Introduction

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The Hajj (Ar. *ḥajj*) is one of the largest gatherings of human beings on the planet; it is also one of the oldest. Every year millions of Muslims from around the world head to the city of Mecca and its environs to perform the Hajj during the month allocated for this ritual, or to perform the ʿUmra, the so-called minor pilgrimage, which can be done at any time of year. They come from all over the Middle East, but from much further afield as well – Africa, Asia, and increasingly from Europe, the Americas, and Australia. It is no exaggeration to say that the Hajj is the most important annual event in the world involving the transnational movement of human beings. The present book attempts to describe the various aspects and facets of the Muslim pilgrimage, with contributions ranging from discussions of the localized rituals of the Hajj itself to the building of a modern global infrastructure. Politics, economics, religion, global health, and transport are all part of the fabric of this volume, as is the lived experience of the pilgrimage as expressed in the literature and art of its practitioners.

We have asked specialists to weigh in with their own perspectives on how the Hajj works, so that the book can be greater than the sum of its parts. It is no doubt beyond any one person's expertise to write comprehensively about the global pilgrimage to Mecca, taking into account its many aspects and given the complexity of global connectivities – no one scholar has the languages, archival reach, or ethnographic experience to craft such a narrative. There is a long history to the pilgrimage to Mecca, but it can also be viewed through anthropological, sociological, and other disciplinary lenses. We have endeavored here to bring many of these approaches into one volume, so as to give a multivalent and multifaceted

account of this enormous, international enterprise. We hope that as a collective we have succeeded in saying something cohesive and important about the Hajj as a religious, cultural, and sociopolitical phenomenon.

The Muslim Hajj has existed for nearly fourteen hundred years and has recognizable precursors. The Hijaz was an important crossroads for trans-Arabian caravans, and Mecca was already a pre-Islamic pilgrimage site at an early date. As Islam spread after Muhammad's death in the seventh century CE, Muslims traveled to Mecca and its environs to fulfill one of Islam's fundamental injunctions, to "make the annual pilgrimage to the House [i.e., the Kaʿba at Mecca] if one is able." What is more, Mecca, Medina, and other sites associated with the life and message of the Prophet became incorporated into the life-ways of Islam and began to attract year-round visitors and scholars. This process started in the seventh century but quickly gained momentum as Islam spread throughout the world through trade, conquest, and migration. Within a few generations after the life of Muhammad, Muslims could be found across nearly the entire breadth of the Old World, from Morocco to China. This history, in other words, became an increasingly global one from a very early date.

Many Muslims heed the call to perform the Hajj or the impulse to visit the sacred precincts. Yet the vast majority of pilgrims are by no means wealthy or able to take the time off from work and other daily, local responsibilities in order to do so. In pre-modern times, the trip could take many months; today, it takes thousands of dollars to undertake the journey. Yet, despite these concerns of both distance and expense, the number of pilgrims rises year after year, with around three million attending the annual Hajj at present, all arriving in the holy cities at approximately the same time. Some eleven million perform ʿUmra year-round, including more than a million during the fasting month of Ramaḍān alone. These figures show no signs of diminishing. On the contrary, the willingness and desire to make the Hajj is clearly increasing in numerous societies across the globe. The pilgrimage is a way for Muslims to get in touch not only with the history of their faith, but also with themselves – it is a communal journey, but also at the same time a deeply personal one. For this reason, our volume describes and discusses the Hajj from a number of different, yet interlocking, vantages. No single book can capture all of the ritual, historical, and geographical aspects of the Hajj, but we hope that our contributors have succeeded in evoking many, if not most, of the salient issues around the pilgrimage to Mecca. Indeed, we hope that this book will be profitably read side by side with its

predecessors,[1] including several excellent volumes that have appeared in the past few years.[2] We have accordingly divided the chapters into four rubrics that we feel showcase the ways that the Hajj can and has been actualized: (1) Evolution, on the ways in which the Hajj originated and evolved; (2) Journey, which describes the history of the movement of pilgrims and proceeds more or less chronologically through time; (3) Infrastructure, which looks at the way that the Hajj is managed, by focusing on economics, health, and the welfare of pilgrims; and (4) Performance, where perspective shifts to the ways in which the pilgrimage is performed, how it is entering the "modern age," and how it is represented in travel accounts, and folk, popular, and elite art forms. The Hajj is triangulated therefore over time and distance, across customs and modes of organization, and as a religious obligation, as well as an aesthetic.

Part I, "Evolution" opens with Harry Munt's "Pilgrimage in pre-Islamic Arabia and Late Antiquity" which provides the historical and geographical context for the Hajj. Specifically, by relying on inscriptions and other relatively sparse sources, Munt situates pilgrimage in the Arabian Peninsula within the wider ambit of the late antique eastern Mediterranean. The Hajj, for all its specificities, has antecedents in local and interregional pilgrimages, both to the north and also in South Arabia. Munt notes that there is no evidence that pilgrimage in Arabia was interregional before the advent of Islam (properly, the Prophet

[1] Notably M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Le pèlerinage à la Mekke* (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1923); F. E. Peters, *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places* (Princeton University Press, 1994); F. E. Peters, *A Literary History of the Muslim Holy Land* (Princeton University Press, 1994); R. R. Bianchi, *Guests of God: Pilgrimage and Politics in the Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). The following collection is indispensable: *Records of the Hajj*, ed. A. Rush, 10 vols. ([Slough:] Archive Editions, 1993): I: *Pilgrim Prayers, Invocations and Rites*. II: *The Early Caliphal, Mamluk and Ottoman Periods, 630–1814*. III: *The Ottoman Period, 1814–1887*. IV: *The Ottoman Period, 1888–1915*. V: *The Hashimite Period, 1916–1925*. VI: *The Saudi Period, 1926–1935*. VII: *The Saudi Period, 1935–1951*. VIII: *The Saudi Period, 1951–*. IX: *Health Affairs and the Hajj*. X: *Documents and Maps*.

[2] M. E. McMillan, *The Meaning of Mecca: The Politics of Pilgrimage in Early Islam* (London: Saqi Books, 2011); A. I. al-Ghabbân, *Les deux routes syrienne et égyptienne de pèlerinage au nord-ouest de l'Arabie Saoudite*, 2 vols. (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2011); V. Porter, *The Art of Hajj* (Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2012); V. Porter, with M. A. S. Abdel Haleem et al., *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); A. Petersen, *The Medieval and Ottoman Hajj Route in Jordan: An Archaeological and Historical Study* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2012); M. Chekhab-Abudaya and Cécile Bresc (eds.), *Hajj: The Journey through Art* (Milan: Skira, 2013); L. Mols and M. Buitelaar (eds.), *Hajj: Global Interactions through Pilgrimage* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2014).

Muhammad), but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that it was popular.[3] What sets the Hajj apart, in the Muslim telling, is the role of Abraham and before him Adam, both of whom are believed to have built the "House of God" at the site on which the city of Mecca then, and now, stands. Fareeha Khan takes up this sacred history in "Why Mecca? Abraham and the Hajj in the Islamic Tradition."[4] Drawing on the Qur'an, the Prophet's attested practice (as described in the Hadith corpus), and elaborations in classical Muslim sources, Khan shows how central the story of Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael is to the Hajj, and to its meaning as a ritual of obedience and worship. Indeed, the centrality of Abraham to Muslim worship generally can be seen from the fact that, as Khan notes, "every day, Muslims remember the blessings bestowed by God on the biblical figure Abraham when they recite ... their five daily prayers."

Although Mecca is the Islamic *axis mundi* and the prime focus (literally) of ritual attention, as Travis Zadeh shows in "The Early Hajj, Seventh–Eighth Centuries CE," much was in flux in the two centuries following the death of Muhammad.[5] This led to lasting and profound transformations, especially in terms of the relationship of those in political power to the protection of the sanctuary, and of the routes leading to it. Those transformations, as Zadeh demonstrates, are captured in competing architectural expressions and "various discursive efforts that turned to the mythopoeic power of narrative to mold and reimagine the significance of the Kaʿba." Zadeh discusses the fact that women in political authority, or women allied to those in power, were a significant source of patronage, largesse, and decision making. Asma Sayeed makes that the focus of her chapter, "Women and the Hajj."[6] She does not confine herself to this, however, and also broaches such questions as the juridical and social factors affecting women's ability to embark on the Hajj, the specific ritual demands made on women pilgrims – for whom it has been described as a kind of jihad – and the complementarity of women's religious education

[3] For a study of the city of Medina, where the Prophet Muhammad is buried, see H. Munt, *The Holy City of Medina: Sacred Space in Early Arabia* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[4] Khan's *The Ethical Contours of a Fatwa: Women, Sufism and Islamic Law in Late Colonial India*, forthcoming.

[5] Zadeh is the author of *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam: Geography, Translation and the ʿAbbāsid Empire* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

[6] Cf. A. Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

and the Hajj. She concludes her chapter with a discussion of two memoirs by women in order to give direct voice to women pilgrims and their experience of their voyages.

Part II, "Journey," is organized according to the means of transport used by pilgrims to reach Mecca, namely, land, sea, and air. Inevitably, and predictably, there is temporal overlap – even in the age of air travel, millions still also make the trip by sea or land – but this seemed to us a productive way of thinking about the nature and modalities of the journey. In "Hajj by Land," Benjamin Brower shows that "[o]verland travel was and remains at the heart of every Hajj," not only because the Hajj itself consists in movement from one location to another over land, but also because the Qur'an implies a preference for land travel in its injunction, "Proclaim the Pilgrimage to the people. Let them come to you on foot and on every lean camel" (Q Ḥajj 22:27). Brower describes the road-building projects of the Umayyad–Abbasid era (seventh–thirteenth centuries), the caravans of the Mamluk era (thirteenth–sixteenth centuries), and those of the Ottoman period as well (sixteenth–nineteenth centuries). When he discusses the twentieth-century Hijaz Railway, Brower is able to show the intensification, and effect, of state control over the Hajj.[7]

In "Hajj by Sea," Eric Tagliacozzo explores the maritime dimensions of the historical transit to the Hijaz.[8] Whereas those crossing the seas might have constituted a small percentage of hajjis in earlier centuries, by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they often accounted for half of all pilgrims, often from very far away. Indeed, as Tagliacozzo notes, "over time the pilgrimage to Mecca gradually became more and more of an oceanic venture, and remained thus into the middle decades of the twentieth century." He focuses on three distinct regions: the long coast stretching from the Maghreb all the way to Egypt, the Indian subcontinent and Arabian Sea, and maritime Southeast Asia. He notes that "the sea allowed for the pilgrimage to Mecca to take place as part of the global project of modernity, as this project was enacted and evolved in the later nineteenth century. Crucial here was the development of the steamship, a Western invention, but one that was quickly adopted both by Muslim powers and also by Muslim populations."

[7] Brower takes up questions he raises in *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009) and in the forthcoming *The Colonial Hajj, 1798–1962*.

[8] For a detailed discussion of Southeast Asian pilgrims, see E. Tagliacozzo, *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

If the steamship meant a shorter, less expensive journey, then air travel brought exceptional speed and affordable travel, and resulted in what Robert Bianchi identifies as explosive growth in his chapter, "Hajj by Air." Yet, he points out also that this explosion, coupled with economic success, has also wreaked havoc, bringing overcrowding, stampedes, commercialization, monopoly, and a host of other problems and challenges. The unprecedented numbers have resulted in the instituting of quotas, imposed both by Saudi Arabia and by other nations. Bianchi looks in particular at the following countries, some of which send large numbers of pilgrims, others of which have had contested relationships with the Saudi Hajj authorities – Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Turkey, Russia, and China.[9]

Part III, "Infrastructure," opens with Sylvia Chiffoleau's "Economics: Agents, Pilgrims, and Profits," which looks at the economic stakes in the transportation of pilgrims, especially the transition from what was in the main a Muslim economic activity to one of concern – and profit – to the colonial powers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Chiffoleau describes the competition between the various actors, and also the economic dependence of the Hijaz on the Hajj. Her chapter also highlights economic and fiscal aspects of the Hajj that are often neglected, such as the levying of taxes and subsidies on pilgrims.[10]

In "The Pilgrimage to Mecca and International Health Regulations," Valeska Huber broaches the question of global health, notably the intersection of contagious diseases and mass pilgrimage. She approaches the question by juxtaposing two types of bodies, international organizations on the one hand and the pilgrims themselves on the other. Science and statistics are enlisted to show the ways in which sanitation, disease control, quarantine, and enforcement were deployed as strategies of containment and technologies of control. As Huber shows, although increasingly effective organization and communication appeared to lead to a reduction in health issues, globalization has actually lead to a resurgence of epidemics – witness the presence of MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) in Saudi Arabia, even as we write this introduction.[11]

[9] See also R. R. Bianchi, *Guests of God: Pilgrimage and Politics in the Islamic World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[10] See also S. Chiffoleau and A. Madoeuf (eds.), *Les pèlerinages au Maghreb et au Moyen-Orient: espaces publics, espaces de public* (Beirut: Institut français du Proche-Orient, 2005).

[11] On the question of people on the move, see V. Huber, *Channeling Mobilities: Migration and Globalisation in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869–1914* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

Next, Saud al-Sarhan's "The Saudis as Managers of the Hajj" addresses the role of the Saudi Arabian government in directly administering the pilgrimage. Al-Sarhan looks at the "international conflicts over banned or circumscribed cultural practices" associated with the pilgrimage to Mecca. These practices, he notes, are incompatible with the conservative Salafi ideology espoused by the Holy Cities' custodians. In spite of that espousal, the government maintains that the Hajj is apolitical, even while it uses the Hajj to promote a positive image for itself. Al-Sarhan shows that in spite of the pressures that they face, the Saudis have been largely successful in keeping pilgrims safe and secure.[12]

The four chapters that comprise Part IV, "Performance," look at the different ways in which the Hajj is performed and in which that performance is manifested and represented. In "Performing the Hajj," Shawkat Toorawa describes the rituals of the ʿUmra and of the Hajj, notably the acts required of pilgrims during the several hours of the former or the five days of the latter in Mecca and its precincts. He also gives examples of the ceremonies that take place before pilgrims leave for Mecca, and when they return home. He proposes that the pilgrimage be understood as a metaphor of return, and as a reenactment of the Prophet Muhammad's actions.[13] In "Decoding the Hajj in Cyberspace," Gary Bunt emphasizes the fact that "understanding technological interfaces is increasingly important in developing a comprehension of contemporary Islamic issues and their dissemination," and that the Hajj is no exception to this. The growth of cyber Islamic environments has been exponential in the past fifteen years or so – the Hajj, initially only represented online, can now even be performed "digitally." One can "access" Mecca on the net, "enter" Hajj portals, and be guided by Hajj apps, equipped with GPS, during the course of the whole pilgrimage. Statistically most people will never perform the Hajj, but as Bunt notes, in the digital age, "there is no need for those staying at home to not feel part of the Hajj" any longer.[14]

Everyone who goes on Hajj has stories to tell; some will write these down in travel accounts and memoirs. In "The Pilgrim's Complaint: Five Accounts of the Hajj," Michael Wolfe looks at five critical Hajj accounts,

[12] Al-Sarhan is preparing a monograph based on his "Early Muslim Traditionalism: A Critical Study of the Works and Political Theology of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal" (unpublished thesis, University of Exeter, 2011).

[13] Toorawa has co-edited (with Roger Allen), *Islam: A Short Guide to the Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2011).

[14] Bunt is the author of *iMuslims: Rewiring the House of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press; London: C. Hurst & Co, 2009).

one from the early 1960s, and four much more recent ones. Three are by men: Jalal Al-e Ahmad's *Lost in the Crowd* (1964), Abdellah Hammoudi's *A Season in Mecca* (2005), and Michael Muhammad Knight's *Journey to the End of Islam* (2009). Two are by women: Asra Nomani's *Standing Alone in Mecca* (2005) and Qanta Ahmed's *In the Land of Invisible Women* (2008). These accounts – the direct result of personal experiences of performing the Hajj – all critique the apparatus of the Hajj. They also sometimes critique the transformed raison d'être of performing it, providing a very instructive counterpoint to descriptions that are more devotional and pious.[15] Juan Campo's "Visualizing the Hajj: Imagining a Sacred Landscape, Past and Present" looks at the history of the representation of the Hajj. This representation has encompassed such diverse media and genres as manuscripts, certificates, paintings, pamphlets, periodicals, books, calendars, pictures, postcards, signboards, films and videos, television broadcasts, web sites, and social media. Campo tells us that written accounts and Hajj certificates were significant in the pre-modern period, whereas in the modern period, visual media have become more prominent, especially with the advent of printing and photography.[16] Indeed, how the Hajj will be performed in the future, and how that will look (and also be represented) has yet to be determined.

As we hope the foregoing makes clear, we have endeavored in the present volume to sketch out a vision of the Hajj that is both historical and contemporary, one that takes into account elite and folk modes of practice, and that is sensitive to the breathtaking geographic diversity of the pilgrimage, now a truly global phenomenon. Although the Hajj started some fourteen centuries ago, it has evolved and undergone trans-valuations and shifts in mode and execution over time. Camel caravans gave way to Hajj by sail, and pilgrims are now primarily conveyed by air, jets hurtling aspirants over vast distances. It once took pilgrims from Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim polity, months if not years to perform the Hajj. It now takes the descendants of those same people only hours to fly across the ocean, and the entire experience can be completed in a few weeks. Banditry at the sacred sites by tribesmen eager to capitalize on the flow of visitors to the holy cities has now been replaced by a modern infrastructure and state-based security that has to be seen to be believed. The pages that follow impart some sense

[15] Cf. M. Wolfe, *One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing about the Muslim Pilgrimage*, revised and expanded (New York: Grove Press, 2015).
[16] Cf. J. Campo, *The Other Sides of Paradise: Explorations into the Religious Meanings of Domestic Space in Islam* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991).

of the evolution of the Hajj as it has developed over the centuries as a common endeavor for many millions of people.

The Hajj is of course also – some would say primarily – an inner journey, a voyage toward God and toward an understanding of oneself. That dynamic is also broached in this volume. Taken together, the chapters answer such questions as: How has the meaning of the Hajj changed for pilgrims over time? What position does it occupy in the mental field of believers, and has this always been constant, or has the significance of the ritual changed over the centuries? Does the Hajj mean the same thing to women as it does to men, and how do its practices differ across the gender divide, in terms of the lived experience of the trip, and its many daily dimensions of practice? How does the pilgrimage look to different traditions within Islam, when the members of so many divergent "streams" of the religion (Sunni, Shiʿite, progressive, Salafi, and so on) all come to the holy cities at the same time? The book attempts to explore some of these more inwardly focused dimensions of the Hajj as well, laying out a cross-section of the ritual's meanings to the various adherents of the faith who all perform its outlines together.

In sum, we hope to be able to give a sense of the Muslim pilgrimage as a "total experience." There is of course no "model Hajj," no template of unitary experience for how a single Hajj must be undertaken. Rather, as is clear from the contributions collected here, the pilgrimage to Mecca is as varied as its practitioners, a diffuse yet coordinated mode of religious praxis that has taken on many colors over the centuries. Trying to understand the Hajj as a phenomenon forces one to confront religiosity, of course, but also sociology, the anthropology of belief, history writ large across huge spaces of both geography and time, and politics, all at once. The complexity of the Hajj is daunting, yet it is an institution and a practice that allows itself to be studied. It is, in fact, now being examined more and more by scholars in different academic bailiwicks wearing different academic lenses. We offer the present volume as an extension of this process of analysis, though it is of necessity only one of many such works that attempt to shine light on this fascinating topic. If we succeed in stimulating further conversation and analysis of the Hajj as a subject of discourse by scholars and believers alike, then we will know that our own endeavor in assembling this volume has been a worthwhile project indeed.