

**RECONSTRUCTING PERSIAN CIVILIZATION THROUGH HADITH:
A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SASANIAN EMPIRE AND IRAN'S
TRANSFORMATION IN ISLAMIC HISTORY****Zuherni AB, Nurlaila, Zulihafnani**

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zuherni.ab@ar-raniry.ac.id**ABSTRACT**

The historical relationship between Islam and Iran represents one of the most consequential encounters between a prophetic religious tradition and an established imperial civilization in Late Antiquity. Although the Qur'an and Hadith do not provide a continuous history of Persia, several Prophetic traditions explicitly refer to the Persian people (*Fāris*), the Persian monarchy (*Kisrā*), the treasures of the Persian Empire, and the religious and intellectual contribution of Persians to the Muslim community. This article examines these traditions through a hadith-historical approach in order to investigate how Persia was represented in the Prophetic discourse and how these representations correspond to the subsequent transformation of Iranian civilization. The study employs qualitative library research, analysing of hadith *matn*, contextual reading, and comparative historical analysis. Particular attention is given to the traditions concerning Salman al-Farisi, and the opening of the treasures of Kisra ibn Hurmuz. The findings demonstrate three principal dimensions. First, Prophetic references to Persia were not merely geographically, they anticipated the incorporation of Persian populations into the expanding Muslim community. Second, the traditions concerning Kisra and Persian treasures function historically as eschatological and political predictions whose fulfillment became associated by early Muslims with the collapse of Sasanian imperial power and the conquest of its territories. Third, the hadith corpus does not portray Persian identity as inherently opposed to Islam. On the contrary, the Salman tradition explicitly recognizes the capacity of Persians to become major bearers of faith and knowledge. Consequently, the historical trajectory from Sasanian Persia to Islamic Iran should not be interpreted simply as a transition from Persian civilization to Arab civilization, but as a complex process of political conquest, religious conversion, institutional adaptation, intellectual exchange, and the subsequent emergence of a Persian-Islamic civilization. The article argues that hadith provides an important theological memory of Persia, but its historical interpretation must remain integrated with classical Islamic historiography and modern Iranian historiography.

Keywords: Iran, Persia, Hadith, Sasanian Empire, Kisra, Salman al-Farisi, Islamic history, Persian civilization, Islamic historiography

**ABSTRAK**

Hubungan historis antara Islam dan Iran merupakan salah satu bentuk perjumpaan paling penting antara tradisi keagamaan profetik dan peradaban imperium yang telah mapan pada periode *Late Antiquity*. Meskipun Al-Qur'an dan hadith tidak menyajikan sejarah Persia secara berkesinambungan, sejumlah hadith Nabi secara eksplisit merujuk kepada bangsa Persia (*Fāris*), monarki Persia (*Kisrā*), kekayaan dan harta kekaisaran Persia, serta kontribusi keagamaan dan intelektual masyarakat Persia terhadap komunitas Muslim. Artikel ini mengkaji hadith-hadith tersebut melalui pendekatan historis-hadith (*hadith-historical approach*) untuk menganalisis bagaimana Persia direpresentasikan dalam wacana kenabian dan sejauh mana representasi tersebut memiliki keterkaitan dengan transformasi peradaban Iran pada periode-periode berikutnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kepustakaan kualitatif dengan memadukan, analisis *matn* hadith, pembacaan kontekstual, dan analisis sejarah komparatif. Perhatian khusus diarahkan pada hadith-hadith yang berkaitan dengan Salmān al-Fārisī, prediksi mengenai berakhirnya tatanan kekuasaan Persia, serta pembukaan perbendaharaan Kisra ibn Hurmuz. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga dimensi utama. Pertama, rujukan Nabi terhadap Persia tidak semata-mata bersifat geografis, tetapi juga mengisyaratkan masuk dan terintegrasinya masyarakat Persia ke dalam komunitas Muslim yang terus berkembang. Kedua, hadith-hadith mengenai Kisra dan perbendaharaan Persia secara historis dapat dipahami sebagai prediksi yang memiliki dimensi eskatologis dan politis, yang kemudian oleh generasi Muslim awal dikaitkan dengan runtuhnya kekuasaan imperium Sasania dan penaklukan wilayah-wilayah kekuasaannya. Ketiga, korpus hadith tidak merepresentasikan identitas Persia sebagai sesuatu yang secara inheren bertentangan dengan Islam. Sebaliknya, hadith tentang Salmān secara eksplisit mengakui kapasitas masyarakat Persia untuk menjadi salah satu kelompok penting dalam pembawa dan pengembangan iman serta pengetahuan. Dengan demikian, perjalanan historis dari Persia Sasania menuju Iran Islam tidak tepat dipahami semata-mata sebagai transisi dari peradaban Persia menuju peradaban Arab, melainkan sebagai proses kompleks yang melibatkan penaklukan politik, konversi keagamaan, adaptasi kelembagaan, pertukaran intelektual, dan pada akhirnya pembentukan peradaban Persia-Islam. Artikel ini menegaskan bahwa hadith menyediakan memori teologis yang penting mengenai Persia, tetapi interpretasi historis terhadapnya harus tetap ditempatkan dalam dialog yang integratif dengan historiografi Islam klasik dan historiografi Iran modern.

Kata Kunci: Iran, Persia, Hadis, Kerajaan Sasanian, Kisra, Salman al-Farisi, Sejarah Islam, Budaya Persia



INTRODUCTION

Iran occupies a distinctive position in the history of Islamic civilization. Long before the emergence of Islam, the Iranian plateau and its surrounding territories had developed successive political, intellectual, religious, and cultural formations. The Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian empires constituted major centres of power in the ancient Near East. By the seventh century CE, when the Prophet Muhammad began preaching Islam in Arabia, the Sasanian Empire represented one of the two dominant imperial powers of Late Antiquity, alongside the Byzantine Empire.¹

The encounter between Islam and Persia therefore cannot be reduced to the military conquest of a territory. It represented an encounter between two extensive civilizational formations. On the one side was the emerging Muslim community centred initially in Arabia; on the other was a sophisticated imperial order characterized by centralized monarchy, administrative institutions, Zoroastrian religious structures, developed urban centres, taxation systems, and extensive commercial networks.

Modern scholarship generally regards the seventh-century Arab-Muslim conquest as a major turning point in Iranian history. The decisive military encounters, including the battle of al-Qadisiyyah and the subsequent collapse of Sasanian political authority, opened the way for the incorporation of large portions of the Iranian world into the Islamic polity. Nevertheless, the process was neither instantaneous nor culturally uniform. Iranian societies continued to preserve linguistic, administrative, social, and cultural forms while progressively engaging with Islam. The result was not the disappearance of Iranian civilization but its transformation within an Islamic framework.² This historical transformation raises an important question for Islamic studies: How did the Prophetic tradition represent Persia before the Muslim conquest, and how should those representations be interpreted in light of subsequent Iranian history? The question is particularly significant because several hadiths contain explicit references to Persia and the Persian people. Among the most important is the tradition narrated by Abū Hurayrah in which the Prophet reportedly placed his hand on Salman al-Farisi and stated:

حَدَّثَنِي عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ بِلَالٍ، عَنْ ثَوْرٍ، عَنْ أَبِي الْعَيْشِ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: كُنَّا جُلُوسًا عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ، فَأَنْزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ سُورَةُ الْجُمُعَةِ: {وَأَخْرَيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ}، قَالَ:

¹ M. G. Morony, In D. T. Potts (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran* (Oxford University Press, 2013). 157.

² A. J. Newman, *Islam in Iran. Oxford Bibliographies in Islamic Studies*. (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 136.



قُلْتُ: مَنْ هُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ فَلَمْ يُرَاجِعْهُ حَتَّى سَأَلَ ثَلَاثًا، وَفِينَا سَلْمَانُ الْفَارِسِيُّ، وَضَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَدَهُ عَلَى سَلْمَانَ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: لَوْ كَانَ الْإِيمَانُ عِنْدَ الثَّرَيَّا، لَنَالَهُ رِجَالٌ، أَوْ رَجُلٌ، مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ.³

We were sitting in the company of the Prophet ﷺ when Sūrat al-Jumu'ah was revealed to him: And [He has sent him to] others among them who have not yet joined them' (Qur'an 62:3). I asked, who are they, O Messenger of Allah? He did not respond to me until I asked him three times. Salman al-Fārisī was among us. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ placed his hand upon Salman and then said even if faith were at the Pleiades, men or a man from among these people would certainly attain it.

The same hadith is recorded in *Sahih Bukhari* and also in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, where the expression explicitly refers to men from Persia (*rijāl min Fāris*). The contextual association with Salman al-Farisi has consequently made this tradition one of the most frequently cited Prophetic statements concerning the religious significance of the Persian people.

Another important hadith concerns the Persian monarch:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: إِذَا هَلَكَ كِسْرَى فَلَا كِسْرَى بَعْدَهُ، وَإِذَا هَلَكَ قَيْصَرٌ فَلَا قَيْصَرَ بَعْدَهُ، وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَتَنْفَقَنَّ كُنُوزُهُمَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.⁴

When Kisra perishes, there will be no Kisra after him and when Caesar perishes, there will be no Caesar after him. By Him in whose hand is the soul of Muhammad, their treasures will certainly be spent in the path of Go.

A related report transmitted through 'Adī ibn Ḥātim is even more historically specific:

وَلَعِنَ طَالَتْ بِكَ حَيَاةٌ لَتُفْتَحَنَّ كُنُوزُ كِسْرَى، قُلْتُ: كِسْرَى بْنُ هُرْمُزٍ؟ قَالَ: كِسْرَى بْنُ هُرْمُزٍ.⁵

If you live long enough, the treasures of Kisra will certainly be opened. I asked, Kisra ibn Hurmuz? He replied, Kisra ibn Hurmuz. The report further records that 'Adī later stated that he personally participated in the opening of the treasures of Kisra ibn Hurmuz.

These hadiths are historically important because they allow the study of Persia from two complementary perspectives. First, they reveal how Persia was conceptualized within early Islamic religious discourse. Second, they became part of the retrospective memory through which Muslims interpreted the fall of Sasanian imperial power. Nevertheless, an important methodological caution is necessary. Hadith is not a conventional political chronicle. A hadith report should not be transformed into a complete historical narrative merely because later events appear to correspond with its wording. Hadith criticism requires attention to *isnād*, *matn*, variant

³ Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ju'fī, *Al-Bukhari*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, Maktabah Syamilah, juz. 15, p. 176.

⁴ Al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, juz. 10, p. 363.

⁵ Al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, juz. 11, p. 429.



transmissions, chronology, terminology, and the historical circumstances in which traditions were transmitted and compiled. Modern historical research likewise requires comparison with non-hadith sources.⁶

This methodological caution is particularly important when studying prophetic predictions. Modern historical scholarship has demonstrated that historical memory can shape narratives of earlier events. Persian pre-Islamic history, for example, was subsequently reconstructed through Arabic and Persian historiography, epic literature, genealogical traditions, and Islamic political narratives.⁷ The history of Iran must therefore be approached through multiple layers of evidence rather than through a single textual tradition.

This study elaborate discussion on three point, first, how does the canonical hadith corpus represent Persia and the Persian people? Second, how can the hadiths concerning Persia and Kisra be historically contextualized in relation to the Sasanian Empire? Third, what does the hadith evidence contribute to understanding the transformation of Persia into an important centre of Islamic civilization?

The central argument is that the Prophetic representation of Persia is characterized by a remarkable tension between political decline and religious potential. Persian imperial sovereignty is represented as temporary, while Persian participation in the religious community is represented positively. This distinction is essential for understanding why the Islamic conquest of Sasanian Iran did not result in the disappearance of Persian civilization. Instead, Persian society became one of the principal contributors to the intellectual, literary, theological, legal, and spiritual development of Islam.

This research employs a qualitative, interdisciplinary library-research methodology combining hadith studies, historical analysis, and textual interpretation. The primary sources consist of hadith traditions from the major Sunni canonical collections, especially:

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Persia and Iran as Historical Categories

Before examining the hadith material, it is necessary to distinguish the terms *Persia* and *Iran*. Persia is commonly employed in historical literature to designate the Iranian cultural and political world, particularly in pre-modern contexts. Iran, by contrast, is the modern state's official name and has a longer indigenous history as a concept of Iranian identity. Modern scholarship emphasizes that the meaning of Iran changed across historical

⁶ Abdul Wahid Arsyad, 'STUDI TERHADAP ASPEK KEUNGGULAN KITAB SAHIH MUSLIM TERHADAP SHAHIH BUKHARI', *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura*, 17.2 (2019), p. 312, doi:10.22373/jiif.v17i2.2454.

⁷ M. Tavakoli-Targhi, *Contested Memories: Narrative Structures and Allegorical Meanings of Iran's Pre-Islamic History*. *Iranian Studies*. (Cambridge University Press., 2022), p. 84.



periods and should not automatically be projected backward as equivalent to the contemporary nation-state.⁸

Yarshater notes that pre-Islamic Iranian historical traditions combined myth, legend, dynastic memory, and historical information. These traditions were eventually transmitted through works such as the *Khwadāy-nāmag* and later Arabic and Persian histories. Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāme* became particularly influential in preserving a Persian conception of pre-Islamic history.⁹

Consequently, when a hadith uses the term *Fāris* or *Furs*, the researcher should avoid automatically equating the term with the territorial boundaries of the contemporary Islamic Republic of Iran. The Persian world of Late Antiquity extended across regions that today belong to several modern states.

The Sasanian Empire before Islam

The Sasanian Empire was established in 224 CE and survived until the seventh century. It constituted the final major pre-Islamic Persian imperial formation and developed a close relationship between political authority and Zoroastrian religious institutions.¹⁰ Sasanian political organization was highly developed. The empire possessed administrative divisions, taxation systems, military institutions, urban centres, and diplomatic relations with Byzantium and neighboring peoples. Its position in the eastern Mediterranean, Mesopotamia, Central Asia, and the Arabian frontier made it an unavoidable geopolitical factor in the Arabian world.

By the time of the Prophet Muhammad, however, the Sasanian state had experienced prolonged warfare with Byzantium. The Byzantine-Sasanian wars severely strained both imperial systems. Internal political instability after the death of Khusraw II further weakened Sasanian authority. The Muslim conquest therefore occurred within a context of significant political and military instability rather than against an unchanging imperial structure.¹¹

Hadith and Iranian Historical Experience

The relationship between hadith and Iranian civilization has received scholarly attention. Shaked demonstrates that the hadith corpus contains evidence of contact between early Islamic society and Iranian religious and cultural practices. He also emphasizes the methodological difficulty of

⁸ T. (Ed.). Daryaei, *The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History* (Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 97.

⁹ E. (Ed.). Yarshater, *Title Traditional History of Persia*. In *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. (Columbia University, 2004).

¹⁰ Daryaei, p. 105.

¹¹ Daryaei, *The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History*.



determining precisely whether individual reports represent authentic Prophetic statements, later Muslim responses to Iranian practices, or retrospective literary developments.¹²

This observation is highly relevant to the present study. Hadith should not be understood simply as a transparent mirror of seventh-century Persia. Rather, hadith literature preserves multiple layers of historical memory. Some traditions may preserve direct Prophetic statements, while others reveal the way later Muslim communities remembered and interpreted encounters with Iranian society.¹³ At the same time, the canonical status of particular traditions matters. The traditions concerning Salman al-Farisi and the disappearance of Kisra are found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and/or *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, giving them a different evidentiary status from isolated reports in later works. The Salman tradition, for example, is transmitted in both major Sunni canonical collections.

Persian Contributions to Islamic Civilization

A major theme in Islamic historiography is the extraordinary contribution of Persians and Persianate peoples to Islamic intellectual life. The Persian contribution is visible in hadith scholarship, Qur'anic exegesis, jurisprudence, philosophy, medicine, astronomy, literature, mysticism, and political thought.

This contribution complicates simplistic models of Arab conquest versus Persian civilization. The conquest certainly involved political domination, but subsequent Islamic civilization became deeply interconnected with Persian institutions and intellectual traditions.

The history of medieval Iran demonstrates that Iranian cultural forms survived and adapted to Islamic political and religious institutions. The development of New Persian literature and the preservation of Iranian historical memory through works such as the *Shāhnāmah* illustrate this process.¹⁴

Thus, the hadith concerning Salman should be read not merely as a prediction concerning ethnic conversion but as part of a broader Islamic theological principle: religious virtue is not determined by ethnicity or geography. The Persian individual becomes a paradigmatic example of the possibility that faith may emerge from beyond the Arab heartland.

Persia in the Prophetic Geographical Imagination

The first result of the study is that Persia appears in the hadith corpus not as an isolated geographical space but as a major political and cultural

¹² S. Shaked, *Hadith as Influenced by Iranian Ideas and Practices*. In *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. (Columbia University, 2002).

¹³ Abd Wahid and Mahyaruddin, 'Urgensitas Pembelajaran Ilmu Hadis Di Era Digital', *El-Sunan: Journal of Hadith and Religious Studies*, 1.1 (2023).

¹⁴ A. M Ansari, *Iran: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press.).



actor. The Prophet's references to Kisra demonstrate awareness of the Persian imperial system. *Kisra* was not the personal name of a single king but a title associated with Persian monarchy. The hadith therefore places the Prophet's community in a world where Persia represented one of the dominant political powers.

The importance of this reference becomes clearer when the historical context is considered. The Sasanian Empire was a major imperial power at the beginning of the seventh century, and its political reach extended across much of Iraq and the Iranian plateau. Modern scholarship confirms the central position of the Sasanian state in Late Antiquity.¹⁵

Thus, the hadith references to Kisra should not be interpreted as references to an insignificant foreign kingdom. They concern an imperial structure that represented a major political counterpart to Byzantium.

The Hadith of Salman al-Farisi: Persian Religious Potential

Among the most significant traditions concerning Persia is the hadith of Salman al-Farisi. The Arabic wording in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* states:

كُنَّا جُلُوسًا عِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ فَأَنْزِلَتْ عَلَيْهِ سُورَةُ الْجُمُعَةِ: {وَأَخْرَيْنَ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ}، قَالَ: قُلْتُ مَنْ هُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ فَلَمْ يُرَاجِعْهُ حَتَّى سَأَلَ ثَلَاثًا، وَفِينَا سَلْمَانُ الْفَارِسِيُّ، وَضَعَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ يَدَهُ عَلَى سَلْمَانَ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: لَوْ كَانَ الْإِيمَانُ عِنْدَ الثَّرَيَّا، لَنَالَهُ رِجَالٌ، أَوْ رَجُلٌ، مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ.¹⁶

This hadith has at least three dimensions. First, it establishes the universal geographical character of Islam. Faith is not merely confined to Arabia. Second, it recognizes Persians as potential major participants in Islamic religious life. Third, the placement of the Prophet's hand on Salman transforms the individual Persian companion into a symbolic representative of a wider people.

The theological significance is particularly important. The Prophet does not state that Arabs possess an exclusive religious privilege. Instead, the metaphor of the Pleiades places faith at an immense symbolic distance, while Persian believers are described as capable of reaching it. This is consistent with a broader Qur'anic principle that human honor is not based on ethnicity but on piety.¹⁷ In this framework, the Persian identity of Salman is not a theological obstacle. His Persian origin becomes an occasion for illustrating the universality of Islam. The subsequent history of Islamic civilization makes the tradition historically striking. Persian and Persianate scholars became central to the transmission of Islamic knowledge. The

¹⁵ Daryaei, *The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History*.

¹⁶ al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, juz. 10, p. 176

¹⁷ Fahmi Andaluzi and others, 'Boycott in Hadith Perspective: History and Implementation', *El-Sunan: Journal of Hadith and Religious Studies*, 2.2 (2024), doi:<https://doi.org/10.22373/el-sunan.v2i2.5801>.



development of Islamic scholarship after the conquest demonstrates that the incorporation of Persian populations was not merely political.

The Collapse of Kisra: Political Persia versus Religious Persia

The second major result concerns the hadith:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ إِذَا هَلَكَ كِسْرَى فَلَا كِسْرَى بَعْدَهُ، وَإِذَا هَلَكَ قَيْصَرٌ فَلَا قَيْصَرَ بَعْدَهُ، وَالَّذِي نَفْسُ مُحَمَّدٍ بِيَدِهِ لَتَنْفَقَنَّ كُنُوزُهُمَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ.¹⁸

The report is transmitted by Abū Hurayrah in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. At first glance, the phrase there will be no Kisra after him appears historically problematic because Persian rulers continued to exist after the death of individual Sasanian kings. A literal interpretation as no Persian ruler will ever exist after the current Kisra would therefore be historically inaccurate.

Classical commentators consequently interpreted the statement in terms of the disappearance of the imperial political order rather than the impossibility of any subsequent Persian ruler. The distinction is significant. Kisra in the hadith functions as a symbol of imperial sovereignty. The prediction therefore concerns the destruction of the political structure represented by Kisra rather than the disappearance of Persian ethnicity or culture.¹⁹

This distinction corresponds closely with subsequent history. The Sasanian imperial system collapsed during the seventh century, and the last Sasanian ruler, Yazdegerd III, died in 651/652 CE. The Iranian territories were subsequently incorporated into the expanding Muslim polity (Morony, 2013). Modern scholarship places this transformation within a wider process of political fragmentation and military confrontation rather than describing it as a single instantaneous event. Thus, the hadith is more accurately interpreted as referring to the end of the Sasanian imperial order than to the disappearance of Persian civilization.

The Treasures of Kisra and the Historical Memory of Conquest

The hadith transmitted by ‘Adī ibn Hātim provides an unusually concrete connection between prophetic prediction and subsequent historical memory. The Prophet states:

عَنْ عَدِيِّ بْنِ حَاتِمٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ بَيْنَا أَنَا وَعِنْدَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ إِذِ أَتَاهُ رَجُلٌ فَشَكَا إِلَيْهِ الْفَاقَةَ، ثُمَّ أَتَاهُ آخَرُ فَشَكَا إِلَيْهِ قَطْعَ السَّبِيلِ، فَقَالَ: يَا عَدِيُّ، هَلْ رَأَيْتَ الْحِيرَةَ؟ قُلْتُ: لَمْ أَرَهَا، وَقَدْ أُبْنِتُ عَنْهَا. قَالَ: فَإِنْ طَالَتْ بِكَ حَيَاةٌ لَتَرَيْنَ الظَّعِينَةَ تَرْتَحِلُ مِنَ الْحِيرَةِ حَتَّى تَطُوفَ بِالْكَعْبَةِ، لَا تَخَافُ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ. قُلْتُ فِيمَا

¹⁸ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*.

¹⁹ Abd Wahid and others, ‘ANALYSIS OF THE SCOPE OF HUMAN RIGHTS BASED ON THE HADITHS’, *PETITA: JURNAL KAJIAN ILMU HUKUM DAN SYARIAH*, 9.1 (2024), pp. 164–83, doi:10.22373/petita.v9i1.282.



يَبْنِي وَيَبْنِي نَفْسِي : فَأَيْنَ دُعَارُ طَيِّئِ الَّذِينَ قَدْ سَعَرُوا الْبِلَادَ؟ وَلَكِنْ طَالَتْ بِكَ حَيَاةٌ لَتَفْتَحَنَّ كُنُوزُ كِسْرَى .
 قُلْتُ: كِسْرَى بْنُ هُرْمُزٍ؟ قَالَ: كِسْرَى بْنُ هُرْمُزٍ وَلَكِنْ طَالَتْ بِكَ حَيَاةٌ لَتَرَيْنَ الرَّجُلَ يَخْرُجُ مِلءَ كَفِّهِ مِنْ
 ذَهَبٍ أَوْ فِضَّةٍ يَطْلُبُ مَنْ يَقْبَلُهُ مِنْهُ فَلَا يَجِدُ أَحَدًا يَقْبَلُهُ مِنْهُ قَالَ عَدِيٌّ: فَرَأَيْتُ الطَّعْنَةَ تَرْتَحِلُ مِنَ الْحِيرَةِ
 حَتَّى تَطُوفَ بِالْكَعْبَةِ لَا تَخَافُ إِلَّا اللَّهَ، وَكُنْتُ فِيْمَنْ افْتَسَحَ كُنُوزُ كِسْرَى بْنِ هُرْمُزٍ، وَلَكِنْ طَالَتْ بِكُمْ حَيَاةٌ
 لَتَرَوْنَ مَا قَالَ النَّبِيُّ أَبُو الْقَاسِمِ ﷺ: «يَخْرُجُ مِلءَ كَفِّهِ».²⁰

‘Adī ibn Hātim (may Allah be pleased with him) reported While I was with the Prophet ﷺ, a man came to him and complained about poverty. Then another man came and complained to him about the insecurity of the roads. The Prophet ﷺ said O ‘Adī, have you seen al-Hīrah?’ I replied, I have not seen it, although I have been informed about it. He said If you live long enough, you will certainly see a woman traveling from al-Hīrah until she circumambulates the Ka’bah, fearing no one except Allah. I said to myself, Then where will be the highway robbers of Ṭayyi’ who have spread disorder throughout the land? He then said: And if you live long enough, the treasures of Kisra will certainly be opened. I asked, Kisra ibn Hurmuz? He replied, Kisra ibn Hurmuz. He then said and if you live long enough, you will certainly see a man carrying a handful of gold or silver, seeking someone who will accept it from him, but he will find no one who will accept it. ‘Adī said: I subsequently saw the woman traveling from al-Hīrah until she circumambulated the Ka’bah, fearing no one except Allah. I was also among those who opened the treasures of Kisra ibn Hurmuz. And if you live long enough, you will certainly witness what the Prophet Abū al-Qāsim ﷺ said He will come out carrying a handful of gold.

This hadith is historically significant because it identifies the Persian ruler with Khusraw II Parviz, the most powerful Sasanian monarch immediately preceding the final collapse of the empire. The historical memory contained in the hadith thus became closely associated with the Muslim conquest of Sasanian territories. Yet the phrase opening the treasures requires careful interpretation. The hadith does not offer an economic history of Sasanian wealth. Instead, it presents wealth as a sign of divine providence and as part of the moral test of human beings.

This moral dimension is clear from the continuation of the hadith. The Prophet moves from the opening of Persian treasures to the warning that a person will eventually stand before God without an intermediary. Wealth therefore functions simultaneously as political evidence and ethical temptation. The hadith’s logic is consequently not imperial triumphalism

²⁰Al-Bukhari, *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, juz. 11, p. 429.



alone. It is theological, political power and wealth are temporary, while moral accountability is permanent.

Persia and the Transformation of the Islamic Political Order

The fall of Sasanian Iran represented a major transformation in the political geography of the Middle East. According to modern historical research, the Muslim conquest of Iran developed over decades and involved battles, negotiated settlements, local political alliances, administrative adaptation, and demographic transformation.²¹

The battle of al-Qadisiyyah is conventionally regarded as one of the decisive encounters, although modern historians increasingly emphasize that conquest cannot be reduced to a single battle. The Sasanian state was already weakened by decades of war and internal political conflict. This historical context modifies the interpretation of the hadith. The Prophetic statement concerning Kisra should not be transformed into a simplistic prediction that immediately generated conquest. Instead, it became meaningful within a sequence of historical developments.

The Muslim conquest transformed the political structure of Iran, but it did not erase Iranian society. The administrative and economic infrastructure of many regions continued to function. Persian elites participated in the new Islamic order, and Iranian cultural forms were progressively incorporated into Islamic civilization. The result was a historical paradox: Sasanian political sovereignty disappeared, while Persian civilization survived and eventually became one of the central components of Islamic civilization.

From Persian Empire to Islamic Iran

One of the most important findings of this research is that Persia after the conquest cannot simply be described as a defeated civilization. The post-conquest period produced a complex process of cultural negotiation. Iranian populations gradually adopted Islam, while Persian language, administrative traditions, literary forms, and intellectual practices continued to develop. Modern scholarship emphasizes that the history of Iran after Islam involved both continuity and transformation. Newman notes that the terms Persia and Persian have different meanings in modern historical usage, while the Islamic conquest created a new religious and political framework in which Iranian identity continued to evolve.²²

The development of New Persian literature provides one of the clearest examples. By the tenth century, Persian became an important literary language of the Islamic world. Ferdowsi's *Shāhnāmeḥ* preserved a vast body of pre-Islamic Iranian historical memory while being composed in a Muslim

²¹ Morony, In D. T. Potts (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*.65.

²² Newman, *Islam in Iran. Oxford Bibliographies in Islamic Studies*.



cultural environment. Yarshater observes that Iranian historical traditions survived through Arabic and Persian historiography and reached one of their most influential literary forms in Ferdowsi.²³ This development demonstrates that Islamization and Persianization were not mutually exclusive processes.

The Hadith and the Reversal of Ethnic Hierarchy

The Salman hadith has another important implication. If political Persia represents a great empire destined to disappear, Persian believers represent a population destined to make a major contribution to faith. This produces an interesting reversal:

Political dimension	Religious-intellectual dimension
Kisra represents imperial power	Salman represents religious commitment
Sasanian sovereignty disappears Persian imperial wealth is transferred	Persian participation in Islam expands Persian intellectual capital contributes to Islam
Political domination is temporary	Religious knowledge transcends ethnicity
Empire declines	Civilization is transformed

This distinction helps prevent an ethnocentric reading of the conquest. The hadith does not suggest that Persians are inherently inferior. Rather, the political sovereignty of Kisra is placed within the temporary nature of worldly power, while Persian believers are explicitly praised for their potential religious achievement. In this respect, the hadith can be read as a theological critique of imperialism while simultaneously recognizing the religious potential of the people who lived within that empire.

Persian Participation in Hadith Scholarship

The historical development of Islamic scholarship further confirms the importance of Persian participation in Islam. The geographical expansion of hadith scholarship brought Persian and eastern Islamic regions into the center of the transmission network. Major hadith scholars were connected to regions such as Khurasan, Transoxiana, Rayy, Nishapur, and other centres of the eastern Islamic world. This historical phenomenon is particularly important because it demonstrates the difference between Arab political expansion and Islamic civilizational formation. The early Muslim conquests were largely initiated from Arabia, but the subsequent intellectual production of Islam was geographically much broader. The eastern Islamic world became a major centre for hadith, theology, jurisprudence, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and literature. This historical development is consistent with the theological universality represented in

²³ Yarshater, *TitleTraditional History of Persia. In Encyclopaedia Iranica.*



the Salman tradition. The hadith therefore can be read retrospectively as an important symbolic framework for understanding the emergence of Persian-speaking and Persianate scholars within the broader Islamic scholarly tradition.

A critical result of the study is that prophetic prediction and historical reconstruction must not be conflated. The existence of a hadith in a canonical collection establishes that the tradition was accepted within the canonical hadith tradition. It does not by itself provide a complete reconstruction of the historical circumstances in which the statement was first uttered. Modern scholarship on Iranian historiography has shown that historical narratives about pre-Islamic Iran were repeatedly reconstructed according to later political and religious concerns. Tavakoli-Targhi for example, demonstrates that narratives of pre-Islamic Iran could acquire allegorical meanings within Islamic historiography.²⁴

The historical irony of Persia is that the political empire disappeared while Persian civilization became deeply embedded within Islam. Persian intellectual traditions contributed to Islamic civilization in numerous fields. Persianate scholars participated extensively in jurisprudence, hadith, theology, philosophy, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, literature, and Sufism. This process can be conceptualized as civilizational transformation rather than civilizational extinction.

The Sasanian political system disappeared, but Iranian social institutions were not completely destroyed. Persian languages developed within an Islamic literary environment. Iranian historical memory was preserved in Islamic historiography and epic literature. Iranian intellectuals became major contributors to Islamic knowledge. The emergence of Persianate Islamic civilization therefore provides a historical illustration of the Salman hadith. The Prophetic statement does not merely predict that some Persians will become Muslims. In retrospect, the tradition can be understood as anticipating the universalization of Islamic religious participation beyond its Arabian origin.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the historical representation of Persia in Prophetic hadith and its relationship to the transformation of the Iranian world from the Sasanian Empire into an important centre of Islamic civilization. Four conclusions emerge.

First, Persia occupied a significant position in the geopolitical world known to the early Muslim community. The repeated references to *Kisra* demonstrate that the Persian Empire represented one of the principal political powers against which the emerging Islamic community was historically situated.

²⁴ Tavakoli-Targhi, p. 147.



Second, the hadith concerning the disappearance of Kisra should be interpreted primarily in relation to the collapse of Sasanian imperial sovereignty rather than the disappearance of Persian society. The historical end of Sasanian political authority in the seventh century provides an important context for understanding the tradition.

Third, the hadith concerning Salman al-Farisi provides a radically different representation of Persian identity. Whereas the Persian imperial order is temporary, the Persian believer is explicitly praised. The statement that faith could be attained by people from Persia represents an important theological affirmation of the universality of Islam.

Fourth, the historical development of Iran after the conquest demonstrates that political conquest did not mean cultural extinction. Persian language, historical memory, administrative practices, and intellectual traditions survived and were transformed within Islamic civilization. The emergence of Persianate Islamic culture therefore represents one of the most important consequences of the encounter between Islam and Iran.

The study consequently proposes a distinction between Persia as empire and Persia as civilization. The former was represented in hadith through the figure of Kisra and his political sovereignty, while the latter emerged historically through the Persian participation in Islamic knowledge and culture. The significance of this distinction extends beyond the study of Iran. It provides a methodological model for studying prophetic traditions concerning foreign civilizations. Hadith should neither be reduced to political prophecy nor isolated from historical evidence. A more productive approach integrates hadith criticism, textual interpretation, classical commentary, and comparative historiography. The history of Iran therefore offers a particularly important example of the relationship between Islam and non-Arab civilizations. Islam emerged in Arabia, but Islamic civilization did not remain Arab. Persian participation became one of the principal forces through which Islam developed into a global intellectual and cultural tradition.

The hadith of Salman al-Farisi is especially significant in this regard. Its fundamental message is not ethnic triumphalism but religious universality, which faith is not restricted by geography, language, or lineage. Persia, represented initially as the realm of Kisra, eventually became one of the most influential environments for the intellectual and spiritual development of Islam. Accordingly, knowing Iran through Persia requires more than reconstructing the fall of the Sasanian Empire. It requires recognizing the transformation through which Persian civilization entered, negotiated with, and ultimately helped shape the Islamic world.

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