

NATIONAL EMBLEM AND FLAG OF PAKISTAN IN COLONIAL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

There are many national symbols of Pakistan. This paper focuses on Pakistan's national emblem and national flag in a colonial context. The development of the national symbols of Pakistan is affected by historical factors. It was due to the religious connotation and its association with these symbols. This qualitative research focuses on symbolism as national identity development in the subcontinent up to the post-independent period of Pakistan. The paper comprises exploratory research for data collection. The data presented is narrated and described for analysis. The study explores the meaning of the emblem and national flag from a historical perspective and aims to highlight the existing meanings in the contemporary allegory of Pakistan. The research is based on documents and surveys from Punjab Archives, Punjab Public Library, NCA Archives, online data and a literature review. The results present a significant inclination toward religious and national affiliation.

Keywords: National Flag, Pakistan, Emblem, post-colonial, Crescent and star

INTRODUCTION

The national symbol of the crescent and star is known as an Islamic symbol on national flags of Muslim countries worldwide in general. The origins of the symbols and their meanings have different connotations in historical context. During World War I the symbol appeared in the subcontinent. The symbol of the crescent and star was eventually adopted by the Muslims of India as their political symbol. The British colonials used visual communication design for war funding and recruitment. The support of colonies was

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required to back the war requirements. The need for symbolic icons evolved for army recognition and grades to instantly communicate. The influential images, badges and catchphrases for the posters were designed. The war of visuals through pictures and words as weapons against the enemy was on display during World War I.

The Urdu newspaper *Himmat* weekly renamed *Paisa Akhbar* was founded by *Munshi Mahboob Alam*. It became popular because of the economical price of one *paisa*. The newspaper introduced visuals to attract readers. The images published during World War I are retrieved from the Library of Punjab Public at Lahore. The images were faded and had misprint-like text effects due to getting old. The pages also had curvature near the edges and were torn. These archives of the newspapers have editions survived through the time, which are preserved digitally and some are available physically. The *Paisa Akhbar* and *Eastern Times* were available for the following dates 1909-1922. These newspaper references present the evolution of the crescent and star in the colonial period of Lahore.

ORIGINS OF SYMBOL CRESCENT AND THE STAR

The hieroglyph of Egyptian civilization presents a crescent above the star. This was a reminder of the lunar calendar. The ancient Mesopotamia, a Babylonian cuneiform word *Shiptu* (incantation) change its shape similar to the modern crescent and star. It was used to ward off evil. Another example of a crescent and star is found on the stone of King Nebuchadnezzar I near the borderline of Babylon city (see figures 1, 2). In the Byzantium during 1st century BCE, the coins carried the symbol of the crescent and star. The crescent and star were a tribute associated with the Hecate goddess, who protected the Byzantines from Phillip II of Macedon around 339 BCE through light to lead them into the siege tunnels. Stephen from Byzantine attributed Hecate as phosphorus (light bearer) to commemorate the event in the 7th century. The association of the moon with Hecate presents a symbol of a crescent (see figure 3). The sign of the star and crescent was adopted by Parthian kings of the Sassanian Empire to signify justice (see figure 4). The Arab Muslims ruled Persia during the 7th century in which Sassanid coins preserved the symbol of the crescent and star (see figure 5). The symbol of the crescent and star was adopted by the Ottomans and used for their naval flags (see figure 6). The crescent and star on the red flag was the national flag of the Ottomans in 1844. The Ottoman national flag spread the association of Islam with the symbols of the crescent and star. Later on, the Muslim national flags developed in the 20th century featured the star and crescent symbols.⁴

The crescent has become a symbol of Islam nowadays. Going back to Central Asia and Siberia the crescent symbol pre-exists before the religion Islam. The tribes of Central Asia worshipped the sun and moon gods and used symbols. The Greek goddess of Diana was honoured with a symbol for worship. Islamic design patterns appeared between the

⁴ Steemit. June 22, 2017. <https://steemit.com/history/@mand/history-of-the-star-and-crescent> (accessed June 17, 2020).

10th to 16th centuries and used stars frequently in geometric ornaments. The symbol of the star was applied in Islamic architecture, metal works, wood carving, bookbinding and miniature painting. In the Anatolian Seljuq, Mamluk and Timurid architecture and on the brick from Iran, the symbols of stars appeared mostly.⁵

The Goths occupied the capital of the Eastern Roman called Byzantine Empire Constantinople and were reconquered on the first of the lunar month by the Romans. Romans commemorated this event with the symbol of the crescent on the city flag. The direction of the crescent facing the pole of the flag was designed. Anatolia (Asian Turkey) used a crescent on the flag. The flag of the Ottoman caliphate was in red colour with a green circle in the middle carrying three yellow crescents facing to the right side. There were no symbols used on the Islamic flags since its introduction to the world. The black flag was used by the prophet PBUH. The Caliphate belonging to the Rashida had not used symbols on its flags. The eighth Abbasid caliph Mamnun Al-Rashid (813-833) adopted a green colour which became a national colour for the Muslims on the flags. Ali Raza was appointed as the caliph because of the descendant of Ali the fourth caliph. The descendants of Ali had green colour on the flags. Later during the Fatimid Rule, the sect of Shiites (*Shias*) used green colour flags. The Ottomans separated the national and religious flags through colours. The national flag of the Ottomans was red and the green colour flag was associated with the religion with the symbol of the crescent.⁶

After Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the green and white coloured flags were carried by the armies of Muslims. The green colour represents the symbolic meaning of optimism, forte, endurance and immortality. Progress was symbolised with a crescent and light and knowledge were signified with stars. The combined usage of both symbols means heaven. The star also signifies the beginning of the lunar month of Muslims as the crescent represents the new moon. Crescent is known as *Hilal* in the Arabic language. After the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, it is supposed that the symbols were adopted in 1453. The symbol of the crescent and star were used on the flag of Sultan Orhan's infantry (1324-1360). Nations of Algeria, Maldives Islands, Tunisia and Turkey have used green with crescent and star.⁷

NATIONAL FLAG OF PAKISTAN

After World War I, the Muslims of British India supported the Khilafat Movement against the British conquest. The Ottomans got a defeat the British in WWI. The support for the Ottomans were developed through the Sultans of Turkey (see figure 7-8). In British

⁵ Baer, Eva. *Islamic Ornament*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 22 George Square, 1998. 47

⁶ Imam, Syed Junaid. *FOTW 'Flags of the World'*. September 6, 1999. <https://fotw.info/flags/rel-ishi.html> (accessed June 17, 2020).

⁷ Jalal, Ayesha. *Mazaar Bazaar, Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan*. Karachi: Noorani printing & Packaging Industry, 2011. 184

India to re-establish the Caliphate, the Khilafat movement was led by Shaukat Ali and Muhammad Ali. Mahatma Gandhi also supported the movement to strengthen anti-British policies. After the war ended, Gandhi and the Indians were upset by the British arrogance. It was due to the feeling that despite helping the British with supplies of soldiers, pounds, wheat and steel for the war, British subjugation carried on towards Indians in the post-war period. Gandhi initiated the boycott of British products. To unite all Indians, Gandhi supported Khilafat Movement. Khilafat movement declined rapidly after the removal of the Caliph in 1924. The one-rupee receipt issued by the Calcutta Bengal Khilafat committee is proof of the presence and support of Indian Muslims for the movement (see figures 9-10).⁸

The symbol of the crescent became *Swadeshi* meaning home-based produced for the subcontinent. The Crescent Expressed *Swadeshi* which was signified by the willpower of the native people of the subcontinent, autonomy and the ban on foreign products, particularly textiles of the British. The *Swadeshi* movement was a non-violent resistance to prevent the subcontinent from British imports. In the subcontinent, it also exemplified the harmony of Hindus with Muslims. The movement got popular through printing press media specifically newspapers (see figures 11-12).⁹

The khilafat movement made Muslims of the subcontinent emerge as a political force, which lately demanded an independent homeland for them. Muslim political movement evolved with Crescent and star symbols derived from the Khilafat movement. The most prominent Pakistani national symbol from independence is its flag having a star and crescent in the centre of the green portion. The symbols on the national flag of Pakistan evoke emotions of pride, love, liberty and continuousness. The leader of the nation Jinnah wearing *Achkan* or *Sherwani* with a known Jinnah cap can be seen at times sitting in the law library wearing a three-piece suit. The pictures of Jinnah appear on his birthday and the Independence Day of Pakistan. Visuals of Jinnah, the flag and Iqbal (national poet) re-energized the national Independence Day of Pakistan to recap the history of the nation (see figure 13).¹⁰

The Pakistani flag was originated at Dhaka on 30th December 1906 at the event of South Asian Muslim political parties of the subcontinent conference. As a result, All-India Muslim League was formed. At Dhaka, a crescent and star in the centre of a green colour flag were displayed. Thus, this flag became the symbol of the All-India Muslim League during the political struggle which continued for forty years (see figures 14-16). The flag

⁸ Symes, Peter. *pjsymes*. February 2014. <http://www.pjsymes.com.au/articles/Khilafat.htm> (accessed June 26, 2020).

⁹ Khan, Lutfullah. *Mazaar Bazaar Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan*. Edited by Saima Zaidi. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009. 263

¹⁰ Saigol, Rubina. *Mazaar Bazaar Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan*. Edited by Saima Zaidi. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009. 218-219

of the All-India Muslim League became a representation of the Muslim political community. After the independence of Pakistan, the flag of the All-India Muslim League was incorporated into the national flag of the new-born nation. Following are the significance of Pakistan's national flag

- Peace and prosperity signified by the white and dark green fields.
- Progress is presented through the crescent on the flag.
- Light and knowledge are associated with a five-pointed star.¹¹

The designer of Pakistani flag was *Ameer Uddin Kidwai*. The flag was officially tailored by Master Afzal at Hussain Brothers Tailor Shop, New Delhi. The Daily Dawn published information about the design of the flag on 10th August 1947. The newspaper stated that the design of the flag for official approval was chosen and presented in the Constituent Assembly. The rectangular sizes of the flag are 3:2 in length to breadth. The white vertical bar on the mast has a width size one a fourth of the length of the flag. The dark green portion after the white portion is three fourth. The crescent and five-pointed star are in the centre of dark green.¹² The shade of green colour is BBC 26 Tartan green standard the as per the British Colour Council's shade. Red 2.0, Yellow 9.3, and Blue are according to the love-bond tintometer reading, Neutral tint with nil brightness.¹³ For the specification of the crescent and star on the national flag see figure¹⁷.

All-India Muslim League flag was quite similar to the Turkish Ottoman flag. It took inspiration from three sources. The sources were Delhi Sultanate, the Mughal empire and the Ottoman empire. The Delhi Sultanate flag was in plain green colour with a black vertical band dividing the one-third portion of the flag. The Mughal flag in the period of its decline had more similarities to the Turkish flag of the period. The flag captured in 1857 during mutiny had a yellow crescent in the centre of the green background. The ottoman flag has five corner stars and a crescent in the centre of a red background. The national flag of Pakistan took the green colour from the Mughal flag and the star and crescent from the Ottoman flag. To represent the non-Muslim minorities, a white stripe was added to the flag.¹⁴

On 11th August 1947, the national flag of Pakistan was accepted by the constituent assembly. The fading moon crescent instead the rising moon was formed. Different hues

¹¹ "The Pakistan Flag." Islamabad: Director General Films & Publications, Ministry of Information & Media Development Government of Pakistan, n.d. 3-4

¹² Jalal, Ayesha. *Mazaar Bazaar Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan*. Edited by Saima Zaidi. karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009. 183

¹³ "The Pakistan Flag." Islamabad: Director General Films & Publications, Ministry of Information & Media Development Government of Pakistan, n.d. 7

¹⁴ Abubakr, A. (2020, January 12). *Quora*. Retrieved June 17, 2020, from <https://www.quora.com/Why-is-the-Turkish-flag-so-similar-to-the-Pakistani-flag>

of green are used nowadays for the national flag. The star and crescent angles are also composed of different angles. Most of the references give credit to Muhammad Ali Jinnah for designing the flag of Pakistan. It is based upon the reason for the insertion of the white band recommended by him. Apart from the white stripe the remaining flag is the similar to the All-India Muslim League flag of Dhaka.¹⁵

CRESCENT AND STAR SYMBOLS OF MUSLIMS IN INDIA

The Oriental College at Aligarh was created by Sir *Sayyed Ahmad Khan* for the education of the Muslims of India. The crescent and star were designed as the logo of the Aligarh inspired by the Turkish flag. The Turkish dress code was compulsory for the students. The star and crescent symbol on the flag appeared during the battle of Tripoli. The green flag with a crescent and star was used for routes in India to support Turkey. The khilafat movement made Muslims of India support Turkey against the British. The Turk association of the symbol cannot be described with certainty. The white stripe in the flag of Pakistan symbolises the approach to power. Psychology describes the white stripe as living Vertically. It signifies the spiritual sign and access to the earth. It also represents the dawn and the crescent direction is set towards the west, which is the position of the moon during the important days of the month. The perspective of the Muslim for the facing of the moon is that it should not face East as projecting decline. There are many directions of crescent and star in Muslim flags, whereas the Pakistani flag has a crescent and star facing fixed side.¹⁶

In most the Islamic flags old moon is depicted. Though the directions on the Islamic flags are mostly in the reverse shape of the moon like the alphabet ‘C’. The moon is presented in the Islamic context as Islamic iconography. Before this Christian art used the crescent to portray Virgin Mary. In human history, the crescent is one of the ancient symbols. The motif of crescent and star was supposed to be introduced in 12th century Turk Seljuks. *Sultan Abdul Hamid II* upheld the green flag with star and crescent. According to Professor Richard Ettinghausen, it was a European supposition that the crescent and star were religious and national symbols which were used by Muslim governments in the 19th century.¹⁷

Ministry of Information and Media Development of the Government of Pakistan printed a brochure ‘*The Pakistan Flag*’. It was the Khilafat movement, which transported the signs of crescent and star as a political besides national ideology for the Muslims of

¹⁵ Jalal, Ayesha. *Mazaar Bazaar Design and Visual Culture in Pakistan*. Edited by Saima Zaidi. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2009. 183

¹⁶ Qidwai, Sayyed Anwar. *Qaumi Parcham ki Kahani*. Islamabad: National Book Foundation, 2017. 25-33

¹⁷ Baker, Patricia. *guardian.co.uk*. 2020.

<https://www.theguardian.com/notesandqueries/query/0,5753,-1411,00.html>.

India. Later on, along with the political enlightenment, the visual identity evolved for a separate homeland. The symbol united the Muslims of India to achieve independence.

THE STATE EMBLEM OF PAKISTAN

The state emblem of Pakistan was approved in 1954 by the central government of Pakistan (see figure 18). The design of the state emblem has symbols to convey the cultural heritage, ideology, economic strength and guiding principles for the nation. The emblem design has four iconic representations. The symbol of crescent and star symbolises Islam. The shield below has four sections representing Cotton, Tea, Wheat and Jute. These represents the major crops of Pakistan since independence to signify the agriculturally based economic strength. The *Jasmine officinale* (national flower of Pakistan) is surrounding the shield.¹⁸ The *Jasmine* flower was used in the Mughal art and it is used as a reminder to the nation of its culture. *Muhammad Ali Jinnah* as leader of the nation set the motto 'Faith, Unity, Discipline' as guiding principles for the nation is composed on the scroll beneath the floral wreath. The emblem design conveys the tradition, strength and source of inspiration (see figure 19-20).

The emblem designs of All-India Muslim League and Punjab Pro Muslim League has specific design features familiar to the current nation emblem of Pakistan. These emblems of All-India Muslim league and Punjab Pro Muslim League shows map of British India in which name of the parties is written in English and Urdu. A crescent envelope the map of British India and an Arabic verse from Quran sura 3 verse 102 translated as 'Hold on firmly together to the rope of God, and be not divided among yourselves'. The emblem has used three languages in one place (see figures 21-22).

The Masthead of the newspaper *The Eastern Times* Lahore 1948 presents the national emblem with the map of Pakistan before partition. The star has six corners with a crescent crowning the symbol with the national flag of Pakistan spread on the opposite sides. A garland of leaves surrounding the map rests on a band with two crests. The Urdu motto *Akhuwat* (brotherhood) and *Masawat* (equality) written inside the band (see figures 24-25). The Punjab emblem took its inspiration from national and colonial designs (see figures 26-29).

CONCLUSION

The crescent and star symbol evolution are documented in this article. The themes and meanings of the symbols are examined. The symbol of the crescent and star is traced with historical references. The symbols were used extensively by the Muslims of India to communicate religious and political ideologies. The crescent and star symbols recorded through photograph newspapers captured before World War I are the earliest references

¹⁸ *Pakistan Defence*. April 13, 2014. <https://defence.pk/pdf/threads/national-coat-of-arms-and-their-meaning.309087/> (accessed June 10, 2020).

since the colonial period in the subcontinent. The symbol of the crescent and star used by ottomans set the inspiration for the Muslims of India to adopt the symbol for their political identity.

The association of the symbol with Islam was followed due to its use in wars against British and European assumptions as Professor Richard Ettinghausen stated. The symbol was adopted by the Muslims and became a national symbol to remind the nation of its heritage and struggle for independence. The national emblem of Pakistan further adopted icons to visually communicate the ideologies, strength and religious affiliations. Pakistan is recognised worldwide through its symbols. The national emblem of Pakistan carries colonial legacies and heritage in its design.

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FIGURES

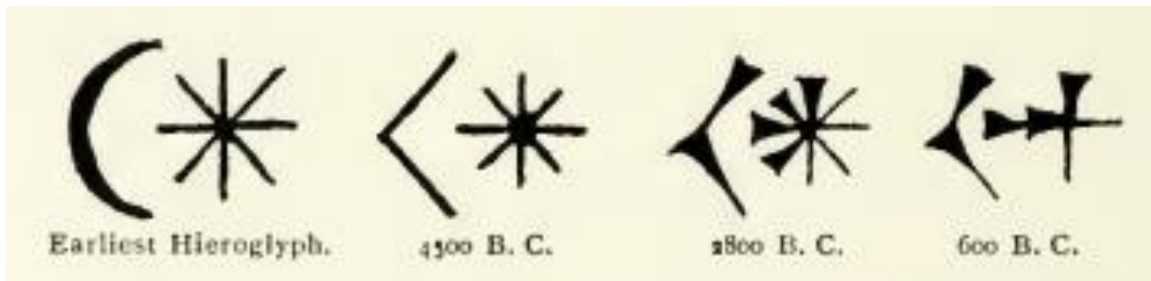


Figure 27. The Babylonian cuneiform word *Shiptu*,
<https://steemit.com/history/@mand/history-of-the-star-and-crescent>



Figure 28. The Boundary Stone of King Nebuchadnezzar I of Babylon (1125-1104 BCE)
 an example of a star within a crescent, <https://steemit.com/history/@mand/history-of-the-star-and-crescent>

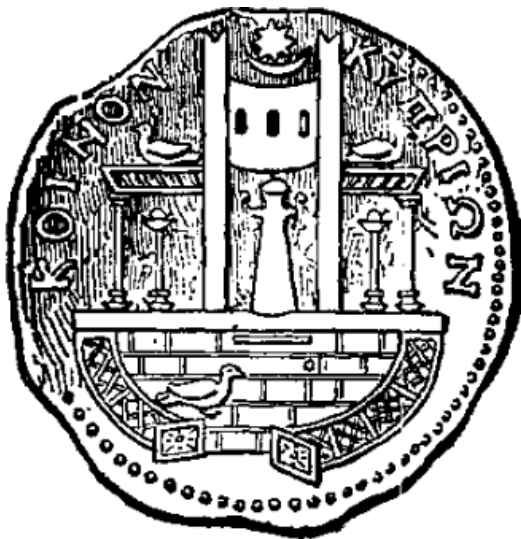


Figure 29. The coin of the city Byzantium 339 BCE, <https://steemit.com/history/@mand/history-of-the-star-and-crescent>



Figure 30. The coin of a Parthian king Phraates V, 2 BCE, <https://steemit.com/history/@mand/history-of-the-star-and-crescent>



Figure 31. Sassanid coin of 7th century by Muslim Arab caliph Abd al-Malik (685-705 CE), <https://steemit.com/history/@mand/history-of-the-star-and-crescent>

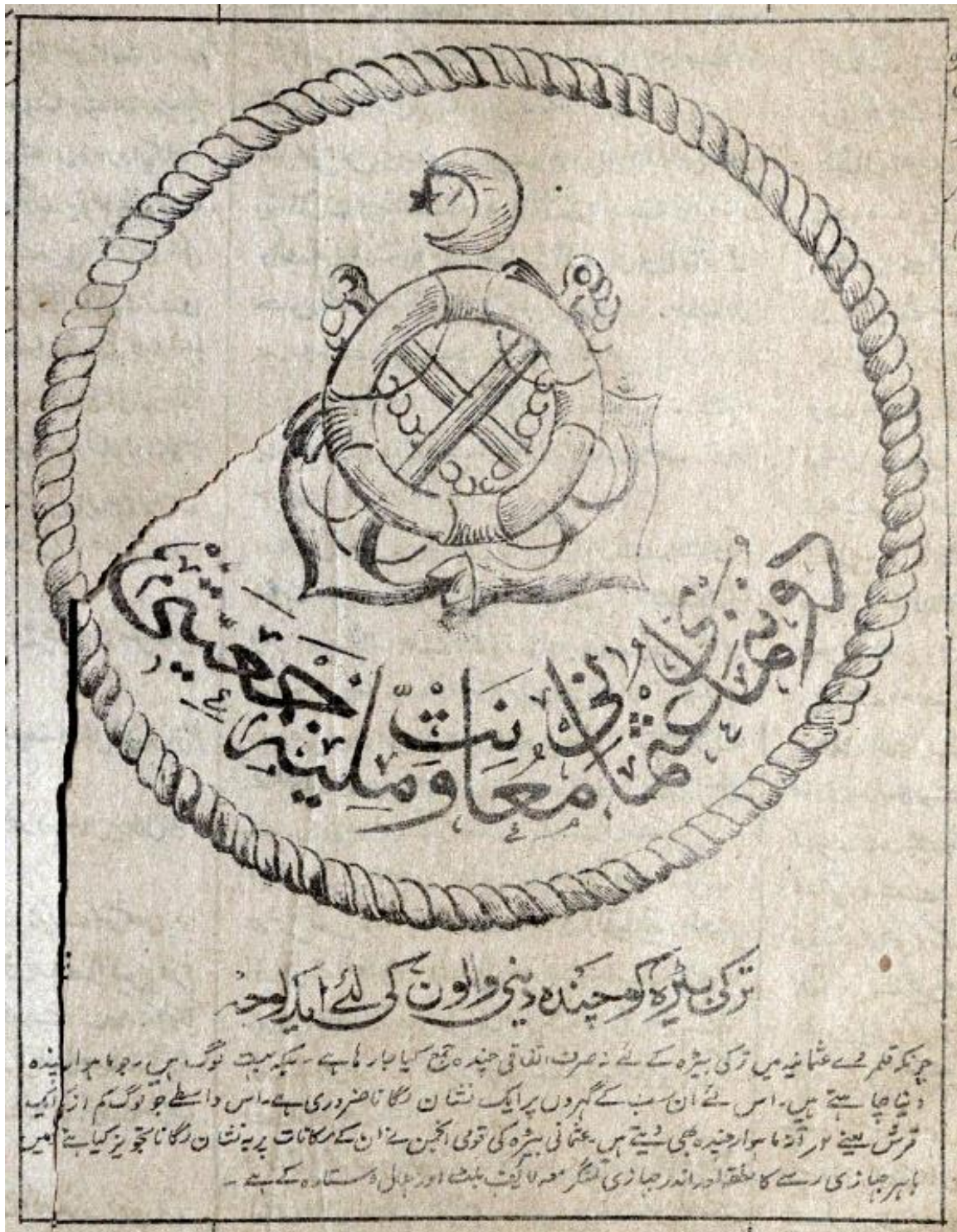


Figure 32. Turkish Naval sign in Urdu newspaper *Paise Akhbar* Lahore, 11 July, 1914, *The Punjab Public Library*, Photograph 27, August 2020.



Figure 33. The Sheikh-ul-Islam proclaiming a Holy War against the Entente Powers in 1914, with Ottoman Turkey flags placed in front of the podium, <http://www.manorhouse.clara.net/book2/chapter18.htm>



Figure 34. Crescent and star symbols as badges and bands, Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar (left) standing next to Dr Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1338270/the-dawn-of-pakistan> ¹⁹

¹⁹ **Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar** (left) dons Turkish attire on his visit to Turkey on the eve of the First World War. Dr Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari, leader of the Indian Muslim Medical Mission to Turkey and future president of the Muslim League, stands on the right.



Figure 35. Khilafat Movement Receipt issued in 1920 by the Khilafat Committee in Calcutta,
<http://www.pjsymes.com.au/articles/Khilafat.htm>



Figure 36. Khilafat Movement Five Rupee Note from Hyderabad,
 labelled multilingually and dated Feb. 1, 1347 A.H. (1928/9),
http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealc/pritchett/00routesdata/1700_1799/hyderabad/hyd5rup/hyd5rup.html

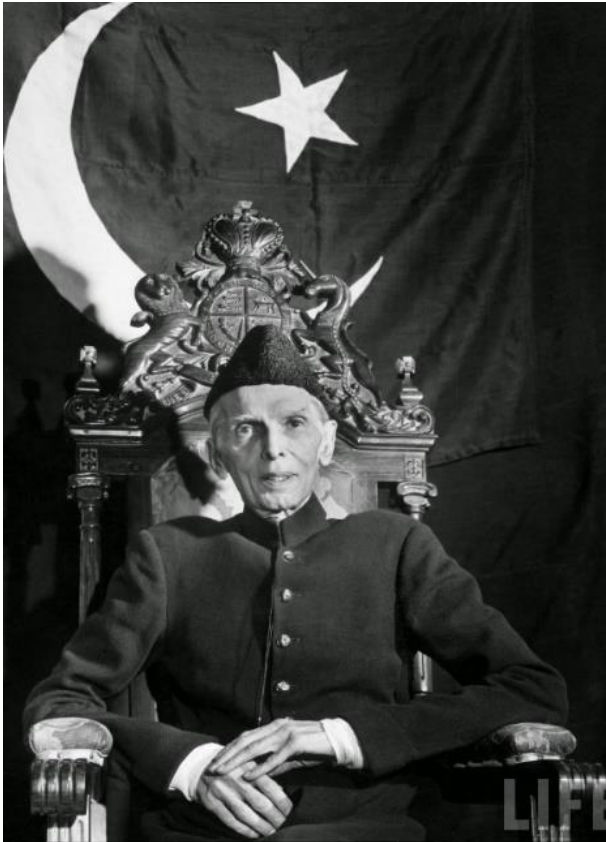


Figure 39.

Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah is seated with the Pakistan flag draped behind him in Karachi in December 1947, excerpted with permission from *Witness to Life and Freedom*, Roli Books, Delhi, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1338270> ²⁰

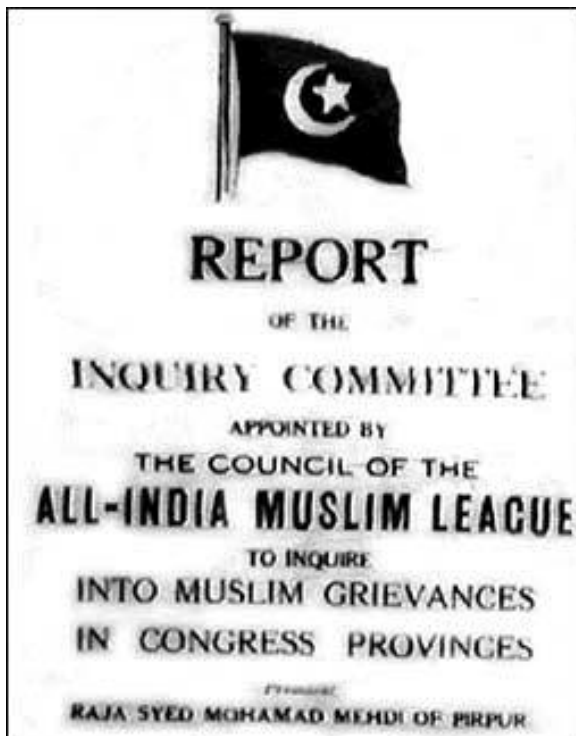


Figure 40.

Report of the Inquiry Committee, 1938, [http://www.allamaiqbal.com/webcont/393/RuleofCongressMinistries\[1937-1939\].html](http://www.allamaiqbal.com/webcont/393/RuleofCongressMinistries[1937-1939].html)

²⁰ This photo, which appears on the cover of the January 5, 1948 edition of *Life* magazine, is part of a series taken by Margaret Bourke-White for the magazine.



Figure 41. The Quaid-i-Azam, in celebratory progression through Karachi in December 1938,
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1338270>

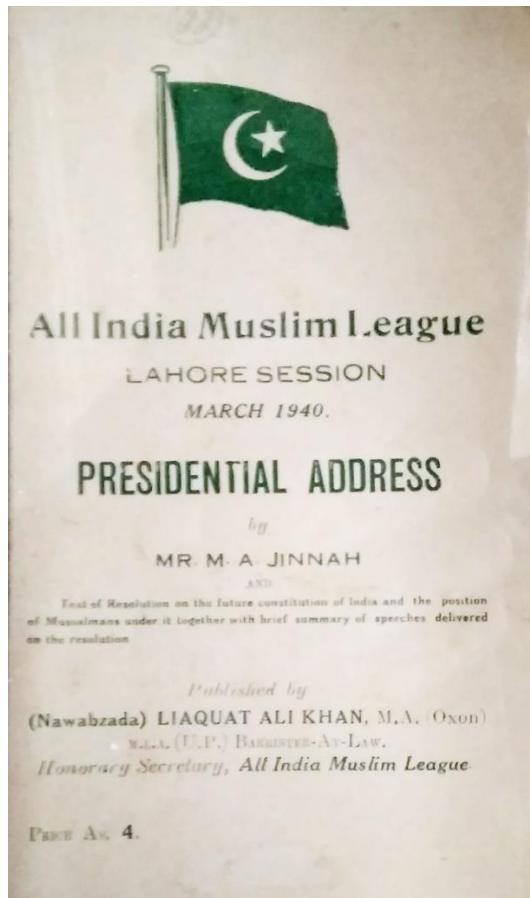


Figure 42.

M.A. Jinnah Presidential Address Lahore 1940,
 The Punjab Government Archives Lahore,
 Photograph 16, September 2019.

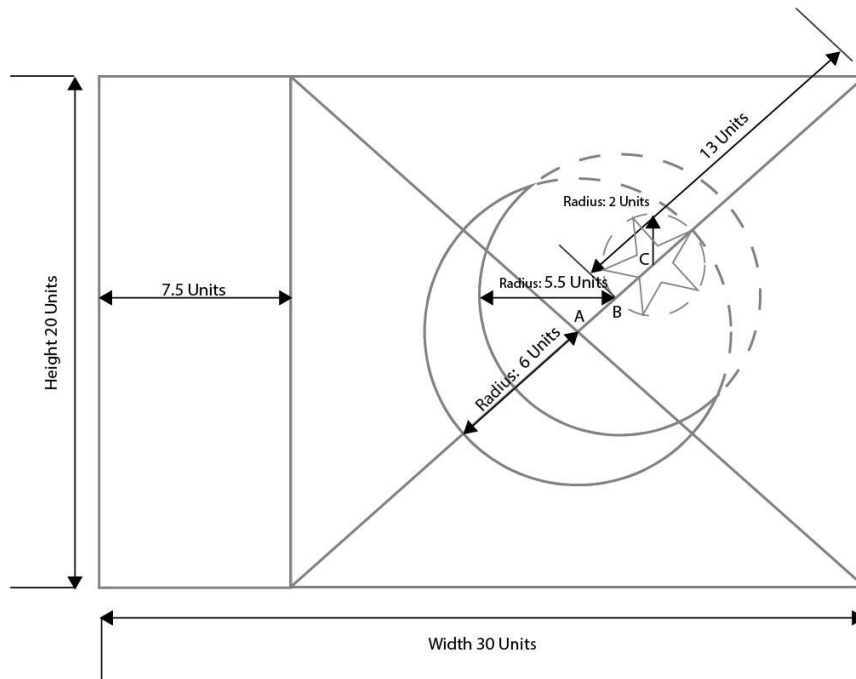


Figure 43.

Drawing of the
Pakistan Flag by
author, June 19th
2020



Figure 44.

First State Emblem of Pakistan designed by
Abdul Rehman Chaghtai and approved by *Qaid-e-Azam* on 18th May 1948, Credits *Arif Rahman Chaghtai*

<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=10157428151887285&set=a.146421922284>



*approved sample
the finish
18/5/48*



Figure 45. State Emblem of Pakistan²¹ adopted in 1954 published by The Gazette of Pakistan Karachi, 2nd February 1968, *The Punjab Government Archives Photograph 16*, September 2019.



Figure 46. State Emblem of Pakistan, <https://www.facebook.com/673717284/posts/10157382795042285/?sfnsn=scwspwa&extid=HqDqfNFKmRzfGikG>



Figure 47. Emblem of All India Muslim League published on the title of Presidential Address, Allahabad Session Dec, 1930, *The Punjab Government Archives Lahore, Photograph 16*, September 2019.



Figure 48. Emblem of Punjab Pro Muslim League on the book title of *Punjab Ka Faisla*, *The Punjab Government Archives Lahore, Photograph 16*, September 2019.

²¹ Designed by artist Meraj Mohammad from Dera Ghazi Khan (diploma in commercial painting at the Mayo School of Arts Lahore, 1935-38



Figure 49. Emblem on the title of *Karbala-e-Hind* brochure published in *Darya Ganj* Delhi, *The Punjab Government Archives Lahore*, Photograph 16, September 2019.

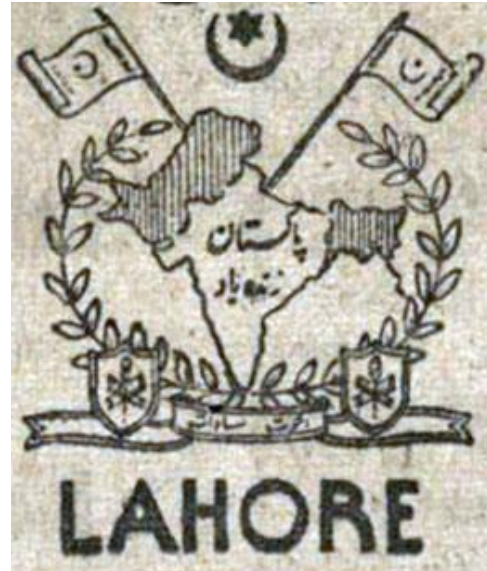


Figure 50 State Emblem of Pakistan design on Masthead of *The Eastern Times* Lahore, 1948, *The Punjab Public Library*, Photograph 27, August 2020.

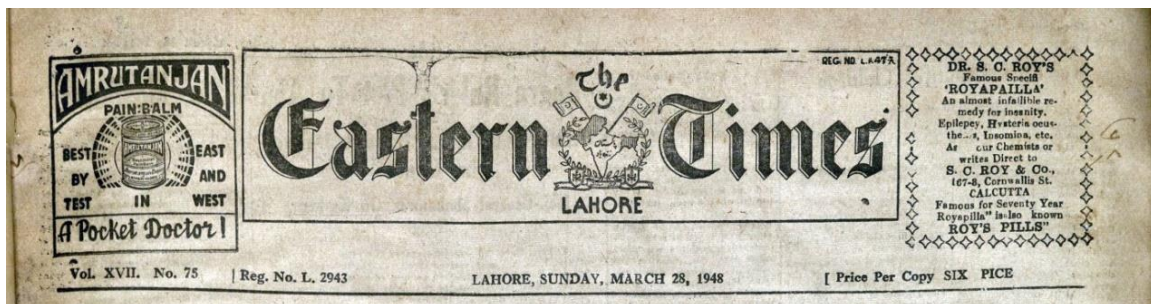


Figure 51 State Emblem of Pakistan design on Masthead of *The Eastern Times* Lahore, 1948, *The Punjab Public Library*, Photograph 27, August 2020.



Figure 52.

Grant of Armorial Ensign to the Province of the Punjab, *An Introduction to The Punjab Government Archives* by Liaquat Ali Khan Niazi, p 96.



Figure 53. Emblem of Punjab published on the Development of Urdu as Official Language in the Punjab (1849-1974) by The Government of the Punjab 1977, *The Punjab Government Archives Photograph 16*, September 2019.



Figure 54. Emblem of Punjab published on the Calendar of Persian Correspondence by The Government of the Punjab 1985, *The Punjab Government Archives Photograph 16*, September 2019.



Figure 55. Emblem of Punjab

https://www.clipartkey.com/view/iRwoToJ_punjab-government-logo-png/