IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies

Volume 7 Issue 2 2024

International Islamic University Malaysia

IIUM JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND CIVILISATIONAL STUDIES

(E-ISSN: 2637-112X)

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fauziah Fathil, Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Mohd Helmi Mohd Sobri, Editor

Dr. Alwi Alatas, Associate Editor

Dr. Mohamad Firdaus Bin Mansor Majdin, Associate Editor

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rabi'ah Binti Aminudin, Associate Editor

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Prof. Dr. Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk, Qatar University, Qatar

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Adibah Binti Abdul Rahim, International Islamic University Malaysia

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Fatmir Shehu, International Islamic University Malaysia

Prof. Dr. Hafiz Zakariya, International Islamic University

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rahimah Embong, UniSZA, Malaysia

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rohaiza Rokis, International Islamic University Malaysia

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sharifah Syahirah Binti Shikh, Kolej Universiti Poly-Tech MARA, Malaysia

Prof. Dr. Abdullahil Ahsan, Istanbul Sehir University, Turkey

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ahmed Alibasic, University of Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Prof. Dr. Alparslan Acikgenc, Uskudar University, Turkey

Prof. Dr. Fadzli Adam, UniSZA, Malaysia

Prof. Dr. Syed Farid Alatas, Singapore National University, Singapore

Prof. Dr. Fahimah Ulfat, Tubingen University, Germany

Prof. Dr. James Piscatori, Durham University, United Kingdom

Prof. Dr. Jorgen Nielsen, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Samim Akgonul, Strasbourg University, France

© 2024 IIUM Press, International Islamic University Malaysia. All Rights Reserved

Editorial Correspondence:

Editor, IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies (IJRCS)

Research Management Centre, RMC

International Islamic University Malaysia

53100 Gombak Campus

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tel: (+603) 6421 5002/5010

Fax: (+603) 6421 4862

Website: http://journals.iium.edu.my/irkh/index.php/ijrcs

Comments and suggestions to: alwialatas@iium.edu.my

E-ISSN: 2637-112X

Published by:

IIUM Press, International Islamic University Malaysia

P.O. Box 10, 50728 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Phone (+603) 6421-5018/5014, Fax: (+603) 6421-6298

Website: https://www.iium.edu.my/office/iiumpress

Papers published in the Journal present the views of the authors

and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Journal.

CONTENTS

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., Ḥasanwayhid Emirate established in the 10th – 11th C.E. In his article, "The Internal and External Relations of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate during the Rule of Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh (369–405 AH/979–1014 CE)", the author brings to attention the capable leadership of Badr Ḥasanwayh 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.

Fauziah Fathil
Editor-in-Chief
December 2024

IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies (IJRCS) 7:2 (2024); 144-158.
https://doi.org/10.31436/ijrcs.v7i2.342
Copyright © IIUM Press

Some Similarities between the Creation of Sarajevo and Prophet Muhammad's Development of Madinah

Spahic Omer[1]

Article history: Received: 2024-7-30 Revised: 2024-10-18 Accepted: 2024-12-13 Published: 2024-12-26

Abstract: This article explores how the creation of Sarajevo was influenced by Prophet Muhammad's planning and development of the city of Madinah. The article concludes that despite being over eight centuries apart, the foundational histories of these two cities share more than a few similarities. This is because the Prophet's urbanisation efforts in Madinah are considered part of his Sunnah, which Muslims are encouraged to follow. The parallels between the two cities focus on three main aspects: the priority of building a central mosque, which acted as a catalyst for growth; the strategic location of the mosque, neither away from nor in the midst of existing settlements, with the intention of promoting justice and social cohesion; and the interconnectedness of the mosque with other social institutions, emphasising the importance of the ideological institutional harmony for progress. The research methodology combined descriptive, interpretative, and analytical historical approaches.

Keywords: Sarajevo, Madinah, Prophet's Mosque, Sultan's Mosque (Careva džamija), Institutions

Introduction

Islam is often perceived as a profoundly urban religion, or faith, conforming essentially to urban life. Joel Kotkin (n.d.), for one, observed that from its origins in the 7th century, Islam has consistently been linked to cities. The need to gather a community of believers required a settlement of some size for the full performance of one's duties as a Muslim. Prophet Muhammad (henceforth "Prophet") did not want his people to return to the desert and its clan-oriented value system. Islam virtually demanded cities to serve as places where people could pray together five times a day, socialise, and build an organic body of the Muslim community (*ummah*) rooted in brotherhood, love, unity, and cooperation. This urban orientation came naturally for a religion that first sprang to life in a city of successful merchants (Kotkin, n.d.).

In the same vein, Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) (1967) deduced that only royal authority, representing a complex system of thought and beliefs, calls for urban settlement, and that only a strong royal authority is able to construct large cities and high monuments. Thus, being the sole truth integrated into a complete way of life for individuals, families, and communities, Islam by definition necessitated the presence of a sovereign authority. This, in turn, required well-developed urban environments—the highest level in the hierarchy of social structures and environments—to uphold both the Islamic faith and its governing authority. Ibn Khaldun (1967) encapsulated this reality by stating that dynasties precede towns and cities; towns and cities are the ultimate products or effects of the functioning of royal authority.

In their capacity as the custodians of Islam and Islamic civilisation, the Ottomans exemplified the above attitude. Their cities were not just urban socioeconomic hubs, but also focal points of Islamic culture and faith. Faith and power were closely intertwined, mutually

[1] Dr. Spahic Omer is an Associate Professor at the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). His research interests cover early Islamic history and civilisation, as well as the history and theory of Islamic built environment. He can be reached at ospahic@iium.edu.my.

reinforcing each other. Faith acted as a guiding light, illuminating the path for power to follow, while power stood as a stalwart guardian, shielding faith from any threats that may seek to dim its brilliance. That is why the Ottomans were desperate to seize control of Constantinople (later Istanbul) so as to match their grand ambitions. The city held significant allure for those in pursuit of power. It was the coveted holy grail of any imperial success.

This is in agreement with a tradition that is sometimes thought to be from the Prophet: "Indeed, Allah curbs with (earthly) authority, or power (sultan), what cannot be curbed by the Qur'an (faith) alone" (Ibn Kathir, n.d.). Even the Prophet, in addition to the truth, needed power and authority to quell those who opposed and resisted him. This necessity ultimately led to the migration (*hijrah*) from Makkah and the establishment of the city-state of Madinah.

No sooner had the Ottomans arrived in Bosnia and introduced Islam, the inclination towards urban life became evident in both the Ottomans and Islam. The simultaneous processes of peaceful Islamisation and lively urbanisation provided a backdrop for the creation of the city of Sarajevo (Malcolm, 1994; Haveric, 2008). Indeed, the city originated from a unique fusion of Islam's spirituality and the Ottomans' corporeality, giving it its distinct character and generating a rich cultural heritage.

This article examines how closely the then-new Ottoman city of Sarajevo, especially at the outset, followed the urban planning principles inspired by the Prophet's experiences, drawing several parallels between the urbanisation, architecture, and general development of Sarajevo and those of the Prophet's city of Madinah. The article has seven sections, namely: "Linguistic and geographical origins of Sarajevo"; "The gradual but steady growth of Sarajevo"; "The relationship between the new and old settlements"; "Following a pattern implemented by the Prophet"; "The impact of the Prophet's Mosque as a community development centre"; "The case of Sarajevo's first mosque, Sultan's Mosque (Careva džamija)"; and "The importance of residential architecture."

Linguistic and geographical origins of Sarajevo

The city of Sarajevo gets its name from the Turkish and Persian word *saray*, which translates to "palace," "court," "mansion," or simply "house or dwelling place" (Škaljić, 1966). This word is also found in the term "caravanserai" or "caravansary" (caravan-*saray*), referring to a lodging or dwelling place for caravans and travellers in general (Kiani & Kleiss, n.d.). *Saray* (court or palace) was among the first buildings constructed in Sarajevo, playing the role of the new government's headquarters.

There are two interpretations of the suffix *evo* added to the word *saray* (in Bosnian, *saraj*). Both interpretations are widely accepted and used as much in academic as everyday discourses. Due to the ongoing uncertainties regarding the early history and historical accounts of Sarajevo, neither interpretation holds a clear advantage over the other.

One perspective suggests that the *evo* suffix functions as a possessive noun, making the name Sarajevo mean "city of the court or palace." This explanation links the etymology of "Sarajevo" to the names of various other cities and locations in the Balkans, such as Smederevo, Kraljevo, Popovo, Mirijijevo, Trnovo, and others. The governmental *saray* was built by Sarajevo's founder, Isa-beg Ishaković (d. 1470), on the left bank of the Miljacka river. The structure existed until 1853.

Another perspective suggests that *evo* originated from *ovasi* (field), which was a component of the Turkish term *Saray-ovasi* (the field of Sarajevo). Parenthetically, in the

earliest Ottoman archives, Sarajevo was referred to as *Saray-Bosna* and *Saray-ovasi*. It is believed that the latter name evolved into *Sarajevo* (Škaljić, 1966).

Despite the absence of solid evidence,[2] it is reasonable to posit that there was no city at the site where Sarajevo was established. A Bosnian historian named Behija Zlatar (1996), acting as the spokesperson, as it were, for a community of historians, stated that there was no significant market or square, let alone a decent urban settlement at the place. Even though there were some scattered and barely interrelated small villages around the valley in which the city eventually emerged, these villages were sparsely populated, with some completely deserted due to local conflicts before the arrival of the Ottomans.

It is occasionally thought, albeit inaccurately, that in the central medieval region of Bosnia, known as Vrhbosna, there existed a town named either Vrhbosna, after the entire region, or Vrhbosanje. This town was situated in the area where the city of Sarajevo was later created, becoming not only the latter's precursor, but also an integral part thereof. However, this belief is also refuted since historically, there was no city named Vrhbosna at all, raising questions of how such a city could predate Sarajevo. Positively, there was neither Vrhbosna (Vrhbosanje) nor any other city at the location of Sarajevo. Instead, Sarajevo was conceived and systematically developed by the Ottomans in conjunction with their advent and subsequent governance in Bosnia.

What was there prior to the Ottomans was some geographical entity named Vrhbosna, though in a more modest manifestation as a minor market or square attached to a small neighbourhood. The neighbourhood was one of those tiny and dispersed villages in the locale. This market (*trg*) was documented in 1436 and 1439, but by 1462, it was described as an old and possibly defunct settlement. In 1468, it was referred to as an old marketplace. This indicates that there was no city before Sarajevo in that area, and Vrhbosna was not a city but a marketplace with a minor community nearby (Šabanović, 1982). The use of the adjective "old" before the nouns "marketplace" and "settlement" suggests that there later arose newer versions of both the marketplace and settlement, that is, the city of Sarajevo (Salihspahić, n.d.).

In passing, in the entire Vrhbosna region, which encompassed the Sarajevo valley and numerous surrounding mountain areas, there was merely one fortified city called Hodidjed. Positioned east of Sarajevo in the Miljacka river valley, this relatively small city was first mentioned in historical records in 1434 after being captured by the Ottomans. The city was defended by a fortress commander, known as a *dizdar*, and a small crew of 23 soldiers (Zlatar, 1996). This city should not be confused with a village also named Hodidjed, which was located next to the city itself and had 36 households in 1455 (Šabanović, 1964).

For the record, the initial significant Ottoman incursion into Bosnian land may have occurred as early as 1396 or 1386 when the first attacks on the Kingdom of Bosnia came to pass. However, some sources indicate that certain Ottoman military units were engaged in military activities in Bosnia as far back as 1384 (Salihspahić, n.d.). In the aftermath, there was a substantial growth in Ottoman political and military interventions in Bosnian affairs, ultimately resulting in the demise of the Bosnian Kingdom in 1463.

1462 is commonly considered as the founding year of Sarajevo. The city was established by Isa-beg Ishaković, an Ottoman Bosnian commander and administrator, who later became the governor of the Sanjak of Bosnia when it was formed in 1463 (Šabanović, 1982). The precise length of time he spent in the position of *sanjak-beg* is up for debate (Muvekkit-Hadžihuseinović, 1998). It is suggested that he may have briefly held the position in 1463 as an

[2] According to Mihovil Mandić (n.d.), representing the majority of historians, the questions of when and how exactly Sarajevo was established, and what existed before, are but some historical inquiries about Bosnia with very little reliable evidence available.

extension of his rule over the Bosnian Krajište or Frontier, which he took on in 1455, and then from 1464 to 1470, the year in which he likely passed away. It is no surprise then that since its inception, Sarajevo was designated as the seat of the newly formed Sanjak.

The gradual but steady growth of Sarajevo

The growth of Sarajevo was gradual and influenced by the socio-economic, religious, and military conditions in Bosnia. Initially, the growth was slow but started to accelerate in line with improvements in both internal and external circumstances (Fine, 1996; Šabanović, n.d.). In their article titled "Development of Urban Residential Zones of Sarajevo During the Ottoman Period from 1455-1604," Lejla Šabić and Lejla Kahrović Handžić (2022) from Sarajevo University summarised the early urban residential evolution in Sarajevo as follows:

> While the development of Sarajevo occurred more slowly in the period between 1455 and 1485, the register from 1489 shows 40 more households than in 1485. The next register from 1516 shows 1063 households in 15 mahalas (mahalas are traditional urban, predominantly residential, zones of Ottoman origin), in Varoš mahala and community of Dubrovnik merchants, in contrast to the register from 1489 when 92 Muslim households, 95 Christian households and 7 households of Dubrovnik community were recorded. This represents an annual increase of 32.2 households in 27 years, but it is assumed that the increase in population becomes more noticeable from the beginning of 16th century. The register shows significant developmental leap and transformation from small town to an oriental type of urban centre and the biggest city of Sanjak of Bosnia. (p. 3)

Accordingly, upon its establishment, Sarajevo was initially referred to as *kasaba*, indicating an unfortified settlement larger than a village but lacking the characteristics of a city. It was not until the early 16th century that the Ottoman authorities officially recognised Sarajevo as a city (*šeher*) (Donia, 2006). The demographic composition of the city was originally heterogeneous, with a higher proportion of non-Muslims than Muslims. However, as the city developed and Islam gained traction, the demographic balance quickly tilted in favour of Muslims.

The above pattern observed in Sarajevo was consistent with a larger pattern seen throughout Bosnia. Mustafa Imamović (1997) put forth that the conversion of people to Islam in Bosnia was a gradual but steady process, especially during the 15th and early 16th centuries. The conversion rate increased significantly throughout the 16th century, particularly following the Ottoman victory at the Battle of Mohács in 1526 against the Kingdom of Hungary and its allies. In total, the conversion to Islam among the Bosnian population took 250 years.

It is conceivable that Isa-beg Ishaković commenced the establishment of Sarajevo as far back as 1455, as the Ottoman influence in Bosnia grew and their plans for the country became more defined. Despite the presence of various small and randomly located villages in the area, the formation of Sarajevo was unique and independent, unrelated to any previous settlements. The city represented a remarkable example of urban planning and development in the Balkan region. According to Robert J. Donia (2006), it embodied the Ottoman urbanisation philosophy, where urbanisation was viewed as integral to the Islamisation and civilisation efforts in newly acquired lands.

Sarajevo was envisaged, planned, and built to mirror the vibrant Islamic civilisation of the Ottomans, acting as a driving force in the north-western geopolitical domain. There was nothing arbitrary in the entire scheme. All decisions and actions were meticulously chosen and carried out. Several criteria had to be met for a grand vision to come to fruition and become a reality, and for Sarajevo to stand as a bastion for the locals and a guiding light for others.

Sarajevo was a small part of an urban development blueprint amidst a huge and multifaceted existential mosaic. The founding of the city was more than just a segment—it was also a mirror image and even a miniature version of the founding of an empire and its civilisational proclivity. Careful coordination of the timing and positioning, as well as the characteristics and functions of buildings, in Sarajevo was essential for the development of a cosmopolitan city (*šeher*). If one posits that Sarajevo experienced an urban and architectural evolution, it ought to be kept in mind that the evolution was not random and inconsistent, but rather systematic and visionary. Nothing fundamental was left to chance. The development trajectory of the city was set in stone and there was nothing that could thwart it.

The relationship between the new and old settlements

In accordance with the Ottoman urbanisation philosophy, the new urban marvel called Sarajevo was positioned neither in the midst nor away from the existing settlements and villages. It stood somewhere in between them, yet adjoining some. Džemal Salihspahić (n.d.) concluded that it was an Ottoman standard operating procedure to let a novel urban initiative unfold in the vicinity of existing settlements, rather than away from them or right in the middle of them, in which case the new initiative would effectively superimpose itself over and replace those settlements. For the same author, in terms of geography, military strategy, and economic considerations, Isa-beg Ishaković demonstrated substantial acumen in selecting the site for the development of the new city of Sarajevo. He truly lived up to the Ottoman proficiency.

The first urban planning and development activities in Sarajevo took place on agricultural land that belonged to a medieval village called Brodac. The land was acquired in a manner that was satisfactory to all parties. Since it belonged to some non-Muslims, in order to make up for the land they lost, Isa-beg Ishaković provided a new area called Vrančić for them. In Isa-beg Ishaković's *vakufnama* (a document outlining the purpose and upkeep of an endowment), Brodac village and the territory of Sarajevo were explicitly mentioned, with the latter including the former. This means that the agricultural part of Brodac was the nucleus where a Muslim district was first formed, paving the way for the creation of Sarajevo, which then integrated both the new and old residential areas (Šabanović, n.d.).

Through this approach, the Sarajevo development strategy prevented the promotion of exclusivity by not distancing itself from existing elements, and avoided favouritism by not prioritising specific settlements or their inhabitants. The message intended to be conveyed was to the effect that the city of Sarajevo was a city of the future and was open to all. Everybody's roles were welcome, implying what could be termed a brand of urbanisation democracy.

The city was a revolutionary and groundbreaking undertaking, after which the whole region was set never to be the same again. This project marked a transition from a stagnant historical phase to one filled with dynamism and confidence, and from a life paradigm losing direction to one brimming with potential and poise. Moreover, the city project exuded anticipation and excitement, with hope and belief prevailing. The establishment of the city felt like a harbinger of the imminent future and the realisation of ambitions.

However, the new city, despite its forward-looking vision, aimed to stay connected to the past while embracing all that the present circumstances had to offer to enhance the new urbanisation model. There was a conscious effort to ensure fairness by not showing favouritism towards any particular aspect of the circumstances or any specific population group. Each person was considered valuable and capable of contributing, as the future could not thrive on prejudice and discrimination. The decision to plan and develop Sarajevo near existing settlements, instead of isolating or displacing them, demonstrated a balanced approach rooted

in justice and equality. Everyone was included: Muslims and non-Muslims, local and immigrants.

Sarajevo offered a warm reception to all, ensuring everyone had a home and opportunity. This idea is captured in an aphorism that states whoever visits Sarajevo and drinks water from the spout near Gazi Husrev Beg's mosque will either have to come back to the city one day or choose to stay there. This means that Sarajevo possessed an inexplicable charm and its potential was limitless. The charm was both God-given and man-generated.

Despite undergoing a process of Islamisation, the residents of Sarajevo and Bosnia were still free to adopt and follow their preferred religion. There was neither force nor coercion in this matter. Islam and Muslims were not seen as conquerors or oppressors, but rather as "openers," enlighteners, and liberators of minds and souls, following a higher ontological order. Islam and its civilisation rejected compulsion and oppression, as highlighted by Bakir Tanović, who emphasised that there was no pressure to convert to Islam in Bosnia. The rapid spread of Islam in the region was due to similarities between the Bosnian Church[3] and Islam, as well as the Qur'anic principle of no compulsion in religion. The tolerant nature of Islam attracted people seeking a refreshing alternative to the prevailing hostilities of medieval times. Needless to say that the way Sarajevo was created and then operated prominently reflected Islamic values. Such was a highly effective channel for promoting the beauty and tolerance of the Islamic message (Tanović, 2010; Bašagić, 1900; Handžić, 1940).

Following a pattern implemented by the Prophet

The Ottomans' blueprint of Sarajevo is evocative of a pattern adopted by the Prophet while creating the city of Madinah by transforming it from Yathrib as an area with some insignificant and faintly interconnected settlements to a vibrant and progressive capital of Islam and its polity. Since Madinah was a prototype Islamic city and its sustainable development a segment of the Prophet's Sunnah (life example)—which Muslims are bidden to follow as much as possible, serving as an indicator of their religious observance and piety—it cannot be ruled out that the way Sarajevo was planned and developed was meant to be part of the Prophet's Madinah experience.[4] This becomes plausible when reflecting on the religious fervour displayed

[3] As heretics in the eyes of the Christian two-pronged "orthodoxy" (the Catholic and Orthodox Churches), the Bosniaks were given several pejorative names, namely "Bogomili" (or "Bogumili", Bogomils, which means, sarcastically, those dear to God), "Babuni" (perhaps superstitious ones, or followers of an ungodly idea), "Patareni" (deviants or fools), and members of the Bosnian (heretical) Church. The last one, perhaps, was the mildest one, in that, as Christians, the Bosniaks were indeed united as a community, a body, or an organisation of believers. Such was not a slur, but merely stating the obvious. At any rate, it appears as though the "Bogomili" tag was the intended affront and that the names of "Babuni" and "Patareni" were its synonyms. The three were used interchangeably, which may also suggest that the Bosnian heresy fluctuated in practice and intensity, taking on varying interpretations and being construed differently across different historical periods and locations. That is why the Bosniaks are sometimes called "Bogomili" and sometimes "Babuni" and "Patareni." At other times, the whole system is dubbed simply as the heresy of the Bosnian Church. Thus, inferring for instance that the Bosniaks were neither Bogomili, nor Babuni, nor Patareni purely because the three classifications were not used widely and consistently, is not appropriate. As said before, those were synonyms that complemented each other, and were used interchangeably, especially by the antagonists of Bosnia. Indeed, the Bosnian Christians were different, associating themselves with neither of the branches or sects of Christianity, but with Christianity itself. They were Christians ("christianus" or "krstjani"), first and foremost, the followers of a religion rather than any of its derivatives (See Yanich & Hankey, 1921; Spinka, 1968; Lavrin, 1929; Obolensky, 1972).

[4] There are so many misconceptions invented or misjudgments inflated about the Ottomans. This is the case because they were eventually defeated and dethroned as the world's leading superpower, and consistent with the canon that victors' narratives dictate the terms of historiography. However, the Ottomans were neither innocent nor perfect. It is a fact that all the principles of Islam were theoretically accepted and applied throughout Ottoman history. However, it is also a fact that there were those who opposed such principles in practice. It is impossible to deny both: "As in everything, the Ottoman State

especially by Sultan Mehmed II al-Fatih (d. 1481), the conqueror of Bosnia (who opened Bosnia to Islam, which is the true meaning of al-Fatih), and by the majority of his officials.

The religious devotion of Isa-beg Ishaković, the founder of Sarajevo, is evident through his renowned actions and legacy. His *vakufnama* reflects his deep commitment and affection for Islam, demonstrated through his efforts to enhance the welfare of Sarajevo and its residents. Undoubtedly, Sarajevo held a special place in his heart, representing the pinnacle of his contributions to the Ottoman Empire and its official religion, Islam. Distinguished by his jihad efforts and plentiful successes in battle, Sarajevo truly remained the most critical battleground for Isa-beg Ishaković. Certainly, it was not a coincidence that the mentioned *vakufnama*, the oldest and most authentic document about Sarajevo's history, emphasises that Islam is the true religion and guidance meant to prevail over all religions, despite the disapproval of idolaters. In essence, Sarajevo was intended to embody and reflect the fundamental principles of Islam. The city's founder expectedly wanted to be a main protagonist.

Setting an example that would be followed about eight and a half centuries later in Sarajevo, the Prophet initiated the development of Madinah by designing and constructing his mosque (Al-Samahudi, 1997; Uthman, 1999). This mosque served as a community development centre located between existing settlements, instead of being too distant or within the boundaries of any specific settlement. In doing so, the Prophet created various new development prospects for all. Some previously uncultivated lands became cultivated, while neglected areas were revitalised. Communication networks between the old settlements were enhanced and expanded to include new ones.

Expectedly, the migrants from Makkah and other places played a part in the positive developments of Madinah. They settled in a fertile area near the Prophet's Mosque, which was a central location in the city. They were rewarded for their past contributions to the Islamic cause in Makkah. This recognition motivated them to work diligently, become self-sufficient, and establish their own lives promptly. The resulting transformation made them valuable members of the growing and young community, rendering them as assets and not liabilities.

If the Prophet's Mosque had been built within an existing settlement, it would have marginalised many migrants, making their situation more challenging and hindering their integration. They would have had to stay longer with the helpers (*ansar*) as the natives of Madinah, delaying their self-sufficiency and ability to contribute to the city's socio-political and economic needs. Being unnecessarily reliant on the people of Madinah was the migrants' least desired outcome.

The helpers were never disrespected when the site for the Prophet's Mosque and the future city centre was chosen in a location where the migrating people were soon to become the majority (al-Samahudi, 1997). The introduction of Islam and the Prophet in Madinah meant that all possibilities of reigniting the long-standing rivalry between the two main Arab tribes in the area, the 'Aws and Khazraj, had to be eliminated. Displaying partiality towards the helpers from either the 'Aws or Khazraj, while ignoring other groups, could have rekindled this rivalry, especially since most of the helpers had recently converted to the new religion.

Besides that, while some people hesitated to embrace Islam until after the Prophet's arrival, there were still helpers who, even later, needed time to adjust to the new way of life and eventually accept the truth. Moreover, a significant number of hypocrites were actively trying

included both pious deeds as well as errors. Nevertheless, it is because their good acts outnumbered their bad for 600 years that divine destiny granted them the favor of being the standard-bearer of Islam for such a long time. And when their evil deeds outweighed their good, divine destiny took away that honourable role. Millions of archival documents demonstrate that even during their worst times the Ottomans did their best to conform to the Islamic law (sharia)" (See Akgunduz and Ozturk, 2011; Maksudoglu, 1999).

to sow discord and confusion in Madinah, aiming to revert the city to its previous state of turmoil. A bias demonstration towards either the 'Aws or Khazraj tribe would have been exploited by these negative forces. The Prophet's Mosque and central housing areas were crucial for resolving old conflicts and disparities among the tribes, taking essential steps towards lasting peace and unity. Therefore, the decision not to align the Prophet's Mosque and Madinah's core with either the 'Aws or Khazraj was a highly effective move, given the circumstances.

The impact of the Prophet's Mosque as a community development centre

When completed, the form of the Prophet's Mosque as a community development centre was extremely simple (Ibn Hisham, 2013). This simplicity stemmed from the basic tasks the mosque initially served, reflecting the early stages of the Muslim community in Madinah as it slowly grew and expanded its activities. In architecture, three elements—people's needs, function, and form—are closely connected and mutually dependent. As such, as a community becomes more involved and their needs expand, a mosque's functions multiply, prompting significant enhancements to its original simple design and structure.

Thus, during the Prophet's time, his mosque evolved from a simple roofless and plain enclosure to a complex multi-tiered institution that featured, among other factors, a roofed section, a pavement outside one of its entrances, a *minbar* (pulpit) with a *dakkah* or *dukkan* (seat, bench) for communication purposes, lamps as a means for lighting up the mosque, several compartments that facilitated the various social functions of the mosque, and a person or persons as the mosque caretaker(s).

Inasmuch as the Prophet's Mosque was the centre of gravity in the wide-ranging affairs of the ever-expanding Muslim community in Madinah, its strength and stature epitomised the strength and stature of Islam and Muslims. The mosque seemed to be accommodative of every beneficial activity concerning worship (*'ibadah*), education, politics, security, and social relations, and was able to help the nascent and ambitious society make a remarkable civilisational headway.

The Prophet's Mosque's diverse activities soon evolved into independent institutions, some of which were physically connected to the mosque, while others moved away physically yet remained spiritually linked. In Islamic civilisation, this strong and mutually complementing affiliation between the mosque as the mother of all Islamic institutions and institutions themselves is known as the ideological institutional harmony. Despite being structurally distinct, all institutions share the same vision and mission, working towards common goals inspired by Islamic spirituality. This contrasts with the ideological institutional dichotomy, which is on the completely opposite end of the spectrum.

The Prophet's Mosque was a reflection of the Muslim society in Madinah and its challenges. Therefore, discussing the mosque during the Prophet's time means discussing the people who established and utilised it. Similarly, exploring the development of the mosque during the Prophet's mission in Madinah is essentially a discussion about the evolution of the Muslim community, along with its mind-set and spiritual growth. Indeed, the notions of Islam, Muslims, Islamic society, and the mosque as an idea and physical spectacle, are inseparable (Ibn Hisham, 2013; al-Umari, 1995).

While showcasing the strength and importance of Islam and Muslims, the development of the Prophet's Mosque also highlighted the Prophet's impact on Islamic architecture. The foundation of key principles in Islamic architecture can be attributed to the Prophet's efforts in transforming his mosque in Madinah from a basic structure to a versatile

community development centre. These principles, which are fundamental in Islamic architecture, include a close relationship between function and form, consideration for the environment, emphasis on cleanliness, comprehensive excellence, promotion of fair social interactions, adherence to the Prophet's principle of avoiding harm (*la darar wa la dirar*, meaning "there is no inflicting or returning of harm"), a balance between local and foreign influences, and attention to aesthetics (Omer, 2004).

The case of Sarajevo's first mosque, Sultan's Mosque (Careva džamija)

Correspondingly, a cluster of institutions was established around the time the city of Sarajevo was founded, with some even predating its establishment. One of the most prominent institutions was a mosque, constructed first by Isa-beg Ishaković in 1457. This mosque was a modest and compact building with a wooden minaret. It also featured a wooden roof and a stone wall surrounding it. This design was preliminary, so to speak, due to the limited number of Muslims residing in the newly formed area, which would eventually become the city of Sarajevo.

The mosque initially had limited and simple functions, reflecting its modest form. However, with the city's official establishment and the growth of its Muslim community, the mosque's functions expanded, leading to the construction of a more substantial mosque in 1565. This new mosque was constructed in the classical Ottoman style to accommodate the increasing demands resulting from Sarajevo's rapid growth. This occurred during the reign of Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent (d. 1566) when Mimar Sinan (d. 1588), a renowned architect and engineer, served as the chief Ottoman architect. This has led to speculation that either Mimar Sinan himself or someone associated with him, such as one of his apprentices, might have had a say in the mosque's design and construction. There were no further expansions of the mosque until 1847 (Salihspahić, n.d.).

The mosque of Isa-beg Ishaković's construction is attributed to either Sultan Mehmed II al-Fatih's request or Isa-beg Ishaković's initiative as a visionary leader. While Robert J. Donia (2006) supports the former theory, according to Salih Sidki Muvekkit-Hadžihuseinović (1998), the construction of the mosque was initiated by Isa-beg Ishaković himself. Later when Sultan Mehmed II al-Fatih personally arrived in Sarajevo, in conjunction with his successful conquest of Bosnia, Isa-beg Ishaković gifted the mosque to him. That is why the mosque was and is still called the Sultan's Mosque (Careva džamija).

Regardless, the mosque served more as a socio-political symbol and statement of intent than a remarkable architectural feat or a purely religious site. Similar to the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, this mosque aimed to stimulate urban growth, socio-political progress, and community cohesion, besides the facilitation of standard religious practices. Despite the establishment of numerous other mosques in Sarajevo, the Sultan's Mosque retained its prominence and influence. Its symbolic meaning was more important than both its physical appearance and intended use. It denoted the royal seal of approval and assistance for Sarajevo's venture. It functioned as the cause, not the outcome.

Careva džamija, or Sultan's Mosque, was erected in the 15th century, exactly 834 years after the building of the Prophet's Mosque. If the Prophet's Mosque was created as a community development centre with a plethora of functions representing the centre of gravity in the urbanisation scheme of Madinah, the Sultan's Mosque in Sarajevo was the heart and prime mover of a plethora of institutions that were built separately yet functioned independently. Dotting the designated landscape of a new city, these institutions denoted the ultimate limbs around which the city's substance was later gradually formed, and through which its vivacity flew, sustaining the city and giving it its discernible Islamic identity.

The way these institutions were conceived, built, and operated signified the climax of the institutionalisation process in Islamic civilisation whose embryonic phase could be traced back to Madinah and the Prophet's Mosque. Indeed, the multiple functions of the Prophet's Mosque conducted under its roof eventually evolved into independent sophisticated institutions that were handled differently by different Islamic polities. However, since the Ottoman state was delicately—sometimes even rigidly—organised and administered, the notion of state-owned institutionalisation was more readily pronounced.

In the spectrum of the existing institutions, the mosque institution played the leading role. The remaining institutions derived their purpose and legitimacy from nowhere else but the extent of their affiliation with the quintessence of the mosque. The more intimately they were conceptually and functionally connected to the mosque, the better and more fulfilling they were. The idea of the ideological institutional congruence was required, something that was also suggested and the first seeds of which were planted during the Prophet's development of Madinah. Such happened from within the architecturally limited and spiritually open-ended parameters of the Prophet's Mosque.

It follows that the Ottoman centralised institutionalisation of development, and their institutionalised centralisation of power, connoted a fine example of what the Prophet's Madinah—and the exemplar of the Prophet' mosque as the city's equilibrium point—subtly entailed. All Ottoman cities tried to embrace the spirit of Madinah, and succeeded in varying degrees. Hence, Sarajevo was not an exception. It goes without saying that the urban and architectural sides of Madinah stood for some of the most critical aspects of the Prophet's behavioural model that needed to be adhered to.

In addition to the Sultan's Mosque in Sarajevo—which functioned as the primary focus of religious and socio-political life in the city, owing to its nigh on central position within the city's budding configuration—Isa-beg Ishaković also built the following urban institutions: a caravanserai surrounded by a series of *bezistan* (covered markets), some of whose original walls are still visible today; a number of commercial arteries or souks that branched off from the caravanserai and its *bezistan*; a palace or court as governmental headquarters (*saray*); an inn or guest house (*musafirhana*) for destitute travellers, which had four or five rooms; nine watermills, or a single huge watermill with nine waterwheels, over the Miljacka river whose income was used for running the *musafirhana*; a public bath (*hammam*), which adjoined the mosque; an *imaret* or public soup kitchen where food was given free of charge to specific types of people and unfortunate individuals; bridges across the Miljacka river in order to link the developing new city's core on both sides of the river and to ease the flow of people and goods; and a *tekke* (*khankah* or *zawiyah*) as a monastery for Sufis or dervishes that functioned as both a religious and educational establishment, complementing the similar functions of the Sultan's Mosque (Muvekkit-Hadžihuseinović, 1998).

From the list of the newly established institutions, a madrasah (school) is conspicuously missing. Nonetheless, such was neither deliberate nor a sign of neglect. Schools were uniquely advanced institutions and for their existence compatibly advanced conditions were needed. Sarajevo at the time was in its infancy and its people at the rudimentary stage of religious and intellectual development. The basic educational services provided by the mosque institution, and the *tekke*, were considered adequate.

Schools were established as soon as the prevailing conditions warranted it, and what Isa-beg Ishaković did was to pave the way for the purpose. True enough, in 1495/96, the first madrasah was established in Sarajevo. The founder was Firuz-beg, the ruler of the Bosnian Sanjak. The school was described as tall and beautiful. The income from a *hammam* and a series of shops, watermills, and gardens was dedicated to supporting the school. The establishment of the school was so significant that the residential district (*mahala*) in which it was located

became known as the Mahala of madrasah. A second school was built in 1520 by Gazi Mehmed-beg Isabegović, the son of Isa-beg Ishaković (Zlatar, 2006). The next two schools were built by the illustrious Gazi Husrev Beg in 1531 and 1537 respectively (Zlatar, 1996).

Intermediaries between mosques and schools were called *maktab*, which provided elementary facilities where the basic level of religious education could be obtained. *Maktab* were either integrated within mosques or located close by in separate buildings. Ajas-beg and Skender-beg, who were in charge of the Bosnian Sanjak, are believed to have founded the first and second *maktab* in Sarajevo in 1470/71 and 1478/79 respectively (Mehmedović, 2005).

Historically speaking, schools or madrasah as independent educational institutions were established much later than other institutions. Prior to that, mosques, homes, and subsequently *maktab* served as educational centres to meet the needs of the community. The Prophet's Mosque in Madinah was a notable example of one of the most outstanding and influential educational institutions ever. Its alumnae, known as the *sahabah* or companions of the Prophet, were considered the most exemplary generation to have lived. This is why some of the oldest Islamic universities, such as the University of al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco (founded in 857-859) and al-Azhar University in Cairo (founded in 970 or 972), initially began as mosques.

The importance of residential architecture

Historical accounts normally do not reveal about the intensity and scope of the first residential architecture in Sarajevo. This suggests that, though built on a relatively large scale, the houses in terms of prominence and reporting at that stage assumed a subsidiary role to the other socio-political, religious, and economic foundations. Rounding up the Sarajevo urbanisation scheme, private domestic architecture played second fiddle to its institutional and public counterpart.

For example, when discussing about the abovementioned caravanserai, Salih Sidki Muvekkit-Hadžihuseinović highlighted that the structure was the biggest, tallest, and most impressive in the city. It was a compact complex in its own right, featuring giant walls and arcades adorned with archways. The city itself was small and its houses modest. When contrasted with each other, the massive caravanserai further dwarfed the tiny houses, and the houses, in turn, augmented the caravanserai. Other people were yet compelled to reason that this caravanserai (caravan-*saray*)—rather than the governmental *saray* (court or palace) mentioned earlier—might have been the reason why Sarajevo is called as such (Muvekkit-Hadžihuseinović, 1998).

However, one should not be deceived by this turn of events, that is, believing the houses were not as important. They surely were equally, if not even more, important, than the highlighted facets of the institutionalised and public architecture, but such were the circumstances in the city that development concerns and transformative priorities had to be judiciously planned and executed, optimising their effects. The matter of fact was not about what was more and what less important, but about what was more exigent and essential. Ensuring the correct prioritisation, effective channelling of efforts, and prudent resource allocation became necessary. Gradation, quality, fluidity, comprehensiveness, and strategising were the key.

The immediate objective was to generate frameworks for building (creating) people as the fundamental units upon whose strengths each and every aspect of the society- and civilisation-building processes will depend. Before asking people to do, contribute, and give, they were supposed to be given, done for, and contributed towards. In short, people's needs and welfare had to be taken care of first, before they were asked to take care of themselves, their families, other people, and their country. It was imperative for all institutions to cooperate

seamlessly, coordinating their actions in sync, in order to achieve personal and national aspirations. Since all focus was on the limited human resources, developing and nurturing them in unity, instead of causing confusion and ruin by pulling them apart, was the only way forward.

In the process of this mutual cooperation between authorities and people, whereby both of them were set to mature and grow from strength to strength, addressing the subject of housing progressively became the object of collective interest. Thus, cultivated and spiritually recalibrated, everyone was set to embark on a path of converting the idea and marvel of the house into a family development centre, a family sanctuary, a paradise on earth, and a private religious-cum-educational pivot (a domestic mosque and school). Put differently, physical houses were to be transformed into spiritual, ethical, and enlightening homes.

This indeed was the most challenging task and was predicated on the successes of other tasks. Accordingly, houses were not neglected, but cleverly treasured and painstakingly attended to at every level of Islam's religious and civilisational presence. Just as the future of ethno-symbolism and socioeconomic transformation in Sarajevo and Bosnia as a whole[5] was contingent on human resources as the outcome of human development, the urban and architectural development of Sarajevo and Bosnia was contingent on the Islamically urban as well as architectural disposition of houses.

Indeed, Islamic domestic architecture signify a barometer of other architectural expressions in Islamic societies. For the same reason, the Prophet, upon arriving in Madinah, prioritised building his mosque before anything else (al-'Umari, 1995). Building houses for migrants was put on hold until the completion of the mosque. While the mosque was built, the migrants stayed with their brethren in Madinah, sharing everything they had.

This way, with building the mosque and simultaneously delaying the building of physical houses for migrants, people and their characters were also "built," unity and brotherhood established, commitments fortified, sacrifices warranted, and the future facilitated as well as ensured. Both the migrants and natives of Madinah (*ansar*) were primed to convert their houses into "homes" and "sanctuaries," functioning as a launchpad for taking on the world.

Having said that, if Madinah was a sanctuary (a holy city), so were the houses of its people wherein the city's most precious gems were kept and the most valued assets cherished. While it is true that Sarajevo was neither a holy city nor a sanctuary, it nevertheless managed to blossom into a magnificent, prosperous, and beautiful city, serving as the capital of the Bosnian Eyalet, which in turn formed a crucial component of a powerful empire that ranks among the most remarkable in history. Owing its sophisticatedly refined existence to the Islamic worldview and life values championed by the Ottomans, Sarajevo's ongoing and seemingly perpetual advancement was also a result of these same beliefs and standards, irrespective of the administrations and leaders in power. Clearly, the essence of Sarajevo eclipsed them all.

According to the legendary Ottoman traveller and explorer Evlija Celebi (d. 1682), who visited Sarajevo in 1660, Sarajevo ranked first among the 173 large cities in the Bosnian Eyalet. Dotted with myriads of religious and temporal buildings, the city was an urban sight to behold. However, what is conspicuous is that when Evlija Celebi arrived in Sarajevo, its development activities were no longer stages in evolution, but manifestations of an urban and architectural fruition. Thus, while dwelling on those institutional and otherwise buildings, Evlija Celebi paid special tribute to the houses of Sarajevo. Seeing them as echeloned through estates and gardens

[5] Bosnia as Bosnian Krajište or Frontier first, then Bosnian Sanjak as part of the Bosnian Eyalet.

in an amphitheatrical fashion, the amazed visitor described the houses as beautiful, charming, well built, and functional. He tallied them up to 17,000 houses (Celebi, 1967).

Similarly, an Irish traveller in Bosnia in the 19th century was amazed by the beauty, diversity, and liveliness of the "Oriental" housing type, which was entirely distinct from the ethos of Western residential architecture. He remarked: "The great bulk of the houses here are not like those in Europe, governed by circle and line, after the Western school; Oriental freedom reigns, intolerant of all monotony: everything is lively, and adds to the endless variety" (Berber, 2010, p. 60).

As per the soul of Islamic architecture in general and Islamic residential architecture in particular, the housing of Sarajevo signified the urbanisation apex. They embodied a vision that had been transformed into reality and stood as the defining feature of the city, remaining its invaluable treasure.

Conclusion

As with other Islamic cities that drew inspiration from the Prophet's urbanisation scheme in Madinah, Sarajevo was developed based on a clear and advanced philosophy. It is safe to say that it adhered to the general practices of the Prophet as much as the predominant circumstances so permitted. Practically, the city followed the principle of distinct purposes for different urban areas: the bazaar, serving as the hub for crafts and trade, and acting as the economic centre of the city; and the residential area made up of smaller streets and alleys. This residential part was divided into smaller sections called *mahala*. In each *mahala*, houses were surrounded by both large or small gardens and estates, interconnected by narrow winding roads.

The main mosque was strategically positioned at the heart of the city. It dominated the events and the cityscape, suggesting that mosques and the values they represent were central to people's lives, serving as the most authoritative, reliable, guiding, and overseeing influence. As public spaces, other religious, social, and educational institutions were also located in the central core of the city. Their belonging to the public emphasised the importance of their availability, accessibility, and functionality.

Moving outward from this central area, each neighbourhood had its own mosque typically situated at its centre. Public facilities and services in these areas were organised around the mosque, creating the focal point of each neighbourhood. In this sense, Sarajevo distinguished itself by achieving a level of near-perfection in the seamless integration of its religious and urban elements, demonstrating a meticulous approach that resulted in a highly harmonious and well-organised cityscape.

Inspired mainly by the worldview and teachings of Islam, Sarajevo and other Islamic cities were organic in nature. They were rich, healthy, efficient, and conducive, resembling a healthy and perfectly functioning body. Except for rare cases, the trends of imbalances and inconsistencies were not endorsed. The cities were mainly focused on function and services, meaning that the idea of aesthetics for aesthetics' sake was not a priority. Therefore, in architecture, function took precedence over form. Structures were designed for practicality, and their artistic appearance was only significant if it contributed to their overall usefulness and purpose.

References

Akgunduz, A. and Ozturk, S. (2011). *Ottoman history: Misperceptions and truths*. Rotterdam: IUR Press.

Bašagić, S. (1900). *Kratka uputa u Prošlost Bosne i Hercegovine (A brief introduction to the History of Bosnia and Herzegovina)*. Sarajevo: Vlastita Naklada.

Berber, N. (2010). *Unveiling Bosnia-Herzegovina in British travel literature (1844-1912)*. Pisa: Pisa University Press.

Celebi, E. (1967). *Putopis - odlomci o Jugoslavenskim Zemljama (Book oftTravels - Passages about the Yugoslav Lands)*. (H. Šabanović, Trans.) Sarajevo: Svjetlost.

Donia, R. J. (2006). *Sarajevo: Biografija grada (Sarajevo: A biography)*. (D. Valenta, Trans.) Sarajevo: Institut za Istoriju.

Fine, J. V. A. (1996). The medieval and Ottoman roots of modern Bosnian society. In M. Pinson (Ed.), *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their historic development from the Middle Ages to the dissolution of Yugoslavia* (pp. 1-21). Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Handžić, M. (1940). *Islamizacija Bosne i Hercegovine (Islamization of Bosnia and Hercegovina)*. Sarajevo: Islamska Dionička Štamparija.

Haveric, Dz. (2008). *Islamisation of Bosnia*. Saarbrucken: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller.

Ibn Hisham. (2013). *The Prophetic biography*. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah.

Ibn Kathir. (n.d.). *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*. https://www.altafsir.com/Tafasir.asp?tMadhNo=1&tTafsirNo=7&tSoraNo=17&tAyahNo=80&tDisplay=yes&UserProfile=0&LanguageId=1, accessed on July 12, 2024.

Ibn Khaldun. (1967). *The muqaddimah*. (F. Rosenthal, Trans.) Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Imamović, M. (1997). *Historija Bošnjaka (History of Bosniaks)*. Sarajevo: "Preporod".

Kiani, M. Y. and Kleiss, W. (n.d.). Caravansary. In *Encyclopædia Iranica*, IV/7 (pp. 798-802). Retrieved July 6, 2024, from http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/caravansary

Kotkin, J. (n.d.). *Islamic cities: Can the past be the key to the future?* Retrieved July 12, 2024, from http:/www.islamicity.com/articles/Articles.asp?ref=GL0306-1991

Lavrin, J. (1929). The Bogomils and Bogomilism. *The Slavonic and East European Review*, *8*(23), 269-283. https://www.jstor.org/stable/4202396

Maksudoglu, M. (1999). *Osmanli history, 1289-1922, based on Osmanli sources*. Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia.

Malcolm, N. (1994). *Bosnia: A short history*. New York: New York University Press.

Mandić, M. (n.d.). *Postanak Sarajeva (The rise of Sarajevo)*. Retrieved July 6, 2024, from https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/90233

Mehmedović, A. (2005). *Gazi Husrev-beg i njegove zadužbine (Gazi Husrev-beg and his endowments)*. Sarajevo: Cobiss.

Muvekkit-Hadžihuseinović, S. S. (1998). *Povijest Bosne (History of Bosnia)*. Sarajevo: El-Kalem.

Obolensky, D. (1972). *The Bogomils: A study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism*. Twickenham: Anthony C. Hall.

Omer, S. (2004). *The Prophet Muhammad and urbanization of Madinah*. Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia.

Salihspahić, Dž. (1983). Sarajevo do Gazi Husrev-Bega (Sarajevo before Gazi Husrev-Beg). *Anali Gazi Husrev-Begove Biblioteke, 6*(9-10), 181–206. https://www.anali-ghb.com/index.php/aghb/article/view/487

Al-Samahūdī. (1997). *Wafā' al-wafā*. Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi.

Spinka, M. (1968). *A history of Christianity in the Balkans*. Claremont: Archon Books.

Šabanović, H. (1982). *Bosanski Pašaluk (Bosnian Pašaluk)*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.

Šabanović, H. (1964). *Krajište Isa-bega Ishakovića Zbirni Katastarski Popis iz 1455. Godine (Krajište or Frontier of Isa-beg Ishaković summary of Cadastral Census from 1455)*. Sarajevo: Orijentalni Institut Sarajevo.

Šabanović, H. (n.d.). *Postanak i razvoj Sarajeva (The Origin and Growth of Sarajevo)*. Sarajevo: n.p.

Šabić, L. and Handžić, L. K. (2022). *Development of urban residential zones of Sarajevo during the Ottoman period from 1455-1604*. World Multidisciplinary Civil Engineering-Architecture-Urban Planning Symposium (WMCAUS) 2021. AIP Conference Proceedings 2574, 060001 (2022). pp. 1-12. Retrieved July 7, 2024, from https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0105299

Škaljić, A. (1966). *Turcizmi u Srpskohrvatskom Jeziku (Turkish words in Serbo-Croatian Language)*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost Izdavačko Preduzeće.
Tanović, B. (2010). *Historija Bosne u Okviru Osmanskog Carstva (History of Bosnia within the Ottoman Empire)*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.
Al-Umari, A. D. (1995). *Madinan society at the time of the Prophet*. Herndon: The International Institute of Islamic Thought.
Uthman, M. A. S. (1999). *Al-Madinah al-Islamiyyah (the Islamic City)*. Kuwait: 'Alam al-Ma'rifah.
Yanich, V. and Hankey, C.P. (1921). *Lives of the Serbian saints*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
Zlatar, B. (1996). *Zlatno doba Sarajeva (The golden age of Sarajevo)*. Sarajevo: Svjetlost.
Zlatar, B. (2006). *Vakuf Gazi Mehmed-bega Isabegovića u Sarajevu (Gazi Mehmed-beg Isabegović's endowment in Sarajevo)*. Sarajevo: n.p.

IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies (IJRCS) 7:2 (2024); 159-174.
https://doi.org/10.31436/ijrcs.v7i2.354
Copyright © IIUM Press

Crucifixion in the Muslim World: An Overview of Prominent Cases from 600s to 1300s CE

Aditya Pratama Widodo[1]

Article history: Received: 2024-10-7 Revised: 2024-11-24 Accepted: 2024-12-17 Published: 2024-12-26

Abstract: This study examines cases of crucifixion that occurred between the 600s and 1300s in the Muslim world, drawing from first-hand accounts of notable Muslim historians of the time. Through in-depth reading and analysis of these historical sources, this study sheds light on selected cases of crucifixion that emerged as a result of political and warfare situations in the medieval Muslim world, highlighting the devastating effects of war, particularly civil war, on society. The study also explores the Islamic perspective of crucifixion, which is justified in the Qur'an and Hadith as a form of discretionary punishment for crimes such as brigandage, murder, heresy and apostasy, and even revolt against legitimate authority. However, this study also reveals that the imposition of crucifixion was often influenced by factors such as blood feud, political bias, tribal enmity, and personal vendetta, leading to instances of unjust punishment. This study concludes that the severity of crucifixion as a punishment necessitates careful and thorough investigation and consultation to ensure justice and fairness, in adherence to the foundational virtues of Islam.

Keywords: Crucifixion, gibbeting, punishment, revolt, rebel, heretic, apostate

Introduction

One of the earliest documented threats of imposition of crucifixion in human history was pronounced by the Qur'anic Pharaoh against his magicians who, after losing in a 'magical powers showdown' against the Prophets Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron), chose to repent and follow the teachings brought by the two messengers of Allah. As stated in verse 71 of Surah Ṭāhā and verses 121 to 124 of Surah al-Aʿrāf, when he felt that his hegemony was in peril, the Pharaoh threatened: "Then indeed I will cut off your hands and feet all of you crosswise, and indeed I will crucify you all at the base of the date palm tree." This event possibly occurred between 1400 and 1300 BCE. After the deaths of Prophets Musa and Harun, Prophet Yūsha' ibn Nūn (Joshua), after his success in conquering the Kingdom of Ai, crucified its king on a piece of wood, and burned its city. Meanwhile, in the battle against the Amorites, which took place in Gibeon, Allah sent down hailstones that killed most of the Amorite army. Frightened by the Israelites, the five Amorite kings hid in a cave, only for Prophet Yūsha' to later kill and crucify them on a piece of wood. Subsequently, he ordered their bodies to be taken down from the cross and thrown into the cave where they hid (Al-Ṭabarī, 1991a).

Centuries later, a case of crucifixion was found among the Assyrians in Mesopotamia during the rule of Ashurnasirpal II. Renowned for his expansionist policy, this king, who ascended to the throne in 883 BCE, severely crushed the rebellion in Ashur, plundered the city, selected some of its most guilty inhabitants, and crucified them (Rawlinson, 1870). Another case that occurred among the ancient Persians and was related in Herodotus' *Histories* is the execution of a general named Artayctes, who was crucified alive (Hengel,

[1] Aditya Pratama Widodo is a master's student at the Department of History and Civilisation, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. He can be reached at pratama_adityaof88@yahoo.com.

1977). Herodotus explains that Artayctes was crucified because "he was in the habit of taking women directly to the Temple of Protesilaus at Elaeus and committing impious acts there," and he also plundered Protesilaus' treasures (Book 9, Chapter 116). A similar punishment was also imposed by Darius III (r. 336–330 BCE), who reportedly crucified thousands of Babylonians in order to conclude their revolt once and for all; the same king reportedly crucified his chief adherents as well. Later, when Alexander the Great was about to finally conquer Persia and found out that Darius III was assaulted by the latter's guards (in another version, the assailants were his chamberlains), the former ordered the capture, beheading, and crucifixion of the assailants. In justifying the crucifixion, Alexander proclaimed, "Such is the punishment of him who dares to raise a hand against his king, and is disloyal to his people" (Al-Ṭabarī, 1987b, pp. 87–93), which implied that the act of treason was punishable by death.

There are many other examples of crucifixion imposed among the ancient Persians to the point that this punishment was described as an ordinary punishment against rebels (Rawlinson, 1870). In a similar vein, among the Romans, crucifixion was also commonly imposed on criminals, including political or religious agitators, pirates, and slaves. One famous case is the crucifixion ordered by Marcus Crassus upon the army of Spartacus in 71 BCE, including some 3,000 rebel slaves. In later periods, crucifixion was again inflicted on rebels, as ordered by the Judean King Alexander Jannaeus on 800 Jewish rebels who, before their eventual crucifixion, were forced to witness their wives and children being slaughtered. It goes without saying that the most famous case is the alleged crucifixion of Prophet Īsā ibn Maryam (Jesus son of Mary) by Pontius Pilate in about 32 CE. Prophet Īsā was considered by the Romans and the Jewish authorities to be a political and religious threat and a seditious instigator, and was therefore arrested on charges of treason. Just as Spartacus and his followers, Prophet Īsā was probably also considered an iconoclast and a scourge on the authorities, and was thus labelled as a "criminal." However, it is worth mentioning that since the crucifixion of Prophet Īsā is not recognised in Islam and by Muslims, several medieval Arab writers referred to Christians as "the worshippers of the crucified" or "worshippers of the cross."

From the exposition above, it is evident that crucifixion as a form of capital punishment has been imposed since time immemorial by ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Seleucids, Scythians, Indians, Carthaginians, Romans, Celts, Germanic, Britannic, Arabs, and other nations of the antiquities. The common characteristic of the older form of crucifixion is that the condemned, living or dead, were either fastened, bound, or nailed to a *crux*, a vertical structure made from wood (pole, stake, plank, or the trunk of a tree), or even hung on a gibbet—thus this kind of *crux* is termed *crux simplex*. Alternatively, the condemned were also fastened, bound, or nailed to a *crux compacta*, which was made "by two joined wooden stakes or beams" and considered the full and true version of crucifixion since it combined the *crux* (vertical pole, or stake, or plank) and the *patibulum* (crossbeam). Furthermore, the *crux compacta* can be divided into two types: as the letter "X" (*crux decussata*), or the letter "T" (*crux commissa*) (Hengel, 1977, pp. 22–29; Samuelsson, 2010, pp. 3–4, 7). In view of these variations of norms in crucifixion, in the early Muslim world, particularly in Arabia, *ṣalb* is considered the equivalent of crucifixion and gibbeting alike. In the Arabic tradition, *ṣalb* means tying and hanging—without nailing, which is considered heretical in Islam and perceived as the worst form of execution in the Greco-Roman world—someone on a tree bark, tree, pole, stake, or cross (El Fadl, 2001; Hengel, 1977).

Due to the slow, painful, gruesome, and humiliating death of the condemned, since he/she would be displayed in public for days, thus undergoing an 'exemplary punishment,' crucifixion was intended to deter people from committing crimes and to protect society from criminals. Sometimes, for added humiliation, animals such as dogs, cats, or fish were also crucified alongside the criminals, and the bodies of criminals were sometimes left unburied

and served as food for beasts (Peters, 2005; Hengel, 1977). Furthermore, it is important to note that although in the general 'Arabic-style' crucifixion victims were usually executed before they were crucified since Islam forbids torture, and that crucifixion in the medieval Muslim world usually involved headless cadavers (Noldeke, in al-Ṭabarī, 1990d; El Fadl, 2001), the Malikites held that bandits must be crucified first and then executed by stabbing him/her on the breast, while in the Shiite tradition bandits must be crucified for three days and can be spared if they survived this period (Peters, 2005).

There are a considerable number of documented cases of crucifixion that occurred in the medieval Muslim world, which largely encompassed the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, Egypt, Northern Africa (including Ifriqiya), Central Asia, and al-Andalus. However, due to limited space, this article will only discuss a few of the most important cases related in prominent historical sources, such as the translated accounts of notable medieval Muslim historians such as al-Balādhurī (d. 892), al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), Ibn al-Qūṭiyya (d. 977), al-Bīrūnī (973–1048), Ibn al-Athīr (1160–1233), Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373), Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 1369), al-Maqrizī (1364–1442), and al-Maqqarī (1577–1632), as well as Christian historians such as Michael Rabo (d. 1199) and William of Tyre (1130–1186). The descriptions of cases of crucifixion contained in their works—which, in many cases, were passed to them from previous narrators—are too precious to be left out since they can not only shed some light on the political and warfare situation in the medieval Muslim world, but also show the devastating effects of war, civil war in particular. Additionally, analysis presented by modern scholars is also consulted since it can provide additional context and better understanding of crucifixion. These historical facts can impart a lesson as well as become a vivid reminder of what can happen to the *ummah* (Muslim community) if the 'strongmen' are preoccupied with worldly power and drenched in their will to gain power but not submit to the command of Allah, make peace, and maintain unity.

Crucifixion in the Muslim World and its Gory Imposition

Crucifixion of rebels, agitators, bandits, and murderers

Many historical accounts testify that there were numerous cases of crucifixion that occurred in the Muslim world between the 600s and 1300s CE, mostly in West Asia, Persia, Central Asia, Northern Africa (including Ifriqiya), and al-Andalus. Perhaps, among the earliest instances of crucifixion in the Muslim world was around the same time as the Battle of Badr (624 CE). As related in Sunan Abī Dāwud 591, Umm Waraqa bint 'Abdullah was murdered by her slave and slave-girl by strangulation using "a sheet of cloth." Upon learning of her death, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ordered those slaves to be captured and crucified, becoming the first crucifixion to take place in Medina. It is worthy to note that prior to her death, Umm Waraqa bint 'Abdullah had asked Prophet Muḥammad to be allowed to accompany him to the Battle of Badr, but he rejected her request and, instead, said to her, "Allah, the Almighty, will bestow martyrdom upon you." Later, during the Muslim conquest of Iraq, in the Battle of 'Ayn al-Tamr in 633 CE, the legendary Muslim military commander Khālid ibn al-Walīd managed to best the Sassanian forces and their Arab Christian auxiliary forces. The commander of Arab Christian forces, Hilāl ibn Aqqa ibn Qays ibn Bashir, who thought that he knew Arab Muslims better than his Persian comrades and was determined to eliminate the Khālid forces, was personally captured by Khālid, after which he was killed and crucified (Al-Baladhuri, 1916; Al-Ṭabarī, 1993).

'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was again involved in the imposition of another crucifixion that occurred soon after the conclusion of the Battle of Yarmouk (636 CE), though this time the crucified was, again, by no means a Muslim. As narrated by Michael Rabo, after being

defeated by the Arabs and losing 40,000 cavalry, one of Heraclius' lieutenants of Persian origin, Niketas (whom Rabo referred to as "the son of Shahrvaraz"), came before 'Umar in Homs to plead for mercy and offer his service to help the caliph conquer Persia. However, Khosrow II's daughters, who happened to be among the captives, warned 'Umar not to be deceived by Niketas and testified that his father, Shahrvaraz, usurped the throne from Ardhashir III and "killed anyone who did not swear an oath to support the king and his sons." 'Umar believed their story and had Niketas executed and crucified him on a wood in Homs (Michael Rabo, 2014, pp. 456–457). Furthermore, during the early days of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān's reign, a rebellion launched in Tripoli, Lebanon, led by one of the Greek patricians who was given a safe haven and allowed to stay in the city. However, after staying in the city for around two years, this Greek patrician seized the city. After shutting the city's gate and killing the city's *'āmil* (administer), he took this city's soldiers and Jews as captives. According to one account, after the Muslims besieged and defeated him, he was captured, executed, and crucified (al-Baladhuri, 1916).

In the early days of the Umayyad Caliphate, crucifixion was imposed as a penalty upon Sahm ibn Ghālib al-Hujaymi, who not only rebelled against 'Abd Allah ibn 'Āmir, the Governor of Basra under Muawiyah, in 41 AH (May 7, 661 CE–April 25, 662 CE), but also unjustly took the life of Qudamah ibn Maẓ'ūn, one of the earliest reverts. Around five years later, in 46 AH (March 13, 666 CE–March 2, 667 CE), Sahm rebelled again by causing mischief in al-Ahwaz and went as far as to proclaim the Kharijite slogan, "Judgement belongs only to God." In response, the then-Governor of Basra, Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān (Ziyād ibn Abīhi), denied him a safe conduct, and subsequently hunted, killed, and crucified him for his crime (Al-Ṭabarī, 1987c, pp. 19, 89–90). While Sahm's case clearly demonstrated the imposition of a just death penalty on an unrepentant rebel, the crucifixion of Hānī ibn 'Urwa al-Murādī serves as an eerie reminder of the rigorous punishment that fell upon those who were only suspected to have helped or aligned with the Alids during the Second Fitna (680–692 CE). After he was suspected to have harboured Muslim ibn 'Aqīl—an envoy of Husayn ibn 'Alī, to rally the allegiance of Kufans and then raise a revolt, and thus was 'marked for death' by Yazīd I—Hānī was probed by the Governor of Kufah, 'Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyād. According to various accounts, Hānī bravely refused to deliver Muslim, who was both a refugee and his guest, to 'Ubayd Allah. As a result, 'Ubayd Allah dragged Hānī to a certain place in al-Kunāsah (the camel market in Kufah), and beheaded and crucified his body there; subsequently, his head was presented to Yazīd I. This event, which occurred on September 10, 680 CE, clearly demonstrated how the Umayyad government was truly anxious to secure their position by suppressing their political opponent, the Alids in particular (Al-Ṭabarī, 1990, pp. 16–63). Around the same year, 'Ubayd Allah played a certain role in the crucifixion of 'Abd Allah ibn 'Afīf al-Azdī al-Ghimidī, a Shiite and sympathiser of the Alids. However, it was his own tribe, Azd, who crucified him in Basra since the leader declared that 'Abd Allah brought trouble for others and destroyed his own tribe (Al-Ṭabarī, 1990a, pp. 167–168).

Perhaps, among the most famous yet tragic cases of crucifixion during the early years of the Umayyad era is the crucifixion of 'Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām and his younger brother, 'Amr, the first and fifth sons of al-Zubayr ibn al-'Awwām respectively. Being a grandson of 'Abū Bakr though Asmā', 'Abd Allah held vast influence and power, gained support from people in the Arabian Peninsula, was even recognised as a caliph, and was later known for his refusal to give allegiance to Yazīd I. Therefore, it was only natural that the new Umayyad caliph perceived 'Abd Allah as a threat to his authority, branded him as a rebel, and was determined to stop him. While not much is known about 'Amr, it is related that he received much money and power from the Umayyads but resented his own family. Although they were brothers, the animosity between them was so intense. This rift was exploited by Yazīd I, who, in July or August 680 CE, appointed 'Amr ibn Sa'īd ibn al-'Āṣ, the Umayyad Governor of Medina, as the commander of his *shurṭah* (police), or army, and then sent him to

subjugate and persecute ʻAbd Allah along with his followers. The bad blood between the two brothers grew so severe that ʻAmr planned to attack ʻAbd Allah at the Kaʻbah, but he was instead defeated by the latter, after which he was incarcerated, flogged to death, and gibbeted. This event took place in 681 CE, at the Cemetery of Mecca, which is located outside of Maʻlā Gate (thus called al-Muʻalla Cemetery) (Al-Ṭabarī, 1990a; ibn Battuta, 1958; Gibb, 1960).

ʻAbd Allah's truly heroic action and his last stand in Mecca are documented in detail in al-Ṭabarī's chronicle. He managed to withstand more than six months of siege laid by Al-Hajjāj ibn Yūsuf (Umayyad Governor of the Hejaz), without any trench, fortress, or stronghold, severely outnumbered and overwhelmed, and eventually abandoned by his own people, including his sons and family (Al-Ṭabarī, 1990c). While al-Ṭabarī does not specify any crucifixion of him, Ibn Battuta mentions that in 692 CE, ʻAbd Allah's body was crucified at the same spot where ʻAmr was gibbeted earlier, while Ibn al-Athīr notes that ʻAbd Allah was crucified with a dog or a fish. After being crucified for some time, his head was sent to and displayed in Medina (Ibn Battuta, 1958; see also Hitti, 1970; Gibb, 1960; Ibn al- Athīr in Fadl, 2001). Apart from ʻAmr and ʻAbd Allah, another son of al-Zubayr ibn al-ʻAwwām, Musʻab, was reportedly also crucified in 692 CE. His body was crucified by al-Hajjāj on the order of Caliph ʻAbd al-Malik in Thaniyya Kada' in al-Hajoon, Mecca, at a spot known as Munakkasah. As related by Ibn Kathir, this crucifixion was, among others, driven by al-Hajjāj's retaliation for Musʻab's prior killing of al-Mukhtār ibn Abī ʻUbayd al-Thaqafī who, despite being a rebel, belonged to the same tribe as al-Hajjāj. Musʻab's lifeless body was crucified on a tree for months, and it was ʻAbd Allah ibn ʻUmar who later requested al-Hajjāj to take Musʻab's body down and bury it (Ibn Kathir, 2012).

In the 8th century, crucifixions occurred between 708 and 710 CE, though they befell upon rebels-cum-heathens. During his military campaign in Central Asia, the Umayyad Governor of Khorasan, Qutaybah ibn Muslim al-Bahilī, was notorious for his role behind the crucifixions of the rebellious king and people of Talaqan "in two straight parallel rows 4 parasangs (19–22 kilometres) long" and the brigands in this city. It is worth noting that the abovementioned crucifixions were the result of their cooperation with the Badghis prince Nezak Tarkhan in waging war on Qutaybah after Nezak's perfidy and breaking the peace agreement with the Muslims. Nezak himself was eventually captured and crucified by Qutaybah in Ishkamish, Lower Tocharistan (Al-Ṭabarī, 1990). However, Qutaybah's crucifixion stint was far from over, since around the same year he hunted the *marzban* (margrave) of Marw Rudh (in Khurasan) for his conspiracy with Nezak against the governor. The *marzban* managed to flee, but his two sons were captured by Qutaybah and crucified. Interestingly, Qutaybah later launched an ill-fated rebellion against Sulaymān ibn ʻAbd al-Malik, the new Umayyad caliph. Fearing that he would fall in favour with Sulaymān, whom he presumed would appoint another figure to be the Governor of Khurasan, Qutaybah sent three letters to Sulaymān, threatening to renounce his allegiance to him. When Qutaybah eventually decided to renounce his allegiance to Sulaymān, several warlords in his rank plotted against him, and this former governor—along with his son, a few of his brothers, and their sons—were slain by the plotters and crucified in Khurasan in August 715 (Al-Ṭabarī, 1989a). Later, another mass crucifixion, which was no less brutal than the one imposed by Qutaybah, repeated during the Muslim conquest of Gorgan, Persia. It was reported that in 98 AH (August 25, 716 CE–August 13, 717 CE), the Umayyad Governor of Iraq, Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab, crucified the soldiers of Gorgan on palm trunks "over the courses of 4 *farsakhs* (24 kilometres)" after the Gorgani broke their peace agreement with him and treacherously waylaid his army (Al-Ṭabarī, 1989a, pp. 57–58).

During the Umayyad era, crucifixions were not only imposed in Arabia, Iraq, and Persia/Iran, but also in al-Andalus, with the crucifixion of Zeyyad Ibn ʻAmru al-Lakhmi probably being the first ever recorded. During the course of the Berber Revolt (740–743 CE), the newly-appointed Governor of Ifriqiya, Kulthūm ibn ʻIyāḍ al-Qushayrī, was sent from Iraq

to defeat the rebels but later found himself and his nephew, Balj ibn Bishr al-Qushayrī, cornered and besieged by the Berber rebels in the castle of Ceuta. Balj requested the Umayyad Governor of al-Andalus, ʻAbd-al Malik ibn Kattan al-Fihrī, to send some ships so he could safely cross to al-Andalus, hence saving his life and the lives of his men. Fearing that Balj's presence in al-Andalus would eventually pose a challenge to him, ʻAbd-al Malik denied his request; consequently, the former's uncle perished. However, Zeyyad, against the will of his superior, ʻAbd-al Malik, sent two provisions-laden vessels, thus saving Balj and his men from starvation. Perceiving Zeyyad's initiative as an act of disobedience, ʻAbd-al Malik ordered his immediate arrest and punished him with 700 lashes. Additionally, since ʻAbd-al Malik also accused Zeyyad of conspiracy, he ordered that the latter be first deprived of his sight, then beheaded and crucified with a dog on the left side of his cadaver (Al-Maqqari, 1964, pp. 40–41).

Despite all the hardships he encountered in Ceuta, Balj came to an agreement with and was invited by ʻAbd-al Malik to destroy the Berber rebels in al-Andalus. Thus, with large troops, Balj managed to cross the Strait of Gibraltar safely, land in al-Andalus, and immediately launch a campaign against Berber rebels in al-Andalus. However, Balj and his men were soon turned against ʻAbd-al Malik for the latter's refusal to aid him but punished those who had helped him, and seemingly sought retaliation for the death of his uncle. As it turned out, Balj men were also determined to avenge ʻAbd-al Malik's bad treatment toward them in the Battle of al-Harrah (683), in which they were doomed to "eat dogs and the skins of animals." The two first engaged in a battle near Algeciras, followed by 18 subsequent battles. Eventually, Balj managed to defeat ʻAbd al-Malik in a battle near Cordoba and crucified him in September or October 741 CE, on the opposite bank of the river, at the head of the bridge where the Great Mosque of Cordoba is located, with a crucified pig placed on his right hand and dog on his left hand (Ibn Qutiya, 2009, pp. 60–61; Collins, 1983, p. 168; Al-Maqqari, 1964, p. 39–43). So cruel was the crucifixion that the body of ʻAbd al-Malik remained on the beam for a long time until a few of his friends and clients stole his mangled remains one night and buried them. The spot of this lamentable execution was later known as Masslab ibn Kattan, or "the place of execution of Ibn Kattan" (Al-Maqqari, 1964, pp. 38–39). Additionally, it is also important to note that many scholars, including Ibn Khaldūn and Ibn Bashkuwāl, maintain that ʻAbd al-Malik had previously instigated a revolt in al-Andalus, as the extension of the revolt in Tangier, in around 740 CE and deposed the incumbent Governor of al-Andalus, ʻUqba ibn al-Hajjāj (Ibn Qutiya, 2009; Al-Maqqari, 1964). Therefore, apart from the enactment of Balj's revenge, the crucifixion of ʻAbd al-Malik may as well be viewed as a punishment imposed for the rebel.

Despite their apparent glory in Central Asia, during the first half of the 8th century, the Arabs, as the new overlord of this region, faced challenges posed by their rivalry with the Chinese in gaining control over this region, as well as their rivalry and ongoing military conflicts with the Turco-Persian people. Moreover, onerous taxes imposed by the Arabs intensified resentment among the local population, and the fact that new reverts in Khurasan were also targeted by Abbasid propaganda and became breeding grounds for Shiism only created a situation where rebellion and revolt became all the more possible and jeopardised the position of the Arabs (Gibb, 1923). It was also at this point that ʻAmmār ibn Yazīd, who later changed his name to Khidash, rallied support for Muḥammad ibn ʻAlī as the new *imam* (cleric). However, the newly-appointed Governor of Khurasan, Asad ibn ʻAbd Allah al-Qasrī, who perceived Khidash's activity as incitement, immediately seized and crucified him in Amul (now Turkmenabat) in 736 CE. It is also worthy to mention the vicious manner in which Khidash was crucified: Asad ordered this inciter's hands be cut off, his tongue torn out, and his eyes gouged out (Al-Ṭabarī, 1989b; Ibn Kathir, 2012). Furthermore, reportedly in the same year, Asad also crucified around 400 rebels in Balkh who surrendered the city to a rebellion

leader, al-Hārith ibn Surayj. Similar to the previous crucifixion, the rebels' hands and feet were cut off (Al-Ṭabarī, 1989b, pp. 127–128).

Another anti-Shiite measure was taken between 739 CE and 740 CE, which was followed by the imposition of crucifixion on several leaders of the Shiite rebellion. Zayd ibn ʻAlī was prominent among these leaders, and he rallied the masses' allegiance for himself under the argument that it is necessary to wage war against:

> those who act tyrannically, to defend those who have been oppressed, to give pensions to those who have been deprived of them, to distribute this booty (*fay'*) equally amongst those who are entitled to it, to make restitution to those who have been wronged, to bring home those who have been detained on the frontiers, and to help the *ahl al-bayt* against those who have opposed us and disregard our just cause. (Al-Ṭabarī, 1989c, p. 23)

However, many of Zayd's followers eventually renounced their allegiance to him, and even his slave gave his position away. Under the order of the Umayyad Governor of Iraq, Yūsuf ibn ʻUmar, Zayd was slain and crucified at al-Kunāsah, Kufah. One account relates that Zayd was first beheaded before crucified, while other accounts mention that his body was buried but later exhumed and crucified (Al-Ṭabarī, 1989c). Al-Biruni relates that after Zayd's crucifixion, his body was burnt and his ashes thrown into the water (Al-Biruni, 1879). A similar bizarre crucifixion repeated several years later in 127 AH (October 24, 743 CE–September 13, 744 CE) when the body of Yazīd III was exhumed and crucified at al-Jabiyah Gate in Damascus by the supporters of Al-Walīd II, who probably viewed Yazīd III as a usurper (Ibn Kathir, 2012).

Other than the abovementioned cases, crucifixions of rebels became more common around the end of the Umayyad era, during the Third Fitna (744–747 CE), and prior to the outbreak of the Abbasid revolution in the 8th century, when anti-Umayyad sentiments were intensified among Arabs and non-Arabs alike. Among the noteworthy rebellions is the rebellion of Banu Kalb in Homs, which resulted in the crucifixion of around 500 to 600 rebels after a cavalry led by Marwān II recaptured the city on June 28, 745 CE (two days after Eid al-Fitr in 127 AH). Soon, the instigator, Thābit ibn Nuʻaym, was crucified on the gates of Damascus (Al-Ṭabarī, 1985). Another case of crucifixion is that of the famous anti-Umayyad rebel, al-Hārith ibn Surayj, whose headless body was crucified under an olive or sorb tree in the city of Merv at the end of May 746 CE. A year later, an Umayyad general-turned-rebel, Judayʻ ibn ʻAlī al-Kirmānī, was slain in the course of a peace treaty negotiation with the Umayyad Governor of Khurasan, Naṣr ibn Sayyār. While al-Ṭabarī attributed the slaying and crucifixion of Judayʻ to Naṣr, a modern historian holds that it was al-Hārith's son who speared and crucified him, exacting blood revenge for his father's death (Al-Ṭabarī, 1985; Ibn Kathir, 2012; Sharon, 1990). It is also worth mentioning that in 121 AH (December 738 CE–November 739 CE), when Naṣr conducted a military expansion on the lands of the Turks, he was involved in an imposition of crucifixion. In this campaign, he bested, captured, and crucified the Turk king Kursul, who once led Turk armies to fight Muslims and was deemed too dangerous to be let live (Ibn Kathir, 2012).

When the Abbasids came into power in the mid-8th century, political struggles did not end altogether. In fact, rebellions remained a common occurrence and generated certain situations that resulted in the crucifixion of rebels, including the crucifixion of the Marwanid family shortly after the Abbasid takeover (El Fadl, 2001; Collins, 1983). Another instance occurred in 156 AH (December 1, 772 CE–December 20, 773 CE), when ʻAmr ibn Shaddād, who rebelled in 762 CE and took over Fars, was captured and interrogated—his hand and legs were cut off before he was beheaded and crucified in Basra by the authority (Al-Ṭabarī, 1990d). A similar fate was also experienced by Yūsuf ibn Ibrāhīm (also known as Yūsuf al-Barm) and his followers around 776 CE as a consequence of their rebellion in Khurasan (Al-

Ṭabarī, 1990d). Almost a century later, one of the longest and among the most devastating rebellions occurred during the Abbasid era, in which black slaves and freemen from Zanj (in East Africa)—hence the name Zanj Rebellion—and Arabs played their part. The leader of this rebellion launched their attack on Wednesday, August 6, 870 CE, in southern Iraq, which was soon followed by a series of attacks on other cities in the province. It is related that in one of the episodes in the course of this rebellion, in mid-881 CE, under the command of Abū Aḥmad Ṭalḥa ibn Ja'far al-Muwaffaq, the Abbasid army managed to inflict heavy losses on the rebels in Jawwith Barubah on the Tigris, an event soon followed by the beheadings and crucifixions of the rebels. In order to make his point, al-Muwaffaq then catapulted the heads of the rebels to the leaders of the rebellion so that "the friends of the dead recognised the heads of their compatriots and broke out in tears." Abandoned by most of his followers, the leader of the rebellion himself, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad (designated as "the abominable one'), was captured and beheaded on the order of al-Muwaffaq on August 11, 883 CE (Al-Ṭabarī, 1987e, pp. 53, 139).

Crucifixion in al-Andalus was again imposed by its ruler in the early 9th century, this time during the rule of Umayyad Emir of Cordoba, al-Ḥakam ibn Hishām, or al-Ḥakam I. In 805 CE, it was reported that al-Ḥakam I was attacked by mobs, and many theologians applauded his next action. He ordered an investigation, only to find out that 72 masterminds were involved in a conspiracy against him. Thus, these ringleaders were apprehended and crucified (Hitti, 1970; Dozy, 1913). Later, an unfortunate event was experienced by the people of Toledo—who were described as "haughty, malevolent, and disdainful of his governors"—during al-Ḥakam I's rule. Al-Ḥakam I instructed his newly-appointed Governor of Toledo to prepare a banquet for the notables of Toledo at the newly-built fort in this city. Thus, on November 16, 806 CE, around 5,300 leading Toledans attended the banquet, only to find themselves being awaited by executioners and then decapitated. In the same year, Al-Ḥakam I crucified three plotters, one of whom was Mūsā ibn Sālim al-Khawlānī, who was crucified with his son's head hanging around his neck (Ibn Qutiya, 2009, pp. 87–89; Collins, 1983, p. 189). A bloody event again occurred in 814 CE, when al-Ḥakam I was surrounded by a furious mob and was forced to isolate in his palace. However, his cavalry managed to ruthlessly suppress the mob and its instigators, and around 300 of them were crucified upside down on crosses (Hitti, 1970). In 817 CE, another revolt broke out in the Arrabal suburb in Cordoba, but was swiftly put down; Al-Ḥakam I then ordered the execution and crucifixion of its leader (Ibn Qutiya, 2009). Despite being known for his outstanding deeds for Muslims, as specified by Ibn Qutiya and al-Maqqari, al-Ḥakam I was described as wild, "addicted to chase and wine" (Hitti, 1970, p. 512), and, as a result of his extremely harsh forms of rebellion suppression, he was also notoriously touted as "'the Massacre of the Suburb,' and 'a tyrant and shedder of blood'" (Al-Maqqari, 1964, pp. 106–107).

Returning to West Asia, while widely regarded as the leader who brought the Abbasid Caliphate to its golden era and for the flourishing of Baghdad and establishment of the legendary library Bayt al-Hikmah, Hārūn al-Rashīd also played his role behind a several warranted cases of crucifixion. In 779 CE, before he even ascended to the throne, during the campaign in Asia Minor and having conquered the fort of Samālu, he crucified an Abyssinian who was heard cursing him and Muslims on one of the towers of this fort (Al-Baladhuri, 1916). Later, in the 9th century, during the rule of Hārūn al-Rashīd, the newly appointed ruler of Abbasid Oman, Īsā ibn Ja'far, reportedly caused disturbances and corruption in this land. Leaving Basra with his troops, in his new domain of Oman, they "began to violate women, and rob the people, and make public use of musical instruments." The people of Oman—who at that time were ardent Kharijites who reconverted to Islam during Abū Bakr's rule after previously apostatising upon Prophet Muḥammad's death—heavily opposed the action of Īsā and his men, and proceeded to fight them, ultimately killing and crucifying Īsā (Al-Baladhuri, 1916, pp. 117–118).

In Central Asia, a region well known for its political turbulence, another notable rebellion occurred between 817 and 837 CE in present-day Azerbaijan, in the form of the Khurramiyah movement, led by a Persian cattle herder-turned-warlord, Bābak Khorramdin. This movement was not merely political in nature since the Khurramites were also viewed as heretic due to their inclination to neo-Mazdakism. Reportedly, the devastating effect of this rebellion was unparalleled in this period since, in the course of 20 years, Bābak and his followers launched numerous military operations from their base in northern Azerbaijan, killed 255,000 people, as well as defeated and killed several Abbasid military commanders. However, Bābak's luck ended after Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim, in 835 CE, appointed Khaydhar ibn Kāwūs al-Afshīn, a Persian general who later repeatedly defeated Bābak until he captured the latter's capital, Badhdh (now Kaleybar), on August 26, 837 CE. Bābak's fate was sealed when al-Afshīn brought him to Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim in Samarra, where the latter ordered his belly to be slit open and head removed, to then be paraded in Khurasan and exhibited on a pole at Nishapur, while his trunk was to be crucified in Samarra. Soon after, Bābak's brother, ʿAbd Allah, experienced the same fate, except that he was crucified in Medina (Al-Ṭabarī, 1987d; and 1991b, pp. 14–88; Rabo, 2014, pp. 547, 564–567). Additionally, it is also worthy to note that Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim reportedly crucified several Byzantines during the Sack of ʿAmmuriyyah (Amorium) in 838 CE.

Despite all this, Bābak's crucifixion simply did not end the disobediences among the Iranians, which became evident in the rebellion led by Mazyār ibn Qārin ibn Vindadhhurmuzd. While it started with the hostile relationship between the Qarinids and Tahirids, this rivalry soon escalated into a serious conflict due to intrigue played by ʿAbd Allah ibn Ṭāhir in agitating the Caliph by means of letters and by al-Afshīn, who encouraged Mazyār to wage war with the Tahirids and rebel against the Caliph. Eventually, Mazyār was captured in 839 CE, and al-Muʿtaṣim ordered him to receive 450 lashes until he died, and his corpse be gibbeted in Samarra, beside Bābak's corpse (Al-Ṭabarī, 1991b). Upon learning of al-Afshīn's devious role behind Mazyār's rebellion, al-Muʿtaṣim became angry, dismissed him from the caliphal guard, and incarcerated him in a special cramped prison in the form of a minaret until he died in the middle of 841 CE. Upon his death, al-Afshīn's body was gibbeted on a wooden beam at al-ʿAmmah Gate, Samarra, but it was then flung down and burned, and his ashes were thrown into the Tigris (Al-Ṭabarī, 1991b). According to Michael Rabo, among the reasons behind al-Afshīn's rebellion was that he discovered enormous treasures left by Bābak that were buried underground, a discovery that made him rich and gave him the audacity to rebel, while Al-Ṭabarī holds that idol worshipping and heresy may have been another factor behind the crucifixion of al-Afshīn (Rabo, 2014; Al-Ṭabarī, 1991b).

While Islamic teachings are definitely against torture, an unorthodox fashion of crucifixion was imposed in 813 CE, during the Abbasid civil war, an event also known as the Fourth Fitna (811–813 CE). This fashion of crucifixion is, without a doubt, among the most horrifying and painful punishments since the victim was crucified alive. At this time, when two sons of Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, Muḥammad al-Amīn and Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Maʾmūn, were engaged in a civil war, there was a general named al-Samarqandī who served in al-Amīn's army as a *manjaniq* (trebuchet) and *ʿarrddah* (a smaller kind of *manjaniq*) shooter, renowned for his excellent dexterity and his role in the bombardments of al-Maʾmūn's castles in Baghdad as well as civilian houses and streets nearby. However, since al-Samarqandī inflicted more damage and loss to civilians than al-Maʾmūn's army, his fate was changed altogether after he was captured following the execution of Muḥammad al-Amīn. Consequently, a beam was raised for al-Samarqandī on the east bank of Tigris, where he was crucified alive while people threw stones, shot arrows, and thrusted spears at him until he died. As a matter of fact, the shootings continued even after he lost his life and only a day later, on October 1, 813 CE, his cadaver was dismounted from the beam and burnt, and part of it was torn apart by dogs (Al-Ṭabarī, 1992). While the fate of al-Samarqandī is undoubtedly

very unfortunate, a similar fate also befell al-Faḍl ibn Qārin. As a skilled military commander, al-Faḍl was deployed to crush a rebellion in Hiṃs (also known as Homs) in 862 CE, where he captured rebels and executed them in considerable numbers. However, in 864 CE, during his tenure as the Abbasid Governor of Hiṃs, the people of Hiṃs, along with the people of Banū Kalb, rebelled against him. His situation worsened when his follower betrayed and handed him over to the rebels who, after robbing him of his money and seizing his wives, executed and crucified him (Al-Baladhuri, 1916; Al-Ṭabarī, 1985a).

Another crucifixion occurred in the 11th century in al-Andalus, and this time it was imposed on a corrupted and cruel high state official, ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī. Although he himself did not launch or instigate a rebellion or riot, due to his profligate life, impious habits, his familiarity with common soldiers and persons of lowest rank, and his constant and immoderate habit of drinking wine and spirituous liquor, ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mahdī earned the title of "Sanchol," meaning "madman" (hence, *sanchuelo*), from the people. Inheriting his father's position as the *ḥājib* (chief minister) of the Caliphate of Cordoba under Caliph Hishām II in 1008 CE, his excessive impudence and presumption prompted him to exact, from the inhabitants of Cordoba, an oath of allegiance to himself as their lawful sovereign. He even went as far as proclaiming himself as *al-mahdī* and *walī ʻabd al-Islam* (presumptive heir to the throne), who will eventually replace Hishām II. His proclamation invoked the wrath of Banī Umayyah, who were already disgusted with his tyranny and excesses. Thus, a conspiracy against him was formed among the people of Cordoba under the leadership of an Ummayad prince. In turn, this conspiracy culminated into a rebellion that was joined by a greater part of the army and by almost all inhabitants of Cordoba. Subsequently, ʻAbd al-Raḥmān "Sanchol" was captured, executed, and crucified in 1009 CE (Al-Maqqari, 1964).

As one of the major urban centres in al-Andalus, from historical records it is evident that Cordoba had witnessed numerous disturbing political dynamics and turbulences, including one that took place in the 1070s CE, when it was briefly seized from the grasp of Taifa of Seville. This time, it was Ibn Okasha who captured it for Yaḥyā ibn Ismāʻīl al-Maʼmūn of Toledo, from its youthful governor, ʻAbbad, the son of the Emir of Seville, ʻAbbad III al-Muʻtamid. A former mountain bandit who was known as a fierce and bloodthirsty man, Ibn Okasha played his part well in the city's politics, and was even able to start a conspiracy within a city. Additionally, he also knew the city well and managed to gather some intelligence from the city's garrisons. In 1075 CE, Ibn Okasha and his men stormed the governor's palace and even though the young governor "defended himself like a lion," he was eventually killed by one of his assailants and decapitated. ʻAbbad's head was put on a spear and paraded through the city, while his lifeless body was left half-naked on the street. Devastated by the fact that he lost his son and Cordoba, it took three years for the father of the murdered governor, ʻAbbad III, to eventually recapture Cordoba on September 4, 1078 CE. Ibn Okasha attempted to flee the city while ʻAbbad III and his men stormed in, but he was cornered and outnumbered, and eventually killed. Subsequently, Ibn Okasha's body was crucified beside a dog's cadaver on the order of ʻAbbad III (Dozy, 1913, pp. 674–676).

During the course of the 12th century, military and political conflicts between Muslim rulers did not diminish, despite the fact that the encroachments of European Crusaders were also deeply felt in some parts of the Muslim world. As contestation for power among Muslim elites—which gave birth to conspiracies, defamations, rebellions, and civil wars—was still a common feature in the 12th-century Muslim world, so were crucifixion and gibbeting. Those who were crucified ranged from viziers, such as Saʻd al-Mulk Abū-l-Maḥāsin (in 1107 CE) and Abū ʻAbd Allāh ibn al-Batāʼiḥī (in 1126 CE), to brigands, thieves, and even to construction workers, in this case plasterers, who conspired against the ruler of Mosul (in the mid-1133 CE). Nonetheless, perhaps among the most interesting cases of crucifixion and gibbeting was conducted by a Mamluk official named Īldakīn. As the deputy prefect of Baghdad, Īldakīn was

personally ordered by Seljuk Sultan Ghiyāth ad-Dīn Mas'ūd to crush the gangs of Baghdad who interestingly operated under the protection of the vizier's son and the brother-in-law of the sultan. This was an assignment he could not refuse, as the sultan threatened that he would crucify Īldakīn instead. Thus, Īldakīn launched a raid against the gang members; while most of them fled, he managed to arrest many of them, as well as crucify the vizier's son and gibbet the son of the brother-in-law of the sultan. Another case of crucifixion was that of the Alid Shia in Egypt, who had conspired with the Franks of Sicily in return for money and land, conspired against and even made an attempt on Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn ibn Ayyūb, and also tried to restore the Alid dynasty in Egypt (Ibn al-Athīr, 2016a; 2016b).

Cases of crucifixion and gibbeting also occurred during the 12th-century Crusades, which were not only imposed on Muslims by their fellow believers but also by Christians. For example, following the failed siege of Edessa by Muslims between April and May 1115 CE, the Franks managed to hold their position and even seized nine Muslim soldiers and crucified them on the city wall. Later, when there was an uprising in Ifriqiya against the reprehensible rule of the Frankish kingdom of Sicily, which was followed by a large-scale massacre of Franks and Christians in Ifriqiya, William I of Sicily retaliated by crucifying the former Sicily Governor of Ifriqiya, Abū-l-Ḥasan, since the latter refused to convince his son to put an end to the resistance. It is related that Abū-l-Ḥasan, who was taken as a hostage in Sicily in order to discourage the inhabitants of Ifriqiya from rebelling against the Franks, "continued to call upon God Almighty until he died" when he was crucified sometime around 1156/1157 CE. Meanwhile, the Frankish rule over Ifriqiya ended in early 1160 CE when they left Mahdiyya after ruling for 12 years (Ibn al-Athīr, 2016b, pp. 77, 106). Moreover, as far as the crucifixion of Christians is concerned, a Christian clergyman named William of Tyre reported that during the Battle of Arsuf in 1101 CE, some Christian soldiers under the leadership of Baldwin I were crucified before their comrades by the Saracens (Muslims) and that a few Christian communities who lived in Egypt at the end of the 12th century were subjected to crucifixion, though he failed to specify a single case of crucifixion of Christians that occurred in Egypt at that time (William of Tyre, 1943).

Later, in 1260 CE, during the Mamluk era, crucifixion was again imposed on the participants of a revolt in Cairo—people of colour, squires, and pages. As mentioned by al-Maqrizi, the instigator of this revolt was a rosary-bearing hermit called Kourāni, who, in the previous year, had been arrested and prosecuted for his heresy but then released after he agreed to renew his *shahadah* (proclamation of faith). This time, however, he agitated the mass by invoking the family of 'Alī. The revolt began in the middle of the night but was swiftly crushed, and the participants were gibbeted outside Zuweila Gate (al-Maqrizi, 1838). Additionally, according to Ibn al-Athīr's account, crucifixion was not only imposed on able-bodied men, but on the disabled as well. For example, in 1205 CE, a blind man in Baghdad was crucified because he had killed and tried to steal from another blind man in a mosque (Ibn al-Athīr, 2016c). Furthermore, still in the Mamluk era, it was reported that a number of riots broke out in 14th-century Egypt. For example, in 1327 CE, a riot broke out in Alexandria, which ended with "the deaths of thirty-six of the men of the city, and had each man cut in two and the bodies placed on crosses in two rows" (Ibn Battuta, 1958, pp. 27–28). Another case was the rebellion of al-Kanz in Cairo, which ended with the crucifixion of the rebels in April 1379 CE. Al-Maqrizi attributed these riots to the weakness of the state (Webb, 2019).

Crucifixion of false prophets, heretics, apostates, and atheists

It must be borne in mind that, as recorded in historical sources, apart from plotters, rebels, and instigators, in the medieval Muslim world, crucifixions were also imposed on those who claimed prophethood as well as those who were viewed as heretics and/or atheists. As related

by Mālik ibn Anas, during the rule of Caliph ʻAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, an influential false prophet named Al-Ḥārith al-Mutanabbī al-Kadhdhāb was crucified and killed in Jerusalem in 698 CE (El Fadl, 2001). Subsequently, a crucifixion was imposed on a *zindiq* (heretic) named Ibn Abī al-Awja'. It is related that this person also confessed to have notoriously invented 4,000 Hadiths in which he "forbid what is lawful and make lawful what is forbidden" and make people break fast when they should be fasting and fast when they should be breaking their fast. Consequently, Ibn Abī al-Awja' was imprisoned and beheaded, and his body crucified in al-Kunāsah, Kufah. This event took place around the end of 772 CE (Al-Ṭabarī, 1990d, pp. 72–74). Meanwhile, the atheists of Aleppo were crucified on the order of the authority in 163 AH (September 17, 779 CE–September 5, 780 CE) (Al-Ṭabarī, 1990d, p. 214). Another prominent heretic was a follower of Rāwandiyya, al-Ablaq, who preached that ʻAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad were gods and that "the spirit that was in Jesus, son of Mary" resided in them; he was crucified in 158 AH (November 11, 774 CE–October 30, 775 CE) (Al-Ṭabarī, 1990d, p. 122).

At the turn of the 9th century, during the Abbasid era, crucifixion also imposed on an apostate. As related by al-Biruni, the day of the crucifixion of an apostate named Antonius was celebrated by Christians every 29th day of December in the Syrian calendar. It is said that this apostate, whom Christians held with high regard as a martyr and sanctified with miraculous tales, was a cousin of Hārūn al-Rashīd named Abū Rūḥ. Although al-Biruni failed to mention when this penalty was imposed, it is evident that this event occurred during Hārūn al-Rashīd's rule since it was the Caliph himself who ordered the crucifixion of Antonius (al-Biruni, 1879). Gibbeting of a prominent apostate also took place during the Abbasid era, on March 26, 922 CE. This time, Manṣūr al-Hallāj, a Persian Sufi renowned for his proclamations "I am the Truth" and "I am He whom I love, and He whom I love is I," and whose teachings were so influential that it inspired social and political turbulence in Baghdad. As the target of the Abbasid inquisition, the authority believed that if al-Hallāj were to be let live, he would corrupt the law and apostatise the people, which will lead to the demise of the Abbasid dynasty. Caliph al-Muqtadir thus ordered the local police to scourge al-Hallāj "with a thousand stripes," amputate his hands and feet, and fasten him on a gibbet at the city square. Al-Hallāj was gibbeted overnight, but he was still alive by the next morning, so the police decapitated him, burnt his body, and threw his ashes over the Tigris. As for his head, it was displayed on a bridge for two days and then sent to Khurasan to be exhibited (Kritzeck, 1964, pp. 96–104; Hitti, 1970, pp. 435–436).

One extremely violent and truly unfortunate event that took place in al-Andalus was the crucifixion of a Jewish vizier named Joseph ibn Naghrela, followed by the massacre of Jews in Granada. As related by Ibn Idhārī, Joseph—who replaced his father, Samuel ibn Naghrillah, as the vizier of Taifa of Granada in 1056—came from a line of statesmen-cum-rabbi. As a prominent public functionary, he enthusiastically conducted the affairs of the kingdom and ensured that taxes were paid accurately; these qualities made the ruler of Granada, Badis ibn Habus, respect him. However, Joseph was also described as a person who was ignorant of the favourable conditions enjoyed by the *dhimmī* (non-Muslim subjects) under Muslim rule. Additionally, a local poet of the time, Abū Isḥāq al-Ilbirī, composed his own views about Joseph: he was a presumptuous and proud man, had a tendency to entrust high official positions to Jews, had amassed immense treasures, kept spies in royal palaces and affairs, was irreligious, insulted Islam and even ridiculed verses of the Qur'an, had orchestrated a few assassinations (including that of the firstborn son of Badis, Buluggin ibn Badis, in 1064 CE), and had committed high treason by inviting the army of the neighbouring Taifa of Almeria (which was also the arch-rival of Granada) to invade Granada, even opening the gate for them. While the poem inked by Abū Isḥāq had little effect on Badis, the Granadan mobs, which consisted mostly of Berbers, were agitated. They raised a riot, captured and executed Joseph, and fastened him to a cross. The impact of Abū Isḥāq's poem was soon

proven to be overwhelming since the masses proceeded to massacre 4,000 Jews and plunder their dwellings (Dozy, 1913).

Continuing from previous centuries, in the 13th century, crucifixion was still imposed on heretics. One such case was that of 'Umar ibn Yazan, who encouraged a Mamluk named Aybak Bāk to create chaos in Multan by "gathering troublemakers, seizing property, and making the roads dangerous." Consequently, in early 1205 CE, 'Umar ibn Yazan and Aybak Bāk, along with the latter's followers, were crucified on the order of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ghūrī (Ibn al-Athīr, 2016c). During the Mamluk era, another heretic was gibbeted for causing disturbance in Cairo. This sagacious, erudite, yet misled man named Fakhr al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Moḥammad ibn al-Bakaki blamed those who were fasting during Ramadhan while he did not fast. He also despised and insulted the *qadi* (Islamic judges), "looked at them with disdain, and treated them as ignorant" and inexistent—he even went as far as to put his feet on the Qur'an. He was tried immediately and a charge was fixed upon him wherein he would get the death sentence. Despite the fact that he pronounced the *shahadah* before he was put to death, no one heeded his profession of faith and complaints, and he was beheaded on November 16, 1302 CE. Later, his head was placed on a lance and paraded across the city, while his body was dragged to Zuweila Gate and tied to a gibbet (al-Maqrizi, 1838, pp. 192–193).

Justification for Crucifixions

From the cases presented above, it is evident that crucifixion was imposed on many criminals, evildoers, and heretics. Evidently, many cases of crucifixion of criminals, evildoers, and heretics indeed found its legitimation in the divine perspectives that are clearly stated in the Qur'an and the Hadīth, and that crucifixion is commonly accepted as a part of *hadd*, or discretionary punishment—as mentioned in Verse 37 of Surah al-Mā'idah:

> This is the recompense of those who fight against God and His Messenger, and hasten about the earth to do corruption there: they shall be slaughtered, or crucified, or their hands and feet shall alternately be struck off, or they shall be banished from the land. That is a degradation for them in this world; and in the world to come awaits them a mighty chastisement.

Similarly, Prophet Muḥammad himself, as narrated by his wife, 'Ā'isha (Sunan al-Nasā'i 4743; Sunan al-Nasā'i 4048; Sunan Abī Dāwud 4353), said that "one who goes forth to fight with Allah and His Apostle, in which case he should be killed or crucified or exiled from the land." Therefore, crucifixion can be legally imposed since brigands, bandits, murderous robbers, gang members, and rioters can be unanimously considered as spreading corruption and calamity in society, while heresy and atheism can be categorised as waging war against Allah and Prophet Muḥammad's teachings. However, all Sunnite schools agree that, in certain cases, a sincere repentance can save the condemned (apostates and bandits in particular) from the death penalty, including crucifixion (Peters, 2005).

Concerning rebellion against a legitimate government, the Qur'an has strongly advised in verse 59 of Surah al-Nisā' that all believers must "obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you" and must refer to Allah and His messenger if any disagreement arises. Furthermore, if a disagreement between believers intensifies, then, as mentioned in verse 9 of Surah al-Ḥujurāt, both parties are encouraged to make peace. Even though the Qur'an deems it necessary to fight the transgressor "until they are willing to submit to the rule of Allah," peace, which is based on fairness and justice, can be achieved. Moreover, verses 75 and 76 of Surah al-Nisā' also encourages believers to fight oppressors, which in some cases include corrupted and/or unjust rulers, for the cause of Allah. While the Qur'an does not prohibit rebellion against corrupted and/or unjust rulers—considering the

fact that rebellion was not viewed as a crime in the medieval Muslim world and since the rebels themselves might have legitimate causes—rebellions in the medieval Muslim world were generally aimed at replacing or usurping legitimate rulers (El Fadl, 2001). Unfortunately, more often than not, such actions have resulted in serious corruption (mischief), chaos, disturbances, and havoc in society, rendered disorder, instability, and insecurity in an established state, even large-scale killings and the destruction of properties. Hence, it is safe to state that, to a certain degree, the impact of rebellions was quite similar to the actions of bandits, brigands, or terrorists. Furthermore, given that Prophet Muḥammad has mentioned that believers are like a body to the point that "when any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 5665; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2586), and in many cases rebellions caused more harm than good and have rendered such devastating effects to the *ummah*, perhaps the imposition of crucifixion upon certain rebels can be soundly justified and understandable. Notwithstanding, it must be borne in mind that many jurists, chief among them Imam Shāfiʿī, argued for a more humane treatment against rebels and argued against their execution, crucifixion, or decapitation, and that their corpses must be properly washed and buried (El Fadl, 2001).

However, it must be noted that, in many cases, the imposition of crucifixion was also motivated by many factors, including blood feud, which was a traditional feature of Arab society and can be traced back to the pre-Islamic era. Therefore, instead of law enforcement in its truest sense, many crucifixions against rebels were apparently imposed based on judgments that were heavily overshadowed by the hatred, vengeance, or political bias of Muslim rulers. Moreover, although in many cases, as presented above, crucifixion may appear as a conclusion to the struggle for the throne and served as a harsh warning to discourage rebellions, insurrections, revolts, and the like, sometimes such a form of punishment can only spark an unrelenting spiral of vengeance, vendetta, and violence in Muslim society (Collins, 1983) which, in turn, widens disunity and schism in people, especially among the political elite. Therefore, given the severity of this punishment, it is only natural that crucifixion should only be imposed upon rebels and criminals after a careful and thorough investigation and consultation, for the foundation of Islam is justice and good deeds. Such virtue is reflected in the advice of Caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz: "…do not hasten, on your own initiative, to cut off the arm of the thief or to crucify someone until you have consulted with me on the matter" (Al-Ṭabarī, 1989, pp. 96), as well as verse 8 of Surah al-Mā'idah, which warns believers to not let hatred lead them to injustice.

Conclusion

From the selected cases presented above, crucifixion can be perceived as a political, military, and legal punishment. Furthermore, based on consulted materials, only a few individuals who waged war against Allah—namely apostates, atheists, and heretics—were crucified. Mainly, most of the documented crucifixions were imposed upon those who rebelled against the authority. It is also evident that a significantly large number of documented crucifixions in the Muslim world occurred during the Umayyad and Abbasid eras, and these phenomena clearly reflect the significant degree of disunity and schism among a few Muslim leaders, which further developed into larger political and military conflicts as well as rebellions. This disunity and schism proved that these Muslim leaders did not heed the Qur'anic advice specifically contained in verse 103 of Surah Āli ʿImrān, in which they should "hold firmly together to the rope of Allah and do not be divided." They also forgot the fact that "a believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 2446) as well as proven the truth of Prophet Muāammad's saying that the *ummah* will split after his demise (Musnad Aḥmad 704). While the Qur'an and Hadīth would obviously be the elixir to such a situation and the former strongly advises transgressors to make peace and submit to

the will of Allah, it seems that, more often than not, the political elite in the Muslim world at that time were blinded by their intense hatred as well as excessive will and love for worldly power to the point that they were reluctant to seek guidance and truth in the Qur'an. Finally, while it is difficult to ascertain the impact of crucifixion on the improvement of public order with precision, in view of the recurring cases of rebellion in the selected period of this study, it is safe to assume that the imposition of this severe, gruesome, and humiliating public execution only witnessed limited success in deterring rebellions, heresies, and other deviations in society. Instead, as evidenced in several cases, crucifixion only invited more vengeance, violence, and bloodshed.

References

Al-Baladhuri, A. A. (1916). *The Origins of Islamic State* (P. K. Hitti, Trans.). Columbia University.

Al-Biruni, A. R. (1879). *Chronology of Ancient Nations* (C. E. Sachau, Trans.). Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain & Ireland.

Al-Maqqari, A. M. (1840). *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*, vol. I (P. de Gayangos, Trans.). Oriental Translation Fund.

_____. (1964). *The History of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*, vol. II (P. de Gayangos, Trans.). Oriental Translation Fund.

Al-Maqrizi, T. A. (1838). *Histoire des Soultan Mamlouks, de L'Egypte*, vol. I (É. M. Quatremère, Trans.). The Oriental Translation Fund.

Al-Ṭabarī, A. J. M. (1985). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk*), vol. XXVII (J. A. Williams, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1985a). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XXXV (G. Saliba, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1989). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. I (F. Rosenthal, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1987a). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. II (W. R. Brinner, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1987b). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. IV (M. Perlman, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1987c). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XVIII (M. G. Morony, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1987d). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XXXII (C. E. Bosworth, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1987e). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XXXVII (P. M. Fields, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1989a). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XXIV (D. S. Powers, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1989b). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XXV (K. Y. Blankinship, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1989c). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XXVI (C. Hillenbrand, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1990a). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XIX (I. K. A. Howard, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1990b). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XXI, (M. Fishbein, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1990c). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XXIII (M. Hinds, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1990d). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XXIX (H. Kennedy, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1991a). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. III (W. M. Brinner, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1991b). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XXXIII (C. E. Bosworth, Trans.). State University of New York Press.

_____. (1992). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XXXI (M. Fishbein, Trans.). State University of New York Press.
_____. (1993). *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-muluk)*, vol. XI (K. Y. Blankinship, Trans.). State University of New York Press.
Collins, R. (1983). *Early Medieval Spain unity in diversity, 400-1000*. Macmillan.
Dozy, R. (1913). *Spanish Islam: A history of the Moslems in Spain*. Chatto & Windus.
El Fadl, K.A. (2001). *Rebellion and violence in Islamic Law*. Cambridge University Press.
Gibb, H. A. R. (1923). *The Arab conquests in Central Asia*. The Royal Asiatic Society.
_____. (1960). ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr. In H. A. R. Gibb, J. H. Kramers, E. Lévi-Provençal, J. Schacht, B. Lewis, and Ch. Pellat (Eds.). *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition. Volume I: A–B. E. J. Brill.
Hengel, M. (1977). *Crucifixion in the Ancient World and the folly of the message of the cross*. Fortress Press.
Hitti, P. K. (1970). *History of the Arabs from the earliest times to the present*. Macmillan.
Ibn Battuta, A. A. M. (1958). *The travels of Ibn Battuta: A.D. 1325–1354*, Vol. I (H. A. R. Gibb, Trans.). The Haykluyt Society.
Ibn al-Athīr, I. (2016a). *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'rīkh*, part 1 (D. S. Richards, Trans.). Routledge.
_____. (2016b). *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'rīkh*, part 2 (D. S. Richards, Trans.). Routledge.
_____. (2016c) *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athīr for the Crusading Period from al-Kāmil fi'l-ta'rīkh*, part 3 (D. S. Richards, Trans.). Routledge.
Ibn Kathir. A. I. (2012). *The Caliphate of Banu Ummayah: The first phase* (Darussalam Research Center, Trans.). Darussalam.
Ibn Qutiya. (2009). *The History of Ibn al-Qutiya* (D. James, Trans.). Routledge.
Kritzeck, J. (1964). *Anthology of Islamic literature: From the rise of Islam to modern times*. Penguin Books.
Michael Rabo. (2014). *The Syriac chronicle of Michael Rabo (The Great): A universal history from the creation* (M. Moosa, Trans.). Beth Antioch Press.
Peters, R. (2005). *Crime and punishment in Islamic Law: Theory and practice from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century*. Cambridge University Press.
Rawlinson, G. (1870). *The Seven great monarchies of the ancient eastern world*. Washington Co.
Samuelsson, G. (2010). *Crucifixion in antiquity*. Mohr Siebeck.
Sharon, M. (1990). *Revolt: The social and military aspects of the ʿAbbāsid Revolution*. The Max Schloessinger Memorial Fund, The Hebrew University.
William of Tyre. (1943). *A History of deeds done beyond the sea*. Columbia University Press.
Webb, P. (2019). *Al-Maqrīzī's al-Ḫabar ʿan al-bašar, Volume V, Sections 1–2: The Arab thieves*. Brill.

IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies (IJRCS) 7:2 (2024); 175-184.
https://doi.org/10.31436/ijrcs.v7i2.336
Copyright © IIUM Press

The Internal and External Relations of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate during the Rule of Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh (369–405 AH/979–1014 CE)

Hamza Kaka Yaseen[1]

Article history: Received: 2024-5-17 Revised: 2024-11-21 Accepted: 2024-12-18 Published: 2024-12-26

Abstract: The struggle for control over Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, among the Persians, Turks, and Buyids, weakened the Caliph's authority. This led to the fragmentation of the Caliphate, giving rise to various local states and principalities. The Kurds capitalised on this situation, establishing their own authority and creating several Kurdish principalities. Several of these Kurdish principalities gained political and military influence, and emerged as strong states in the region. Notably, the Fatimids, Byzantines, and Romans sought to establish friendly relations with these Kurdish states, offering gifts, valuables, and titles to win their favour. This study delves into the internal and external relations of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate during Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh's reign. The methodology of this study is qualitative and historical analysis, depending on the selected primary and secondary sources. The most important finding of this study is that the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate had robust diplomatic relations with other authorities since its founding. Furthermore, the Buyids designated the emirs of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate. Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh established and strengthened his authority and control over the rocky wilderness of the western region with his military might and support.

Keywords: Ḥasanwayh, Kurd, Emirate, Abbasid, Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh

Introduction

The political and military situation of the Abbasid Caliphate before the establishment of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate was dire due to the rise of several weak and inexperienced caliphs at the beginning of the 4th century AH/10th century CE. This period witnessed a decline in political, military, and administrative stability, leading to the disintegration of the state and its governance. Fierce conflicts among military commanders, ministers, and senior state officials further exacerbated the situation, pushing the country towards political and military collapse. For instance, when Caliph al-Muqtadir Billah (295–320 AH/908–932 CE) came to power as a young and inexperienced ruler, the conflicts and disputes during his reign reached a critical level, posing a serious threat to the Caliphate's survival (Daḥiya, 1946).

Around 315 AH/927 CE, the Zanjis created problems in the Abbasid Caliphate and demanded privileges. They further initiated a revolution, further complicating the situation in the state. Consequently, Caliph al-Muqtadir Billah decided to repress them (Miskawayh, 2000). Several years later, the Caliphate was plagued by conflicts between the Turks and the Dailamites, who had become a prominent part of the Abbasid army in Baghdad (Al-Hamadānī, 1983). This conflict intensified, especially after Caliph al-Radhi Billah assumed power from 323 to 329 AH/933 to 940 CE when he appointed Kurtkin Dailami as a senior leader of the Abbasid forces (Ṣūli, 1979). The Caliphate had weakened to such an extent that political, military, and administrative instability had spread throughout the capital. This chaotic situation is embodied in the account where ministers who took office were removed in less than a day: "Minister has

[1] The author is an assistant professor at the Department of History, Faculty of Arts, Soran University. He can be reached at hamza.yaseen@sorsn.edu.iq.

been completed in the patch; he takes off and is then removed after an hour" (Ibn al-Athīr, 1997).

As a result of this instability, various forces emerged, and several emirates were established in the Islamic East and Kurdish regions. The arrival of the Buyids in the region and their subsequent capture of Baghdad in 334 AH/945 CE facilitated the Kurds in creating their own authorities. Thus, the capture of Baghdad by the Buyids marked a new era in Islamic history, different from the previous time, as the policy implemented by the Buyids paved the way for the Kurds to establish principalities. By that time, several emirates were established, and one of the most significant of these principalities was the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate.

The Establishment of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate and the Role of Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh in Consolidating its Power

Establishment of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate

The Ḥasanwayhid Emirate, one of the prominent Kurdish emirates in the western mountainous region, existed in the 10th and 11th centuries CE during the Abbasid Caliphate. This principality was supported by the Barzikani tribe, enabling its establishment (Ibn al-Athīr, 1997). The Aishani tribe, closely connected to the Ḥasanwayhid dynasty, was considered part of the Barzikani tribe. Emirs Windad and Ghanim controlled Nahavand and various areas with numerous brave soldiers (Ibn Khaldūn, 1988a).

The death of Emir Windad in 349 AH/961 CE marked the beginning of the principality's decline as Emir Ghanim was later arrested by the Shadhanjan tribe, leading to their downfall. Historian al-Ṣadafī identified 350 AH/961 CE as the year in which the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate was established (Al-Ṣadafī, 1907).

There are differing views on the true founder of this principality. Hussein Huzni Mukriani believed that Ḥasanwayh, chief of the Barzikani tribe in 330 AH/941 CE, founded the Emirate. The name "Ḥasanwayh" might have originated from al-Ṣadafī's reference to Hussein or Husseini in the book *History of Islam*. Qadir Mohammed cited a text from al-Birūnī mentioning the authority of Mir Badr, the founder of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate (Hassan, 2011).

Most sources, however, confirm that Mir Badr founded the principality in 348 AH/959 CE, making him the original founder. His wise policy and adept management allowed him to conquer regions such as Dinawar, Hamdan, Nahavand, and others. He established himself as the successor of the Aishanites until his passing in 369 AH/979 CE (Ibn al-Kathīr, 1991).

Principal Rulers of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate

Ḥasanwayh ibn Barzikani (348–369 AH/959–979 CE). Ḥasanwayh ibn Barzikani (henceforth Ḥasanwayh) is renowned as one of the most powerful emirs of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate. During his rule, he bolstered the Emirate by constructing significant fortresses, with Sarmaj being the most vital (Rojbeyani, 1996). Notably, he distinguished himself from other Kurdish emirs by endeavouring to unite the Kurdish tribes and free them from the constraints of the tribal system (Mohammed, 2022). Ḥasanwayh pursued the expansion of his Emirate and took advantage of regional conflicts to augment his power. He supported the Buyids in their campaign against the Samanids, which earned him their confidence and territorial gifts (Ghalib, 2008). He further strengthened his position by collecting taxes from merchants and affluent individuals in the surrounding areas. In 359

AH/969 CE, Ḥasanwayh launched an attack on Nahavand, defeating its ruler Sahlan ibn Musafir and compelling him to seek peace and a ceasefire (Miskawayh, 2000). However, this action led to a rupture in his relations with the Buyids, resulting in a retaliation attempt led by Ibn al-Amid. The situation was eventually resolved through an agreement that included financial contributions and loyalty to the Buyids (Miskawayh, 2000).

Ḥasanwayh's rule continued until his death in 369 AH/979 CE, with his burial taking place in Sarmaj Castle. Historical accounts depict him as a just ruler who efficiently managed the regions under his control and discouraged abuse of power by officials (Ibn al-Athīr, 1997). He encouraged tribal chiefs and local officials to maintain security in their territories (Miskawayh, 2000), and his commitment to his country and strong belief in Islam are also highlighted (Rojbeyani, 1996).

Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh (369–405 AH/979–1014 CE). After Ḥasanwayh's death, a dispute arose among his seven sons over the inheritance of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate. Eventually, Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh (henceforth Badr) succeeded in becoming Emir with the assistance of 'Adud al-Dawla of the Buyid Empire (Al-Rūdhrāwarī, 2000). Gradually, Badr consolidated his power, becoming one of the most influential and renowned emirs of the Emirate. Historians praised him as a good ruler; Ibn al-Athīr even described him as the best king in the world, following a sound policy in governing his state, leading to peace and security with no thieves (Ibn al-Athīr, 1997). Ibn al-Jawzī also noted that Badr invested a significant amount of money in constructing mosques, monasteries, and markets, as well as providing financial aid to scholars, the poor, and the needy (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1358).

Contemporary historians, such as Zrar Saddiq, highlighted Badr's focus on reconstruction and the construction of bridges, mosques, houses, and agricultural projects (Tawfiq, 2012). Under Badr's rule, the Emirate witnessed strong authority and improved economic infrastructure, making his reign a pivotal period in its history. However, after ruling for more than 30 years, Badr faced a tragic end when his soldiers turned against him, leading to his assassination in 405 AH/1014 CE.

Hilāl ibn Badr (405 AH/1015 CE). Hilāl, the third Emir of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate, did not rule for an extended period. Before the death of his father, Badr, Hilāl rebelled against him. He managed to seize power with the support of the Shazanjani tribe. However, due to his political acumen and good relations with the Buyids, Badr successfully removed Hilāl from power with their help. After Badr's death, Hilāl was eventually appointed as the Emir of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate and bestowed with the title of "Qutb al-'Ali." The Buyids provided an army to support him, but his forces were defeated, and he was captured and killed in the same year (Majhul, 1938). Hilāl's rule, though short-lived, added another chapter of intrigue and complexity to the history of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate.

Ṭāhir ibn Hilāl (405–406 AH/1015–1016 CE). When his father was in dispute with his grandfather and Badr was able to arrest and remove his father from the Emirate, Ṭāhir was hiding in remote areas such as Shahrizor and did not dare to be open. Additionally, he was afraid that his grandfather would take revenge on him instead of his father. In order to take revenge on his grandfather, he secretly prepared in distant areas. After the disappearance of his grandfather and his father's death, Ṭāhir tried to take control of Shahrizor and the surrounding region. Eventually, he attacked the Buyid army and took several of them prisoner (Ibn al-Athīr, 1997).

Buyid Emir Fakhr al-Dawla requested Ṭāhir to release the prisoners in order to establish contact with them and get their confession, to which the latter agreed. Moreover, he swore to Shams al-Dawla and reaffirmed his decision to obey him. As a result, Shams al-Dawla returned some of his father and grandfather's properties in the important areas of Shahrizor

and Dinwar to Ṭāhir as a reward. Finally, these areas returned under the rule of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate (Ghalib, 2008).

After regaining control of some areas, Ṭāhir announced that he is the new Emir of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate. However, a few Kurdish tribes in the western mountainous regions did not recognise his rule, especially the Shadhanjan and Lur tribes. Due to Ṭāhir's lack of experience in administration and politics, he was unable to convince these tribes otherwise (Beg, 1931). Soon, a fight happened between Emir Abū al-Shawk al-'Annāzī and Ṭāhir. To avoid further defeat, Abū al-Shawk expressed his willingness to cooperate with Ṭāhir, and they strengthened their relationship through political marriage. However, this relationship was short lived, as Abū al-Shawk attacked Ṭāhir in 406 AH/1016 CE, thereby killing him and defeating the Ḥasanwayh army (Zaynel, 2012).

As a result, Abū al-Shawk ended the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate, and the region was occupied and ruled by the 'Annāzīd Emirate until their fall. The Barzikani tribe also disappeared after the destruction of the principality and is not mentioned in later sources.

Internal and External Relations of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate during the Reign of Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh

The Internal Relations between Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh and Other Kurdish Rulers

When Badr came to rule the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate, he implemented good policy by establishing strong and extensive relations with Kurdish military leaders and tribes, including the Aishanid, Barzikani, Shadhanjan, Gawani, Guran, and Lur tribes who served under his rule. Consequently, numerous prominent military commanders—such as Abū 'Īsā Shadi, Warmi son of Muḥammad al-Gawan, Khoshini son of Massoud, Haydi son of Saadi, Dulfi son of Mala, and many other Kurdish leaders—served in the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate.

With his increase in power, territorial expansion, and good relations with the Buyids, Badr's relations with the Kurdish leaders deteriorated from lack of communication. For instance, after 397 AH/1007 CE, 'Amid al-Jawish entrusted the protection of the trade routes of Khorasan to 'Annāzīd Emir Abū al-Fatḥ Muḥammad ibn 'Annāz. This led to a conflict between Abū al-Fatḥ and Badr, who perceived the former as a threat to his power (Ibn al-Athīr, 1997; Rojbeyani, 1996).

Furthermore, in the late 4th and early 5th centuries AH, or around 11th century CE, the good relations between Badr and the Guran tribe deteriorated, especially after the tribe came under the rule of Shams al-Dawla and reaffirmed their support for him (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1358).

Badr also faced conflicts within his own family, notably in 400 AH/1009 CE, when his son, Hilāl, rebelled against him, resulting in the defeat and capture of Badr and his army. Eventually, the Buyids were able to free Badr, help him regain his power, and return Hilāl to him as a prisoner. However, new conflicts between Badr and the Guran tribe resurfaced (Ibn al-Athīr, 1997). In 404 AH/1015 CE, the Guran tribe fought against Badr with the help of Shams al-Dawla, and this time they defeated Badr, leading to his eventual death and the end of his rule (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1358).

From these events, it becomes evident that Badr initially had good relations with the Kurdish authorities in the western mountain region. Due to his soft policy towards the Kurdish tribes and leaders, he gained their support. However, as his power expanded and his relations

with the Buyids grew stronger, he distanced himself from a few Kurdish tribes, leading to deteriorating relations. Eventually, the Kurdish kings and chieftains grew tired of his power and sought opportunities to remove him, which ultimately resulted in his demise at the hands of the Kurds.

The External Relations of Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh with the Abbasid Caliphate and Buyid Rulers

It is plausible to state that the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate had good relations with the rulers of Baghdad due to its geographical location. Since the Emirate was located near Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, it always maintained good and balanced relations with the Caliphate authorities, including in religious and political affairs. This was a sign of religious support for Badr's power. The principality also had good relations with the Buyids, which increased their hold in the region. In particular, after Badr's came to the power and became the ruler of the Emirate, he was able to strengthen his position in the region through his intelligence and competence. Relations between Badr and the Abbasid Caliph can be observed mainly in the conferring of titles and Badr's close ties with the Buyids.

Conferring of titles. The conferring of titles by the Caliph to rulers was a sign of strong relations between the Caliph and the authorities in an Islamic territory; it was also a sign of respect and a symbol of recognition of political power. In addition, the kings and officials who were bestowed titles by the Caliph were those with ranks and positions, and these titles were given according to their work and skills (al-Pasha, 1957). Therefore, given the position of Badr and close relations between them, Caliph al-Qadir in 388 AH/988 CE gave him the title of "Abba al-Najm." At the same time, the Caliph decided to recognise Badr's authority in the western mountain region and even made him the supervisor and brigadier general of the said region (Bartold, 1983).

However, several sources indicate that Badr initially did not like the title given to him by the Caliph and, given their mutual respect, conveyed his dissatisfaction to the Caliph. Since the Caliph was satisfied with his good deeds and appreciated his work, he gave Badr the new title of "Naṣīr al-Dīn wa-l-Dawla." This was done because the Caliph did not want to dishearten Badr, who also relied on the support of the Caliphate.

Badr's given title has two important aspects, the first being his religious aspect because he was known to have performed numerous religious services in the state. Secondly, the title reflects Badr's extensive power, which he used to support and serve the Caliphate. Badr also became known as "Nasruddin" because he spent thousands of dinars annually on religious services and coordinated with the Caliph in religious matters (Rojbeyani, 1996). Sources mention that Badr spent 5,000,000 dinars annually to provide a safe route for pilgrims to Makkah (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1358). He also repaired the roads leading to Makkah and Madinah, so the amount of money he spent annually in this endeavour was more than 20,000 dinars, in addition to funding the people (Anṣār and Muhājirīn) from Makkah and Madinah, as well as aiding the needy in Baghdad (Al-Rūdhrāwarī, 2000). Badr also renovated more than 2,000 mosques, houses, and other religious places. It was mainly his services to the poor and needy that made the Caliph give him the title of "Naṣīr al-Dīn" (Al-Rūdhrāwarī, 2000).

Meanwhile, Badr's bestowed title of "Naṣīr al-Dawla" traces back to the political and military support he provided to the Abbasid Caliphate. That is why Buyid Emir Bahā' al-Dawla directly asked the Caliph to give the title of "Naṣīr al-Dawla" to Badr (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1990). Receiving this title is a testament of the greatness and strength of Badr's position. On the same day Badr was given this title, the Caliph also gave him the authority to supervise the brigade of

the mountainous region. This brigade was of unprecedented importance, and the Caliph gave the person who took this post a white silk cloth decorated with religious slogans (Al-Ṣābī, 2000). Besides that, Badr was awarded another title, namely "Amīr al-'Ajal," which was obviously awarded to those with extensive powers and dominance across regions (al-Pasha, 1957). Badr's name was also read in Friday khutbah (sermon) as a way to make known of non-Arab kings around the capital (Rojbeyani, 1996).

It is noteworthy that all the titles and monikers that the Abbasid Caliph gave to his emirs, ministers, and officials had no religious connotations, except for Badr due to his religious contributions to the Abbasid Caliphate (al-Kutubī, 1973). These titles were a recognition of the legitimacy of Badr's authority and rank among the kings and officials. Although there were many Kurdish and non-Kurdish kings who sought for titles from the Caliph, and even sent a lot of money and gifts to the Caliph and the palace of the Caliphate, it was in vain. Thus, it can be deduced that Badr maintained friendly relations with the people and was given more than one title from the Abbasid Caliphate due to his close relationship with the Caliph.

Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh's relations with the Buyid rulers. Badr maintained generally peaceful and close bilateral relations with the Buyid authorities, even though there have been tensions and wars between them. The Ḥasanwayhid Emirate often provided military aid to the Buyids in order to defeat their opponents, since Ḥasanwayh previously helped the Buyids against the Samanids, and he made the Buyids defeat the Samanid Empire (Ibn Khaldūn, 1988b). Therefore, after the death of Ḥasanwayh, Badr was supported by 'Adud al-Dawla to become the ruler of the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate and imposed power over the entire region, even expanding and imposing more hegemony in the region. This friendly relationship between them continued, even after 'Adud al-Dawla's death. During this time, Badr showed loyalty by helping 'Adud al-Dawla's mother, Ummmajad al-Dawla, and spending more than thousands of dinars annually to serve the family as tribute. Badr was able to expand the influence of power in Buyid areas, especially in the city of Ray. He was also often consulted by Ummmajad al-Dawla in her many affairs, which is a sign of his competence on one hand, and proof of deep trust between them on the other hand (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1990). Badr also had a special position with Bahā' al-Dawla, so he requested the Caliph to give him more important titles and recognise his authority in the western mountainous region. He respected Badr and acknowledged his authority. He considered him greater than himself, so he called him. Such diplomacy between them is evidence of Badr's religious and military position, and also shows that his position was higher than that of Shams al-Dawla of the Buyid Empire. Moreover, this indicates that Shams al-Dawla considered himself as a follower of Badr (Ghalib, 2008). The stable relations between Badr and the Buyids, which often led to social integration, occurred mainly through political marriage and the exchange of gifts and letters.

Political marriage. Political marriage was a way to strengthen political, military, economic, and social relations between the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate and the Buyid Empire. Such an alliance strengthened and protected both sides from foreign attacks. In 380 AH/990 CE, Badr wedded his daughter to the eldest son of Fakhr al-Dawla, named Majd al-Dawla. In doing so, they were able to forge, strengthen, and maintain the family line for the future (Majhul, 1938).

Exchange of gifts and letters. The exchange of gifts and letters between Badr and the Buyid authorities was a sign of respect and trust between them—it was indicative of their strong relations. Badr sent money and gifts to the authorities of Buyids, the most prominent example being sending thousands of dinars annually to Fakhr al-Dawla's family after the latter's death (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1358). On the other side, the mother of Majd al-Dawla neither did anything nor made any military decision without consulting Badr. For example, in 378 AH/997 CE, when the region of Ray was attacked by the Ghaznavid Empire, Sayyida Shīrīn sent a letter to Badr, seeking advice on how to protect herself from the confrontation and succeed in the battle (Al-

Rūdhrāwarī, 2000). This situation was repeated in 388 AH/988 CE when Qābūs ibn Wushmagīr invaded and captured the city of Gorgan. This city was rich with agricultural products made in the region, and was considered as one of the most important agricultural cities. Sayyida Shīrīn sent a letter to Badr, seeking instructions on the ways to proceed in such a dangerous situation. In response, Badr informed her that she should not take any political or military action because the situation was unfavourable to her and she could not fix this problem at the moment (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1990).

This kind of communication and consultation was a sign of the utmost trust, loyalty, and concern exhibited by both sides in times of need. The areas under Badr's rule also became a refuge for those who had been affected and needed his help.

Political and Military Relations between Badr ibn Ḥasanwayh and the Buyids

Friendly Relations

The close relations between Badr and the Buyids trace back to the reign of Ḥasanwayh, which was not only social and advisory, but also led to political and military cooperation and assistance in times of need. Ḥasanwayh, the father of Badr, provided military aid to the Buyids during the conflict between the Buyids and the Samanids. This act opened the way for Badr to follow in his father's footsteps. In 371 AH/981 CE, when a conflict arose between Qābūs ibn Wushmagīr and ʻAdud al-Dawla, Badr decided to join the war with a large force and defend ʻAdud al-Dawla against Qābūs ibn Wushmagīr (Al-Rūdhrāwarī, 2000).

Eventually, the Buyids were able to defeat Qābūs ibn Wushmagīr's army with the help of Badr's army. Fakhr al-Dawla then requested Badr to help him capture Gorgan, to which the latter agreed (Al-ʿAtaybi, n.d.). It is worth mentioning that Badr, due to his power in the region, often interfered in family and ruling matters of the Buyids. His role in determining the Buyid rulers led to him being often called "our great master" (*sayyidinā*) (Al-Ṣābī, 2000). In 372 AH/982 CE, after the death of ʻAdud al-Dawla, the Kurds of the Barzikani tribe led by Muḥammad ibn Ghānim tried to rebel against the Buyids, but Badr sent an army to defeat them (Ibn Khaldūn, 1988a). In 373 AH/989 CE, another war broke out between Fakhr al-Dawla and the Kurds from the Barzikani tribe. Even though Muḥammad ibn Ghānim succeeded, Badr established a peace treaty between Muḥammad ibn Ghānim and Fakhr al-Dawla (Ibn al-Athīr, 1997).

In 387 AH/997 CE, Badr once again saved the army of Bahā' al-Dawla from starvation and destruction when they were surrounded by the army of Abū-l-Faḍl ibn al-ʻAmīd. Bahā' al-Dawla's army would have been defeated, but Badr was able to save them from a terrible consequence (Ibn al-Athīr, 1997). Moreover, in 397 AH/1006 CE, at the request of Sayyida Khātūn, the grandmother of the Buyids, Badr sent his army to regain control of the city of Ray and restore full power to Sayyida Khātūn (Mustawfi, 1910). Badr was always the decisive force in the Buyid family's continual conflicts. The tasks undertaken by him for the Buyid family and their political and military assistance at the end of his rule proved fruitful during the conflict with his son Hilāl. In 400 AH/1009 CE, when Badr was defeated by Hilāl and taken prisoner to a fortress to forfeit his power and fame, he secretly wrote a letter to Bahā' al-Dawla, asking to be rescued from Hilāl. In response, Bahā' al-Dawla sent an army led by Fakhr al-Mulk against Hilāl. Not only did they successfully defeat Hilāl in battle and take him prisoner, but they also returned power to Badr (Mustawfi, 1910). This support from Bahā' al-Dawla to Badr was a sign of the friendly relations between Badr and the Buyid family.

Unstable relations

During the entire period of Badr's rule, he not only established friendly relations with the Buyids, but also often became embroiled in their internal conflicts as well as conflicts of political and military interests. Badr's support for one side and the lack of support for the other side often complicated the situation in the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate, as he failed to strike a balance between the prominent Buyid leaders.

Tensions over refugee shelters. Due to the conflict among the Buyid rulers, several ministers and officials were forced to leave their areas and move to one under Badr's rule in order to live in peace. They hid as refugees until they were able to reappear in the political and military arena. For example, in 381 AH/991 CE, following a dispute between Bahā' al-Dawla and Abū Naṣr al-Khawashaz, Bahā' al-Dawla took Abū Naṣr hostage and imprisoned him. However, Abū Naṣr soon escaped from prison and sought asylum once he reached Badr. Badr accepted his request and sent a special representative to bring him, but he died on the way before reaching Abū Naṣr (Al-Rūdhrāwarī, 2000). Later, in 389 AH/999 CE, a war broke out between Bahā' al-Dawla and his sons, 'Adud al-Dawla Bakhyar on one side, and Abū Naṣr and Abū al-Qāsim on the other side. 'Adud al-Dawla Bakhyar triumphed, while Abū al-Qāsim was forced to escape from captivity. Abū Naṣr fled to Shiraz and Abū al-Qāsim sought refuge with Badr, which the latter granted (Ibn al-Athīr, 1997).

Once again, due to the war between Majd al-Dawla and the minister Abū al-'Abbās al-Ḍabbī, the latter was forced to leave his kingdom and move to the territory of Badr. This situation caused Sayyida Khātūn to become angry with Badr, and many people took advantage of this tension to create discord in their relationship. One of these people, Abū 'Alī al-Khatir, worked hard to ruin Badr for his own benefit. He succeeded in securing a ministry position easily and expanded his power while also attempting to break the relationship between Majd al-Dawla and Badr. However, Abū 'Alī al-Khatir soon lost and was removed from his ministry position, following which another person named Abū Sa'īd Muḥammad tried to secure the position. Upon learning of this incident, Badr promptly intervened and returned Abū al-'Abbās to his former post. For this purpose, he sent a force of 3,000 soldiers led by Abū 'Īsā al-Shādhī ibn Muḥammad to Majd al-Dawla to forcibly return Abū al-'Abbās to his position and take revenge on Abū 'Alī al-Khatir. Abū 'Alī al-Khatir had previously managed to strain the relationship between Badr and Majd al-Dawla's mother (Sayyida Shīrīn), but Badr stopped his scheme, thus the ministry position was returned to Abū Sa'īd. Abū Sa'īd was able to hold this position for two years, after which soldiers and officials rebelled against him, and he was forced to leave his position and move to an area under the control of Badr. Abū 'Alī al-Khatir then regained the ministry position, but since Badr did not recognise both his position and authority, he began to oppose Badr again. Subsequently, not only did Abū 'Alī al-Khatir strain relations within the Buyid family, but he was also able to use Badr's son, Hilāl, against his father. Hilāl was able to defeat Badr in battle and conquer his territory, imprisoning the latter in a castle (Al-Ṣadafī, 1907).

Thus, it can be inferred that the harbouring of refugees and support of rebels by Badr had a negative impact on his overall friendly relations with the Buyids. They opposed him until the early 5th century AH/11th century CE, which led to war with the Buyids.

Tensions and military conflicts. Although Badr established good and friendly relations with the Buyids, there were also instances of strained relations due to some developments and changes in power as well as the assumption of power by certain Buyid rulers. There were several military clashes between Badr and Buyid officials in an attempt to take revenge on each other. For example, in 376 AH/986 CE, Sharaf al-Dawla invaded and seized

Baghdad from the control of his brother, Ṣamṣām al-Dawla, thus becoming the main ruler in Baghdad. His immediate next step was to send troops to seize the mountainous region in order to establish his power there as well as to destroy Badr. This was because Badr had previously been a supporter of Fakhr al-Dawla, who was the uncle of Sharaf and Ṣamṣām al-Dawla. Moreover, Badr supported Ṣamṣām al-Dawla in political and military affairs, so their good relationship threatened Fakhr al-Dawla since the Emir's stay in the region would stir dangerous problems for him (Al-Rūdhrāwarī, 2000).

Therefore, Sharaf al-Dawla sent a large force led by Qaratkin Jashyari to take over the areas of Badr, causing clashes between the two forces of Qaratkin and Badr in 377 AH/987 CE. Sharaf al-Dawla's main goal was to destroy both of his enemies at the same time while also removing much of Qaratkin's power by killing him, and to take revenge on Badr by destroying his power. Initially, Badr was defeated and he retreated, but he later returned with a strong army and attacked the Buyid army, resulting in the defeat, capture, and killing of many, while Qaratkin quickly fled to Baghdad (Ibn al-Jawzī, 1358). The victory of Badr in his first confrontation with Sharaf al-Dawla was an important achievement for him and increased his power in the region.

On the contrary, Badr's victory affected relations between him and his principality (Rojbeyani, 1996). In 397 AH/1007 CE, his power in the mountainous region was threatened, especially after the death of Qalj, the owner of the road to Khorasan. Brigadier al-Jayush of the Buyid army entrusted the protection of this road to an enemy of Badr, named Abū al-Fath Muḥammad ibn Annāz. Badr refused to accept it and formed a large force of friends and supporters led by Abū Jaʿfar al-Ḥajjāj, who was the main enemy of Brigadier al-Jayush. Badr also formed the army of Amir Hindi ibn Saʿīd and called in the forces of Abū al-Ḥassan ʿAlī ibn Mazbad al-Asadī and a large number of Kurds from the region, totalling to more than 10,000. They attacked Baghdad under the leadership of Badr and besieged it for a while. On the other side, Brigadier al-Jayush attacked the areas of Badr and was about to occupy them when Badr sent a letter to Brigadier al-Jayush, within it stating:

> You could not lift the siege of Baghdad when the Oqaili forces were only a few meters away from capturing it and you had to make an agreement with him. Now how can you invade our country, so I have a lot of money and wealth that you do not have, so if I fail, then use my money to strengthen the fortresses and give the money to my population, but if you break then the supporters are blaming you, so I would like to send you some gifts and make a peace agreement. Thus, both sides resolved the issue peacefully and signed a peace agreement (Ibn al-Athīr, 1997).

Although there were peaceful relations, there have been many clashes and wars between Badr and the Buyids.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that from its inception, the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate maintained positive relations with the Buyid authorities. Nevertheless, the Buyids exerted significant influence in the selection of appointed emirs for the Ḥasanwayhid Emirate. Furthermore, owing to his authority and support, Badr successfully consolidated his power and control over the mountainous territories of the western region. The Abbasid Caliphate bestowed upon Badr many titles in recognition of his exemplary reputation and assistance to the impoverished. Badr also maintained excellent connections with the majority of the Buyid monarchs. His strategy originally fostered strong internal relations, which attracted several tribes in the region to him. The Ḥasanwayhid Emirate ultimately declined and disintegrated due to the power struggle between sons and fathers, culminating in the ʿAnnāzī's takeover.

References

Al-ʿAtaybi. (n.d.). *Tārīkh al-Yemini*. Jemʿiye Maʿarif.
Bartold, F. (1983). *Tārīkh al-ḥaḍāra al-Islāmiya*. Dār al-Maʿārif.
Beg, M. A. Z. (1931). *Khulaṣay tarīkhī Kurd u Kurdistan*. Dar al-Salam.
Ghalib, Ḥ. A. (2008). *Shaarzur u lurstani bakur la sadakani nawerast*. Ḥamdi.
Al-Hamadānī. (1983). *Takmila tārīkh Ṭabari*. Cario: Dār al-Maʿārif.
Hassan, Q. M. (2011). *Alo Emirate Kurdiya fi ʿahd al- Buwayihi*. Rojhelat.
Ibn al-Athīr. (1997). *Al-Kāmil fi-l-tārīkh*. Dār Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.
Ibn Diḥyah. (1946). *Al-Nibrās fī tārīkh khulafāʾ Banī al-'Abbās*. Maṭbaʿ al-Maʿārif.
Ibn al-Jawzī. (1358). *Al-Muntaẓam fī tārīkh al-muluk wa-l-umam*. Beyrut.
Ibn al-Jawzī, S. (1990). *Mirʾāt al-zamān fī tārīkh al-aʿyan*. Dār al-Waṭaniyah.
Ibn al-Kathīr. (1991). *Al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*. Dār al-Hijr.
Ibn Khaldūn. (1988a). *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn*. Dār al-Fikr.
Ibn Khaldūn. (1988b). *Tārīkh Ibn Khaldūn*. Dār al-Fikr.
Al-Kutubī. (1973). *Fawāt al-wafiyāt wa-l-dhayl ʿalayhā*. Dar al-Thaqafa.
Majhul, M. (1938). *Mujamil tawārikh wa-l-qaṣaṣ: Taṣḥīḥ Malk al-Shuʿarāʾ*. Tehran.
Miskawayh. (2000). *Tajārib al-umam wa Taʿāqub al-Himam*. Srush.
Mohammed, A. B. (2022). *Mirnshina Kurdiyakan le serdami Abbasi*. Chwarchra.
Mustawfī, Ḥ. I. (1910). *Tārīkh Gizideh*. London.
Al-Pasha, H. (1957). *Al-Alqāb al-Islamiya fī al-wathaʾiq wa-l-tārīkh wa-l-Āthār*. Maktaba al-Nahẓa.
Rojbeyani, M. J. (1996). *Mezhy Ḥasnewayhi u ʿAyyazi*. Dār al-Ḥurriyah li-l-Ṭabaʿah.
Al-Rūdhrāwarī. (2000). *Dhayl kitāb tajārib al-umam*. Srush.
Al-Ṣābī, H. (2000). *Tārīkh Hilāl al-Ṣābī*. Srush.
Al-Ṣadafī. (1907). *Tārīkh duwa-l-Islām*. al-Hilāl.
Al-Ṣūlī. (1979). *Akhbār al-Rāḍi Billah wa-l-Muttaqī Billah*. Dār al-Meyser.
Tawfīq, Z. Ṣ. (2012). *Kurd u Kurdistan le rozhgari khilafeti Islamida*. Rojhelat.
Zaynel, A. F. (2012). *Diblomasiyati Kurd la Serdemi Buwayhiyakan*. Kamal.

IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies (IJRCS) 7:2 (2024); 185-196.
https://doi.org/10.31436/ijrcs.v7i2.366
Copyright © IIUM Press

Evaluating Existing Literature on Interreligious Dialogue and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka: Buddhist-Muslim Relationships

Mohamed Arkam[1] and Fatmir Shehu[2]

Article history: Received: 2024-11-7 Revised: 2024-12-13 Accepted: 2024-12-20 Published: 2024-12-26

Abstract: This study evaluates selected literature on interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka emphasising Buddhist-Muslim relationships. A comprehensive review of critical findings of existing scholarship about the current state of interreligious dialogue, its role in peacebuilding, and the challenges it faces in the Sri Lankan context is provided. This evaluation aims to identify the need for more empirical research on interreligious dialogue's efficacy in lowering religious tensions and creating societal peace in Sri Lanka. While such dialogue has the potential to foster unity and peace, it faces significant obstacles such as religious fanatism, negative stereotypes, and misunderstanding. The lack of empirical studies and theoretical frameworks implies that future studies are needed to properly understand interreligious dialogue in Sri Lanka and its role in peacebuilding. This study uses historical, descriptive, and analytical methods. This study uses two significant strategies to pick appropriate materials for this evaluation: first, widely accepted experts' most celebrated chapter works, and second, some important selected papers published in reputed journals. The focus of discussion is on (1) Historical interactions between Buddhists and Muslims and lessons for dialogue; (2) Post-war dynamics and the need for dialogue; (3) The role of interreligious dialogue in peacebuilding; (4) Challenges to interreligious dialogue in Sri Lanka; and (5) Analytical Remarks. The study concludes that interreligious dialogue has great potential to enhance peacebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka's multi-religious community, especially in strengthening Buddhist-Muslim relationships.

Keywords: Interreligious dialogue, peacebuilding, reconciliation, Sri Lanka, understanding

Introduction

Sri Lanka, a country of immense religious diversity, has long been home to diverse religious traditions, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, all of which have coexisted for millennia. Despite this rich heritage, Sri Lanka has experienced significant periods of ethnic and religious tensions, particularly in the aftermath of its decades-long civil war. The war, primarily rooted in ethnic conflict between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority, created deep-seated divisions that spilled over into religious conflict in the post-war era. Political, social, and economic factors and religious nationalism, particularly among Buddhists, have intensified these conflicts (Orjuela, 2018). In this context, Interreligious Dialogue has become essential for promoting peace, understanding, and bridge-budling across religious communities. Despite the importance of interreligious dialogue in Sri Lanka, the academic focus on this area has been limited. While there are numerous studies on ethnic conflict and political reconciliation in Sri Lanka, few have systematically explored the role of religious

[1] Mohamed Arkam Mohamed Razzak is a Ph.D. student in the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization at the International Islamic University Malaysia (ISTAC - IIUM), and a Lecturer at the Naleemiah Institute of Islamic Studies, Sri Lanka. He can be reached at arkamrasak@gmail.com.
[2] Dr. Fatmir Shehu, an Albanian scholar, is an Associate Professor at the Department of Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He can be reached at fatmir@iium.edu.my or shehu.fatmir@gmail.com.

dialogue in fostering peace and harmony. This gap in scholarly attention is surprising, given the prominence of religious identities in Sri Lankan society and the potential for religion to either exacerbate tensions or contribute to conflict resolution. This study fills this vacuum by reviewing the literature on interreligious dialogue's role in promoting peaceful coexistence in Sri Lanka, focusing on the post-war period and the challenges and opportunities that have emerged in recent years.

The importance of interreligious interaction and dialogue in post-conflict Sri Lanka cannot be understated because of the country's complex religious and ethnic composition. Even though different religious groups in Sri Lanka have lived side by side peacefully throughout the country's history, tensions have escalated, especially along religious lines, in the aftermath of the conflict. In light of this change, it is more important than ever to conduct conversations amongst religions to heal the wounds that have opened up and to work toward lasting reconciliation. Several researchers have examined how dialogue may help bring people together and promote harmony, drawing attention to the difficulties of turning conflict into peace.

Interreligious dialogue is the process through which individuals or groups from different religious traditions engage in conversations to promote mutual understanding and cooperation. It is not limited to theological discussions but also encompasses efforts to address social, political, and economic issues that affect religious communities. In Sri Lanka, interreligious dialogue has been employed by various religious leaders, civil society organisations, and international actors to bridge the divides between Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, and Christian communities. These initiatives aim to create a more harmonious society where religious differences are acknowledged, respected, and transcended to pursue common goals such as peace, justice, and development.

The literature on interreligious interaction in Sri Lanka emphasises its potential to promote peace and its limitations. Religious leaders and civic societies have promoted conversation, but more must be done to make it durable and inclusive. The lack of empirical studies and theoretical frameworks implies that future studies are needed to properly understand interreligious dialogue in Sri Lanka and its role in peacebuilding. Therefore, this paper thoroughly attempts to review a few selected existing works dealing with Buddhist-Muslim relationships in Sri Lanka and identify the research gaps. In the following sections, this paper examines the critical contributions to studying interreligious dialogue in Sri Lanka, explores the challenges and opportunities facing interreligious dialogue initiatives, and assesses the potential for interreligious dialogue to contribute to long-term peacebuilding in the country.

Two significant strategies have been applied to pick appropriate materials for this evaluation: first, widely accepted experts' most celebrated chapter works, and second, some important selected papers published in reputed journals. Most of these papers are collected from online sources. Furthermore, this review follows the thematic content analysis method in analysing data, which includes: (1) Historical interactions between Buddhists and Muslims and lessons for dialogue; (2) Post-war dynamics and the need for dialogue; (3) The role of interreligious dialogue in peacebuilding; (4) Challenges to interreligious dialogue in Sri Lanka; and (5) Analytical Remarks.

Historical Interactions Between Buddhists and Muslims and Lessons for Dialogue

The historical and socio-political dynamics between the Sinhalese and Muslim communities in Sri Lanka offer a complex narrative shaped by cooperation and conflict, particularly in recent years. Early interactions between Sinhalese and Muslim communities were characterised by

trade and mutual support, with Muslim traders integrating into the Sinhala kingdoms and receiving royal patronage. Scholars such as Lorna Dewaraja (1994) and Mohamed Shukri (1986) emphasise that these early relationships fostered a degree of structural assimilation without eroding the cultural distinctiveness of either group, creating a foundation for religious coexistence. However, colonial policies, particularly the British "divide and rule" strategy, introduced communal divisions that became significant under modern ethno-nationalist pressures. The 1915 anti-Muslim riots marked one of the earliest fractures, primarily fuelled by economic competition and heightened by political unrest. This incident set a precedent for evolving communal tension, especially in the post-war context (Dewaraja, 1994).

The centuries-old Buddhist-Muslim relationship in Sri Lanka traces back to pre-Islamic Arab trade relations, which laid a foundation for peaceful coexistence that expanded with the advent of Islam as Muslims established deep trade and cultural ties, a strong relationship developed between them and the Sinhalese majority, encompassing economic, diplomatic, and defensive alliances. For centuries, Islamic values interwove with Buddhist ethics, creating mutual respect between communities and resisting imperial pressures. Despite attempts by British colonial powers to use religious differences to divide these groups, their bond remained resilient. Post-independence, however, some political leaders wielded Buddhism for personal gain, eroding the traditional Buddhist values of compassion and unity that had previously characterised Sri Lankan governance. This politicisation of religion has strained the Buddhist-Muslim relationship, as certain political factions have manipulated Buddhist sentiments against the Muslim minority, portraying them as a threat (Riza Yehiya, 2013). This sentiment is a foreign influence to destabilise Sri Lanka's internal harmony. He argues that true Buddhist and Islamic values unite against the threats of materialism and exploitation and that both communities should reinforce their historic bond. For Sri Lanka to resist external pressures and maintain peace, Yehiya suggests an urgent need for collective social awareness, legal accountability, and renewed Buddhist-Muslim solidarity.

The study, "Relationship between the Sinhalese and the Muslims in Sri Lanka," by Razick et al. provides a comprehensive bibliographic survey of Sinhalese-Muslim relations, tracing the peaceful coexistence and strong interethnic bonds that historically characterised the two communities. It highlights those Arab Muslim traders who established themselves in Sri Lanka centuries ago, contributing to the economy and integrating within Sinhalese society, often receiving protection and support from Sinhalese rulers. This amicable relationship persisted through colonial disruptions until the early 20th century, when economic and political factors, including British divide-and-rule policies, strained these bonds. The study reviews key works that underscore how Muslims maintained strong alliances with Sinhalese, supporting national unity even in post-independence Sri Lanka. However, recent tensions have emerged, with Buddhist nationalist movements questioning the cultural and religious rights of Muslims, which has led to incidents of anti-Muslim sentiment and restrictions on religious practices. They contend that while Sinhalese-Muslim relations remain resilient overall, the effects of nationalism and socioeconomic divides pose challenges to interreligious harmony, necessitating renewed efforts for peaceful coexistence and mutual respect between the two communities. Despite the long-standing peaceful coexistence, recent nationalist groups have framed Muslims as a cultural and economic threat, rallying segments of the Sinhalese population around ideas of Sinhala-Buddhist purity. Post-war anti-Muslim campaigns, spurred by extremist Buddhist groups, have further strained relations, leading to violent incidents and social alienation for Muslims, often justified by nationalistic rhetoric advocating a "pure Buddhist state" (Razick et al., 2015).

Interreligious interaction between Islam and Buddhism in Sri Lanka is rooted in a profound history of exchanges and common principles between the two religions. Understanding these historical relationships can provide significant insights for structuring modern interreligious dialogue to promote social harmony and peace. Religious doctrines

prioritising compassion, forgiveness, and moderation offer a foundation for positive community interaction. The historical interactions between these two communities, such as during the Abbasid dynasty and along the Silk Road, show the longstanding potential for constructive engagement. In post-conflict Sri Lanka, ongoing religious conflicts impede peacebuilding attempts; hence, examining past experiences may enhance contemporary reconciliation and coexisting activities. Modern interreligious discourse can aid in bridging the divide between the Muslim and Buddhist communities in Sri Lanka, where religious tensions have occasionally risen, by concentrating on these common principles. Given that the interaction between these two cultures has been impacted by the larger sociopolitical landscape in Sri Lanka, the significance of these shared values is much greater there. Interreligious dialogue can resist the dividing narratives that frequently lead to religious and ethnic conflict by underlying shared ethical principles, such as the value of compassion for all living beings (Nafeel, 2017). Nafeel's analysis suggests that interreligious dialogue grounded in shared ethical values can be instrumental in addressing contemporary communal tensions. However, further exploring practical applications and contemporary challenges would enhance its relevance. This work contributes to the literature on religious pluralism in post-conflict societies by advocating for dialogue as a pathway to national unity and stability.

In "Buddhist-Muslim Religious Co-Existence in Sri Lanka: A Historical Analysis," Fathima Afra and Thameem Ushama explore the longstanding history of peaceful Buddhist-Muslim relations in Sri Lanka, tracing back to the initial settlement of Muslim traders who were well-integrated into Sinhala-Buddhist society and maintained positive relationships with local rulers. However, this harmony faced challenges during colonial rule, particularly under Portuguese, Dutch, and British administrations, which applied restrictive trade policies and "divide and rule" tactics, intensifying religious and ethnic divisions. Post-independence, Sinhalese nationalist policies further marginalised Muslim communities. In contrast, the civil war and the rise of Buddhist nationalist groups, such as Bodu Bala Sena (Buddhist Strength Force) (BBS), exacerbated anti-Muslim sentiments. Violent incidents, including the Aluthgama and Digana riots, targeted Muslim businesses and practices, with tensions reaching a peak after the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks, which fuelled widespread backlash against Muslims. Despite these historical and contemporary challenges, the authors emphasise that resilient grassroots interfaith efforts remain critical in maintaining coexistence. They conclude that sustainable harmony requires addressing political inequalities, legal protection, and active interreligious dialogue to bridge divides and reinforce peaceful cohabitation between these communities (Afra & Ushama, 2022).

Academic literature highlights how this re-emergence of ethno-religious nationalism disrupts the historical bond, creating an asymmetry in which Muslims are viewed as outsiders despite centuries of integration. In response, some scholars call for renewed interreligious dialogue and constitutional protections, emphasising that without systemic changes and intentional peacebuilding efforts, the enduring legacy of Sinhala-Muslim solidarity may be jeopardised.

Post-War Dynamics and the Need for Dialogue

The complex landscape of reconciliation in Sri Lanka is deeply intertwined with ethnonationalism, institutional biases, and grassroots initiatives aiming to bridge divides in a post-conflict society. Although the civil conflict formally ended in 2009, longstanding issues of ethnic and religious tension persist, influenced by constitutional structures that privilege Buddhism and often marginalise minority religions and ethnic groups. Nationalist ideologies, supported by groups like the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS), have exacerbated these tensions, creating an environment where institutional reforms alone are insufficient (Peiris, 2017). The Office for

National Unity and Reconciliation (ONUR), in collaboration with the Centre for Peace Building and Reconciliation (CPBR), launched the Dialogue Initiative as a pilot project to address these challenges at the community level by fostering mutual understanding and tolerance through dialogue. The Dialogue Initiative strategically selected regions to facilitate dialogues: the predominantly mono-ethnic Anuradhapura and Jaffna districts and the multi-ethnic Ratnapura district. By developing a cadre of trained facilitators from government and community leadership roles, the initiative aimed to promote reconciliation through echo pieces of training and grassroots dialogues that focused on coexistence, peacebuilding, and dismantling stereotypes.

These sessions encouraged open discussion of ethnic equality, cultural diversity, and historical grievances to reduce prejudiced attitudes and foster empathy across ethnic lines. While the project succeeded in forming a dedicated group of facilitators trained in conflict resolution, several obstacles emerged. Bureaucratic red tape, political biases, and an unclear conceptual framework for reconciliation goals hindered the initiative's effectiveness. Furthermore, some Sinhala-majority areas exhibited resistance to the concept of reconciliation, with participants questioning the relevance of such initiatives in regions they perceived as being unaffected by conflict, reflecting a common assumption that reconciliation efforts should target Tamil-majority areas alone. In Jaffna, however, Tamil participants expressed a contrasting perspective, viewing reconciliation as an avenue for justice, reparation, and restoring dignity rather than simply restoring the pre-war status quo. Evaluation data from ONUR and CPBR revealed that participants in the initiative demonstrated modest shifts in attitude, such as greater openness to interethnic friendships and a decrease in support for ethnonationalism sentiments compared to non-participants. However, core issues related to structural inequities and ethnically based entitlements - such as minority protections and respect for cultural diversity - saw little change, highlighting the limitations of individual-focused dialogue without broader systemic reforms (Peiris, 2017). Based on these findings, the assessment recommends incorporating a conceptual framework that draws on conflict resolution theory to address personal biases and structural aspects of reconciliation. Moreover, the report underscores the importance of sustained interethnic interactions, particularly in mixed-group settings, to promote more profound, lasting shifts in perception. The report also calls for a reformed national policy that includes interreligious and intercultural education, positing that such measures will reinforce grassroots dialogue and bridge the gap between communities on a larger scale. Ultimately, while the Dialogue Initiative has demonstrated the value of dialogue-based approaches in fostering mutual understanding, the evaluation emphasises that a dual strategy is essential for meaningful reconciliation to take root in Sri Lanka. This strategy should combine grassroots dialogue initiatives with policy reforms that uphold the rights and inclusion of all ethnic groups, creating a supportive framework for a genuinely pluralistic society in which reconciliation and peaceful coexistence can thrive sustainably.

The research conducted by Chas Morrison focuses on the interreligious dynamics in Sri Lanka following the 2019 Easter Sunday Bombings. These attacks, which targeted Christian churches and luxury hotels, highlighted religious tensions, particularly against the nation's Muslim minority. Morrison draws attention to these difficulties and the shortcomings of current interreligious dialogue initiatives in fostering social harmony and peace. The emergence of religious extremism and the lingering tensions from the nation's protracted civil war provide severe obstacles to peacebuilding efforts, even though religious leaders have actively participated in them. Though it has advanced mutual understanding across communities, interreligious dialogue has not been wholly included in more comprehensive peacebuilding plans. For interreligious dialogue to be more successful, Morrison contends that it has to be integrated into national reconciliation initiatives that address the underlying social, political, and economic problems that fuel conflict in addition to religious differences (Morrison, 2020). The study also highlights the need for a more inclusive conversation strategy in which political actors, civil society, and religious leaders collaborate to develop long-term

peace plans. Incorporating interreligious dialogue into broader peacebuilding frameworks, according to Morrison, can help Sri Lanka create a more cohesive society in which various religious groups can live in harmony with one another despite their differences instead of being a reactionary reaction to crisis dialogue may become a continuous process by focusing on shared values like understanding and forgiveness.

The Role of Interreligious Dialogue in Peacebuilding

In "Inter-religious Dialogue in Sri Lanka," Valence Mendis examines the country's religious diversity and the role of interreligious dialogue in fostering social cohesion. Sri Lanka's multi-religious society, encompassing Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, has historically maintained peaceful coexistence. However, socio-political issues, such as economic inequalities and ethnic tensions, have occasionally strained relations. Mendis employs a fourfold model of dialogue: life, deeds, experience, and intellectual exchange to illustrate how Sri Lankans engage in interreligious interactions. The "dialogue of life" is seen in daily communal living, where mutual respect prevails, particularly in rural villages. The "dialogue of deeds" emerges through collaborative efforts on social and environmental issues as religious communities unite to address shared concerns. Mendis also highlights the "dialogue of experience" through shared spiritual gatherings. However, he notes that the "dialogue of specialists" or theological exchange remains limited due to local suspicions, with some viewing dialogue as a pretence for conversion (Mendis, 2020). He underscores the importance of structured, transparent dialogue to dispel misunderstandings and promote a culture of interreligious understanding, ultimately advocating for policies that support peaceful coexistence while respecting cultural identities. Mendis's work contributes to the discourse on interreligious harmony, proposing a model for peacebuilding in multi-religious societies.

The literature surrounding religious freedom and pluralism in Sri Lanka reflects challenges and opportunities for fostering interreligious coexistence. Historically, the nation's multi-ethnic and multi-religious fabric, supported by religious syncretism and shared worship sites, allowed communities of differing religions to practice harmoniously. However, post-independence, constitutional changes, and nationalist ideologies accorded Buddhism a privileged position in the country's legal framework, leading to an implicit hierarchy of religious rights. The 1972 and 1978 constitutions, despite provisions for religious freedom under Articles 10 and 14, reinforced Sinhala-Buddhist dominance. In post-war Sri Lanka, this hierarchical structure has been compounded by heightened ethnonationalist narratives, which have intensified bias against religious minorities, especially Muslims and Christians (Peiris, 2021). Organisations like Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) and Sinhala Ravaya leveraged these sentiments to instigate hate campaigns and violent incidents, often with tacit political endorsement, fostering an atmosphere of discrimination that affected access to resources and protection for religious minorities. Meanwhile, the role of social media as both a tool for hate propagation and a platform for peacebuilding has been significant. While extremist groups utilise social media to spread disinformation and incite violence, civil society groups, journalists, and religious leaders also use it to promote narratives of coexistence, although effective regulation remains challenging.

In response, numerous civil society initiatives have mobilised religious leaders to act as agents of peace through dialogue and reconciliation efforts. Promoting interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding requires the cooperation of religious leaders and civil society groups. Sulochana Peiris thoroughly examines the contribution of interreligious dialogue to peacebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka since the end of the civil war. Her research focuses on well-known organisations that have employed religious leaders to resolve disputes and promote peace, such as Sarvodaya Shanthisena, the Center for Peace Building Reconciliation, and the

National Peace Council of Sri Lanka. These organisations have used religious leaders' moral authority to spread harmony, nonviolence, and peace themes. She contends that acknowledging the spiritual truths that all religions share is crucial to the success of interreligious dialogue projects. Civil society groups may establish a forum for significant discussion beyond religious divides by concentrating on these shared values. This strategy can assist in dismantling the boundaries that have historically separated communities in Sri Lanka, where religion and ethnic identity frequently cross. These groups ensure that the words of reconciliation reach the grassroots level, where they may have the most significant influence, by enlisting religious leaders in the peacebuilding process (Peiris, 2021).

Similarly, Jayathilaka and Ansari's study explores the role of religious leaders in Sri Lanka's national reconciliation process. Religious leaders in Sri Lanka have been pivotal in the post-war reconciliation process, leveraging their influential roles within their communities to bridge divides among Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, and Muslims. Following nearly three decades of civil conflict, Sri Lanka's society has been deeply affected by ethnic and religious tensions, making interreligious cooperation critical for peacebuilding. The Collective Engagement for Religious Freedom project, a notable initiative by the National Peace Council, established Local Inter-Religious Committees (LIRCs) in eight districts, creating platforms for religious leaders, civil society members, and government officers to collaborate on reconciliation initiatives. Research indicates that many religious leaders, particularly those from Christian and Islamic backgrounds, prioritise individual reconciliation through sermons and community teachings. In contrast, Buddhist leaders emphasise cultivating inner peace as a foundation for broader societal harmony. Despite varying approaches, there is a consensus on the need for collective action. The LIRCs have engaged in interfaith dialogues, social empowerment projects, and cultural exchange programs to foster mutual understanding across ethnic lines. However, the research highlights challenges, such as a lack of awareness among some leaders about their roles in reconciliation and criticisms regarding the alignment of some Buddhist leaders with political factions, which some believe undermines their impartiality and contributes to societal discord. To strengthen interfaith peacebuilding, the study recommends formalising national policies incorporating religious leaders into reconciliation efforts, establishing a National Center for Interfaith Peacebuilding, and promoting interreligious peace journalism to counter divisive narratives. The proposed strategies include legal measures against entities that incite religious conflict, education programs in Sinhala and Tamil to bridge language barriers, and district-level religious unity groups to address potential tensions preemptively. These initiatives underscore the potential of religious leaders to influence society positively and the need for systemic support to ensure their roles are effectively integrated into Sri Lanka's reconciliation framework (Jayathilaka & Ansari, 2020).

Orjuela's study, "Building peace in Sri Lanka: A role for civil society," explores the contributions of civil society to peacebuilding in Sri Lanka amidst entrenched ethnic divisions and conflict. The author discusses how civil society actors attempt to bridge divides through educational programs, awareness-raising, and cross-ethnic dialogue despite being hampered by a politically divided society and ongoing war. Orjuela emphasises that civil society can help foster a "peace constituency," which involves mobilising public support for peace and promoting tolerance across ethnic lines. However, she highlights structural weaknesses, noting that civil society in Sri Lanka is deeply fragmented along ethnic lines, with a strong historical legacy of politicisation. Furthermore, many peace efforts by civil society organisations tend to be project-based and externally funded, which can limit their effectiveness in generating widespread, grassroots support. For instance, peace rallies and workshops often face challenges reaching rural communities, where political patronage and economic dependencies foster a passive "receiving mentality" rather than active civic engagement. Orjuela also underscores the need for more robust frameworks to evaluate the long-term impact of small-scale civil society activities on the more significant conflict. She argues that while civil society has significant potential to advocate for peace, it is not enough on its own; an inclusive and democratic

approach, coupled with greater autonomy from political influences, is essential for sustained peacebuilding. This perspective adds to the literature on civil society's role in post-conflict societies by emphasising the importance of local engagement and the challenges of fostering authentic civic participation in politically charged contexts (Orjuela, 2003).

Challenges to Interreligious Dialogue in Sri Lanka

Paul Rohan's study, "Challenges and opportunities for coexistence: A Sri Lankan Christian perspective," explores the complex religious plurality of Sri Lanka and the potential for interreligious dialogue as a means to foster harmony in a multi-religious society. Rohan begins by contextualising Sri Lanka's diverse religious landscape, noting the presence of four major religious traditions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, coexist within the nation. He observes that while religious plurality presents opportunities for mutual understanding, it also brings challenges, primarily when divisive attitudes and ethno-religious identities create social tension. According to Rohan, this is evident in the legacy of colonial influences and post-independence policies, which have sometimes prioritised specific religious and ethnic identities over others, leading to a sense of exclusion among minority groups. Rohan emphasises that interreligious dialogue should not be theoretical but must engage communities at the grassroots level, fostering a "culture of peace" within everyday interactions. He draws on the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences' model of "triple dialogue," which encourages encounters with diverse cultures, religious traditions, and marginalised communities. Rohan argues that this model is essential for building resilience against religious extremism and promoting mutual respect, especially in a post-war Sri Lankan society. Despite his strong advocacy for interreligious dialogue, Rohan also notes the practical difficulties, such as entrenched biases and political affiliations, that can hinder genuine cooperation between groups. Nevertheless, he remains optimistic that if religious leaders and communities embrace a spirit of tolerance and openness, religious plurality could become a source of national unity rather than division. His perspective is essential to the broader literature on pluralism in Sri Lanka, as it underscores the need for proactive and inclusive dialogue models that accommodate religious diversity as a pathway to peaceful coexistence (Rohan, 2021).

S. Rifa Mahroof examines the socio-religious tensions between Sinhalese Buddhists and Muslims in Sri Lanka, focusing on how misconceptions and the "self vs. other" dichotomy foster intergroup distrust. She contends that the propagation of fallacies regarding the Muslim community has led to fear, mistrust, and animosity among Buddhists, culminating in violence and discrimination against Muslims. Post-2009 and particularly after the 2019 Easter attacks, Muslims have been collectively blamed for the actions of a few, leading to increased discrimination and alienation, often exacerbated by social media. The shift in Muslim identity, seen in practices like the adoption of the abaya, has been misinterpreted as radicalisation. However, it reflects an ethno-religious identity similar to other cultural adaptations, such as the sari. Addressing these issues requires dismantling stereotypes through interreligious dialogue and inclusive education that highlights shared values of peace and tolerance within both Islam and Buddhism. Therefore, Buddhism and Islam encourage interaction with the "other" based on peace, tolerance, and non-violence, regardless of differences. Integrating interreligious education into the curriculum is proposed to foster mutual respect from an early age, aiming to reshape societal narratives and promote harmony by recognising all Sri Lankans' diversity and shared identity (Mahroof, 2021).

Pinnavala Sangasumana investigates the effects of forced religious conversions on social harmony within Sri Lanka, highlighting how these practices disrupt interreligious relationships. Focusing on Buddhist-Christian tensions, he notes that conversions often occur under socioeconomic pressures, where fundamentalist NGOs allegedly exploit vulnerable

groups, offering financial incentives in exchange for religious affiliation shifts. Sangasumana traces this issue's roots to colonial times when Buddhism faced threats from missionary activities, contributing to the development of what Bartholomeusz terms "Buddhist secularism," a model in which Buddhism holds the "foremost place" under the Sri Lankan Constitution while safeguarding other religious practices. This legal precedent informs contemporary anti-conversion sentiments, including proposed legislative efforts such as the Prohibition of Forcible Conversion Bill, which seeks to criminalise coercive religious conversions. Sangasumana's review of past and present anti-conversion movements illustrates the consistent involvement of Buddhist leaders in protecting Buddhism from perceived threats, particularly from Christian evangelicals. Reports like the 2002 Presidential Commission on Buddha Sasana and the 2009 All Ceylon Buddhist Congress Commission reveal widespread public concern regarding unethical conversions by NGOs. Through these cases, Sangasumana argues that religious conversion in Sri Lanka frequently heightens interreligious discord, especially when perceived as undermining Buddhist culture and identity. This contention is bolstered by the reactions of other religious communities, including Hindu and Catholic leaders, who share apprehensions about forced conversions and express solidarity in resisting external missionary pressures. Sangasumana concludes that fostering peaceful coexistence in Sri Lanka requires more robust interreligious dialogue and legal safeguards against coercive conversion practices, reinforcing the significance of religious harmony as essential to social stability. This study adds depth to the broader discourse on religious plurality by highlighting conversion's social and legal dimensions as critical issues in sustaining interreligious harmony in Sri Lanka (Sangasumana, 2015).

The recent scholarship on Buddhist-Muslim conflicts in Sri Lanka indicates a shift in ethnic tensions and intergroup relations in the post-war era, highlighting the role of Buddhist nationalism in targeting Muslims as a new "other." Historically, Sinhala Buddhists and Muslims coexisted with limited tension, even cooperating in trade and cultural exchanges. However, the resurgence of Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism, intensified by nationalist organisations like Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) and Sinhala Ravaya, has fuelled a narrative that portrays Muslims as threats to the Sinhala-Buddhist identity, leading to Islamophobic sentiment and periodic violence. This shift mirrors patterns of earlier anti-Tamil rhetoric and violence during the civil conflict, repurposing the nationalist discourse to identify Muslims as undermining Buddhist culture and values. Central to these conflicts is the notion that Islam poses a demographic and ideological threat. This idea has gained traction via social media, where groups such as Safe Buddhism actively disseminate anti-Muslim messages. These groups have utilised social platforms effectively, creating alarmist content that emphasises the alleged encroachment of Islamic practices, like halal certification, into Sri Lankan society. Claims that Muslims are attempting to "take over" Sinhala Buddhist spaces are reminiscent of rhetoric used during the Tamil conflict and have incited protests, boycotts, and attacks on Muslim-owned businesses. Research shows that economic motivations also play a part in fostering these tensions, as illustrated by the targeting of Muslim-dominated trade sectors. Scholars note that some of this nationalist sentiment is rooted in historical grievances, such as those arising from colonial policies that favoured specific communities, thus ingraining economic competition into ethnic relations. The Dialogue Initiative and other reconciliation efforts highlight the need for cross-ethnic engagement, yet grassroots-level programs struggle to counteract the institutional privileges afforded to Sinhala-Buddhists. While dialogue has shown moderate success in fostering tolerance, structural changes, such as constitutional protections for religious and ethnic minorities, are necessary for substantial and lasting reconciliation. Without such systemic shifts, the scholarly consensus suggests that nationalist rhetoric will continue fueling divisive, ethnocentric ideologies and hinder efforts toward a pluralistic and peaceful Sri Lankan society (Stewart, 2014).

Analytical Remarks

This review explores the dynamics of interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka by examining the complexities and challenges within this field, focusing on Buddhist-Muslim relations and the roles of civil society and religious leaders. It underscores the potential of interreligious dialogue to bridge divides and foster peace while recognising several persistent issues that limit its effectiveness. Following the significant arguments presented on interreligious dialogue, Buddhist-Muslim communal relations, and the challenges of using dialogue as a peacebuilding tool, this section offers vital analytical insights on the subject under investigation. In evaluating interreligious dialogue's role in peacebuilding within Sri Lanka, it becomes clear that substantial challenges persist while these efforts hold significant promise for fostering mutual understanding and reducing tensions:

Firstly, the available works of literature give us the historical foundation of interreligious engagement between Buddhists and Muslims, which offers valuable lessons for modern initiatives. Historically, these groups often coexisted harmoniously through shared economic and social spaces, particularly in pre-colonial eras. However, colonialism and post-independence political dynamics introduced sectarian divisions that intensified communal tensions, exemplified by events such as the 1915 anti-Muslim riots and more recent nationalist movements. Understanding these past interactions is essential for shaping a dialogue framework to sustain peace and coexistence.

Secondly, the existing scholarly narratives elaborate that despite a rich tradition of coexistence, Sri Lanka's religious and ethnic tensions have been exacerbated by several factors, including economic competition, politicised religion, and ethnonationalism. The 2019 Easter Sunday attacks underscored the fragility of these interreligious relationships, revealing gaps in the country's existing peacebuilding strategies. Civil society efforts, often supported by organisations like the National Peace Council, Sarvodaya Shanthisena, and the Center for Peace Building and Reconciliation, have promoted interreligious dialogue as a tool for healing and reconciliation. However, these initiatives frequently face obstacles such as a lack of political support, societal prejudice, and structural inequalities.

Thirdly, a key consideration at this stage is that it is for interreligious to become an effective tool in Sri Lanka's peacebuilding efforts, it must transcend superficial engagements and address underlying socio-political issues; current initiatives illustrate the need for dialogue frameworks that integrate conflict resolution theories focus on structural injustices and promote cross-ethnic interactions. Effective interreligious engagement in Sri Lanka requires not only conversations at the grassroots level but also systematic reforms to dismantle biases ingrained in the constitution and societal structures that privilege specific religious identities. Furthermore, religious leaders play a promising role in reconciliation, mainly when utilising shared values to foster unity—Buddhist-Muslim relations. Historically rooted in mutual respect, it shows that dialogue based on everyday ethics can help bridge religious differences, calling religious leaders to advocate for peace and pluralistic society beyond sectarian interests.

Fourthly, discussions reveal that challenges to interreligious dialogue and harmony, such as ethnoreligious nationalism, forced religious conversions, and socio-economic inequalities, continue to complicate dialogue efforts. Misconceptions and xenophobic rhetoric often amplify through social media, deepen divides, and fuel distrust between communities; legal protections and educational reforms are essential to foster a more tolerant society and mitigate the effects of such divisive narratives, encouraging interreligious education and incorporating principles of peace and tolerance from an early age help reshape societal attitudes and reinforce a national identity that respects diversity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, successful interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding in Sri Lanka require a multifaced approach that combines grassroots interreligious initiatives with comprehensive policy forms. Recent scholarship emphasises that dialogue alone is insufficient; it must be paired with efforts to address structural inequities and support for religious minorities. Sustained interreligious engagement, underpinned by a legal framework ensuring equal rights and promoting cultural understanding, is vital for creating a peaceful and inclusive society. However, several gaps impede the effectiveness of interreligious dialogue in Sri Lanka's peacebuilding. A notable lack of empirical research on the impact of these dialogues limits insights into their role in fostering reconciliation. Most existing studies focus on historical and theoretical perspectives, with few examining practical applications or evaluating real-world dialogue initiatives.

References

Afra, F., & Ushama, T. (2022). Buddhist-Muslim religious co-existence in Sri Lanka: A historical analysis. *Al-Itqan Journal of Islamic Sciences,* 6(1), 87–110. https://journals.iium.edu.my/al-itqan/index.php/al-itqan/article/view/226

Ali, A. (2014). Muslims in harmony and conflict in plural Sri Lanka: A historical summary from religio-economic and political perspective. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 34*(3), 227-242. https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2014.939554

Dewaraja, L. (1994). *The Muslims of Sri Lanka: One thousand years of ethnic harmony 900-1915*. The Lanka Islamic Foundation.

Gunathilake, G. (2018). *The chronic and entrenched: Ethno-religious violence in Sri Lanka*. International Center for Ethnic Studies.

Imtiyaz, A. R. M., & Mohamed-Saleem, A. (2015). Muslims in post-war Sri Lanka: Understanding Sinhala-Buddhist mobilization against them. *Asian Ethnicity, 16*(2), 186–202. https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2015.1003691

Jayathilaka, A., & Ansari, M. (2020). Role of religious leaders in reconciliation process in Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS) 3*(1), 295-299. https://ideas.repec.org/a/bcp/journl/v3y2019i1p295-299.html

Mahroof, S R. (2021). A critical review of the misconceptions and reconciliation between the Sinhalese Buddhists and Muslims in Sri Lanka. *8th International Symposium 2020 on "Promoting Faith-Based Social Cohesion Through Islamic and Arabic Studies,"* 251–265. http://ir.lib.seu.ac.lk/handle/123456789/5686

Mendis, V. (2000). Inter-religious dialogue in Sri Lanka. *Journal of Dharma, 25,* 90–98.

Morrison, C. (2020). Post-conflict interfaith activities, combatting religious extremism and mass atrocity in Sri Lanka. *Revista de Paz y Conflictos, 13*(1), 99–124. https://doi.org/10.30827/revpaz.v13i1.13901

Nafeel, M. Z. M. (2021). Muslim Buddhist dialogue: A quest for ethnic harmony in the Sri Lankan Context. *Sri Lanka International Journal of Buddhist Studies (SIJBS), 6*.

Orjuela, C. (2003). Building peace in Sri Lanka: A role for civil society. *Journal of Peace Research, 40*(2), 195-212. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3648411

Peiris, P. (2017). Assessment of the dialogue initiative organised by the office of the national unity and reconciliation. Sri Lanka: Office of the National Unity and Reconciliation. https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/LKA/Assessment%20of%20the%20Dialogue%20Initiative%2026052017.pdf

Peiris, S. (2019). An introduction to religious pluralism in Sri Lanka. Internews Lanka Handbook. ISBN 978-624-5330-00-3.

Razick, A. S., Long, A. S., & Salleh, K. (2015). Historical relationship between the Buddhists and the Muslims in Sri Lanka. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences,* 6(4), 278–84. https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2015.v6n4s2p278.

Razick, A. S., Saujan, I., & Hakeema Beevi, S. M. (2021). Buddhist and Muslim interaction in the post-war of Sri Lanka. *International Journal of Islamic Thought, 20*, 13–24. https://doi.org/10.24035/ijit.20.2021.206.

Rohan, P. (2021). Challenges and opportunities for co-existence: A Sri Lankan Christian perspective. *SAJRP, 2*(2), 1–18. http://repo.lib.jfn.ac.lk/ujrr/bitstream/123456789/9519/1/Challenges%20and%20Opportunities%20for%20Co-Existence%20A%20Sri%20Lankan%20Christian%20%20Perspective.pdf

Sangasumana, P. (2015). Impact of forcible religious conversion on interreligious harmony: Lessons learned from Sri Lanka. *Vietnam Buddhist University Series/ Buddhism for Sustainable Development and Social Change*, First Edition, 279–91. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3455597.

Shukri, M. A. M. (1986). *Muslims of Sri Lanka: Avenues to antiquity*. Jamiah Naleemia Inst.

Stewart, J. J. (2014). Muslim–Buddhist Conflict in Contemporary Sri Lanka. *South Asia Research, 34*(3), 241–260. https://doi.org/10.1177/0262728014549134

IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies (IJRCS) 7:2 (2024); 197-199.
https://doi.org/10.31436/ijrcs.v7i2.352
Copyright © IIUM Press

Book Review

Walaa Quisay (2023). *Neo-Traditionalism in Islam in the West: Orthodoxy, Spirituality and Politics*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

by Mohamed Fouz Mohamed Zacky[1]

There has been a lot of interest in studying how Muslims of Europe adapt to modernity in Western countries. In the last two decades, most of the research focused on Islamist movements, political Islam, Salafi movements, and reformist Islam in the West. However, Walaa Quisay's work goes beyond this to explore the rise of neo-traditionalism, often understudied, as an emerging alternative Islamic authority in the West. The work aims to explain how neo-traditionalism has emerged, established its authority, and engaged with modernity. It also focuses on its appeal, internal contradictions and socio-political implications. Through studying the life and discourses of three charismatic neo-traditionalist sheiks, white converts such as Hamza Yousuf, Abdul Hakim Murad and Umar Faruq Abdullah, the author mainly shows how they collectively presented Islamic traditionalism not only as the voice of pure Islam through otherising religious discourses of Salafism and reformist Islam as the products of post-colonial complexities, but also as a paradigmatic critique of modernity. Despite such grand claims, the author highlights that neo-traditionalism has ultimately ended up serving the very power structure of modernity, particularly nation-states. Neo-traditionalism in Islam in the West is a result of an ethnographic study. The author spends years of participating, experiencing and interviewing the neo-traditionalist sheiks and followers in their spiritual sites. The chapters of the book broadly cover the emergence of neo-traditionalism, its key discourses and implications on the Muslim societies in the West and Muslim world.

In terms of the emergence and key discourses of the neo-traditionalist movement in the West, Quisay's analysis in the initial chapters shows that it is a recent phenomenon that emerged after the decline of the Salafi movement's appeal to Western Muslims in the 1980s. This decline, referred to as 'Salafi burnout,' was characterised by intra-group factionalism. Initially, Salafism had dominantly influenced the religious discussions of Western Muslims by offering a 'de-culturalised Islam' that allowed new converts and traditional immigrant Muslims to transcend ethnic differences and identify themselves as followers of authentic Islam. The decline of Salafism in the 1980s left a vacuum that was occupied by neo-traditionalism. The appeal of neo-traditionalism mainly lies in its ability to follow the very logic of Salafism, presenting traditional Islam as authentic, pure, and intellectually rooted while portraying the latter as contextual, modern, and cultural (p. 24-25). Furthermore, as neo-traditionalism has gradually become an important factor in shaping Western Islam, the leading figures of the movement formed a loose network among themselves as an epistemic community, and institutionalised their scholarly activism through building new educational institutions such as Zaytuna College and the Cambridge Muslim College, and occasional spiritual retreats for seekers.

[1] Mohamed Fouz Mohamed Zacky is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. He can be reached at zackyfouz@iium.edu.my.

Quisay also traces the core argument of the neo-traditionalist sheiks. They argue that modernity has broken down the metaphysical foundation of human comprehension of the world, leading to a crisis of meaning and promoting radical relativism. Therefore, contemporary modernist and reformist Islam, which seeks to integrate Islam with modernity, is seen as a reaction stemming from an inferiority complex in response to the rise of modernity, and an outcome of a traumatic experience of the dissolution of traditional system of knowledge, rather than as an objective understanding of modernity. The neo-traditionalist solution to the modern problem is not the reformation of Islam but to reclaim and restore the metaphysics of traditional Islam (p. 47-48). In the following chapters, Quisay explores how neo-traditionalist sheiks try to restore traditionalist Islam at their spiritual retreat sites. This includes emphasising the authority of sheiks, belief in miracles, the importance of traditional methods of transmitting knowledge, rereading the classical works of Islamic law, spirituality and theology, and making journey to places where they believe remnants of traditional Islam are preserved such as Mauritania, Turkey and Morrocco (p. 67-123).

Moreover, Quisay allocated significant portion of the work to examine how this authority is translated to address various socio-political issues such as Islamophobia, racism, and the marginalisation faced by Muslims in the West. In this process, she sheds light on the concept of 'cosmic legitimisation', which guides neo-traditionalists in responding to these major socio-political questions in the West. Cosmic legitimisation refers to the idea of respecting an orderly-hierarchical society and the harmonious relationship between the cosmos and the world. Neo-traditionalists use this concept to challenge any attempt to critique power structures or structural reasons as the root cause responsible for these socio-political issues. They argue that such a critique of power prevents Muslims from examining the broader spiritual and metaphysical aspects of injustice, and pushes them to deconstruct the order and to challenge ‘stability’ in the world, which they believe carry cosmic meanings. Their solution to the problem is self-reflection and spiritual empowerment, understanding injustice as a tribulation from God to evaluate the spiritual status of believers (p. 123-148).

In light of this logic, Muslim civil activism to counter right-wing Islamophobic movements by forming political alliances with left-wing social movements is also criticised by neo-traditionalist sheiks. They argue that racism is not a structural political issue, but rather a spiritual crisis within the Western society. As a result, they advocate for engagement with right-wing conservative establishments in promoting common values. However, neo-traditionalists believe that a significant challenge for this engagement with right-wing conservatives is the influence of post-colonial cultural Islam brought by Muslim immigrants from the global south who have internalised activist epistemology while rejecting the metaphysical foundations of traditional Islam (p. 150-170).

The book explores how these discourses have enabled neo-traditionalist sheiks to become key players in global geopolitics after the 9/11. In this sense, Quisay strongly argues that the politically neutral stance of neo-traditionalism has itself become a political position, positioning neo-traditionalists as a potential bulwark against radical Islam globally, and as close allies of Arab authoritarian regimes in the Muslim world. This has also allowed them to establish an alternative religious authority to counter the democratic aspirations of the Arab world after the Arab Spring. The author further highlights the irony in this situation, as neo-traditionalism inherently holds an anti-modernist worldview while being used by regimes that increasingly seek to portray them as modern and progressive (p. 180-200). Finally, Quisay evaluates the reception of these ideas among the students and followers of the neo-traditionalist sheiks in the final chapter of the book. She writes that there are three types of responses: complete acceptance, complete scrutiny, and privatisation of the beliefs. Interestingly, her analysis finds that the percentage of complete acceptance of neo-traditionalist discourses among its followers is minimal compared to the other two types of responses (p. 205-206).

Examining these arguments surrounding neo-traditionalism in the context of the rising right-wing populism in Europe highlights the challenges it presents regarding the role of Islam and Muslim communities in navigating issues of belonging and identity. Many interpret the discourse associated with neo-traditionalist responses as pro-status quo since it aims to reconcile with right-wing establishments. However, there has yet to be a comprehensive study that situates these various narratives within a broader framework, which would enhance our understanding of the movement as a whole. Quisay's work addresses this intellectual gap effectively. Furthermore, it is essential to recognise that her study on neo-traditionalism in the West significantly enriches existing scholarly discussions on Islam in Europe and on a global scale. Neo-traditionalism is a worldwide phenomenon with different expressions based on local contexts. Specifically, Quisay's research explains the growing interest among certain segments of European Muslim communities in studying traditional Islamic sciences, reviving classical texts, and acknowledging traditional religious authorities. One of the key strengths of this work is its exploration of the tension between the fundamental tenets of the neo-traditionalist school of thought and the politics of the modern state. It carefully illustrates how, in some instances, sheikhs have inadvertently reinforced the very paradigms they intended to resist. The study also addresses the mixed reactions and uncertainties that followers of these sheikhs experience, as they often find that the discourses present more dilemmas than solutions regarding the role of Islam in multicultural societies. The thoroughness of Quisay's treatment of the subject makes this work a significant advancement in the study of European Islam. However, a critical point to note is that the book does not provide an in-depth analysis of the intellectual evolution of traditionalism and neo-traditionalism or their various schools of thought within a global context. Such an analysis would help readers more precisely locate neo-traditionalism in the West.

IIUM Journal of Religion and Civilisational Studies (IJRCS) 7:2 (2024); 200-203.
https://doi.org/10.31436/ijrcs.v7i2.374
Copyright © IIUM Press

Book Review

Adeline Ooi, Beverly Yong, Hasnul J. Saidon, Nur Hanim Khairuddin and Rachel Ng (Eds). (2012). *Exploring An A-Z Guide to Malaysian Art*. Kuala Lumpur: RougeArt.

by Asilatul Hanaa Abdullah[1]

Malaysian art is a dynamic and complex field that reflects the nation's rich cultural heritage, social dynamics, and evolving identity. *An A-Z Guide to Malaysian Art* is an ambitious and comprehensive book that documents the history, movements, and practices of Malaysian art. Published as part of the *Narratives in Malaysian Art* project in 2012, this guide serves as an essential resource for anyone interested in understanding the development of Malaysian visual art. Through its wide-ranging content, the book explores the intersections of tradition and modernity, art and identity, and individual expression and community engagement. This essay offers a critical review of the book, analysing its structure, strengths, and limitations. It will also highlight its contribution to the discourse on Malaysian art and its potential to inspire further exploration of this vibrant cultural landscape.

The early chapters of *An A-Z Guide to Malaysian Art* provide an in-depth exploration of Malaysia's art history, beginning with the advent of modern art. The establishment of the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in Singapore in 1938 marked a turning point in formal art education in the region, fostering a generation of artists who would later shape Malaysia's visual culture. The influence of students returning from Europe in the 1950s and 60s introduced international modernist styles to Malaysia. Artists such as Tay Hooi Keat and Syed Ahmad Jamal spearheaded the fusion of these styles with local elements, creating works that reflected a unique Malaysian identity. The book also emphasises the role of institutions and collectives in nurturing artistic talent and fostering dialogue. For example, the Angkatan Pelukis SeMalaysia (APS) played a crucial role in promoting Malay cultural themes in art. Simultaneously, alternative spaces like Rumah Air Panas encouraged experimental and interdisciplinary practices, reflecting the diversity of Malaysia's art scene.

A significant focus of the guide is the evolution of artistic practices in Malaysia. One of the highlights is the incorporation of batik as a fine art medium by Chuah Thean Teng in the 1950s. Initially celebrated for its romantic depiction of Malaysian life, batik art evolved to include modernist techniques and Islamic themes by the 1980s. Artists like Fatimah Chik pushed the boundaries of this traditional medium, merging it with contemporary concepts. The guide also documents the rise of artist collectives, such as Anak Alam, which promoted multicultural collaboration and experimental art. These groups created platforms for artists to explore new ideas and challenge conventional practices, paving the way for Malaysia's diverse and dynamic art landscape.

The intersection of art and identity is a recurring theme in the book. Malaysian art has long grappled with questions of nationalism, tradition, and modernity. Movements such as the

[1] Dr. Asilatul Hanaa Abdullah is an independent scholar. She is currently pursuing her second master in Art History and Cultural Management in the College of Creative Arts UiTM Shah Alam. Her specialisation is decolonising history. She is intensely interested in art history, politics, public policy history, development, decolonisation, gender, and theology. Many of her publications focus on Islamic history and civilisation. She can be reached at asilatul1983@gmail.com.

National Cultural Congress in 1971 sought to define a national identity through art by integrating traditional Malay motifs and Islamic aesthetics into contemporary practices. This cultural shift gave rise to works that balanced global influences with local heritage, offering a nuanced portrayal of Malaysia's identity. The guide also highlights the evolution of figurative art, from early social realism to contemporary works addressing modern challenges. Artists used figurative representation to explore themes such as identity, social inequality, and cultural heritage, reflecting the complexities of Malaysian society. Another recurring theme is education where the work emphasises its importance in shaping future generations of artists and audiences. *The Malaysian Art Book for Children*, launched in 2011, addresses the gap in art education by introducing children to significant Malaysian artworks and cultural heritage. This initiative exemplifies the book's broader mission of fostering art appreciation and critical thinking.

Community engagement is a cornerstone of Malaysian art, and the guide sheds light on various initiatives that bring art closer to the public. Projects such as *Let Arts Move You* and *Bangun Penang!* demonstrate how artists engage with diverse communities through public art. These initiatives not only make art accessible but also foster dialogue and understanding across cultural and social divides. Also noteworthy is the role of institutions in supporting the art scene. Corporate collections, such as those maintained by Petronas and Bank Negara, have been instrumental in promoting Malaysian artists. These collections, along with national galleries and art competitions like the Young Contemporaries Competition, provide platforms for emerging artists and contribute to a vibrant art ecosystem. Moreover, art festivals and residencies also play a crucial role in the development of Malaysian art. Events like Urbanscapes, and the Melaka Art and Performance Festival provide platforms for artists to showcase their work and engage with the public. Residencies, such as those at Rimbun Dahan, offer opportunities for collaboration and experimentation, enriching the cultural landscape.

The period following Malaysia's independence in 1957 was marked by a surge in nationalistic fervor, which significantly influenced the country's art. Artists began exploring themes of cultural identity, tradition, and modernity, seeking to define what it meant to be Malaysian. One of the pivotal moments in this era was the return of Malaysian students who had studied art in Europe and the United States. Figures like Syed Ahmad Jamal and Tay Hooi Keat brought back modernist influences, which they combined with local motifs and themes. Syed Ahmad Jamal's Gunung Ledang is a prime example of this synthesis, blending abstract forms with references to Malaysian folklore. The establishment of artist collectives also played a crucial role in this period. The Angkatan Pelukis SeMalaysia (APS) emerged as a platform for Malay artists to explore their cultural heritage through naturalistic portraiture and landscape painting. The collective's works were characterised by their emphasis on Malay cultural motifs, reflecting the broader push toward creating a cohesive national identity.

The 1960s and 1970s were transformative decades for Malaysian art, marked by the rise of modernist movements. Artists began experimenting with abstraction and other contemporary styles, moving away from the traditional realism that had dominated earlier periods. This era was characterised by a growing sense of artistic freedom and exploration. Chuah Thean Teng's introduction of batik as a fine art medium was one of the most significant developments of this period. By elevating a traditional craft form into the realm of fine art, Chuah not only challenged the boundaries of artistic practice but also created a new visual language that was distinctly Malaysian. His works, such as *Two Sisters*, combined the vibrant colors and patterns of batik with modernist sensibilities. The influence of modernism was further bolstered by the establishment of art institutions like the School of Art & Design at Institut Teknologi MARA in 1967. These institutions provided a platform for artists to experiment with new ideas and techniques, fostering a vibrant and dynamic art scene.

Meanwhile, the late 20th century saw the emergence of conceptual art and a heightened focus on socio-political critique. This period was shaped by significant events in Malaysia's history, such as the May 13 riots in 1969 and the National Cultural Congress in 1971. These events prompted artists to reflect on issues of race, identity, and cultural cohesion. The Towards a Mystical Reality exhibition in 1974, curated by Redza Piyadasa and Sulaiman Esa, marked a turning point in Malaysian art. The exhibition challenged traditional notions of art by focusing on ideas and concepts rather than aesthetics. It introduced a new era of conceptualism, encouraging artists to engage with contemporary issues in their work. Figurative art also gained prominence during this period as a means of addressing socio-political themes. Artists like Nirmala Dutt Shanmughalingam and Wong Hoy Cheong used their work to comment on issues such as human rights, social inequality, and political corruption. Their art became a tool for activism, reflecting the changing role of artists in Malaysian society.

The 1990s ushered in a new era of cross-disciplinary practices and global engagement in Malaysian art. Artists began incorporating elements from theatre, dance, and music into their visual art, reflecting a broader trend of interdisciplinary collaboration. Collectives like the Five Arts Centre played a pivotal role in fostering these practices, creating a space for experimentation and dialogue. Technological advancements also had a profound impact on contemporary art practices. Video art emerged as a significant medium, with artists like Liew Kungyu exploring themes of identity and memory through innovative techniques. The younger generation of artists embraced these new tools, creating works that were playful, satirical, and deeply engaged with contemporary issues. Community engagement became a central theme during this period, with artists using public art to connect with diverse audiences. Projects like Let Arts Move You and festivals such as Urbanscapes provided platforms for artists to interact with the public, breaking down barriers between art and everyday life.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its comprehensive coverage. It provides a detailed account of Malaysian art's history, movements, and key figures, offering readers a holistic understanding of the field. Its inclusion of diverse perspectives - from artists and curators to academics - enriches the narrative and encourages critical engagement. The book's integration of art and identity is another notable strength. By connecting artistic practices to socio-political events and cultural heritage, it highlights the role of art as both a reflection of and a commentary on Malaysian society. This approach not only deepens readers' appreciation of Malaysian art but also underscores its relevance in a global context.

Despite its strengths, the book has some limitations. The lack of visual content is a significant drawback, as it limits readers' ability to fully appreciate the artworks discussed. Including more images would enhance the book's educational and aesthetic appeal. The depth of coverage is also inconsistent. While some topics, such as modernism, are explored in detail, others, like the Islamic art movement, receive comparatively less attention. This imbalance may leave readers wanting more comprehensive insights into certain aspects of Malaysian art. Potential bias is another concern. The book's emphasis on corporate-sponsored initiatives might overshadow contributions from independent or marginalised artists, presenting a skewed view of the art scene. Additionally, the book's 2012 publication date means some information may be outdated, particularly in the rapidly evolving contemporary art world.

Despite these limitations, *An A-Z Guide to Malaysian Art* makes a significant contribution to the discourse on Malaysian art. By documenting the history and evolution of artistic practices, the book provides a valuable resource for scholars, educators, and enthusiasts. Its focus on community engagement, cultural identity, and interdisciplinary practices reflects the dynamic and multifaceted nature of Malaysian art. The book also serves as a call to action, inspiring readers to explore and contribute to the field. Its emphasis on education and accessibility ensures that the knowledge it offers can be passed on to future generations, fostering a deeper appreciation of Malaysian art and culture.

The historical development of Malaysian art, as outlined in *An A-Z Guide to Malaysian Art*, is a testament to the resilience and creativity of its artists. From its traditional roots to the modernist movements of the mid-20th century and the interdisciplinary practices of today, Malaysian art has continually evolved in response to changing cultural, social, and political contexts. By documenting this rich history, the guide provides a valuable resource for understanding the complexities of Malaysian art. It highlights the role of art as a reflection of society, a medium for critique, and a tool for cultural preservation. As Malaysian art continues to grow and adapt, its history serves as both a foundation and a source of inspiration for future generations.

An A-Z Guide to Malaysian Art is a landmark publication that offers a comprehensive and insightful exploration of Malaysia's art scene. By tracing the intersections of tradition and modernity, art and identity, and individual and community, the book paints a vivid picture of a nation's artistic journey. While it has some limitations, its strengths far outweigh them, making it an indispensable resource for anyone interested in Malaysian art. Through its detailed narrative and emphasis on education, the book not only documents the past but also shapes the future of Malaysian art. It stands as a testament to the richness and resilience of Malaysian culture, reminding readers of the transformative power of art in shaping and reflecting society.