The unitary Caliphate of the first two or three centuries of Islam is often portrayed as a golden age, including in the economic domain, where its achievements were indeed considerable. At the same time, we can detect plenty of disagreement and conflict in this area. In modern scholarship we have the convergence of several debates over the emergence of Islamic law, the character of early Arabic historiography, and other things. Meanwhile, a fresh look at the events and developments of that time (so far as possible) also reveals conflict and contestation, for instance, between eastern and western Arabia at the time of the rise of Islam, and between patrimonial elites and their adversaries in the early Caliphate.

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