



The Early Islamic Empire Lecture Series

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From Empire to Commonwealth in the 4th/10th Century: Comparative Perspectives



The long 4th/10th century (beginning some decades into the 3rd/9th century) witnessed a gradual erosion of central power in both Carolingian Europe and the Abbasid Empire. However, only in special cases did new regional rulers style themselves as emperor/caliph. In most cases, they remained under the “umbrella of legitimacy” provided by the “universal” ruler. In the European case, many historians of the 19th and 20th century hardly noticed this essential feature at all because they were preoccupied with writing national history. But to chroniclers of the time, there was no doubt that a universal empire was still in existence. A comparison of the post-Carolingian and the post-Abbasid world therefore yields beneficial insights for both the medievalist and the Islamicist. The 4th/10th century Carolingian World and Abbasid World had much in common: erosion of central power, consolidation of literary culture, etc. But there were also significant differences: the Carolingian Empire had never been a tax-extracting polity like the Caliphate, and the Roman-Catholic church had no true equivalent in the Caliphate.

Thursday June 1, 2017, 6:00 PM (s.t.), AS-SAAL, ESA 1 (Hauptgebäude)

<https://www.islamic-empire.uni-hamburg.de/en/news-and-events/lecture-series/lecture-jacob-tullberg.html>