Fig. 47
The sanctuary at Medina, from the Dalāl al-Khayrat by al-Jazuli
Ottoman Turkey, late 17th or 18th century
ink, gold and opaque watercolour on paper
20.4 x 12.3 cm
Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art

In this painting the sanctuary at Medina is shown in elevation, the domed tomb of the Prophet with its coving of chevron-patterned tiles surrounded by a frieze of stalactites. The pulpit (mimbar) of the Prophet is shown on the right. The labels of the first two Caliphs (successors of the Prophet), Abū Bakr and 'Umar, and that of his daughter Fātima are marked, as are a number of the gates. Outside the walls are a group of mosques and below (to the north) the two mountains: Nābī, near Mecca, where the Prophet received the first revelations in a cave; and Ṣa‘dā, near Medina, scene of an epic battle between Muslims and the Meccan unbelievers.

Fig. 48
Medina tile
Ottoman Turkey, mid-17th century
Stonepaste, underglaze painted
59.8 x 36 cm
Musée du Louvre, Paris

This tile is similar in style to the Mecca tile (Fig. 16) and was made in Iznik or possibly Kilisheşik, towns in western Turkey. The quatrefoil panel filled with Chinese cloud bands at the top contains a Qur’ānic verse referring to the Prophet Muhammad: ‘God and his angel send blessings on the Prophet. You who believe, invoke blessings and salutations to him in abundance’ (Qur’an 33:54).

The architectural details are simply and colourfully rendered. Within the blue courtyard is the pulpit (mimbar) of the Prophet. His tomb and two others alongside may imply the presence of other martyrs. To the left and a little below the pulpit stands a domed structure with a crescent-shaped frieze, where the oil for the lamps was kept. The two rectangles on either side may represent lampstands for lighting the courtyard. Below is the garden of Fātima, daughter of the Prophet, which is always depicted with the two palm trees planted in his lifetime. The arcades are filled with hanging lamps, and slender minarets are at each corner.
Fig. 49
Candlestick

Probably Iraq, dated 1317-18
Brass inlaid with silver
45.7 x 36.8 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens

Candlesticks were a popular gift to the holy sanctuaries, particularly in Medina. This example has a fascinating history. It is dated and signed by a craftsman called Ali ibn Umar ibn Ibrahim al-Suwaydi who was one of the last in a long line of craftsmen associated with Mamluk in northern Iraq, an important and influential centre of inlaid metalwork in the medieval period. It was probably made for a ruler of Mardin.

Included within the silver enameled designs and inscriptions are a series of figures in arabesque designs along the base and neck of the candlestick. These figures were subsequently scratched out, perhaps by its next owner, part of whose name features in an inscription on the socket stating that the candlestick was given in waqf (endowment) to the sanctuary of Medina by M ijjan al-Suwaydi. M ijjan can probably be identified as M ijjan ibn Abd al-Rahman ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Suwaydi (d. 1317), a cooper connected to the il-Kahal sultan (1315), who is well known for having constructed the Mi’rjam al-Madrasa in Baghdad in 1315. As this was now intended as a gift to the sanctuary at Medina, the figures would not have been appropriate: figural representation was not permissible on objects placed or used in mosques.
India, 18th–19th century
Watercolour, ink and gold
on laid Persian paper
13 x 10.2 cm and 13.2 x 10.5 cm
Private collection, London

This brilliantly coloured double-page map once served as part of a manuscript of the Dala‘i ‘Alai Minayyid (‘Guide to Goodness’), a highly popular devotional book in Arabic on the virtues of the Prophet Muhammad, with formulae invoking divine blessings upon him. It was written by Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Jazuli (d. 1463), a Moroccan religious scholar and member of the Shadhillyah Sufi order, and is often illustrated with depictions of the sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina. Other examples (see fig. 51).

Unlike only the Prophet’s mosque, the style of the painting, particularly in the forms and colours of the buildings, shows it to be the work of Indian artists, probably residing in Mecca (see fig. 18). As with other diagrammatic depictions, the key locations are labelled, in this case in Persian nasta‘liq script.
Dala'il al-Khayrat, Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Jazuli

Probably Patani, southern Thailand, 19th century
16 x 10 cm
National Library of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur

This double-page from a copy of Dala'il al-Khayrat is a detailed representation of the Prophet's mosque in Medina. Illustrated on the right is the Rawda or garden, under the arch are three dogbone-shaped shapes, which are described in the manuscript as follows: “This is a description of the Blessed Garden (Rawda) in which the Messenger of God is buried, together with his two companions, Abu Bakr and Umar. This is related by Umar ibn al-Zubayr: The Messenger of God was buried in the ellipses (al-sahwah). Abu Bakr was buried behind the Messenger of God, and Umar ibn al-Khattab was buried near the feet of Abu Bakr.”

On the left page is the minbar or pulpit on which the Prophet gave his sermons. It has triangles on either side and, as in the Rawda illustration, a golden lamp hangs from an arch above. The illumination of these pages, dominated by brilliant red and gold, is remarkable. Elaborate heraldic designs, flags and flaming lamps exhibit an eclectic style drawing influences from Ottoman art as well as from local styles of South-east Asian Islamic art. Although this manuscript may have been made in the Malay world, it could also have been the work of a Patani artist in Mecca, where there was a large community of people from that region who had come for hajj but stayed on in the Hijaz.
Chapter 7

The Homecoming

As Egyptian pilgrims start the last leg of their homeward journey, a mood of jubilation reigns through the land. Highways become crowded with overloaded cars and buses ... In country villages the homecoming scene is still observed in the old-fashioned manner. Celebrants on horseback hold Hajj banners high above their heads as they gallop back and forth along dusty roads to the accompaniment of firearms being discharged into the air to announce the Hajjis' safe return.

Ann Parker, 1985

In the villages of Upper Egypt in particular there is a remarkable tradition of celebrating and commemorating Hajj through wall painting. The paintings appear on the exteriors of houses and in courtyards as well as inside and evoke the Hajj through images of the journey, once on camel and nowadays by plane or ship down the Red Sea to Jeddah; of the holy sites such as the Ka'ba and the Prophet's mosque at Medina; and of the welcome that pilgrims receive on their return. To have performed Hajj is a source of pride, and to be called hajji or hajja is an honour. The paintings, which are generally executed with water-based paints or more rarely with oils, are often commissioned by the families of hajjis. The artists, who are rarely professionals, are generally local, and many come from families who have been making Hajj paintings for generations. Although the tradition of Hajj paintings seems to have started in the nineteenth century and proliferated in the twentieth, it has its roots in the wall painting traditions of Ancient Egypt.
Fig. 53
Painted house in a village between Luxor and Aswan

Photograph by Khalid Hafiz, 2009

Against a deep turquoise ground, a hajji dressed in white is surrounded by family and relatives who wave flags and celebrate with music. The two lines of calligraphy on the right are invocations of divine blessing upon the Prophet Muhammad. On the left, above the hajji, is the traditional phrase, ‘Haji mahfou wad dhahab maghafir’. May the hajji be abundantly rewarded [by God] and sins forgiven. The painting and calligraphy are by Yaaqub Ali.

Khalid Hafiz has been recording the portraits of Hajj artists for a number of years. He is particularly drawn to the popular culture of his native Egypt, and his own work often draws and expands upon the themes he finds, from Ancient Egyptian to modern folk art.

Fig. 54
Courtyard of a house

Photograph by Khalid Hafiz, 2009

In this painting the references to Ancient Egyptian art are clear in the designs on the left side of the courtyard, and at the base of the main picture. The Haji is beautifully encircled by vignettes of the rituals and the journey by camel and ship. At the top a pilgrim in Yemen chants the talbina, the special invocation made during Hajj, and faces the sanctuary he is about to enter. Below, the scene is one of joyous celebration, with men blowing the traditional trumpets echoed by the owner of the house who is seated on the bench. The inscriptions include verses from the Qur'an and benedictory phrases.
Fig. 55
Hajj by Newsha Tavakolian, 2009

Just before going on Hajj, the Iranian
artist Newsha Tavakolian texted her
friends, saying: “Please forgive me if
I have done you wrong in any way.
I’m going on Hajj.” She explains,
“If a Muslim gets to go on the holy
pilgrimage to Mecca, he or she
should ask all family members and
friends for forgiveness, which I did
via text message after I was granted
a visa to take pictures there. Soon
after people come round bringing
essentials for the trip. My aunt
gave me prayer beads, my cousin
made me a white dress, which is
the customary color during the Hajj.”
On her return her family organized
a special traditional party, known as
Yalda. She recollected her pilgrimage
in a series of evocative black-and-
white photographs. Her Hijab now
completely, her-thrown garment hangs
in her flat, a powerful reminder of
her experience.
Fig. 36
Magnetism by Ahmed Mater
Photography I, 2011
British Museum, London

Ahmed Mater is one of Saudi Arabia’s leading artists. He trained as a doctor and studied art at al-Muharraq Art Village, part of the King Fahd Cultural Centre, under the patronage of HRH Prince Khalid Al Faisal. He began his series ‘Magnetism’ in 2007, first showing it at the Venice Biennale of 2009. This powerful evocation of Hajj has developed into both an installation of magnets and iron filings and an accompanying series of photogravures.

“When iron filings are put near a dull-plied magnet, they gather together forming a circle around the magnet, but keep at a distance according to the rules of attraction... This natural state is similar to the emotional state which prompts humans to gather together around a centre. Though by nature each individual is the centre of himself, individuals like iron filings are compelled to be part of larger groups turned towards the centre.”
Glossary

Amir al-Hajj
Official leader of the Hajj caravans.

Arafat
Desert plain 1.4 km east of Mecca where pilgrims perform waqaf, known as the rite of standing, during Hajj. At its center is the Mount of Mercy (Jabal al-Ka‘ba).

Dhul Hijja
Twelfth (last) lunar month of the Muslim calendar, during which the Hajj takes place.

Eid al-Adha
Festival known as ‘the feast of sacrifice’ which marks the formal end of Hajj and commemorates a further three days. It begins on the tenth day of the month of Dhul Hijja, and for pilgrims this takes place at Mina.

The five pillars of Islam
Five principles central to Muslim belief: the shahada, the Profession of Faith (there is no god but God, Muhammad is the Prophet of God); niyya, the intention; the five daily prayers; zakat, the giving of alms; and fasting during the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, and the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Hajj
Pilgrimage to Mecca, one of the five pillars of Islam, which takes place between the eighth and twelfth days of the month of Dhul Hijja, the last month of the Muslim lunar calendar. The title of ‘Hajj’ (Hajj) or ‘Hajj’ (female) is given to Muslims who have performed Hajj.

Nasam
Bell embroidered with verses from the Qur’an that is attached to the kiswa and gives all around the Ka‘ba.

Ahnam
Rites of purification performed by pilgrims before entering the sacred territory of Mecca on pilgrimage. The term also applies to the clothing worn during Hajj and umrah. For men this is two pieces of seamless white cloth, one furred round the waist and the other covering the top of the body. Women’s shawm consists of modest dress which can be any colour, although many choose white. The shawm is draped on specific places called mishaf which mark the boundaries of the sacred area of Mecca.

Jamrat
Three pillars in the valley of Mina close to Mecca that represent ‘the Saturas’. Over several days each pillar throws at them a total of forty-nine stones which they have earlier collected at Muzdalifah. This act of stoning commemorates the refusal of Abraham to be tempted by Satan.

Ka‘ba
Cubeshaped structure at the centre of the Masjid al-Haram. Muslims believe that it was first built by Adam and then rebuilt by Abraham and his son Ishmael (in Arabic, Ibrahim and Isma‘il). Whenever they are in the world, Muslims face the Ka‘ba when they pray.

Mina
Literally meaning robe; the outer black cloth placed over the Kiswa that is replaced every year during Hajj.

Mishaf
Fabric-covered palanquin carried on a camel that was sent each year with the official Hajj caravan to Mecca.

Masjim Ibrahim
Place where Abraham stood in prayer or, according to some traditions, where he stood when rebuilding the Ka‘ba. It is marked by a small structure inside the Haram.

Marwa
One of two hills within the Haram in Mecca (the other is Safa), about 365 meters apart, between which Ishmael’s mother Hagar is said to have run seven times in her desperate search for water. So is the Hajj rite representing Hagar’s action.

Mina
Location a few kilometres east of Mecca where pilgrims camp overnight on their way to Arafat during Hajj.

Muzdalifah
Place, in the location of the sanctuary at Medina the Prophet Muhammad stood to give his sermons.

Mishaf
Five stations in a radius bordering the sacred territory of Mecca, where pilgrims purify themselves and put on the kiswa before going on Hajj or ‘umrah.

Muzdalifah
Location, nearly 6.5 km from the plain of Arafat, where pilgrims pick up the forty-nine stones they will need to throw at the jamrat.

qibla
Direction of Mecca.

Safa
One of two hills within the Haram in Mecca (the other is Marwa), about 365 meters apart, between which Ishmael’s mother Hagar is said to have run seven times in her desperate search for water. So is the Hajj rite representing Hagar’s action.

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Al Farid, R. 2009, Hajj, Reading
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Front and Front Flap Details from the Arba 'Ala 'Ala' (The Pilgrim’s Companion) by Sallat bin Ali, India, possibly 16th century, ink, watercolor, and gold on paper 13 x 21.3 cm
Nasir D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art

BACK AND BACK Flap:
Marrakesh, 2011
Ahmed Mater
Fascinating, enlightening 6 x 5 x 11.4 cm
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