

Workshop

Jihad in Medieval Islam

Texts, theories, and practices

(7th-14th c.)

Organisers

Dr. Mehdi Berriah, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam



UMR 8167



The subject of jihad figures prominently in current debates on Islam. In the academic field, it has been ceaselessly generating a great number of publications ever since the attacks of 2001. The majority of this production are works by political scientists and, to a lesser extent, by sociologists who are primarily interested in the variants and effects of jihad ideology in contemporary societies. In order to interpret these political and societal variants and effects, the phenomenon of jihad has to be approached in the long-term and in all its complexity. Intellectuals, as well as the different groups and individuals who align themselves with jihad and/or propose definitions of it, refer to thinkers and texts written in the Middle Ages, hence the importance of studying medieval jihad.

However, medieval jihad is unequally documented by occidental scholarship, which quasi-systematically neglects the approach of Arab intellectuals to the subject. The global approach sought by certain researchers like Michael Bonner, which does not limit itself to the crusade as a sole prism, hardly bore any results: this prism continues to largely haunt them. Furthermore, it is often considered as a monolithic ideology establishing a law of war that imposes standards of behavior on all social actors.

This workshop seeks to distinguish itself from these approaches and aims to fill the gaps they induced. Decidedly multi-disciplinary, it aspires to grasp the jihad phenomenon with its various dimensions: ideological, jurisprudential, political, economic, and social. Participants will have complete freedom to gather all of the corpora, edited or in manuscript form, which refer to jihad: legal and narrative texts, kutub al-faḍā'il, furūsiyya manuals, etc. Participants are invited to study jihad within its context and its evolutions, and to try to discern the complex relation between the theories of jihad—as a set of principles and prescriptions—and the multiple practices that fall under their scope, that which implies systematically questioning whether they merely prompted them or if, on the contrary, they generated them.

This workshop is part of a research project titled *Le corpus taymiyyen sur le jihad : réception, décontextualisation et utilisation par les mouvances jihadistes* (French Ministry of Interior - Central Bureau of Cults ; direction: Mehdi Berriah), and organised in partnership with the French Research Centre of the Arabian Peninsula (CEFREPA),

the research programme based at IFAO "War in the Medieval Orient: Transmission of knowledge, social practices and sensible approach" direction: M. Eychenne, A. El-Shoky, A. Zouache, UMR 8167 Orient and Mediterranean, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the Centre for Islamic Theology (VU Amsterdam).

It will take place in the French Institute for Oriental Archaeology (IFAO) in Cairo, on Monday 11th October 2021 and will result in the publication of a collective volume. English and Arabic will be the languages of communication, and the duration of each paper submission will be 20 minutes. There will also be a part dedicated for Q&A's at the end of each session.

The cost of transport and accommodation (three nights maximum) of participants could be covered.

In case the health situation does not permit the workshop taking place in-person, it will be in the form of an online webinar on Zoom.

Contact : m.berriah@vu.nl

Calendar:

- 30/09/21 : submission of papers (5 pages max.)
- 11/10/21 : the day of the workshop
- 15/02/22 : submission of articles for evaluation
- 15/03/22 : feedback for submissions
- 15/04/22 : submission of final version of articles