

## **New Approaches to Khārijite History, 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century CE**

University of Hamburg, 16-17 October 2025

### *Call for Papers*

Abstracts are invited for a two-day workshop on Khārijite history hosted at the University of Hamburg and co-organised by Teresa Bernheimer (Munich) and Hannah-Lena Hagemann (Hamburg). The workshop is funded by the Gerda Henkel Foundation and the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Khārijites are remembered in the Islamic tradition as quintessential rebels and heretics, notorious for their excessive violence and extreme piety. The history of Khārijism remains severely understudied, however, and existing scholarship has largely adopted the traditional view, continuing to regard Khārijites through the lens of religious fanaticism. Moreover, groups and individuals labelled ‘Khārijite’ were active into the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE and across many regions of the Islamic Empire, but scholarly attention has been almost exclusively focused on the first fifty years of Khārijite history (until c.700 CE). The time has come for a fresh take on Khārijism.

In contrast to established scholarship, the planned workshop aims to step away from simplistic interpretations that centre ideology as cause and trigger of Khārijite rebellion, and to instead investigate Khārijism on its own terms. What happens if we disregard the label ‘Khārijite’ and examine the groups and people so categorised within their broader (social, political, economic, cultural, geographic, ethnic, tribal...) contexts? Importantly, for the purposes of this workshop, Khārijites are considered distinct from Ibādīs, the only surviving offshoot of Khārijism, whose exact connection to the latter remains controversial.

The organisers invite contributions that study Khārijism from a decidedly historical perspective. Social-historical approaches are especially welcome, as are more experimental methods and those that bring in (sociological, anthropological...) theory. In order to respond to the dearth of research on Khārijism, we strongly encourage historians of the early Islamic world and adjacent fields who do not usually work on Khārijites to consider submitting an abstract. While all historical topics are very welcome, we invite potential speakers to touch on the following themes in particular:

- Khārijites as socio-economic actors: to what extent do factors like fiscal policy, migration and conversion, climatic events and their corollaries (e.g., famine), or settlement and demilitarisation play a role in Khārijite revolts?
- Prosopography of Khārijite groups, particularly in the context of revolt and/or connections to other contentious groups
- Geographical, tribal, and ethnic distribution of Khārijite groups and revolts
- Khārijite-Ibāḍī relations (marriage, trade, scholarly networks...), especially in 8<sup>th</sup>-century CE Iraq, but also in other periods and locales
- Social practice of Khārijism: e.g. ritual, fiscal structures, mosques, settlement patterns, marriage and inheritance
- Khārijites and non-Muslims; Khārijites in non-Islamic sources
- Gender as expressed in the context of Khārijite groups and group-formation (e.g., marriage; female rebels)
- Material culture: do we 'see' Khārijites in the material and documentary record?

The workshop is intended to be informal and discussion-led. Draft papers will be pre-circulated; each speaker will be allotted a one-hour slot, comprising 10 minutes for a short presentation of the paper's main points followed by 50 minutes of discussion. Interested speakers should submit an abstract of c.300 words and a short biography to [T.Bernheimer@lmu.de](mailto:T.Bernheimer@lmu.de) and [hannah-lena.hagemann@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:hannah-lena.hagemann@uni-hamburg.de) by **15 April 2025**. We welcome submissions from established as well as junior scholars, advanced PhD students, and independent researchers. Travel and accommodation for 3 nights will be covered.

All prospective speakers will be notified of the outcome of their proposals by early May 2025. Confirmed speakers will be asked to send their draft paper for pre-circulation by 1 September 2025. We plan to publish the results of this workshop, so please let us know in advance if you are interested in contributing to the proceedings; this is not, however, a prerequisite for participation. We look forward to receiving your abstracts!