Clarke N.

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Heirs and spares: elite fathers and their sons in the literary sources of Umayyad Iberia

Introduction

In the five decades since Philippe Ariès suggested that perhaps "there was no place for childhood in the medieval world",[1] the study of medieval European children and childhoods has gained significant momentum and importance. Work by the likes of Barbara Hanawalt, Shulamith Shahar, Pierre Riché, Danièle Alexandre-Bidon, Nicholas Orme, Albrecht Classen, and many others, has comprehensively challenged Ariès' argument that childhood was not viewed, in the medieval world, as a distinct stage of life.[2] Drawing on a wide range of evidence, from school books and coroners' inquests to art and toys, these scholars have broadened and deepened our understanding of how children were conceptualised and treated, both within and outside the family, and even brought to life the worlds of children themselves.

Research has also been carried out on medieval childhoods in the worlds beyond Europe, geographically and culturally,[3] but with the exception of the pioneering work of Avner Gilʿadi, medieval Islamic children and childhoods have gone largely unexamined. Moreover, the preliminary nature of the work that has been done means that, to date, the picture has been a generalised one, giving very little indication of the variation that must have existed across different periods and regions of the medieval Islamic world.[4]

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[1] Philippe Ariès, *L'Enfant et la familiale sous l'ancien regime*, trans. Robert Baldick, *Centuries of Childhood* (London: Pimlico, 1996 [2nd edition]), p. 31; this is restated on p. 125, more strongly: "In medieval society, the idea of childhood did not exist."

[2] Barbara Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bound: peasant families in medieval England* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1990); Pierre Riché and Danièle Alexandre-Bidon, *L'enfance au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1994); Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Albrecht Classen, *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005); see also the essays collected in Louise J. Wilkinson (ed.), *A Cultural History of Childhood and Family*, vol. 2: *In the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Berg, 2010).

[3] For a useful overview and summary bibliography, see Peter N. Stearns, *Childhood in World History* (London: Routledge, 2011 [2nd edition]).

[4] Avner Gilʿadi, *Children of Islam: concepts of childhood in medieval Muslim society* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992); Thierry Bianquis, *La Famille arabe médiévale* (Bruxelles: Éditions Complexe, 2005 [2nd edition]); Carol Bargeron,

In part this lack of attention to Islam can be attributed to one of the field's perennial problems: the nature of the evidence available to us. This is not to say evidence is lacking; in fact, there is an abundance of theoretical material on children in the medieval Arabic corpus. Chiefly, this consists of medical texts devoted to childhood illnesses and children's physiological development, together with didactic treatises tackling the social and intellectual side of child-rearing – particularly topics such as how soon children ought to take part in religious ritual, at what age children reached legal capacity, and the content, nature, and ideal schedule of elementary education.[5] There is much less to be found on the experiences and lives of actual children, however, or the relationships between parents and their offspring. In the stylised and formulaic context of historical chronicles and biographical dictionaries, individual men and women rarely seem to have piqued the interest of authors and compilers before they attained adulthood. While Maria Luisa Ávila has shown that quantitative data on Andalusī families can be gleaned from biographical dictionaries,[6] these texts are, by their very nature, chiefly concerned with the contributions men and women made as adults to the author's field(s) of interest: *ḥadīth* transmission, grammar, poetry, etc. This goal restricts the picture the dictionaries present to that of an educated, largely urban elite, and ensures their authors were, at most, interested in an individual subject's parentage and education, the better to assess their reliability as transmitters.[7] However, we are not completely bereft. In common with similar trends in scholarship on children in medieval Christian Europe – often reacting against Ariès' assertion that, before the early modern period, parents were largely indifferent to the deaths of children, since it was so common[8] – Gilʿadi has identified evidence of parental affection in the context of books of advice for parents mourning the loss of infants, which seems to have become a popular genre in the Mamluk period.[9]

'World contexts', in Wilkinson (ed.), *Cultural History of Childhood*; Julia Bray, 'The family in the medieval Islamic world', *History Compass* 9/9 (2011): 731-42; see also the relevant sections of Mohammed-Hocine Benheira, Avner Giladi, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, Jacqueline Sublet, *La famille en islam: d'après les sources arabes* (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2013).

[5] Gilʿadi, *Children*, introduction and chs. 2 and 4.

[6] Maria Luisa Ávila, 'The structure of the family in al-Andalus,' in M. Marín (ed.), *The Formation of al-Andalus, Part 1: History and Society* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 469–83.

[7] H. Gibb, 'Islamic biographical literature', in B. Lewis and P.M. Holt (eds), *Historians of the Middle East* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 54-58, esp. p. 54.

[8] Ariès, *L'Enfant*, pp. 36-46.

[9] Avner Gilʿadi, 'Concepts of childhood and attitudes towards children in medieval Islam: a preliminary study with special reference to reaction to infant and child mortality', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 32/2 (1989): 121-152; Gilʿadi, *Children*, chs. 6-7.

Other types of evidence exist. One area largely outside the scope of the present article is legal material: *fiqh*, *fatwā*s, and collections of *wathāʾiq* (formularies). As Vincent Lagardère, Amalia Zomeño and Janina Safran have demonstrated, such texts offer insight into the social history of the Islamic west, when used carefully;[10] on areas such as divorce, inheritance, and wage labour, for example, *fatwā* and *wathāʾiq* collections can give us both legal principles and examples of individual cases.[11] But this material is fragmentary, and can be more suggestive than truly illustrative. Furthermore, while Safran draws a distinction between theoretical and practical law, calling for greater attention to the specifics of historical context when examining legal works – something in which she is not alone[12] – she acknowledges that it can be difficult to tell the difference when reading a text.[13] (Nor is it clear whether 'theory' and 'practice' are quite the clear-cut categories they might appear to be.[14]) Some *fatwā*s that appear to be real-life examples are in fact exercises in casuistry, in testing the limits of law by exploring potential edge cases. For example, raids across the border between Christian and Muslim Iberia created an enormous range of possible complications in determining the legal status of children: a child's religious identity was generally dictated by that of his or her father, but what happened, for example, if a pregnant woman was kidnapped and the child was raised in a different religion? It is hard to be sure how many of these sorts of cases discussed by medieval jurists truly happened, or how common such instances were.[15] Nonetheless, an analysis of the arguments offered by the jurists – and, in some instances, of the disagreements later jurists expressed with these earlier verdicts – can be instructive in itself, showing us how individual scholars in different contexts sought to explain and apply legal principles.

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[10] Vincent Lagardère, *Histoire et société en occident musulman au Moyen Age: analyse du Miʿyār d'al-Wanšarīsī* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1995); Amalia Zomeño, *Dote y matrimonio en al-Andalus y el norte de África: estudio sobre la jurisprudencia islámica medieval* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones científicas, 2000); Janina Safran, *Defining Boundaries in al-Andalus: Muslims, Christians and Jews in Islamic Iberia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

[11] Maya Shatzmiller, 'Women and wage labour in the medieval Islamic west: legal issues in an economic context', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40/2 (1997): 174-206; David S. Powers, 'Women and divorce in the Islamic West: three cases', *Hawwa* 1/1 (2003): 29-45.

[12] Ziba Mir-Hosseini, 'The construction of gender in Islamic legal thought and strategies for reform', *Hawwa* 1/1 (2003): 1-28, p. 3.

[13] Safran, *Defining Boundaries*, pp. 5-6, 12, 26-9.

[14] M. Fadel, 'Rules, judicial discretion, and the rule of law in Naṣrid Granada: an analysis of *al-Ḥadīqa al-mustqilla al-naḍra fī al-fatāwā al-ṣādira ʿan ʿulamāʾ al-ḥaḍra*', in R. Gleave and E. Kermelli (eds), *Islamic Law: theory and practice* (London: IB Tauris, 1997), pp. 49-86, esp. pp. 49-50.

[15] Safran, *Defining Boundaries*, pp. 194-6.

Stylised evidence is still evidence, even if it helps us to answer different questions than we started with. Literary sources such as historical chronicles are of questionable value when it comes to discovering what medieval Islamic childhood was 'actually' like. But just like the reasoning set out by legal scholars, chroniclers' presentations of youth, and of parent-child relationships in both childhood and adulthood, can tell us a great deal about the way this society thought about itself, and it is this line of argument that the present article shall focus on. Children's lives were determined (and still are) by the cultural expectations of the environment(s) in which they grew up.[16] Childhood, as a social status and a process of socialisation – of training for adulthood[17] – is a product of the (sometimes unconscious or unconsidered) decisions and actions of groups of social actors; it is the attempt of society at large, or of a social group, to replicate itself.[18] . In the assumptions and expectations attached to literary portraits of children and parenting, we can see what the chroniclers – and, by extension, the world in which they wrote – held dear: what they wanted to see reflected in the behaviour of the next generation, and carried on into the future. Like many literary works of the period, the aim of these texts is not to represent the past or present as such, but to create *meaning* out of it.[19] It will probably come as little surprise, then, that much of the material that shall be explored in this article requires us to extrapolate from rather negative verdicts. All too frequently, the 'youth of today' baffled and disappointed its elders; a familiar story, perhaps.

For the purposes of this short piece, I am concerned with children both growing and grown up; in the chronicles under examination, the primary representation of elite parent-child relationships is in the context of adult sons waiting to inherit their fathers' mantle, and the way in which the resultant confrontations and disappointments prompt reflection on the process of raising children. The piece shall also focus on male rather than female children. This is partly because the material on male children is much more plentiful – many of the normative texts are only really interested in boys when it comes to issues such as

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[16] Hugh Cunningham, 'Review essay: histories of childhood', *The American Historical Review* 103/4 (1998): 1195-1208, p. 1198.
[17] Stearns, *Childhood in World History*, p. 2.
[18] Leena Alanen, 'Rethinking childhood', *Acta Sociologica* 31 (1988): 53-67, p. 64.
[19] Julie S. Meisami, 'Masʿūdī and the reign of al-Amīn: narrative and meaning in medieval Muslim historiography', in P.F. Kennedy (ed.), *On Fiction and* Adab *in Medieval Arabic Literature*, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2005), pp. 149-76, esp. pp. 149-52.

education[20] – but also because it is useful and important to look at masculinity as a category. As Julia Bray has argued, study of the family in medieval Islam needs to pay more attention to questions of class, gender, and race.[21]

Masculinity

When we talk about gender history, and gendered history, in the medieval Islamic world, the scholarly focus is – or has been – overwhelmingly on women.[22] This is perfectly understandable. Since women's voices are rarely heard within texts of the period – particularly chronicles, which were written by, about, and for men – it is both an important and a radical task to find women, and to find ways to write them back in to the history: to make them, as the introductory essay to one such volume has it, "visible".[23] Yet there are two caveats that may be advanced.

The first is that we must be wary of the possible distorting effect of applying to medieval Islam theories of gender and women's status that were formulated in a western scholarly context.[24] A model of binary gender ideology – of a coherent conception of femininity defined against a coherent masculinity, or vice versa – does not necessarily map comfortably onto a medieval Islamic world that made space, albeit uncomfortably, within its ideology of gender for the *mukhannathūn* (a term Rowson translates as 'effeminates': men who adopted dress and mannerisms associated with women, without posing as

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[20] Avner Giladi, 'Gender differences in child rearing and education: some preliminary observations with reference to medieval Muslim thought', *al-Qanṭara* 16/2 (1995): 291-307, p. 301.
[21] Bray, 'Family', p. 731.
[22] Including, but certainly not limited to: María J. Viguera, *La mujer en al-Andalus* (Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 1989); Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite* (New York: Perseus Books, 1991); Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman Word: gender and discourse in Arabo-Islamic writings* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron (eds), *Women in Middle Eastern History: shifting boundaries in sex and gender* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: historical roots of a modern debate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); D.A. Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past: the legacy of 'A'isha bint Abi Bakr* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
[23] Gavin R.G. Hambly, 'Becoming visible', *idem* (ed.), *Women in the Medieval Islamic World* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 3-27.
[24] Amira El-Azhary Sonbol, 'Introduction', in *eadem* (ed.), *Beyond the Exotic: women's histories in Islamic societies* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2005), pp. xvii-xxxviii, esp. pp. xvii-xviii; Afsaneh Najmabadi, 'Beyond the Americas: are gender and sexuality useful categories of analysis?', *Journal of Women's History* 18/1 (2006): 11-21.

women, as such).[25] To conceptualise gender in medieval Islam as a spectrum may in fact be more useful[26] – and, indeed, closer to the Galenic 'one-sex' model upon which many medieval Muslim writers drew for their ideas about men and women.[27]

The second drawback of the strong focus on women is that we run the risk – as Joan Scott and others have observed of the field more broadly – of telling only half the story.[28] Gender is relational;[29] it exists in an individual's interactions with other individuals and groups, and is ultimately, as Judith Butler has argued, performed against imagined gendered versions of the self.[30] The ideas, institutions, and practices that define and sustain 'femininity' – the set of behaviours and attitudes deemed ideal for women – derive their meaning and utility from the fact that women exist in a complex social hierarchy with men. Considering women alone means that we do not take full account of this structural element of gender, and reinforces the idea that men and (heterosexual) masculinity are the default: the entirely neutral yardstick against which everything else should be measured, and judged. It suggests that gender, with everything it implies in the way of possibility and permissibility, of social roles and behavioural expectations tied to perceived physical sex,[31] is something that only happens to women. This, of course, is not the case. As a consequence, it is essential to also study men, *as men*: as gendered beings.[32]

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[25] Everett K. Rowson, 'The effeminates of early Medina', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111/4 (1991): 671-693, pp. 672-5.

[26] Aisha Geissinger, *Gender and Muslim Constructions of Exegetical Authority: a re-reading of the classical genre of Qurʾān commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 34-7.

[27] Sherry Sayed Gadelrab, 'Discourses on sex difference in medieval scholarly Islamic thought', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 66/1 (2010): 40-81, esp. pp. 51-2 (noting, pp. 40-1, that medieval Islamic ideas on this topic were far from coherent, or unified); on how ideas about foetal development fit into this, see Ursula Weisser, 'The embryology of Yūḥannā ibn Māsawaih', *Journal of the History of Arabic Science* 4/1 (1980): 9-22.

[28] Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis', *American Historical Review* (1986): 1053-75, p. 1054.

[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 1055-6; R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: rethinking the concept', *Gender and Society* 19/6 (2005): 829-859, p. 837.

[30] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 185-6.

[31] Scott, 'Gender', p. 1056. Even biological sex is, of course, less binary than it might appear, as the sexing of the body is not stable either, due to cultural constructions of sex and the existence of, for example, intersex individuals. Butler, *Gender Trouble*, pp. 175-81; K.S. Lesick, 'Re-engendering: some theoretical and methodological concerns of a burgeoning archaeological pursuit', in Jenny Moore and Eleanor Scott (eds), *Invisible People and Processes: writing gender and childhood into European archaeology* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), pp. 31-41, esp. pp. 34-5.

[32] Susan Kingsley Kent, *Gender and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 66; Thelma Fenster, 'Preface: why men?', in Clare A. Lees (ed.), *Medieval Masculinities: regarding men in the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. ix-xiii, esp. p. x.

Masculinity is a construct of social order, albeit one so ubiquitous as to be, paradoxically, almost invisible, its standards taken for granted, and universalised.[33] It is, like gender more broadly, a symbolic language of power;[34] as Lahoucine Ouzgane has put it, masculinity is "a set of distinctive practices defined by men's positionings within a variety of social structures".[35] This is particularly so when we consider what RW Connell has called 'hegemonic masculinity', or "the most honoured way of being a man" in any given time and place;[36] despite the fact that the average man does not and cannot live up to the ideal masculine type, a mixture of cultural, institutional and interpersonal pressures lead men to judge themselves and each other against local standards of hegemonic masculinity. Manhood is a public status that must be performed in certain social contexts, and which requires recognition by other men. There is a pecking order: acceptable masculinity is inscribed with the traits, preferences and roles of elite men, while other behaviours are stigmatised and policed, often by being labelled as feminine.[37] Within medieval Islam, it is presumably not an accident that juristic conceptions of masculinity privileged eloquence and reason, since those were the skills that enabled a jurist to succeed in his profession; femininity, correspondingly, was assumed to consist in irrationality and frivolous pursuits, and Qurʾānic justifications were sought accordingly.[38]

In many historical contexts, masculinity, centrally, was about not just power, but power over others. Within patriarchal social systems, men's authority within the household confers upon them, symbolically, the ability to participate in commercial and political transactions in the public sphere.[39] Within Islam, justifications of men's authority within the household often centre on Q. 4:34 ("Men are overseers of women, because God has

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[33] Kent, *Gender*, pp. 3-4.
[34] Scott, 'Gender', pp. 1067-9, 1072.
[35] Lahoucine Ouzgane, 'Islamic masculinities: an introduction' (ed.), *Islamic Masculinities* (London: Zed Books, 2006), pp. 1-7, esp. p. 2.
[36] Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic masculinity', p. 832.
[37] Sometimes this led to competing definitions, or redefinitions, of masculinity: Christian monks, for example, occupied a difficult gendered space owing to the celibacy, which prevented them from demonstrating their manhood through the then-conventional means of fathering and providing for children. Vern L. Bullough, 'On being a male in the Middle Ages', in Lees (ed.), *Medieval Masculinities*, pp. 31-45, esp. p. 34; Andrew Holt, 'Between warrior and priest: the creation of a new masculine identity during the Crusades', in Jennifer D. Thibodeaux (ed.), *Negotiating clerical identities: priests, monks and masculinity in the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 185-203, esp. pp. 187-8.
[38] Geissinger, *Exegetical Authority*, pp. 52-3.
[39] Kent, *Gender*, pp. 10, 51-2. Patriarchy is not identical in all times and places, of course; for some examples of varieties of patriarchy within Islamic contexts, see Deniz Kandiyoti, 'Islam and Patriarchy: a comparative perspective', in Keddie and Baron, *Women in Middle Eastern History*, pp. 23-42.

granted some of them bounty in preference to others [*baʿḍahum ʿalā baʿḍin*]")[40] although this reading has come in for some robust challenges in recent years.[41] The effects of this authority were far-reaching; Yossef Rapoport's study of 'divorce oaths' in Mamluk Egypt (1250-1516) – the way that the unilateral right of a Muslim man to divorce his wife became a mechanism to demonstrate standing and establish trust in a wide variety of male-to-male social interactions – demonstrates amply how private power could translate into public standing.[42] In this case, gender has become the symbolic language of social power on a broader scale than relations between men and women in the household: it also defines the nature of relations between men (singly and collectively), determining the way that many other markers of social status (race, lineage, profession, clientage, etc.) are presented and understood.

Researching masculinity means looking at the aspects of a man's social being that define him as a man: what Rosalind O'Hanlon, in her work on Mughal manhood, has called the "psychic and social investment" that sustains a man's sense of his gender.[43] This means considering issues such as what links a man to other men as similarly gendered beings, how masculine identity is expressed, and what roles and qualities are associated with it. It also means examining how patriarchal social structures and expectations both privileged and confined boys and men. For example, the assumption that proper masculine sexuality was active and centrally about penetrating[44] meant that men could never be considered victims of rape or sexual coercion; if penetration had taken place, the logic went, they must have taken pleasure in it, and be punished accordingly for fornication or adultery.[45] Gendered assumptions and practices were inextricably bound up with both the conceptualisation and the symbols of political and social hierarchy, and they shaped the way that men in the medieval Muslim world lived their lives, and raised their sons.

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[40] The Qurʾān, trans. Alan Jones (London: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2007).

[41] Asma Barlas, 'Women's readings of the Qurʾān', in Jane Dammen McAuliffe (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Qurʾān* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 255-71, esp. pp. 263-4; Geissinger, *Exegetical Authority*, pp. 42-7.

[42] Yossef Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), esp. ch. 5.

[43] Rosalind O'Hanlon, 'Manliness and imperial service in Mughal north India', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 42/1 (1999): 47-93, p. 48.

[44] Geissinger, *Exegetical Authority*, p. 64; for a more general discussion of medieval Islamic sexuality, see Franz Rosenthal, 'Fiction and reality: sources for the role of sex in medieval Muslim society', in A. Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot (ed.), *Society and the Sexes in Medieval Islam* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1979), pp. 3-22.

[45] Delfina Serrano, 'Rape in Maliki legal doctrine and practice (8th-15th centuries C.E.)', *Hawwa* 5/2-3 (2007): 166-207, p. 175.

I shall now outline some of the expectations attached to children and child-rearing in medieval Islam, with particular reference to qualities and behaviours associated with elite sons, specifically.

Expectations

Andalusī chronicles hint at a hierarchy of access to the trappings of masculine adulthood for elite children. The courtly chronicler and grammarian Ibn al-Qūṭīya (d. 977), for example, tells us that the future Umayyad *amīr* ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II (r. 822-52) was permitted only to ride a donkey, not a horse, while he was growing up.[46] Even though ʿAbd al-Raḥmān was the current *amīr*'s eldest son, he was not, at the time, the designated heir. The gendered significance of the anecdote may not, by itself, be immediately apparent; but by setting it into the wider context of medieval Islamic constructions of masculinity in childhood, we can read ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's donkey as a public concession of a debt of status, expressed in terms of masculinity.

In the late tenth century, one Kaykāvūs b. Iskandar, an aristocratic landowner in the region to the south of the Caspian Sea, wrote a book of advice for his son. Most of his life lessons concern correct conduct for his son once the latter has attained full adulthood as a lord in his own right. But when he turns to instructing his son upon starting a family of his own, he offers some more personal insight into elite Muslim methods and goals for childrearing, and particularly in terms of father-son relationships, which are instructive for the present study even if he lived and wrote some distance from al-Andalus. He writes:

> If a son is born to you, you must endow him with a good name, because one of
> the claims which children have upon their fathers is to be endowed by them
> with a good name. Another duty is to entrust your children to intelligent and
> affectionate nurses. Then, when the time comes for circumcision, have it
> performed; and hold it essential to celebrate it with as resplendent and joyful a

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[46] Ibn al-Qūṭīya, *Taʾrīkh iftitāḥ al-Andalus*, in J. Ribera (ed.), *Historia de la conquista de España* (Madrid: Tipografía de la 'Revista de Archivos', 1926), p. 60.

feast as lies within your power. Afterwards teach your son the Qurʾān so that he shall be known as having it by heart.[47]

Kaykāvūs' concerns here are reflected in many legal and medical treatises on childrearing, such as the *Kitāb khalq al-janīn wa-tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-ʾl-mawlūdīn* ('The Book of the Creation of the Foetus and the Care of Pregnant Women and Newborns') by the Andalusī writer ʿArīb b. Saʿīd (d. 980).[48] These texts set out clear – if competing – schemas of the various stages of childhood,[49] including what we might term the developmental goals children should reach (teething, talking, walking, puberty, and *tamyīz* or 'discernment', on which more below), and the rites of passage parents should observe for these things.[50] Kaykāvūs alludes to the latter when he mentions circumcision. In the early years, children were left largely to the care of their mothers,[51] or – as Kaykāvūs suggests in the passage quoted above – to wetnurses;[52] in cases of divorce, women were almost invariably granted custody of sons under seven (or nine for daughters), at least until such time as they remarried.[53] The father's role was to carry out public rituals welcoming the child into the community, and thus publicly recognise the child's paternity. This rite was gendered, at least in the eastern Islamic world: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 1350) notes that, with the exception of the Mālikī school – the dominant legal tradition in al-Andalus – most authorities mandated that fathers should sacrifice one sheep to celebrate a girl's birth, and two for a boy; Mālikīs, however, recommended one sheep for any child, regardless of sex.[54]

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[47] Kaykāvūs ibn Iskandar ibn Qābūs, *Naṣīḥat-nāma known as Qābūs-nāma*, ed. Reuben Levy (London: Luzac, 1951), p. 74; trans. Reuben Levy, *A Mirror for Princes: the Qābūs nāma* (London, Cresset Press, 1951), pp. 119-20. Quotations from this text are taken from Levy's translation.

[48] For more on ʿArīb, see A.C. Lopez, 'Vie et oeuvre du fameux polygraphe de Cordoue, ʿArīb ibn Saʿīd (Xᵉ siècle)', in R. Barkai, ed., *Chrétiens, musulmans et juifs dans l'espagne médiévale: de la convergence à l'expulsion* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1994), pp. 77-101.

[49] In this, Islamic writers were influenced by the likes of Hippocrates (Gilʿadi, *Children*, p. 22); their 'stages' were not dissimilar to those of medieval European Christian thought (Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, pp. 17-19).

[50] ʿArīb b. Saʿīd, *Kitāb khalq al-janīn wa-tadbīr al-ḥabālā wa-ʾl-mawlūdīn*, ed. Henri Jahier and Noureddine Abdelkader (Algiers: Librairie Ferraris, 1956), esp. pp. 57-60 and 85-87; other chapters go into greater detail about what could be expected, primarily from the point of view of how to treat the diseases of the various stages.

[51] Manuela Marín, *Individuo y sociedad en Al-Andalus* (Madrid: Editorial Mapfre, 1992), pp. 156-7.

[52] A major source of income for women, including mothers, who were entitled to seek payment from their husbands for nursing their children; Shatzmiller, 'Women and wage labour', pp. 182-188.

[53] Giladi, 'Gender differences', p. 116; Susan A. Spectorsky, *Women in Classical Islamic Law: a survey of the sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 188-9.

[54] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Tuḥfat al-mawdūd bi-aḥkam al-mawlūd*, ed. ʿAbd al-Karīm Sharaf al-Dīn (Bombay: Sharaf al-Dīn al-Kutubī wa-Awlāduh, 1961), p. 38.

Once the child reached the age of minority – as distinct from infancy and childhood – he or she was considered to belong to the father.[55] This switch from mother to father is traditionally linked with *tamyīz*, the ability to grasp ideas and distinguish right from wrong, which was conventionally thought to occur around seven years of age.[56] The theologian al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) identifies *tamyīz* as the development of a sense of shame – that is, the ability to recognise that certain things are to be considered ugly and different, and certain behaviours are sources of shame – and explains that this quality enables children to be properly disciplined, as a necessary part of their educational and social growth.[57] Not all writers agreed on the exact age of *tamyīz*; ʿArīb – who connects developmental stages to the dominance of certain humours, under the influence of astrology – suggests that childhood (*mawlūd*) ends at around the age of ten. He says that *tamyīz* and related intellectual developments occur between the ages of ten and fourteen, and that fourteen is understood by many authorities to be the age of puberty for boys.[58] Even if they did not necessarily use the term, medieval Arabic chroniclers made reference to this stage in a child's development. Al-Masʿūdī (d. 955), discussing – with heavy foreshadowing of doom – the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Amīn's attempt to subvert his father Hārūn al-Rashīd's (r. 786-809) succession arrangements by appointing his own son, Mūsā, as his heir in the place of his brother al-Maʾmūn, notes disapprovingly that this boy to whom a representative of the army (*nās*) is swearing an oath of allegiance, "can't speak sense (*bi-amr*), nor does he know right from wrong (*lā yaʿrifu ḥasnan wa-lā yaʿqilu qabīhan*)".[59]

Whatever the precise parameters of age, the period between reaching *tamyīz* and puberty was a formative one for both boys and girls, in different ways. It was at this point that the father took a more active role, by supervising the child's education.[60] As Kaykāvūs puts it,

> Teach your children all that needs learning in various arts and
> accomplishments, in fulfilment of your duty as a father and the exercise of your
> loving kindness as a parent.[61]

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[55] Giladi, 'Gender differences', pp. 292-3. Rapoport's sample of Cairene divorces includes cases in which men used their custody rights after this age as leverage to gain a negotiated divorce (*khulʿ*), which was less costly to them than a unilateral one; Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce*, p. 73.
[56] Gilʿadi, *Children*, pp. 52-4, 82-84.
[57] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (Maṭbaʿat lajna nashr al-thaqāfa al-islāmiya, 1356/1937), 4 vols., p. 1468.
[58] ʿArīb b. Saʿīd, *Khalq al-janīn,* p. 85-6.
[59] Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, ed. C. Pellat (Beirut, 1966-79), 7 vols., §2645.
[60] Richard W. Bulliet, 'The age structure of medieval Islamic education', *Studia Islamica* 57 (1983): 105-117, pp. 108-9.

The key, here, is the word "needs". Education, too, was gendered; while many of the same developmental stages were expected of girls and boys alike, parents' aims in raising them were assumed to be different in certain key respects. As in any society, medieval Islamic childhood was a period of apprenticeship in the various skills needed to be an adult within that society. Learning culturally defined gender norms is only one of these skills, but it is an important one,[62] imposed externally through teaching, and internalised through imitation and adaptation of behaviour to receive praise from adults.[63] Girls and boys alike were taught what they needed to know to equip them for their future lives: sons were raised to be independent, so they could head the household when their father died; daughters were prepared to be a vehicle (initially a very lowly one) for the household they would marry into. Too much education, notably literacy, was viewed by some medieval Muslim authorities as dangerous for girls,[64] although it is clear from other evidence that it did sometimes take place regardless.[65]

Kaykāvūs' point in the second quoted passage nods towards the greater expectations elite fathers had of their sons, in an ideal scenario. He argues, here and elsewhere, that while sons of the elite are accorded a certain automatic respect on account of that status, they must be educated such that they can prove themselves worthy of respect. He thus extols the virtue of education that goes beyond the elementary training received by non-elite boys: a good father should ensure his son receives instruction in arms, horseriding, craftsmanship, and swimming; the key qualities to be cultivated, he says, are eloquence and generosity.[66] The latter point nods towards the importance of cultural education for elite boys: of *adab*, that endlessly flexible term denoting training in manners, wit, rhetoric, and above all the treasure trove of knowledge (of poetry, proverbs, history, jokes, and more)

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[61] *Qābūs-nāma*, p. 75 (translation p. 122).

[62] J. Sofaer-Derevenski, 'Engendering children, engendering archaeology', in Jenny Moore and Eleanor Scott (eds), *Invisible People and Processes: writing gender and childhood into European archaeology* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997), pp. 192-202, esp. p. 199.

[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 194, 197.

[64] Giladi, 'Gender differences', pp. 301-2.

[65] For examples from al-Andalus: Marín, *Individuo y sociedad*, pp. 187-8. For examples from Egypt, see Jonathan P. Berkey, 'Women and Islamic education in the Mamluk period', in Keddie and Baron, *Women in Middle Eastern History*, pp. 143-57, esp. pp. 146-51, and Huda Lutfi, 'Al-Sakhāwī's *Kitāb al-nisāʾ* as a source for the social and economic history of Muslim women during the fifteenth century A.D.', *The Muslim World* 71 (1981): 104-24, pp. 119-21.

[66] *Qābūs-nāma*, p. 74 (translation p. 120).

that an elite man might be expected to have at his mental fingertips.[67] While the content of *adab* might vary in different times and places, the ideal of being able to display cultivation was a lasting one,[68] and it was a skillset that was gendered as masculine. Amid his opening exhortations to his readers to ensure they only learn *adab* from the foremost men, the tenth-century writer Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Bayhaqī expresses the following extraordinary sentiment about *adab*: "Only the manliest of men (*al-dhukhūr min al-rijāl*) love it, while the effeminates (*muʿannath*) among them hate it."[69] What better marketing for *adab*: this is an education for *real* men only.

But a more extensive education did not necessarily mean that boys, even or perhaps especially elite boys, had more agency in their lives. It is well known that adult men were expected to make provision (*nafaqa*) for their families, and could expect obedience in return from their wives; this was central to both the Qurʾānic and the *fiqh* conceptions of marriage.[70] But this was only part of a patriarchal model of authority and social relationships that was mirrored across society, both within and outside the home; not just between men and women, but also among men.[71] Political and social connections of all kinds – including not just slavery, but also clientage, discipleship, and service to a caliph or sultan – all involved hierarchical power divides, in which one party was expected to defer, both publicly and privately, to the other;[72] society as a whole was an ever-shifting network of these sorts of relationships, in which an individual could have more power over some, but be obliged to defer to others, according to factors such as age and political or cultural power. In some instances, these relationships were discussed in explicitly gendered language, as Margaret Malamud has shown in her study of Sufi writings on discipleship, including the Andalusī mystic Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240). Deference, obedience and receptivity,

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[67] S.A. Bonebakker, '*Adab* and the concepts of *belles-lettres*', in J. Ashtiany, T.M. Johnstone, J.D. Latham, R.B. Serjeant, G.R. Smith (eds), ʿ*Abbasid Belles-Lettres* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 16-30.
[68] O'Hanlon, 'Manliness and imperial service', pp. 51-2, 58-9, 69-72, outlines the on-going importance of *adab* for the Mughal male elite.
[69] Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-maḥāsin wa-ʾl-masāwī*, ed. F. Schwally (Giessen: J. Ricker, 1902), p. 1.
[70] Spectorsky, *Women*, pp. 180-4; Mir-Hosseini, 'Construction of gender', pp. 7 and 10. In keeping with Connell's model of hegemonic masculinity, however, this authority didn't always have to be maintained by force; some medieval exegetes urged husbands to be accommodating and compromising in their relationships with their wives: Omaima Abou-Bakr, 'Turning the tables: perspectives on the construction of 'Muslim manhood', *Hawwa* 11 (2013): 89-107, pp. 94-7.
[71] Margaret Malamud, 'Gender and spiritual self-fashioning: the master-disciple relationship in classical Sufism', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64/1 (1996): 89-117, pp. 90-6, 108-9.
[72] For further discussion of the asymmetrical nature of clientage, see Nicola Clarke, *The Muslim Conquest of Iberia: medieval Arabic narratives* (London: Routledge, 2012), ch. 3.

Ibn ʿArabī said, were feminine qualities and an essential part of female sexuality, but they were not the exclusive provenance of women; disciples had to take on these traits when learning from their masters, just as all mystics ultimately did in their relationship with God.[73]

Father-son relationships, too, were hierarchical; patriarchy gave senior men authority over not just the women of their household, but the younger men and boys in it too.[74] Ideally, all children were expected to defer to their elders; this included offering the same sorts of public displays of obedience to their fathers that disciples did to their masters, such as walking behind them and not speaking unless they were spoken to.[75] Being quiet was prized; such unforgivably childish acts as crying too loudly or raising one's voice were linked with childhood injury in the form of a protruding navel, according to a Latin translation of a lost Arabic medical text attributed to al-Rāzī (d. 925).[76] In general, boys occupied an ambiguous gendered space, as Everett Rowson and others have argued; while the masculinity of adult men was displayed publicly through markers such as beards,[77] and the private fact of being sexual penetrators, beardless (*amrad*) young men were a common subject of homoerotic poetry, and their beauty and sexual availability was discussed by medieval writers in explicitly feminine terms.[78] These emasculating and immoral possibilities clearly worried some theorists, who sought to ensure that gender distinctions be demarcated – and performed – through the clothing permitted to boys, as they were for other social groups.[79] Al-Ghazālī, for example, recommends that well-to-do boys be dressed in white only, not in coloured garments, and still less in silk (which, he said, is suitable only

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[73] Malamud, 'Gender and spiritual self-fashioning', pp. 99-101.
[74] Geissinger, *Exegetical Authority*, p. 42; Kandiyoti, 'Islam and Patriarchy', p. 31.
[75] Malamud, 'Gender and spiritual self-fashioning', pp. 94-5, 105.
[76] Muḥammad b. Zakariya al-Rāzī, *On the Treatment of Small Children (De curis puerorum)*, ed. and trans. Gerrit Bos and Michael McVaugh (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p. 29 (translation p. 62).
[77] Gadelrab, 'Discourses on sex difference', p. 77.
[78] Everett K. Rowson, 'The categorization of gender and sexual irregularity in medieval Arabic vice lists', in J. Epstein and K. Straub (eds), *Body Guards: the cultural politics of gender ambiguity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 50-79, esp. pp. 54-6, 65-6; J.W. Wright, 'Masculine allusion and the structure of satire in early ʿAbbāsid poetry', in John W. Wright Jr. and Everett Rowson (eds), *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 1-23.
[79] Huda Lutfi, 'Manners and customs of fourteenth-century Cairene women: female anarchy versus male sharʿī order in Muslim prescriptive treatises', in Keddie and Baron, *Women in Middle Eastern* History, pp. 99-121, esp. pp. 109-10. Geissinger, *Exegetical Authority*, pp. 37, 50-3, shows how Qurʾānic verses were used by medieval exegetes to create and reinforce narratives of gender ideology. For more on dress, see Hadas Hirsch, 'Outward appearance of children in medieval Muslim legal texts: modesty, adornment and gender', *History and Anthropology* 25/5 (2014): 614-626.

for "women or *mukhannaths*").[80] In a neat example of the use of self-scrutiny and peer-to-peer policing to sustain gender boundaries, and especially hegemonic masculinity,[81] al-Ghazālī further suggests that boys should be taught to criticise and shame other boys who break these clothing rules.[82]

By virtue of their age and visible physical immaturity, then, boys – like many other social groups, such as slaves and women, albeit with a guarantee of considerable future improvement in social status that both of those groups lacked – were disempowered relative to their fathers, and in society at large.[83] This powerlessness can be seen in literary portraits of elite children. Heirs to significant social and political power were subject to a variety of expectations both in their actual childhood, and in the enforced extended childhood they spent awaiting their accession to that power. Elite heirs were projections and representations of their father's prestige, bound to act in ways that accorded with their fathers' policies and public image (at least in theory), but with few avenues available to them to make their own status and fortune out of their father's shadow.

The end of childhood was marked by the onset of puberty. For boys, this transition from child to adult was accompanied by the end of formal religious education (except for those going on to more specialised studies), and an expectation that the individual now possessed the legal capacity to manage his own affairs, in the sense of being able to form contracts and being legally responsible for his actions;[84] he was also expected to fulfil his complete religious duties.

Praise

When sons are praised in the texts under consideration here, it tends to be for exemplary performance of filial piety – in the form, essentially, of acknowledging their father's patriarchal authority over them. Kaykāvūs, again, sums up the general idea when he says,

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[80] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, p. 1469.
[81] Kent, *Gender*, pp. 68-70; Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic masculinity', p. 844.
[82] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, p. 1469.
[83] A state of affairs with parallels in many other times and places, e.g.: Alex Woolf, 'At home in the Long Iron Age: a dialogue between households and individuals in cultural reproduction', in Moore and Scott, *Invisible People and Processes*, pp. 68-74, esp. pp. 71-2.
[84] Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), pp. 124-5.

"As long as a child is young he cannot but be indebted to his father and mother for their guidance and affection. [...] Parents have the power to rear you and the command to teach you what is good."[85]

Andalusī chronicles written under the patronage or influence of the ruling Umayyad family are – like the dynasty itself – very much concerned with the continuity of the Umayyad lineage,[86] and with showing the sons of the dynasty following in their fathers' footsteps to uphold the family legacy. One example of this comes in an anecdote – of dubious historical accuracy, perhaps, but full of meaning for its tenth-century audience[87] – about the future Umayyad *amīr* ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I (r. 756-88). The first time we meet ʿAbd al-Raḥmān in Ibn al-Qūṭīya's chronicle, it is some years before he will go anywhere near al-Andalus. As a child in Damascus, we are told, he was in attendance at an audience given by the Umayyad caliph Hishām (r. 724-42) to one Sāra al-Qūṭīya ('the Gothic woman'),[88] the grand-daughter of a former Visigothic king of Iberia, and apparently an ancestor of our author.[89]

Key to the story is that Sāra is portrayed as a woman in need of protection, with no male relatives to speak on her behalf. She seeks the audience because she has been cheated of her inheritance by an unscrupulous uncle, Arṭubās, after the death of her father. The text makes clear that her sons would go on to be notable individuals – "one became the metropolitan of Seville, and the other was Oppa, who died in Galicia" – but they are described as being, at the time, her "two young sons (*ibnayn ṣaghirayn*)".[90] *Ṣaghīr* refers to a minor child – that is, someone no longer an infant (*ṭifl*) but not yet at the age of physical maturity[91] – and for the purposes of Sāra's story, they are clearly supposed to be below the

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[85] *Qābūs-nāma*, p. 15 (translation p. 19-20).
[86] For a brief further discussion of these issues, see Clarke, *Muslim Conquest*, pp. 40-2. For further detail, see Gabriel Martinez-Gros, *L'idéologie omeyyade: la construction de la légitimité du Califat de Cordoue (Xe-XIe siècles)* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1992), and Janina M. Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate: the articulation of Caliphal legitimacy in al-Andalus* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2000). The stories surrounding the building of the Great Mosque of Cordoba are a case in point of this interest in Umayyad continuity: see Ibn ʿIdhārī, *Kitāb al-bayān al-mughrib*, ed. G.S. Colin and E. Lévi-Provençal (Leiden: Brill, 1948–51), ii, pp. 229-30, and discussion in N.N.N. Khoury, 'The meaning of the Great Mosque of Cordoba in the tenth century', *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 80-98, pp. 80, 83-4; A. Fernández-Puertas, *Mezquita de Córdoba: su studio arqueológico en el siglo XX* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2009), pp. 296-9, 380; M. Fierro, 'En torno a la decoración con mosaicos de las mezquitas omeyas', *Homenaje al Prof. Jacinto Bosch Vilá* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1991) i, pp. 131-44, esp. pp. 135-39, 143-4.
[87] Ann Christys, *Christians in al-Andalus (711-1000)* (Richmond: Curzon, 2002), pp. 164-8.
[88] Ibn al-Qūṭīya, p. 5.
[89] Ibn al-Faraḍī, *Taʾrīkh ʿulamāʾ al-Andalus*, ed. I. Ibyari (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 1983-4), 2 vols., § 1316.
[90] Ibn al-Qūṭīya, p. 4.
[91] Avner Giladi, 'Ṣaghīr', *EI²* IX, pp. 821-27.

age of *tamyīz*, and thus to lack legal capacity to act on her behalf.[92] The father of Sāra's children is, moreover, nowhere to be seen in the story; we are later told that during this same visit, in addition to instructing his governor to ensure Sara's property is returned to her, "the caliph Hishām gave her in marriage (*ankaḥahā*) to ʿĪsā b. Muzāḥim".[93] Brokering marriages was one of the key rights and responsibilities of a male guardian, whether a father or (as in this case) a patron, towards female dependants;[94] it also positions Sāra as a figurative forebear of the Hispano-Roman and Basque women who would form the invisible backbone of the Umayyad dynasty in later years, as concubines and the mothers of the family's sons and heirs.[95]

In short, every aspect of Ibn al-Qūṭīya's portrait of Sāra is geared towards creating an image of a woman in need of a male patron to protect her interests. This she finds in the shape of Hishām, and it is a responsibility that Hishām passes down to his Cordoban Umayyad descendants. Years later, when the grown-up ʿAbd al-Raḥmān is installed in Cordoba, after the ʿAbbāsid revolution of 750 has led him to flee Damascus, he takes on the mantle of masculine, patriarchal authority from Hishām: he remembers the ties of clientage forged between Sāra and his Umayyad forebear, and is scrupulously careful to always welcome her into the palace at Cordoba.[96] Thus the new *amīr*'s roles as ruler, patron and head of household intertwine in this particular (pseudo-)historical anecdote. It should be noted that the caliph Hishām was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's grandfather; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's father died when he was six years old – that is, before ʿAbd al-Raḥmān had reached the age of *tamyīz* – and never reigned as caliph. Hishām thus functions as a role model and surrogate father in the passage discussed above. By virtue of having ruled in Damascus, Hishām is, in fact, a more effective figure for underlining the chronicler's point than ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's actual

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[92] See above, n. 84.

[93] Ibn al-Qūṭīya, p. 6.

[94] Maribel Fierro, 'Mawālī and muwalladūn in al-Andalus (second/eighth-fourth/tenth centuries)', in M. Bernards and J. Nawas (eds), *Patronate and Patronage in Early and Classical Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), pp. 195-245, esp. p. 199; Spectorsky, *Women*, pp. 65-71 and 148-51, in the latter case noting that the Mālikī school became stricter as time went on about the need for a woman of any age to be supervised by a guardian during the completion of a marriage contract.

[95] D. Fairchild Ruggles, 'Mothers of a hybrid dynasty: race, genealogy, and acculturation in al-Andalus', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34/1 (2004): 65-94, pp. 69-73. Such intermarriage between conquerors and elite conquered was relatively common in early medieval al-Andalus: Simon Barton, 'Marriage across frontiers: sexual mixing, power and identity in medieval Iberia', *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 3:1 (2011): 1-25, pp. 2-4. Sāra and ʿĪsā's descendants became the politically prominent Banū Ḥajjāj: J.M. Carabaza, 'La familia de los Banū Ḥaŷŷāŷ (siglos II-VII/VIII-XII)', in M. Marín and J. Zanón (eds), *Estudios onomástico-biográficos de al-Andalus* v: *Familias Andalusíes* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992), pp. 39-55.

[96] Ibn al-Qūṭīya, p. 5.

father would have been. An overriding theme of Ibn al-Qūṭīya's chronicle, as Maribel Fierro and Ann Christys have argued, is the continuity between the Umayyad past in Damascus and the Umayyad present in Cordoba.[97] Obedience to examples witnessed and instruction received in childhood – specifically, obedience to the Cordoban Umayyads' caliphal ancestors in Damascus – is thus presented by Ibn al-Qūṭīya as an important part of maintaining that legacy, and thus the Umayyad dynasty's legitimacy.

Later in the same chronicle, when ʿAbd al-Raḥmān makes a move to appropriate the estates of Arṭubās, he is criticised for this in terms that once again link fatherhood and dynastic fortunes.[98] Arṭubās accuses ʿAbd al-Raḥmān of "going against the pacts of your ancestors (*khālafta ʿuhūd ajdādika*)", and also warns him that, if he continues to make mistakes like alienating his allies, he is endangering his son's inheritance and his dynasty's survival in al-Andalus. Arṭubās asks ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, sarcastically, if he plans to return to Syria, to which the latter testily replies that he could not possibly do this, having been hounded out of the region (*bi-ʾl-sayf ukhrijtu*, "forced to leave by the sword"), in a clear reference to the ʿAbbāsid revolution. Well then, says Arṭubās: "Do you want to secure your current position for your son (*walad*), or are you going to take from him what you have got for yourself?" ʿAbd al-Raḥmān replies, "I only want to establish it (*an awṭidahu*) for me and for my son." Duly chastened, he gives a portion of the land he has seized back to Arṭubās. The message is that sons upholding their family's legacies and fathers safeguarding their sons' futures are both critical to ensuring the Umayyads survive and thrive after the setback of 750.[99]

There is another example worth noting, briefly, before we turn to negativity about sons. This, again, relates to the Umayyad family in Cordoba. A point of praise that Ibn al-Qūṭīya advances of the *amīr*-to-be ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II, in his youth, is that he reveres the famed Mālikī jurist Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā (d. 848) "more than a dutiful son would a loving father" (*al-ibn al-bārr li-ʾl-abi*).[100] Particularly by the middle of the tenth century, when Ibn al-Qūṭīya was writing, it was important to draw links between the dynasty and the keepers of the legal tradition, as another dimension to promoting Umayyad legitimacy; Yaḥyā, as a key figure in the arrival of Mālikī learning in al-Andalus, makes for an excellent anecdote in that

[97] M.I. Fierro, 'La obra histórica de Ibn al-Qūṭiyya', *al-Qanṭara* 10 (1989): 486-512, pp. 502, 511; Christys, *Christians in al-Andalus*, ch. 8; Clarke, *Muslim Conquest*, pp. 67-8.
[98] Ibn al-Qūṭīya, pp. 36-7.
[99] All quotations in this paragraph come from Ibn al-Qūṭīya, p. 37.
[100] Ibn al-Qūṭīya, p. 58.

regard.[101] But again it is the symbolic language of childhood, and what it implies in terms of power dynamics, that I want to highlight here. Fathers, as noted above, were supposed to guide their sons and oversee their religious instruction; they also had unilateral authority over their families. Rulers, moreover, had a duty to ensure the correct practice of religion in their domains, understood in ninth and tenth-century al-Andalus to mean, specifically, Malikī law. The phrasing of Ibn al-Qūṭīya, then, therefore signals not simply a close relationship, but one understood in terms of masculine hierarchy, and of the state as household. This is legitimisation of a regime by patriarchal logic, and at the same time a justification of patriarchal models of power.

Critique

The idea that there can be tensions between fathers and their offspring, especially sons, is hardly a new observation. Criticism of individual sons – and wariness about sons as a class – abounds in medieval Islamic literature. One of the exceptions to the rule that medieval chroniclers were uninterested in childhood has already been alluded to above: this is the civil war (809-813) between al-Amīn and al-Maʾmūn in the ʿAbbāsid caliphate, which several writers sought to explain by looking back to the brothers' earliest days, examining their personalities and upbringing to find the roots of the conflict.[102]

Kaykāvūs, likewise, sounds a note of world-weariness when he comments, perhaps more in hope than expectation, that, "For [their] existence, it behoves children to be grateful to their parents",[103] and "[H]e who fails in his comprehension of what he owes to the root cannot appreciate the goodness [required] of the branch."[104] In this, he echoes Qurʾānic exhortations for children to respect their parents.[105] Having explained that children's obedience to their parents should mirror that which they offer to God – the essence of

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[101] For more on Yaḥyā, see M. Fierro, 'El alfaqui beréber Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Laythī (m. 234/848), el inteligente de al-Andalus', in María Luisa Avila and Manuela Marín (eds), *Estudios onomástico-biográficos de al-Andalus*, vol 8: *Biográfias y género biográfico en el occidente islámico* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1997), pp. 269-344.

[102] Meisami, 'Masʿūdī and the reign of al-Amīn', pp. 153-9 (on al-Masʿūdī's version), 166 (on al-Ṭabarī's, which blames both brother equally for going against their father's wishes); Tayeb el-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography: Hārūn al-Rashīd and the narrative of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 31-57.

[103] *Qābūs-nāma*, p. 14 (translation p. 19)

[104] *Qābūs-nāma*, p. 15 (translation p. 20).

[105] E.g. Q. 17:23, 31:33.

patriarchal authority – Kaykāvūs observes that all the best people continue to esteem and obey their parents well into adulthood. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, he tells us, once said of the Prophet's parents, "If they had survived into the Prophet's time, it would have been his duty to place them above himself and humble himself before them out of filial piety."[106] Kaykāvūs' true source of patriarchal anxiety emerges towards the end of this section. "Guard against wishing for your father's death," he says, "merely for the sake of the inheritance."[107] Later, in the section advising how to raise children, Kaykāvūs counsels generosity towards sons: give them such money and property as they ask for, he suggests – don't make them desperate, is the implication.[108]

Anxiety over whether sons were worthy to succeed their fathers at all – in the estimation, of course, of their fathers – is a common motif in chronicles about the Umayyad period in al-Andalus. The case study that shall be considered here is that of the succession to Muḥammad b. Abī ʿĀmir, better known as al-Manṣūr (d. 1002). Al-Manṣūr was the regent for – and, between 981 and 1002, the *de facto* ruler in place of – Hishām II (r. 976-1009, 1010-13), who was a minor child upon his accession to the Umayyad caliphate. In his ability to seize and consolidate power, and make raids against the Christian kings of the north a highly successful centrepiece of his legitimacy, al-Manṣūr was a remarkable figure in many ways. But his achievements did not long outlast his death, and the caliphate he had dominated never recovered its stability or prestige, being consumed by *fitna* (civil war) between 1009 and its eventual collapse in 1031. Andalusī chroniclers, when they were not blaming those awful Berber mercenaries for the disaster,[109] evoked the problem of ineffectual heirs to explain matters.

The Tunisian writer Ibn al-Kardabūs (fl. 13th c.) portrays al-Manṣūr, on his deathbed, tearfully lamenting his fears and regrets to his chancellor (*ḥājib*), a *fatā* (eunuch) named Kawthar. Al-Manṣūr declares that he has done the Muslims a disservice so great that they ought to just kill him and burn his body immediately; it is, he says, the only fitting punishment for him. Kawthar, evidently familiar with the role interlocutors were expected to play in this sort of conversation, dutifully expresses disbelief: this cannot be true, he

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[106] *Qābūs-nāma*, p. 15 (translation p. 20).
[107] *Qābūs-nāma*, p. 15 (translation pp. 20-1).
[108] *Qābūs-nāma*, p. 75 (translation pp. 122-3).
[109] P.C. Scales, *The Fall of the Caliphate of Córdoba: Berbers and Andalusis in Conflict* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 68-73, 175.

exclaims, because al-Manṣūr has "glorified Islam and conquered the region (*bilād*)"; he has "subdued unbelief (*kufr*)". These were among the key duties of an amīr.[110] What more could he possibly have done? Well, I shall tell you, says al-Manṣūr:

> "When I conquered the Christian lands (*bilād al-rūm*), and their strongholds, I stationed it with troops (*ʿammartu bi-ʾl-quwwāt*) from all places, and continued to do this until these lands were fully fortified. [I then] rejoined them to the lands of the Muslims [...] But now here I am, dying, and none of my sons are able to succeed me; while they distract themselves with wine, women, and song (*yashtaghilūna bi-ʾl-lahw wa-ʾl-ṭarab wa-ʾl-shurb*), the enemy will come and find a flourishing and extremely populous land; he will find abundant resources therein to use against it, and, step by step, he will overcome it.[111] [...] If only God had inspired me to lay waste to the territory I conquered and leave it empty, creating a march of deserts and wastelands between Christian and Muslim territory, they would have struggled to find ways through it to enter the lands of Islam."[112]

This exchange is, of course, not so much an honest and realistic confession of a ruler's doubts as it is a paean of praise to al-Manṣūr, and a hindsight-laden assessment of what went wrong at the end of the Umayyad period. Raised in luxury and given little responsibility while their father was alive, we are told, al-Manṣūr's adult sons al-Muẓaffar (d. 1008) and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (aka 'Sanchuelo', d. 1009) made rather a mess of ruling when they finally got the chance. Most notably, Sanchuelo – who succeeded al-Muẓaffar on his brother's death in 1008 – abandoned his father's relatively cautious relationship with the Umayyads, forcing the isolated caliph Hishām II – no longer a minor, still not a ruler – to designate Sanchuelo as his heir. In doing so, he brought down the wrath of the rest of the family on his head.

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[110] Janina N. Safran, 'Identity and differentiation in ninth-century al-Andalus', *Speculum* 76 (2001): 573-98, p. 598.

[111] The verb *ghalaba* is used here, rather than *fataḥa*, implying an illegitimate – i.e., specifically non-Muslim – conquest.

[112] Ibn al-Kardabūs, *Kitāb al-iktifāʾ fī akhbār al-khulafāʾ*, ed. A.M. Abbadi, *Revista del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos* 13 (1966): 41-126, pp. 64-5.

A century after Ibn al-Kardabūs, the Granadan minister and writer Ibn al-Khaṭīb (d. 1374) included in one of his works a last testament-style speech apparently delivered by al-Manṣūr on the same deathbed, this time to al-Muẓaffar directly. Having opened with stern warnings about the risks attendant on not listening to his father's words, al-Manṣūr proceeds to outline the many advantages he is leaving behind for his heir:

> "I have given you a smooth path to power, ordered the ranks of the state's personnel for you, and ensured abundant tax revenue, far in advance of what is needed for your personal expenses and the upkeep of your army."[113]

The message throughout is clear, and again the text is making a moral tale of the past: if al-Muẓaffar (and Sanchuelo) had only obeyed their father's advice, demonstrating the same prudence and an active engagement with the demands of rule, al-Andalus would not have fallen into civil war and ruin. But if we recall Kaykavus' pronouncements on the responsibility of fathers to ensure the proper training of their sons – and Arṭubās' rebuke to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I, about endangering his dynasty's survival by risking his son's legacy – there is surely also in here some commentary on ineffective elite parenting. In a sense, al-Muẓaffar's and Sanchuelo's disasters were a final comment on al-Manṣūr himself; a key function of fatherhood among the elite, after all, is to ensure the next generation is equipped to maintain that elite status. For a Muslim ruler, moreover, the chief obligation is to protect the community. Failure to produce a son worthy to fulfil this role was as much of an indictment of an elite man's masculinity as not producing one at all.

Conclusions

This has been only a preliminary exploration; much remains to be done in terms of broadening the pool of examples, identifying further gendered markers at work in the texts, and drawing on a larger evidence base. In particular, any serious study of this topic requires a more sustained consideration of the possibilities of legal texts: both the theoretical question-and-answer texts of the famous founding jurists, and the legal rulings and opinions of day-to-day life in al-Andalus.

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[113] Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Kitāb aʿmāl al-aʿlām*, ed. E. Lévi-Provençal (Dār al-Makshūf: Beirut, 1956), p. 81.

What I have attempted to do here is give some indication of the way masculinity operated in a particular time and place – ninth, tenth and eleventh-century al-Andalus, and later literary accounts of it – while also giving some indication of how conceptions of masculinity were formulated, and developed, in the wider culture of the Islamic world in this period. Masculinity was a particular set of behaviours, qualities and expectations attached to men as social beings; it privileged certain roles and characteristics as exemplary, according these high social status, and devalued others. All of this intersected with other aspects of social and political life – age, profession, wealth, ethnicity, religious identity – creating a complex web regulating what men of various ages and walks of life could and could not do, at least if they wanted to maintain their status in the eyes of other men, and determining how they recognised and related to each other.

Elite men were the benchmark of performative, hegemonic masculinity and social power. A presumption of masculine authority within the household shaped the way early medieval rulers were described by chroniclers, and how medieval fathers related to their sons. The formal and informal ways that they interacted with lower status men – whether these men were their clients, their courtiers, or, as explored in this article, their sons – were hedged about with the symbolic language of gender. Fundamentally, masculinity was about having power over others: it was about enacting, at every opportunity, patriarchal social hierarchy through words and deeds that carried a gendered charge, and also about the ways in which those words and deeds were interpreted and reinterpreted with a narrative of gender ideology. But it was also fragile, requiring constant maintenance if it was not to crumble.