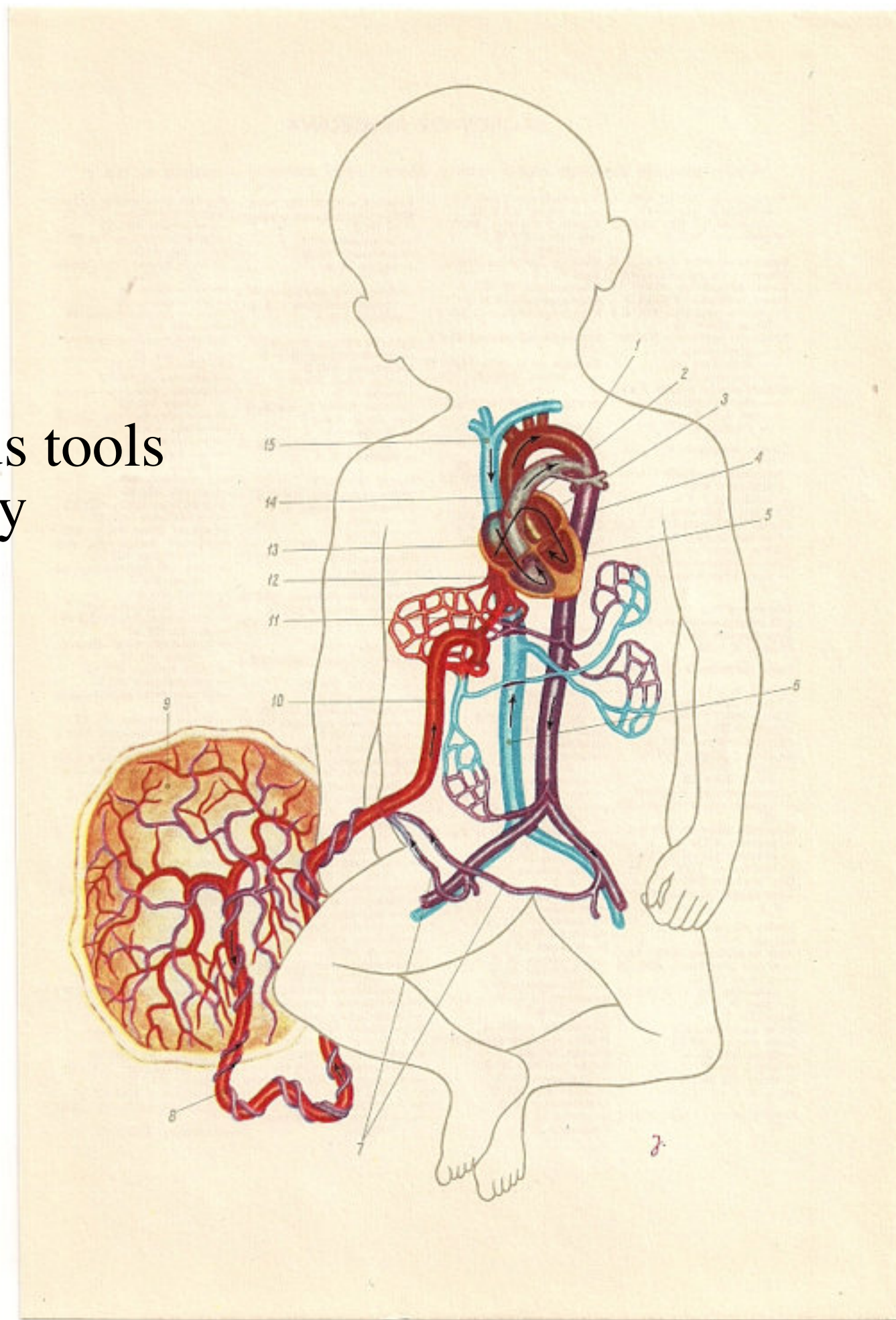


Midwifery and Childbirth in Scottish Folk Belief

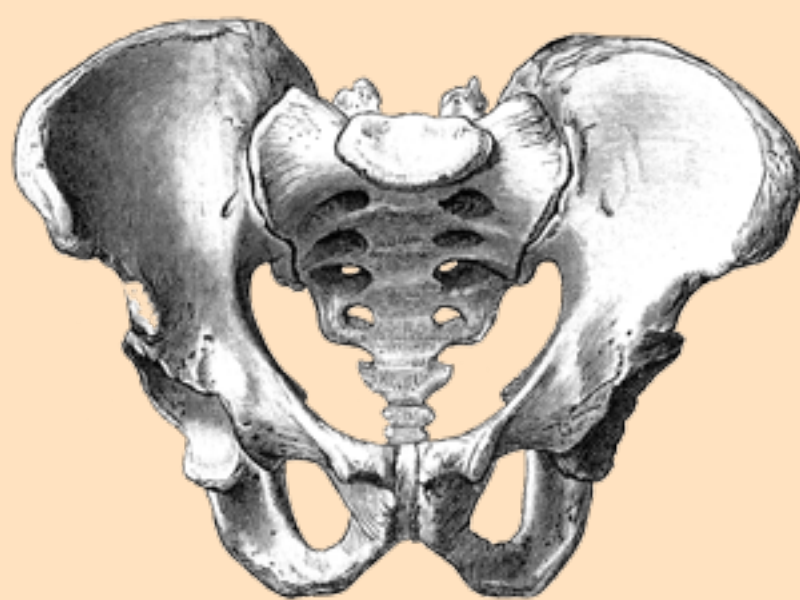
15th to 19th century



Midwives used various tools to ensure safe delivery including:

- amulets
- herbal remedies
- sympathetic magic
- invocations

Midwives had to be prepared for Otherworldly threats as well as medical ones. These included the threat of faeries which was used to explain birth defects or infant death.



After the witch trials in early modern Scotland, faith in folk remedies was shaken. The old folk beliefs and practices were looked at as superstition and witchcraft. This doubt caused women to look beyond their midwives for help during childbirth, and as medical knowledge began advancing quickly, there was soon science behind the business of birth. Women were not yet allowed in university, so educated men began their rule of the birthing room.