



**RECOGNIZING AN ISLAMIC HERO:
The Quran-Hadith's Vision about Muhammad al-Fatih
In Indonesian Comics**

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Abstract: This study highlights the different Qur'an-Hadith visions regarding Islamic heroism in the Muslim community, especially in Indonesia. The lack of attention of Islamic scholars to the concept of heroism was significant, emphasized by analyzing the heroism of Muhammad al-Fatih in Indonesian Islamic comics, using the socio-heroism theory of Kristian Frisk. Critical discourse analysis reviews the relation of the Qur'an-Hadith visions in the Muhammad al-Fatih comic with the social discourse of heroism in Indonesia. Furthermore, this study concludes that Islamic heroism is recognized based on two aspects, namely the transcendental recognition from the information of the Qur'an-Hadith vision and the inherent recognition from the Muslim community. It also discovered that Islamic comics in Indonesia introduce the heroism of Muhammad al-Fatih due to several factors and objectives. First is the long-standing relationship with the Turkish community. Second, the Islamic heroism in Muhammad al-Fatih's actions is considered a sign of Islamic glories and brilliance. Third, his victory is considered by some groups as an example and a positive role model for Muslims from various aspects. Therefore, this research will significantly contribute to the knowledge of future Islamic scholars about Islamic heroism, the Quran-Hadith vision, and the study of religious comics, especially in Indonesia.

Keywords: Recognizing Islamic Hero, Quran-Hadith vision, Islamic Comic, Muhammad al-Fatih, Indonesian Muslim

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Introduction

ISLAMIC HEROISM (*Ar. abtal al-Islāmī*) is highly dominated by war figures, commanders, and generals. Meanwhile, scholars such as Franco understood heroism as a person fighting for the ideals of a community who selflessly accepts physical danger or social

sacrifice.¹ Kristian Frisk conversely regarded heroism as a social construct created by a community with a specific purpose.²

Frisk connected heroism with mainstream social theory, expressing that discussing factors that make a hero relates to fundamental sociological questions. This includes questions about the relationship between the individual and social order, the historical causes, and place of human beings, as well as behavior and the formation of cultural meaning. Moreover, the concept of heroism explains the social structure of characters and actions, alongside hero-worship, by understanding people, activities, and events as natural or intrinsic and heroic.³ This reason motivates the recognition of heroes from various generations by many Muslim communities.⁴

Muslim historians have written many stories of the Islamic struggle, which are filled with heroes and prominent figures who contributed to the religion's development. The history of Prophet Muhammad as the central figure of Islamic heroism⁵ has been written all over the world.⁶ More heroes have continued to appear, following the actions of leaders, commanders, and big names, who contributed to the spread of Islamic territory. These include Umar bin Khattab,⁷ Thariq bin Ziyad,⁸ Musa bin Nusair,⁹ Khalid bin

¹ Zeno E. Franco, Kathy Blau, and Philip G. Zimbardo, "Heroism: A Conceptual Analysis and Differentiation between Heroic Action and Altruism," *Review of General Psychology* 15, no. 2 (2011).

² Kristian Frisk, "What Makes a Hero? Theorising the Social Structuring of Heroism," *Sociology* 53, no. 1 (2019).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Peter Heath and Jan Knappert, "Islamic Legends: Histories of the Heroes, Saints, and Prophets of Islam," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110, no. 1 (1990).

⁵ Michael H. Hart, *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History* (Citadel, 2000).

⁶ Heath and Knappert, "Islamic Legends: Histories of the Heroes, Saints, and Prophets of Islam"; Timur M. Nadyrshin, "Heroes of Islamic History in the Collective Memory of Muslims of Russia," *Religiovedenie* 2020, no. 4 (2020); Carine Bourget, "Narrating the Prophet's Life: Mohammed in North African Novels," *International Journal of Francophone Studies* 16, no. 4 (2013); J. R. Jewett and D. S. Margoliouth, "Mohammed and the Rise of Islam," *The American Historical Review* 11, no. 4 (1906).

⁷ Michael H. Hart, *The 100*.

Walid, Sa'ad bin Abi Waqqas, Amru bin al-Ash, Abdurrahma al-Dakhil, Salahuddin al-Ayubi,¹⁰ and Muhammad al-Fatih.¹¹

A hero that has received attention globally is Muhammad al-Fatih, a great figure who contributed to Islamic civilization.¹² He was the sultan who succeeded in conquering the capital of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople. Al-Fatih is recognized as extraordinary by the Muslim community as he achieved this feat at 21 years old and was a good and strong leader through the guidance of the clerics.

Various forms of Muhammad al-Fatih's heroism recognition can be found in media in Indonesia and serve as a way of promoting closeness with the idolized hero. This includes oral media such as stories, folklore, and legends,¹³ as well as written media, including books. Popular media with appropriate technological developments, such as films, animations, comics, and short videos, have also been used. This recognition is always maintained by the Muslim community.

In Indonesia, the name Muhammad al-Fatih was proposed as the title of the main street in Jakarta, the nation's capital,¹⁴ which is somewhat surprising because the hero is familiar with the modern Turkish state. Therefore, this study is a theoretical or empirical analysis to understand the phenomenon of heroism, specifically Muhammad al-Fatih, in the Indonesian Muslim community. The majority of Muslim scholars' attention is concentrated on the

⁸ Lynn H. Nelson, "Gibraltar: The History of a Fortress," *History: Reviews of New Books* 1, no. 2 (1972).

⁹ Javier Albarrán, "Al-Andalus," in *War in the Iberian Peninsula, 700-1600*, 2018.

¹⁰ H. A R Gibb, "The Achievement of Saladin," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 35, no. 1 (2017); David Page, "Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity: The Search for Saladin," *International Affairs* 73, no. 4 (1997).

¹¹ Nur Anggre Apriliani, "Bravery in Felix Siauw's Novel Muhammad Al-Fatih 1453," *KnE Social Sciences* (2021); Ezad Azraai Jamsari, Ammalina Dalillah Mohd Isa, and Mohamad Zulfazdlee Abul Hassan Ashari, "Sultan Muhammad Al-Fatih: Ottoman's Great Strategic Planner," *Middle - East Journal of Scientific Research* 20, no. 12 (2014).

¹² Jamsari, Isa, and Ashari, "Sultan Muhammad Al-Fatih."

¹³ Apriliani, "Bravery in Felix Siauw's."

¹⁴ Merdeka.com, "Jalan Muhammad Al-Fatih Di Jakarta Dinilai Lebih Diterima Daripada Kemal Ataturk," 19 Oktober (Jakarta, 2021).

stories of Muhammad al-Fatih, and little or no investigations have been made concerning the concept of the Muslim community recognizing his heroism. However, recognition of heroism is essential in the culture and formation of civilization and signifies the identity of a community.¹⁵ This shows that heroes are an indicator of human identity and need to be studied¹⁶ as well as recognized to determine what one strives for in life.

The Muslim community tends to recognize heroism in life's problems and religiosity as transcendental meaning.¹⁷ Therefore, the recognition of Muhammad al-Fatih's heroism through comics in Indonesia is an undeniable reality that has attracted the public's attention to discourses related to religion, state, and national identity.¹⁸ This recognition also influences the ideology and practice of Islamic sectarianism in certain groups.¹⁹

This paper examines popular Islamic comics that tell the character of Muhammad Al-Fatih as a hero, which consists of 3 series. This comic, published by Salsabila Al-Kautsar, has been printed 14th times (with the last printing in December 2020). The publisher categorizes this publication as "Islamic Comics". This Muhammad Al-fatih comic is the work of an Indonesian illustrator named Handri Satria Handjaya. This comic consists of 3 series. The first series is Muhammad Al-Fatih: The War of Vana (picture 1). The second series is Muhammad Al-Fatih: The Resurrection (picture 2). The third series is entitled Muhammad Al-fatih: Conquest (picture 3). Apart from Muhammad Al-Fatih comics, Handri Satria also publishes comics for other figures with the theme of Islamic heroes.

¹⁵ Barbara Korte, Simon Wendt, and Nicole Falkenhayner, *Heroism as a Global Phenomenon in Contemporary Culture*, *Heroism as a Global Phenomenon in Contemporary Culture*, 2019.

¹⁶ Frisk, "What Makes a Hero?."

¹⁷ Samia AL-Shayban, "Davenant's The Siege of Rhodes: Islam, Heroism and Solyman the Magnificent," *Journal of Literature and Art Studies* 3, no. 2 (2013).

¹⁸ Korte, Wendt, and Falkenhayner, *Heroism as a Global Phenomenon*.

¹⁹ Matthias Zick Varul, "After Heroism: Religion versus Consumerism. Preliminaries for an Investigation of Protestantism and Islam under Consumer Culture," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 19, no. 2 (2008).



Figure 1:
Islamic Comics Series 1
(Muhammad al-Fatih:
Battle of Varna).²⁰



Figure 2:
Islamic Comics Series 2
(Muhammad al-Fatih:
The Resurrection)

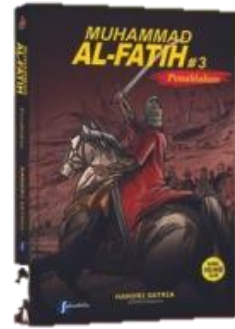


Figure 3:
Islamic Comics Series 3
(Muhammad al-Fatih:
Conquest)

This comic is very well received by the public, this can be proven by the number of prints that have reached 14 reprints. This comic is also a best seller in bookstores. However, this study only tracks and analyzes critical discourses on Quran-Hadith vision mentioned in the comic narration and relates it to the socio-religious phenomena in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study attempted to describe the phenomenon of the Muslim community's recognition of Muhammad al-Fatih as an Islamic hero. This was done using three core formulations, namely, how was Muhammad al-Fatih's heroic recognition by the Muslim community in Indonesia formed? What are the important factors affecting this recognition? What is the purpose of recognizing his heroism in comics?

This study is expected to contribute significantly to the conception of Islamic heroism in contemporary Indonesia and assist scholars, experts, and policymakers in understanding the dynamics of Islamic civilization. Moreover, it will help to understand the phenomenon of Islamic heroism in Indonesia.

Recognition of Islamic Heroism

Every culture has a different concept of heroism. In Western civilization, the word 'hero' has a Greek origin and means "person

²⁰ Team Al-Kautsar, "Katalog Komik Islami," last modified 2022, accessed July 7, 2022, <https://www.kautsar.co.id/category/komik-islam>.

of God." This individual is believed to be awarded the holy charisma²¹ to inspire.²² Therefore, a hero is understood as a charismatic person²³ who is conceptualized as an idealized reference group.

Heroism is created by the community in Western sociology²⁴ and serves as a mechanism to characterize self-identity. As part of the soul landscape, heroes are essential markers of inner identity. Meanwhile, heroic stories come from community leaders who often quote their living and dead counterparts as heroes. Generally, heroes are identified as emblems of noble values such as humility, integrity, dedication, vision, and courage, and through their recognition, public figures seek to embody, hence, strengthen the importance of virtues in the community.

Heroism is not only shaped by the community in Islamic literature but also a recognition of transcendental information.²⁵ Heroes are interpreted as fighters who uphold the truth (al-Haqq) to achieve the pleasure of God. The indicators of reality are also transcendental and include everything (orders and prohibitions) that comes from Allah (al-Quran) through the teachings of Islam by Prophet Muhammad (Hadith). Hence, heroes in the Islamic perspective should have this corridor and context (to fight for the truth and uphold the noble values of Islam as the true religion).²⁶ This denotes that the identification of heroes in Islam is closely related to the recognition of religious information and transcendental metanarratives.

Many pieces of Islamic literature relate the recognition of the Quran and Hadith to Islamic heroism in various cross-histories. Several groups and names have received recognition from the Quran, Hadith, and Muslim community as heroes of Islam, such as

²¹ Ernest Hakanen, *The (d)Evolution of Heroes: An Expanded Typology of Heroes for the Electronic Age* (Free Inquiry in Creative Sociology, 1989).

²² Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: The Free Press, 1947).

²³ Marshall Fishwick, *The Hero in Transition* (Bowling Green University Press, 1983).

²⁴ Frisk, "What Makes a Hero?."

²⁵ Douglas V. Porpora, "Personal Heroes, Religion, and Transcendental Metanarratives," *Sociological Forum* 11, no. 2 (1996).

²⁶ Page, "Jinnah, Pakistan and Islamic Identity."

the companions, warriors of Badr, Abu Bakr, Umar bin Khattab,²⁷ Usman bin Affan, Ali bin Abi Thalib, and Zubair bin Awam. Other recognized heroes include Thalhah bin Ubaidillah, Sulaiman al-Qonuni, Sulaiman al-Halbi, Abu Ubaidah bin Jarrah, Abdullah bin Yasin, Salahuddin al-Ayyubi,²⁸ Omar Mukhtar,²⁹ and Muhammad al-Fatih .

The majority of Islamic literature recognizes warlord figures as heroes, highlighting the information from the Quran and hadith about their merits and virtues in war situations. As contained in QS: 2: 193, QS 2: 154, QS 4: 75, the recognition of the Quran Hadith promotes the Muslim community to conceptualize the Hero as a person who dares to fight for Islam and sacrifices property and life without any strings attached. An example is Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi, whose name is engraved in the Muslim struggle history.³⁰ Salahuddin is believed to have revived the glory of Islam as predicted by the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad. The followers of Islam believe that heroes who fight for the truth are discovered at the end of every century. This belief comes from the Quran and Hadith, which are recognized by the Muslim community to this day.

Besides transcendental recognition, heroes obtain immanence recognition from the community, which is related to the value of truth in the context of upholding universal human values, such as justice, equality, tolerance, and the rights of others. The attitude of tolerance and respect for human values exhibited by the hero results in their acceptance and imitation by the community. Islamic heroism is associated with struggle and sacrifice in upholding universal values.³¹ This religion believes its value comes from the universal power, God Almighty, who is the source of truth and goodness and the ultimate goal of a hero. Therefore, a

²⁷ Michael H. Hart, *The 100*.

²⁸ Gibb, "The Achievement of Saladin."

²⁹ Frank Dhont, "The Historical Figure of Omar Al-Mukhtar and Islamic Martyrdom in Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 50, no. 1 (2012).

³⁰ Ann Moore, "Saladin: Noble Prince of Islam," *School Library Journal* 51, no. 1 (2005).

³¹ Dhont, "The Historical Figure of Omar Al-Mukhtar and Islamic Martyrdom in Indonesia."

hero will strive to provide benefits and examples for humankind. The immanence recognition of Islamic heroism is aimed at the glory of self and religion. A hero dedicates and sacrifices his existence to realize the ultimate truth without intending to receive material gain. Offering one's best entails giving an example with noble character, which is eternal, not material things, relative and temporal.³²

The Vision of the Quran-Hadith and the Heroism of Muhammad al-Fatih

Islamic literature mentions that the Quran and hadith provide a vision of heroism through metanarratives about future events.³³ In several instances, the Quran predicted the defeat of the Persians, the fall of the Romans, and even the end of time conditions. This is because the Quran contains values as a driving force to change human history, which is considered motivated by moralistic-idealistic parties. Therefore, the Quran has long predicted the direction of historical changes executed by Muslims under the guidance of Allah.³⁴

The Hadiths also provide a vision of Islamic heroism, which informs the heroic stories and future history of various events and figures, including Fathul Makkah, Conquest of Spain, Liberation of Jerusalem I, Liberation of Jerusalem II, Conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul), and conquests in other parts of the world. The Quran-Hadith vision can be seen in the following table:

Quran-Hadith's Vision	History	Islamic Hero
(QS Annur: 55)	Fathul Mekkah	Prophet Muhammad and his Companions
(Qs. Al-A'raf: 137)	Conquest of Baitul Maqdis I	Umar bin Khattab / Abu Ubaidah and Khalid bin Walid

³² Nadyrshin, "Heroes of Islamic History in the Collective Memory of Muslims of Russia."

³³ Sachiko Murata and Chittick William, *The Vision of Islam* (New York: Paragon House, 1994).

³⁴ A. Rippin, "The Vision of Islam . Sachiko Murata , William C. Chittick ," *The Journal of Religion* 76, no. 3 (1996).

"If the people of Sham corrupt their religion, then there will be no good left among you. There will always be one group from my Ummah who will be won by Allah, not affected by the fatter and not the opposite until the Day of Judgment comes." (HR. At-Tirmidhi)	Conquest of Baitul Maqdis II	Salahuddin al-Ayyubi
"The city of Constantinople will fall into the hands of Islam. The leader who has conquered is the best of leaders, and the troops under his command are the best of troops." [H.R. Ahmad bin Hanbal Al-Musnad 4/335]	Conquest of Constantinople	Muhammad al-Fatih
(QS Al-Fath: 21)	Conquest of Spain	Abdurrahman al-Dakhil
"If Kisra perishes, there will be no other Kisra after him, and if the Emperor perishes there will be no other Emperor after him. And by the One in Whose hand is my soul, you will indeed take the treasures of both of them in the way of Allah." (HR Bukhari).	Persian collapse	Saad bin Abi Waqqash
(QS Al-Fath: 21)	Conquest of Egypt	Amru bin al-Ash
(QS Arrum: 1-4)	Byzantine victory over Persia	None of Muslim Figure

The Quran vision of the future is contained in Surah al-Rūm, 1, which interpreters strengthen using the Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad. In the 7th century AD, the Christian Byzantine Empire was defeated by the Persians, leading to the loss of Jerusalem by the Byzantines. Although the defeat of Byzantium was believed to be irreversible, Muhammad, in 620 AD, almost seven years after their defeat, announced their imminent victory, as contained in the Quran Surah al-Rūm [30] verses 1-4.

This vision was doubted by the Arab community because the Byzantine victory within ten years seemed impossible, as they had suffered heavy losses in the war against the Persians.³⁵ Although the Arabs ridiculed the vision, stating that the victory announced by the Quran was impossible, history records its realization. Seven years after the revelation of the first verse of Surah al-Rūm, the decisive war between the Byzantine and Persian Empires occurred in December 627 AD in Nineveh. This time, the Byzantines surprisingly defeated the Persian army.³⁶ Hence, the Persians made a treaty a few months later to return the territories they had taken from the Byzantines.³⁷

As shown in Table 1, another the Quran-Hadith vision about human history that is still believed as a doctrine by Muslims concerns the success of the Muslims in conquering Byzantium, Constantinople. Muslim scholars recognize the conquest of Byzantium by the Muslims as one of the religious doctrines in their interpretations of the Quran-Hadith vision.

Muhammad al-Fatih's victory in conquering Constantinople is highly acknowledged in Islam history and even the world.³⁸ In fact, the conquest of Constantinople was informed by the Quran Surah al-Fath: 21 and the Hadith as narrated by Ahmad.

"Constantinople will indeed be conquered, so the best leaders were leaders at that time, and the best soldiers were soldiers at that time." (H.R. Ahmad)

This Hadith contains a grand vision of Islamic civilization through the conquest of Constantinople,³⁹ which motivated every Islamic leader to focus on jihad and spread the religion. Subsequently, it paved the way for the development and solidification of the Islamic empire and civilization. The conquest provided space for the religion to develop and dominate three-

³⁵ Lawrence A. Tritle and Warren Treadgold, "A History of the Byzantine State and Society," *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (2000).

³⁶ Hitti Philip K., *History of The Arabs* (Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 1970).

³⁷ Tritle and Treadgold, "A History of the Byzantine State."

³⁸ David Marshall Lang, "Between Byzantium and Islam," in *The Armenians*, 2021.

³⁹ Robert G. Hoyland, *In God's Path The Arab Conquests and the Creation of an Islamic Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the world's area⁴⁰ and facilitated the growth of Islamic scientific civilization, including law, science, philosophy, theology, literature, and art.

This Quran-Hadith vision motivated the Muslims to conquer the capital city of Byzantine, Constantinople. In the Hadith, the Prophet assigned the title of the best leader and army to those who succeeded in conquering the city.⁴¹ Therefore, Islamic commanders were promoted to continuously expand to the promised city through a spirit that made Islam's existence as a feature of the new world order an unavoidable fact. This spirit was created in the 8th century AD, when Islam controlled the lands formerly owned by the Persian Empire. The fall of the Sasanian dynasty convinced many Persians that God was on the side of the Arabs and approved of their faith because victory is always a strong argument.

Meanwhile, the Quran-Hadith vision about the conquest of Byzantium is always associated with jihad,⁴² indicating that this event was God's command or "in the way of God." The Muslim community was motivated to conquer the city as a field of jihad to uphold God's promises. Although the jihad mentioned in the Quran and Hadith did not always have the nuances of war, conquest, and battle, the meaning was synonymous with war at the beginning of the spread of Islamic territory. Muslims believed that they were assigned to fight for Islam as the highest truth, as shown in the letters sent by Muhammad to the kings of Rome, Habsyah, Egypt, and Bahrain. These letters instructed the kings to accept Islam through the word '*Aslim Taslam*,' meaning 'if you convert to Islam then you and your kingdom will be safe.'

The vision hints that Islam will spread rapidly in the region. According to historical records, the Islamic territory extended in only 20 years, accompanied by the conquests of Persia, Egypt, and the Roman territory. Besides the expansion of Islamic troops into the Middle East, Islam spread massively and significantly due to

⁴⁰ Hourani Albert, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, 2015.

⁴¹ Paizin H. B., "Reinterpretasi Hadis Penaklukan Konstantinopel Perspektif Fazlur Rahman," *Al-Bukhari : Jurnal Ilmu Hadis* 3, no. 1 (2020).

⁴² Abdullah Drury, "The Islamic Law of War: Justifications and Regulations," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 23, no. 1 (2012).

its nature that exempts institutionalized hierarchy and clergies such as Zoroastrianism and Christianity, promoting its acceptance by newcomers. Furthermore, the failure of several revolts by the Zoroastrians after conquering Persia conclusively confirms the religion's extensive establishment in the outer Arab region and its existence as a threat to the surrounding empires by the end of the 8th century.⁴³

This indicates that the Quran-Hadith vision informs the future glory of Islam. As narrated by Ahmad, Ad-Darimi, and al-Hakim, the Prophet had predicted the initial conquest of the Byzantine Empire by the Muslims. According to the Hadith, the Companion asked the Prophet about the first city out of Constantinople and Rome that would be conquered by the Muslims. The Prophet's reply to this inquiry was Constantinople, followed by Rome, and this information is the Hadith vision used in predicting the glory of Islam by conquering the city center of the Eastern Roman empire.⁴⁴

The conquest of Constantinople was achieved 800 years after the Qur'an-Hadith vision, long before Muhammad al-Fatih. Records show that 11 attempts were made by Muslims to conquer Constantinople, and these efforts began in 44 Hijriah at the time of Muawiyah bin Abu Sofyan. However, Muhammad al-Fatih, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, succeeded in conquering Constantinople. This was an extraordinary achievement due to the young age of the sultan. Mehmed was motivated to perform this feat because of the Qur'an-Hadith vision, which gave good news (*Bashirah*) about the conquest,⁴⁵ and was assisted by 100,000 soldiers under his command. Initially named Mehmed II but better known as Muhammad al-Fatih, he succeeded in conquering the heart of the greatest Christian civilization. Although Constantinople city was fortified by a 20 KM long protective fort, Mehmed managed to effectively execute his war strategy. He began the attack on April 6 or over a month earlier with challenging obstacles and no

⁴³ Hoyland, *In God's Path*.

⁴⁴ Apriliani, "Bravery in Felix Siauws."

⁴⁵ Mohd Hasrul Shuhari et al., "The Ethical Character of Sultan Muhammad Al-Fatih in Leadership," *Journal of Legal, Ethical and Regulatory Issues* 22, no. Special Issue 1 (2019).

satisfactory results. Therefore, the fall of Constantinople became the gateway for the Ottoman Caliphate to expand its power to the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkan Peninsula. This event also became a crucial point for the political stability of the Ottomans as a superpower in its time.

Muhammad al-Fatih's heroic story, as well as of other Islamic warriors in the ages, has always been narrated with endless energy. This sultan brilliantly and touchingly realized the Hadith because he had a burning desire and paid the price to achieve the goals and inspiration of Muhammad's treatise.

The history of the conquest of Constantinople by Muhammad al-Fatih is the Quran-Hadith vision that has been informed and disseminated in Muslim society. It motivated Muslim followers and troops to expand to the promised city,⁴⁶ and the success is believed to be proof of the truth of the promises of God and the Prophet Muhammad to Islam and its people.

The Heroic Factor of Muhammad al-Fatih in Indonesia

Islamic comics in Indonesia depict Muhammad al-Fatih as a very extraordinary figure. He conquered Constantinople at only 21 years old and became a good and strong leader through the guidance of the scholars. He memorized the Qur'an 30 juz', studied Hadith, learned mathematics, understood fiqh, astronomy, as well as war strategies, and mastered Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Latin, Hebrew, and Greek at a young age.

The Indonesian Muslim community recognizes the heroism of Muhammad al-Fatih through various media. However, a question regarding the causes of his recognition has been raised, as the sultan is not the only hero in Islamic history. Other big names, such as Salahuddin al-Ayubi, Khalid bin Walid, Amru bin al-Ash or Umar bin Khattab, are also entitled to be appointed as heroes of Islam in the nation.

Hence, Muhammad al-Fatih's heroism in Indonesia was considered a polemic in related discourse, following the plan to accord the name 'Mustafa Kemal Attaturk' to a street in Jakarta in

⁴⁶ Sarkowi, "Peranan Muhammad Al-Fatih Dalam Penaklukan," *Jurnal Criksetra* 5, no. 10 (2016).

October 2021. This received a negative response from the Indonesian people, who considered the name 'Muhammad al-Fatih' more appropriate.⁴⁷ The polemic began when Turkey proposed Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as the name of a street in Jakarta to serve as a form of cooperation with Indonesia. Subsequently, Indonesia proposed 'Ahmad Soekarno' as a street name in Turkey, while the name suggested for the street in Jakarta sparked rejection from various parties.

This polemic proved that Indonesians considered Muhammad al-Fatih a hero who was on par with their national hero, the first president of Indonesia, Soekarno.⁴⁸ Therefore, discussing the arguments and factors of Muhammad al-Fatih's heroic phenomenon in Indonesia is necessary. According to observations and interviews from several community leaders, some factors behind the sultan's recognition as a hero of Islam in the nation are:

First, Indonesia-Turkey Islamic Relations: Indonesians have always had good relations with Turkey, which can be traced back to the 12th century. Islamic students from Turkey who visited Indonesia at that time played an essential role in the spread of Islam. Relations with the Ottoman Empire (Turkish state change) began with the Ottoman expedition to Aceh in the 16th century, with the excuse of responding to a request for assistance from the Aceh Sultanate against the arrival of the Portuguese in Malacca. Hence, Turkey played a vital role in the Islamization of Indonesia in a unique way, characterized by rapidity and sustainability. Relations between both countries occurred in the Islamization plan, in terms of Turkey's role in strengthening the existence of Islamic politics in the archipelago as well as the dynamics and treasures of the religion's scholarship in Indonesia.⁴⁹

According to history, in the 15th century, the Acehnese sought help from the Ottoman Sultanate to ease the way to the Holy Land after being prevented from embarking on a pilgrimage by the

⁴⁷ Merdeka.com, "Jalan Muhammad Al-Fatih di Jakarta Dinilai Lebih Diterima daripada Kemal Atatürk."

⁴⁸ KumparanNews, "Sekjen MUI Usul Al-Fatih Jadi Nama Jalan: Lebih Setara Dengan Sukarno," 20 Oktober (Jakarta, 2021).

⁴⁹ Meirion Meirion, Zulvia Trinova, and Yelmi Eri Firdaus, "The Ottoman Empire Relations With the Nusantara (Spice Islands)," *Tabuah* 24, no. 2 (2020).

maritime forces. Meanwhile, the history of relations between Turkey and Indonesia is known to have existed since the 12th century, beginning when Turkish students visited Indonesia with the initial aim of spreading Islamic teachings through the da'wah method, starting from the Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam region. Another proof of the closeness between the two countries is the presence of an ancient Aceh royal flag that looks very similar to the Ottoman Turkish imperial flag, which has a crescent moon background. Also, these good relations were highlighted when Turkey acknowledged Indonesia as an independent country on December 29, 1949. Previously, Indonesia had recognized the sovereignty of Turkey, which proclaimed its independence in October 1923. This became the forerunner of more diplomatic severe relations between both nations, leading to a cooperative relationship that has endured for a very long time.

Subsequently, Turkey's original view of Indonesia as a distant country has been transformed into emotional closeness. These two countries have a common ground: their conceptual existence and the most substantial ties forged throughout history. Also, Turkish and Indonesians have a binding quality, namely the presence of a Muslim majority population.⁵⁰ Through these similarities, both nations can make excellent contributions to the advancement of good relations. However, there are no severe political problems that may hinder the efforts to develop good relations between the two countries.

The past close relationship between Indonesia and Turkey can facilitate good relations between these two Muslim nations in the present. Indonesians, specifically Muslims, focus enthusiastically on the history of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, as signified by the many romantic historical representations in the media, such as the filming of *Jejak Khilafah di Nusantara* in 2020. Also, Indonesian Muslims express their interest in Ottoman history through digital media, denoted by the dozens of existing documentary videos on this topic. Many books highlight a connection with Ottoman history, including the Islamic heroic comic of Muhammad al-Fatih

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Lambourn, "From Anatolia to Aceh. Ottomans, Turks and Southeast Asia," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 22, no. 1/2 (2016).

in Indonesia. Furthermore, some elementary schools teach about Muhammad al-Fatih to enable the younger generation to imitate the morals and character of this historical figure.

This reality shows the enthusiasm of the Indonesian Islamic community towards the history of the Ottoman Empire. Hence, the inclusion of Muhammad al-Fatih as a hero who deserves to be idolized is unsurprising. After the Islamic comic of this figure was released, the Indonesian Islamic community was very receptive to its publication, and it became a best-seller.

Second, Muhammad al-Fatih is considered a hero of humanity.⁵¹ Indonesians are concerned his actions in conquering Constantinople as heroic because he fought for Islam as well as human values. The Islamic comics depict the conquest of Constantinople as accepted by people from lower castes who felt neglected by the Byzantine rulers. In the comic, Muhammad al-Fatih is described as a humanist leader, causing the people of Constantinople to welcome the liberation of the city.

For most Indonesian Muslims, Muhammad al-Fatih liberated Constantinople from the immorality and grip of the Catholic Church, which had been oppressing Orthodox Christians. Some historians argue that after the fall of Constantinople, Muhammad al-Fatih refrained from massacring civilians and nobles, executing only those who opposed the victorious Ottoman Turks. This historical version has been made into a feature film and historical documentary in various digital media.

Therefore, Muhammad al-Fatih is described as a humanist figure. After the conquest, he filled the city with people from various ethnic and religious backgrounds and also moved the capital of the Ottoman Empire from Edirne to Constantinople. He made a city that was tolerant of anyone, allowing people from different religious and cultural backgrounds to sit in government seats, alongside permitting worship according to their respective beliefs.⁵²

After the conquest, Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih entered Constantinople, got off his horse, and prostrated as a sign of

⁵¹ Jamsari, Isa, and Ashari, "Sultan Muhammad Al-Fatih."

⁵² Shuhari et al., "The Ethical Character."

gratitude to Allah SWT. Then, he headed to the Hagia Sophia Church and ordered its conversion into a mosque. Constantinople was made the capital and seat of government of the Ottoman Empire and was renamed Istanbul. Besides being famous as a war general and successfully expanding the Ottoman power beyond other sultans, Muhammad al-Fatih was known as a poet, possessing a *diwan* or a collection of poems he composed personally. The sultan built more than 300 mosques, 57 schools, and 59 baths in various Ottoman areas, with the most famous relics being the Sultan Muhammad II Mosque and Jami 'Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. Hence, this is an example of life for certain groups that are devoted to Indonesian Muslims⁵³ and can foster change among such communities.

However, the story of the heroic conquest of Constantinople can be viewed alternatively, specifically from the perspective of Western society. According to this perception, Muhammad al-Fatih was an aggressor who harbored ambitions to conquer the West. Some opposing parties consider the sultan a figure of aggression and invasion of the European world, including Western Christians, who view him as an aggressor in the conquest of Constantinople. Muhammad al-Fatih is described as an ambitious person who sought to continue the ideals of his father, Sultan Murad II, by ruling Constantinople and mainland Europe.⁵⁴ According to this version, the sultan did not uphold the values of humanism, as there is no evidence that he cared about the fate of the Orthodox Christians oppressed by the Roman Catholic Church. A historical record also reveals that Muhammad al-Fatih allowed his troops to pillage Constantinople for three days and nights. The city's inhabitants experienced massacres and rapes, including the killing of about 4000 people, and the sale of 50,000 into slavery, causing many to avoid being enslaved by committing suicide.

⁵³ Muhammad Ridwan and Nurhasanah Bakhtiar, "Nilai -Nilai Pendidikan dan Dakwah Muhammad al-Fatih sebagai Penakluk Konstantinopel," *Wardah* 21, no. 1 (2020).

⁵⁴ Halil Inalcik, "Mehmed the Conqueror (1432–1481) and His Time," *Speculum*, 1960.

However, the first version and Islamic history narrative, believed by Indonesian Muslims, is that Muhammad al-Fatih was a liberator who freed the people of Constantinople from the shackles of an unjust ruler. Several pieces of literature mention that this was his motivation to conquer Constantinople. The spread of the Islamic version of this story in Indonesian Muslim society is understandable, causing the people to consider him a hero who fought for human values. Since the majority of Indonesians are Muslim, the spread and extensive belief of this version, instead of the Western narrative, is justifiable. Although Indonesia was a Dutch colony for hundreds of years, the emotional, theological, and cultural closeness made the Islamic depiction of Muhammad al-Fatih more acceptable than the Western account.

Third, Muhammad al-Fatih is considered a symbol of the glory of Islam. His heroism in Indonesia is also related to Islamic civilization, which is one of the crucial civilizations and claimed to rule over the world. Islamic culture contributed to the development of global civilization in various fields, such as science, art, religion, social society, politics, etc. Due to its vast territory, the Ottoman Empire was one of the most prestigious Islamic rulers. Muhammad al-Fatih or Mehmed II was also regarded as the most meritorious sultan because he succeeded in conquering Constantinople City, which was previously controlled by the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman). However, Islamic civilization has faded slightly in modern times, as indicated by the large number of Islamic territories colonized by the West. It has failed to contribute significantly to the science and technology advances in human civilization, which is currently led by the West.

This history has led Muslims to romanticize the golden past of Islam, using Muhammad al-Fatih as a symbol of past glory. His heroic actions in conquering Constantinople and overthrowing the Byzantine Empire are highly acknowledged, resulting in his recognition as a hero by the Indonesian community, the majority of whom are Muslims. His heroism can also be interpreted as an effort to revive the glory of Islam, as previously attempted by

Hizbut-Tahrir Indonesia, which longed for the revival of Islamic government under a state system called the Khilafah.

Fourth, Muhammad al-Fatih is considered a successful young leader. This achievement led to his fame and recognition as a leader who enhanced the glory of Islam. According to records, His success is inseparable from his courage, purity, and noble character. The spirit of jihad glorifying the intentions and hopes of victory in front of Allah made Muhammad al-Fatih and his soldiers victorious.⁵⁵ Hence, his leadership with a revolutionary war strategy that resulted in the conquest of Constantinople amazed many people. Through comics, various methods of Muhammad al-Fatih's leadership in his victory have been narrated.

Muhammad al-Fatih has carved a character that is brave, obedient to Allah, optimistic, religious, keeps his stance, and endures all problems. Some other aspects that have been reflected are having a tall, mighty, strong, dashing body and regularly attending prayer or the obligatory Sunnah. He was a significant figure because of his closeness to Allah SWT, diligence in performing the Monday-Thursday Sunnah fasting, completion of the Qur'an, and broad knowledge. Therefore, Muhammad al-Fatih was a highly respected leader in his time, and within the age of 22 to 25 years, he was entrusted with replacing his father as a king or sultan. These qualities led him to hold an essential determination or mission in his conquest of Constantinople.⁵⁶

Fifth, Muhammad al-Fatih was an exemplary role model. The sultan's achievements are an excellent example for the Muslim generation, and his heroic history has been spread continuously through generations.⁵⁷ Hence, he has made various impressions that the Muslim community in Indonesia can adopt to promote human values and exhibit excellent and suitable examples in society. This has been illustrated by the leadership of Muhammad

⁵⁵ Apriliani, "Bravery in Felix Siauw's."

⁵⁶ Siauw Felix, *Interview 1*, 2021.

⁵⁷ Yulianto Dhamar, "Meneladani Muhammad Al Fatih Dalam Membangun Kredibilitas," 22 Maret, last modified 2021, <https://jabar.kemenag.go.id/portal/read/meneladani-muhammad-al-fatih-dalam-membangun-kredibilitas>.

al-Fatih in the conquest of Constantinople, using strategies and implementations that were executed efficiently with the involvement of Allah SWT.

The Purpose of the Recognition of Muhammad Al-Fatih's Heroism in Islamic Comics

The recognition of Muhammad al-Fatih's heroism by Indonesians is an influential reality in various socio-religious interactions, which has led to the emergence of many discourses and dynamics. Consequently, the development of comics is an attempt to promote mainstream Islamic heroism in social life in Indonesia. Based on observations and interviews that were corroborated with valid data, several goals were directed at making his Islamic heroism mainstream, as follows:

First, Islamic heroism, through comics, aims to create social control in Indonesia. The leadership, war strategy, and victory of Muhammad al-Fatih in conquering Constantinople amazed many people. Hence, the existing inequality should be corrected immediately by giving social control to Muslims. Muslims, as the next generation of leaders, should be prepared and equipped with the good social power to act effectively and bring the country to glory, following the example of Muhammad al-Fatih.⁵⁸

Therefore, the formation of social control requires good examples and habituation. This imitation can be performed by giving direct examples to the community or introducing Islamic leaders who possess noble characters and can function as role models. Introducing these noble figures is critical because many young people idolize Western figures such as those in the movies, leading to the emergence of worldly attitudes and distance from religion. As a result, various parties must participate in the struggle to fix the crisis. The Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih the Conqueror comic contains the history of a young Muslim figure who exhibited noble character, which enabled him to conquer Constantinople, the city with the most vigorous defense of its time.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Ridwan and Bakhtiar, "Nilai -Nilai Pendidikan."

⁵⁹ Apriliani, "Bravery in Felix Siauw's."

Some qualities of Muhammad al-Fatih that can be used as social control are, first, learning extensively in the scientific field. As explained above, Muhammad al-Fatih had been educated since childhood by a great scholar who was asked by his father. Despite his young age, he learned more and could theoretically and practically study the Qur'an, Hadith, fiqh, and other modern sciences, such as arithmetic, astronomy, history, and military education. He also learned various subjects, including mathematics, physics, astronomy, practical war arts, military, and other sciences. However, the sultan did not forget his worship after gaining power, as he was very active religiously, performed his obligations even in critical situations, and prayed for the safety and victory of the Islamic troops over Constantinople.

Second, promoting the movement to learn Islamic history. Muhammad al-Fatih made history the key by understanding the actions to take while dealing with a problem. This is the primary reason for his existence as one of the most famous war leaders with various brilliant strategies. Subsequently, the last page of the comic ends with a statement that the conquest of Constantinople is a significant part of human history, not only for Muslims:

The conquest of Constantinople by the Ghazis led by Sultan Muhammad al-Fatih. was a great event that garnered global attention. No one, except the sultan, has ever caused such a commotion among European Christians. His first conquest became the struggle's most outstanding achievement, and he made noble decisions after the win. He forgave those who took refuge in the Hagia Sophia church, such as pastors, parents, women, and children, ordered the elite Janissaries to guard every citizen's house to avoid the ravages of conquest, and even conducted mass pardons.⁶⁰

Third, the Islamic comic of Muhammad al-Fatih aims to set an example for the younger generation. The first page states that the book is dedicated to all ages of Islam.

"For all generations of Islam, never forget that Islam has great people. It is enough for us to reflect on it, to all generations of Islam".⁶¹

⁶⁰ Satria Handri, *Komik Muhammad Al-Fatih #3 Penaklukan* (Jakarta: Salsabila, Pustaka al-Kautsar Group, 2020).

⁶¹ Ibid.

As a leader, Muhammad al-Fatih served as an example who possessed numerous advantageous qualities, including a very high fighting spirit that did not despair easily, even under challenging conditions. These positive qualities were not inherent at birth but were created through adequate competence. Meanwhile, history records that Muhammad al-Fatih provided medicine, health services, and hospital facilities free of charge to anyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, skin color, and religion, during his leadership.

In his comics, Muhammad al-Fatih is described as a great and humble leader. Since childhood, he had witnessed his father's attempts to conquer Constantinople and had studied the efforts made throughout Islamic history to destroy the city, thereby motivating a strong desire to succeed in this goal. His strength lay in his height, as he was educated intensively by the leading scholars of his time in childhood. Therefore, he is described as a leader with noble character due to his abundant Islamic education. In the comic, Mehmet II (Muhammad al-Fatih) described studied science and war strategy intensively as a child.

The characters of Muhammad al-Fatih that are highlighted in Islamic comics include the following lessons.

Tough leader: Muhammad al-Fatih was very famous for his excellent leadership style and ability to amaze both friends and enemies, as well as his care and cleverness in planning. His troops, which he selected carefully, were renowned for their prowess, thereby buttressing his recognition as the best leader and confirming his existence as a role model for future leaders. During his leadership, he protected all people without discrimination by implementing a culture of tolerance. Also, he made education free for every citizen due to his belief that the progress of a nation can only be achieved with knowledge.⁶²

Consistency in worship: Muhammad al-Fatih always drew close to Allah SWT by increasing worship and believed that the struggle would only succeed through God. However, this straightforward and clear formula is complicated for many leaders, resulting in their failure.

⁶² Shuhari et al., "The Ethical Character."

Hard worker: Besides his diligence at worship, the sultan was very hardworking. Therefore, a leader is also required to work hard and earnestly at any available time.

Strong beliefs: Another prominent character of Muhammad al-Fatih was his belief in the *bisjarah* (*nuburwah*) of Prophet Muhammad. Although several factors make a person a good leader, the absolute trait is an optimistic attitude. This can enable a leader to bring a positive aura to his team and continually encourage the team to solve problems. Hence, a leader should have an optimistic attitude in transmitting the atmosphere and belief to his subordinates that all issues can be resolved.

Smart and brave: The qualities possessed by Muhammad al-Fatih also included intelligence and courage. Smartness and bravery are two essential characteristics that every leader should possess. Intelligence is needed in difficult times when faced with many obstacles and challenges in achieving goals, while courage is necessary to overcome the risks that will be experienced.

Conclusion

This study concluded that the phenomenon of Muhammad al-Fatih's Islamic heroism in Muslim society is motivated by two aspects. First, the existence of transcendental recognition that comes from the metanarrative and the Qur'an-Hadith vision regarding a leader who will conquer the Byzantine Empire. Second, the immanent recognition that comes from the community, which recognizes that Muhammad al-Fatih's actions in conquering Constantinople were following the requirements of Islamic heroism.

Furthermore, this study exposed that Muhammad al-Fatih's heroism in Indonesia was motivated by socio-contextual factors. These include good relations with Turkey in various aspects and the community's perception of the sultan as a hero of humanity. Muhammad al-Fatih is also considered a symbol of the glory of Islam, a successful young leader, and an exemplary role model. Meanwhile, the existence of the Islamic comic of Muhammad al-Fatih aims to promote social control and Islamic history and educate generations of Muslims with noble characters.

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