Articles

A Mixed Methods Empirical Examination of Changes in Emphasis and Style in the Extremist Magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*

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Abstract

The change in name of ISIS's flagship English language magazine from Dabiq to Rumiyah prompted media speculation about its significance. This article uses a mixed methods approach that integrates a qualitative social semiotic discourse analysis approach with quantitative methods of information visualisation to examine empirically changes in emphasis and approach in both magazines over time to determine whether the changes are ones of style or substance. The paper argues that, while ISIS has changed its strategic focus over time in response to its changing fortunes, the organisation's underlying world view, values and ultimate aims remain consistent and unchanged.

Keywords: *mixed methods approach, multimodal discourse analysis, violent extremist discourse, information visualisation, Dabiq, Rumiyah*

Introduction

The extremist organisation which refers to itself as Islamic State (referred to here as ISIS) is a prolific producer of media output. The "vast majority of official media releases are in Arabic" [1], however a proportion of ISIS's media output is also in other languages, with English the most common other language used.[2] Among these publications are the professionally produced online magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. From July 5, 2014 to July 31, 2016, Al Hayat Media Centre, the branch of ISIS's Ministry of Media which produces material in English, produced fifteen issues of *Dabiq*.[3] On September 6, 2016, the first issue of *Rumiyah* was released. Since then further issues of *Rumiyah* have been released on a more or less monthly schedule. Since no further issue of *Dabiq* has appeared since the first issue of *Rumiyah* appeared, it seems most likely that *Rumiyah* has replaced *Dabiq* as the organisation's flagship non-Arabic propaganda magazine.

The change in name has prompted media speculation. Is the change from *Dabiq* to *Rumiyah* a sign that ISIS is under extreme pressure from "unrelenting airstrikes" [4], or is it "just a savvy PR decision"[5]? It has also been reported that *Rumiyah* lacks the "fire and brimstone" apocalyptic narrative of Dabiq" [6], is shorter than *Dabiq,* and lacks "the unifying theme of other ISIS propaganda tools" .[7] Comerford also notes that ISIS is under increasing pressure on several fronts but cautions against underestimating the resilience of ISIS's ideology as the group has shown "its ability to respond to changes in situation or fortune"[8], suggesting that the change in name of the magazine might signal a shift in emphasis from a physical caliphate to a more virtual one.

Both the ISIS in crisis hypothesis and the resilience and adaptability of ISIS are supported by Siyech, who states that "IS' state-building enterprise appears to be crumbling with the continuing loss of territory, towns and cities in Iraq and Syria".[9] Recruitment has also declined with the number of foreign fighters joining IS falling from 2,000 recruits every month to fewer than 50.[10] However, Siyech cautions against writing ISIS's obituary prematurely, arguing that, "while the group will lose its territory in Iraq and Syria, its capacity to conduct attacks in Iraq and elsewhere will not be diminished."[11]

Ingram is ambivalent, speculating whether *Rumiyah* represents part of an expansion or a contraction in ISIS's propaganda.[12] Shanahan suggests that, following losses of territory, naming their front-line publication aimed at a Western audience after a town that is soon to be lost to them "would not be a good look 'going forward'" for ISIS. However, re-naming the publication after the historical centre of Christianity could be "a way to show what you aspire to".[13]

Spada points to similarities between *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* in layout, photographic style and appeal to a Western audience.[14] Alternatively, Pragalath reports that *Rumiyah* is said to be made up of articles which have been recycled from ISIS's daily news bulletins while *Dabiq* features new content; and *Rumiyah* focuses more on current operations while *Dabiq* emphasises longer-term goals and on propagating ISIS's ideology. [15] Similarly, Friedland points to differences, stating that "ISIS has switched away from *Dabiq* in favor of an easier to read, less theological magazine".[16]

This media speculation raises questions which are worth exploring empirically. An analysis of these magazines provides an opportunity to examine how ISIS has adapted and adjusted its propaganda strategy to changing circumstances as they provide a chronicle of how ISIS has presented its agenda to the English-speaking world for a period of over two years. The questions addressed in this article include:

- What, if anything, can be read into the name change from *Dabiq* to *Rumiyah*?

- Is the switch in title another strategic adaptation to changing circumstances for ISIS?

- Are apparent differences between *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* something new or do they continue a trend already evident in Dabiq?

- Are the changes matters of style or substance; what are the similarities/differences between *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* and what, if anything, do they imply?

Through addressing these questions the article argues that similarities and differences between *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* show that ISIS has changed its strategic focus over time in response to its changing fortunes and capabilities. In conceding that a quick victory is not possible, ISIS has adjusted its rhetoric and plans of attack. However, the organisation's underlying world view, values and ultimate aims remain consistent and unchanged.

Theoretical Approach

This article integrates the qualitative social semiotic approach of Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis [17] with quantitative methods of information visualisation [18], to examine changes in emphasis and approach over time in the English language versions of the online propaganda magazines *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah.*

Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) is an approach that studies human signifying processes as social practices and is concerned with different sign systems and their integration in texts and social activities, interpreted within the contexts of the situation and culture.[19] The approach builds on Halliday's systemic functional theory (SFT).[20] Three of the key tenets of this approach are that a) language and other semiotic systems are viewed as resources for making meaning; b) it is a theory where meaning in language and other semiotic systems is realised through choices from sets of possible alternatives; and c) language and other semiotic resources are structured according to the functions which meaning-making resources have evolved to serve in society.

Although it was initially applied to language, SFT has been adapted and extended to include the study of other semiotic resources and multimodal texts and artefacts to account for the ways in which linguistic and

non-linguistic resources combine and interact in communicating meaning.[21] In this article, an SF-MDA approach is integrated with information visualisation [22] so that patterns of change in choices in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* over time can be investigated and displayed .[23]

In a qualitative study of the content of the text of *Dabiq*, Kiefer, Messing, Musial and Weiß propose that the magazine is one of the leading media instruments used for radicalisation, especially of Western audiences. [24] However, they analysed only text, arguing that images just serve to support the text and do not contain any new information.[25] On the other hand, Kovacs argues for the importance of "the interconnection of texts and images" where "the text is often an integral part of the image and the same applies vice versa".[26] It is assumed here that, since both *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* are multisemiotic productions, the combinations of text and image will be more revealing than either text or images on their own. For this reason, the focus of this study is text, images and their relations, as described below.

Methodology

Data Set

The data set for this study consists of the fifteen issues of *Dabiq* and six issues of *Rumiyah*. All issues were downloaded, all images were extracted and image files were catalogued and assigned a unique identifying label. In total 1095 images from *Dabiq* and 201 images from *Rumiyah* were classified according to their subject matter and context, based on the framework developed by O'Halloran, Tan, Wignell, and Lange for classifying images and article types in the first 14 issues of *Dabiq*.[27] Images were first classified into superordinate categories and then sub-categorised according to distinguishing features. This resulted in 12 superordinate image categories and 75 sub-categories (see Table 1).

Similarly, all articles in all issues of both magazines were classified into types according to article titles and the article's content focus. Where articles in *Rumiyah* did not have the same category title but were very similar in content to articles in *Dabiq* they were classified as belonging to the same category. For example, articles titled 'Hikmah (Wisdom)', which preach the ISIS version of Islam, do not appear in *Rumiyah* but are similar in content to a series of articles in *Rumiyah* called 'The Religion of Islam and the Jama'ah of the Muslims'. The labels assigned to article types, although different in wording, more or less match the content of those used by Colas.[33] Twenty article types were identified (see Table 2). The distribution of article types was then matched with all issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* (see Table 3).

Table 1. Image Classifications and Explanations of Key Terms (adapted from O'Halloran, Tan, Wignell, and Lange).[28]

	Image Category	Description (Experiential Meaning)
1.	FAR ENEMY	The term Far Enemy is used by Jihadist Salafists to refer to Western sponsors of Arab regimes: the United States, its Western allies and Israel.[29]
2.	NEAR ENEMY	The term Near Enemy was initially applied to secular Arab regimes considered apostate by jihadis.[30] It is also used to refer to other secular Muslim regimes.[31]
3.	ISIS HEROES	Heroes are people, living and dead, regarded by ISIS as worthy of emulation. Hero images are sub-classified according to whether the hero is alive – mostly mujahideen, or dead – martyrs.
4.	ISIS ICONS	Three prominent ISIS icons are identified: the ISIS flag, the AK47 assault rifle, and what we refer to as the Tawheed gesture. These icons are often used in combination with other image categories.[32]

5.	HISTORICAL RECREATIONS	Historical re-creations are usually staged or photo-shopped, representations of apocalyptic events and historical events.
6.	ISIS LAW ENFORCEMENT	These are typically in-situ documentary shots showing ISIS involved in aspects of Shari'a law enforcement.
7.	ISIS SOCIAL WELFARE	These are a combination of in-situ documentary shots and in situ posed shots showing ISIS engaged in social welfare activities.
8.	OTHER ISIS OBJECTS, PLACES, EVENTS	Miscellaneous ISIS-related imagery which is too varied to be categorized as separate categories. Examples include ISIS advertisements, ISIS maps, ISIS money, ISIS weaponry, etc.
9.	OTHER OBJECTS, PLACES, EVENTS	Miscellaneous non-ISIS-related imagery which is too varied to be categorized as separate categories. Examples include landscapes and cityscapes, mosques, non-ISIS flags, stock photographs, etc..
10.	PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE	Images of actions signifying allegiance to ISIS.
11.	SCRIPTURE	Includes images of scripture in Arabic. Also includes enacted creed, depicting mujahideen reading scripture, or showing them in prayer after 'victory'.
12.	INFOGRAPHICS	Information rendered in the form of charts, graphs, drawings, images, accompanied by succinct text.

To assist in the exploration of patterns of relationships between images and article types in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, an interactive visualisation application, Multimodal Analysis Visualisation application (MMA Visualisation app) was developed.[34] Comparison of patterns of relationship between *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* is used to identify key points of difference and similarity between the two magazines, which can be used to investigate changes in ISIS's approach over time. Patterns of change in emphasis over time are also addressed by examining the major themes pursued in each issue of both magazines. These major themes are identified through the title of each issue, the image on the cover of each issue and through the text and images in the feature article which most closely relates to the cover of each issue. Patterns are evaluated in terms of ISIS priorities and circumstances at or closely preceding the time of publication of the issue.

Table 2. Article Types

	Article Type	Description
1.	Cover/Table of contents	Introduce the main theme and table of contents in *Rumiyah*.
2.	Cover	Introduce the main theme of the issue in *Dabiq*.
3.	Table of contents	Present the table of contents in *Dabiq*.
4.	Last page message	Short articles imparting words of wisdom, often quoted from scripture.
5.	Foreword	Articles akin to editorials, reflecting ISIS values and obligations of Muslims. Topics include migration to ISIS territory, encouraging lone-wolf attacks, gloating reports on attacks on Western countries, denunciations of Far Enemy 'crusaders', promises of ISIS victory, gloating about attacks on Near Enemy (especially Shi'a Muslims), all justified and legitimised by references to selected scripture.

6.	Hikmah (Wisdom)	Religiously inspired feature articles on how to be a good ISIS Muslim, and why ISIS is correct, supported by citations of scripture.
7.	Amongst the Believers are Men	Stories paying homage to exemplary ISIS "martyrs".
8.	To/From Our Sisters/For Women	Articles about a range of topics on what ISIS considers women's issues. Topics include migration to ISIS lands, slave girls or prostitutes, advice to wives of Muslims fighting against ISIS, the role of women in jihad, how many wives a man can have, how widows should behave, and an interview with the wife of a "martyr".
9.	From the Pages of History	Mostly religious/scriptural justifications of ISIS and condemnation of 'enemies', and reconstructions of past Islamic 'glory days' from the time of the Prophet Muhammad.
10.	Interviews	Mostly interviews with leaders of other organisations that have pledged allegiance to ISIS.
11.	Near Enemy Issues	Articles concerned with criticising the Near Enemy.
12.	In the words of the Enemy	Articles concerned with interpreting Western analysis, highlighting the strength of ISIS, and showing the 'enemy' as disunited, or showing Far Enemy Crusaders, Jews and secular Arab (that is, Near Enemy) leaders as being in collusion.
13.	Feature Articles	Articles on a wide range of topics, including Islamic leadership, why ISIS is the legitimate ruler of all Muslims, the ultimate fate of the 'crusaders', migration to ISIS lands, advice to mujahideen on their obligations, jihad, denunciation of Jews and Shi'a Muslims, denunciation of 'crusaders', conspiracies between 'crusaders' and near enemy, what it takes to be a good ISIS Muslim, and why ISIS is right and other jihadist and nationalist groups are wrong.
14.	Far Enemy Captives	Feature articles concerned explicitly with the fate of Far Enemy 'crusader' captives.
15.	John Cantlie (Captive British journalist)	Articles following typical western journalistic editorial or op-ed style, written under the by-line of John Cantlie, a British journalist captured by ISIS in 2012, who writes commentaries in support of ISIS (under duress).
16.	ISIS Reports	Mostly local and district reports of ISIS military activity and successes.
17.	Advertisements	Advertisements for various ISIS media products.
18.	Eulogy/Obituary	Articles paying homage to deceased ISIS leaders.
19.	Infographic	Information rendered in the form of charts, graphs, drawings, images, accompanied by minimal text.
20.	Procedural	Instructions and procedures on how to select the correct weaponry for targeted ISIS attacks.

Table 3. Distribution of article types across issues of Dabiq and Rumiyah.

		Dabiq															Rumiyah					
	Issue	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Article Type																					
1.	Cover/Table of contents																■	■	■	■	■	■
2.	Cover	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
3.	Table of contents	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
4.	Last page message	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
5.	Foreword	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
6.	Feature Articles	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
7.	ISIS Reports	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
8.	Hikmah (Wisdom)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
9.	In the words of the Enemy	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
10.	Advertisements		■				■					■					■					■
11.	Far Enemy Captives			■				■				■										
12.	John Cantlie (Captive British journalist)				■	■	■	■	■		■			■								
13.	Near Enemy Issues						■		■	■	■	■	■	■								
14.	To/From Our Sisters/For Women								■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
15.	Amongst the Believers are Men								■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■		■			
16.	From the Pages of History								■	■	■	■	■	■					■			
17.	Interviews								■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
18.	Infographic																■	■	■	■	■	■
19.	Eulogy/Obituary																■					
20.	Procedural																	■	■		■	

Analysis and Discussion

Wignell et al. show that ISIS presents a clear and unequivocal agenda founded on a clear set of values which are condensed into readily recognizable icons and that together these represent and reinforce the organisation's consistent antagonistic world view.[35] The principal question that is addressed here is: do aspects of that agenda which are highlighted change from time to time as ISIS adapts to and accommodates changing circumstances?

Choice of Magazine Name: Dabiq and Rumiyah

Dabiq takes its name from a small nondescript town in Syria near the Turkish border. The town itself is of no strategic importance, however it figures in an apocalyptic prophecy by the Prophet Muhammad.[36] The prophecy foretells of a cataclysmic battle at Dabiq between the Muslims and the Romans. This apocalyptic theme, which continues through all issues of *Dabiq*, is introduced at the top of the table of contents of Issue 1 with the quote from the leader of one of the previous incarnations of ISIS, Abu Mus'ab az-Zarqawi: "The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify – by Allah's permission – until it burns the crusader armies in Dabiq".

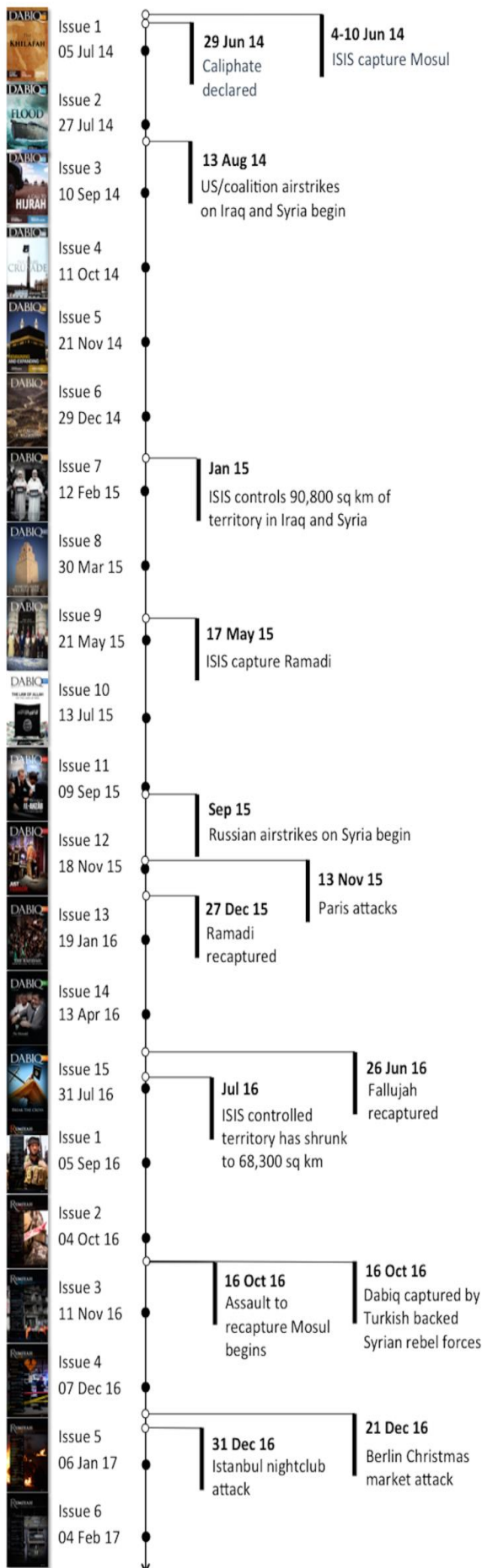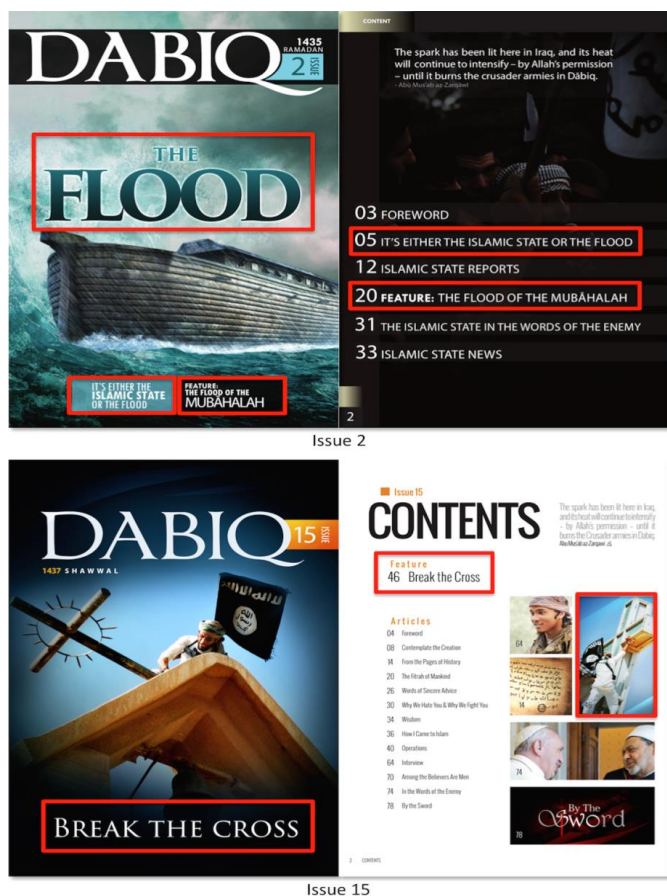*Figure 1. Timeline of Issues of Dabiq and Rumiyah and Key Events in the Changing Fortunes of ISIS*

Figure 2. Cover and Table of Contents Introducing the Main Theme and Associated Feature Articles (Dabiq, Issues 2 and 15).

Issue 2

Issue 15

While *Rumiyah* does not foreground the apocalyptic message it has not disappeared. In *Rumiyah* ISIS appears to be resigned to a longer time frame to achieve victory. For instance, the quote featured in *Dabiq* has been replaced by a quote from another deceased leader of another previous incarnation of ISIS, Abu Hamzah al-Muhajir (Abu Ayyub al-Masri): "O muwahhidin (believers in *tawhid*: the absolute oneness of Allah), rejoice, for by Allah, we will not rest from our jihad except beneath the olive trees of Rumiyah (Rome)".

Issue One of *Rumiyah* was released on September 6, 2016. On October 16, 2016, ISIS lost control of Dabiq to Turkish backed Syrian rebel forces.[37] The timing of the change of name and the release of the new magazine a few weeks before the fall of Dabiq indicates both foreknowledge of a change of circumstances and careful preparation to accommodate that change. In Issue 3 of *Rumiyah*, the fall of Dabiq is rationalised in a feature article titled 'Towards the Major Malhamah (battle) of Dabiq' (*Rumiyah*, Issue 3, pp. 24–26). This article warns that ISIS's enemies are deluded in thinking that the fall of Dabiq was a psychological victory as this was only the "minor battle of Dabiq" and not the "Major Malhamah of Dabiq" (*Rumiyah*, Issue 3, p. 25), which has yet to take place.

ISIS's Fortunes 2014-2016 as Reflected in Text and Image Combinations in Dabiq and Rumiyah

While it is difficult to determine exactly the size of territory and population that has been and is under ISIS control, clearly ISIS went through an initial phase of rapid expansion, followed by a phase of slower expansion and consolidation, followed by a phase of contraction, which continues. Johnson reports that at the end of 2014, ISIS controlled a third of Iraq, a third of Syria and had control over more than 9 million people and further states that as at March, 2016, ISIS had lost 22 per cent of that territory.[38] Gilsinan cites estimates of maximum territory under ISIS control from 12,000 square miles to 35,000 square miles.[39] Figure 1 shows the covers of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* with their release dates and a corresponding timeline of some key events in the expansion and contraction of ISIS-controlled territory. The timing of the release of

each issue of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* can be mapped against this timeline. The main themes as reflected in the style and content of each issue are summarised below.

Dabiq

For *Dabiq*, the title of the issue and the image on the cover reflect the central theme of each issue, which is then most often taken up in a feature article. The cover includes the title of the issue, which introduces the main theme of that issue, and, in most cases, a pointer to a feature article(s) which connects directly to the title of the issue (e.g. see outlined features in Figure 2). The covers include an image which visually relates to the main theme of the issue. The selection of main themes in *Dabiq* changes over time.

The first three issues of *Dabiq* were released during the time of greatest ISIS expansion. In Issue 1 the principal theme is the declaration of the caliphate and the tone is one of rejoicing. Secondary themes, which persist through all issue of *Dabiq,* are the coming apocalypse and the exposition of ISIS's intolerant and antagonistic world view. Issues 2 and 3 put out a call for migration. They present migration as an obligation and warn of the consequences of not becoming part of the so-called Islamic State. The cover image of Issue 2 is of Noah's Ark. [40] The feature article that stems from the cover uses the story of Noah and the Flood to develop the argument that allegiance to ISIS is the only way to avoid annihilation. In Issue 3 one lengthy feature article extols the virtues of *muwahhidin* who migrate to what ISIS refer to as the land of *malahim* (battle) to join the *jihad*, while another feature article, 'Hijrah from Hypocrisy to Sincerity', adopts a more threatening tone. The theme of Issue 4 predicts both victory for ISIS and the forthcoming apocalypse. The articles which link to the cover are the 'Foreword' and a feature article called 'Reflection on the Final Crusade'. This article finishes with a quote from Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, now deceased but at the time a key member of ISIS leadership, who forecasts a final defeat for the "Crusaders".
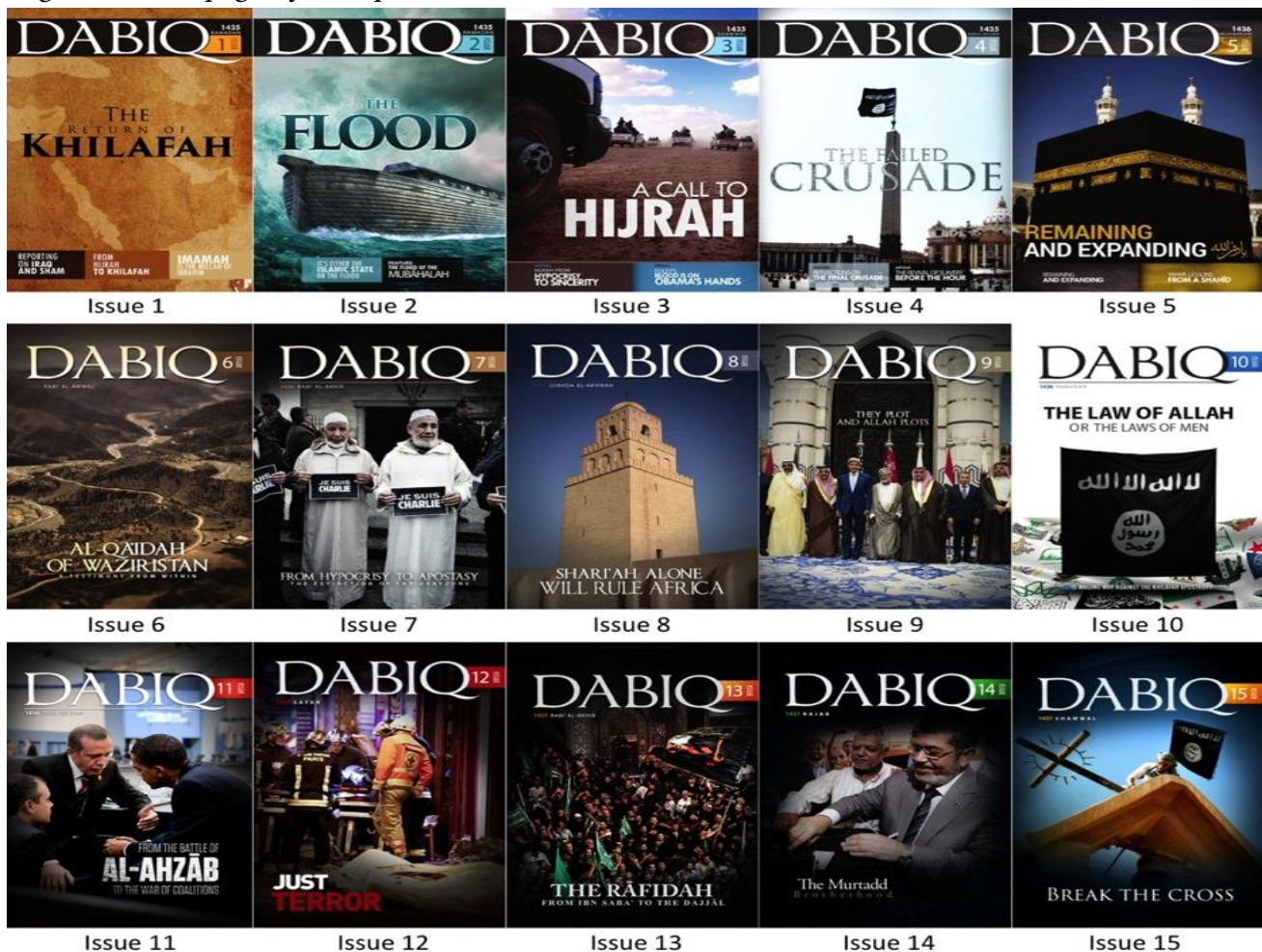
Figure 3. Cover pages of Dabiq, Issues 1–15.

Figure 4. Images and associated articles on the Cover/Table of Contents in Rumiyah,

Issues 1–6.

Issues 5 to 8 focus on unity and disunity among jihadist groups and the deviance of those not allied to ISIS. For example, Issue 5 boasts of a growing number of jihadist groups pledging allegiance to ISIS while Issue 6 focuses on discrediting jihadist groups which have not aligned themselves with ISIS. Issue 9 shifts attention to 'conspiracy' between the near and far enemy. Issues 9 and 10 both have a strong apocalyptic and theological focus. From Issue 11 onwards the focus is firmly on ISIS's enemies, near and far. The title of the issue refers to the Battle of al Ahzab in 627CE.[41] The historical battle is used an analogy for the current conflict between ISIS and a coalition of 'enemies'. Issue 12 features the Paris attacks of November 13, 2015. Issue 13 focuses on 'enemies' closer to home and is an attack on Shi'a Muslims, again using historical accounts and scripture. Issue 14, attacks the 'near enemy', again using historical and scriptural arguments to assert the apostasy of Arab leaders who are not aligned with ISIS. Issue 15, 'Break the Cross', shifts the attack back to the far enemy with an attack on Christianity. Figure 3 gives an Overview of the Cover Pages of Dabiq, Issues 1–15.

Rumiyah

The covers of *Rumiyah* contrast with the covers of *Dabiq*. In the six issues of *Rumiyah* the cover page includes the name of the magazine, the number of the issue and the table of contents superimposed over an image. The issues have no title. Each cover has a dominant image which links to one or more articles in the magazine (outlined in Figure 4). For example, in Issue 1, the image is of a "martyred" ISIS leader, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, which connects to the Foreword 'Stand and Die Upon That for Which Your Brothers Died'. The covers of the six issues of *Rumiyah* are consistent in format.

Similarities and Difference between Dabiq and Rumiyah

The covers and main motifs in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* show a pattern which changes over time. The shift in the aspects of ISIS's agenda which are foregrounded is also reflected in the choice of certain image-types, which can be visualised using the frequency analysis tool in the MMA Visualisation app. Figure 5 show the distribution of three major image types (ISIS Heroes, Near Enemy and Far Enemy) across all issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Figure 5 demonstrates, for example, that greater emphasis was placed on depicting ISIS Heroes in the early issues of *Dabiq*. In contrast, the number of images depicting the Far Enemy and the Near Enemy increased over time. The emphasis on ISIS Heroes corresponds with the phase of greatest ISIS expansion, when ISIS was most actively trying to recruit foreign fighters, while the increase in attention to enemies builds from the time when ISIS came under increasing attack. In *Rumiyah*, ISIS Heroes feature strongly in Issue 1, are less emphasised in Issue 2 and show a trend of increasing emphasis over the remaining issues. Images of the Far Enemy reach a peak in Issue 3, then drop and level off for the remaining issues, whereas

Near Enemy images show an inconsistent but steady increase across issues. Trends, however, are more difficult to interpret due to the smaller number of images in each category.
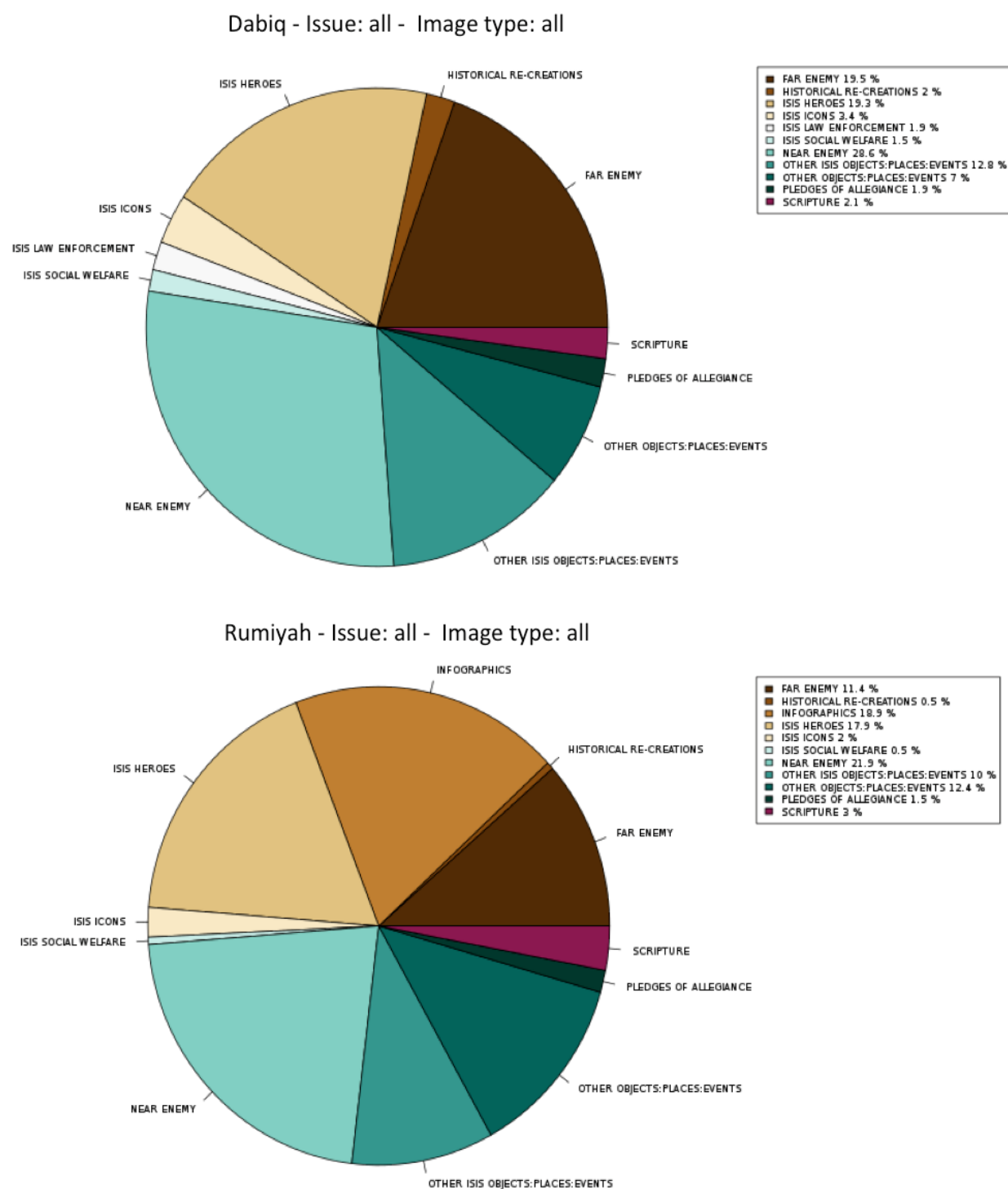
Comparison of the aggregated distribution of images and article types is more revealing. Figures 6a and 6b show the distribution of images and article types in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah,* based on the percentage of images and articles found in each magazine. The main difference in image distribution between the two magazines is in the categories of 'Near Enemy' (29% in *Dabiq*, 22% in *Rumiyah*), 'Far Enemy' (20% in *Dabiq*, 11% in *Rumiyah*) and in the image category 'Infographics' (19% in *Rumiyah*, not present in *Dabiq*).

Figure 5. Image Type Frequency Analysis for 'ISIS Heroes' (top), 'Far Enemy' (middle), and 'Near Enemy' (bottom), Dabiq, Issues 1–15 (left), and Rumiyah, Issues 1–6 (right).
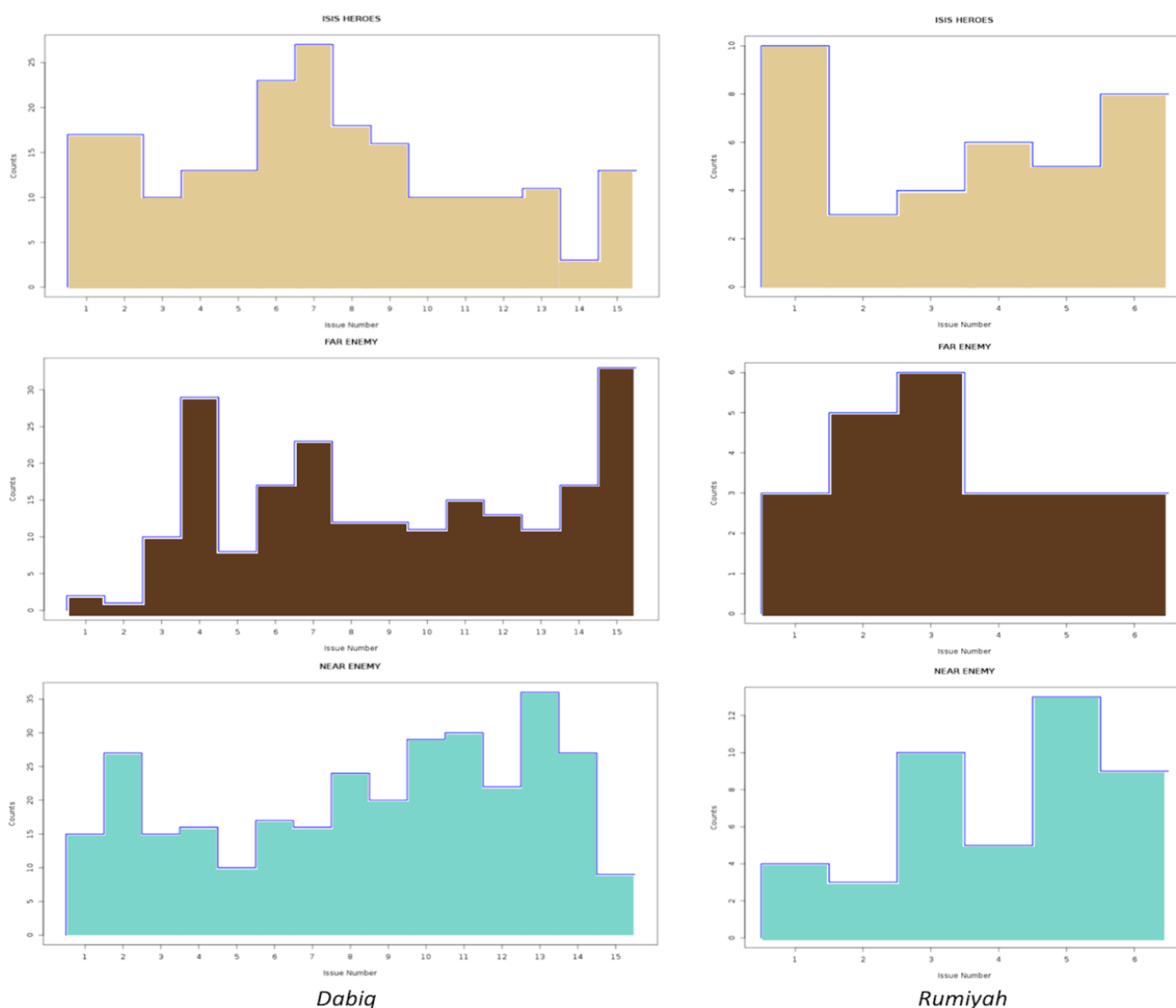
The distribution of image and article types is quite consistent across *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah.* However, there is one major difference. Infographics appears as both a new image category (Figure 6a) which may be embedded within other article types, and a new article type (Figure 6b) which may consist of text and images or assemblages of text only (e.g. see Figure 7). Infographics condense into a more accessible form themes which are addressed in *Dabiq* through dense passages of text, and account for many of the differences in the other categories. Of the 38 infographics in the six issues of *Rumiyah*, 20 are about battles/military operations against the near enemy, 16 are about religion or religious advice, while the remaining two are about encouraging lone wolf attacks, and other near enemy issues.
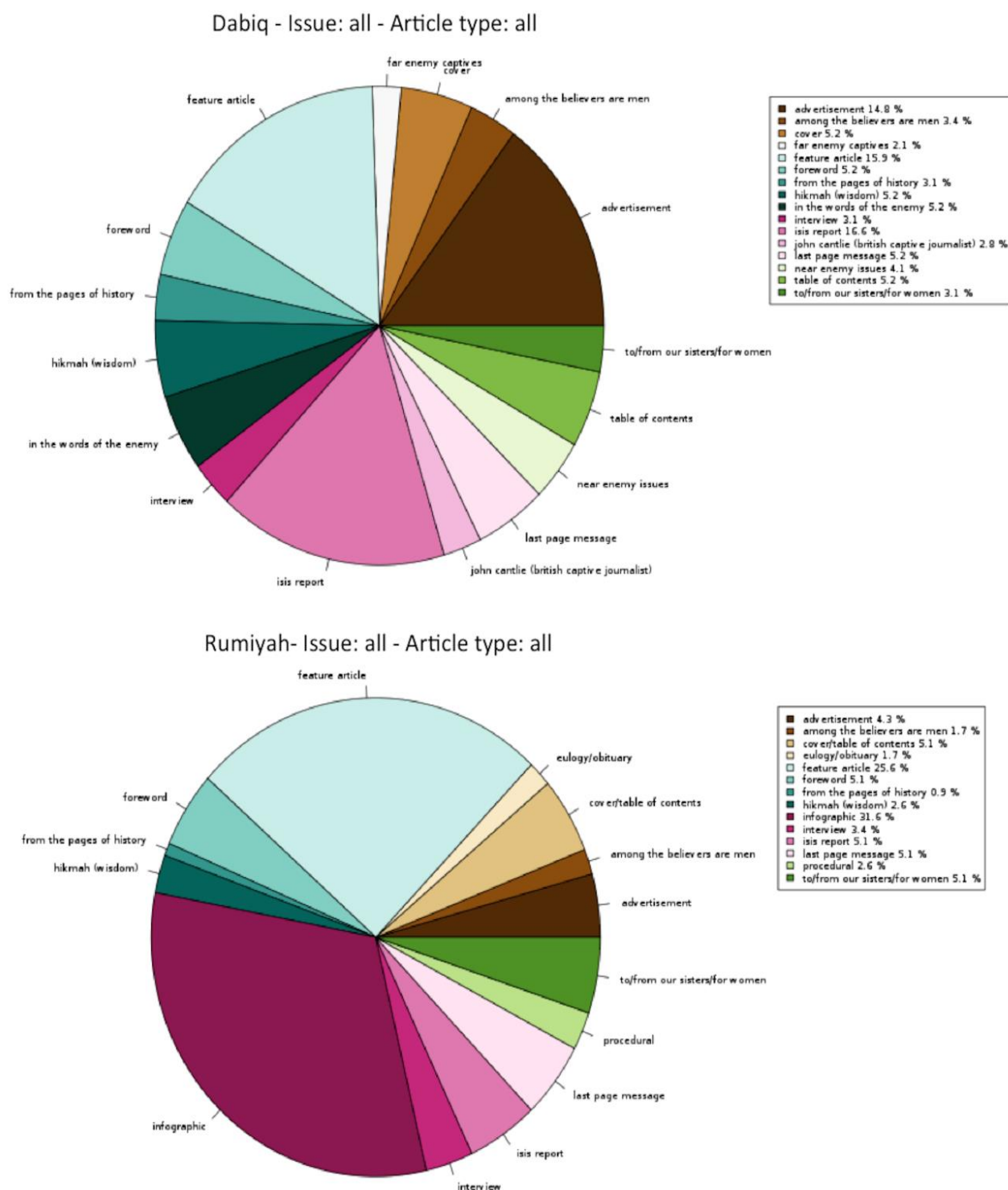
Figure 6a. Distribution of Image Types in Dabiq (Issues 1–15) and Rumiyah (Issues 1–6).

Dabiq - Issue: all - Image type: all

FAR ENEMY 19.5 %
HISTORICAL RE-CREATIONS 2 %
ISIS HEROES 19.3 %
ISIS ICONS 3.4 %
ISIS LAW ENFORCEMENT 1.9 %
ISIS SOCIAL WELFARE 1.5 %
NEAR ENEMY 28.6 %
OTHER ISIS OBJECTS:PLACES:EVENTS 12.8 %
OTHER OBJECTS:PLACES:EVENTS 7 %
PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE 1.9 %
SCRIPTURE 2.1 %

Rumiyah - Issue: all - Image type: all

FAR ENEMY 11.4 %
HISTORICAL RE-CREATIONS 0.5 %
INFOGRAPHICS 18.9 %
ISIS HEROES 17.9 %
ISIS ICONS 2 %
ISIS SOCIAL WELFARE 0.5 %
NEAR ENEMY 21.9 %
OTHER ISIS OBJECTS:PLACES:EVENTS 10 %
OTHER OBJECTS:PLACES:EVENTS 12.4 %
PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE 1.5 %
SCRIPTURE 3 %

Apart from this difference the distribution of image and article types is similar in both magazines. Of the twenty article types 10 are common across issues of both magazines: 'Advertisements', 'Amongst the Believers are Men', 'Feature Articles', 'Foreword', 'From the Pages of History', 'Hikmah (Wisdom)', 'Interviews,' 'ISIS Reports', 'Last page message', and 'To/From Our Sisters/For Women'. Each magazine also has a cover and a table of contents, which are on separate pages in *Dabiq* and on the same page in *Rumiyah*. The covers of *Dabiq* also contain the title of the issue while the issues of *Rumiyah* are numbered but not titled. Despite these differences a cover and a table of contents are common to both magazines. Two further article types in addition to Infographics, 'Eulogy' and 'Procedural', which are not present in *Dabiq*, were found in *Rumiyah*.

Four article types found in *Dabiq* are not found in *Rumiyah*: 'In the Words of the Enemy', 'Near Enemy Issues', 'Far Enemy Captives' and articles by captive British journalist John Cantlie.

Figure 6b. Distribution of Article Types in Dabiq (Issues 1–15) and Rumiyah (Issues 1–6).

Dabiq - Issue: all - Article type: all

advertisement	14.8 %
among the believers are men	3.4 %
cover	5.2 %
far enemy captives	2.1 %
feature article	15.9 %
foreword	5.2 %
from the pages of history	3.1 %
hikmah (wisdom)	5.2 %
in the words of the enemy	5.2 %
interview	3.1 %
isis report	16.6 %
john cantlie (british captive journalist)	2.8 %
last page message	5.2 %
near enemy issues	4.1 %
table of contents	5.2 %
to/from our sisters/for women	3.1 %

Rumiyah- Issue: all - Article type: all

advertisement	4.3 %
among the believers are men	1.7 %
cover/table of contents	5.1 %
eulogy/obituary	1.7 %
feature article	25.6 %
foreword	5.1 %
from the pages of history	0.9 %
hikmah (wisdom)	2.6 %
infographic	31.6 %
interview	3.4 %
isis report	5.1 %
last page message	5.1 %
procedural	2.6 %
to/from our sisters/for women	5.1 %

Of the article types new to *Rumiyah*, 'Eulogy/Obituary' is similar to the *Dabiq* articles titled 'Amongst the Believers are Men' in that it deals with the lives of exemplary "martyrs", although it does appear to be reserved for deceased ISIS leaders. These articles also carry an additional message that, as Islam continued and expanded after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, the deaths of ISIS leaders will not defeat the grand plan.

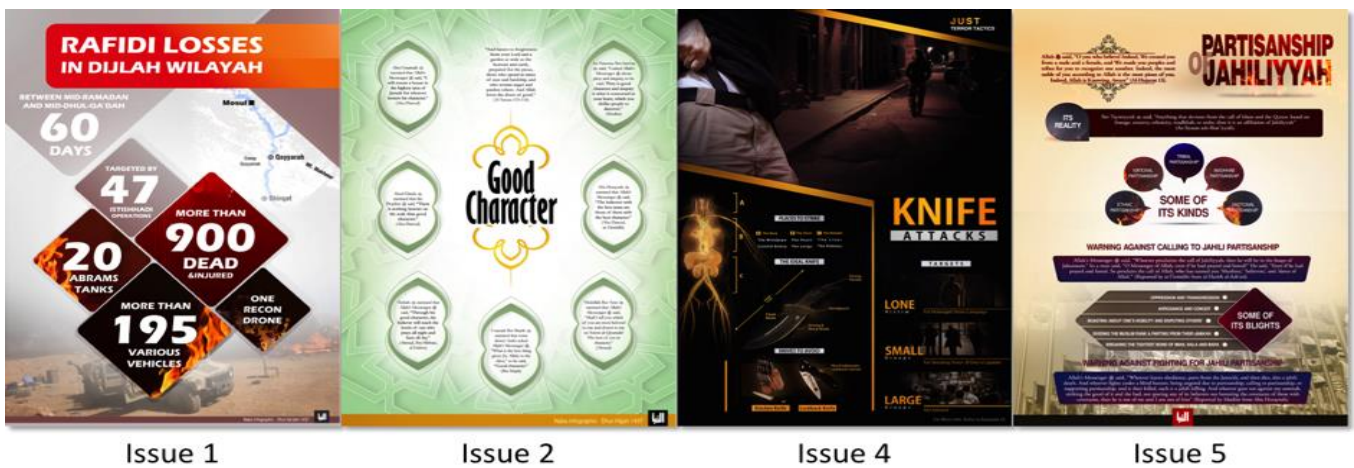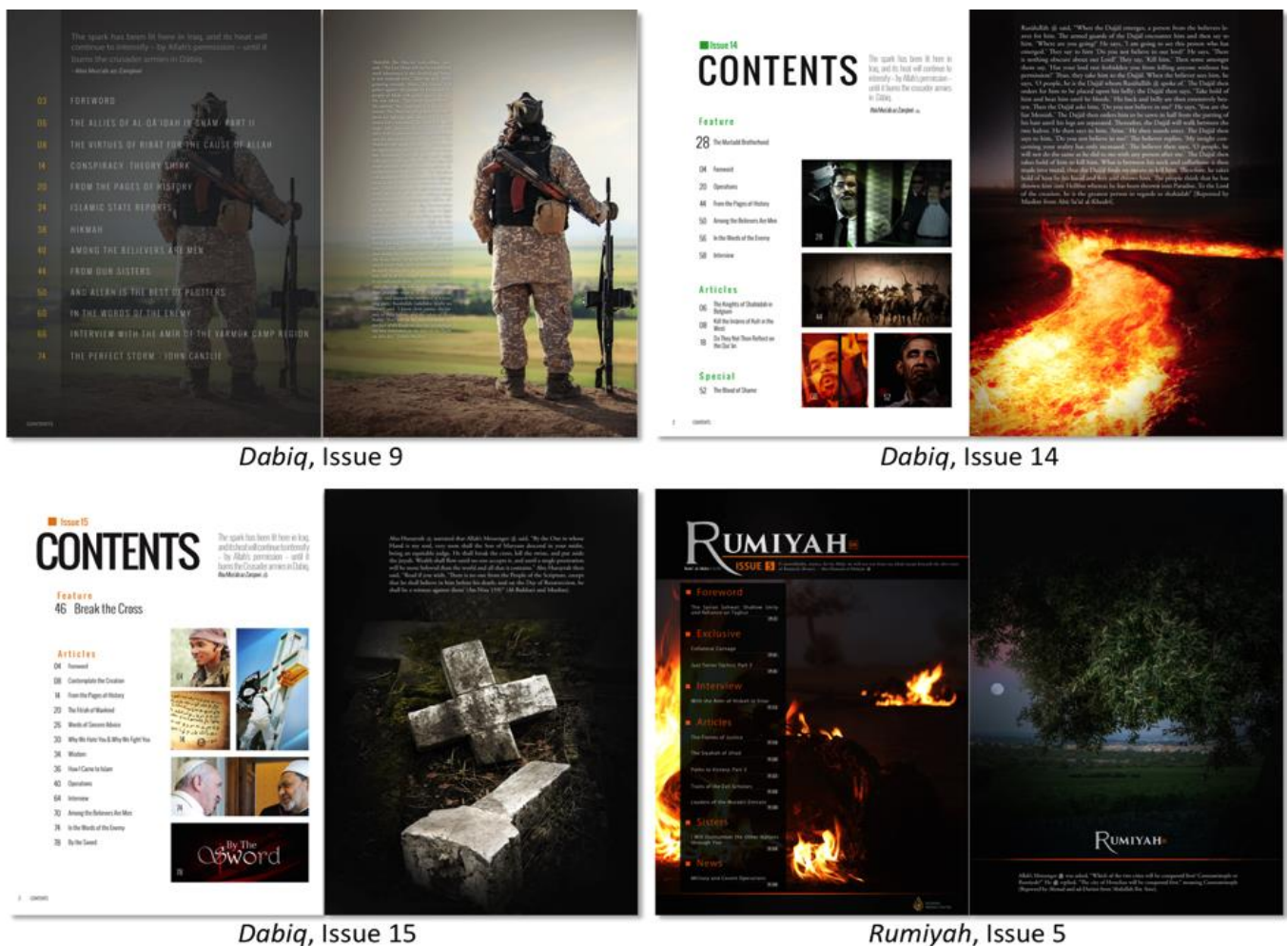*Figure 7. Examples of Infographics (Rumiyah, Issues 1, 2, 4 and 5).*

Figure 8. Stylistic Differences in the Presentation of Table of Contents and Last Page Message (Dabiq, Issues 9, 14, and 15, and Rumiyah, Issue 5).

The principal difference in the distribution of article types across the two magazines is in how ISIS addresses their near and far enemies. Article types such as 'In the Words of the Enemy' appeared in each issue of *Dabiq*. These articles tended to focus on denunciations of political enemies and 'conspiracies' between near and far enemies. Enemy leaders and public figures were foregrounded in the images. These articles appear to have been replaced in *Rumiyah* by procedurals which encourage more direct attacks by spelling out instructions and procedures for how to select the correct knife and create carnage (*Rumiyah*, Issue 2, pp. 12–13), how to

select and use the most appropriate vehicle for attacking crowds (*Rumiyah*, Issue 3, pp. 10–12) and how to make a Molotov cocktail and napalm to commit arson attacks (*Rumiyah*, Issue 5, pp. 8-10). Issue 6 contains an article describing sarin gas but stops short of providing a recipe (*Rumiyah*, Issue 6, p. 20).

Apart from being considerably shorter than *Dabiq*, *Rumiyah* is also different in several other respects. For instance, the apocalyptic theme which is foregrounded in *Dabiq*, is downplayed in *Rumiyah*. While both magazines emphasise attacking enemies near and far, the prediction of an imminent apocalypse is no longer prominent in *Rumiyah*, although it has not disappeared. The quote which appears at the top of the Table of Contents of each issue of *Dabiq*, predicting the destruction of the Crusaders has been changed in *Rumiyah*, where it has been replaced by the previously cited quote from the leader of AQI who succeeded al-Zarqawi, Abu Hamza al-Muhajir. The nature of the quote suggests postponement of an imminent apocalypse with a promise of a much longer-term victory. What Berger refers to as accelerated "apocalyptic time" has slowed as claims that the 'Hour' is fast approaching are more difficult to support in the changed circumstances. [42]

The final page of each issue of *Rumiyah* contains the same citation from scripture superimposed over the same image. In each issue the image has an olive tree in the foreground with a town in the background. At the bottom centre of the image is the word 'Rumiyah' in large type. The image echoes the quote at the beginning of the issue with its visual reference to olive trees. This is a variation on the pattern found in the last page of each issue of *Dabiq*, where each last page contains a different citation from scripture and a different image (see Figure 8 for illustration). Also, other apocalyptic messages and articles found in several issues of *Dabiq* do not appear in *Rumiyah*. For instance, there is reference to "the Hour" (the Day of Judgment) in only one article in *Rumiyah*.

Dabiq itself is not constant in style and format. There were several changes over the course of the fifteen issues. For example, the article type classified as 'Last Page Message' shows an interesting pattern. From Issues 1 to 9 a different faded image appeared behind the text of the table of contents. This image was repeated but with full clarity on the final page of the issue with passages of scripture superimposed over the image. In Issues 10 and 11 the image behind the table of contents is blurred so that its subject cannot be discerned. The image behind the scripture on the final page is fully visible. In both issues it is an image depicting enemies of ISIS. In Issue 12 the earlier pattern returns only to be replaced in Issue 13 by the second pattern.

Issues 14 and 15 have a different pattern altogether. The tables of contents now have the contents in a column on the left side of the page and several images underneath each other on the right. The image on the final page now relates directly to the text of the scripture on the page and to the theme of the issue. For example, in Issue 14, the title of the issue is 'The Murtadd (apostate) Brotherhood' and the theme of the feature article which relates to the title is deviance and apostasy. The text on the final page is from a Hadith (Muslim from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri) about the emergence of the Dajjal (the Muslim equivalent of the Anti-Christ) and his attempt to get a true believer to stray. Failing in his attempt he throws the believer into hellfire. The image behind the text is a vivid edited photograph of a burning lava flow (see Figure 8).

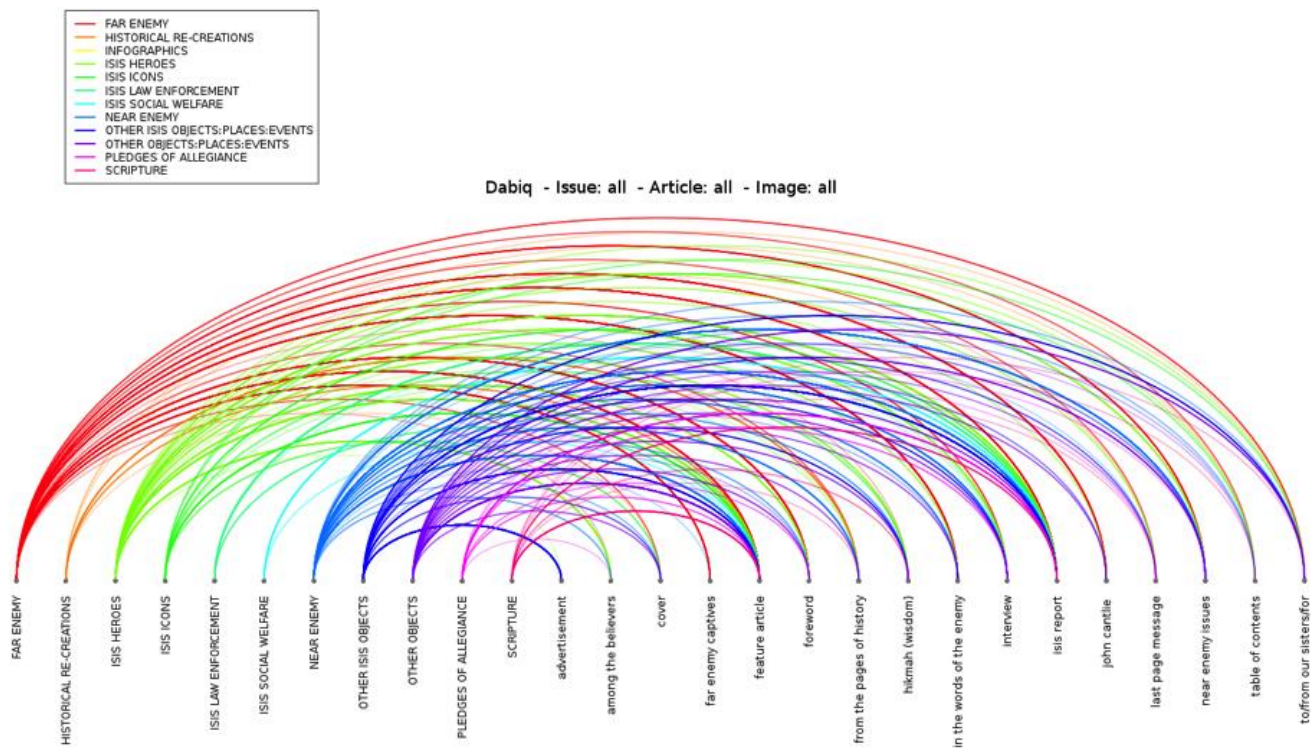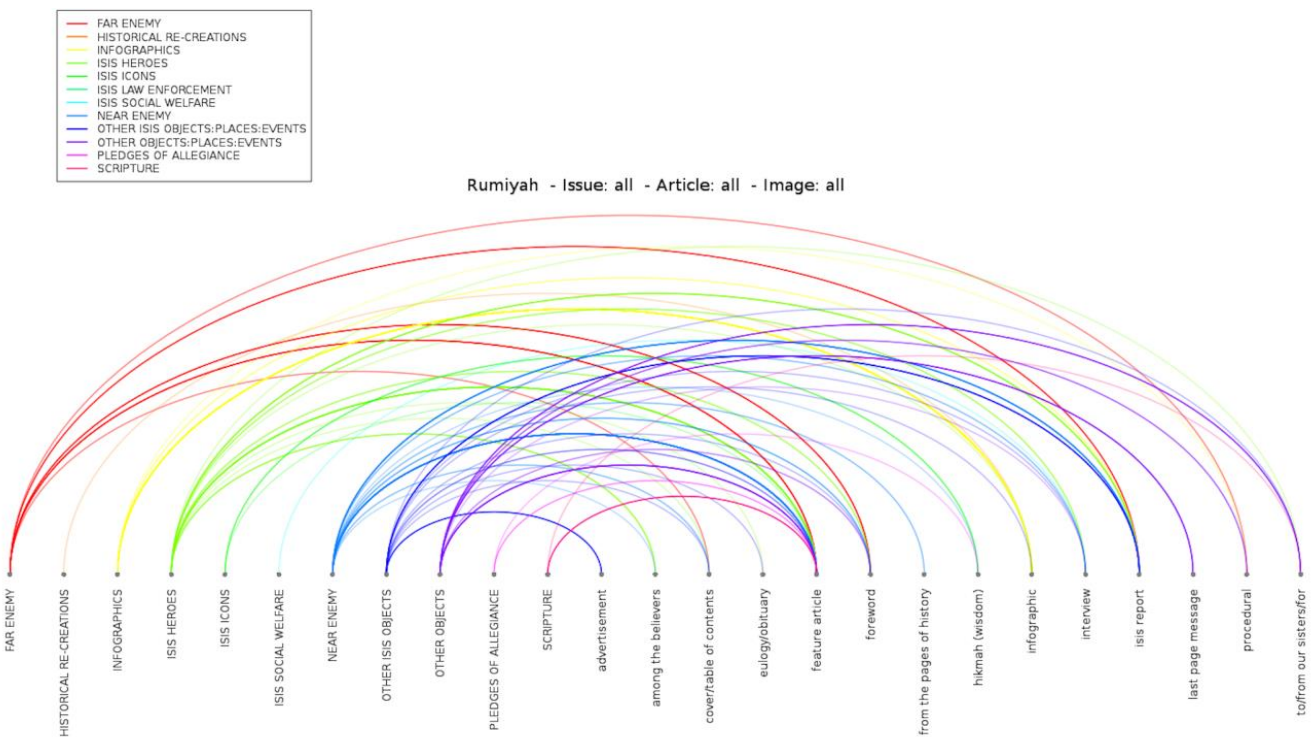*Figure 9a. Overall Pattern of Image/Article Type Combinations in Dabiq, Issues 1–15.*

Figure 9b. Overall Pattern of Image/Article Type Combinations in Rumiyah, Issues 1–6.

These changes show progressive stylistic development with the tables of contents of Issues 14 and 15 and the last page message of Issue 15 of *Dabiq* being similar in visual style to the same pages in *Rumiyah*. The style appears to have stabilised in *Rumiyah* (see Figure 8).

Finally, there are several features which are constant across *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. For instance, scripture is consistently behind all the arguments used by ISIS to justify what they do. Scripture is used in almost all

articles as evidence to support arguments for action. There are also feature articles in *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* devoted specifically to ISIS's interpretation of Islamic faith and practice. Other things which feature prominently in both magazines are *jihad* and the glorification of "martyrdom"; field reports on current ISIS military activity; and articles on ISIS's views on the role and duties of women. While there have been stylistic changes across issues of *Dabiq* and between *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah,* the core content and the values espoused are consistent across both magazines. The arc-graphs in Figures 9a and 9b illustrate, for example, that despite the obvious difference in the total number of images and articles (1.095 images and 290 articles for the 15 issues of *Dabiq* versus 201 images and 117 articles for the six issues of *Rumiyah*), the overall pattern of image-article type combinations remained quite consistent across *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*.

Summary and Conclusions

The above analysis has addressed the questions posed in the introduction to this paper, that is: What are the similarities/differences between *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* and what, if anything, do they imply? What, if anything, can be read into the change from *Dabiq* to *Rumiyah*?; Is the switch in title another adaptation to changing circumstances for ISIS?; Are apparent differences between *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* something new or do they continue a trend already evident in Dabiq?

In summary, *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* are more similar than they are different. The analysis and discussion have shown that ISIS's core values, intolerance and an antagonistic world view are constant across all issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*. Likewise, their reliance on selected Islamic scripture to justify their position remains constant. What changes is the strategies they use to enact their antagonism. When ISIS was expanding rapidly their antagonism was realised on the battlefield. When they came under attack from coalition airstrikes they began to focus on ISIS-orchestrated and lone-wolf attacks, especially in countries allied to the United States. When they were under increasing attack from the air and on the ground and forced into a defensive war their ability to launch and orchestrate attacks was reduced so they focused on instructional articles for potential lone-wolf terrorists.[43]

Looking across all issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, ISIS shows itself to be an organisation that readily adapts to changing circumstances. Changes in focus across issues of *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* appear to closely align with changes in ISIS's circumstances. For instance, the focus was on migration, recruitment and state-building when ISIS was rapidly expanding the territory under its control. ISIS presented itself as an expanding, victorious and administratively competent organisation, successfully carving out an ever-growing 'promised land' for their believers. As their territory reached its maximum and no further gains were looking likely, they switched focus to highlight affiliated organisations, particularly in Africa, to present a case that their caliphate was expanding globally. When their home territory started to shrink again they switched focus to attacks their enemies, far and near.

When seen against this backdrop, the change in their showpiece magazine's name from *Dabiq* to *Rumiyah* can be interpreted as strategic. With the fall of *Dabiq* imminent the forecast apocalyptic battle was not going to happen any time soon so the apocalypse was put on hold and the emphasis switched to the eventual conquest of Rome, which does not have a date attached to it and can therefore happen at any indefinite time in the future.

Overall it can be surmised that ISIS will pursue its agenda by using whatever resources it has at its disposal at the time. While ISIS foregrounds different strategies to pursue its agenda at different times depending on their circumstances, the overall goals and the rationale used to justify them remain constant. As Ingram points out, the central message of *Rumiyah* is no matter what losses ISIS suffers on the ground their *jihad* is "fundamentally a battle of opposing values and is never-ending".[44]

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