



Call for Papers: Motherhood and Unfreedom in the Islamicate World (700-1000)

June 4, 2025

Organizers

This workshop is organized by Dr. Zahra Azhar and Dr. Leone Pecorini-Goodall, and supported by ERC Horizon Starting Grant Project, "Embodied Imamate: Mapping the Development of the Early Shi'i Community 700-900 CE (ImBod)," grant number 101077946, led by Dr. Edmund Hayes with the generous support of the Allard Pierson and their collaborative partner, the National Slavery Museum.

For more information on the project, please see our website:

www.embodiedimamate.hcommons.org

Please submit abstracts of up to **500 words** to this email address no later than **March 15th**:
embodiedimamate@gmail.com

The intersection between slavery and gender shaped the history of early Islam; the seventh-century conquests brought a large number of slaves into the Islamicate world. Over the course of subsequent centuries these women gave birth to an increasingly large number of elite Muslim children, whose birth-circumstances had far-reaching implications for family structure, gender roles, and rulership. Simultaneously, the emergence of Islam brought changes to enslaved women, who, unlike their pre-Islamic counterparts, had clearer rights in terms of their children's paternity, could not be sold once they bore children, and were theoretically granted freedom upon their master's death. By the mid-eighth century, the Abbasid caliphs, Umayyad amirs of al-Andalus, and Twelver Shi'i Imams were predominantly born to concubine mothers. Endogamous marriage (marrying within one's family) amongst elites further represents a shift away from the maternal family and prosopographical research has shown a sharp increase in concubinage, especially in genealogical records.

Abstracts should be submitted to embodiedimamate@gmail.com by 15 March 2025. Abstracts should be 500 words or less, including references. Please use the following format: [Author Name], [Title of Abstract], [Institution]. Abstracts should be submitted in PDF format. Please use the following format: [Author Name], [Title of Abstract], [Institution]. Abstracts should be submitted in PDF format. Please use the following format: [Author Name], [Title of Abstract], [Institution].