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## **The Narrative of Islamic violence in History. Creation, artifice and reality. ICS, University of Navarra, the 14<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> of December 2018**

### **The retrospective narrative on Islamic FATH: origins & beginnings**

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Following the Saidian (Edward Said) distinction between *Origins* and *Beginnings*, this paper aims at showing the literary dimension of Arabic early chronicles.

Qur'anic narratives differentiate among violence applied to 'us' and surrounding violence. Contextualizing this set of literary reflections of obvious different times and geographies, a first conclusion of what would mean *Jihad* in its early appearances will be established. In a second level, these ideas will be contrasted with the known references to violence as put in more than forty-three non Arabic sources dated between 570 and 750 AC. Finally, in a third conclusive chapter, the paper will discuss the concomitances between these references and Al-Tabari pseudo-historical instalments in order to establish a new chronology of causes and effects in the history of Islamic early violence.

The aim of this paper is to reconsider the very concept of Fath -conquest- as means of early Islamic expansion as well as the way we tend to describe so many war actions in the Middle East and the Mediterranean region, the seventh and the eighth centuries, sometimes as Islamic, sometimes as Arab futūḥ -conquests-. It will also focus on the inappropriateness of considering those several war actions -those futūḥ, to literary effects in later Arabic chronicles- as a chain of subsequent events, interrelated, centralized and derived from a single cause, i.e. the matrix of Islam, as it is usually considered and taught.

I will try to highlight a certain epistemological obstruction in which we all participate concerning this, produced by several causes: the mixing of religion, culture and politics throughout history (specifically while dealing with Islam), the incorrectness of preferring secondary -later- sources and not primary ones while constructing a historical narrative about early Islam -Bashear uses here *riwāya* in Arabic, like today's 'novel' (1984)-, some unrelenting considerations of Islam as an anachronistic collective identity regardless of time and geography, the additional problem of led and induced translations, the vivid and interesting debate about who-did-what-and-when (Muslims, Hagarens, believers...?), as well as the scientific barrier that appear with the excesses of taxonomy, either in the separation of disciplines or in the insurmountable division of ages into labels such 'Late Antiquity' and 'Middle Ages'. In order to encompass these two latter categories, we propose the use of the expression Islamic Late Antiquity, for instance (Sizgorich), and the overarching possible interpretative procedure of Historiology. This is not for the purpose of despising Historiography and so many other possible sources of primary historical documentation, but to promote their enhancement and reasonable reading in inter-connection.