

Khaoula Trad

# The Concept of Prenatal Life in the Medieval Islamic West

The Hermeneutics of Abū Bakr  
Ibn al-‘Arabī and Qādī ‘Iyād



Ergon

Khaoula Trad

# The Concept of Prenatal Life in the Medieval Islamic West

RECHT, ETHIK UND GESELLSCHAFT  
IM VORDEREN ORIENT /  
LAW, ETHICS AND SOCIETY  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Herausgegeben von | Edited by  
Serena Tolino – Thomas Eich

BAND 5 | VOLUME 5

The Concept of Prenatal Life  
in the Medieval Islamic West

---

ERGON VERLAG

Khaoula Trad

# The Concept of Prenatal Life in the Medieval Islamic West

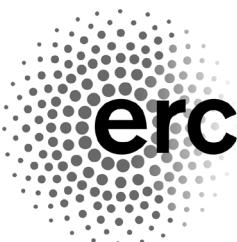
The Hermeneutics of Abū Bakr

Ibn al-‘Arabī and Qādī ‘Iyād

---

ERGON VERLAG

The research and printing of this work was funded by the European Research Council.



## European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Cover Illustration:

© The cover picture contains the prophetic tradition on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd (ensoulment hadīth), taken from Muslim's *Šaḥīḥ*, from the book of destiny (*Kitāb al-qadar*).  
The overlaid graphic presents a pregnant woman in different periods of gestation.

Calligraphy: Taoufik Issaoui (Centre National de la Calligraphie Tunis)

Graphic: Asma Hilali (Université de Lille)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the  
Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data  
are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

a.t.: Hamburg, Univ., Diss., 2022

Original title:

The Imagination of the Unborn in the Islamic West:  
al-Andalus and al-Maghrib (11th and 12th centuries)

© Khaoula Trad

Published by

Ergon – ein Verlag in der Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden 2024.  
Overall responsibility for manufacturing (printing and production) lies with

Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG.

Cover design: Jan von Hugo

[www.ergon-verlag.de](http://www.ergon-verlag.de)

ISBN 978-3-98740-131-2 (Print)

ISBN 978-3-98740-132-9 (ePDF)



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution  
– ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

”...قف على ناصية الحلم و قاتل“  
“Stand on the edge of your dream and fight ...”

-Mahmud Darwish-



## Acknowledgements

This book is based on my dissertation for the Department of Islamic Studies at the University of Hamburg, within the ERC project COBHUNI. Like an embryo passing through the maximum pregnancy period in Mālikī consensus, I had been carrying this book in my mind for years. I felt it and saw it developing, much like the tripartite *nutfa-‘alaqa-mudgha*. Carrying it was a difficult task, which was lightened thanks to the help of many people that I would like to pay tribute to.

My special thanks are to my advisor, Professor Thomas Eich, to whom I am eternally grateful – words cannot express my gratitude enough. Professor Eich put me on the right track in scientific research and helped me understand serious scholarship. His wise and valuable comments, together with his simultaneous attention to detail, encouraged me to make this study the best that I have to offer the academic community.

I am also grateful for the unceasing support and guidance of my second advisor, or as it is called in German, my Doktormutter, Professor Camilla Adang. Professor Adang was literally like a mother, a source of selfless help in this work with her generous spirit, academic precision and her breadth of knowledge.

Professor Delfina Serrano Ruano kindly reviewed my study and provided a thorough and thoughtful critique, as well as helpful suggestions for reshaping it into a book. I am grateful to her and to the other anonymous reviewer. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable guidance and encouragement of Professor Maribel Fierro. In addition, I would particularly like to thank Professor Mohammed Ghaly for his precious advice and information that helped confirm my hypothesis. Thanks are also due to Professor Dmitry Bondarev for his support. Nicola Wilton deserves special recognition for proofreading my work and for her patience.

I would also like to thank Doru Doroftei, with whom I not only shared an office but also times of ease and intense difficulty. I should not forget Jenny Brakel, who was the first person to welcome me in Hamburg, and who helped me so much. Joud Nassan Agha, Alba Fedeli, Darya Ogorodnikova, Maria Luisa Russo, Serena Tolino, Riem Wimmer and Tsampika Paraskeva have always been a source of unmatched love and encouragement. I am also grateful to the staff of the National Laboratory for the

### *Acknowledgements*

Preservation and Conservation of Parchment and Manuscripts (Raqqada, Kairouan), as well as all the staff in the library of the Asien-Afrika Institut and all the members of the COBHUNI project.

My deepest gratitude is to all my family, especially my mother Monia Tissaoui, who has always been my endless source of inspiration and has pushed me forward when I felt down. My aunt Thouraya Tissaoui has provided unwavering encouragement and unconditional love. My uncle Jamel Tissaoui has always been a constant source of strength for me. Najoua Shili, Souamya Tissaoui, Arbi Tissaoui, Ziko Mansouri, Chedi Najlaoui, Meryam Trad and Sadiqa Trad, thank you for your love and support throughout my journey. I am most grateful to *ḥabibī* Martin Vosberg, who supported me and never failed to ease my distress. I would like to thank the Vosbergs and my friends Khairi Saibi, Hanen Mhamdi, Umaina Naffouti, Hosni Shili, Hamza Zaghdoud, Yathreb Aouadi, Eya Trad, and Cristina Fontanilla Palacios; they are a real blessing to my life.

Finally, I dedicate this study to my beloved grandmother *mīmā* Fāṭma, to *bābā* Arbi, to my aunt Jaljoula Trad, and to my father Abdelkarim Trad.

## Table of Contents

List of tables	13
Transliteration system and abbreviations	15
Introduction	17
1. Thematic background	17
2. Review of the literature	18
3. The problem and the questions	24
4. Methodological aspects and structure	24
5. Notes on translation, transliteration and dates	26
1. Preliminary framework	27
1.1. Geographical context	27
1.1.1. al-Andalus	27
1.1.2. al-Maghrib	28
1.1.3. <i>al-Maghrib/al-Gharb al-islāmī</i>	31
1.2. Historical context (eleventh and twelfth centuries)	32
1.3. Embryological context	35
1.3.1. Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions dealing with the prenatal life	35
1.3.2. The embryo in ancient Greek medicine	39
2. Abū Bakr Ibn al-‘Arabī	43
2.1. Biographical prelude	43
2.1.1. Life	43
2.1.2. Rihla	55
2.1.3. Scholarship	75
2.1.3.1. <i>Aḥkām al-qur'ān</i>	76
2.1.3.2. <i>al-Qabas fī sharḥ Muwaṭṭa' Mālik Ibn Anas</i>	83
2.1.3.3. <i>Āriḍat al-ahwadḥī bi-sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī</i>	86
	9

Table of Contents

	86
2.2. The embryological discourse in Ibn al-‘Arabī’s works	91
2.2.1. <i>Aḥkām al-qur’ān</i>	91
2.2.1.1. Q 6:59 ( <i>al-An‘ām</i> )	92
2.2.1.2. Q 13:8 ( <i>al-Rā‘d</i> )	102
2.2.1.3. Q 22:5 ( <i>al-Hajj</i> )	116
2.2.1.4. Q 42:49–50 ( <i>al-Shūrā</i> )	138
2.2.1.5. Q 75:37–38 ( <i>al-Qiyāma</i> )	143
2.2.1.6. Q 86:5–6 ( <i>al-Tāriq</i> )	145
2.2.1.7. Q 96:2 ( <i>al-‘Alaq</i> )	148
2.2.1.8. Q 15:22 ( <i>al-Hijr</i> )	149
Concluding remarks	150
2.2.2 <i>al-Qabas</i>	152
2.2.2.1. About coitus interruptus	153
2.2.2.2. Litigation related to the mothers of children ( <i>al-qadā’ fī ummahāt al-awlād</i> )	163
Concluding remarks	169
2.2.3. <i>Āridat al-ahwadhī</i>	170
Concluding remarks	176
3. Qādī ‘Iyād	179
3.1. Biographical prelude	179
3.1.1. Life	179
3.1.2. <i>Rihla</i>	185
3.1.3. Scholarship	189
3.2. The embryological conceptualisation in Qādī ‘Iyād’s commentary <i>Ikmāl al-mu‘lim</i>	197
3.2.1. The versions of Muslim’s <i>Sahīh</i> used by Qādī ‘Iyād	198
3.2.1.1. The Eastern version	199
3.2.1.2. The Western version	201
3.2.2. The embryological conceptualisation in <i>Ikmāl al- mu‘lim</i>	204
Concluding remarks	224

*Table of Contents*

Conclusions	225
Appendices	231
Appendix 1	231
Appendix 2	231
Appendix 3	232
Appendix 4	233
Appendix 5	235
Bibliography	237



## List of tables

Table 1: ‘Arīb Ibn Sa‘īd’s planetary gestational correlation	111
Table 2: Similarities between the phrases of al-Kiyā al-Harrāsī and Ibn al-‘Arabī	134
Table 3: Differences between the variants	140
Table 4: Legal and social evolution of the <i>umm walad</i> status according to the embryological development of the unborn	168
Table 5: Embryonic stages in <i>al-Qabas</i> according to the practice of <i>coitus interruptus</i> , abortion and the <i>umm walad</i> status	170
Table 6: The arrangement of <i>kitāb al-qadar</i> in al-Māzarī, Qādī ‘Iyād and al-Nawawī’s commentaries on the <i>Ṣaḥīḥ</i> of Muslim	196
Table 7: Role of the angel of the womb determined by time according to different traditions.	218



## Transliteration system and abbreviations

The Arabic transliteration used in this study follows the system used by the Library of Congress. The tables of transliteration are as follows:

### Consonants

ء	'	ص	d
ب	b	ط	t
ت	t	ظ	z
ث	th	ع	'
ج	j	غ	gh
ح	h	ف	f
خ	kh	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	dh	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	sh	و	w
ص	š	ي	y

### Vowels

Long	ا	ا	Short	ا
و	و	و	و	و
ي	ي	ي	ي	ي

## Abbreviations

BA	Biblioteca de al-Andalus
BRAH	Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia
CHE	Cuadernos de Historia de España
CSIC	Consejo Superior de Investigación científica
<i>EI</i>	Encyclopaedia of Islam
Fol.	Folio
GA	Generation of Animlas
JITC	Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization
MEAH	MisCELánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos
Ms.	manuscript
N/A	Not Available
PCL	Partial Common Link
v.	Verso