

The self-representation^s of the Islamic State through photographs in Rumiya

The Visual Culture of the Islamic State

As a sub-title it doesn't complement the main title



photo source: Rumiya, issue 1, page 4

the message is quite manipulative ...

لا إله إلا الله



photo source: Wikimedia Commons

The Islamic State

background information

A Salafi jihadist terrorist organisation that follows a fundamentalist, Salafi doctrine of Sunni Islam (al-Ibrahim 2014).

In June 2014, the group claimed itself a worldwide caliphate (BBC News 2015).

It is believed to operate in different countries.

In 2017, it was estimated to have more than 35,000 fighters (Shinkman 2017).

Intention- ality of visual elements

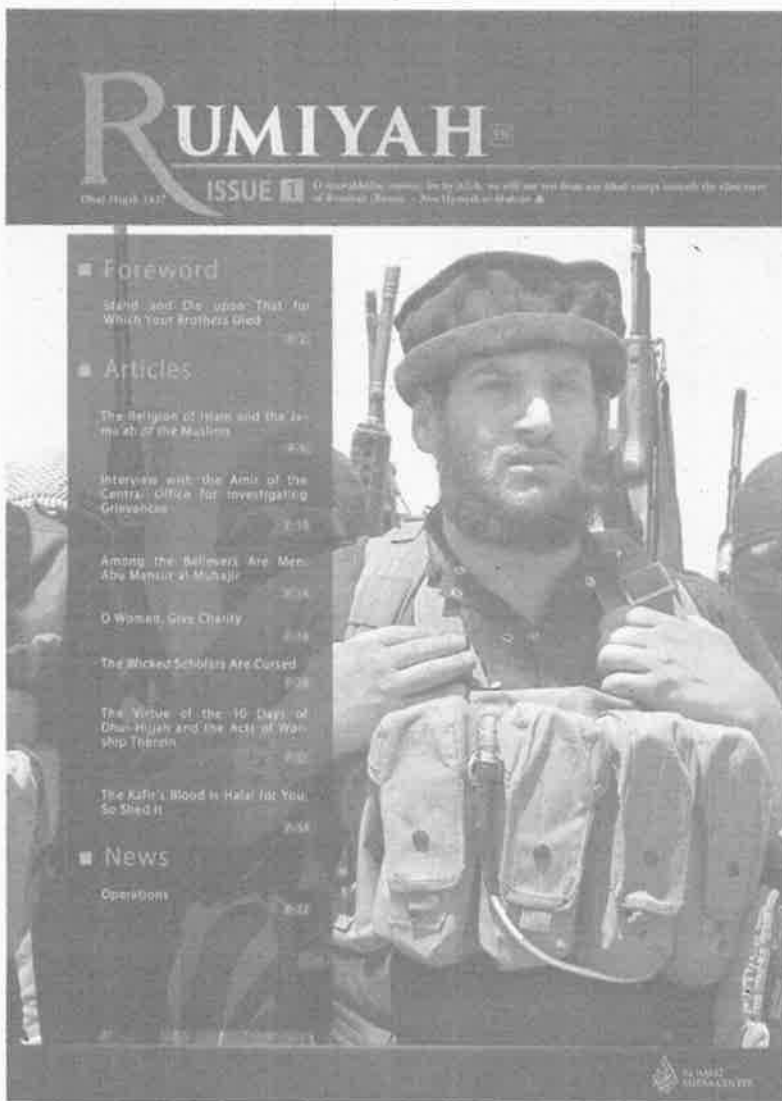
In his writing, *The Visual Culture of Jihad*, Ostovar (2017) suggests that jihadi visuals stress on simplicity and have explanations of intentionality (84) communicating different messages (83).

2

- that doesn't make sense

**Research
Question**

What **affect techniques** does the **Islamic State** use in its **visuals**, specifically **photographs of self-representation** in **Rumiyah magazine**, to **communicate** with its audience, and particularly to mobilize young adult men?



Rumiyah portraits

Rumiyah is the Arabic name for the city of Rome.

It conveys teachings of Islam, stories, strategies, news and interviews with IS fighters.

It was first published in September 2016 as a successor to Dabiq, which was discontinued in July 2016.

Research method 1 Panofsky method

A **qualitative analysis** through the understanding and interpretation of meaning in visual representation, which can be separated into three levels:

- level 1** Pre-iconographic analysis
- level 2** Iconography
- level 3** Iconology

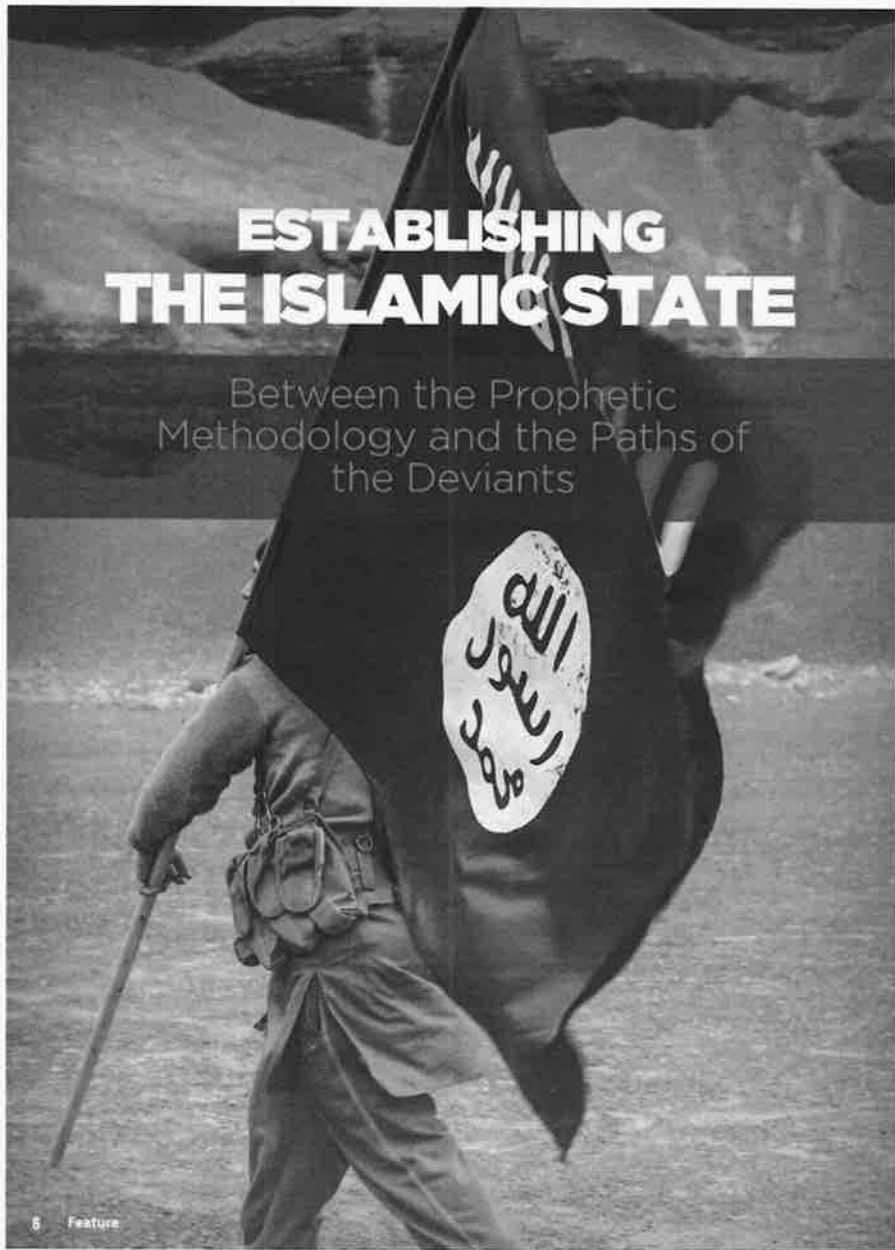
Level 1

Pre-iconographic analysis

Pre-iconographic analysis, which is the formal, natural and factual descriptions of what is seen such as the colours, the content, and the format seen without any speculations.

Quantitative analysis of the portrait photographs of the **IS** in **Rumiyah** (issues 1 to 13) **by recording quantitative data through keywords**

Panofsky method



Focus

Afghani Robe
Bag
Fighter
From Behind
ISIS Flag
Looking Away

Periphery

Desert
Out of Focus
Stone

Location

Outdoor

Field Size

Full Shot
(from behind)

Title of text

ESTABLISHING THE ISLAMIC STATE
Between the Prophetic Methodology and
the Paths of the Deviants



Camera Angle

Light Low-Angle Shot

Aspect Ratio

5:7

Portrait Type

Candid Portrait

Depth of Field

Narrow

from Pre-iconographic analysis to iconography

issue 7 / page 6

Level 2 Iconography

Iconography,
which is the **decoding**
of the content
by questioning the meaning
of the elements in each photo
taking in consideration
the context, history, culture,
traditions, rituals, audiences,
and the framework of society.

Panofsky method



photo source: p. 47



photo source: p. 11



photo source: p. 27



photo source: p. 17

Authors

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The Islamic Imagery Project
 Visual Motifs in Jihadi
 Internet Propaganda

Findings

Fighter

Looking away

All black dressed

Clasped hands

Finger of Tawhid

Children

Horse

Mountains

Greenery

Sun

Clouds

Water body

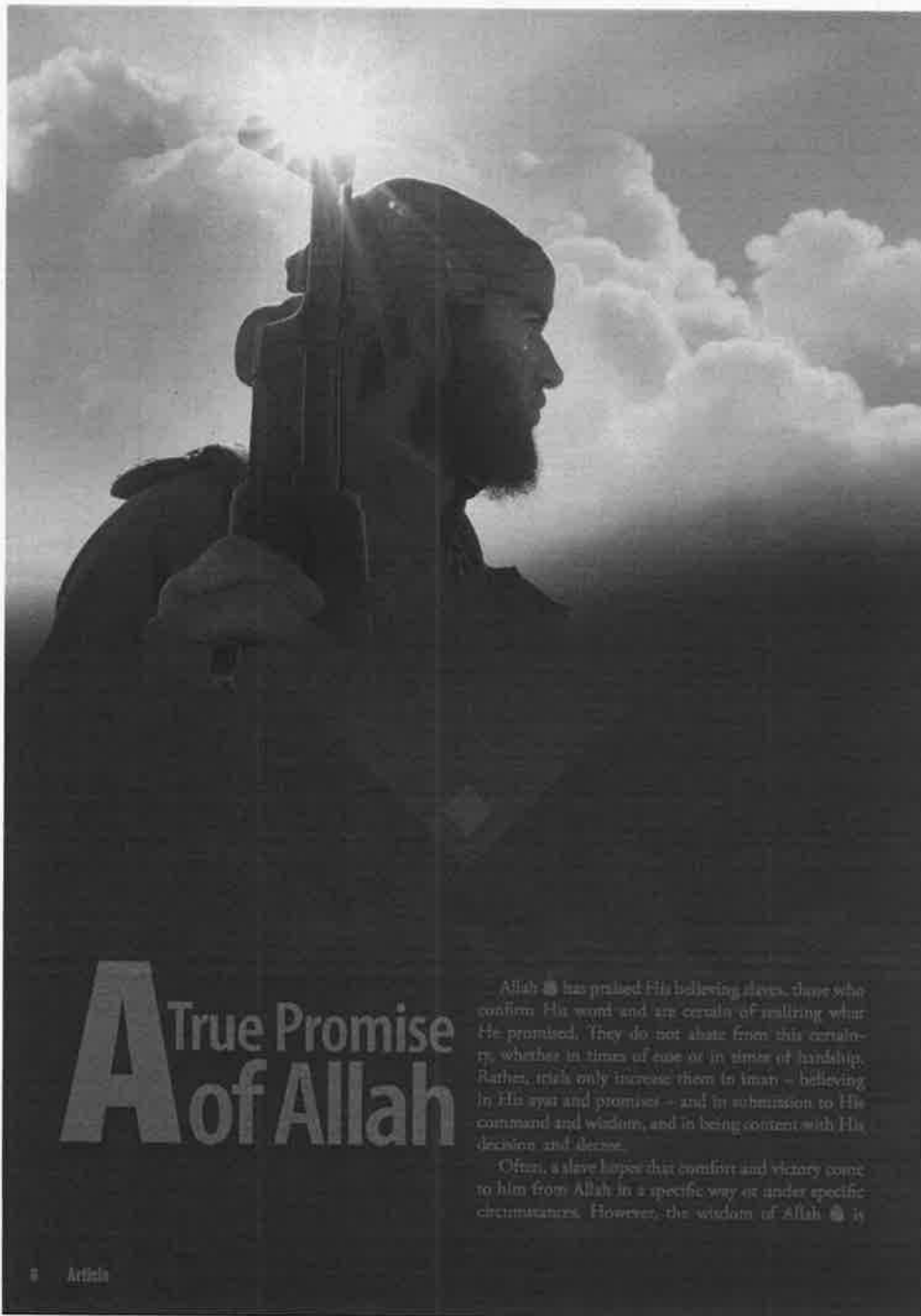


photo source: Rumiayah; issue 8, p. 6



photo source: Rumiayah, issue 1, p. 2



photo source: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/iconic-photography-che-guevara-alberto-korda-cultural-travel180960615/>

Context



photo source: Rumiyah, issue 11, p. 4

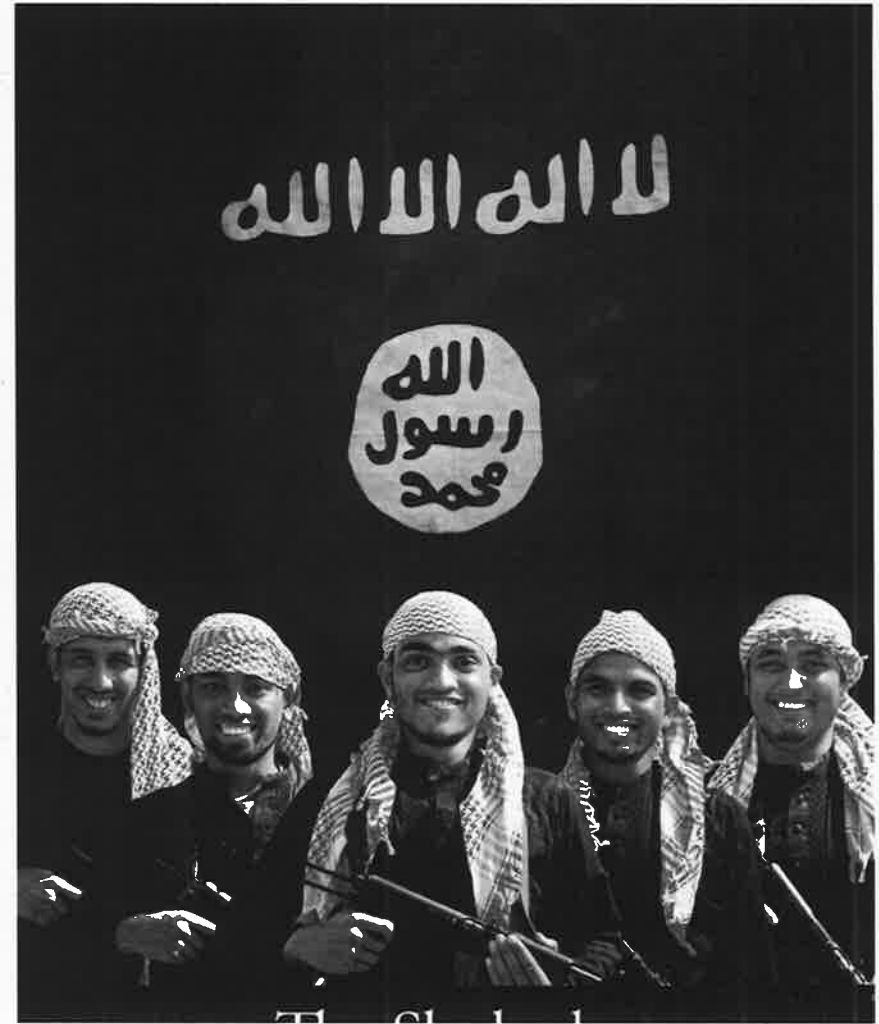


photo source: Rumiyah, issue 2, p. 8

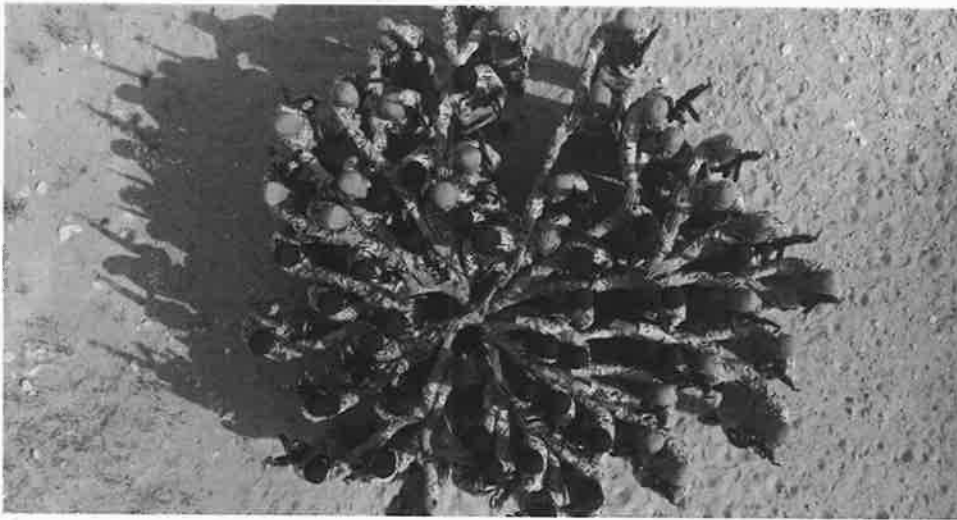


photo source: Rumiya, issue 10, p. 3

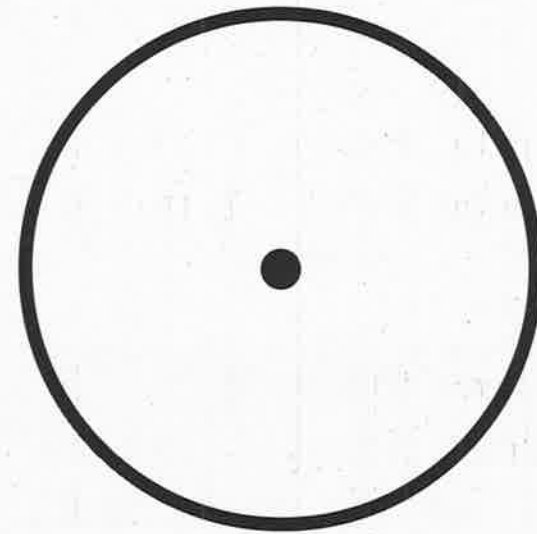


photo source: Rumiya, issue 1, p. 8



photo source: Rumiya, issue 13, p, 18



photo source: Rumiya, issue 9, p, 43



photo source: Rumiya, issue 9, p, 31



photo source: <http://www.continentaltelegraph.com/law/the-nazi-saluting-pug-and-the-crowd-funded-appeal/>



photo source: <https://www.quora.com/How-do-you-do-a-communist-salute>

فَضْلُ الْجَاهِدِ

THE EXCELLENCE OF JIHAD

Jihad Is the Peak of Islam

Mu'adh Ibn Jabal ؓ narrated: Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "Shall I tell you the head of the whole matter, its pillar, and its utmost peak?" I said, "Certainly, O Messenger of Allah!" He said, "The head of the matter is Islam. Its pillar is the prayer. Its utmost peak is jihad" (Reported by al-Tirmidhi).

No Deed Equals Jihad

A man came to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and said, "Guide me to a deed that equals jihad." He said, "I cannot. Are you able to enter your masjid, stand in prayer and not get tired, fast and never eat, from the time the mujahid leaves until he returns?" He said, "Who is able to do that?" (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah).

100 Levels in Jannah

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "In Jannah, there are one hundred levels which Allah prepared for the mujahidin for Allah's cause. Between each level is like the distance between the sky and the earth." (Reported by al-Bukhari from Abu Hurayrah).

"Allah favored the mujahidin over those who sit back with a great reward"

(An-Nisa 95)

Jihad Is Part of Iman

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "Allah has guaranteed whoever goes forth in His cause, saying, 'He only goes out due to his iman in Me and belief in My messengers. I will return him with his gain of reward or ghanimah, or I will enter him into Jannah.'" (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah).

Protection from the Fire

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Whoever's feet get covered in dust for Allah's cause, Allah has forbidden him from the Fire" (Reported by al-Bukhari from Abu 'Abd).

The Mujahid Is the Best of People

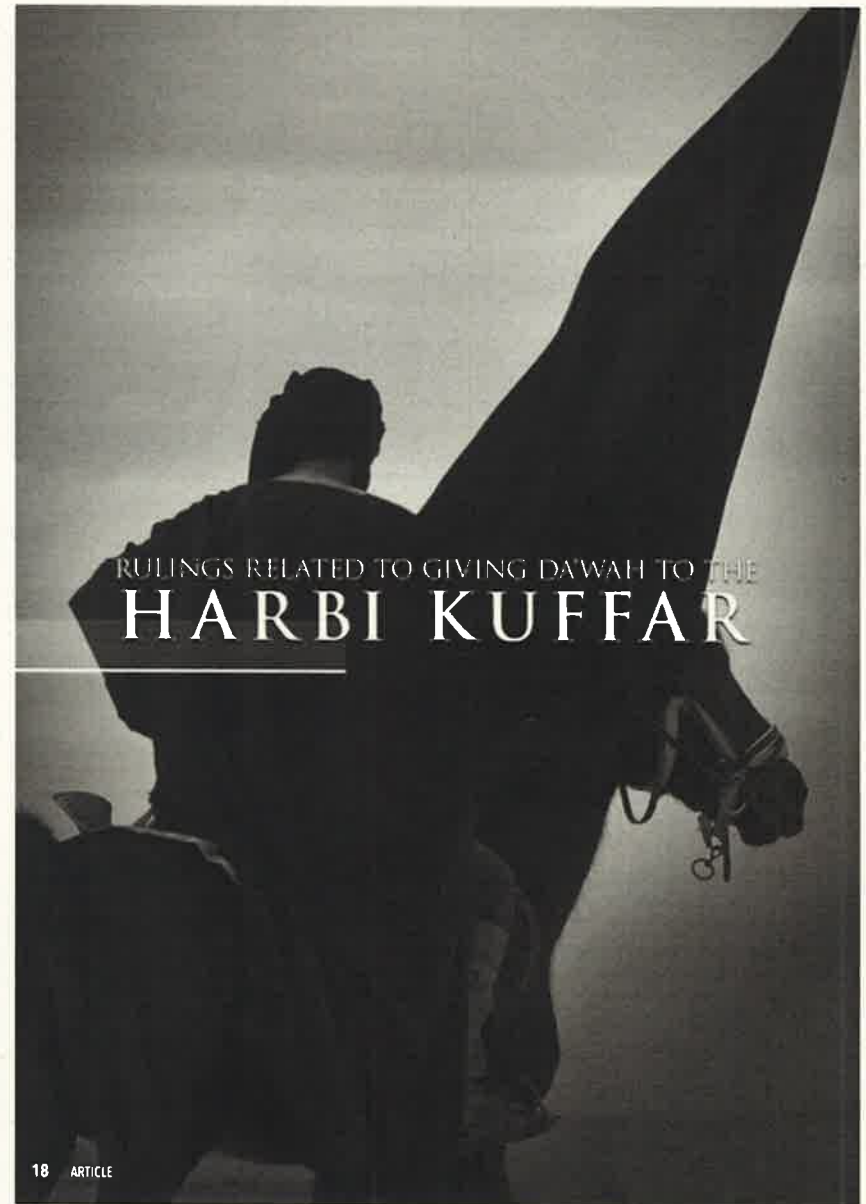
A man came to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and said, "Which people are best?" He said, "A man who wages jihad for Allah's cause with his wealth and self" (Reported by al-Bukhari and Muslim from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri).



Naba Infographic



photo source: Rumiayah, issue 4, p. 13



RULINGS RELATED TO GIVING DAWAH TO THE
HARBI KUFFAR

18 ARTICLE

photo source: Rumiayah, issue 12, p. 18

Lonely wolf?



photo source: Rumiyah, issue 2, p. 16



photo source: Rumiyah, issue 7, p. 3



photo source: Rumiyah, issue 8, p. 32



photo source: Rumiyah, issue 2, p. 37



photo source: Rumiya, issue 10, p. 46



photo source: Rumiya, issue 9, p. 3



photo source: Rumiya, issue 10, p. 30



photo source: Rumiya, issue 12, p. 4



photo source: Rumiya, issue 6, p. 33

Findings

Movie poster
style



photo source: <http://www.movieposter-shop.com/dunkirk-movie-poster2017->



photo source: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/CAPTAIN-AMERICA-THE-WINTER-SOLDIER-MOVIE-POSTER-2-Sided-ORIGINAL-Ver-B27-x152990702857/-40>



photo source: <http://www.thehollywoodnews.com/14/03/2018/new-uk-trailer-poster-lands-for-i-kill-giants/>



photo source: Rumiyah, issue 7, p. 38





photo source: Rumiayah, issue 11, p. 4



photo source: <https://www.filmaffinity.com/en/film848294.html>

Findings

Re-
occurrence
of
some
photos

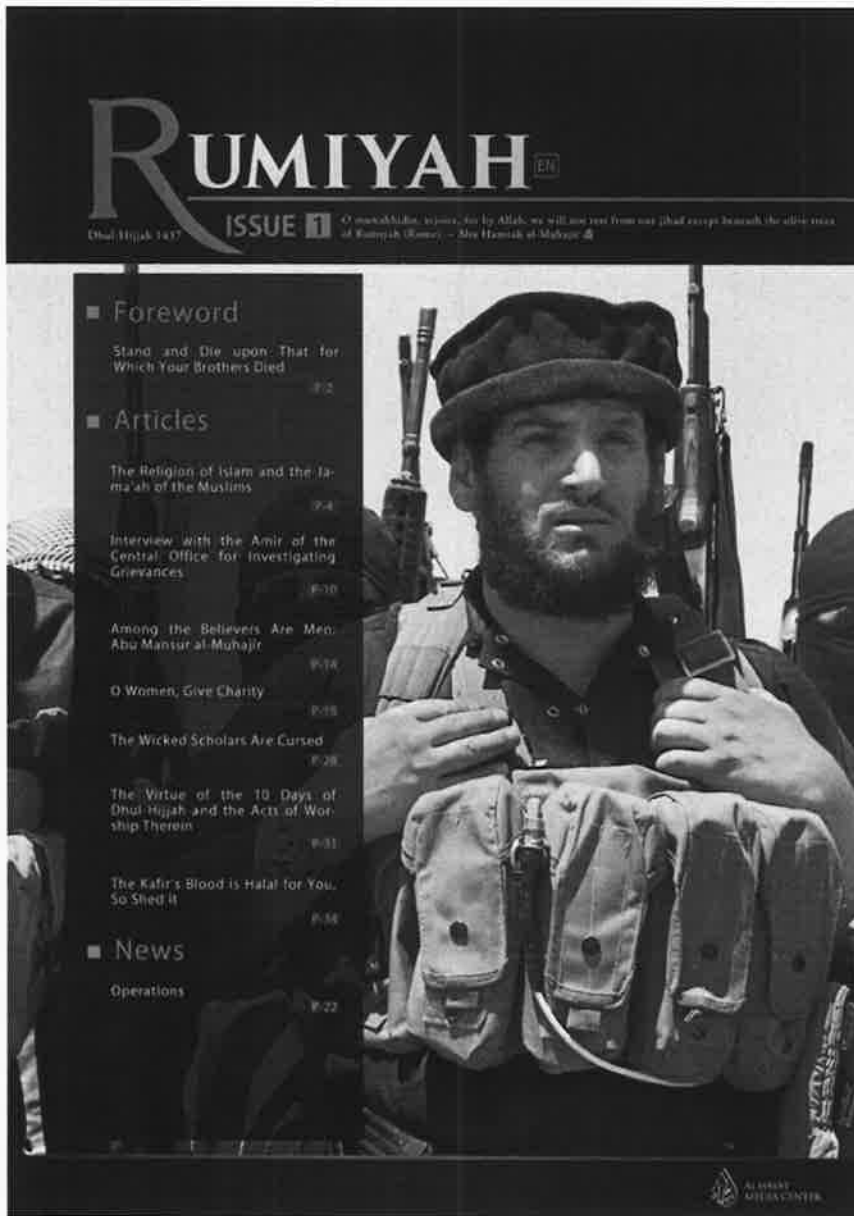


photo source: Rumiya, issue 1 (cover)

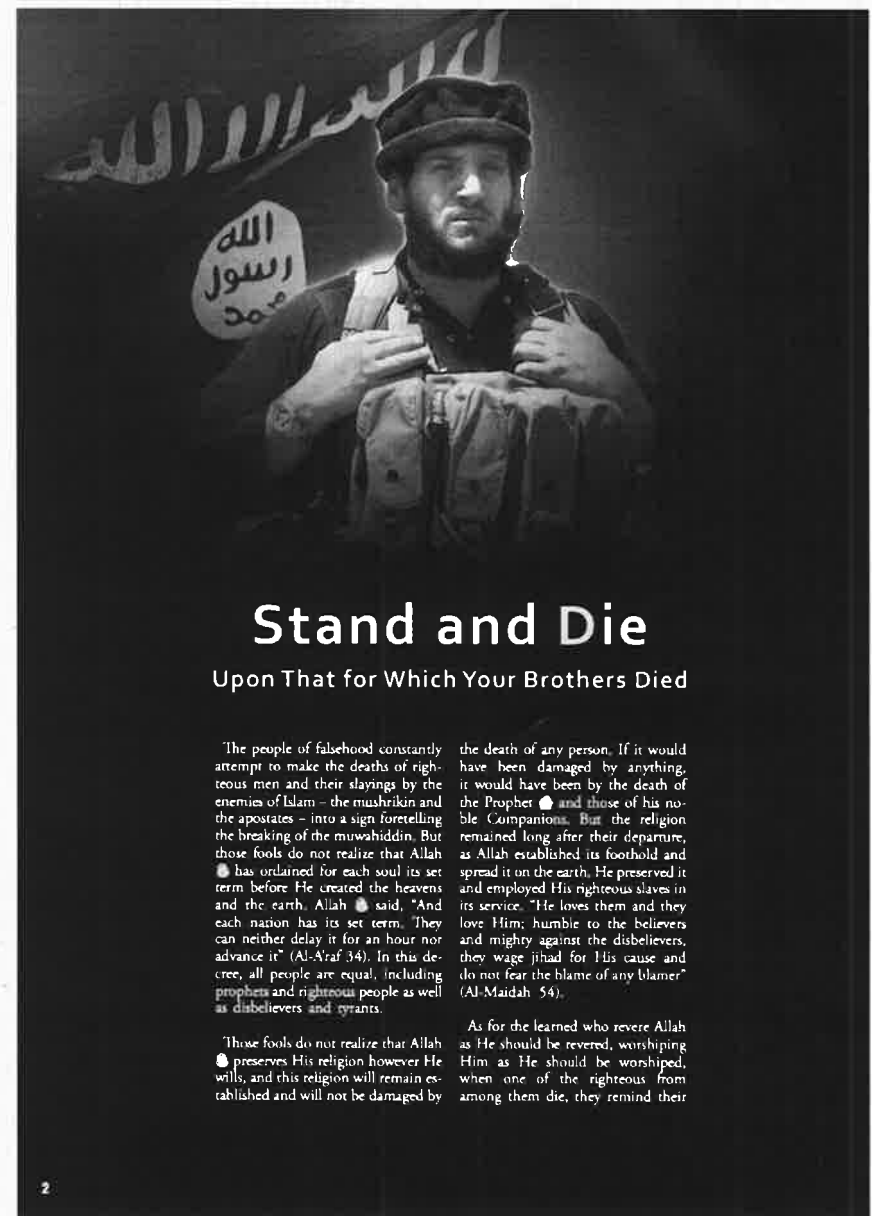


photo source: Rumiya, issue 1, page 2



EXAMPLES OF THE SAHABAH'S *Eagerness to Attain Shahadah*

The first forerunners from among the Muhajirin and the Ansar knew that Jannah was Allah's precious commodity, and also knew that none would be able to pay its price except one who rolled up his sleeves for difficult work. So they searched for every path to Allah's pleasure so that they could attain it, while asking Allah for facilitation and acceptance.

Thus, you would see them resolving to engage in trade with Allah, selling their lives and wealth so that He would purchase them. "O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allah and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if you should know. He will forgive you your sins and admit you to gardens beneath which rivers flow and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence. That is the great attainment" (As-Saff 10-12).

When they recognized that the quickest path leading to it is shahadah for the cause of Allah, they descended onto the battlefields, advancing forward and not retreating, hastening, proceeding towards death, and taking it as a means to attaining life.

Anas Ibn an-Nadr ﷺ Races the Mushrikin on the Day of Uhud

Here we have Anas Ibn an-Nadr ﷺ, who was absent from the Battle of Badr and was extremely upset as a result. However, he swore an oath and made a promise, so let us listen to his nephew Anas Ibn Malik as he tells us about his uncle's deed. He said, "My uncle, Anas Ibn an-Nadr, was absent from the fight-

ing at Badr, so he said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I was absent from the first battle in which you fought the mushrikin. If Allah allows me to attend a battle against the mushrikin, Allah will certainly see what I will do!' Then, when the day of Uhud came and the Muslims became exposed, he said, 'O Allah, I ask Your pardon for what these ones (i.e. the Sahabah) have done, and I absolve myself before You of what these ones (i.e. the mushrikin) have done.' He then advanced and was met by Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh, so he said, 'O Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh, it is Jannah, by the Lord of an-Nadr! Indeed, I smell its fragrance before Uhud.' Sa'd said, 'But I was not able, O Messenger of Allah, to do what he did.'" Anas said, "We found on him eighty some-odd sword wounds, spear wounds, and arrow wounds, and we found that he had been killed and the mushrikin had mutilated him, so no one recognized him except for his sister, through his fingertips." Anas then said, "We would view or think that this ayah was revealed about him and his likes: 'Among the believers are men true to what they promised Allah' (Al-Ahzab 23)."

'Umayr Ibn al-Hammam ﷺ Races to a Garden as Wide as the Heavens and Earth

And here we have Anas ﷺ telling us about their endeavor. He said, "Allah's Messenger ﷺ and his companions set out and arrived at Badr before the mushrikin. The mushrikin then came, so Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Let not any one of you proceed towards anything unless I am in front of him.' The mushrikin then came close, so Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Arise to a garden whose width is that of the heavens and the



FOREWORD

Indeed, our brothers in Mosul displayed steadfastness, perseverance, and conviction in the face of disbelief and its various forms, something not witnessed by history until today. And indeed the kuffar had gathered and rallied thousands of soldiers and vehicles, but they were confronted by the lions of the Islamic State, who massacred them and tore them to pieces, after inflicting upon them losses reaching into the tens of thousands in regards to both soldiers and vehicles – with the permission of Allah ﷻ and His assistance.

The kuffar were incapable of comprehending the determination of the men and women of the Islamic State, who could be stopped by the immanence of death, nor by their enemies' planes.

The believer sees the dunya as a prison and instead looks for relief in obedience towards Allah; and in the Battle of Mosul many of our brothers and sisters were liberated from this prison whereby

they attained – by Allah's permission – shahadah in the cause of Allah.

One of the kafir news outlets stated, "From the first day of the Battle of Mosul the army of the Islamic State resolved to fight down to the last soldier, which is the first time this has occurred in the history of the war against terrorism in this age."

These people do not understand. They cannot grasp that every soldier of the Khilafah is upon the same 'aqidah and methodology, all seeking to be killed in Allah's cause. Yes, the soldiers of the Islamic State – without exception – are all prepared to fight in the cause of Allah down to their last drop of blood. And so we give glad tidings to the kuffar that the soldiers of the Khilafah will conquer the land of Sham in its entirety, even if after some time, and will eventually reach their lands, with Allah's permission.



photo source: Rumiya, issue 1, page 8



photo source: Rumiya, issue 13, page 20

The Religion of Islam

And the Jama'ah of the Muslims

Indeed, all praise is due to Allah. We praise Him and seek His help. Whomsoever Allah guides there is none to misguide, and whomsoever Allah leaves to stray there is none to guide. I testify that there is no god except Allah alone, who has no partner, and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger ﷺ. As for what follows:

The purpose of this series is to clarify the reality of Islam and the necessity of the Jama'ah. We ask Allah to grant both us and you understanding of Islam and to keep us firm in the Jama'ah of the Muslims.

Allah ﷻ said, "This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved Islam as the religion for you" (Al-Maidah 3). He ﷻ also said, "Indeed, the religion with Allah is Islam" (Al-Imran 19). He ﷻ also said, "And whoever desires other than Islam as a religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers" (Al-Imran 85).

Thus, the religion which Allah is pleased with for the people and other than which He does not accept from them is Islam. Its reality, both linguistically and religiously, is: salamah, meaning ikhlas, and istislam to Allah, meaning submission to Him.

Abul-Abbas Ibn Taymiyyah ﷺ said, "Islam is to submit to Allah alone, and the term Islam encompasses istislam (submission) as well as having ikhlas (sincerity) in this istislam to Allah ... So whoever does not submit to Him is not a Muslim, and whoever submits to other than Him the same as he submits to Him is not a Muslim, and whoever submits to Him alone is a Muslim, as in the Quran, 'Yes (on the contrary), whoever submits his face in Islam to Allah while being a doer of good will have his reward with his Lord. And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve' (Al-Baqarah 112). He also said, 'And who is better in religion than one who submits himself to Allah while being a doer of good and follows the religion of Ibrahim, inclining toward truth? And Allah took Ibrahim as an intimate friend' (An-Nisa 125)" (An-Nubuwwat).



photo source: Rumiayah, issue 1, page 4

The Religion of Islam

And the Jama'ah of the Muslims

Allah is the Judge, the Rule is His

Indeed, the statement of tawhid (la ilaha illallah), which negates ilahiyah (the right to be worshiped) from all but Allah and affirms it for Allah alone, nullifies all forms of major shirk - in rububiyah (lordship), uluhiyyah (godhood), and al-asma was-sifat (names and attributes) - for the ilah (god) is the one that deserves to be worshiped and obeyed due to "those attributes it possesses necessitating that it be loved with the utmost love and submitted to with the utmost submission" (Tay-sir al-Aziz al-Hamid). Thus, whoever does not single out Allah with ilahiyah in all forms of worship and obedience has nullified the shahadah of tawhid and - through his actions - has belied what he claims of belief in the tawhid of rububiyah and al-asma was-sifat.

From among the different forms of worship that Allah ﷻ has singled out for mention in His Book and in the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ is the act of seeking judgment from His legislation alone and ruling by it alone. This is what is necessitated by one's belief that Allah is "the most just of judges" (Hud 45) and "the best of judges" (Al-An'am 57), that there is none more just in word than Allah, that there is none better than Him in judgment,

1. Tawhid is traditionally categorized by scholars into three categories: rububiyah, uluhiyyah, and al-asma was-sifat. Tawhid of rububiyah (lordship) means that there is no Lord but Allah, no one creates except Him, and no one provides the creation with what it needs save Him. This tawhid was recognized by the Arab muslimin, as Allah ﷻ said, "If you were to ask them, 'Who created the heavens and the earth?' they indeed would say, 'Allah.' Say, 'Then have you considered what you supplicate besides Allah? If Allah intended me harm, are they removers of His harm, or if He intended me mercy, are they withholders of His mercy?' Say, 'Sufficient for me is Allah upon Him (alone), rely the [weak] reliance'" (Az-Zumar 38). This tawhid did not exclude the possibility from takfir nor did it save them from the sword and Hell-fire. Allah ﷻ said in this regard, "Most of them believe not in Allah except while they say 'We believe' (Hud 36), meaning they believe in rububiyah but disbelieve in uluhiyyah. Tawhid of uluhiyyah is to worship Allah alone, as none deserves to be worshiped except Him. Tawhid of al-asma was-sifat means that Allah ﷻ has the most beautiful names and loftiest attributes and that He has no equal therein.



photo source: Rumiayah, issue 3, page 16

Findings

No
photographer
credit

Level 3 iconology

Iconology, the gathering of information and solidifying knowledge about the society in which the motifs under analysis.

Panofsky method

Research method 2

Visual rhetorics analysis

A **qualitative analysis** of visuals from the perspective of **persuasion** methods that aim to have an effect on the target audience.

Through this method, I will attempt to find unintended elements in the portraits that contradict the Islamic State's narratives.

What I have done & What I will do

socio-anthropological approach to Salafism: religious doctrine and (anti) social practices'

in Université de Lausanne

Literature about
The visual Culture of Jihad,
by Afshon Ostovar
Islam,
terrorism history

Documentaries and movie about the Islamic State: The State, which is a look at the lives of four British citizens who joined ISIS in Syria
Audio series: Introducing 'Caliphate', a New York Times audio series, I would like to read more about visual rhetorics analysis

The end...

for now!

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