

The Theory and Practice of Rebellion in the Early Islamicate World

Call for Papers

The Emmy Noether research group, ‘Social Contexts of Rebellion in the Early Islamic Period (SCORE)’, invites submissions for an international conference on the theme of rebellion in the early Islamicate world (c. 600–1000 CE), to be held in Hamburg (Germany) on 22–24 September 2022. SCORE studies rebellion and related categories (such as banditry, martyrdom, or civil war) foregrounding socio-political and socio-economic rather than more traditionally emphasised religious causes (www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/score).

We invite submissions that discuss rebellion in the early Islamicate world from theoretical and/or source-based perspectives. We particularly welcome papers that seek to apply methods, theories, and insights from other fields to the study of rebellion in the early Islamic period. Recognising the complexity and diversity of early Islamicate societies, we are also especially keen to include papers on contention in non-Muslim communities under Muslim rule, as well as contributions that examine rebellions by non-elite and marginalised groups and individuals (e.g., women, slaves, peasants, certain groups of *mawālī*).

Speakers are invited to discuss rebellion in all its dimensions; these include, but are not limited to, the following themes and questions:

Definitions and typologies

- What makes a rebellion? Are there particular acts, processes, slogans, or symbols that qualify contentious events as rebellion? Is time a relevant factor for the definition of rebellion, i.e., does rebellion extend beyond a particular moment?
- Is it useful to typologise rebellion? If so, what are the criteria underlying such typologies?
- Rebellion vs. civil war vs. separatism: when and why is contention considered not as rebellion, but as a conflict afflicting (and potentially sundering) a whole polity? (How) can we differentiate between original intention and eventual outcome?
- Can we identify common traits of rebels across different categories of rebellions? Is there an archetype or textbook example of a rebel?

Causes and impact factors

- What were the immediate triggers that sparked rebellions, and (how) do such triggers relate to longer-term historical processes and developments?
- What role do apocalypticism and messianic expectations play in the outbreak of a rebellion?
- To what extent is religious identity a motive for rebellion? Can we observe particular triggers, incentives, strategies, or processes of rebellion among particular confessional communities?
- What is the role of social class and status (esp. the role of slaves and *mawālī*) in the outbreak of rebellion?
- Family or clientage networks: how are relatives and clients utilised, especially in the preparation and the aftermath of rebellions?

- Clusters of rebellions and rebels: was rebellion used disproportionately often by particular groups or in certain regions or periods? E.g., can we identify geographical clusters of contention?

Rebellion and/in the political system

- What role does rebellion play for the functioning of the system of political rule? To what extent was rebellion used as a negotiation tool, by whom and in which situations?
- Did the attitude towards rebellions change after the ‘Abbāsīd takeover in 750 CE’?
- When and how do rebellions end? Are there particular patterns to how the aftermath of a rebellion (e.g., the establishment of a local ruling house; socio-political/economic (re-) integration; the use of force) comes about?
- When is a rebellion successful and how do we measure this ‘success’? Does a whole career sustaining rebellion still qualify as ‘rebellion’?
- Is rebellion inevitably violent? What other means were at the disposal of rulers and ‘rebels’ in order to prevent confrontation from escalating to armed conflict?

Memory and historiography

- How much was rebellion guided by memories and narratives of past rebellion?
- Can we observe distinct narrative patterns and tools in the portrayal of rebels and rebellions? Was rebellion used to convey particular issues and concerns, e.g. relating to rulership?
- To what extent can we reconstruct a rebel’s original aims and intentions from the sources at our disposal?
- What roles does the memory of early Islamicate rebellion play in later discourses?

Papers will be pre-circulated. Each paper will be allotted a 45-minute slot, comprising 15 minutes for a short presentation of the paper’s main points followed by 30 minutes of discussion. Interested speakers should submit an abstract (300 words) and a short biography to hannah-lena.hagemann@uni-hamburg.de by 1 February 2022. We welcome submissions from established as well as junior scholars, advanced PhD students, and independent researchers. Travel and accommodation for four nights will be covered.

Confirmed speakers will be asked to send their draft paper for pre-circulation by 1 August 2022. We plan to publish the results of this conference, so please let us know in advance if you are interested in contributing to the proceedings. We’re looking forward to receiving your abstracts!