

Negotiation in Conquest: wars, treaties and recollections of the rise of the Caliphate

Leiden, 12-14 September 2019

The great conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries brought under Arab-Muslim control an area that stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian subcontinent. Military conquests on this scale are remarkable enough; the establishment of a stable empire in the centuries that followed is even more so. How did a military minority succeed in asserting and maintaining durable political dominance over the diverse and dispersed territories of their conquest domains? In short, how was the establishment of the caliphate realised in the aftermath of the conquests?

This conference explores the dynamics of negotiation in the process of conquest and the subsequent building of the caliphate. How did the terms of conquest – the accommodations and agreements made with subjected cities, regions and their representatives – and the ways in which they were re-evaluated in subsequent centuries contribute to the establishment of short and long-term caliphal rule? In other words how were relations between the different stakeholders of the caliphate shaped by the experiences and memories of the negotiated conditions of the conquest?

We would also like to explore the long-term impact of the conquests on subsequent discussions about hegemonic relations and especially the ethics of war. How did the systematisation of conquest agreements in history and law reflect changing dynamics in government, religion and ethics? How were the conquests remembered and how did they impact later discussions, attitudes and behaviour?

A central question will be how agreements and accommodations brokered in the earliest conquest wars of the caliphate compare with the conditions of conquest imposed in other cases of régime change. To help answer it we have invited scholars working on different areas and periods of the caliphate and included a panel on comparative case studies from pre-modern Eurasian empires.

We invite participants to discuss individual cases of negotiated conquest or the role such processes played in later historical contexts: the treaties and compacts, official and tacit, that determined the contours of the conquered peoples' relations, obligations and rights vis-à-vis their new rulers. Who initiated such agreements and how were they formulated? To what extent were their terms imposed upon, demanded by, or negotiated with subjected people? Were they conceded or granted by the conquerors? What precedents were referred to, respected, re-shaped or ignored?

And what were the consequences for internal relations of the caliphate? How did it affect the position of representatives of the old régime and members of its ruling élite? How were the negotiated conditions of the conquest imposed from above or demanded from below by religious and other minorities? What was the impact on the caliphate's economic

organisation, such as the status and ownership of land, the role of forced labour, prisoners of war and slavery as a result of the conquest?

Finally, how were such treaties and the negotiated conditions of conquest recorded, transmitted, interpreted and implemented – whether accepted as precedents or rejected as aberrations – by later authorities? How did later moral, theological and legal considerations and debates impact the representation of earlier events? Was the memory of negotiation especially strong amongst certain groups or in particular historical contexts? What was the impact of historical conditions on the memory of conquest amongst specific groups? How did local histories deal with instances of conquest?