



Muslim Midwives: The Craft of Birthing in the Premodern Middle East (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization)

Avner Giladi

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This book reconstructs the role of midwives in medieval to early modern Islamic history through a careful reading of a wide range of classical and medieval Arabic sources. The author casts the midwife's social status in premodern Islam as a privileged position from which she could mediate between male authority in patriarchal society and female reproductive power within the family. This study also takes a broader historical view of midwifery in the Middle East by examining the tensions between learned medicine (male) and popular, medico-religious practices (female) from early Islam into the Ottoman period and addressing the confrontation between traditional midwifery and Western obstetrics in the first half of the nineteenth century.

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