

**Leadership and Legacy:
Muslim Women Remembered**

A Teaching Packet about Muslim Women in History



'Amra bint 'Abd al-Rahman

Secondary Teaching Packet: Unit Plans

A project of Rabata

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*"History looks different when the contributions of women are included."
-- The National Women's History Project*

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Overview:

The following material is assembled in hopes of “giving rise to women’s voices.” Its intent is to demonstrate a way that teachers and students can work together to forward awareness of both historic and contemporary Muslim women.

Overall Objective of Digital Books and Worksheets:

To acquire attitudes which are essential for citizens of democratic pluralist societies, in particular intellectual honesty, open-mindedness, respect for truth, tolerance, acceptance of differences, empathy and civil courage.

This packet includes activities for English Language Arts and Social Studies.

Interdisciplinary Conceptual Understanding:

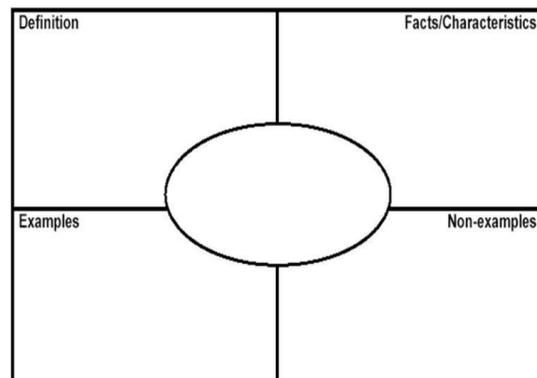
Intentionally studying our past empowers us to view the present with a more diverse perspective.

Middle & High School Lesson Plans and Standards

Scaffolding Activities:

Introducing Vocabulary:

- **Essential Understanding:** A robust vocabulary improves all areas of communication — listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- **Objective:** Students will be able to define words in context and utilize them correctly in their day-to-day speaking and writing.
- **Standard:**
 - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text and analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.
- **Activities:**
 - Student Led: Give each student two words to define and then hang all of the Frayer Squares (copy in appendix) for students to perform a gallery walk. Ask them to evaluate which Vocabulary Squares make sense, and which (if any) do not.
 - Teacher Led: Modified KWL Chart (write on board, project or print for each student)



Vocabulary KWL Chart---*Full Copy in Appendix		
Important Word	Why is the word important? How is it related to the topic?	What I think the word means from context.

Introducing Geography:

- **Essential Understanding:** Learners develop an understanding of spatial perspectives, and examine changes in the relationship between peoples, places and environments.
- **Objective:** To orient the students to the Arabian Peninsula.
- **NCSS Standard:**
 - Develop an understanding of spatial perspectives, and examine changes in the relationship between peoples, places and environments.

- The study of people, places, and environments enables us to understand the relationship between human populations and the physical world.
- **Activities:**
 - Present: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Digital Book.
 - Discuss each slide.
 - Blank Map: Locate the following places on the map
 - Locate the seven countries (Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Yemen) on the map, label them and color them yellow.
 - Locate the major seas and waterways on the Arabian Peninsula map, label them and color them blue: Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Gulf of Oman, and the Persian Gulf (also called the Arabian Gulf).

History Activity:

- **Essential Understanding:** *Knowledge and understanding of the past enables us to analyze the causes and consequences of events.*
- **Objective:** To explore and evaluate the critical events that occurred before, during and after the life of 'Amra bint 'Abd al-Rahman.
- **NCSS Standards:** Studying the past makes it possible for us to understand the human story across time.
- **Activity:**
 - [Early Islamic Civilization Timeline](#)

Warm-Up Activity: Engage

- **Essential Understanding:** The role of government is to regulate individuals behavior and actions.
- **Objective:** To engage students in understanding how courts make decisions.
- **NCSS Standard:** *Know how institutions are formed, what controls and influences them, how they control and influence individuals and culture, and how institutions can be maintained or changed.*
- **Warm-Up:**
 - [“Goldilocks on Trial”](#)
 - Divide the class in groups of three. One group will have a guilty verdict with a sentence and another group will have a non-guilty verdict with community service.
 - **Comprehension Questions:**
 - Do you think Gold E. Locks did anything wrong? Why or why not?
 - How did the Bear family feel about what she did?

- Have each group share the verdict.
- Which verdict is more fair? Why? (*See appendix for “verdicts.”*)

Main Lesson Plan: Reading the Text

- **Essential Understanding:** *People cite concrete evidence from a text to support their analyses of what the text says explicitly and inferentially. Summarizing allows readers to briefly articulate the substance of a work to facilitate overall comprehension.*
- **Objective:** *To challenge students to work with a “stretch text” to glean information and strengthen their comprehension.*
- **Common Core Standards:**
 - *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.2/12.2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text.*
- **Reading Activities:**
 - First reading of the article
 - Close Reading of the article (see appendix)
 - **Summarizing:** Have students summarize each section of the text for the central idea.
 - Second reading of the article:
 - Popcorn read the article: ‘Amra bint ‘Abd al-Rahman.
 - Pause and ask students what their comments or questions were.

Writing Lesson Plans

Argumentative Writing

- **Essential Understanding:** *People cite concrete evidence from a text to support their analyses of what the text says explicitly and inferentially. Summarizing allows readers to briefly articulate the substance of a work to facilitate overall comprehension.*
- **Objective:** *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.1/12.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence*
- **Writing Activities:**
 - **Find evidence to support the claim:** ‘Amra bint ‘Abd al-Rahman is a ‘vast ocean of knowledge.’
 - Outline is available in the Appendix

Creative Writing Lesson Plan

- **Essential Understanding:** *People write narratives to explore issues and promote a variety of perspectives as well as deepen insight.*

- **Objective:** *To utilize dialogue, word choice and tone to develop insight by writing a play.*
- **Standard:** *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3/12.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.*
- **“Be a jurist”**
 - Think about a time when you or someone you know experienced a decision that was unfair. (Brainstorm scenarios)
 - Write a play with 4 characters.
 - One character is the **defendant** or one committed the offense
 - One character is the **prosecutor** who is charging the defendant
 - One character is the **attorney** who is helping the friend
 - One character is the **judge** who decides what sentence is appropriate

Research/Informational Writing

- **Essential Understanding:** *Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.*
- **Objective:** *Students will research, organize information and write a newspaper article or facebook page on a specific event or person.*
- **Standard:** *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2/12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.*
- **Activity 1: Newspaper Article**
 - Research an event on the [timeline](#)
 - Create an innovative headline
 - Develop a story (Who? What? Where? When? How? Why? So what?)
 - Use a free newspaper template or make your own on canva
- **Activity 2: Facebook Template**
 - Using the [timeline](#) research an important person
 - [Create a Facebook Account](#) for them using canva or a google template.

Wrap Up:

- **Create Trivia Cards on the Article (or Timeline)**
 - With this Jeopardy twist, students can create *their own* trivia cards and then take turns playing the game with a fellow student. The bonus here is that
 - students will be cementing their learning while creating the cards, and then they'll solidify that even further when playing trivia with a partner!
- **Exit slips**
 - Students will write two sentences about what they learned today, or you can have them respond to a specific thought-provoking question about what you taught. Either way, exit slips are a quick and easy solution.
- **Slide presentation/ Exit Slip**
 - Allow your students to flex their creative muscles by developing slide or canva presentations that highlight key points from the topic. Students will solidify their learning not only when they create their presentation but also when they watch their peers present.
- **The artist**
 - Wrap up a series of lessons by having students create a related piece of art such as a collage to capture the feeling of the article. Have each student put their "square" on the wall and read them off.

Middle and High School Worksheets, Lesson Activity Sheets and Appendix

Verdict Cards

Verdict 1: Innocent on all counts

- *Innocent on the Charge of Breaking and Entering*
- *Innocent on the Charge of Stealing (food and drink)*
- *Innocent on the Charge of Destruction of Property*

Free to go home!

Verdict 2: Guilty on all counts

- Guilty on the Charge of Breaking and Entering
- Guilty on the Charge of Stealing (food and drink)
 - *Total damages of \$50*
- Guilty on the Charge of Destruction of Property
 - *Total damages of \$2,000*

Sentenced to 10 years in jail without parole.

Verdict 3: Guilty on all counts

- *Guilty on the Charge of Breaking and Entering*
- *Guilty on the Charge of Stealing (food and drink)*
- *Guilty on the Charge of Destruction of Property*

Sentenced to 150 hours Community Service and must repay the Bear Family \$2,050.

Vocabulary KWL Chart		
<i>Important Word</i>	<i>Why is the word important? How is it related to the essential understanding?</i>	<i>What I think the word means from context.</i>
Jurist		
Critically		
Revealed		
Counteract		
Proximity		
Tutelage		

Vocabulary		
KWL Chart		
<i>Important Word</i>	<i>Why is the word important? How is it related to the essential understanding?</i>	<i>What I think the word means from context.</i>
Reputable		
Discord		
Assasination		
Strife		
Burdensome		
Theorist		

Vocabulary		
KWL Chart		
<i>Important Word</i>	<i>Why is the word important? How is it related to the essential understanding?</i>	<i>What I think the word means from context.</i>
Animosity		
Nascent		
Immediacy		
Abundance		

Fruyer Model

DEFINITION	CHARACTERISTICS
WORD:	
EXAMPLES/MODELS	NON-EXAMPLES

<u>CLOSE READING CHART</u>	
<p>Questions</p> <p><i>*Ask at least 3 questions that begin with Why, How or So What?</i></p>	
<p>Comments & Connections</p> <p><i>*Make 2 comments and 2 connections</i></p>	
<p>Evidence to support:</p> <p>'Amra bint 'Abd al-Rahman is a 'vast ocean of knowledge.'</p> <p>Find three pieces of evidence</p>	

Argumentative Essay Outline	
Paragraph 1: Introductory Paragraph	
<u>Hook</u>	
<u>Summary</u> <i>Write a brief summary about the article</i>	
<u>Claim with reasons</u> <i>Answer the question and add the word "because" then give 2 reasons.</i>	
Paragraph 2: First Body Paragraph	
Topic Sentence: <i>Create a topic sentence with the first reason</i>	

<p>Evidence: <i>This is a direct quote from the text and should support reason above</i></p> <p><i>*remember to introduce the evidence properly</i></p>	
<p><u>Comment, give examples & connect to claim:</u></p> <p><i>Why / How does this sentence connect to the claim? What point are you making?</i></p> <p><i>Write at least 3 sentences</i></p>	
<p>Paragraph 3: Second Body Paragraph</p>	
<p>Topic Sentence: <i>Create a topic sentence with the second reason</i></p>	
<p>Evidence: <i>This is a direct quote from the text and should support reason above</i></p> <p><i>*remember to introduce the evidence properly</i></p>	

<p><u>Comment, give examples & connect to claim:</u></p> <p><i>Why / How does this sentence connect to the claim? What point are you making?</i></p> <p><i>Write at least 3 sentences</i></p>	
<p>Paragraph 4: Third Body Paragraph Counterargument & Rebuttal</p>	
<p>Choose a counter argument statement or create your own</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The other side might say ‘Amra bint Abd al-Rahman was primarily a jurist. - The other side might say ‘Amra bint Abd al-Rahman was primarily a student of Aisha. 	
<p>Write your counter argument statement:</p>	
<p><u>Rebuttal:</u> Write 3-5 sentences giving evidence AGAINST this statement and supporting your original claim.</p> <p><i>Use a clear transition that denotes disagreement</i></p>	

<p>But, however, in spite of, despite, on the other hand, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, in contrast, on the contrary, conversely</p>	
<p>Paragraph 5: Conclusion</p>	
<p>Rephrase the thesis statement with fresh and deeper understanding</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrate the importance of your ideas - Propel your reader to a new view of the subject - End on a positive and dynamic note 	

Middle School Biography Article

`Amra bint `Abd al-Rahman: Legal Scholar, Jurist and 'Vast Ocean of Knowledge'

The year 650 CE was the beginning of what is called the Middle Ages in Western/European history, yet in the modern Middle East it was a period of rapid growth and development. The leader of the Muslim world at this time was `Uthman ibn `Affan.

In the eighteen years since the death of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him¹), Muslim rule had already spread far and wide.² New questions, issues and thorny legal problems were cropping up often and the role of the *jurist* became *critically* important.

For over 29 years, since the Quran was *revealed* to Prophet Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel, Muslims had been memorizing the Quran in the oral tradition of the time. This meant that one person would memorize the verses from another person. There were written accounts, to be sure, but for the most part it was an oral tradition.

The Quran was written in Arabic and as non-Arabs entered Islam and learned Quran variations in pronunciation occurred. In order to *counteract* these mistakes in pronunciation and writing, an official Quran was copied and sent to all major cities.

Meanwhile, in every major city, legal specialists, judges, and teachers of the faith were building a system of law³ and institutions of learning for present and future generations.

It was in this time of growth and development that a baby girl was born in Medina.

Biographical information

This child, 'Amra bint⁴ Abd al-Rahman, was related to two important members of the early Medinan society. She was the paternal great-niece of As'ad ibn Zurara, who was one of the six delegates to meet the Prophet and become Muslim. Her maternal aunt, Um Hisham bint Haritha, was also a companion, and one of the individuals who took the Pledge of the Tree⁵ right before the Treaty of Hudaibiya.⁶

¹ Muslims say, "peace be upon him" when speaking about all prophets as a term of respect

² <http://www.essential-humanities.net/world-history/islamic-middle-east/>

³ See "Approaches to Law" article on

⁴ Bint means "daughter of"

⁵ A pledge that was sworn to the Prophet Muhammad.

⁶ This treaty established the Islamic state of Medina and eliminated the notion that Prophet Muhammad as a fugitive or rebel.

Years with 'A'isha (r)

'Amra's father died when she was still a young girl, and she was invited to move into the home of 'A'isha, who carried the title of 'Mother of the Believers' because she had been married to the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him).

'A'isha's vast knowledge made her the leading authority of the time and a priceless resource for both men and women. Both her brilliance and her *proximity* to the seat of learning offered 'A'isha (r) the opportunity to become one of the greatest scholars of early Muslim history.

Under 'A'isha's *tutelage*, 'Amra became one of the most *reputable* legal theorists in Islamic history, a devoted student, learning the Quran, the hadith, and the legal opinions of her teacher.

During 'Amra's life, the city of Medina was experiencing a period of great political *discord* and difficulty. Leaders were being killed one after the other. The *assassination* of 'Uthman happened when she was six years old, the assassination of 'Ali when she was eleven years old, and nine years later, Hasan ibn 'Ali was poisoned to death.

During all of this political *strife* and grief, she continued to study with 'A'isha bint Abu Bakr. In 678, when 'Amrah was 28 years old, her patron and teacher 'A'isha (r) died, leaving the *burdensome* role of scholar, legal *theorist*, and spiritual leader in her capable hands.

Life in Medina

Political life did not become simpler and 'Amra continued to witness *animosity*. Yet, in 658, when 'Amra was 35 years old, the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan contained the regional discord and the *nascent* nation began to develop in new ways. He instituted a postal service and replaced the Roman and Greek coins that were being used for money with new coins that declared the maturing status of the Muslim nation⁷.



⁷ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/discover/coins-muslims-islam-seventh-century-arabia>

'Amra as jurist and scholar

'Amra was someone who understood the principles of goodness and justice that had been taught during the Prophetic Era, and could bring forth valid evidence for legal rulings, policy making, and cultural development.

'Amra bint Abd al-Rahman did not fail to offer her opinion if she felt justice was not fulfilled. At one point, the official judge of Medina, Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn 'Amr ibn Hazm was holding a prisoner for punishment in a case of theft. The judgment had been made, and the sentence decided, but 'Amra disagreed with the result. She sent her messenger in haste to the judge in order to correct his sentence.

Ibn Hazm, the judge, heard 'Amra's opinion and immediately released the man in custody. Such was the weight of her opinion. He did not call her to argue or discuss the matter; he did not take some time to think about her opinion, he simply listened and responded with *immediacy*.

She died in 727, and upon her deathbed asked her brother to bury her away from other tombs, so that in digging the grave they would not disturb the bones of others. Concerned even in death about taking care of details, 'Amra was truly, "a scholar, jurist, and holder of an *abundance* of knowledge" (Al-Dhahabi)⁸.

⁸ Al-Dhahabi was a leading historian and scholar.

Highschool
Biography Article

`Amra bint `Abd al-Rahman

Tabi`iya, Legal Scholar, and Jurist

The year 650 CE was the beginning of what is called the Middle Ages in Western/European history, yet in the modern Middle East it was a period of rapid growth and development. The leader of the Muslim world was `Uthman ibn⁹ `Affan.

In the eighteen years since the death of Prophet Muhammad¹⁰ (peace be upon him¹¹), Muslim rule had already spread far and wide¹². New questions, cultures, and thorny legal problems were cropping up often and the role of the *tabi`een*¹³ became critically important.

Generations of the Early Muslims
Sahaba: (companion) someone who met and learned directly from Prophet Muhammad
Tabi`i pl. Tabi`een: (follower/followers) someone who met and learned directly from a companion/sahaba
Tabi` al tabi`een: (follower of the followers) Someone who met and learned directly from a tabi`i.

For over 29 years, since the Quran¹⁴ was revealed to Prophet Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel, Muslims had been memorizing the Quran in the oral tradition¹⁵ of the time. The Quran was in Arabic, and as non-Arabs entered Islam and learned Quran, variations in pronunciation began to appear. To **counteract** any mistakes in pronunciation and writing, an official Quran was copied and sent to all major metropolises.

⁹ ibn: “son of”

¹⁰ Prophet Muhammad was the prophet of Islam, believed to be the last prophet after Adam, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets mentioned in the Torah and the Bible.

¹¹ Muslims say, “peace be upon him” when speaking about all prophets as a term of respect

¹² <http://www.essential-humanities.net/world-history/islamic-middle-east/>

¹³ *Tabi`een* generation of people (termed the *tabi`een*) who had met the generation of people who had learned directly from Prophet Muhammad became critically important.

¹⁴ Quran: the holy scripture of the religion of Islam, it is the divine revelation from God to Prophet Muhammad, relayed through Angel Gabriel.

¹⁵ Oral tradition is one in which one person would listen to another person and learn from them, memorize what they learned, and in turn transfer this knowledge to others. There were written accounts of the Quran, to be sure, but for the most part it was an oral tradition.

Scholarship was booming in other areas of study as well. In every major city legal specialists, judges, and teachers of the faith were busy building a system of law¹⁶ and institutions of learning for the present and future generations of Muslims and peoples of other faiths living in Muslim lands.

It was in this time of growth and development that a baby girl was born in Medina¹⁷.

Biographical information

`Amra bint¹⁸ `Abd al-Rahman was related to two important members of the early Medinan society. She was the paternal great-niece of As`ad ibn Zurara, who was of the first six delegates from Medina to meet the Prophet in Mecca¹⁹ and become Muslim. Her maternal aunt, Um Hisham bint Haritha, was also a companion, and one of the individuals who took the Pledge of the Tree²⁰ right before the Treaty of Hudaibiya²¹.

Names

Instead of using last names or tribe names on a daily basis, the Arabs would use their fathers' or children's names to identify each other. Some of the terms used for these names are:

ibn: son of

bint: daughter of

abu: father of

um: mother of

Years with Sayidina 'Aisha

`Amra's father died when she was still a young girl, and she was invited to move into the home of Sayidina 'Aisha, who carried the title of 'Mother of the Believers' because she had been married to the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him). Sayidina 'Aisha's vast knowledge made her the leading authority of the time and a priceless resource for both men and women. Both her brilliance and her

¹⁶ See "Approaches to Law" article

¹⁷ Medina: a city in the Arabian Peninsula, (modern-day Saudi Arabia) the capital of the Muslim lands at that time.

¹⁸ bint: daughter of

¹⁹ Mecca: a major city in the Arabian Peninsula, from which Prophet Muhammad originally hails.

²⁰ The Pledge of the Tree: an agreement between early Muslims and Prophet Muhammad which was made under a tree on the outskirts of Mecca, wherein those early Muslims pledged their allegiance to the Prophet

²¹ The Treaty of Hudaibiya: An peace treaty made between Prophet Muhammad and the Muslims on one side, and the people of Mecca on the other - who had been enemies up to now. This treaty marked a turning point, as it allowed peace to spread so that people were free to learn about the religion of Islam without fear of persecution.

proximity to the seat of learning offered Sayidina 'Aisha the opportunity to become one of the greatest scholars of early Muslim history.

Learning and living with Sayidina 'Aisha was a great opportunity for `Amra. History does not note the reason that Sayidina 'Aisha decided to extend this invitation to `Amra. It could be that Sayidina 'Aisha offered to raise her since she was of the clan of Bani Najjar, the tribe of the Prophet's mother, making `Amra a maternal relative of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. However, there must have been other orphans in Medina, and perhaps Sayidina 'Aisha saw in `Amra a brilliant young mind that could help to carry forward legal and **theological** studies to the next generations. `Amra became one of the most **reputable** legal theorists in Islamic history, a devoted student, learning the Quran, the hadith²², and the legal opinions of her teacher.

During `Amra's life, the city of Medina was experiencing a period of great political **discord** and difficulty. Leaders were being killed one after the other. The assassination of `Uthman happened when she was six years old, the assassination of `Ali ibn Abi Talib when she was eleven years old, and nine years later, Hasan ibn `Ali was poisoned to death.

During all of this political **strife** and grief, she continued to study with Sayidina 'Aisha bint Abu Bakr. In 678, when `Amra was 28 years old, her patron and teacher Sayidina 'Aisha died, leaving the weighty role of scholar, legal theorist, and spiritual leader in her capable hands.

Life in Medina

But political life did not become simpler. She would witness fighting between the companions `Abdullah ibn Zubair and Mu`awiya, the Shi`a-Sunni **schism**, the Battle of Karbala²³, and the death of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) second grandson, Husain.

In 658, when `Amra was 35 years old, the Caliph²⁴ `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan²⁵ contained the regional strife and the **nascent** nation began to develop in new ways. He instituted a postal service and replaced the Roman and Greek coins that were being used for money with new coins that declared the maturing status of the Muslim nation²⁶.

²² hadith: sayings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which are used the second main source of deriving Islamic law, after the Quran which is the main source

²³ the Battle of Karbala: a major battle fought in October of 680 CE between the early Muslim Shi`i and sunnis in which a

²⁴ Caliph: the title given to the leader of the Muslim people

²⁵ `Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan: The leader of the Muslim nation from 685-705 CE

²⁶ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/discover/coins-muslims-islam-seventh-century-arabia>



Medina was much more than the politics of the day. It was an agricultural town and most of its residents, whether from Medina or of the Muhajireen²⁷, had a piece of land that they farmed. Most importantly, it was a place of immense scholarship and a place of sacred knowledge. Teeming with scholars, students and *tabi`een*, it was a culture of intense learning and teaching. Thriving with scholars and academics, the city was made richer by the presence of `Amra bint `Abd al-Rahman.

`Amra as jurist and scholar

`Amra carried the title of “*Tabi`iyya*” which means one who met and learned from those who met and learned from the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself. Those who bore this title carried authority and legitimacy. It was a noble title offered to both men and women.

She was also a **renowned** legal scholar who had learned from the most knowledgeable Islamic teachers in history. To be a legal scholar at this time was to be someone who understood the principles of goodness and justice that had been taught during the prophetic era, and could bring forth textual evidence for legal rulings, policy making, and cultural development. Intellectual **acumen**, however, was not enough. In order to be considered a leading scholar, one needed to be known for their personal ethics and deep commitment to the moral teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

`Amra bint Abd al-Rahman was a vocal jurist. She was knowledgeable and informed of legal discussions and decisions happening in Medina and did not fail to offer her opinion if she felt justice was not fulfilled. At one point, the official judge of Medina, Ibn Hazm, was holding a prisoner for punishment in a case of theft. The judgement had been made, and the sentence decided, but `Amra disagreed with the result. She sent her messenger in haste to the judge in order to correct his

²⁷ those who had emigrated from Mecca to live in Medina

sentence. Ibn Hazm, the judge, heard `Amra's opinion and immediately released the man in custody. Such was the weight of her opinion. He did not call her to argue or discuss the matter; he did not take some time to think about her opinion; he simply listened and responded with immediacy.

Testimonies to `Amra's influence and impact

In 717, `Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz became Caliph. He took up this leadership position amidst much corruption and materialism and made great changes. He was described as just, pious and devout. During his reign, he cleaned up corruption and changed the direction of the government from one that filled its **coffers** with money from the subjects to one that cared for its people and followed the Shari`a (Islamic law). It is said that he benefited greatly from the counsel of `Amra bint `Abd al-Rahman. It is most likely that this counsel occurred while he was the governor of Medina when he would have been in the same geographical space as `Amra. As Caliph, he ruled from Damascus and took her advice with him. It is quite possible that her words in Medina made him the leader that he later became in Damascus.

`Umar ibn `Abd al-`Aziz said about `Amra, "No one is now living who has more knowledge of Sayidina 'Aisha's hadith than `Amra."

`Amra's narrations are quoted by the famous scholar Al-Zuhri²⁸, and he tells us how he came to learn from her, "Qasim ibn Muhammad said to me, 'I see, my boy, that you are greedy for knowledge. Should I not inform you of the vessel of knowledge? Go and stick to `Amra, for she was under the guardianship of Sayidina 'Aishah.'" Al-Zuhri then said, "Then I came to her and I found her an ocean; its water never goes."

Her name is found in all six of the greatest collections of hadith, and her rulings about hajj (pilgrimage) are quoted by Imam Malik in his Muwatta²⁹.

She died in 727, and upon her deathbed asked her brother to bury her away from other tombs, so that in digging the grave they would not disturb the bones of others. Concerned even in death about taking care of details, `Amra was truly, "a scholar, jurist, proof, and holder of abundance of knowledge" (Al-Dhahabi)³⁰.

²⁸ Al-Zuhri: a *tabi'i* jurist and hadith scholar of the eighth century

²⁹ The Muwatta of Imam Malik is a compilation of hadith which was collected by Imam Malik, one of the prominent Muslim scholars of the eighth century.

³⁰ Al-Dhahabi was an Islamic historian and hadith expert of the fourteenth century

Vocabulary List:

1. counteract
2. proximity
3. theological
4. reputable
5. discord
6. strife
7. nascent
8. renowned
9. acumen
10. coffers
11. schism

Glossary

[Voicenote link to Arabic transliteration alphabet](#)

Highschool Scholarly Article

Approaches to Law

Laws and rules bring order to where and how we live. Laws are not written from thin air, they are based on documents, philosophies, theologies, and beliefs about what is right and wrong. In the United States, the resource document that laws must fulfill is the constitution. For Muslims, law is called shariah, and the resource documents are the Quran and sunnah (way, words, and deeds) of Prophet Muhammad (s))

Interpretation of these documents differs and it is because of this approach that people who believe in the importance of the same documents can have vastly differing viewpoints.

Literalism: Just the text.

When someone approaches law from a literal point of view, they read the plain meaning of the text and allow for no interpretation whatsoever. So for example, we might ask how slavery was legal in the United States even though the constitution says it was written to “secure the blessings of liberty”? Frederick Douglass, an early abolitionist would agree with us. He argued that the constitution should be read literally, and in that case slavery was unconstitutional and illegal and should be immediately stopped.

A famous early literalist approach to Islamic law can be seen in the work of Ibn Hazm who did not allow for human interpretation of the law but rather supported the plain and obvious meaning of the resource texts.

Originalism: The intent of the lawmaker(s)

Originalists approach the resource of law looking for the intent of the original writers of those documents. For the Constitution, this means looking at what eighteenth century white American male property owners intended in the text, which can be seen in their actions and applications of early law. In Shariah it is an attempt to understand the intent of God as seen in the actions of the earliest followers of Islam.

The Spirit of the Law: The deeper intention of justice

The third approach to law is that which looks to the resources of law in search of an understood search for justice. In Islamic law this became known as the ‘purposes of the law’ or maqasid al shariah. There are six purposes: preservation of faith, preservation of family, preservation of intellect/mind, preservation of property/wealth, preservation of life, and preservation of dignity. In the United States, Justice William Brennan said that the highest purpose of the Constitution is to protect human dignity and other fundamental human values. In both of these cases, laws derived from these sources must then preserve this purposes in order to be considered legal laws.

Differentiated Additional Resources

['Amra bint 'Abd al-Rahman Biography Lookbook](#)

[Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Lookbook](#)

['A Day With 'Amra' - A Historical Fiction Story](#)

References

Erlanger et al.

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=896762

Quraishi, Asifa Interpreting the Quran and the Constitution: Similarities in the Use of the Text, Tradition, and Reason in Islamic and American Jurisprudence a Legal Studies Research paper Series Paper No. 136 from the University of Wisconsin Law School