

Digitization and Scholarly Analysis of Islamic Decrees Related to the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem

In collaboration with the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, White Cross Foundation, Yerevan State University, and Hamad Bin Khalifa University

Executive Summary

This collaborative effort between the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the White Cross Foundation, and Hamad Bin Khalifa University to collect, preserve, and digitize significant Islamic decrees (firmans/ahdname) that concern the Armenian presence in Jerusalem and the rights of Armenian Christians under Islam generally. These historical documents, originating from early Islamic leaders to the Ottoman period, represent invaluable testimonies of coexistence, protection, and religious diplomacy. The project aims to make these documents accessible for scholarly analysis, translation, and publication, thus promoting peacebuilding and dialogue between Armenia and the Muslim world.

1. Project Objectives

a. Collection & Preservation of official decrees

The project will need to locate and gather all important Islamic decrees related to the Armenian Patriarchate and Christian communities in Jerusalem, including:

- Decrees of Prophet Muhammad
- Decrees of early Caliphs (e.g., 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, Ali ibn Abi Talib)
- Decrees from prominent Islamic leaders (e.g., Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi)
- Ottoman Firmans related to the Armenian community and Christian holy sites

b. Digitization, Archiving and Publication

- Digitally scan and archive these decrees in high-resolution formats, suitable for academic use and publishing.
- Store them in a secure, accessible digital repository by the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the White Cross Foundation.
- Make these documents accessible to Yerevan State University and Hamad Bin Khalifa University so that they may be studied by scholars.
- Publish typescripts of the documents.
- Publish images of the documents (to be obtained through permission of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem).

c. Digitization and publication of MS 2891

MS 2891 is an Arabic History of Jerusalem which is unknown outside the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Part of the project will be to :

- Digitize the manuscript;
- Publish it in Arabic;
- Publish translated editions in English and Armenian.

2. Long-Term Vision: Expanding Collaborations

In the long term, we aim to expand the project's reach to include other Armenian ecclesiastical bodies, such as:

- The Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople.
- The Holy See of Cilicia.
- The Armenian Church in Iran.
- The Armenian Church in Syria.

By establishing a comprehensive archive of Islamic-Armenian interfaith documents, we aspire to foster deeper understanding and promote religious diplomacy and peaceful coexistence narratives.

3. Strategic Aims and Impact

a. Academic Contributions

- Establish the general authenticity of Islamic decrees addressing Christian and Armenian communities.
- Support new academic research in Islamic-Christian relations, Ottoman-Armenian history, and interfaith diplomacy.
- Generate conference papers, scholarly books, and journal articles based on this material.

b. Promoting Peaceful Coexistence and Interfaith Dialogue

- Demonstrate historical precedents within Islam for protecting minorities and fostering coexistence.
- Counteract modern narratives of conflict by highlighting historical cooperation and mutual respect.
- Contribute to educational curricula on interfaith relations in Armenia, the Middle East, and globally.

c. Cultural Heritage and Diplomacy

- Use these documents in Armenia's diplomatic and cultural outreach, particularly toward Muslim-majority countries.

8. Conclusion

This project stands at the intersection of history, scholarship, diplomacy, and interfaith peacebuilding. By preserving and publishing these historic decrees, we aim to revive forgotten traditions of coexistence, strengthen Armenia-Muslim world relations, and contribute lasting value to the global understanding of religious diplomacy.