

= Impalement =

Impalement , as a method of execution , is the penetration of a human by an object such as a stake , pole , spear , or hook , often by complete or partial perforation of the torso . It was used particularly in response to " crimes against the state " and regarded across a number of cultures as a very harsh form of capital punishment and recorded in myth and art . Impalement was also used during wartime to suppress rebellion , punish traitors or collaborators , and as a punishment for breaches of military discipline .

Offenses where impalement was occasionally employed include : contempt for the state 's responsibility for safe roads and trade routes by committing highway robbery or grave robbery , violating state policies or monopolies , or subverting standards for trade . Offenders have also been impaled for a variety of cultural , sexual and religious reasons .

References to impalement in Babylonia and the Neo -@- Assyrian Empire are found as early as the 18th century BC . Within the Ottoman Empire , this form of execution continued into the 20th century .

= = Methods = =

= = = Longitudinal impalement = = =

Impaling an individual along the body length has been documented in several cases , and the merchant Jean de Thevenot provides an eyewitness account of this , from 17th century Egypt , in the case of a man condemned to death for the use of false weights :

They lay the Malefactor upon his Belly , with his Hands tied behind his Back , then they slit up his Fundament with a Razor , and throw into it a handful of Paste that they have in readiness , which immediately stops the Blood . After that they thrust up into his Body a very long Stake as big as a Mans Arm , sharp at the point and tapered , which they grease a little before ; when they have driven it in with a Mallet , till it come out at his Breast , or at his Head or Shoulders , they lift him up , and plant this Stake very streight in the Ground , upon which they leave him so exposed for a day . One day I saw a Man upon the Pale , who was Sentenced to continue so for three Hours alive and that he might not die too soon , the Stake was not thrust up far enough to come out at any part of his Body , and they also put a stay or rest upon the Pale , to hinder the weight of his body from making him sink down upon it , or the point of it from piercing him through , which would have presently killed him : In this manner he was left for some Hours , ( during which time he spoke ) and turning from one side to another , prayed those that passed by to kill him , making a thousand wry Mouths and Faces , because of the pain be suffered when he stirred himself , but after Dinner the Basha sent one to dispatch him ; which was easily done , by making the point of the Stake come out at his Breast , and then he was left till next Morning , when he was taken down , because he stunk horribly .

= = = Survival time = = =

The survival time on the stake is quite variedly reported , from a few seconds or minutes to a few hours or 1 to 3 days . The Dutch overlords at Batavia , present day Jakarta , seem to have been particularly proficient in prolonging the lifetime of the impaled , one witnessing a man surviving 6 days on the stake , another hearing from local surgeons that some could survive 8 or more days . A critical determinant for survival length seems to be precisely how the stake was inserted : If it went into the " interior " parts , vital organs could easily be damaged , leading to a swift death . However , by letting the stake follow the spine , the impalement procedure would not damage the vital organs , and the person could survive for several days .

= = = Transversal impalement = = =

Alternatively , the impalement could be transversally performed , for example in the frontal @-@ to @-@ dorsal direction , that is , from front ( through abdomen , chest or directly through the heart ) to back or vice versa

In the Holy Roman Empire ( and elsewhere in Central / Eastern Europe ) , women who killed their newborn could be liable to be placed in an open grave , and have a stake hammered into their heart . A detailed description of an execution in this manner comes from 17th century Košice ( then in Hungary , now in eastern Slovakia ) . A woman was to be executed for infanticide , the executioner had two assistants to help him . First , a grave , some one @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half ell deep was dug . The woman was placed within it , her hands and feet secured by driving nails through them . Then , the executioner placed a small thorn bush upon her face . He then placed and held vertically a wooden stave at her heart , while his assistants piled earth on the woman . Her head , though , was kept free of earth , at the behest of the clerics , because that would have quickened her death process . Once the earth had been piled upon her , the executioner grabbed with a pair of tongs a rod made of iron , which had been made red hot . He positioned the glowing iron rod beside the wooden stave , and as one of his assistants hammered the rod in , the other assistant emptied a trough of earth upon the woman 's head . It is said that a scream was heard , and that the earth actually moved upwards for a moment , before all was over .

= = = Variations = = =

= = = Gaunching = = =

Joseph Pitton de Tournefort , travelling on botanical research in the Levant 1700 ? 1702 , observed both ordinary longitudinal impalement , but also a method called " gaunching " , in which the condemned is hoisted up by means of a rope over a bed of sharp metal hooks . He is then released , and depending on how the hooks enter his body , he may survive in impaled condition for a few days . Forty years earlier than de Tournefort , de Thévenot described much the same process , adding that it was seldom used because it was regarded as too cruel . Some 80 years prior to de Thevenot , in 1579 , Hans Jacob Breuning von Buchenbach witnessed a variant of the gaunching ritual . A large iron hook was fixed on the horizontal cross @-@ bar of the gallows and the individual was forced upon this hook , piercing him from the abdomen through his back , so that he hung from it , hands , feet and head downward . On top of the cross bar , the executioner situated himself and performed various torture on the impaled man below him .

= = = Hooks in the city wall = = =

While gaunching as de Tournefort describes involves the erection of a scaffold , it seems that in the city of Algiers , hooks were embedded in the city walls , and on occasion , people were thrown upon them from the battlements .

Thomas Shaw , who was chaplain for the Levant Company stationed at Algiers during the 1720s , describes the various forms of executions practiced as follows :

" .. but the Moors and Arabs are either impaled for the same crime , or else they are hung up by the neck , over the battlements of the city walls , or else they are thrown upon the chingan or hooks that are fixed all over the walls below , where sometimes they break from one hook to another , and hang in the most exquisite torments , thirty or forty hours . "

According to one source , these hooks in the wall as an execution method were introduced with the construction of the new city gate in 1573 . Before that time , gaunching as described by de Tournefort was in use . As for the actual frequency of throwing persons on hooks in Algiers , Capt. Henry Boyde notes that in his own 20 years of captivity there , he knew of only one case where a Christian slave who had murdered his master had met that fate , and " not above " two or three Moors besides . Taken captive in 1596 , the barber @-@ surgeon William Davies relates something

of the heights involved when thrown upon hooks ( although it is somewhat unclear if this relates specifically to the city of Algiers , or elsewhere in the Barbary States ) : " Their ganshing is after this manner : he sitteth upon a wall , being five fathoms high , within two fathoms of the top of the wall ; right under the place where he sits , is a strong iron hook fastened , being very sharp ; then he is thrust off the wall upon this hook , with some part of his body , and there he hangeth , sometimes two or three days , before he dieth . " Davies adds that " these deaths are very seldom " , but that he had personally witnessed it

= = = Hanged by the ribs = = =

A slightly variant way of executing people by means of impalement was to force an iron meat hook beneath a person 's ribs and hang him up to die slowly . This technique was in 18th century Ottoman @-@ controlled Bosnia called the cengela , but the practice is also attested , for example , in 1770s Dutch Suriname as a punishment meted out to rebellious slaves .

= = = Bamboo torture = = =

A recurring horror story on many websites and popular media outlets is that Japanese soldiers during World War II inflicted bamboo torture upon prisoners of war . The victim was supposedly tied securely in place above a young bamboo shoot . Over several days , the sharp , fast growing shoot would first puncture , then completely penetrate the victim 's body , eventually emerging through the other side .

= = History = =

= = = Antiquity = = =

= = = Mesopotamia and the ancient Near East = = =

The earliest known use of impalement as a form of execution occurred in civilizations of the ancient Near East . For example , the Code of Hammurabi , promulgated about 1772 BC by the Babylonian king Hammurabi specifies impaling for a woman who killed her husband for the sake of another man . In the late Isin / Larsa period , from about the same time , it seems that , in some city states , mere adultery on the wife 's part ( without murder of her husband mentioned ) could be punished by impalement . From the royal archives of the city of Mari ( at the Syrian @-@ Iraqi border by the western bank of Euphrates ) , most of it also roughly contemporary to Hammurabi , it is known that soldiers taken captive in war were on occasion impaled . Roughly contemporary with Babylonia under Hammurabi , king Siwe @-@ Palar @-@ huapak of Elam , a country lying directly east of Babylonia in present @-@ day Iran , made official edicts in which he threatened the allies of his enemies with impalement , among other terrible fates . For acts of perceived great sacrilege , some individuals , in diverse cultures , have been impaled for their effrontery . For example , roughly 1200 BC , merchants of Ugarit express deep concern to each other that a fellow citizen is to be impaled in the Phoenician town Sidon , due to some " great sin " committed against the patron deity of Sidon .

= = = Pharaonic Egypt = = =

During Dynasty 19 , Merneptah had Libu prisoners of war impaled ( " caused to be set upon a stake " ) to the south of Memphis , following an attempted invasion of Egypt during his Regnal Year 5 . The relevant determinative for ?t ( " stake " ) depicts an individual transfixed through the abdomen . Other Egyptian kings employing impalements include Sobekhotep II , Akhenaten , Seti , and Ramesses IX .

===== Neo @-@ Assyrian Empire =====

Evidence by carvings and statues is found as well , for example from Neo @-@ Assyrian empire ( rough dating , 934 @-@ 609 BCE ) . The image of the impaled Judeans is a detail from the public commemoration of the Assyrian victory in 701 BC after the Siege of Lachish , under King Sennacherib ( r.705 @-@ 681 BC ) , who proceeded similarly against the inhabitants of Ekron during the same campaign . From Sennacherib 's father Sargon II 's time ( r.722 @-@ 705 BC ) , a relief from his palace at Khorsabad shows the impalement of 14 enemies during an attack on the city of Pazashi . A peculiarity about the " Neo @-@ Assyrian " way of impaling was that the stake was " driven into the body immediately under the ribs " , rather than along the full body length . For the Neo @-@ Assyrians , mass executions seem to have been not only designed to instill terror and to enforce obedience , but also , it can seem , as proofs of their might that they took pride in . For example , Neo @-@ Assyrian King Ashurnasirpal II ( r.883 @-@ 859 BC ) was evidently proud enough of his bloody work that he committed it to monument and eternal memory as follows :

" I cut off their hands , I burned them with fire , a pile of the living men and of heads over against the city gate I set up , men I impaled on stakes , the city I destroyed and devastated , I turned it into mounds and ruin heaps , the young men and the maidens in the fire I burned "

Paul Kern , in his ( 1999 ) " Ancient Siege Warfare " provides some statistics on how different Neo @-@ Assyrian kings from the times of Ashurnasirpal II commemorated their punishments of rebels

Although impalement of rebels and enemies is particularly well @-@ attested from Neo @-@ Assyrian times , the 14th century BC Mitanni king Shattiwaza charges his predecessor , the usurper Shuttarna III for having delivered unto the ( Middle ) Assyrians several nobles , who had them promptly impaled . Some scholars have said , though , that it is only with king Ashur @-@ bel @-@ kala ( r.1074 @-@ 1056 ) that we have solid evidence that punishments like flaying and impaling came into use . From the Middle Assyrian period , we have evidence about impalement as a form of punishment relative to other types of perceived crimes as well . The law code discovered and deciphered by Dr. Otto Schroeder contains in its paragraph 51 the following injunction against abortion :

If a woman with her consent brings on a miscarriage , they seize her , and determine her guilt . On a stake they impale her , and do not bury her ; and if through the miscarriage she dies , they likewise impale her and do not bury her

===== Ambiguous Biblical evidence =====

Some controversy exist between different Bible translations concerning the actual fate of the 5th century BC Persian minister Haman and his ten sons , whether they were impaled or hanged For example , the English Standard Version , Esther 5 : 14 opts for hanging , whereas The New International Reader 's version opts for impalement . The Assyriologist Paul Haupt opts for impalement in his 1908 essay " Critical notes on Esther " , while Benjamin Shaw has an extended discussion of the topic on the website [ligonier.org](http://ligonier.org) from 2012 .

Other passages in the Bible allude to the practice of impalement , such as II Samuel 21 : 9 , concerning the fate of the sons of Saul .

" And they handed them over to the Gibeonites , and they impaled them ?????? ( VeYiQY`aM ) on the mountain before YHVH , and all seven of them fell together . And they were killed in the first days of the harvest , at the beginning of the barley harvest . " <

Although conclusive evidence might be wanting either way for whether Hebrew Law allowed for impalement , or just hanging , the Neo @-@ Assyrian method of impalement as seen in the carvings could , perhaps , equally easily be seen as a form of hanging upon a pole , rather than focusing upon the stake 's actual penetration of the body .

===== Rome =====

From John Granger Cook , 2014 , - " Stipes is Seneca 's term of the object used for impalement . This narrative and his Ep . 14 @.@ 5 are the only two textually explicit references of impalement in Latin texts ... "

" I see crosses there , not just of one kind but made differently by different [ fabricators ] ; some individuals suspended their victims with heads inverted toward the ground ; some drove a stake ( stipes ) through their excretory organs / genitals ; others stretched out their [ victims ' ] arms on a patibulum [ cross bar ] ; I see racks , I see lashes ... "

" Video istic cruces ne unius quidem generis sed aliter ab aliis fabricatas ; capite quidam conuersos in terram suspendere , alii per obscena stipitem egerunt , alii brachia patibulo explicuerunt ; video fidiculas , video uerbera ... "

= = = Europe = = =

### Transversal impalement

Within the Holy Roman Empire , in article 131 of the 1532 Constitutio Criminalis Carolina , the following punishment was stated for women found guilty of infanticide . Generally , they should be drowned , but the law code allowed for , in particularly severe cases , that the old punishment could be implemented . That is , the woman would be buried alive , and then a stake would be driven through her heart . Similarly , burial alive , combined with transversal impalement is attested as an early execution method for people found guilty of adultery . For example , from the 1348 statutes of Zwickau , it seems that an adulterous couple could be punished in the following way : They were to be placed on top of each other in a grave , with a layer of thorns between them . Then , a single stake was to be hammered through them . A similar punishment by impalement for a proven male adulterer is mentioned in a 13th @-@ century ordinance for Bohemian mining town Iglau , whereas in a 1340 Vienna statute , the husband of a woman caught in flagrante in adultery could , if he wished to , demand that his wife and her lover be impaled , alternatively demand a monetary restitution . Occasionally , women found guilty of witchcraft have been condemned to be impaled . In 1587 Kiel , 101 @-@ year @-@ old Sunde Bohlen was , on being condemned as a witch , buried alive , and afterwards had a stake driven through her heart .

Rapists of virgins and children are also attested to have been buried alive , with a stake driven through them . In one such judicial tradition , the rapist was to be placed in an open grave , and the rape victim was ordered to make the three first strokes on the stake herself ; the executioners then finishing the impalement procedure . Serving as an example of the fate of a child molester , in August 1465 in Zurich , Switzerland , Ulrich Moser was condemned to be impaled , for having sexually violated six girls between the ages four and nine . His clothes were taken off , and he was placed on his back . His arms and legs were stretched out , each secured to a pole . Then a stake was driven through his navel down into the ground . Thereafter , people left him to die .

### Longitudinal impalement

Cases of longitudinal impalement can be found typically in the context of war or as a punishment of robbers , the latter being attested as practice in Central and Eastern Europe .

Individuals perceived of collaborating with the enemy have , on occasion , been impaled . For example , in 1632 during the Thirty Years ' War , the German officer Fuchs was impaled on suspicion of defecting to the Swedes , a Swedish corporal was likewise impaled for trying to defect to the Germans . In 1654 , under the Ottoman siege of the Venetian garrison at Crete , several peasants were impaled for supplying provisions to the besieged . Likewise in 1685 , some Christians were impaled by the Hungarians for having provided supplies to the Turks .

In 1677 , a particularly brutal German General Kops leading the forces of Holy Roman Emperor Leopold I designed to keep Hungary dominated by the Germans , rather than to become dominated by the Turks , began impaling and quartering his Hungarian subjects / opponents . An opposing general for the Hungarians , Wesselényi , responded in kind , by flaying alive Imperial troops , and fixing sharp iron hooks in fortress walls , upon which he threw captured Germans to be impaled . Finally , Emperor Leopold I had had enough of the mutual bloodshed , and banished Kops in order to establish a needed cessation of hostilities . After the Treaty of The Hague ( 1720 ) , Sicily fell

under Habsburg rule , but the locals deeply resented the German overlords . One parish priest ( who exhorted his parishioners to kill the Germans ) is said to have broken into joy when a German soldier arrived at his village , exclaiming it was gone a whole eight days since last he killed a German , and shot the soldier off his horse . The priest was later impaled . In the short @-@ lived 1784 Horea Revolt against the Austrians and Hungarians , the rebels gained hold of two officers they promptly impaled . On their side , the imperial troops got hold of Horea 's 13 @-@ year @-@ old son , and impaled him . That seems to have merely inflamed the rebel leader 's determination , although the revolt was quashed shortly afterwards .

From 1748 and onwards , German regiments organized manhunts on " robbers " in Hungary / Croatia , impaling those caught .

= = = Execution of Paul Wasansky in 1570 = = =

Occasionally , individual murderers were perceived to have been so heinous that standard punishments like beheading or to be broken on the wheel were not regarded as sufficiently commensurate with their crimes , and extended rituals of execution that might include impalement were devised . The case of Pavel Va?anský ( Paul Wasansky in German transcript ) may serve as an example here .

Paul Wasansky , who in 1570 was executed in Ivan?ice , in present @-@ day Czech Republic , on account of 124 confessed murders ( he was a roaming highwayman ) , underwent a particularly gruelling execution procedure : First , his limbs were cut off and his nipples were ripped off with glowing pincers . He was then flayed , afterwards impaled and finally roasted alive . The pamphlet , which purports to give Wasansky 's verbatim confession , does not record how Wasansky was apprehended , nor what means of torture was used to extract his confessions .

= = = Dracula = = =

During the 15th century , Vlad III ( " Dracula " ) , Prince of Wallachia , is credited as the first notable figure to prefer this method of execution during the late medieval period , and became so notorious for its liberal employment that among his several nicknames he was known as Vlad the Impaler . After being orphaned , betrayed , forced into exile and pursued by his enemies , he retook control of Wallachia in 1456 . He dealt harshly with his enemies , especially those who had betrayed his family in the past , or had profited from the misfortunes of Wallachia . Though a variety of methods was employed , he has been most associated with his use of impalement . The liberal use of capital punishment was eventually extended to Saxon settlers , members of a rival clan , and criminals in his domain , whether they were members of the boyar nobility or peasants , and eventually to any among his subjects that displeased him . Following the multiple campaigns against the invading Ottoman Turks , Vlad would never show mercy to his prisoners of war . After The Night Attack of Vlad ?epe? in mid @-@ June 1462 failed to assassinate the Ottoman sultan , the road to Târgovi?te , the capital of Vlad 's principality of Wallachia , eventually became inundated in a " forest " of 20 @,@ 000 impaled and decaying corpses , and it is reported that Mehmet II 's invading army of Turks turned back to Constantinople in 1462 after encountering thousands of impaled corpses along the Danube River . Woodblock prints from the era portray his victims impaled from either the frontal or the dorsal aspect , but not vertically .

As an example of how Vlad ?epe? soon became iconic for all horrors unimaginable , the following pamphlet from 1521 pours out putative incidents like this one :

He let children be roasted ; those , their mothers were forced to eat . And ( he ) cut off the breasts of women ; those , their husbands were forced to eat . After that , he had them all impaled

= = = Ottoman Empire = = =

Longitudinal impalement is an execution method often attested within the Ottoman Empire , for a variety of offenses .

### ===== Siege of Constantinople =====

The Ottoman Empire used impalement during , and before , the last siege of Constantinople in 1453 . For example , during the buildup phase to the great siege the year before , in 1452 , the sultan declared that all ships sailing up or down through the Bosphorus had to anchor at his fortress there , for inspection . One Venetian captain , Antonio Rizzo , sought to defy the ban , but his ship was hit by a cannonball . He and his crew were picked up from the waters , the crew members to be beheaded ( or sawn asunder according to Niccolò Barbaro ) , whereas Rizzo was impaled . In the early days of the siege in May 1453 , contingents of the Ottoman army made mop @-@ up operations at minor fortifications like Therapia and Studium . The surrendered soldiers , some 40 individuals from each place , were impaled .

### ===== Civil crimes =====

Within the Ottoman Empire , some civil crimes ( rather than rebel activity / treasonous behavior ) , such as highway robbery , might be punished by impalement . For some periods at least , executions for civil crimes were claimed to have been rather rare in the Ottoman Empire . For example , Aubry de La Motraye , lived in the realm for 14 years from 1699 to 1713 and claimed that he hadn 't heard of twenty thieves in Constantinople during that time . As for highway robbers , who sure enough had been impaled , Aubry heard of only 6 such cases during his residence there . Staying at Aleppo from 1740 ? 54 , Alexander Russell notes that in the 20 years gone by , there were no more than " half a dozen " public executions there . Jean de Thévenot , traveling in the Ottoman Empire and its territories like Egypt in the late 1650s , emphasizes the regional variations in impalement frequency . Of Constantinople and Turkey , de Thévenot writes that impalement was " not much practised " and " very rarely put in practice . " An exception he highlighted was the situation of Christians in Constantinople . If a Christian spoke or acted out against the " Law of Mahomet " , or consorted with a Turkish woman , or broke into a mosque , then he might face impalement unless he converted to Islam . In contrast , de Thévenot says that in Egypt impalement was a " very ordinary punishment " against the Arabs there , whereas Turks in Egypt were strangled in prison instead of being publicly executed like the natives . Thus , the actual frequency of impalement within the Ottoman Empire varied greatly , not only from time to time , but also from place to place , and between different population groups in the empire .

Highway robbers were still impaled into the 1830s , but one source says the practice was rare by then . Travelling to Smyrna and Constantinople in 1843 , Stephen Massett was told by a man who witnessed the event that " just a few years ago " , a dozen or so robbers were impaled at Adrianople . All of them , however , had been strangled prior to impalement . Writing around 1850 , the archaeologist Austen Henry Layard mentions that the latest case he was acquainted with happened " about ten years ago " in Baghdad , on four rebel Arab sheikhs .

Impalement of pirates , rather than highway robbers , is also occasionally recorded . In October 1767 , for example , Hassan Bey , who had preyed on Turkish ships in the Euxine Sea for a number of years , was captured and impaled , even though he had offered 500 @.@ 000 ducats for his pardon .

### ===== Klephts and rebels in Greece =====

During the Ottoman rule of Greece , impalement became an important tool of psychological warfare , intended to put terror into the peasant population . By the 18th century , Greek bandits turned guerrilla insurgents ( known as klephts ) became an increasing annoyance to the Ottoman government . Captured klephts were often impaled , as were peasants that harbored or aided them . Victims were publicly impaled and placed at highly visible points , and had the intended effect on many villages who not only refused to help the klephts , but would even turn them in to the authorities . The Ottomans engaged in active campaigns to capture these insurgents in 1805 and

1806 , and were able to enlist Greek villagers , eager to avoid the stake , in the hunt for their outlaw countrymen .

Impalement was , on occasion , aggravated with being set over a fire , the impaling stake acting as a spit , so that the impaled victim might be roasted alive . Among other severities , Ali Pasha , an Albanian @-@ born Ottoman noble who ruled Ioannina , had rebels , criminals , and even the descendants of those who had wronged him or his family in the past , impaled and roasted alive . For example , Thomas Smart Hughes , visiting Greece and Albania in 1812 ? 13 , says the following about his stay in Ioannina :

" Here criminals have been roasted alive over a slow fire , impaled , and skinned alive ; others have had their extremities chopped off , and some have been left to perish with the skin of the face stripped over their necks . At first I doubted the truth of these assertions , but they were abundantly confirmed to me by persons of undoubted veracity . Some of the most respectable inhabitants of Ioannina assured me that they had sometimes conversed with these wretched victims on the very stake , being prevented from yielding to their torturing requests for water by fear of a similar fate themselves . Our own resident , as he was once going into the serai of Litaritza , saw a Greek priest , the leader of a gang of robbers , nailed alive to the outer wall of the palace , in sight of the whole city . "

During the Greek War of Independence ( 1821 ? 1832 ) , Greek revolutionaries or civilians were tortured and executed by impalement . A German witness of the Constantinople massacre ( April 1821 ) narrates the impalement of about 65 Greeks by Turkish mob . Other Greeks had been impaled during the first months of the insurrection in Patras , as it is recorded in the diary of the French consul Hughes Pouqueville and published by his brother François Pouqueville . Athanasios Diakos , a klepht and later a rebel military commander , was captured after the Battle of Alamana ( 1821 ) , near Thermopylae , and after refusing to convert to Islam and join the Ottoman army , he was impaled . Diakos became a martyr for a Greek independence and was later honored as a national hero .

= = = = Rebels elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire = = = =

Impaling perceived rebels was an attested practice in other parts of the empire as well , such as the 1809 quelling of a Bosnian revolt , and during the Serbian Revolution ( 1804 ? 1835 ) against the Ottoman Empire , about 200 Serbs were impaled in Belgrade in 1814 . Historian James J. Reid , in his *Crisis of the Ottoman Empire : Prelude to Collapse 1839 ? 1878* , notes several instances of later use , in particular in times of crises , ordered by military commanders ( if not , that is , directly ordered by the supreme authority possessed by the sultan ) . He notes late instances of impalement during rebellions ( rather than cases of robbery ) like the Bosnian revolt of 1852 , during the Cretan insurrection of 1866 ? 69 , and during the insurrections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1876 ? 77 . In the Nobel Prize @-@ winning novel *The Bridge on the Drina* , by Ivo Andrić , in the third chapter is described impalement of a Bosnian Serb , who was trying to sabotage the bridge 's construction .

= = = = Occurrences in genocides = = = =

Allegations of impalement during the Assyrian and Armenian genocides have also been recorded . Aurora Mardiganian , a survivor of the Armenian genocide of 1915 ? 1923 , recalled sixteen young Armenian girls being " crucified " by their Ottoman tormentors . The film " Auction of Souls " ( 1919 ) , which was based on her book " Ravished Armenia " , showed the victims nailed to crosses . However , almost 70 years later Mardiganian revealed that the scene was inaccurate and went on to describe what was actually an impalement :

" The Turks didn 't make their crosses like that . The Turks made little pointed crosses . They took the clothes off the girls . They made them bend down , and after raping them , they made them sit on the pointed wood , through the vagina . That 's the way they killed - the Turks . Americans have made it a more civilized way . They can 't show such terrible things . "

A Russian clergyman visiting ravaged Christian villages in northwestern Persia during the Assyrian



genocide found the remains of several impaled people . He notes : " The bodies were so firmly fixed , in some instances , that the stakes could not be withdrawn ; it was necessary to saw them off and bury the victims as they were . "