The pilgrimage to Mecca, the hajj (also haj or hajj), from the Arabic ‘to bear’ or ‘to carry’, belongs to the Five ritual obligations that Muslims are expected to fulfill during their lifetime. A clear distinction is made between the great hajj, which can only be undertaken on specified days of the year during the month Dhul Hijja, and the lesser umrah, which can be made at any time. For every believing Muslim, the great pilgrimage to Mecca, where Mohammed was born in 570 (he died in Medina on June 7, 632) and which is thus Islam’s most holy city, is a matter of prime importance. It also serves to commemorate the first man to believe in the one true God, namely Abraham, who, with his son, Ishmael, is believed to have built the sacred shrine of the Kaaba here. Indeed, this is also where Abraham’s Egyptian slave and concubine, Hagar, sought water, as well as being the place where Abraham was prepared to carry out God’s command to sacrifice his most precious possession, his son Isaac.

Pilgrim itineraries

The itineraries followed by pilgrims were laid down as early as the time of the Abaibah caliphs during the 7th century. There were several routes that could be followed to reach the pilgrimage sites, and these corresponded closely to the old caravan trails that linked Mecca and Medina with Cairo and Damascus, as can be seen on the map on page 41. These pilgrimage routes to the holy enclosures, al-Haram, remained essentially unchanged right up to the nineteenth century.

Travel Conditions for Pilgrims in the Nineteenth Century

Pilgrimages of this kind were fraught with difficulties and dangers for pilgrims, the so-called hajdji (also hajj or hajji), those who could afford it joined caravans organized by local people. It was necessary to take along adequate provisions, and lack of water could easily become a problem. Only those leading the caravan knew where the next stopping-points or supply depots were located. In desert strongholds, if the route passed through an area of political instability, travelers had no choice but to make a long and probably troublesome diversion to avoid the dangers. Alternatively, they might tag onto a caravan of soldiers and government officials paid to accompany and protect wealthy pilgrims or high-ranking figures:

“Those pilgrims who are able to travel in a litter or on a comfortable camel-saddle may sleep at night and complete the journey with little difficulty; but among those who, because of poverty or the greedy desire of quickly earning a large sum of money, are moved to follow the caravan on foot or to hire themselves out as servants, many die on the way because of the difficulties.”

Poorer pilgrims enjoyed neither shelter nor comfort and were exposed to severe hardships. They might also be robbed or even killed by Bedouin tribesmen. Thus, “in 1814, [...], the last Maghreb caravan passed [...] through Egypt; but on its way back, owing to adversities and the lack of a leader and foodstuffs, it suffered great misfortune, as a consequence of which many of the people died.” Unexpected costs for ‘oil roads’ demanded by Bedouin tribesmen or arbitrarily set by sheriffs might also swallow up considerable sums of money:

“As soon as they heard of the imminent arrival of a caravan, they would set off from Mecca with all of their armed servants and Bedouin friends, and would then haggle with the leaders of caravans often for several days on end before the sum to be paid as tribute had been determined.”

Even the passage by ship might be a torment owing to the shortage of space on board. Richard Francis Burton, the Victorian traveler and expert on Arabian culture, complained about the service of ship’s captains who had no regard for the safety of their passengers or vessels, and who overloaded their ships so much that many a voyage ended prematurely with a shipwreck. And Johann Ludwig Burckhardt remarked that:

“Owing to the poor type of ship and its being packed to the gunwales, the voyage is unpleasant and often perilous... The hajdji (pilgrims) used to be allowed to take as many provisions from Suus as they wanted, and they then sold some of the same at a profit in the Hijaz (pilgrimage lands); but now they can only embark with barely enough to satisfy their own needs during the pilgrimage. The advantage of taking along one’s own provisions, particularly butter, flour, rice and dried fish which one can buy at a cheap price in Egypt, was the main reason for preferring to travel by sea, because those who travelled overland had to buy all of their provisions in Mecca, where the prices are high.”

Owing to the very high prices that could be demanded there, the selling of provisions in the immediate vicinity of pilgrimage sites was an extremely profitable business for some traders:

“The value of exporting from Mecca does, however, significantly exceed that of importing, and considerable sums are demanded in dollars and ducats... This trading is so profitable that, [when sold] in Mecca during the hajj, goods bought by merchants in Jiddah from ships that have come from India bring in a net profit of twenty to thirty at wholesale and fifty per cent at retail. For this reason, one may hardly be surprised that everyone in Mecca is a trader. Much profit is also made by swindling; a large number of hajdjis are unequipped with the Arabic language and are thus at the mercy of middlemen and interpreters who never fail to charge highly for their services; it truly does appear that all the people of Mecca have an agreement to cheat the pilgrims.”

In another report, one can read the following:

“Whereas, otherwise in Mecca, the prices of the staple foodstuffs (bread, meat, butter, etc.) are compulsorily fixed by the overseers of the markets (hijār), it is customary to suspend these regulations during the days of the hajj at the stopping-places of the pilgrimage, where supply and demand thus operate without check... and consequently... dreadful abuses are perpetrated.”

In Mecca and the surrounding area, business was brisk, especially just before and after the festival of sacrifice and then after the ritual obligations of the pilgrims had come to an end. The annual market in Mina (or Muna)
robed or even killed by Bedouin tribesmen. Thus, "in 1811 [...], the last Maghribi caravan passed [...] through Egypt... But on its way back, owing to adversities and the lack of a leader and foodstuffs, it suffered great misfortune, as a consequence of which many of the people died." Unexpected costs for "roll roads" demanded by Bedouin tribesmen or arbitrarily set by sheriffs might also swallow considerable sums of money.

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"Owing to the poor type of ship and its being packed to the gunwales, the voyage is unpleasant and often perilous... The badji (slaves) used to be allowed to take as many provisions from Suez as they wanted, and they then sold some of the same at a profit in the Hijaz [pilgrimage lands]; but now they can only embark with barely enough to satisfy their own needs during the pilgrimage. The advantage of taking along one's own provisions, particularly butter, flour, nuts, and dried fish which one can buy at a cheap price in Egypt, was the main reason for preferring to travel by sea; because those who travel overland have to buy all of their provisions in Mecca, where the prices are high."

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In another report, one can read the following:

"Whereas, otherwise in Mecca, the prices of the staple foodstuffs (bread, meat, butter, etc.) are considerably fixed by the overseers of the markets (salesmen), it is customary to suspend these regulations during the days of the hajj at the stopping-places of the pilgrimage, where supply and demand thus operate with little difficulty and consequently... dreadful abuses are perpetrated."

In Mecca and the surrounding area, business was brisk, especially just before and after the festival of sacrifice and then after the ritual obligations of the pilgrims had come to an end. The annual market in Mina (or Mina) attracted countless visitors, including pilgrims bringing goods whose sale might help to cover the costs of their trip. Among the wares they traded were carpets, silk, camphor wood, jewelry, amber, slippers, and negheli and leather goods. Alternatively, visitors might purchase water during their pilgrimages with the aim of selling them for profit on their return home.

"With the exception of beggars, very few pilgrims fail to bring some products from their homeland to sell, and this observation applies both to traders whose main purpose is to do business as well as to those motivated by religious zeal; because, for the latter, the ominous travel expenses are reduced in some degree by the profit made by the sale of products from their own country in Mecca."

In Mecca, pilgrims had to rely on the services of a local guide, and they also had to reckon with inflationary prices for board and lodging. The field researcher, Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, who was among the first Europeans to visit the holy sites of Islam during the nineteenth century, narrated the following about his stay in Mecca:

"I enquired about lodgings but was told that the city was full of pilgrims, while many others whose arrival was expected had already rented their accommodation. After a while, though, I found a man who offered me a furnished room... The landlord was a poor man from Medina. Although his manner of living was way below that of second-class citizens in Mecca, this cost me 15 piastres a day; and, on departure, I discovered that several articles of clothing had been stolen from my rucksack. But that wasn't all; on the day of feasting, he invited me to a marvellous midday meal in my room in the company of half a dozen of his friends and, the following morning, presented me the bill for the costs of the whole banquet."

Such problems were exacerbated by the inexperience associated with a stay in Mecca, as thieves and beggars were at large exploiting the situation:

"The inhabitants of Mecca, like those of Turkey, are, in general, free of the vice of theft, and one rarely hears of stealing, although during the hajj and in the months before and after it, Mecca is full of rascals who are led into temptation by the ease with which locks can be opened in this country."

...if one can speak... of Mecca are swarming with beggars and poor hadji, who are supported by strangers from outside of the city; because the people of Mecca regard themselves as being dispensable from this obligation. However, many of them pursue begging as a trade..."

Towards the end of the pilgrimage when the various ceremonies had been completed, the streets of Mecca and its temple might be the venues of horrifying scenes, as many pilgrims were completely debilitated by their exertions and sometimes died of disease or exhaustion.

"Sickness and fatality, the consequences of the pilgrimages during the journey or caused by the scanty covering of the brain [pilgrim's garment], the unhealthy living quarters in Mecca, bad food or the often complete lack of sustenance, leave the masque [full] of corpses that have been brought in to receive the Imam's prayers, or with sick people from those many people who, when their evil hand is, are brought to the colonnades so that they either might be healed by looking upon the Kaaba or might at least have the satisfaction of dying within the holy enclosure."
on in Mecca for good, and some of these became successful tradesmen, while others remained poor and lived in their own slums. European Investigators of the Arabian World in the Nineteenth Century

Up to 1905, a total of about 15 Europeans were able to collect impressions of those central Arabian regions and sites that Muslims regard as sacred—the so-called Hijaz; these are all located in present-day Saudi Arabia, but during the nineteenth century, they were within northwestern Arabia and included Mecca, Medina, and the larger cities of Jiddah and At Ta‘if. In the following, two investigators who conducted research into Arabian culture will be considered in some detail: Johann Ludwig Burckhardt and Christian Snell Hargrave. Their notes and writings contain the most important fund of information about the Orient available to us from this period, and they provide illuminating analyses of the situation as it then was. At that time, as is now the case once more, the visiting of Muslim holy places by Europeans was an undertaking not without its dangers. Any non-Muslim caught doing so then would have had to pay for this with his life. Heinrich von Maltzan, who made a trip to Mecca in 1865 under an assumed identity and in Oriental disguise, described the danger as follows: "...If it had become known that he [a Muslim] had provided a European with the ways and means of reaching Mecca, which was so inaccessible for a non-Mussulman; because, with regard to the journey to Mecca, the Turkish government, which has set the death penalty for unbelievers who might sneak into the holy city, is not its most fanatical guardian; no, every single Mussulman, according to the degree of his fanaticism, considers it his duty to watch over with the greatest severity the Haram (holy enclosure) as far as this opportunity presents itself."1

Johann Ludwig Burckhardt

Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (born in Lausanne on November 24, 1784; died in Egypt on October 17, 1817) came from an old upper-class family from Basle, Switzerland, and later converted to Islam. He prepared himself for his journeys of research and discovery by pursuing studies that gave him an excellent grounding in the natural sciences, as well as in the languages, history and geography of his intended destinations. In London and Cambridge, he studied Arabic and trained himself to cope with the anticipated hardships of his trips to Africa and the Orient. Burckhardt’s travels were actively supported by the Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior of Africa. In 1809, Burckhardt assumed Oriental dress and joined the hajj, posing as a Muslim trader under the pseudonym, Sheikh Ibrahim bin Abdullah, to reach Mecca and Medina in 1814, where he remained throughout the four-month duration of the pilgrimage. He had obtained permission for this journey from Muhammad Ali (born in Kavala in 1769; died in Alexandria on August 2, 1848), the Ottoman pasha and, from 1805 to 1848, the governor and viceroy of Egypt. Burckhardt visited parts of Syria and the then-unknown Hauran, which no European had ever managed to reach before this time. Thanks to his knowledge of the everyday language and dialects spoken in Arabia and Syria, he was able to pass himself off as an Indo-Arabian merchant without arousing suspicion. With the rise of a “Swiss Muslim,” Burckhardt wrote precise and empathetic entries into his journal describing the course of the pilgrimage and the daily life of pilgrims, without resorting to any form of romantic glorification of the Orient. Burckhardt also drew street-maps of Mecca and Medina, and noted down detailed descriptions of the people living there and the cities’ most interesting architectural features. He investigated in tireless detail matters relating to the local infrastructure and city development, planning, services and provisioning, as well as the strained relationships existing between the government, business, politics and religion. His successors in this field of research were later to have great difficulty adding to his findings. Thanks to his vividly written descriptions in which he was at pains to be fair and reasonable, Burckhardt may be looked upon as a forerunner of empirical ethnology, and he conducted field research in such a way as would become an established scientific approach during the twentieth century. In spite of his typically nineteenth-century model of expression and orthography, his descriptions have lost none of their fascination, and his skill at capturing scenes and incidents with remarkable precision demonstrates an almost photographic viewpoint, a perceptual ability such as can be found in the reportage-style photography of the twentieth century, for example in the work of the photographers working for Life Magazine or the Magnum agency. In Burckhardt’s writings, the straight reporting of facts and events alternates with wholly personal impressions. He provides vivid eye-witness accounts of the hajj procession, of the night camp and of the 70,000 pilgrims in Mount Arafat, deftly sketching the rhetorical skills and gestures of a preacher, the behavior of the faithful, the slaughtering of the sacrificial sheep and goats, and the final phase and ending of the pilgrimage. In doing so, he resorts comparatively rarely to the “soft focus” approach favored by authors aiming at picturesque effects. Incidents are neither romanticized nor dramatized but are presented realistically without irrelevant frills. With a sober verisimilitude worthy of Flaubert, Burckhardt described the death of a pilgrim after the end of the hajj as follows: “One sees poor hadjis, emaciated by illness and hunger, dragging their feeble bodies under the sun; and when they are no longer capable of stretching out their hands to beg for charity from passers-by, then they place a bowl for alms by the mat upon which they are lying. When they feel that their last moment is approaching, they cover themselves with their rags of clothing, and a whole day may often pass before it is noticed that they have died. Just about every morning for about a whole month after the hajj, I found corpses of pilgrims lying in the mosque; on one occasion, I myself and a Greek hadji, whom chance had brought to the same place, closed the eyes of a poor Maghreb pilgrim who had crawled close to the Kaaba in order to breathe his last, as Muslims say, ‘in the arms of the prophet and of the guardian angel.’ Using signs, he expressed his wish that we should sprinkle him with Zamzam water [the Zam-Zam is the holy well located near the mosque in Mecca].”

Reality here plainly shows its undisguised features through the surface of appearances. A description of
good, and some of these became successes while others remained poor and lived in anonymity.

Taghvis of the Arabian World in the 17th Century

Of about 15 European countries, 14 were able to claim some of their cities as Arabian regions in their territories. These regions included the Arabian Peninsula, the Arabian Gulf, and the Arabian Sea, all of which were rich in oil and other natural resources. The European countries were able to gain control over these regions due to their superior military power and the lack of unity among the Arabian states.

Burkhardt's adventure

Burkhardt, born in Damascus in 1784, was a Swiss traveler who lived in Egypt, Syria, and Turkey. He is best known for his journeys through the heart of the Ottoman Empire, where he traveled extensively in order to gain a better understanding of the culture and society of the region. His travels were characterized by a fascination with the Arabic language and culture, and he made many observations about the people and places he encountered.

Burkhardt's primary purpose was to establish a direct trade route between Europe and the Arabian Peninsula, which was then the center of trade and commerce. He encountered many challenges along the way, including语言 obstacles, political conflicts, and physical hardship. Despite these challenges, he was able to complete his journey and return to Europe with a wealth of information and knowledge.

Burkhardt's work was groundbreaking in its time, and his observations and insights continue to be influential today. His travels and writings helped to shape our understanding of the Arabian world, and his legacy continues to inspire new generations of scholars and travelers.

The death of a great leader

The death of a great leader, however, took place in a different context. In the Arabian world, this leader was Abu Bakr, the first caliph of Islam. His death was a significant event, as it marked the end of the period of the four caliphs and the beginning of the Umayyad dynasty.

Abu Bakr's death was a result of an assassination plot, and it occurred in the early 7th century. Despite the tragic circumstances surrounding his death, Abu Bakr's legacy lived on, and his leadership and vision continued to inspire generations to come.
In a footnote to the preface of his first volume, Strouck Hugronje admitted that "nonetheless [...] no recent presentation of political circumstances in the Hijazia can match [up to] that given in Burkhard's "Pencett in Hâchâl"."

If Burkhardt's presentation of his travel experiences amounts to an enthralling documentation with unforgettable snapshot-like moments, Hugronje's volumes sometimes treat historical facts rather more subjectively, as he himself admitted in his preface. A comparison between his and Burkhardt's descriptions of the Kaaba is alone sufficient to make this plain. Burkhardt first describes this edifice in terms of its dimensions and form without further comment: "the Kaaba stands in a broad rectangle that is 250 feet long and 300 wide; none of the sides of the same is entirely straight, although it appears to have a regular form at first glance". Strouck Hugronje, in contrast, inserts a negative subjective judgment in to his description: "located at the center of the mosque, the Ka'bah (length 12, width 10, height 15 metres) is ill-proportioned and not even regularly constructed out of stone from the mountains of Mecca."

**Souvenirs of the Holy Sites—Forbidden Pictures and Photographic Images in the Orient**

Before the pioneers of photography in the Hijazia are introduced in detail, it is necessary to discuss the question of whether, or to what degree, the depiction of persons and objects in paintings and photographs was permitted or forbidden in the Islamic world at that time.

Considered historically, the prohibition of images is common to the Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions. For the Jews, God revealed himself in words, not in visible form. In the Old Covenant, this strict prohibition of images is expressed in Exodus 20:4: "Thou shalt not make for thyself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God..." Islam adopted this prohibition of images and likeness. In the Mubet, an important book of the Sunnite tradition, it says that Mohammed cursed those who painted and drew people and animals (Mubet 12 1, 1). As a consequence, such depictions were regarded as heathen idolatry, a view that had its roots in ancient Arabic and pre-Islamic religions, and which was to be transformed by Islam into a thoroughgoing iconoclastic religious system.

According to the Islamic faith, the essence of God is beyond human comprehension and is thus impossible to describe or to depict. The world of perceptions is merely one of appearances, and its imitation is therefore a serious transgression. The prohibition of images applies especially to the face of the Prophet, although this ban has not always been obeyed.

Over the centuries, this strict ban on image-making has not only been relaxed to various degrees at different times, but it has also been variously interpreted in different regions of Islamic countries, thus leading to gradual deviations and divergences in terms of the means of visual expression available to and applied by artists.
The increasing influence of the technical-industrial equipment and means made available by the colonial politics of the West also resulted in changes in prevailing fashions within the culture of the Islamic world. The ruling and middle classes now began to show a preference for European styles, as could clearly be seen in the fashion, architecture, and furnishings of the period. Pictures and photographs by European artists were now hung up on walls, and imported goods flooded the Oriental market.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, it became increasingly easy to take photographs of Muslims. Photography received with particular interest in Turkey and Persia, but also in Arabia to some extent, primarily among the higher ranks of society. Political and military leaders recognized the possibilities opened up by photography and utilized them to present themselves in an impressive manner. Portrait photographs could be reproduced in unlimited numbers and put to public use, particularly abroad in Europe. At the beginning of the twentieth century, leading Islamic theologians propagated the view that the photographing of people was not to be regarded as a form of immodesty and was not covered by the prohibition of the depiction of the divine creation.

The photographing of women, however, since they were not allowed to appear in public except when suitably veiled, remained impossible even for professional studio photographers. This phenomenon was also linked with the belief widely held at this time that photography might exert a magical power, a spell, over the photographed person. This is why, when making generic portraits, established photographers employed their own models—often prostitutes or women from the lower classes—who were then dressed up in Oriental garb and photographed in the studio against a suitable background. This resulted in women who enjoyed scant regard within their own society being idealized by Europeans who conjured up rosy fantasies while contemplating them in their romanticized settings.

The Pioneers of Arabian Photography

After 1841, a number of European photographers made their way to the Near and Middle East. They showed a marked preference for Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, not only because their aim was to visit legendary places along Biblical pathways, but also because of the political priorities existing within Europe at the time. The Ottoman and Persian governments were well aware of the inherent potential of photography, so that it spread rapidly throughout the Near and Middle East during the late 1850s. Photographers attained their reputation not only to the needs of tourists but also to those of political and military dignitaries. Photographic studios enjoyed a commercial boom, especially in Cairo, Damascus, Jerusalem, Beirut, and Istanbul, as well as in Port Said after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Although many photographic studios were set up in the Middle East, this development had virtually no effect on the Arabian peninsula, because the region was of too little importance for European colonial politics at the time.

Until the beginning of the 1880s, Europeans were not allowed to take photographs of Islam's holy sites or of its pilgrimage sites and ceremonies. The commencement of a certificate attesting that the owner had indeed visited the sacred site in question (see above, p. 45).
“It is forbidden for Christians ... to enter the Holy Cities under any pretext whatsoever. Even when it is a matter of restoring or maintaining technical or industrial apparatus, or for public works (in these places), only Muslims are employed.”

Moustafa Amr, a professor’s assistant at the Egyptian University for Geography in Cairo who wrote an account of the pioneering photographic achievement of Sadiq Bey, reported that, owing to the strict checks imposed on foreigners and the mistrust of them, it was not possible for them to work with instruments and equipment openly without arousing the suspicion of the local population.

In his travel notes, the pioneer of Arabian photography, Sadiq Bey, also remarked that "a visitor of non-Muslim beliefs would have been strangled immediately unless he were very well dressed and protected by a respected Musulman." It was much easier for local people to be seen working with photographic equipment. It therefore seems certain that the earliest photographs of the holy cities of Islam are those taken by the Egyptian colonel, Mohammed Sadiq Bey, who made the first photographic documentation of Medina and Mecca. His work therefore enjoys a unique position within the history of photography. This was not only due to the obstacles outlined above, but also because of the extreme climatic conditions under which he had to work: temperatures were frequently in excess of 40°C during the daytime, but dropped to as low as -4°C at night.

Mohammed Sadiq Bey

Mohammed Sadiq Bey (born in Cairo in 1832; died in Cairo in 1902) was the first photographer to take pictures of Medina (1865) and then of Mecca and Medina (1880-81). The name and title of Sadiq Bey—albeit without his first name, Mohammed—have come down to us in various spellings, i.e., Sadiq, Sadic, Sadik, and Sadek. On the albumen prints owned by the Forum of International Photography of the Reiss-Engelhorn Museum, Mannheim, the name, ‘Sadik Bey’, can be made out on the glass plate although it has been more or less retouched or erased. Wilhelm Reiss acquired these photographs by Sadiq Bey in Tunis during a trip to the Orient in 1885.

For commercial reasons, it was usual at that time either not to mention the name of the photographer or to replace it by the name of the studio or photographer involved in marketing the image. This explains the evident manipulation of names on certain prints. As during this period, photography was regarded not as an artistic but as a purely technical medium, the copyright regulations in force today did not apply. Some photographs from this time did, nevertheless, bear the note, “reproduction of this photograph in any form is forbidden.”

Sadiq Bey came from Cairo. After completing his schooling, he attended the Military College in Cairo, the Madrasat al-Khangah al-Harbiba. In 1846, he served as military attaché in an Egyptian delegation to France. Sadiq Bey subsequently completed a training as an engineer at the École Polytechnique in Paris, and later taught cartographic drawing at the Military School in the Citédal of Cairo. He eventually attained the rank of colonel of the Egyptian army.

In his capacity as engineer and cartographer, he was involved for decades in surveying the region of the Hidjas and was thus thoroughly acquainted with the sites, land and landscapes held sacred by Muslims. Sadiq Bey was later elected president of the Société Khédivalle de Géographie de Caïre. By the time he ended his military career, he had attained the rank of lieu (lieutenant-general) and was eventually given the title of pasha. Sadiq Bey published four books in all. They were devoted to the region of the Hidjas, to the subhan or journey with a ceremonial litter borne by a camel, and to Muslim pilgrimages as such. All these books have only ever been published in Arabic, but we can provide here at least a translation of their titles, giving the author’s name in the spelling to be found in each of the respective books:

Colonel Mohammed Sadiq Bey. A Short Report about Investigations of the Hijaz Route from Wajh and Wadda Al-Bahr to Medinah, Cairo 1879.

Mohammed Sadiq Pasha, Tomb of the Blessed Camel-Litter, Cairo 1881.

Mohammed Sadiq Pasha, Star of Pilgrimage for the Mecca Pilgrimage by Land, Cairo 1884.

Mohammed Sadiq Pasha, Pigeon’s Guide for the Pilgrim, Cairo 1896.
The last of these continued woodcuts by the engraver, Francesco Canevi (born in Milan in 1514; died in Lyons in 1590) as well as photographic/photographic reproductions made by a medium-sized stereopticon, were later published in Venice and signed, ‘Sadig Sc., Venice.’ The woodcuts by Canevi are most probably reproductions of the first photographs taken by Sadig Bey in Medina in 1866.

Important insights into Sadig Bey as a photographer are provided by himself in his second publication, Veil of the Aden Canal Line. This is the most abundant source of information concerning his approach to photographic visualization, which will be considered more closely below. It is most likely that Sadig Bey’s insistence on photographic procedures was awakened during his stay in Paris, although it is possible that it owed something to the work of the French photographer who had studios in Cairo in the second half of the nineteenth century. Whatever its origin, the sheer quality of his photographs is evidence of his talent in this field and reveals professional standards in his handling of the wet collodion process.

In 1886, Sadig Bey published a synopsis of his trip to Medina in French under the title, Mémoire sur le voyage, in the Bulletin de la Société khédive de géographie. In comparison to the Arabic edition, this lacked many important details, such as geographical information, descriptions of the instruments used, the route map and the ground plan of the Haram. This may be well the reason why the pioneering scientific and photographic achievements of Sadig Bey failed to attract the attention that they deserved at that time. The early photographs of Medina that he had taken in about 1866 during his first expedition were, however, shown in the Egyptian pavilion at the First World Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876. This was made possible for several reasons: in (this international) presentation of art, photography was shown for the first time on an equal footing with painting. Furthermore, it was in Philadelphia that the concept of the World Exhibition was developed in conjunction with the pavilions from individual countries. It is clear that, at this time, Sadig Bey was among the most important representatives of his country.

In addition to those books written by himself, Sadig Bey has been the subject of further publications. Attention was drawn to his achievements in research and photography back in 1932 by M.A. Mustafa Amer in his article, ‘An Egypt in Arabia in the Nineteenth Century,’ which appeared in the Bulletin du Gouvernement Royal de Géographie d’Egypte. However, it was only toward the end of the twentieth century that Sadig Bey again became a subject of investigation, this time in Muhammad Hammam Fathi’s book, Al-Khirr e-Fihri (The Journey in the Hejaz). These works have made it possible to draw together the facts concerning Sadig Bey’s life and work presented in the present volume.

Sadig Bey’s Notes Concerning His First Expedition to Medina Made Between January 23 and February 28, 1866.

On January 21, 1861, Sadig Bey was commissioned (primarily for military purposes) to survey and investigate the geography of the region between the Red Sea, the port of Al Wajh, and Medina. It was to be the first-ever survey of this area. He left Cairo by train on Thursday, January 21, 1861, on his way to the Gulf of Suez, a trip that took four days. He then sailed for two days to Al Wajh, a medium-sized port located south of Aqaba on the coast of the Red Sea. This town was then much favored by Egyptian pilgrims (see map on p. 24).

Sadig Bey was traveling with a small group, probably comprising colleagues, and covered the approximately 366 miles to Medina in 12 days.

The photographer used a precise, documentary style to describe his trip and the main highlights on the way, including the ports, the coast and the surrounding region. About six miles from the coast, he found a fortress, which he described in the following terms: "The Fortress is built amidst mountains of red sandstone. It is well equipped with weapons and... is suitable... as a supply station, where vessels frequently come from Egypt at the port of Al Wajh. The square is strewn with pebbles and stones, and this is the junction where three roads meet: the first going to the Gulf of Suez and is known as the El-Ain route; the second is called El-Sfar, and the third leads to the holy city of Medina."

Sadig Bey devoted close attention to the natural surroundings, the land around the fortress, the water-supply points for the area and relations between the governor and the Arab population. He drew comparisons between the canals of this region and those to be found in Egypt and Syria. After staying in the fortress for two days, Sadig Bey continued his journey southward toward Medina and Wadi El-Hand. Wherever he made a survey of the land, he described the roads and parks, the appearance of the mountains, the flora and the distances..."
between the individual stopping-points and camps. With his group, he covered an average of between 23 and 31 miles per day, and it took him twelve days to reach Medina.

He provided a detailed account of Medina and the Menaga, the square where pilgrims gather in front of the gates of the holy city. He also reported at length about the rites and ceremonies performed during the pilgrimage, the hajj, as well as about the citizens of Medina. According to him, they had dark-brown skin, looked rather feeble and were usually willing to offer their services as guides for pilgrims. He described trading with merchants, who principally sold dates, remarked on the exaggerated prices for board and lodging during the time when pilgrims were in the city, and enlarged on the stalls in the bazaars and on the streets, which were about 16 feet wide.

Sadiq Bey was responsible for providing the first comprehensive account of the settlement and climatic conditions of this region. The equipment that he took with him included a compass, surveying instruments, and a bulky plate camera. However, although it was his photography that would assure Sadig Bey's posthumous fame, this was really more of a hobby for him while on his travels.

Having reached Medina, he made several panoramic photographs of the city on February 12, 1865, as well as taking pictures of the entrance courtyard enclosed by a wall, the so-called Hazam, with the Mosque of the Prophet. He was well aware of the historic significance of his activities, as he noted in his travel journal:

"When the highly esteemed place became visible, I took up position at a point on the roof of the Arsenal, from which I had a view over the city such that I was permitted to photograph a part of the residential district as well. With regard to the view of the greatly revered dome [over the tomb of the prophet], though, I also photographed it from the inside of the Haram using the mentioned apparatus. I was the very first person to produce such pictures using this apparatus."

In the French version, Médine, il y a dix ans, we find the following comment on this vantage point:

"It was my good fortune that I had to draw up a precise ground plan of the mosque as well as to take a photograph of its south façade, along with an all-encompassing view from the Tophané, the Arsenal located to the right of the entrance gateway, Bab-el-Caml."

To date, no other photographs from this period showing these subjects have come to light. If comparable images ever did actually exist, it has to be assumed that they have been lost for good. All that has come down to us are engravings (to achieve better reproduction quality) based on Sadig Bey's photographs, which appeared in his publication in the Bulletin de la Société Nationale des arts et sciences du Caire (No. 8, 1880), as well as in a later article about Sadig Bey in the Bulletin des Sciences de l'Egypt (No. 16, 1932).

That none of the local inhabitants objected to his working with a camera may be explained by the fact that Sadig Bey was himself a Muslim and was well acquainted with the religion, language and customs of the people of the region.

Sadig Bey is regarded as the first person to have investigated and described the northern section of the route from Al Wajh to Wadi El-Hamri, 16 years before the
individual stopping-points and camps. He covered an average of between 23 and 25 miles a day, and it took him twelve days to reach Medina.

A detailed account of Medina and the areas where pilgrims gather in front of the holy city. He also reported at length about ceremonies performed during the pilgrimage, as well as about the citizens of Medina. He said that they had dark brown skin, looked sad and were usually willing to offer their services to pilgrims. He described trading with the local inhabitants, and the streets, which were about 16 feet wide and surrounded by houses. He noted that Medina had several areas, each with its own characteristics and features. He described the Mecca, which he said was a place of pilgrimage and worship, and the Haram, which he described as a holy place.

As he traveled through the city, he observed the daily life of the inhabitants, noting their customs, traditions, and practices. He also described the various types of homes and buildings he saw, including mosques, markets, and other public buildings.

On February 12, 1865, as he passed through the entrance of the Haram, he was greeted by the Mosques of the Aswad and the Asma, which he described as being close to the Haram. He also mentioned the Mecca, which he described as being the most holy place in Islam.

A detailed description of the view from the top of the Haram, which he said was a panoramic view of the city, and the view of the sacred site, which he described as being the most beautiful place in Medina.

He also described the various types of homes and buildings he saw, including mosques, markets, and other public buildings. He noted the architectural style of the buildings, their location, and their function.

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