

Editorial

This December 2024 issue of IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies comprises several topics related to Islamic political and intellectual history, Islamic architecture and a few contemporary issues such as interreligious dialogues in plural society, and history of Malaysian art.

The first article titled “Some Similarities between the Creation of Sarajevo and Prophet Muhammad’s Development of Madinah” by Spahic Omer compares the establishment of two Muslim cities, namely Sarajevo built around mid-15th century by the Ottomans and Madinah with the former, according to the author, resembling the holy city of Islam during the era of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. This is exemplified in the commonalities shared between them especially with regards to the importance and strategic location of central mosque, resulting not only from Muslims’ natural inclination to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet, but also the emphasis on social harmony and justice in Islam. Interestingly enough, the town-planning of the 7th century Madinah continues to inspire the construction or layout of many cities in Muslim countries until today, hence exudes the relevancy of Islam even after the lapse of more than 1400 years.

Meanwhile, the second article by Aditya Pratama Widodo “Crucifixion in the Muslim World: An Overview of Prominent Cases from 600s to 1300s CE” provides interesting information on a scarcely discussed topic, i.e., crucifixion, tracing the historical contexts of some of the crucifixion events in Islamic history, as well as the viewpoint of Islam on the capital punishment. Based on the narrations of leading Muslim historians, the author highlighted some events during the time of Khulafa’ al-Rashidun, Umayyads, Abbasids and Mamluks. The author concludes that the crucifixion events prompted by religious heresy was much lesser than those driven by political feuds thus indicating the escalating state of disunity in the Muslim *ummah* especially from the time of Umayyads onwards.

Hamza Kaka Yaseen also discusses Islamic history yet in a different light as he focuses on the rule of a Kurdish state i.e., Hasanwayhid Emirate established in the 10th – 11th C.E. In his article, “The Internal and External Relations of the Hasanwayhid Emirate during the Rule of Badr ibn Hasanwayh (369–405 AH/979–1014 CE)”, the author brings to attention the capable leadership of Badr Hasanwayh which can be attributed to many reasons, the most notable being the good relationship he formed with stronger powers like the Buyids. That said, his rule as explained by the authors, was not without some problems. The work serves as a good read to have a better understanding of the situation during the late Abbasid period which saw the rise of many independent kingdoms throughout the Muslim Caliphate.

Delving on a contemporary issue, the next article, “Evaluating Existing Literature on Interreligious Dialogue and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka: Buddhist-Muslim Relationships” by Mohamed Arkam and Fatmir Shehu discusses the importance of interfaith dialogues to promote unity and peace between Buddhists and Muslims in the Buddhist predominated country of Sri Lanka. Using the information on interreligious dialogues derived from the existing literature, the authors conclude that such a deliberate effort is crucial in view of the many challenges facing the Sri Lankan plural society such as prejudice, ethnonationalism, etc. which had, in the course of the country’s history, led to some ethnic and religious conflicts. Only through interreligious dialogues that various social, political, and economic issues that affected the relation between the different groups could be potentially solved.

There are two book reviews included in this December issue. The first review is by Mohamed Fouz Mohamed Zacky who discusses the work of Walaa Quisay, *Neo-Traditionalism in Islam in the West: Orthodoxy, Spirituality and Politics* (published in 2023 by Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh). The book explains the rise of neo-traditionalism in the West through the life and works of several figures, Hamza Yousuf, Abdul Hakim Murad and Umar Faruq Abdullah. Despite its claim as the voice of pure Islam, neo-traditionalism finds itself to be at the service of modernity, particularly nation-states. In his review, Mohamed Zacky noted that even though the work lacks detailed analysis of the various schools of thought of both traditionalism and neo-traditionalism, it enriches the study of Islam in Europe where modernity in the strong sense of the word, prevails.

Meanwhile, the second book review by Asilatul Hanaa Abdullah covers the edited work of Adeline Ooi, Beverly Yong, Hasnul J. Saidon, Nur Hanim Khairuddin and Rachel Ng titled *Exploring An A-Z Guide to Malaysian Art* (published in 2012 by RougeArt, Kuala Lumpur). The work, according to the reviewer has its strengths, namely the extensive coverage on the history, movements, and practices of Malaysian art. There are also some interesting themes contained therein like the relation between tradition and modernity, art and identity, and individual expression and community engagement. That said, the work falls short a few elements i.e., the lack of visual contents and details on Islamic art movement in Malaysia.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all contributors and reviewers who involved in this December issue. It is hoped that the valuable ideas and engaging works of the contributors or authors will enrich the existing knowledge and benefit readers and students of history and civilisation worldwide.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to all members of the Editorial Board, our Editor Dr. Mohd Helmi Mohd Sobri, Associate Editors Dr. Alwi Alatas, Dr. Mohamad Firdaus Mansor Majdin and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rabi'ah Aminudin without whose efforts and dedication, the publication of this issue will not become a reality. Thank you.

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Editor-in-Chief
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