an entry in al-Sakhawi's collection. Umm al-Khayr and Khadija, the latter designated *raʾīsa* (master? woman of authority?), received several teaching licenses (*ijāzāt*) from religious scholars and may thus be called *ʿālimāt*; Umm al-Khayr was a teacher, probably of hadith, as was common among educated women in the Middle East in the late Middle Ages.[20] Faʾida served as the *shaykha* of a sufi convent for women (*ribāt al-ẓāhiriyya*) in Mecca and is praised for her religious knowledge and preaching. Little is said about the activities of the three women as midwives, and it is

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therefore difficult to assess to what extent they engaged in the field as "professionals." Khadija seems to have inherited her expertise from her grandmother and Faʾida from her mother. Khadija and Umm al-Khayr assisted noble women in Cairo and in Mecca, respectively, whereas Faʾida is said to have served Meccan women in general.

Obviously, women who practiced midwifery often combined this with other occupations such as teaching. An earlier example is given by the Damascene historian Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Jazari (d. 1338 A.D.). In his report of the death of Umm al-Khayr Khadija bint Fakhr al-Din Abu ʿAmr ʿUthman al-Nawzari (known as Dawʾ al-Sabah) in Cairo in December 1333 A.D., al-Jazari first describes in detail her accomplishments as a scholar and then highlights that she gained prosperity in old age thanks to the midwifery services she extended to the Sultan al-Malik al-Nasir Muhammad's wife.[21] This may allude to the advantage older, experienced women enjoyed in Muslim societies: because they had stopped menstruating and could no longer give birth, their purity was guaranteed, and they could move more freely in the public space and cooperate with male doctors in assisting pregnant women.[22] As I will show, they could also play a crucial role as expert witnesses in court, an arena where the social aspect of their activity is most clearly reflected.

Biographers of physicians in the medieval Muslim world were interested mainly in medicine as an intellectual domain and therefore tended to single out authors of medical compilations and treatises as well as court physicians.[23] This can explain the underrepresentation of female medical practitioners in their compilations, yet another disappointment from my point of view. Midwives in particular were associated not only with the less prestigious medical practice but also with popular beliefs, superstition, and magic, as illustrated by the critical opinion of Ibn al-Hajj al-ʿAbdari, the Cairene jurist of the 13th/14th century A.D. He writes that, like other women, midwives adopt, out of ignorance, many disgraceful practices (*ʿawāʾid radīʾa*) in contradiction with the sacred law, the shariʿa.[24] He goes on to describe those practices in detail.[25] In this context, one should keep in mind that in premodern times, when healers came from various educational backgrounds and supplied medical services without being necessarily licensed by or supervised through any official central system, "professional" midwifery probably did not mean more than training through apprenticeship, work for wages, occasional use of instruments, cooperation with male physicians in complicated cases, and reputation. The "nonprofessionals," probably the majority of midwives, were those elder, experienced women who voluntarily extended help to family and community members.

A survey of three collections of physicians' biographies in Arabic by Ibn Juljul (b. in Cordoba in 944; d. after 994 A.D.),[26] Ibn al-Qifti (b. in Upper Egypt in 1172; d. in Aleppo in 1248 A.D.),[27] and Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa (b. in Damascus after 1194; d. in Sarkhad—or Salkhad—in the Hawran, in 1270 A.D.)[28] yielded only one entry devoted specifically to a female physician, namely, Zaynab, the legendary doctor (*ṭabība*) of Banu Awd in the Umayyad period, who is said to have been both a surgeon and an ophthalmologist.[29] But there is not a single article devoted entirely to a midwife.[30]

Unlike authors of medical encyclopedias and gynecological-obstetrical treatises in the eastern parts of the Islamic Mediterranean world whose works I have consulted for my research, two famous Andalusian physicians of the 10th and 11th century A.D. write appreciatively of the firsthand bodily experience of the midwife and see her as a key

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figure in the delivery scene, either under a male doctor's supervision or independently, even in complicated and dangerous situations.[31] As we can infer from ʿArib b. Saʿid (or Saʿd) al-Qurtubi's *Khalq al-Janin wa-Tadbir al-Habala wa-l-Mawludin* (On the Generation of the Fetus and the Treatment of Pregnant Women and Newborn Babies)[32] and Khalaf b. al-ʿAbbas al-Zahrawi's *Kitab al-Tasrif li-Man ʿAjiza ʿan al-Taʾlif* (The Arrangement [of Medical Knowledge] for One Who is Unable to Compile [a Manual for Himself]),[33] physicians in Muslim Spain were familiar with some highly competent and reliable midwives. This is significant even if we take into account that much of what we find in the writings of the two Andalusian physicians is theoretical[34] and that the image of the midwife in these works is idealized. However, because we know that al-Zahrawi criticized the excess of theory and the lack of experience among the physicians of his time,[35] that he included his own experiences and case histories in the huge compilation he wrote, and, moreover, that he contributed a number of technological innovations, among them a variety of obstetrical forceps,[36] it is reasonable to assume that skillful midwives served in Cordova at the time and that he cooperated with one or some of them, at least in complex situations.

This assumption is supported by other occasional references to female doctors and midwives in the "Golden Age" of Muslim Spain.[37] Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, in an entry on al-Hafid Abu Bakr b. Zuhr, mentions the latter's sister and her daughter who, "being both experts in gynecology" (*wa-lahumā khibra jayyida bi-mā yataʿallaqu bi-mudāwāt al-nisāʾ*), "served as the only physicians and midwives for the women of Caliph al-Mansur's household" in 11th-century Cordova (*wa-lā yaqbalu li-l-Manṣūr wa-ahlihi walad*^{an} *illā ukht al-Ḥafīd aw bintuhā . . .).*[38] Another Andalusian female doctor, depicted as a learned and honorable woman (*al-ṭabība al-adība . . . nabīla, ḥasība*), was Umm al-Hasan (or Umm al-Husayn), the daughter of the Qadi Ahmad b. ʿAbdallah b. ʿAbd al-Munʿim, Abu Jaʿfar al-Tanjali (d. in Lawsha in 1349 or 1350 A.D.), who had studied medicine himself.[39] In addition to the medicine her father had taught her, she excelled in Qurʾan recitation and wrote poetry.[40] Ibn Hazm, the Andalusian jurist and writer of the 11th century A.D., in his *Tawq al-Hamama* (Ring of the Dove, a treatise on love and lovers) mentions the female doctor (*ṭabība*) and blood-letter (*ḥajjāma*) at the top of a list of "women plying a trade or profession that gives them ready access to people."[41] Later, in the 14th/15th century A.D., we hear of Muslim midwives from Toledo "imported" to Navarre to serve Queen Leanor.[42]

No wonder, then, that given the years he spent in al-Andalus during the 14th century, Ibn Khaldun had such a high opinion of midwives. And when at exactly the same time we find Abu al-Faraj b. Lubb of Granada (d. 1381 A.D.) complaining of a decline in the standards of midwifery,[43] this may well mean that he had a similarly high image of midwives. But even for Ibn Khaldun, learned male doctors on the whole rank higher within the hierarchy of the medical profession. After recognizing the midwife's expertise in pediatrics, Ibn Khaldun expresses a significant reservation: "This is simply because the human body, at this stage, is only potentially a human body. After (the child) is weaned, (its body) becomes actually a human one. Then, its need for a physician is greater (than its need for a midwife)."[44]

Turning to narrations on the birth of the Prophet, I again expected to find some stories and myths on midwives in early Arab-Muslim societies of the sort that existed in ancient Near Eastern cultures (see below). Of course, the few stories that I actually

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found appear in texts that combine biography with hagiography and thus abound with legendary motifs that make the reconstruction of the real lives of their central characters a complicated, if not impossible, task. However, as hagiographic literature often tends to highlight the uniqueness of miraculous events by placing them within as ordinary a setting as possible, details in the accounts of the Prophet's birth, and that of other members of his family, can help shed light on the contemporary images and roles of midwives. While surveying the sources, not only did I try to tease out information from them on midwives—who, again disappointingly, play a secondary, albeit not completely insignificant, role—but also I found it hard to escape other aspects of the fascinating story of Muhammad's birth.

There are many different versions of the story of the Prophet's birth, all highly interesting in themselves.[45] We find them in chronicles and in biographical writings, particularly in the traditional accounts of Muhammad's life and background (*sīra*),[46] and encounter them in treatises dedicated to the miracles the Prophet performed or that happened to him (*dalāʾil al-nubuwwa, amarāt al-nubuwwa, aʿlām al-nubuwwa*), especially, of course, those devoted entirely to the event of his birth (*mawlid al-nabī*).[47] Here I highlight the questions that come up when looking at the role of the midwife in these narrations: Was Amina bint Wahb, the Prophet's mother, assisted by one or more midwives? If so, who was/were she/they? Of more importance, how do Islamic biographical-hagiographic works portray her/them, and what can we learn from this about the status and functions of midwives at the time these texts were written?

On the whole, when they are mentioned at all, the role of the women who helped Muhammad's mother is represented as marginal. This is understandable if we take into account the theological background of the birth stories. According to the early Islamic conception of history, God created the Light of Muhammad 9,000 years before things were created, and Muhammad was destined to be a prophet long before the creation of Adam. Indeed, the latter came into being so as to help prepare for the appearance of the Prophet of Islam.[48]

No wonder that in such a setting the physical body of Muhammad, the Seal of all Prophets, is seen as out of the ordinary,[49] and his birth becomes an event of cosmological magnitude that reduces its earthly aspects to secondary importance.[50] As in certain versions of the Jewish tradition of the birth of Moses where no midwife is mentioned[51] and, of course, the story of Jesus' nativity in the Gospels of Matthew (1:18–25) and particularly Luke (2:1–8), where we find no reference even to the occurrence of parturition, let alone to helpers,[52] the most authoritative early Islamic *sīra* compilation, by Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham (8th and 9th century, respectively), altogether ignores the moment of the Prophet Muhammad's birth, and no mention is made of a midwife.[53]

In his *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kubra,* Muhammad ibn Saʿd (d. 845 A.D.), Ibn Hisham's contemporary, devotes some attention to the Prophet's birth. He describes surrealistic-fantastic occurrences: light that emerged the moment the infant was separated from his mother illuminating all between east and west; the exceptional way Muhammad dropped down, rested upon his knees, and raised his head toward heaven[54]; and a pottery vessel that, according to a local custom, had been placed on top of him (to protect him during the night from an evil eye?[55]) and was found split in two, with Muhammad lying beneath it, his eyes wide open, gazing up to heaven. Moreover, Ibn Saʿd tells us, the child was born clean (*naẓīf*), with his umbilical cord already cut off (*masrūr*),[56]

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and circumcised (*maḥtūn*), "so that no one saw my private parts" (*wa-lam yara aḥad saw'atī*), as Muhammad is said to have explained.[57] Yet here, too, the narrator assigns no role to human helpers of any kind. But then, of course, given the miraculous circumstances of his birth, such help was unnecessary.[58] Even in much "thicker" narrations of the Prophet's birth, such as those of al-Kharkushi (d. 1015 A.D.)[59] and Ibn Fahd (d. 1480 A.D.),[60] midwives do not appear in the birthplace: Amina is depicted as being alone at home when birth pains take hold of her.[61] But, unlike reports in other compilations and despite the supernatural character of the delivery as a whole, in these accounts she is said to have suffered terribly.[62]

These are not the only versions of the story of Muhammad's birth, of course. At a rather early stage (probably in the 9th or 10th century A.D.) the figure of a woman, Fatima bint ʿAbdallah, the mother of ʿUthman b. Abi al-ʿAs, a later close companion of the Prophet,[63] appears in our texts as being present at the Prophet's birth, although she is given no active role in assisting Amina.[64] Her "mission" was not only to serve as a witness to the miracles that occurred when Muhammad was born, corroborating Amina's testimony, but probably also to testify, in a "legal" sense, to the birth itself (see below).[65] Moreover, ignoring the "historical" question of whether a woman of the tribe of Thaqif, located in Ta'if, actually attended the Prophet's birth, one can assume that early Islamic writings, by giving her a role—however marginal—in the story of the Prophet's birth, intended to glorify her son more than her.

Dala'il al-Nubuwwa by Abu Nuʿaym al-Isfahani (d. 1038 A.D.) is probably one of the few works of the time that not only mention but also identify a midwife at the birth: al-Shifa' bint ʿAmr b. ʿAwf, mother of ʿAbd al-Rahman b. ʿAwf. The latter, another prominent companion of the Prophet Muhammad, took part in both migrations of Muhammad's supporters, fought in all the main battles of the Prophet, and, according to Muslim tradition, was one of ten believers Muhammad assured a place in Paradise; he died about 652 A.D.[66] Al-Shifa' was among the first converts to Islam and one of the Muslim immigrants from Mecca to Medina.[67] Her role in the story is, again, to attest to the birth and to the miraculous occurrences surrounding it. At the same time, the text alludes to some more concrete aspects of her function when she is quoted as recounting how the infant dropped into her hands and made his first sound—a cry or a sneeze—upon which she heard a voice responding, "May God have mercy on you" and how she then dressed him and laid him down.[68]

According to a Shiʿi Ithna-ʿAshari version of the Prophet's birth story, some anonymous midwives came to help Amina and found to their astonishment that the baby already had his umbilical cord cut off, had been swaddled, and had his eyes anointed with collyrium, although nobody, including his mother, had actually treated him. Thus left "unemployed," their main task, here too, was to pass on their testimony.[69]

Some elaborations of the story of Muhammad's birth from the late Middle Ages add realistic details to the supernatural characteristics of the delivery. For example, while Muhammad is described not only as born circumcised and with his umbilical cord cut off but also as clean, purified, perfumed, and anointed,[70] and the pregnancy is depicted as exceptionally easy,[71] his mother is portrayed much more realistically: she is heavily perspiring and suffering immense pains before and during birth,[72] after which she falls ill and thus proves unable to breastfeed her infant for more than a week.[73]

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The vacuum left by the absence in several texts of helping women and a midwife, and the reduced role al-Shifaʾ plays in others, is filled in a few cases—probably beginning with al-Kharkushi in the 10th/11th century A.D.—by supernatural figures who are made to function very much like human helpers and midwives[74]: an angel who, as in the Qurʾanic story of Jesus' birth, calms the mother down and gives her milk,[75] and supernatural female figures who crowd the house, surrounding and supporting her with their arms, giving her something to drink and anointing her belly.[76] Tall women, identified as Asiya, the Israelite wife of Pharaoh,[77] and Maryam, Jesus' mother—both, by the way, destined to be Muhammad's wives in Paradise (*yaṣīrāni zawjatayni lahu ṣalʿam fī al-janna*)[78]—are there as well, presenting Amina to women to whom they refer as *ḥūr al-ʿayn*, "the virgins of Paradise."[79]

Burhan al-Din al-Halabi, in an effort to harmonize contradictory traditions—those describing Amina as giving birth without any human assistance, on the one hand, and those according to which al-Shifaʾ and ʿUthman b. Abi al-ʿAs's mother attended her, on the other—argues that the latter joined Amina at a later stage of her labor.[80] The theme of saints extending help to women in labor, thus replacing the regular midwife, appears also in stories of miracles related to women in, for instance, Moroccan hagiographic writings from the Middle Ages.[81] Here it reflects, perhaps, a yearning for supernatural intervention when the usual physical treatment proves useless or unsuccessful. From the above it is clear that even in hagiographic contexts it was difficult to imagine childbirth—in regular daily life an all-female communal event with a midwife as a supervisor and guide—without any sort of moral and physical support extended by women, be they human or celestial. Given the hagiographic context, the presence of supernatural figures overshadows the role of the human helpers involved in the Prophet's birth, who remain on the margins of the story.

Interesting from another point of view is Amina's report of an angel, one of three delegates in human appearance, who a short while after Muhammad's birth stamps the prophecy seal between his shoulders and then puts his mouth on the infant's, feeding him as if he were a bird.[82] This can be regarded as an early act of initiation preceding the event, alluded to in the Qurʾan (94:1–3), of an angel opening the breast of the child Muhammad, purifying his heart.[83] Amina's emotional reaction when she discovers her newborn baby has disappeared is touchingly described: "My soul became anxious and my heart dismayed" (*wa-jaziʿa fuʾādī wa-dhahila qalbī*).[84]

Like al-Shifaʾ, Muhammad's freed slave and servant Salma Umm Rafiʿ seems to have been relegated to the margins of Islamic mythology. She served as midwife for the Prophet's first wife, Khadija; his female slave (*ama*), Mariya the Copt; and his daughter, Fatima.[85] Salma appears more frequently than al-Shifaʿ does in biographical and other collections; still, her figure remains "thin."[86] Ibn Saʿd alludes to her experience as a midwife when he recounts how she made the necessary preparations each time she helped Khadija deliver one of the Prophet's sons.[87] Others mention her also as the woman who, together with Asmaʾ bint ʿUmays and ʿAli, washed the body of the ailing Fatima prior to her death, a hint of another task midwives carried out in Muslim societies: purifying women's bodies before burial.[88]

According to a tradition cited by Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalani,[89] it was Sawdaʾ, or Sawdaʾ bint Misrah, who served as a midwife for Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, when she gave birth to al-Hasan, the son of ʿAli. The report contains details on how the midwife treated

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the infant immediately after his birth: she cut his umbilical cord, wrapped him in a yellow cloth—in general identified with infidels and therefore forbidden for Muslim males—but then covered him with another, white, cloth, recommended in Islam for males and females alike.[90] This change of colors, preparing the newborn infant for his encounter with his distinguished grandfather Muhammad, was probably intended to emphasize his transition from a natural feminine environment into the monotheist sphere of the new religion.

None of the women who served the Prophet's family became mythological figures who might thus have enhanced the craft of midwifery and heightened the prestige of the women practicing it as, for instance, is the case with midwives in ancient Mesopotamia who embodied on earth the Mother Goddess, the "Wise Mother."[91] Nor did any of them become the prototype for later midwives as we see happening in the Jewish tradition, where Shifra and Puʿa are said to have helped the Hebrew women in Egypt to give birth, enjoying God's blessing as the people of Israel multiplied and strengthened thanks to their courage.[92] *Midrash Exodus Rabbah,* an almost purely Haggadic exegesis compiled in Palestine either in the early Islamic period or between the 9th and the 11th or 12th century A.D., goes one step further in its effort to create a mythical aura around the two midwives and identifies them with the more famous Jochebed, Moses' mother, and Miryam, his sister. Elaborating on the relevant verses in *Exodus* 1, the *Midrash* praises both of them for the role they fulfilled in saving the children born to the Israelites and emphasizes the generous remuneration God bestowed on them.[93]

The marginality in medieval Islamic writings of the midwife, or midwives, who helped the Prophet Muhammad's mother, stands out all the more when one compares the chapters on the lactation of the infant Muhammad with those on his birth. It is remarkable how compilers such as Ibn Hisham, al-Kharkushi, and al-Bayhaqi focus on Halima bint Abi Dhuʾayb al-Saʿdiyya, the Prophet's best known wet nurse: they make her the central figure and the main narrator in the relevant chapters while altogether ignoring the midwife who assisted Muhammad's mother.

Why did the issue of nursing—maternal breastfeeding as well as wet nursing—attract the attention of medieval Muslim writers, particularly of jurists who devoted detailed chapters in their legal compilations to the subject, much more than midwifery? Nursing is a long-term intrafamilial affair. It plays a decisive role not only in ensuring the nursling's survival prospects, the first stages of his/her socialization, and, according to Islamic medical theories, the consolidation of his/her character traits[94] but also in corroborating women's status vis-à-vis men and the power relations that reign within the family. The attention physicians and religious scholars alike paid to the question of a man's sexual relations with a nursing woman brings to the fore the impact breastfeeding had on everyday family life.[95] Moreover, by enabling it to form the basis for a complex and ramified network of impediments to marriage, Islamic law gave nonmaternal breastfeeding a crucial role in social life as a whole.[96]

Breastfeeding is mentioned in six Qurʾanic verses, three of which contain rulings that were to form the basis for the ramified legal discussions we find later in Qurʾan commentaries, hadith, and legal literature.[97] In contrast, no midwife is mentioned in Qurʾanic verses referring to pregnancy and early childhood, for instance, 31:14, or describing the stages of human life, from conception to old age and death, for instance

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22:5 and 23:13–15. No midwife features in the story of the birth of Maryam, Jesus' mother, in Qurʾan 3:36 or in connection to the story of the infant Moses in 28:7–12.[98] This can explain, at least in part, why midwives appear only rarely in the huge corpus of canonical hadith attributed to the Prophet, many of which serve as commentary on the Qurʾanic text.

Men's ambivalent attitudes toward birth and the mother-genitrix may well have contributed to the midwife's relative marginality in Arabic-Islamic texts. Throughout history, birth for them was wrapped in mystery, fears, and taboos. Because they were excluded from this process, males felt it threatened their superiority, prompting them to attribute magical powers to the female—the "primordial other"—while, at the same time, trying to belittle her role in reproduction.[99] According to the Greek myth of autochthony, one had to be born of the earth (*chthon*), not of a woman, to be recognized as an Athenian citizen. The Greek male aspiration was for birth to take place without any procreative act, as the goddess Athena had sprung fully formed out of the head of her father, Zeus.[100] The medieval Christian church—under the inspiration of the biblical myth of creation that, among other things, explains suffering at birth to be the result of divine punishment—considered women not only to be the source of depravity and the cause of man's downfall but also to be necessary, or rather a necessary evil, for procreation.[101] The Qurʾan refers to the (nameless) spouse of Adam as part of a couple. Both Adam and his wife are warned about the tree and approached by Satan and therefore jointly found guilty of the disobedience that costs them their expulsion from Paradise.[102] However, in post-Qurʾanic sources, Adam's wife, now named Hawwaʾ (Eve), is featured as responsible for the fall: Adam tasted the forbidden fruit only after having been intoxicated by the wine that Hawwaʾ made him drink. Ten punishments—among them menstruation, pregnancy, and the sufferings of childbirth—thereafter serve to remind the daughters of Eve of the fault of their first ancestress.[103]

Midwives represent the epitome of the physical essence of femininity, with its periods of impurity during menstruation and childbirth and after delivery; they are associated with its creative power and threatening mystery alike and embody the purely feminine subculture.[104] As such they draw simultaneous feelings of contempt and fear from men. These, in turn, made the midwife a likely target for misogynous sentiments, whether explicitly expressed—Ibn al-Hajj's *Madkhal* is a salient example (see above)—or implicitly reflected in silence about the midwife's crucial role in society.

In patriarchal terms, by giving birth and life, by breastfeeding and caring for the newborn child, the woman performs her duties, first as a place of "safekeeping" for her husband's (or master's) semen and then as a protecting mother, thus fulfilling the expectations of her husband's family. The woman bearing the child is a vessel, then, and the midwife is a tool for getting the baby out of the vessel.[105] In contrast, because the future of a lineage was entrusted in her hands, it is hard to imagine men in patriarchal societies ignoring the power of the midwife altogether. Moreover, Muslim jurists recognized the importance of midwives as agents of the patriarchal system in its permanent efforts to control the female domain through legal procedures and rites of passage. This explains why, despite their low image in Arabic-Islamic writings, midwives were granted exceptional legal status and consequently enjoyed a number of social privileges, most significant among them their role as witnesses in court.

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When issues involving women's reproductive organs are brought before a shar'ia court—menstruation, competence for sexual intercourse, virginity at the time of marriage, pregnancy, miscarriage and the age of the miscarried fetus, birth, the first cry of the newborn, the verification of the mother's identity, as well as defects of the sexual organs—the qadi may authorize one or more midwives to conduct the necessary physical examinations and summon them to testify as experts. This is not necessarily a direct testimony but sometimes a circumstantial one, and they are allowed to give it independently, that is to say, in the absence of male witnesses.[106] Muslim jurists who accept this rule, on occasion reluctantly, are unanimous that, due to the modesty code, there is no choice but to rely on the testimony women give regarding what men are forbidden to watch[107] except in cases of danger to life, for example, during a complex delivery, when male physicians are called upon to extend help. Already in the 8th or 9th century A.D. we find this rule formulated in ʿAbd al-Razzaq's hadith collection: "the sunna proceeded in allowing the testimony of females without the presence of a male witness in matters they are in charge of [*maḍat al-sunna fī an tajūza shahādat al-nisāʾ laysa maʿahunna rajul*], such as birth, the infant's first cry, and other feminine matters which they and only they are entitled to examine."[108] This principle, *infirād,* a testimony of women, or even a single woman, not authenticated by male witnesses, is an exception—justified by necessity (*ḍarūra*)[109]—to the basic rule derived from a Qurʾanic verse (2:282) that implies the testimony of a woman is less credible than that of a man.[110] The controversy among jurists, sometimes taking place within one and the same school of law (*madhhab*), focuses mainly on the range of legal questions to which this exceptional rule applies and on the number of female witnesses required.[111]

In this sociolegal context it is tempting to reexamine the role of Fatima bint ʿAbdallah, ʿUthman b. Abi al-ʿAs's mother, and al- Shifaʾ bint ʿAmr in terms of testimony given not before a regular court but before the "court of history." Some authors of early *sīra, dalāʾil*, and *ṭabaqāt* writings may have been unaware of the importance of eyewitnesses to the Prophet's birth, although, as we have seen, hadith compilers as early as ʿAbd al-Razzaq do refer to the question of *infirād*. In contrast, it is reasonable to assume that later writers, from the 9th/10th century A.D. onward, prompted by the intensifying legal discussions on the theme of women's testimony, began allocating a role, however modest, to those women who helped the Prophet's mother give birth. Likewise, traditions in *sīra* and similar compilations telling the stories of Muhammad's wet nurses, particularly Halima, may well have been influenced by contemporary legal discussions on prohibitions of marriage stemming from nonmaternal lactation and at the same time helped consolidate the Islamic rules in this regard.[112] If we take into account the mystery surrounding the birth of the Prophet Muhammad in the previously mentioned reports, particularly the absence of Amina's family members or those of her deceased husband, ʿAbdallah, on the one hand, and the importance attributed to the Prophet's pure lineage (*nasab*), on the other hand,[113] we may understand why religious scholars, mindful of the legal significance of such questions, insisted on furnishing judicial evidence to the Prophet's genealogy through the testimony of two (!) female eyewitnesses. Their testimony was also essential in the context of another debate that started among Muslim scholars around the 12th century A.D. over whether the Prophet was born at night or in daylight.[114]

To conclude, classical Arabic texts that deal with women's affairs, either from the medical or from the religious perspective, are without exception the product of male

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scholars, members of "the sex that begets, not bears, young."[115] Although in reality midwifery was based on unwritten female wisdom transferred through apprenticeship,[116] these texts were directed mainly at male readers—physicians and jurists. As we have seen, they mirror an ambivalent attitude toward midwives, a mixture of repressed admiration, open repulsion, and fear. Thus, midwives are almost totally absent from Islamic scriptures, and Muslim writers make them play only a minor role in biographical and hagiographic literature, where the midwives of the Prophet's family are consciously or unconsciously "blocked" from becoming mythological figures.

While on the whole remaining marginal literary figures in those stories of *mawlid al-nabī* incorporated in *sīra* compilations and related genres, women, sometimes hesitatingly identified as midwives, nevertheless played a role through their very presence at the moment of the Prophet's birth. In a storylike manner, they set an example for the implication of the legal rules concerning the midwife's status in court, rules that were formulated and consolidated in the formative period of Islamic law side by side with the *mawlid* traditions.

Men acknowledged the power of the midwife in whose hands the future of a lineage was entrusted, as the chapter that Ibn Khaldun dedicated to this profession in *al-Muqaddima* shows, and were aware of their ritual-magical leading role in the all-female domain of the birth scene, as reflected in the unbridled attack on Cairene midwives in Ibn al-Hajj's *al-Madkhal.* Moreover, men recognized the importance of midwives as agents of a patriarchal system that continuously sought to control the female domain, the "queendom of the mothers." Although she did not rank highly in social terms, the midwife was granted exceptional legal status as a witness in court. In her capacity as the "overseer" in the birth place, extending physical help, witnessing to events involving women's bodies, and, at the same time, fulfilling prescribed ritual roles, she found herself at the intersection of public and private spheres in a quasi-official but still liminal status—the female representative of patriarchal authorities.[117]

NOTES

Author's note: This article is part of a work in progress on the sociocultural history of midwifery in premodern Muslim societies. While working on this topic, I cannot avoid thinking with sorrow and empathy of those pregnant Palestinian women in the occupied territories whom the Israeli army blocked from getting to the hospital and with horror of the babies who died as a result. I started the research for this project during a sabbatical in Harvard Divinity School, where I enjoyed the kind hospitality and generous support of the Center for the Study of World Religions. I am grateful to Dr. Adrien Leites of the Sorbonne (Paris IV) University and Prof. Meir Malul of the University of Haifa for their advice, as well as my friend Dick Bruggeman for his unstinting help in editing the text.

[1]Fuad Baali, *Society, State and Urbanism: Ibn Khaldun's Sociological Thought* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1988), 36. See also Stephen Frederic Dale, "Ibn Khaldun: The Last Greek and the First *Annaliste* Historian," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38 (2006): 438.

[2]ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima*, ed. E. Quatremère (Paris: Bibliothèque Impériale, 1858), 2:316. Translated by Franz Rosenthal as *The Muqaddima: An Introduction to History* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), 2:355–56.

[3]Another term still in use today to designate the traditional midwife is *dāya,* a Persian word meaning "wet nurse" that served as a synonym of *qābila* as early as the Mamluk period. See Mahmoud Omidsalar and Theresa Omidsalar, "Dāya," *Encyclopaedia Iranica* 7 (1996): 164–66. For the use of the term *dāya* in Egypt see, for instance, Amira El-Azhary Sonbol, *The Creation of a Medical Profession in Egypt, 1800–1922* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1991), 3, 135.

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[4]Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima*, 2:328; trans. Rosenthal, 2:368.

[5]On Ibn Khaldun's familiarity with Galen's writings, see Dale, "Ibn Khaldun," 437.

[6]Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima*, 2:328; trans. Rosenthal, 2:368.

[7]Cf. Edward Shorter, *A History of Women's Bodies* (Harmondworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1984), 38.

[8]Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima*, 2:330; trans. Rosenthal, 2:370. According to Gerrit Bos, the passive role of Muslim male physicians in the treatment of women's diseases due to ethical considerations explains the modest contribution of Arabic medicine to gynecology and obstetrics. See *Ibn al-Jazzar on Sexual Diseases and Their Treatment,* trans. and study Gerrit Bos (New York: Kegan Paul, 1997), 50–51; Gerrit Bos, "Ibn al-Jazzār on Women's Diseases and Their Treatment," *Medical History* 37 (1993): 312.

[9]Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima*, 2:329; trans. Rosenthal, 2:368.

[10]Donald A. M. Gebbie, *Reproductive Anthropology—Descent through Woman* (New York: Wiley, 1981), 8.

[11]Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima*, 2:331; trans. Rosenthal, 2:370. See also Maya Shatzmiller, *Labour in the Medieval Islamic World* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 353.

[12]On the philosophical formation of Ibn Khaldun, see Dale, "Ibn Khaldun," 431–51.

[13]Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima*, 2:331–32; trans. Rosenthal, 2:371.

[14]Within my research project, the final results of which I plan to publish as a book, I have used a wide range of sources, wider than I could discuss in this paper, including, for instance, classical dictionaries, *adab* collections, and iconography. Important and interesting work has been done on the transition from traditional to Western–modern midwifery in the Middle East in the 19th and 20th centuries, but, again, this is outside the scope of this article. See, for example, Hibba Abugideiri, "Off to Work at Home: Egyptian Midwives Blur Public–Private Boundaries," *Hawwa* 6 (2008): 254–83; Khaled Fahmy, "Women, Medicine, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Egypt," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East,* ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 35–72; Mervat F. Hatem, "The Professionalization of Health and the Control of Women's Bodies as Modern Governmentalities in Nineteenth-Century Egypt," in *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era,* ed. Madeline C. Zilfi (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), 66–80; Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, "The Politics of Reproduction: Maternalism and Women's Hygiene in Iran, 1869–1941," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38 (2006): 1–29.

[15]Ruth Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections: From Ibn Saʿd to Who's Who* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1994), 3.

[16]Ahmad ʿAbd Ar-Raziq, *La femme au temps des mamluks en Égypt. Textes arabes et études islamiques* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1973, 5), 62. On the character of women's biographies in the comprehensive Arabic biographical dictionaries of the late Middle Ages, see Asma Afsaruddin, "Islamic Biographical Dictionaries: 11th to 15th Century," *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures* 1:32–36.

[17]Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Sakhawi, *al-Dawʾ al-Lamiʿ li-Ahl al-Qarn al-Tasiʿ* (Beirut: Maktabat al-Hayat, n.d.), 12:144, no. 891. Cf. ʿUmar b. Fahd al-Hashimi al-Makki (15th century A.D.), *Muʿjam al-Shuyukh*, ed. Muhammad al-Zahi (Riyad: Dar al-Yamama, 1982), 304–305. The entry devoted to Umm al-Khayr is the only one in this collection to mention midwifery as a woman's craft.

[18]Al-Sakhawi, *al-Dawʾ al-Lamiʿ,* 12:114, no. 689.

[19]Ibid., 12:31, no. 177.

[20]Jonathan Berkey, "Women and Islamic Education in the Mamluk Period," in *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender,* ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991), 143–57; Huda Lutfi, "Al-Sakhawi's *Kitab al-Nisaʾ* as a Source for the Social and Economic History of Muslim Women during the Fifteenth Century A.D.," *The Muslim World* 71 (1981): 104–124, esp. 119–21.

[21]Shams al-Din Abu ʿAbdallah Muhammad b. Ibrahim b. Abi Bakr al-Jazari, *Taʾrikh Hawadith al-Zaman wa-Anbaʾihi*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salam Tadmuri (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAsriyya, 1998), 3:701.

[22]For an observation of an ethnographer who worked in Palestine in the first half of the 20th century on the midwife's preferred age, see Hilma Granqvist, *Birth and Childhood among the Arabs* (Helsinki: Söderstorm, 1947), 60–61.

[23]Françoise Micheau, "Great Figures in Arabic Medicine According to Ibn al-Qifṭī," in *Health, Disease, and Healing in Medieval Culture,* ed. Sh. Campbell et al. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 170–73; Miri Shefer, "Physicians in Mamluk and Ottoman Courts," in *Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in Honor of Michael Winter,* ed. David Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (New York: Routledge, 2006), 118.

[24]Ibn al-Hajj al-ʿAbdari, *al-Madkhal* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-ʿArabi, 1972), 3:297.

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[25]Ibid., 3:296–310. Cf. Huda Lutfi, "Manners and Customs of Fourteenth-Century Cairene Women: Female Anarchy versus Male Sharʿi Order in Muslim Prescriptive Treatises," in *Women in Middle Eastern History*, ed. Keddie and Baron, 99–121.

[26]Abu Dawud Sulayman b. Hassan ibn Juljul, *Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ wa-l-Hukamaʾ,* ed. Sayyid Fuʾad (Cairo: al-Maʿhad al-ʿIlmi al-Faransi li-l-Athar al-Sharqiyya, 1955). See also A. Dietrich, "Ibn Djuldjul," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* New edition (hereafter, *E.I.*^{2}), 3:755–56.

[27]Jamal al-Din Abu -l-Hasan ʿAli b. Yusuf ibn al-Qifti, *Akhbar al-ʿUlamaʾ bi-Akhbar al-Hukamaʾ* (Cairo: Matbaʿat Muhammad Ismaʿil, 1908). See also A. Dietrich, "Ibn al-Ḳifṭī," *E.I.*^{2}, 3:840.

[28]Ahmad b. al-Qasim ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, *ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ fi Tabaqat al-Atibbaʾ*, ed. August Müller (Königsberg, Germany: Selbstverlag, 1884). See also J. Vernet, "Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa," *E.I.*^{2}, 3:693–94.

[29]Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, *ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ,* 1:123. Umayma Abu-Bakr and Huda Saʿdi, *al-Nisaʾ wa-Mihnat al-Tibb fi al-Mujtamaʿat al-Islamiyya* (Cairo: Multaqa al-Marʾa wa-l-Dhakira, 1999), 17, 25. On female occulists in the medieval Middle East, see Peter E. Pormann and Emilie Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic Medicine* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007), 104. On ophthalmology as a female specialization in medieval south Europe, see Joseph Shatzmiller, *Jews, Medicine and Medieval Society* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1994), 111.

[30]Two midwives of the Ibn Zuhr family are mentioned in an entry devoted to Abu Bakr ibn Zuhr al-Hafid of Seville (d. 1198 or 1199 A.D.), Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, *ʿUyun al-Anbaʾ,* 2:67–74 (see n. 38). See also R. Arnaldez, "Ibn Zuhr," *E.I.*^{2}, 3:976–79.

[31]Cf. Lianne McTavish, *Childbirth and the Display of Authority in Early Modern France* (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2005), 2.

[32]Manfred Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam* (Leiden/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1970), 139–40; R. Hitchcock, "Arabic Medicine: The Andalusi Context," in *The Human Embryo: Aristotle and the Arabic and European Traditions*, ed. G. R. Dundtan (Exeter, U.K.: University of Exeter Press, 1990), 70–78, esp. 70, 75–76. For similar compilations in the Middle East and North Africa, see Avner Giladi, *Children of Islam: Concepts of Childhood in Medieval Muslim Society* (Houndmills/London: Macmillan, 1992), 4–8. See also Margarita Castells, "Medicine in Al-Andalus until the Fall of the Caliphate," in *The Formation of al-Andalus,* ed. Maribel Fierro and Julio Samsó (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 1998), 2:393–402, esp. 397–98.

[33]Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam,* 149–51; E. Savage-Smith, "al-Zahrawi," *E.I.*^{2}, 11:398–99; Pormann and Savage-Smith*, Medieval Islamic Medicine,* 61.

[34]Emilie Savage-Smith, "The Exchange of Medical and Surgical Ideas between Europe and Islam," in *The Diffusion of Greco-Roman Medicine into the Middle East and the Caucasus,* ed. John A. C. Greppin et al. (Delmar, N.Y.: Caravan Books, 1999), 39–55.

[35]*Abucasis on Surgery and Instruments,* A Definitive Translation and Commentary by M. S. Spink and G. L. Lewis (London: The Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1973), 2. See also Castells, "Medicine in Al-Andalus," 398–402.

[36]Savage-Smith, "al-Zahrawi."

[37]Al-Zahrawi, in his *al-Tasrif*, admits, however, that one only rarely finds competent female doctors. See Emilie Savage-Smith, "Medicine," in *Encyclopedia of the History of Arabic Science,* ed. R. Rashid (London/New York: Routledge, 1996), 3:947.

[38]Ibn Abi Usaybiʿa, 2:70. Expert advice of midwives (*qawl al-qawābil*) is mentioned in a legal treatise by Abu-l-Hasan ʿAli b. Muhammad al-Baq al-Andalusi al-Umawi (d. 1362 A.D.), *Kitab Zahrat al-Rawd fi Talkhis Taqdir al-Fard,* ed. Rachid El Hour (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 2003), Arabic text 67.

[39]Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalani, *al-Durar al-Kamina fi Aʿyan al-Miʾa al-Thamina,* ed. Muhammad Sayyid Jad al-Haqq (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Haditha, 1966), 1:195–96 (entry no. 473). Cf. Ahmad ʿIsa, *Taʾrikh al-Bimaristanat fi al-Islam* (Damascus: Matbuʿat Jamʿiyyat al-Tamaddun al-Islami, 1939), 15–17.

[40]Lisan al-Din ibn al-Khatib, *Al-Ihata fi Akhbar Gharnata,* ed. Muhammad ʿAbdallah ʿInan (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿarif, n.d.), 1:438–39. My thanks to Prof. Maribel Fierro and Dr. Maria Luisa Avila for helping me locate al-Tanjali and his daughter in the biographical dictionaries.

[41]Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, *Tawq al-Hamama fi al-Ilfa wa-l-Ullaf*, ed. Ihsan ʿAbbas. Susa, Tunis: Dar al-Maʿarif, 1992(?), 131. Translated by Arthur J. Arberry as *The Ring of the Dove* (London: Luzac, 1953), 74.

[42]M. Nabrona–Cárceles, "Women at Court: A Prosopographic Study of the Court of Carlos III of Navarre (1387–1425)," *Medieval Prosopography* 22 (2001): 31–64. Cited in Monica Green, "Bodies, Gender, Health,

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Disease: Recent Work on Medieval Women's Medicine," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History,* n.s. 3, vol. 2 (2005): 14–15, 24–25.

[43]David S. Powers, "Four Cases Relating to Women and Divorce in Al-Andalus and the Maghrib, 1100–1500," in *Dispensing Justice in Islam: Qadis and Their Judgments,* ed. Muhammad Khalid Masud et al. (Boston: E. J. Brill, 2006), 390.

[44]Ibn Khaldun, *al-Muqaddima*, 2:330–31; trans. Rosenthal, 2:370.

[45]For the historical development of these texts, see Marion Holmes Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet Muhammad: Devotional Piety in Sunni Islam* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 6–12. For a comparison between the birth of Muhammad and that of Jesus, see Muhammad b. Yusuf al-Salihi (d. 1535 or 1536 A.D.), *Subul al-Huda wa-l-Rashad fi Sirat Khayr al-ʿIbad*, ed. Mustafa ʿAbd al-Wahid (Cairo: Lajnat Ihyaʾ al-Turath al-Islami, 1972), 1:414.

[46]W. Raven, "Sīra," *E.I.*[2], 9:660; W. Raven, "Sīra and the Qur'ān," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an* (hereafter *E.Q.*), 5:29.

[47]Holmes Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet*, 6, 8–10.

[48]Meir J. Kister, "The *Sirah* Literature," in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period,* ed. Alfred F. L. Beeston et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 354. For a detailed discussion of the motifs of the preexistence of the Prophet and the Light of Muhammad, see Holmes Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet*, 12–29; Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muhammad as Viewed by the Early Muslims* (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1995), 37–38; and note 85. See also Adrien Leites, "Temps béni et temps historique. Deux conceptions religieuses du temps dans la Tradition Musulmane," *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999): 23–41, esp. 37.

[49]Denis Gril, "Le corps du Prophète," in *Le corps et le sacré en Orient musulman*, ed. Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and Bernard Heyberger, *Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranées* 113/114 (2006): 41.

[50]Tor Andrae, *Muhammed: The Man and his Faith* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1956), 35. For a detailed survey and discussions of the narrations of the event of the Prophet's birth, see Holmes Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet*, 32–41.

[51]See, for example, Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 2:262–65.

[52]See Sylvie Laurent, "L'accouchement dans l'iconographie médiévale d'après les miniatures de la Bibliothèque Nationale," *Maladies, Médecines et Sociétés,* Actes du VI[e] Colloque d'Histoire au Présent (Paris: L'Harmattan et Histoire au présent, 1993), 1:150. The Qurʾanic story of Jesus' birth (19:23–26) contains a reference to the pangs of labor only. In Islamic-Shiʿi tradition, Fatima—the Prophet's daughter, wife of ʿAli b. Abi Talib, and mother of al-Hasan and al-Husayn—is described, like Mary, as *batūl,* a virgin, and as cleansed from the physical impurities of her sex, that is, menstruation and postpartum bleeding. Moreover, her sons, according to one report, were born from her thigh. See Delia Cortese and Simonetta Calderini, *Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 7.

[53]See Muhammad ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah,* ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, Germany: Dieterichsche Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1858), 1:102–103. Translated by Alfred Guillaume as *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of (Ibn) Ishaq's Sirat Rasul Allah* (Karachi and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 69–70. For other Muslim scholars who followed Ibn Ishaq's line, see, for instance, Abu Bakr Ahmad b. al-Husayn al-Bayhaqi (d. 1066 A.D.), *Dalaʾil al-Nubuwwa* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1985), 1:102–14; Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Dhahabi (d. 1374 A.D.), *Taʾrikh al-Islam wa-Wafayat al-Mashahir wa-l-Aʿlam* (Beirut: Dar al-ʿArab al-Islami, 2003), 1:486. See also Holmes Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet,* 8.

[54]A similar description of Muhammad's miraculous birth appears in the early hadith collection of ʿAbd al-Razzaq b. Hammam al-Sanʿani (d. 827 A.D.), *al-Musannaf*, ed. Habiburrahman al-Aʿzami (Beirut: Majlis ʿIlmi, 1972), 5:318, and in a compilation by Ahmad b. ʿAli al-Tabarsi (a Shiʿi scholar of the 11th to 12th century A.D.), *al-Ihtijaj* (Najaf, Iraq: Dar al-Nuʿman, 1966), 331. See also Muhammad b. Hibban (d. 965 A.D.), *Kitab al-Thiqat* (Hayderabad, India: Daʾirat al-Maʿarif al-ʿUthmaniyya, 1923), 1:41. Cf. Adrien Leites, "*Sīra* and the Question of Tradition," in *The Biography of Muhammad: The Issue of the Sources,* ed. Harald Motzki (Leiden, Boston & Köln: E. J. Brill, 2000), 49–66, esp. 58, 59, 61–63; Annemarie Schimmel, "The Prophet Muhammad as a Centre of Muslim Life and Thought," in *We Believe in One God: The Experience of God in Christianity and Islam,* ed. Annemarie Schimmel and Abdoldjavad Falaturi (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 43.

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[55]See Burhan al-Din al-Halabi (d. 1635 A.D.), *Insan al-ʿUyun fi Sirat al-Amin wa-l-Maʾmun* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tijariyya al-Kubra, n.d.), 1:80. According to al-Halabi (65), in a symbolic act predicting his rule in the world, Muhammad also took a handful of soil immediately after coming out of his mother's belly.

[56]Muhammad ibn Saʿd, *Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, ed. Eduard Sachau (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1904–1940), 1:62–63. On a similar description of the birth of Moses in Jewish sources—including the motifs of light and circumcision—see, for instance, *Babylonian Talmud*, "Sotah," 12/a. These motifs were further developed in the story of Moses' birth as it appears in later medieval Jewish sources, for example, *Midrash Rabbah-Exodus,* trans. S. M. Lehrman (London & Bournmouth: Soncio Press), 1951, 26–27, and in Islamic sources of the time, possibly with mutual exchanges. See, for example, ʿAli b. Hasan ibn ʿAsakir (d. 1176 A.D.), *Taʾrikh Madinat Dimashq* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1998), 61:17.

[57]There are, however, contradictory reports in Muslim tradition according to which Muhammad was either circumcised by the angel Gabriel during the event known as *sharḥ al-ṣadr* ("the opening of the Prophet's breast," see below) or by his grandfather, ʿAbd al-Muttalib, on the seventh day after his birth. See, for example, Muhammad ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350 A.D.), *Tuhfat al-Mawdud bi-Ahkam al-Mawlud* (Bombay: Sharafuddin & Sons, 1961), 120–24. Cf. Meir J. Kister, ". . . 'And he was born circumcised' . . . : Some Notes on Circumcision in Hadith," *Oriens* 34 (1994): 10–30. Some elements in the descriptions of Muhammad's birth reappear in Shiʿi traditions on the birth of their imams. See Mohammad ʿAli Amir-Moezzi, *The Divine Guide in Early Shiʿism: The Sources of Esotericism in Islam* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1994), 56–58; Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 1505 A.D.), *al-Khasaʾis al-Kubra,* ed. Muhammad Khalil Harras (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Haditha, 1967), 1:132–33; Abu al-Fidaʾ Ismaʿil ibn Kathir, *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad,* trans. Trevor LeGassick (Reading, U.K.: Garnet, 1998), 1:149. See also, for example, Ahmad b. Hajar al-Haytami (d. 1567 A.D.), *Mawlid al-Nabi* (n.p., n.d.), 22.

[58]See also Jamal al-Din ibn al-Jawzi (d. 1200 A.D.), *Sifat al-Safwa,* ed. Mahmud Fakhuri (Aleppo, Syria: Dar al-Waʿy, 1969), 1:52.

[59]Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Kharkushi, *Manahil al-Shifaʾ* (Mecca: Dar al-Bashaʾir al-Islamiyya, 2003), 341–64.

[60]Muhammad ibn Fahd, *Ithaf al-Wara,* ed. Fahim Muhammad Shaltut (Mecca: Markaz al-Bahth al-ʿIlmi wa-l-Turath al-Islami, 1983–1990), 45–57.

[61]See al-Kharkushi, *Manahil al-Shifaʾ,* 354, 361, where Amina is described as embarrassed, amazed, and angry due to the absence of her relatives at such a difficult time for her, an absence that no doubt seemed to her in total contradiction with the common practice of familial, particularly female, support. Cf. Ibn Fahd, *Ithaf al-Wara*, 46. On the theme of Amina's loneliness at the Prophet's birth, see also Holmes Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet*, 37.

[62]Al-Kharkushi, *Manahil al-Shifaʾ,* 354–55; Ibn Fahd, *Ithaf al-Wara*, 47.

[63]ʿUthman b. Abi al-ʿAs al-Thaqafi (d. 671 A.D.), one of the most well-known companions of the Prophet, played an important role in the early Islamic conquests. See *E.I.*^{2}, 1:695b; 2:811b, 823b; 4:14b; Khayr al-Din al-Zirikli, *al-Aʿlam* (Beirut: Dar al-ʿIlm li-l-Malayin, 1992), 4:207.

[64]According to ʿAli b. Muhammad al-Mawardi (d. 1058 A.D.), it was Umm ʿUthman who covered the newborn child with a pottery vessel. See al-Mawardi, *Aʿlam al-Nubuwwa* (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-ʿArabi, 1987), 273.

[65]Muhammad b. Jarir al-Tabari (d. 922 A.D.), *Taʾrikh al-Rusul wa-l-Muluk,* ed. M. J. De Joeje (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), Prima Series 2:968–69.

[66]M. Th. Houtsma and M. W. Watt, "ʿAbd al-Rhman b. ʿAwf," *E.I.*^{2}, 1:84.

[67]Ibn Saʿd, *Tabaqat,* 8:180. It is interesting that Ibn Saʿd and later biographers, such as Ibn al-Athir, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, and Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalani, in the entries they dedicated to al-Shifaʾ in their biographical dictionaries, ignore altogether her presence at the birth of the Prophet.

[68]Abu Nuʿaym al-Isbahani, *Dalaʾil al-Nubuwwa* (Hayderabad, India: Daʾirat al-Maʿarif al-ʿUthmaniyya, 1977), 93–94. For al-Shifaʾ in later texts see, for example, Abu al-Fidaʾ Ismaʿil ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1994), 1:209–12; idem, *The Life of the Prophet Muhammad*, 1:145–53. For a detailed discussion of the themes of the first sound made by the infant Muhammad and the blessing his midwife heard, see al-Halabi, *Insan al-ʿUyun,* 1:76, 83–84. In addition to the popular explanation of the baby's first cry, namely, that it was a response to the devil poking his body, al-Halabi offers an interesting observation from our point of view: it is the difficulty involved in departing the warm womb and being transferred to the relatively cold air of the outside world that causes the cry.

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[69]Muhammad Baqir al-Majlisi (d. 1700 A.D.), *Bihar al-Anwar* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Wafaʾ, 1983), 15:329.

[70]Ibn Fahd, *Ithaf al-Wara,* 47; Ahmad b. ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Karim ibn Makiyya al-Shafiʿi al-Nabulsi (d.1502 A.D.), *Durar al-Bihar fi Mawlid al-Mukhtar,* Ms. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin 3859(4), fol. 115a; al-Haytami, *Mawlid al-Nabi,* 17. See also al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*.

[71]Al-Kharkushi, *Manahil al-Shifaʾ,* 349–51. See also Ibn Hibban, *Thiqat,* 1:41, where the motif of the light appears also in connection with Amina's pregnancy period. According to another version, however, Amina used to complain during her pregnancy that the burden of her fetus was too heavy. See Muhammad ibn Zafar, *Kitab Anbaʾ Nujabaʾ al-Abnaʾ*, ed. Mustafa al-Qabbani (Cairo, n.d.), 20.

[72]Al-Salihi, *Subul al-Huda,* 411; al-Haytami, *Mawlid al-Nabi,* 16.

[73]Al-Nabulsi, *Durar al-Bihar,* fol. 115b.

[74]In Mesopotamian literature female deities seem to have been involved in midwifery. There are also a few places in the Bible where metaphoric imagery is used of God as a midwife, for instance, Psalms 22:10. See Hennie J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel: Their Social and Religious Position in the Context of the Ancient Near East* (Boston: E. J. Brill, 2003), 231, 423–24, 430, 725.

[75]Al-Kharkushi, *Manahil al-Shifaʾ,* 354; Ibn Fahd, *Ithaf al-Wara,* 46; al-Haytami, *Mawlid al-Nabi,* 16–22. Cf. Qurʾan 19:23–26.

[76]Al-Kharkushi *Manahil al-Shifaʾ,* 354–55; Ibn Fahd, *Ithaf al-Wara,* 47; al-Haytami, *Mawlid al-Nabi*; al-Halabi, *Insan al-ʿUyun,* 1:77. For other versions, see Holmes Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet*, 36. In a Shiʿi Imami text from the 10th to 11th century A.D. describing, rather similarly, the birth of ʿAli b. Abi Talib, Abu Talib, while rushing to summon four of his wife's friends to help when she is about to give birth, is warned by a mysterious voice that impure women are not allowed to touch the body of the expected baby, "the friend of God." Then four female figures appear dressed in white silk and exuding a perfumed scent and, replacing the human helpers, accompany ʿAli's mother throughout the delivery. See al-Fattal al-Naysaburi (d. 1114 A.D.), *Rawdat al-Waʿizin* (Najaf, Iraq: al-Maktaba al-Haydariyya, 1966), 79.

[77]A. J. Wensinck, "Āsiya," *E.I.*^{2}, 1:710.

[78]Al-Halabi, *Insan al-ʿUyun*.

[79]Al-Haytami, *Mawlid al-Nabi*; A. J. Wensinck and Ch. Pellat, "Ḥūr," *E.I.*^{2}, 3:581–82. On similar narrations disseminated by Ibn Babawayh in the context of the birth of both ʿAli and Fatima, see Holmes Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet*, 37–39.

[80]Al-Halabi, *Insan al-ʿUyun,* 1:77. Cf. Ibn ʿAsakir, *Taʾrikh Madinat Dimashq,* 61:17–18 for the two different versions of the story of Moses' birth. According to one, Moses' mother gave birth with the help of a midwife; according to the other, no helper at all supported her, and only Moses' sister was present.

[81]Manuela Marin, "Women and Sainthood in Medieval Morocco," in *Donne tra saperi e poteri nella storia delle religioni,* ed. Sofia Boesch Gajano and Enzo Pae (Brescia, Italy: Morcelliana, 2007), 283–98.

[82]Al-Kharkushi, *Manahil al-Shifaʾ,* 360–61; Ibn Fahd, *Ithaf al-Wara,* 51. Muhammad as a prophet used to transfer his blessing to young children by passing saliva from his own mouth to theirs. See Giladi, *Children of Islam,* 35–41.

[83]See Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder,* 59–64.

[84]Al-Kharkushi, *Manahil al-Shifaʾ,* 361.

[85]According to some sources, Salma was the freed slave of Safiyya bint ʿAbd al-Muttalib, Muhammad's aunt. See, for example, ʿIzz al-Din ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba fi Maʿrifat al-Sahaba,* ed. Muhammad Ibrahim al-Bana and Muhammad Ahmad ʿAshur (n.p.: al-Shaʿb, n.d.), 7:147–48.

[86]See, for instance, ʿAli b. Muhammad b. Masʿud al-Khuzaʿi, *Takhrij al-Dalalat al-Samʿiyya,* ed. Ihsan ʿAbbas (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1985), 749; Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalani, *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib,* ed. Mustafa ʿAbd al-Qadir ʿAta (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1994), 12:376.

[87]Ibn Saʿd, *Tabaqat,* 8:164–65.

[88]See, for example, Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba*.

[89]Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalani, *Al-Isaba fi Tamyiz al-Sahaba* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1990), 8:195, entry no. 11360.

[90]See Maribel Fierro, "Al-Asfar," *Studia Islamica* 77 (1993): 169–81; idem, "Al-Asfar Again," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 22 (1998): 196–213.

[91]See Marten Stol, "Private Life in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East,* ed. Jack M. Sasson (New York: Simon & Schuster, Macmillan, 1995), 1:491.

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[92]Exodus, 1:15–21. Cf. Ron Barkai, *A History of Jewish Gynaecological Texts* (Boston: E. J. Brill, 1998), 51.

[93]*Midrash Rabbah-Exodus*, 19–22.

[94]Avner Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses: Medieval Islamic Views on Breastfeeding and Their Social Implications* (Leiden/Boston/Köln: E. J. Brill, 1999), 50–51.

[95]Mohammed H. Benkheira, "Le commerce conjugal gâte-t-il le lait maternel? Sexualité, medicine et droit dans le sunnisme ancien," *Arabica* 50 (2003): 1–78.

[96]Idem, "Donner le sein c'est *comme* donner le jour: La doctrine de l'allaitement dans le sunnism medieval," *Studia Islamica* 92 (2001): 5–52. Shiʿi Imami scholars raise the question of the legality of marriage between a man and the midwife who helped his mother give birth to him or between him and the midwife's daughter. It is clear that Shiʿi scholars are divided here: some disapprove of such unions, regarding it as reprehensible yet not formally forbidden; others, considering it a taboo similar, for instance, to that upon intimate relations between a male doctor and his female patients known in certain societies, categorically prohibit it; and finally, some allow it, but only in certain circumstances. Among the last group, a distinction is made between a midwife who is a helper in childbirth (*qabilat wa-marrat*) and who is allowed to marry the child when he comes to age, and a midwife who also serves as a nanny (*qabilat wa-rabbat*), who, substituting in a way for the mother, is prohibited from marrying the child. Others prohibit marriage of this type only in cases when the child is born with its face turned to the midwife(!). See Muhammad b. Yaʿqub al-Kulini (9th–10th century A.D.), *Furuʿ al-Kafi* (Beirut: Dar al-Adwaʾ, 1985), 5:447–48; Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-ʿAmili (d. 1693), *Wasaʾil al-Shiʿa* (Beirut: Muʾassasat Al al-Bayt li-Ihyaʾ al-Turath, 1993), 20:500–502. See also Geert J. van Gelder, *Close Relationships: Incest and Inbreeding in Classical Arabic Literature* (London/New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 81–102, esp. 101–102.

[97]Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses,* 13–22.

[98]Cf. the role midwives played in a few biblical stories: Genesis 35:16–17, 38:27–30, and Exodus 1:15–22. On midwives in biblical and postbiblical Jewish sources, see Fred Rosner, *Encyclopedia of Medicine in the Bible and the Talmud* (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 2000), 210–11.

[99]Elsa Boyman, "De l'enfantement: Les vicissitudes d'une notion primordiale," *Cahiers internationaux de sociologie* 77 (1984): 303–309.

[100]Ibid., 309–12. Cf. Yaʿacov Sh. Licht, "Leda," *Encyclopaedia Biblica* 4:431–35 (in Hebrew).

[101]Boyman, "De l'enfantement," 312–15.

[102]Denise A. Spellberg, "Writing the Unwritten Life of the Islamic Eve: Menstruation and the Demonization of Motherhood," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996): 306–307; Barbara Freyer Stowasser, "The Status of Women in Early Islam," in *Muslim Women*, ed. F. Hussain (London/Sydney: Croom Helm, 1984), 22–23; idem, *Women in the Qurʾan, Tradition and Interpretation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 25–27.

[103]Spellberg, "Writing the Unwritten Life," 319–20; G. Vajda and J. Eisenberg, "Ḥawwāʾ," *E.I.*^{2}, 3:295. For a different view, according to which the suffering of pregnancy and childbirth is understood in Islam not as a punishment but rather as part of the divine way of creation, see Ahmad Muhammad al-Sharqawi, *al-Marʾa fi al-Qasas al-Qurʾani* (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 2003), 1:129–30. Basing his arguments on the Qurʾan and hadith, al-Sharqawi points to the importance of the woman's reproductive role, for which both God and His Prophet praise her and promise her rewards, for instance, by ordering the believers to honor their mothers for their efforts involved in bearing and rearing them or by granting each mother who dies during childbirth the status of *shahīda*, a female martyr testifying by her death to her belief in Allah.

[104]Cf. Lila Abu Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1986), esp. 124–34.

[105]See, for example, Mahmud b. ʿUmar al-Zamakhshari, *al-Kashshaf* (Cairo: al-Matbaʿa al-Bahiya, 1924–1925), commentary on Qurʾan 2:233.

[106]R. Peters, "Shāhid," *E.I.*^{2}, 9:207–208; Judith E. Tucker, *Women, Family, and Gender in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 142, 158–59 (on the infrequency of the appearance of women in court as witnesses in the Ottoman period); ʿAbd al-Karim Zaydan, *al-Mufassal fi Ahkam al-Marʾa* (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risala, 1993), 5:106. For more concrete examples see, for instance, Powers, "Four Cases Relating to Women and Divorce," esp. 386–87. On midwives as expert witnesses in Egyptian courts in the Ottoman period, see El-Azhary Sonbol, *The Creation of a Medical Profession*, 139–40. The most detailed discussion of this topic so far is Ron Shaham's "Women as Expert Witnesses in Pre-Modern Islamic Courts," in *Law, Custom, and Statute in the Muslim World: Studies in Honor of Aharon Layish,* ed. Ron Shaham (Leiden:

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E. J. Brill, 2007), 41–65. Ordinary women also could supply direct eyewitnessing to exclusive female events at which they were present (45–46). On midwives as witnesses in court in medieval Europe, see Laurent, "L'accouchement dans l'iconographie médiévale," 176–77.

[107]See, for example, Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Minhaji al-Suyuti (d. 1475 A.D.), *Jawahir al-ʿUqud* (n.p., 1955), 2:438.

[108]ʿAbd al-Razzaq, *al-Musannaf,* 8:333. For a later formulation of the same rule, by the Hanafi jurist of Central Asia, Abu al-Hasan ʿAli b. Abi Bakr al-Marghinani (d. 1197 A.D.), see *al-Hidaya: Sharh Bidayat al-Mubtadiʾ* (Cairo: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, n.d.), 3:117. Similar concessions were applied when testimony on breastfeeding was required. See chapters in hadith collections, for example, *Sunan al-Darimi* and *Sunan al-Tirmidhi,* dealing with *shahādat al-marʾa al-wāḥida ʿalā al-raḍāʿ*.

[109]See, for example, Shams al-Din al-Sarakhsi, *al-Mabsut* (Beirut: Dar al-Maʿrifa, 1978), 16:142–44. Cf. David Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West,* ed. Samuel M. Cohn (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 42, on the permission given to women in medieval Europe to give testimony in court out of necessity due to the huge mortality rates in the wake of the Black Death.

[110]See Tucker, *Women, Family, and Gender,* 135, 140–44, 149.

[111]See, for example, al-Sarakhsi, *al-Mabsut*, 16:144. Cf. Shaham, "Women as Expert Witnesses," 46–49. For the historical development of the jurists' attitudes toward women as witnesses in court, see Susan A. Spectorsky, *Women in Classical Islamic Law* (Leiden/Boston: E. J. Brill, 2010), 191–95.

[112]See Giladi, *Infants, Parents and Wet Nurses,* 33–39.

[113]See, for example, al-Mawardi, *Aʿlam al-Nubuwwa,* 273.

[114]See, for example, al-Haytami, *Mawlid al-Nabi,* 16–22. Cf. Leites, "Temps béni," 33–34.

[115]*Chambers Concise Dictionary* (Edinburgh: W & R Chambers, 1991), s.v. "Male."

[116]Cf. Petra Kuppinger, "Death of a Midwife," in *Situating Globalization: Views from Egypt,* ed. Cynthia Nelson and Shahnaz Rouse (New Brunswick/London: Transactions Publishers, 2000), 276.

[117]Cf. Samuel S. Thomas, "Midwifery and Society in Restoration York," *Journal of the Social History of Medicine* 16 (2003): 1–16.

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