Out of Obscurity:
John F. T. Keane's Late Nineteenth Century *Ḥajj*

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A Thesis submitted to

The Faculty of
The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences
of The George Washington University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Masters of Arts

May 21, 2017

Thesis directed by

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professors Khoury and Blecher specifically for guiding me through the journey of writing this thesis as well as the rest of the George Washington University's History Department whose faculty, students, and staff have created an unforgettable learning experience over the past three years. Further, I would like to thank my co-workers, both in College Park, Maryland, and Washington, D.C., some of whom have become like family to me and helped me through thick and thin. I would also be remiss if I were not to thank my best friend, Danielle Romero, who mentioned me in the acknowledgements page of her thesis so I effectively must mention her here and quote a line from series that got me through the end of this thesis, "Bang." I would also like to express my gratitude to my Aunt Joy Harris who has been a constant fountain of encouragement.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Larry and Dianne, to whom this thesis is dedicated. It would not have been possible without their continued support in all aspects of my life.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements iii

List of Figures v

Introduction 1

Background 3

Six Months in the Hijaz 18

Conclusion 53

Bibliography 55

List of Figures

Figure 1 – Keane's estimation of the origins of the pilgrims in Mecca during his *ḥajj*…..13

Figure 2 – An Indian Pilgrim ……..…….……..36

Figure 3 – Mecca and the Ka'ba ……...……..51

Figure 4 – Medina…….……..52

> I promise to put before you a narrative of hairbreadth escapes and strange incidents which appear marvelous even to me, who has lived a life of wildest adventure . . . in every quarter of the globe.
>
> -John F. T. Keane[1]

In late 1877, John Fryer Thomas Keane set out on a journey few Christian Europeans had attempted—completing the *ḥajj*, or pilgrimage, to Mecca. The *ḥajj* constitutes a fundamental duty of Islam, presuming its followers have the ability to do so. While some Europeans had undertaken this pilgrimage as Muslims, Keane donned the guise of an Indian Muslim instead of converting to Islam outright. In doing so, he followed a long line of European *ḥajji*s who had performed the pilgrimage in a similar manner. From the *ḥajj* of Italian Ludovico di Varthema in the early sixteenth century to the nineteenth century travels of Englishmen Sir Richard F. Burton and John Lewis Burkhardt, a select few Westerners embarked upon *ḥajj* disguised as Muslims in order to reveal the nature of this Islamic ritual practice. After completion of his *ḥajj*, Keane detailed his journey in a two-volume set. The first recorded the *ḥajj* itself while the second discussed his continuation of his journey in the Hijaz to Medina as well as his return journey to India. In the preface to his work, he acknowledges the previous nineteenth century pilgrimages of Burton and Burkhardt, ostensibly placing himself as a continuance of their legacies. Similarly, most historians have placed Keane as an extension of their journeys and afford him very little attention, if they comment on his *ḥajj* at all.

However, given his youth and general lack of experience, Keane stands out as a unique traveler among England's nineteenth century disguised *ḥajji*s. He was not an

[1] John F. Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz: Journeys to Makkah and Medina, 1877-1878*, Volume 1, (1881, repr., Manchester: Barzan Publishing, 2006), 203-4.

experienced Orientalists like Burckhardt or Burton who embarked on their journeys for academic and overt imperial reasons. Instead, Keane, as demonstrated by the epigraph, was an adventurer at heart and, like much of the rest of his life, undertook the *ḥajj* as with the intent to experience what few Englishmen had—and, of course, later profit off the journey through his books. This difference in perception, understandably, developed into a marked difference in content between Keane and his predecessors. Where Burton and Burkhardt saw fit to painstakingly record nearly every detail of the *ḥajj*'s rituals and locales, Keane glossed over such things. Moreover, he demonstrates the differences between the *ḥajj*s of Burton and Burckhardt in both time and intent. By the late 1870s, the Indian Ocean world was more intricately connected than ever before through both the opening of the Suez Canal as well as through the expansion of the British Empire in the region. His pilgrimage pointed not to an academic spirit, but rather to an adventuring spirit that led him not only into the heart of the Islamic world but also around the world. Finally, Keane adds to his pilgrim's tale a romantic adventure of encountering an Englishwoman residing in Mecca. This addition highlights the potential for embellishment in traveler's tales, especially those like Keane who admired the adventurous and romantic. Taken together, this calls for a more thorough look at Keane's *ḥajj* and the rest of his life. Moreover, Keane's travel demonstrates a "tourist turn" in the history of non-Muslim Europeans undergoing the *ḥajj*. As one of the earliest extant accounts of these "tourist" pilgrims, *Six Months in the Hijaz* provides the best avenue for historians to understand this shift in history.

Background

The Ḥajj

The *ḥajj* constitutes a major duty, a requirement of Shi'i Islam and also one of the five "pillars" (*arkān*) of Sunni Islam, incumbent upon all Muslims with the ability to undertake it. It entails a pilgrimage to Mecca, the birthplace of Islam, during the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar, *Dhū'l-Ḥijjah* to circle the Ka'ba, the house of Allah (*bayt Allah*), along with a visit to nearby Mount Arafat. Upon the successful completion of the pilgrimage, a Muslim earns the honorific title of *ḥajji*. While the practice of making a pilgrimage to Mecca existed within pre-Islamic Arabia, this was ultimately remade into a fully Islamic duty. In the Qur'an, the ritual is traced back to Abraham who is recorded as the builder of the Ka'ba, doing so on the command of Allah while visiting his son Ishmael in Mecca. In this, Abraham and Ishmael also became the first *ḥajji*s after circling the Ka'ba seven times. The pilgrimage was undertaken several times during the Prophet Muḥammad's lifetime and was solidified as an Islamic ritual during the Farewell Pilgrimage of 10/632 when Muḥammad led the *ḥajj* himself just before his death. Given the sacred importance of these sites gained within the Islamic tradition, non-Muslims were barred from them. This restriction was imparted by the second caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab (d. 23/644) who prohibited non-Muslims from entering the "land of the Arabs" which, by the nineteenth century, was commonly considered Mecca and Medina.[2] Ultimately, this restriction did not prevent Europeans, Muslim or otherwise, from undertaking the *ḥajj* or visiting Mecca and Medina. The line of European Christians who

[2] F.E. Peters, *The Hajj: The Muslim Pilgrimage to Mecca and the Holy Places* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 206.

entered Mecca and Medina disguised as Muslims begins three and a half centuries before Keane's *ḥajj*.

Historiography of European Travelers to the Hijaz

The earliest extant record of a non-Muslim European visitor to the birthplace of Islam is that of the Italian Ludovico di Varthema's journey in 1503. Varthema bribed his way into the pilgrimage becoming an escort under the name of Yunis for the Amīr al-Ḥajj's caravan. The caravan first travelled through Medina, where Varthema visited the Mosque of the Prophet and Muḥammad's tomb held within it. After three days, the caravan moved onward to Mecca where Varthema witnessed the diverse group of pilgrims who had made their way from various parts of Asia and Africa for the *ḥajj*. Here, he ran into trouble after calling himself a Mohammedan instead of Muslim when questioned about his religion by another pilgrim. He managed to escape this encounter and left for Jeddah, ultimately arriving back in Europe five years later. With this, Varthema ostensibly became the first non-Muslim European to witness the *ḥajj* and relate an account of Mecca and Medina.[3] With this, Richard Trench argues that the accounts of Varthema and his successor European *ḥajji*s became part of the definitive record of the Hijaz from which "Europe received its conceptions and preconceptions about Arabia" while the classic Muslim scholars and geographers "were forgotten."[4] Over the next four centuries, more Europeans would arrive in Arabia, some also undertaking the *ḥajj*. The most notable of

[3] See Richard Trench, *Arabian Travellers* (London: MacMillan, 1986), 15-20; Peters, *The Hajj*, 82-85 and 141-143; Michael Wolfe, *One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travel Writing about the Muslim Pilgrimage* (New York: Grove Press, 1997), 79-89.

[4] Trench, 15.

Varthema's successors were the slave Joseph Pitts, who accompanied his Muslim master on the *ḥajj* in the seventeenth century, followed by John Lewis Burckhardt in the early nineteenth century and Sir Richard Burton in the 1850s.

Of the nineteenth century European *ḥajji*s, Sir Richard Burton has been the most studied. Burton himself was an interesting historical character beyond his pilgrimage of 1853.[5] Dane Kennedy has explored the eccentricities of Burton within the Victorian world stating that "his appetite for new experiences and curiosity about alien customs and beliefs caused him to range more widely in his inquiries into other lands and peoples than almost any other figure of his generation."[6] Thus, Burton attracts attention not only as a European *ḥajji* but as a prolific traveler whose adventures took him on expeditions on both sides of Africa and to Brazil as well as an avid intellectual who undertook the task of translating *One Thousand and One Nights* as well as the *Kama Sutra*. Burton, born in 1821, studied Arabic at Oxford and enlisted in the military as part of the 18th Bombay Light Infantry at twenty-one. Prior to his pilgrimage, he had previously passed as a Muslim under the disguise of the Arab-Persian Shi'i Mirza Abdullah in order to investigate the province of Sindh, now in modern Pakistan, which held one of the largest Muslim populations within British India, under the command of its governor Sir Charles Napier. He recorded his journey in his two-volume book *Scinde; or, The Unhappy Valley*

[5] Shortly after Burton's death in 1890, biographical works were written about his life like Thomas Wright's *The Life of Sir Richard Burton* (1906) and Walter Phelps Dodge's *The Real Sir Richard Burton* (1907) as well as one written by Isabel Burton, his wife, in 1893 entitled *The Life of Captain Sir Richard. F. Burton*. More recent scholarly work includes Mary S. Lovell's *A Rage to Live* (1998), Dane Kennedy's *The Highly Civilized Man* (2005), Ilija Trojanow's *Nomade auf Kontinenten* (2007), Ben Grant's *Postcolonialism, Psychoanalysis and Burton* (2009), and John Wallen's *New Perspectives on Sir Richard Burton* (2016).

[6] Dane Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 2.

in 1851, although he did not introduce the character of Mirza Abdullah to his readers until a year later in the postscript of his book entitled *Falconry in the Valley of the Indus*. He attempted to undertake the *ḥajj* as the Shi'a Mirza Abdullah, but quickly adapted to the persona of the Afghan Sunni Sheikh Abdullah, a doctor practicing in India, after realizing his mistake given the hostility towards Shi'is in the Sunni majority regions of Egypt and the Ottoman Empire.[7] He continued exploring after his *ḥajj*, travelling to Somalia in 1855 and Lake Tanganyika, the second largest lake in the world. From the 1860s onward, he served as British Consul in a variety of regions from Damascus to West Africa to Brazil. He died in 1890 and was buried in a tomb designed to resemble an Arab tent as he had asked his wife, Isabel, to do instead of cremation, reportedly stating "I don't want to burn before my time – but I would like to lie in an Arab tent."[8]

Following Burton, the second most studied traveler is likely John Lewis Burkhardt. Burkhardt undertook the pilgrimage in 1814 and his record was published posthumously in two volumes in 1829. Burkhardt, originally born in Basel, Switzerland, in 1784 ended up in England on political exile in the aftermath of the French Revolution. He learned Arabic at Cambridge and, during a visit to Malta in 1809, he first donned Middle Eastern style dress. By 1812, he embarked on a journey throughout the Ottoman Empire under

[7] Richard F. Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to al-Madinah and Meccah*, Volume I, edited by Isabel Burton (1866, repr. London: George Bell and Sons), 66-7. Burton's admission of this as a "mistake" has been called into question by Jon R. Godsall. Godsall argues that the knowledge of Shi'is being viewed as heretic in the Sunni world was common knowledge in the Victorian world, meaning that Burton certainly should have known better given his extensive background in studying Islam. See Godsall, "Fact and Fiction in Richard Burton's *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Mecca* (1855-6)" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3, no.3 (November 1993): 343.

[8] Qtd. In Trench, 162 and Lesley Blanch, *The Wilder Shores of Love* (1954, repr., London: BookBlast ePublishing, 2014), 126. It is difficult to ascertain if Richard Burton ever said this to Isabel as the line is uncited in both books. However, Isabel Burton described the making of this tomb in the fashion of an Arab tent in Isabel Burton, *The Life of Captain Sir Richard F. Burton*, ed. W. H. Wilkins (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), 540. She would join him there after her death in 1896.

the guise of Sheikh Ibrahim. After meandering through the Middle East—from Syria to Egypt—he arrived in Mecca in 1814, visiting Medina a while later. In 1815, Burckhardt returned to the Suez, extremely sick. He died in 1817 and was buried as Sheikh Ibrahim by a Scottish convert to Islam, Osman Effendi. Given Burckhardt death so soon after his pilgrimage, his account of it was published posthumously, like all the other accounts of his travels in the Middle East, as a two-volume set entitled *Travels in Arabia* in 1829.[9] Burkhardt, Burton, and Keane were not the only nineteenth century *ḥajji*s from Europe. One *ḥajji*, Osman Effendi, mentioned above, was a Scottish convert to Islam original named William Taylor who had been born in Perth in 1784. He served the military in Egypt in the early 1800s as a part of the British attempt to overthrow Muḥammad Ali. When his unit was defeated, Taylor became the slave of Geder Aga, who, after an attempt by Taylor to escape, gave him the choice to convert to Islam or die. Taylor obviously chose Islam and took on the name Osman. Eventually, Osman escaped from Geder Aga and ended up as a slave in Cairo to a Turk close to Muḥammad Alī Paşa. There, he reached out to the British Consulate for manumission. The consul, Henry Salt denied his request as Osman had abandoned Christianity and "turned Turk," an issue that will be further discussed below. Osman was ultimately freed by Muḥammad Alī in the 1810s and

[9] In addition to *Travels in Arabia*, these posthumous books included *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (1822), *Travels in Nubia* (1822), and *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahábys* (1830) were published. While there are practically no studies on Burckhardt alone, he is a part of practically every book regarding nineteenth century European travelers to the Middle East from Richard Trench's *Arabian Travelers* (1986) to more current scholarship exemplified by Geoffery Nash, *Travellers to the Middle East from Burckhardt to Thesiger: An Anthology* (2009).

accompanied Burckhardt on his travels in Arabia, performing the *ḥajj* for himself during this time.[10]

The "Tourist Turn" in European Ḥajjs and Travel Writing

Another *ḥajji* was the German Heinrich von Maltzan who met Burton in the Shepheard's Hotel in Jeddah when Burton was returning from Mecca and Medina as von Maltzan was preparing to begin his *ḥajj*.[11] Trench argues that during the von Maltzan's *ḥajj*, "Mecca had become a place for tourists, and von Maltzan's reactions . . . were those of a tourist."[12] Von Maltzan was followed by a British "tourist," Herman Bicknell. Bicknell, unlike Burton, Burkhardt, and von Maltzan, chose "proclaim his [true] nationality" instead of donning a disguise and "reduce[d] the most sacred shrine of Islam to the dimensions of his home in the suburb of Norwood."[13] In a letter to the editor of *The Times* (London), he, signing his name as "Haji Muhammad 'Abd Ul Wahid", gave an account of his pilgrimage, adding at the end that:

> In penning these lines I am anxious to encourage other Englishmen, especially those from India, to perform the pilgrimage, without being deterred by exaggerated reports concerning the perils of the enterprise . . . . An Englishman who is significantly conversant with the prayers, formulas, and customs of the Mussulman . . . apprehend[s] no danger if he applies through the British Consulate at Cairo for an introduction to the Amir Ḥajj, the Prince of the Caravan.[14]

[10] See Jason Thompson, "Osman Effendi: A Scottish Convert to Islam in Early Nineteenth-Century Egypt" *Journal of World History* 5, no.1 (Spring 1994): 99-123.

[11] Trench, 91.

[12] Trench, 92.

[13] Trench, 93.

[14] Haji Muhammad'Abdul Ul Wahid [Herman Bicknell], "The Mecca Pilgrimage," *The Times* (London), August 25, 1862, 9. This account, the only extant one regarding Bicknell's *hajj*, was reprinted in the later

Here, Bicknell best describes how the once inaccessible pilgrimage had effectively become a potential tourist attraction for adventurous Europeans. He goes on to recommend others use the same guide he did, adding that the guide had agreed to treat other English travelers with the same civility Bicknell received.[15]

Concomitant to this rise in exploration in Arabia and direct, occupation-based colonialism and the intrusion of European commerce in new areas of the globe was also a rise in the writing of books recounting such journeys.[16] Moreover, travel writing and exploration in the nineteenth century took on a new form. According to Dane Kennedy, "exploration . . . assumed a more privileged status as an agent of knowledge, wealth, and power than ever before. Intellectual curiosity . . . supplied an important impetus for many for many of the probes into unfamiliar lands."[17] We can see how this curiosity would drive some Europeans like Burckhardt, Burton, and Keane to attempt the *ḥajj* in order to gain access to what was supposed to be off limits for them. In this, exploration in the Hijaz took a different form than other nineteenth century forms. While Bicknell's journey was only recorded in one article in *The Times* of London, Keane recorded his *ḥajj* more extensively thus making him fit within the new world of Hijaz tourism and late

editions of Burton's *Personal Narrative*, surprisingly without comment. See Appendix VIII in *Personal Narrative*, Vol II, 409-414.

[15] Haji Muhammad'Abdul Ul Wahid [Herman Bicknell], "The Mecca Pilgrimage," *The Times* (London), August 25, 1862, 9.

[16] Leask, *Curiosity and the Aesthetics of Travel Writing, 1770-1840: 'From an Antique Land'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 15.

[17] Kennedy, "British Exploration in the Nineteenth Century: A Historiographical Survey" *History Compass* 5, no.6 (2007): 1879.

nineteenth century travel writing. While Bicknell's short account represents the "tourist turn" in European *ḥajj*s, Keane provides a complete picture.

As the Hijaz remained under the auspices of the Ottoman Empire through the early twentieth century, these British explorer-writers were not attempting to claim the lands of Mecca and Medina in a physical manner. However, as Richard Phillips points out, Keane's position as the beneficiary of the British Empire's hegemony in undertaking the pilgrimage was "a kind of corollary to the coloniser's economic plunder."[18] Burton and Keane both took away financial gain from their journeys and, in allowing non-Muslim Europeans access to the restricted and most holy spaces of Islam, performed a form of intellectual colonialism of the Hijaz. Roy Bridges describes such explorations as a form of British travel narratives from the nineteenth centuries. Such exploration stood in tandem with explorations of other Eastern states that were never formally colonized like Japan and inland China among others. Exploration of the Ottoman Empire served important imperial interests given the British occupation of the Indian subcontinent and rule over its Muslim population as discussed below. However, in general, these explorations of non-colonized states provide some of "the classic examples of what Edward Said calls 'Orientalism' – interpreting the East in order to dominate it."[19] This European penchant for exploration was not lost on these Christian *ḥajji*s, albeit one would not expect them to reflect too heavily on the implications of these explorations.

[18] John Phillips, "Lagging Behind: Bhabha, Post-colonial Theory and the Future," in *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit* (London: Zed Books, 1999), 64.

[19] Roy Bridges, "Exploration and travel outside Europe (1720-1914)," in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, eds. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 63.

This European superiority in exploration penetrates Keane's writings as well as the historical context of his *ḥajj*.

Increased Mobility in the Indian Ocean World

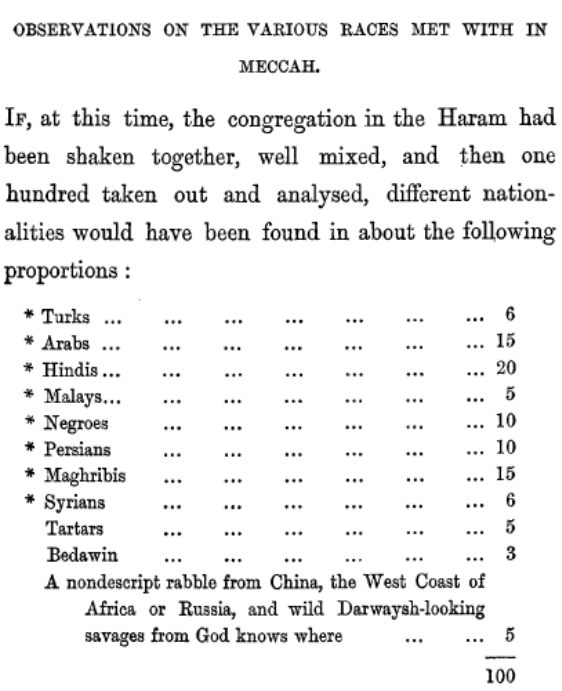
It is nearly impossible to discuss the *ḥajj* in the late nineteenth century without a basic understanding of how Britain's colonization of and hegemony in the Indian Ocean facilitated the pilgrimage. By the time of Keane's pilgrimage in 1877, British power in the region extended from Aden in the west and Malaya and Sarawak in the east with its crown jewel of India in the middle.[20] The East India Company made an early foray into Arabia by establishing agents in Jeddah and with several other Red Sea ports, who in 1838 were promoted to the status of vice-consul by the British Foreign Office. In the following year, the British occupied Aden which was incorporated into the empire as a protectorate. Slight describes these moves as resulting from the British need for a port through which they could better protect and facilitate their trade routes to and from India.[21] Britons themselves recognized the regional hegemony they held throughout the nineteenth century with *The Times* of London declaring in 1879 that the Persian Gulf was "for all practical purposes an English lake."[22] This hegemony came with the unintended result that, alongside the Ottoman Empire, the British controlled the majority of the Muslim population of the 1800s. Indian scholar Moulavi Cheragh Ali underscored this point when he wrote in 1883 that "[t]he British Empire is the greatest Mohammadean

[20] John Slight, *The British Empire and the Hajj, 1865-1956* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 326n5.

[21] Slight, *The British Empire and the Hajj*, 67.

[22] "The Persian Gulf," *The Times* (London), October 23, 1879, 8.

Power in the world."[23] However, not all Westerners perceived the empire as such. Wilfred Blunt remarked in his 1882 survey of Islam that other Europeans viewed the Ottoman Empire as the sole polity within the Islamic world, explaining to his readers that when viewing the populations coming through Jeddah on the *ḥajj* one can see the wide geographic and ethnic spread of the Muslim world of which the Ottoman Empire was only one part.[24]



OBSERVATIONS ON THE VARIOUS RACES MET WITH IN MECCAH.

If, at this time, the congregation in the Haram had been shaken together, well mixed, and then one hundred taken out and analysed, different nationalities would have been found in about the following proportions :

* Turks	6
* Arabs	15
* Hindis	20
* Malays...	5
* Negroes	10
* Persians	10
* Maghribis	15
* Syrians	6
Tartars	5
Bedawin	3
A nondescript rabble from China, the West Coast of Africa or Russia, and wild Darwaysh-looking savages from God knows where	5
	100

Figure 1 - Keane's estimation of the origins of the pilgrims in Mecca during his *ḥajj*, in *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol I, 87.

Regardless of perceptions, the more the British increased their imperial holdings in the Indian Ocean world, the more they became entangled, intentional or not, with the yearly *ḥajj*. Throughout the early nineteenth century, the same regularized ship routes that the British developed in the region to suit their own means, imperial and capitalist, also served to facilitate the *ḥajj*. Michael Low describes the resultant transformation of the *ḥajj* as a shift from the pilgrimage being "confined mainly to elite officials, wealthy merchants, and the 'ulama" to a "modern' ḥajj . . . accessible to Muslims of modest

[23] Moulavi Cheragh Ali, *The Political Social and Legal Reforms in the Ottoman Empire and Other Mohammadan States,* (Bombay: Education Society's Press, 1883), i.

[24] Wilfred Scawen Blunt, *The Future of Islam* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1882), 8.

means."[25] Even disregarding the British hegemony over the sea, a large portion of pilgrims came from its Empire. In 1880, Blunt estimated there were 15,000 pilgrims from India undertaking the *ḥajj* that year which constituted the second largest group after the 20,000 Muslims from the Hijaz.[26] Similarly, Keane placed Indian Muslims as majority of pilgrims in Mecca as seen in Figure 1. To the British, however, this accessibility came with two major concerns that came into full view in the 1860s: the spread of infectious diseases like cholera and the headache of "pauper pilgrims" who undertook the *ḥajj* under a one-way ticket and ran out of funds to return to their homes.[27] The issue of disease came to a head in the cholera epidemic of 1865. This epidemic resulted in the death of around 15,000 pilgrims and spread to Europe and the United States via Egypt where many pilgrims returned through the Suez ultimately killing over 200,000 people worldwide.[28] To combat future epidemic, the 1866 International Sanitary Conference in Istanbul to put in place anti-cholera methods like quarantine stations en route to and from the *ḥajj* and the requirement that the Ottoman Empire establish better hygiene controls in Mecca itself.[29] These stations would be administered by Ottoman officials with the oversight of doctors from Europe.[30] However, even within the issue of circumventing the spread of diseases like cholera, British officials were still haunted by the issue of

[25] Michael Christopher Low, "Empire and the Hajj: Pilgrims, Plagues, and Pan-Islam under British Surveillance, 1865-1908" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no.2 (May 2008): 270.

[26] Blunt, *The Future of Islam*, 10.

[27] Low, "The Empire and the Hajj," 270; Slight, *The British Empire and the Hajj*, 15-16 and 69.

[28] Low, "The Empire and the Hajj," 270; Slight, *The British Empire and the Hajj*, 78.

[29] Slight, *The British Empire and the Hajj*, 78.

[30] Mark Harrison, "Quarantine, pilgrimage, and colonial trade: India 1866-1900" *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 29, no. 2 (1992): 119.

"destitute pilgrims." In 1866, the British Cholera Commissioners reported to the Secretary of state for Foreign Affairs, Lord Stanley, that such pilgrims were part of the problem that required attention in order to avert "such disastrous scenes" like the recent epidemic.[31]

This problem had been noted by earlier British travelers to the region. In 1857, traveler James Hamilton described the presence of the "destitute pilgrims" in Jeddah:

> A most unpleasing sight to the English eye are the crowds of poor Indians, who litter the street like dogs . . . and heaps of filthy rags form their household furniture . . . . These Indians are pilgrims who have returned here from Mecca, but being destitute of means to continue their journey live on alms, a life of squalid idleness . . . . Such English subjects do little honour to our name.[32]

Hamilton then critiques the Government of India for not "taking the means to prevent this annual addition made to this colony of beggars," lauding the sole efforts Jeddah's British vice-consul Charles Cole who had arranged for the free passage home for 6,000 of these pilgrims.[33] Ultimately, Hamilton argued that, because of British power in the region best seen through the prominence of Indian trade in the Hijaz, the Government of India had to take a more active role in controlling the *ḥajj* and its pilgrims.[34] Burton also noted the presence of these indigent *ḥajji*s during his pilgrimage. He related to his readers the story of one pilgrim who spent all he had to reach Mecca and Medina leaving him unable to afford a return trip to his homeland. He added that this pilgrim's story "is too often the

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[31] British Cholera Commissioners (Edward Goodeve and E.D. Dickson) to Lord Stanley, October 3, 1866, 4-7, PC 1/2672 TNA, qtd. in Slight, *The British Empire and the* Hajj, 79.

[32] James Hamilton, *Sinai, the Hedjaz, and Soudan: Wanderings around the Birth-Place of the Prophet and across the Æthiopian Desert from Sawakin to Chartum* (London: Richard Bentley, 1857), 55-56.

[33] Hamilton, 55-6; Slight, 77.

[34] Hamilton, 79; Slight, 72.

history of those wretches whom a fit of religious enthusiasm, likest to insanity, hurries away to the Holy Land."[35] Like Hamilton, he argued that the Government of India should take a keen interest in the plight of these pilgrims and empower the vice-consul with regards to this problem.[36] Keane himself had an encounter with a "destitute pilgrim" describing that once the price of a return ticket to India from Jeddah, he "got hold of an old Hindi beggar, and sent him to the [Consulate] office to take out a ticket in my name, and gave him a rupee for his pains."[37]

Separating Keane from Burton and Burckhardt was the opening of the Suez Canal. Valeska Huber has studied this Canal "as a nodal point and lynchpin of various forms of mobility" in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[38] While Keane himself did not travel through the Suez on his way to or from the *ḥajj*, it stands as a representation of the growing interconnectedness of the Indian Ocean with the world around it. Huber herself mentions that the Canal developed alongside other achievements of increased connectivity in the nineteenth century like the American transcontinental railroad.[39] Further, it represents the encroaching British imperialism on the Muslim pilgrimage as their officials attempted to regulate the *ḥajj* for reasons related to epidemics and Indian pilgrims who found themselves without a way back home from Jeddah. Thus, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 brought the empire even closer to the Hijaz. Starting

[35] Burton, *Personal Pilgrimage*, Vol 2, 185.

[36] Burton, *Personal Pilgrimage*, Vol 2, 186.

[37] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol II, 172.

[38] Valeska Huber, *Channeling Mobilities: Migration and Globalization in the Suez Canal Region and Beyond, 1869-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1.

[39] Huber, *Channelling Mobilities*, 10.

that year, the British began publishing an annual pilgrimage report, albeit a very short one, in order to identify and quantify the problems they faced from the *ḥajj*.[40] Further controls came with the 1870 Native Passenger Ships Act passed by the British Indian government which sought to curtail the overcrowding that occurred on ships, especially during the *ḥajj* season. Further, it gave British officials the power to fine or otherwise punish ship captains who did not abide by the Act.[41] This act, although not mentioned within the document itself, ostensibly had the intention of reducing the likelihood of disease transmission as well as, perhaps unintentionally, limiting the number of pilgrims which in theory would simultaneously help resolve the issue of "destitute pilgrims."

In the mid-1870s, just before Keane's pilgrimage, the newly appointed vice-consul George Beyts made solving this problem a higher priority. In 1876, in a letter to the Foreign Affairs Secretary Lord Stanley, he related that "[t]hese poor ignorant fanatics become doomed to a certain death unless relieved by charity. These unfortunate miserable squalid creatures lay in hundreds before the British Consulate starving and dying."[42] Beyts took it upon himself to provide transport home for some pilgrims at his own expense while simultaneously pressuring the British Raj to do the same. Ultimately, the Government of India settled on non-intervention. Slight recounts that their policy was to "simply publish the pilgrimage's cost and emphasize the difficulties pilgrims would face if their failed to take this amount" the distribution of which was solely "the

[40] Slight, 80-1.

[41] "The Native Passenger Ship Act, 1870" in Gideon Colquhoun Sconce, *The Legislative Acts of the Governor-General of India in Council of 1870* (Calcutta, Thacker, Spink and Co., 1871), 95-108.

[42] Capt. G. Beyts, Consul, Jeddah, to Earl of Derby, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, December 1, 1876, Foreign Department, General—A, 1877, No. 125-192, NAI, qtd. in Slight, *The British Empire and the Hajj*, 84.

responsibility of "respectable" Indian Muslims and Islamic associations" as the government did not want to directly aid these "destitute pilgrims" lest it "encourage more poor pilgrims to go on Ḥajj."[43] The most direct method the British used was sending Dr. Abdur Razzack, a surgeon with the Bengal Medical Service, to undergo the *ḥajj* from 1878 to 1882 in order to monitor the health situation in Mecca.[44] Given the problems the British encountered regarding the *ḥajj*, it is no wonder why Keane related that Beyts attempted to talk him out of undertaking the pilgrimage when Keane met with him before embarking for Mecca.[45] However, at the same time, it was the advances in mobility in the Indian Ocean world caused by British hegemony in the region that made Keane's visit possible. Robert Irwin argues that, given the above described involvement of the British empire with the *ḥajj*, "[b]y the late nineteenth century . . . it is only a slight exaggeration to describe the Ḥajj as it was then as a ritual of the British empire, comparable to durbars and receptions at the British embassies on the Queen's birthday."[46] Similarly, in his study of the Southeast Asian pilgrimage to Mecca, Eric Tagliacozzo describes that "by the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the circuits [of pilgrims] had become quite large," ultimately "connecting the fare poles of the Indian Ocean's shores in an increasingly complex embrace."[47] With this historical scene set, it is now time to turn to

[43] Slight, *The British Empire and the Hajj*, 86.

[44] Slight, "British Colonial Knowledge and the Hajj in the Age of Empire," in *The Hajj and Europe in the Age of Empire*, ed. Umar Ryad (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 90.

[45] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol 1, 3.

[46] Robert Irwin, "Journey to Mecca: A History (Part 2)," in *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam*, ed. Venetia Porter (London: British Museum Press, 2012), 204.

[47] Eric Tagliacozzo, *The Longest Journey: Southeast Asians and the Pilgrimage to Mecca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 6.

our adventurous protagonist.

Six Months in the Hijaz

John F.T. Keane

John Fryer Thomas Keane was born on October 4, 1854, in Whitby, a port town located in Yorkshire in the north of England. His father, Reverend William Keane, originally from Ireland, moved to India in 1846 to work as a missionary in St. Paul's Cathedral in Calcutta. He later moved to Madras, serving as chaplain to the city's bishop, and there met his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Madras council member John Fryer Thomas. In 1852, Reverend Keane moved back to England, working first in London then moving to Whitby to serve as the Perpetual Curate, a type of parish priest, in 1853. John Keane's relationship with his father was, at best, strained. Keane described himself as a rambunctious child who had essentially been expelled from a private school and spent many nights out in the wilderness where he found "security in loneliness."[48] Keane even noted that he attempted to change his behavior after being sent by his "stern, hopeful father" to work on a brig for some time and afterward, attempting to encourage this seeming change of heart, sent him southward to East Ridding to study with a private tutor.[49] This was to no avail. Self-described as "incorrigible," Keane made the decision to head out to sea at the age of twelve.[50] About ten years later, having become bored with life at sea, he moved to Istanbul and, for a time, found work in the Ottoman military.

[48] John F. Keane, *On Blue-Water: Some Narratives of Sport and Adventure in the Modern Merchant Service* (London: Tinsley Brothers 1883), 42-3.

[49] Keane, *On Blue-Water*, 44.

[50] Keane, *On Blue-Water*, 44.

From there, we would head off for the *ḥajj* in 1877 and headed to Mumbai (Bombay) after its conclusion in 1878.

Post- *ḥajj*, he returned to Britain, studying medicine at Edinburgh and writing his first book retelling his travels in the Hijaz. Ultimately, however, Keane ended up back out on the high seas travelling around the world from Brazil to China. He followed up his first book with two more, *On Blue-Water* (1883) which covered his life at sea from when he was twelve to his arrival in Istanbul and *Three Years of a Wanderer's Life* (1887) regarding his post-*ḥajj* life. In the 1890s, he spent his time exploring the interior of Australia, remained there until his death on September 1, 1937 at the age of 82. His legacy as a European *ḥajji* remained with him even almost sixty years later as several obituaries included his faux Indian-Muslim identity of Ḥajj Mohammed Amin.[51]

Historiography of John F. T. Keane

After discussing the "tourist turn" in European *ḥajj*s following Bicknell's pilgrimage, Trench moves beyond the Hijaz, claiming that "Mecca had been in invaded by tourists, but there were still 'huge white blots' on the map of Arabia," and ignoring almost entirely Keane's contribution to the history of European *ḥajji*s.[52] Thus, within the historiography, Keane is often no more than a side note, if mentioned at all. His writings are cited simply to support the arguments scholars are making about the writings of other European

[51] See Facey, "Introduction," *Six Months in the Hijaz*, 7-36; "Deaths," *The Times* (London), November 23, 1937, 1; "Mr. J. F. Keane," *The Times* (London), November 23, 1937, 19; "KEANE, John Fryer Thomas (All Hajj Mohammud Amin), *Who Was Who*, Volume III, 1929-1940 (Calcutta: Adam and Charles Black, 1941), 734.

[52] Trench, 95. In addition to Trench's work *Arabian Travellers*, William Facey has written a more recent article on European *hajji*s. See Facey, "Pilgrim Pioneers: Britons on Hajj before 1940," in *The Hajj: Collected Essays*, eds. Venetia Porter and Liana Saif (London: British Museum Press, 2013), 122-130.

travelers or the nineteenth century *ḥajj* in general. Trent's *Arabian Travellers* only mentions Keane once in relation to von Maltzan, a contemporary of Burton's, noting that von Maltzan did not mention the 'Lady Venus' like Keane did. Of course, in this Trent flattens the time between Keane and von Maltzan's travels. Von Maltzan had arrived in the Hejaz in 1860 while Keane sojourned there a decade later.[53] Given the 'Lady Venus's' claim to have been kidnapped during the 1857 Indian Rebellion, it seems less likely that von Maltzan should have ran into her as Keane did.

However, even more recent scholarship leaves Keane within the margins of history. In F.E. Peters tome on the *ḥajj*, he devotes a chapter to European travelers in the nineteenth century. However, Keane serves only as supporting evidence for Peters' larger arguments as opposed to the more expansive discussion of Burton and Burckhardt. Here, he inserts an excerpt from Keane's writings regarding his disguise to prove the lessening need for a disguise as Europeans slowly encroached upon the Hejaz with the growing number of foreign consulates in Jeddah as he claims Keane had "apparently only the flimsiest pretenses toward disguise."[54] Keane receives wider treatment in Peters' book on Mecca but, again, he is only used as supporting evidence. At one point, Peters quotes Keane regarding the need for flood control in the city and later to present a picture of late nineteenth century Mecca.[55] In one of the most recent works on the subject in general, Geoffrey Nash's *Travellers to the Middle East from Burckhardt to Thesiger: An*

[53] Trench, 91.

[54] Peters, *The Hajj*, 219.

[55] F.E. Peters, *Mecca: A Literary History of the Muslim Holy Land* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 137-140 and 339-340.

Anthology, Keane merits no mention whatsoever.[56] Ultimately, Augustus Ralli gave more attention to Keane in 1909 than the majority of historians of European *ḥajj*is do today demonstrating how his importance has been lost over time.[57]

There are three notable exceptions to this marginalization within the historiography. The first is Michael Wolfe, an American convert to Islam, who edited a volume of travelogues written by various pilgrims from 1050 to 1990 entitled *One Thousand Roads to Mecca: Ten Centuries of Travelers Writing about the Muslim Pilgrimage*. Here, Keane receives his own chapter, two after Burton's, with a three-page introduction by Wolfe followed by a twenty-eight-page excerpt from his book. While Wolfe labels Burton as a pilgrim from Great Britain, he describes Keane as an "Anglo-Indian" which is factually incorrect as Keane was born in England.[58] Other issues with Wolfe's introduction include stating that Keane was the "[son] of a senior canon at Calcutta's Anglican cathedral" which was not his father's post at the time of his birth or while he was growing up and that "he arrived in the Hijaz at the thirty-two" while Keane, having been born in 1854, would have been in his early twenties when he undertook the *ḥajj* in the late 1870s.[59] The second study is one by M. D. Allen, professor of English at the University of Wisconsin, regarding Keane's tales about the 'Lady Venus' included as part of an edited volume.[60]

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[56] Geoffery Nash, *Travellers to the Middle East from Burckhardt to Thesiger: An Anthology* (London: Anthem Press, 2009).

[57] See Augustus Ralli, "John Fryer Keane, 1877-8 (Haj Mohammed Amin), in *Christians at Mecca* (London: William Heinemann, 1909), 204-222

[58] Wolfe, 245. "Mr. J. F. Keane: Gifts and Adventure," *The Times* (London), November 23, 1937, 19.

[59] Wolfe, 245.

[60] M.D. Allen, "The Curious Affair of the Lady Venus," in *Shaw and Other Matters: A Festschrift for Stanley Weintraub on the Occasion of his Forty-Second Anniversary at the Pennsylvania University*, edited by Susan Rusinko (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1998): 110-120.

Allen takes issue with Keane's claims to have meet an Englishwoman in Mecca, known to him as the "Lady Venus," who had be forcibly moved there by an Indian Muslim in the aftermath of the Indian Rebellion of 1857**.** The issue of Keane and the "Lady Venus" will comprise an entire subsection towards the end of this thesis. The final, and most recent, scholarly work regarding Keane is William Facey's introduction to Barazan Publishing's 2006 facsimile reprint of Keane's *Six Months in the Hijaz*. In this introduction, Facey provides the most up-to-date and factually accurate biography of Keane as well as placing him within the history of other European *ḥajjis.*[61]

Overview of Keane's Journey

While Keane only gives the reader the indication that he underwent the *ḥajj* in a six-month period starting in 1877 and ended in 1878, it occured during December 1877 when the month of *Dhū'l-Ḥijjah* 1294 AH started ending in early January 1878.[62] The 2006 Barzan Publishing reprint of Keane's work entitled *Six Months in the Hijaz* was originally published in 1881 as two volumes. Volume I was *Six Months in Mecca* while volume II was entitled *My Journey to Medina*.[63] Keane's chronicling of his *ḥajj* starts almost *in medias res*. He starts in Mecca, with a discussion of how he arrived at the *ḥajj* and ended up attaching himself to the entourage of an Indian Amir headed on the *ḥajj*

[61] Facey includes the same information in his article "Pilgrim Pioneers: Britons on Hajj before 1940" in *The Hajj: Collected Essays*.

[62] Conversion between Gregorian to *Hijri* done through the converter provided by Islamic Philosophy Online. <http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/calconv/hijri.htm> According to this converter, *Dhū'l-Ḥijjah* 1294 AH started on December 7, 1877 and ended on January 5, 1878.

[63] For reasons of clarity, I will simply refer to Keane's two works as *Six Months in the Hijaz* denoting the difference between *Six Months in Mecca* and *My Journey to Medina* as simply Volume I and Volume II respectively.

from Jeddah slowly developed throughout the entire first chapter of volume I. In the rest of *Six Months in Mecca*, Keane chronicles the variety of people he encountered (chapter IV), having already introduced the character of Lady Venus as an Englishwoman residing in Mecca in chapter II, along with other aspects of Mecca life, leaving one chapter out of seven to the actual pilgrimage itself (chapter VI). In his conclusion, he attempts to defend himself from potential attacks regarding the Lady Venus. Volume II, *Journey to Medinah*, starts as exactly that. Picking up from where he left off in Mecca, Keane devotes the first five chapters of this volume to a discussion of his travel from Mecca to Medina. Only two chapters (VI and VII) concern Medina itself. The remainder of the book details Keane's journey back to India through Mecca and Jeddah. Like with volume I, he ends with more information regarding the Lady Venus.

Keane's Relationship with Burckhardt and Burton

Keane was, as seen above, not the first and especially not the most famous Victorian Englishman to journey to Mecca and Medina and publish his venture in a book. Keane, thus, acknowledged his predecessors, stating in the preface to Volume I, that book is intended:

> for the benefit of those who may not have had the leisure, or perhaps the inclination, to read the complete and exhaustive descriptions of the same scenes in the volumes of the well-known Swiss traveller, Johan Ludwig Burckhardt (Shaykh Ḥajj Ibrahim) and of the better-known learned traveller and author, Captain R. F. Burton (Shaykh Ḥajj Abdallah).[64]

[64] Keane, "Preface," *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol 1, no pg.

Comparing Burton's *Personal Narrative* and Burckhardt's *Travels in Arabia* to Keane's *Six Months in the Hijaz,* it is abundantly clear that Keane's predecessors took a more academic approach to their *ḥajj*s. The shear difference in volume of content between the two works is telling. Readers of Burton must wait until volume II of *Personal Narrative* for Burton to even reach Mecca. Volume I instead focuses on the beginning of Burton's journey from Cairo to Medina. Along the way, he makes chapter long interludes to instruct the reader on various topics like the history of the region or the nature of the Bedouin of Arabia. Once in Medina, he began his work of documenting practically everything he could about his visits to the various holy sites contained within the city. This documentation is replete with various diagrams allowing his readers to actively visualize the sacred spaces. Once Burton regales his readers about his experiences in Mecca, he repeats the same process regarding Medina. Burckhardt took a similar approach to the point that Peters' claims that he "was possibly the best reporter on the East in the course of the entire nineteenth century."[65]

A further difference in detail is that, in both Burckhardt and Burton's recollections, the reader is entreated to a timeline of their travels throughout the Hijaz. We know, for example, that Burckhardt arrived in Jedda on July 15, 1814 and left Arabia via the port of Yanbu' on May 15, 1815.[66] Likewise, Burton's Arabian journey began in Yanbu' on July 11, 1853 and he arrived in Mecca on September 11, 1853.[67] Yet, we get

[65] Peters, *The Hajj*, 207.

[66] John Lewis Burckhardt, *Travels in Arabia: Comprehending an Account of Those Territories in the Hedjaz which the Mohammedans Regard as Sacred,* ed. William Ouseley (London: Henry Colburn), Vol I, 1 and Vol II, 341.

[67] Burton, *Personal Narrative*, Vol I, 207 and Vol II, 154.

no such detail from Keane outside of the fact that his journey occurred in 1877 and 1878. This difference between Keane and his predecessors did not go unnoticed in the reviews of his book. Two of *The Literary World*'s major issues with Keane's writing were "its 'slangliness' [and] its rather crude arrangement of material."[68] Further, its reviewer argued that

> [W]e have found Mr. Keane's book at trifle disappointing. Had he been the first to perform the pilgrimage to Meccah in disguise, the faults of style, and the defects of his book might have been overlooked; but seeing that he follows in the wake of such an accomplished man as Captain Burton.[69]

Here, it is clear that Keane's work would live in the shadow of Burton's *Personal Narrative,* in both style and the fact that he was not the first European *ḥajji* to return from the Hijaz and tell his tale.

Certainly, Keane was no Burton or Burckhardt. Where his predecessors had entered Arabia with a background in Arabic and Arab culture, Keane could only draw upon his varied experiences as a sailor in the Indian Ocean and what he had learned from his father's time in India. He cites these experiences as a defense against critics who claimed his lack of experience meant he did not go on the *ḥajj* at all. He claimed his father, "the Rev. William Keane, for many years senior canon of the Cathedral, Calcutta, [was] perhaps one of the best speakers of native dialects in Indian" adding "I have spent seven years of my life among Mohammedans, and at one time I served three years as office on board a ship carrying a Mohammedan crew" which was "quite sufficient to give

[68] "Six Months in Mecca," in *The Literary World: Choice Readings from the Best New Books, and Critical Review,*, Vol. XXIII, January to June 1881 (London; James Clark & Co., 1881), 293.

[69] "Six Months in Mecca," in *The Literary World,* Vol. XXIII, 293.

me a thorough knowledge of Mohammedan language and customs."[70] The experience Keane claims came from when, at the age of twelve, he ran away from home after being expelled in all but name from school, seeking a life of adventure on the high seas.[71] He took to being a ship's boy for four years for which he paid thirty pounds for the pleasure, receiving only one penny a month in wages.[72] Sometime after his service as a ship's boy, he travelled for three years on a variety of ships. It was this adventuring spirit that led him to undertake the *ḥajj*.

Keane's Adventuring Spirit

Keane mentions that, should a non-Muslim want to travel to the Hijaz, for reasons of "curiosity, gain, or for adventure" they would need to "conform to the customs and habits of a Mohammedan."[73] This line unveils Keane's reasons for attempt the *ḥajj*, or at least what he claimed them to be at the time. He made no overt overtones to create a detailed account of a pilgrimage like Burton or Burkhardt which calls into question any academic reasons for his *ḥajj*. British historian Robert Irwin remarked, after reading Barzan Publishing's twenty-first century reprint of both volumes, that "one gets the that he did [the *ḥajj*] for the hell of it."[74] However, in his later work, *Three Years of a*

[70] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol II, 211.

[71] Keane, *On Blue-Water*, 42-3.

[72] Keane, *On Blue-Water*, 42.

[73] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol 1, 14-5.

[74] Robert Irwin, Review of John F. Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz: Journeys to Makkah and Medinah, 1877-1878* (1881; repr., Manchester: Barzan Publishing, 2006), *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17, no.3 (July 2007): 329.

Wanderer's Life, he described the last years of his life as a young sailor before his *ḥajj* as "the least eventful of any in my career," he quit sailing and headed for Istanbul.[75] There, he decided to embark upon the *ḥajj*. Later, he would describe his intentions as purely a way to achieve his ultimate goal in his life—working in Papua New Guinea:

> In every act of my life I hitherto I had been influenced solely by considerations as to its bearing on a future career in that quarter of the world . . . . I had performed the fearfully risky pilgrimage to Mecca with but one purpose; and that was, by performing a feat to bring my name forward as a capable traveller, it would stand me in good stead as recommendation for the support and means I should require to advance my long-cherished designs on Papua.[76]

It is unclear, however, if this was in fact the true reason for Keane's pilgrimage as his longing for Papua is not mentioned in any of his previous works. At most, Keane claimed that his "pilgrimage to Mecca was no rash experiment or accident, but the outcome of a long-cherished project."[77] Yet, this claim comes out in response to critics who argued he had not undergone the pilgrimage at all. Facey comes to the conclusion that his reasoning for undergoing the *ḥajj* in *Three Years of a Wanderer's Life* was a later fabrication, labeling Keane's admission as "hard to take . . . too seriously."[78] Further, he discusses earlier in *Three Years* that, immediately after his pilgrimage his studied medicine at the Edinburgh University for three years until he ended up in poverty which made "necessity . . . an incitement which has kept me running ever since, even without a goal."[79] Thus,

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[75] Keane, *On Blue-Water*, 174.

[76] Keane, *Three Years of a Wanderer's Life,* Vol 1, 87-88.

[77] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol II, 211.

[78] Facey, "Introduction," *Six Months in the Hijaz*, 31.

[79] Keane, *Three Years of a Wanderer's Life*, Vol I, 3.

one can only conclude that Keane, in the words of Irwin citied above, performed the *ḥajj* "for the hell of it."

Keane's penchant for fanciful retelling of his adventures is also demonstrated in his scandalous tale of "Lady Venus," an Englishwoman in supposedly residing in Mecca since the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8. The tale begins in the second chapter of Volume I when while in Mecca, Keane befriended "a chatty old barber" who "casually remarked . . ., 'There is an Englishwoman in Mecca, 'The Lady Venus' by name."[80] Keane retorted that she was probably only half English, but the barber insisted that she was a true Englishwoman.[81] Keane translates her name as the "The Lady Venus" in what he considered to be a "literal translation of "Begum Zarah," the name by which she was known in Mecca."[82] Keane then made it his mission to find this woman and ascertain the details of her life. He met with her the next day, using a Moulvi [or *mawlawī*, an Indian expert in the law], to translate between them as Keane wanted to maintain his Indian Muslim persona. From this interview, Keane learned "that she had been amongst Mohammedans since 1858" and that, after a thirty-minute interview, he had "satisfied myself . . . that she was a real, educated Englishwoman."[83]

A few days later, Keane met her again and was able to talk to her in private in the home of one of her Muslim Indian friends. There, he recalled that they allowed themselves to relax:

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[80] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol I, 38.

[81] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol I, 39.

[82] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol II, 211. For reasons of clarity, I will use Keane's transliteration of her name rather than a more accurate one which will be discussed below.

[83] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol I, 44.

> What a talk we had! How we let loose our English tongues! Sometimes we laughed wildly, sometimes she cried. It must have been a pleasure for her to hear and talk her native language after so many years . . . . We had three hours of this, and then the old Hindi [Indian Muslim], and we thought it time to be going. Before parting she raised her veil and showed me her face, which was as English as my own.[84]

He would meet her several times more, once at Mount Arafat and again after the *ḥajj* had ended.[85] During one of these last visits, "Lady Venus" asked Keane for any English books he had, adding that "she had part of an old almanac . . . which she had come across in Meccah, and horded up ever since."[86] Keane had no books to give her, but did pass her a note with his real name and address in England. However, she also revealed to him in his longest interview with her that her last name had been "Macintosh" and that she was from Devonshire. During the Indian Mutiny of 1857, she had been in Lucknow and fell in – whether through force or choice Keane could not ascertain – with a Muslim man with whom she eventually moved to Mecca. After his death several years later, she went to work for a local merchant as a translator.[87] Their final meeting occurred just before Keane left with the Amir's retinue heading off to Medina. During this he offered her a proposition: "If I come back for you will you go to England with me? To which she replied "Yes," later replying to his discussion of how well she could fare in England, "How you talk!"[88]

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[84] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol I, 55.

[85] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol I, 144 and 188.

[86] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol I, 188.

[87] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol I, 172.

[88] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol I, 200-1.

Upon his return to England, Keane got the attention of the British Foreign Office regarding this Englishwoman residing in Mecca. As such, British officials sent a Muslim agent into Mecca to ascertain the veracity of his claims, "they," he writes, "found my statements of her existence and locality correct."[89] Yet, this leaves open the question of her heritage. Even Keane expresses some doubts, remarking that "[w]hether she is really an English lady . . . is open to doubt."[90] By the time the Muslim agent reached Mecca, "Lady Venus" had moved on to India. British officials caught up with her there and the wife of the district magistrate of Aligarh, W. T. Martin, interviewed her. Keane includes in his conclusion to Volume I a transcript of the magistrate's letter to the Foreign Office. Here, the magistrate claims that the lady his wife interviewed was, in fact, Keane's "Lady Venus." However, the official went on to add that in the interview she denied Keane's story that "she is an Englishwoman who was ravished from her friends during the Mutiny [and] forced to turn Mohammedan."[91] Instead, she claimed that, after the Munity, she moved to Mecca with her husband who died a few years later. Despite her claim of not actually being an Englishwoman, she added that "[s]he was always known as an Englishwoman in Meccah," likely stemming from her work as a translator for some Meccan merchants and, ultimately, the magistrate concluded that "it is difficult if not impossible to believe that she is an Englishwoman, although fair enough to pass for one."[92] Despite his doubts, Keane ended Volume I with the claim that "[i]f [she is] not

[89] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol I, 206.

[90] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol I, 206.

[91] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol I, 208.

[92] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz,* Vol I, 209.

really English, it is difficult to account for her accurate knowledge of English . . . [and] her manner and appearance."[93] She remains unmentioned in Volume II of *Six Months in the Hijaz* until the very end, when Keane discusses her again in order to dispel rumors that he made the story up. Here, he claims the following regarding the "Lady Venus":

> "[S]he has admitted that she is English, and it has been discovered with tolerable certainty who she really is. She is now amply provided for in, and has expressed a desire that she remain unmolested in that country . . . . Every possible inducement has been held out for her to return to Christianity; but as she remains obdurate, nothing can be done for her, and I unquestionably can give no further publicity to her case, or divulge anything further.[94]

However, it is evident that we cannot necessarily take Keane at his word regarding the "Lady Venus."

Yet, given the Foreign Office's investigation, it is hard to argue that Keane invented the character of "the Lady Venus" out of thin air. However, there are several issues that suggest that he likely embellished his story. First, we turn to the issues Keane's contemporaries brought out. Allen's study on the tale of "the Lady Venus" reveals concerns over the accuracy of Keane's story from the British officials tasked with investigating the issue. James Zohrab, consul in Jeddah in 1879, received a letter requesting that he investigate this "Lady Venus" while adding that Keane's tale was "improbable" while allowing that "it may possibly be true."[95] W. T. Martin, the same magistrate that Keane quoted in his book, claimed via telegraph that "[s]he is not

[93] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol I, 212.

[94] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol I, 212.

[95] Qtd in M.D. Allen, "The Curious Affair of the Lady Venus," in *Shaw and Other Matters: A Festschrift for Stanley Weintraub on the Occasion of his Forty-Second Anniversary at the Pennsylvania State University* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1998), 116.

English—perhaps Eurasian. Mr. Keane's description answers generally, but is not confirmed on material points."[96] Even, one reviewer who did not cast doubt on the accuracy of the story of the "Lady Venus" argued that "Mr. Keane naturally makes as much of her as he can in his narrative, and certain it is that it would have lost its most romantic part if her story had been excluded."[97] Similarly, D. G. Horgath argued that by the time of Burton's *ḥajj* in the 1850s, "there was nothing for him to discover [in Mecca], and nothing for his successors Von Maltzan and Keane."[98] Thus, there was much for Keane to gain in claiming Begum Zarah was originally an Englishwoman from Devonshire.

Moving beyond these issues, another aspect to consider is the lack of reference by other *ḥajji*s of Begum Zarah. Richard Trench brought up this issue, pointing out that Heinrich von Maltzan "makes no reference to that most extraordinary of Meccan residents, the redoubtable Miss Macintosh," but he does not make any direct statement calling Keane's story into question.[99] Von Maltzan, as previously mentioned, is not necessarily the best European *ḥajji* to compare to Keane since von Maltzan's *ḥajj* occurred only a couple of years after the Indian Mutiny. Regardless, Keane was the only *ḥajji* to record her presence. The 1862 pilgrim Herman Bickwell does not mention her, but again, his account is only recorded in one newspaper article.[100] Allen also cites the

[96] Qtd in Allen, 177.

[97] "Six Months in Mecca," in *The Literary World*, Vol XXIII, 295.

[98] Hogarth, *The Penetration of Arabia*, 188.

[99] Trench, 93.

[100] Allen, 113.

lack of reference by Christiaan Snouck Hurgroje, a Dutch Orientalist who travelled to Jeddah and Mecca to study the *ḥajj* and Dutch colonial subjects from Southeast Asia who undertook this pilgrimage, in the 1880s as casting doubt on Keane's story; however, by this time, Begum Zarah had supposedly moved back to India. In 1937, R. H. Kiernan considered Keane's entire tale full of "considerable incredulity . . . especially the part which dealt with the Englishwoman in Mecca."[101] There is, of course, the additional problem of Keane's translation of the name Begum Zarah into "Lady Venus." While Begum, "a title used in Muslim India to denote a lady of high rank," was rightly translated as Lady, using Venus for Zarah is more complex. The name is Arabic in origin, stemming from the root *z – h – r*. But given the pronunciation with a's, it is more likely that the name more likely meant something along the lines of "flower, blossom, splendor, beauty."[102] While the word Venus in Arabic is derived from the same root, it is pronounced differently – *zuharah* as opposed to *zahrah*. Facey notes that "Keane translated Zarah as Venus, either out of ignorance of the distinctions in Arabic or, perhaps more likely, to add spice to his tale for his Victorian readership."[103] Finally, at the end of Volume II, Keane claims to have "a private letter, addressed to me by the English lady whom I met in Meccah, which proves most conclusively that the statements made in "Six Months in Mecca" [Volume I]—so far at least as she is concerned—are

[101] R. H. Kiernan, *The Unveiling of Arabia: The Story of Arabian Travel and Discovery* (London: Harrap, 1937), Qtd in Allen, 112

[102] Hans Wehr, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic (Arabic – English)*, ed. J. Milton Cowan, 4th ed (Urbana, IL: Spoken Language Services, 1994), 446.

[103] Facey, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, viii.

correct."[104] But Keane, claiming to be protecting Begum Zarah from further inquiry, does not produce the letter in any public forum. He also neglects to mention her in any of his later works, although like with the letter, he would have argued that this was to prevent further inquiries into her life.

Stories of how women fared during the Indian Mutiny were commonplace in its aftermath. Charles Ball described that in the wake of a massacre of British soldiers at Cawnpore [Kanpur], the Englishwomen "were spared by the Nana [Sahib, leader of the rebellion in Cawnpore] from bad motives" who then "appointed a wicked old hag to persuade the helpless creatures to yield to his wishes."[105] As a result, Ball claimed that these women preferred to commit suicide than go along with Nana Sahib. Among these Englishwomen, the most famous was likely one of the daughters of General Wheeler who had been killed in the fighting. Known to the public as just "Miss Wheeler," Ball reported that, upon her capture by a mutinous trooper, took advantage of "a favourable opportunity, securing the trooper's sword and with it, after killing him and *three* others, threw herself down a well and was killed."[106] In Montgomery Martin's history of the mutiny, he cast doubt over Ball's story. Martin presented reports of Miss Wheeler riding alongside her captor, who, when ordered to give her over to the British as they reclaimed

[104] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol I, 211.

[105] Charles Ball, *The History of the Indian Mutiny: Giving a Detailed Account of the Sepoy Insurrection in India: and a Concise History of the Great Military Events which Have Tended to Consolidate British Empire in Hindostan*, Vol II (London: London Printing and Publishing, 1858), 340-1.

[106] Ball, *The History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol II, 344. Italics in the original.

Cawnpore, "escaped with her at night" with her fate described as "not at all improbable that the unfortunate young lady may still be alive."[107]

Allen argues that Keane was likely influenced by such stories in his creation of his fiction surrounding the real Begum Zarah.[108] From this plethora of evidence, Allen concludes that a more reasonable story is that Keane heard of her "and recognized a good thing when he heard it."[109] Thus, Begum Zarah, a woman from India with knowledge of English who moved to the Hijaz with her husband and not her capture, was transformed in Keane's imagination into a woman like Miss Wheeler who had no real agency in her conversion to Islam and move to Mecca. Such fabrication, or perhaps more accurately embellishment, is not unheard of in travel narratives. Steve Clark argues that because "[t]he travel narrative is address to the home culture," it is often "that [the information] to which it refers cannot be verified" which results in the "equation of traveller and liar."[110] Thus, Keane's adventuring spirit moved his discussion of the "Lady Venus" from fact to fiction.[111]

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[107] R. Montgomery Martin, *The Indian Empire History, Topography, Geology, Climate, Population, Chief Cities and Provinces; Tributary and Protected States; Military Power and Resources; Religion, Education, Crime; Land Tenures; Staple Products; Government, Finance, and Commerce with a Full Account of the Mutiny of the Bengal Army; of the Insurrection in Western India; and an Exposition of the Alleged Causes*, Vol II (London: London Printing and Publishing, 1858-61), 263.

[108] Allen, 118.

[109] Allen, 118.

[110] Steve Clark, "Introduction," in *Travel Writing and Empire: Postcolonial Theory in Transit*, ed. Steve Clark (London: Zed Books, 1999), 1.

[111] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Preface to Vol I.

A Disguised Ḥajji

Keane, like Burckhardt and Burton before him, undertook the pilgrimage in disguise. Given his experiences in the Indian Ocean, he chose to take on the guise of an Indian Sunni Muslim, or "Hindi" as he described this term as meaning a "Mohammedan native of India as distinguished from a Hindoo."[112] He originally chose the name Abdul-Mohammed or "Servant of the Prophet" as his name as he believed it to be "common in several forms in India."[113] However, after several members of his pilgrimage group objected to it, he took on the name of "Mohammed Amin." Wolfe obliquely suggests that the choice of Amin was calculated as it "rhymes with Keane."[114] He mixed his pilgrims dress between Indian, Turkish, and Arab cultural garbs with a Turkish tarbóuche or fez on his head with Indian sandals, pyjamas, and tunic covered with an Arab cloak but his appearance was likely similar to that of the pilgrim photographed in figure 2.[115] To make this transformation

Figure 2 - An Indian Pilgrim
Photo: Christiaan Snouck Hurgonje, c. 1888, in *Bilder-Atlas zu Mekka* (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1888), accessed from the British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers, 1781.b.6/48, in *Qatar Digital Library*.

[112] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol I, 2n†.

[113] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol I, 16.

[114] Wolfe, 245.

[115] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol I, 11-12.

complete, he understood that it would also take a mental change in addition to a change in dress and name. He invited his readers on this journey:

> I remember once hearing a sailor say to another: "You have told that lie so often, Jack, you believe it yourself. I now found this to be no impossibility. It became my case to a nicety, and in less than a month I was to all intents and purposes as honestly Mohammedan as any born Arab among them. I, in fact, acted that lie so well I believed it myself![116]

However, while Keane had come to terms with his disguise, his critics did not see it the same way. In the review of volume I of *Six Months in the Hijaz*, *The Literary World* explained that while the book "helps us to a better understanding of modern Mohammedanism" they had "little or no sympathy with the cunning and hypocrisy necessary to the production of works of this class."[117] A critique of Europeans disguising themselves as a Muslims in order to gain access to Mecca and Medina was nothing new. Henry Salt, head of the British consulate in Egypt during the time of Burckhardt's *ḥajj*, "attempted to deny consular protection to British travelers who wore Eastern clothing, though he later retreated from that position."[118] The Reverend Charles Forster, while relying on Burckhardt's travels for substantial portions of his 1844 book *The Historical Geography of Arabia*, critiqued him for this very reason. Forster argued that Burckhardt's "*unscrupulous* zeal" had "unlocked the forbidden gates of the Hedjáz" explaining that, despite the knowledge gained from such "zeal" that a "love of science can never justify the compromise of religious principle."[119] Forster's position is unsurprising. Shahin Kuli

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[116] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol I, 16.

[117] "Six Months in Mecca," in *The Literary World*, Vol XXIII, 295.

[118] Thompson, "Osman Effendi," 103.

[119] Charles Forster, *A Historical Geography of Arabia; or the Patriarchal Evidence of Revealed Religion: A Memoir*, Volume 1 (London: Duncan and Malcom, 1844), xxxii. Italics in original.

Khan Khattak describes that Forster "saw Muhammad as Christ's antagonist who would indirectly . . . revive Christianity by stimulating a fight against idolatry, Judaism and Christian heresy."[120]

Ludovico di Varthema was not immune to such criticism, even centuries later. George Percy Badger, the editor of an 1863 translation of the first edition of Varthema's travelogue from 1510, critiqued him in almost the same way that Forster had done to Burckhardt. Badger wrote that Varthema's deception was "an act, involving the deliberate and voluntary denial of what a man holds to be the Truth" which "is not justifiable by the end which the renegade may have in view, however abstractly praiseworthy it maybe," ultimately condemning him to "the deserved odium which all honest men attach to apostasy and hypocrisy."[121] Herman Bicknell, who did not disguise himself on his *ḥajj*, was still disparaged for faking being an English Muslim. Ralli noted that, to his fellow military officers, Bicknell was considered "as a Catholic in the West and Mohammedan in the East; and . . . lacked fixed principles."[122]

Taking on Arab dress was not limited to those European travelers undergoing the *ḥajj*. John Hanning Speke, writing about his travels in Africa to find Lake Victoria, the source of the Nile, and his European discovery of it, recalled that the Arabs he was travelling with "advised by donning their habit for the trip, in order to attract less

[120] Shahin Kuli Khan Khattak, *Islam and the Victorians: Nineteenth Century Perceptions of Muslim Practices and Beliefs* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008), 16.

[121] Badger, "Introduction," in *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema in Egypt, Syria, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix, in Persia, India, and Ethiopia, A.D. 1503 to 1508*, ed. George Percy Badger, trans. John Winter Jones (London: Hakluyt Society, 1863), xxvii.

[122] Ralli, 203.

attention."[123] However, Speke did not perceive this action as having any prestige attached to it. Instead, he argued that the Arabs only made the suggestion "to gratify their own vanity by seeing an Englishman lower himself to their position" and that, in dressing like them, "I [had] degraded myself."[124]

In addition to the long history of polemics against Islam in Europe,[125] this criticism of feigning being a Muslim likely comes from the background of outrage over Christian converts to Islam, known as renegades or those who had "turned Turk," in the Mediterranean world and the perception of Islam as a "missionary religion. Eric Durseter describes that, in the early modern period, renegades "violated the most elemental boundary in the early modern era," that of religious identity.[126] While renegades had existed since the earliest years of Islam, the early sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century was the "golden age of the renegade."[127] While many of these renegades were captured slaves like Joseph Pitts mentioned above, some actively chose to convert and move to the Ottoman Empire or other lands under Muslim rule.

Such voluntary converts were heavily polemicized by Western writers. Those who chose to "turn Turk" became known, in the parlance of Galatians 1:7, as "pervert[ing] the

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[123] John Hanning Speke, *What Led to the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1965), 314.

[124] Speke, 314.

[125] See, among others, Albert Hourani, *Islam in European Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000), and Khattak, "Historical and Political Background" in *Islam and the Victorians*, 11-43.

[126] Eric Durseter, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 19.

[127] Durseter, *Venetians in Constantinople*, 112.

Gospel of Christ."[128] In a warning to the readers of this seventeenth century translation of the Qur'an into English, Alexander Ross claimed that "the Turks are preposterously zealous in praying for the conversion, or perversion rather, of Christians to their irreligious Religion."[129] European concern over conversion to Islam spread throughout their writings, most notably English theater.[130] From Shakespeare's *Othello* to lesser known plays like Thomas Goffe's *The Courageous Turk*, Muslims and Christian conversion to Islam was consistently denounced.[131] The Turks, considered synonymous with Muslim during the early modern period, were so vilified that Elizabethan England rejoiced over the defeat of the Ottomans at the Battle of Lepanto in 1572 by the Holy League, their other main religious antagonist. Despite Pope Pius V calling Elizabeth I "a bastard and a heretic," Peter Marshall argues that "a sense of common Christian identity" allowed the English to overcome their hatred of Catholics for a brief moment, Catholics that they often described in "the image of 'the Turk" and vice versa.[132]

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[128] Patricia Parker, "Preposterous Conversions: Turning Turk and its Pauline "Rerighting," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 2, no.1, A Special Issue on the Representations of Islam and the East (Spring/Summer 2002): 2.

[129] Alexander Ross, "A needful Caveat or Admonition for them who may desire to know what use may be made of, or if there be danger in reading the *Alcoran*," proposition 14, in *The Alcoran of Mahomet, Translated out of Arabique into French by the Sieur de Ryer, Lord of Malezair, and Resident for the King of France, at Alexandria and newly Englished, for the satisfaction of all that desire to look into the Turkish vanities* (London, 1649).

[130] The same occurred in other European countries. For example, see Rouillard, Clarence Dana, *The Turk in French History, Thought, and Literature (1520-1660)* (Paris: Boivin, 1941).

[131] See, for example, Joel Elliot Slotkin, "Now will I be a Turke': Preforming Ottoman Identity in Thomas Goffe's *The Courageous Turk*" *Early Theatre* 12, no.2 (2009): 222-235 and Daniel J. Vitkus, "Turning Turk in *Othello*: The Conversion and Damnation of the Moor" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48, no.2 (Summer 1997): 145-176.

[132] Marshall, "Rather with Papists than with Turks': The Battle of Lepanto and the Contours of Elizabethan Christendom," *Reformation* 17 (2012): 135.

It is no wonder then, given this context, that Henry Salt, British Consul in Egypt, denied the Scotsman Osman Effendi's request for manumission in the early nineteenth century. Osman's case was not unique as Salt denied all similar requests made by slaves that had converted to Islam. Completely unsympathetic to their plights, "Salt did not regard any British subject who, as he put it, "turned Turk" to be entitled to ask for assistance as a fellow countryman."[133] Reverend Forster, mentioned earlier for his critique of Burckhardt, claimed that Islam was "preached by armed missionaries and propagated by the sword" in his 1829 work entitled *Mahometanism Unveiled.*[134] In the second volume, he referred to the "missionary zeal" of Muslims, demonstrating the impact of Ross's words two centuries earlier who Forster does not directly cite.[135] This continued even past Keane's *ḥajj*. Sir Thomas Walker Arnold argued that "from its very inception Islam has been a missionary religion."[136]

Keane attempted to defend himself by making sure his readers were well aware of the danger he was stepping into as a Christian disguised as a Muslim entering into the most sacred land of Islam:

> Now, the precarious position of an unbeliever in any wholly Mohammedan town is well known; but let a Jew, Christian, or idolater approach to defile ground so holy and held in such veneration as is Meccah in the eyes of Mohammedans—ground of which many declare that should any but a true believer stand on, it would open and swallow him—to say that he would be stoned to death, torn to

[133] Thompson, "Osman Effendi," 103.

[134] Charles Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled An Inquiry, in which that Arch-Heresy, its Diffusion and Continuance are Examined on a New Principle, tending to Confirm the Evidences, and aid the Propagation of the Christian Faith.* Volume I (London: J. Duncan and J. Cochran, 1829), 75.

[135] Forster, *Mahometanism Unveiled*, Vol II, 209 and 392.

[136] Thomas Walker Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith* (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1896), 4.

> pieces, burnt and his ashes sent out of the country, would only be repeating what I have heard Mohammedans declare.[137]

Isabel Burton similarly recalled her husband was "living with his life in his hand" when he undertook the *ḥajj*, writing that "[t]o accomplish a journey to Mecca and Medinah quite safely in those days (1853) was almost an impossibility, for the discovery that he was *not* a Mussulman would have been avenged by a hundred Khanjars."[138] However, Keane was less worried about the critiques of with writing regarding his use of disguise than he was about defending himself against accusations regarding his "ability to perform the pilgrimage, and with regard to the story of the English [Lady Venus] whom I met in Meccah."[139] At one point, he admitted early in his book that "[t]o undertake an expedition of this kind was certainly a wild and unscrupulous thing" and that he "suffered many qualms of conscience and felt the veriest hypocrite," but this self-reflection does not linger and he offers no other descriptions of experiencing any moral quandaries during and after his pilgrimage.[140]

Burton, on the other hand, was always quick to defend himself and his fellow European *ḥajji*s and often in a much more passionate way. He took offence to Reverend Forster's critique of Burckhardt and mounted a defense of him in the preface to the third edition of *Personal Narrative*.[141] Unsurprisingly, Burton also disagreed with Speke's self-assessment. The lines quoted above are underlined in Burton's copy of Speke's book

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[137] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol 1, 14.

[138] Isabel Burton, *The Life of Captain Sir Richard F. Burton*, 101. Italics in original.

[139] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol II, 210.

[140] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol I, 16.

[141] Burton, "Preface to the Third Edition," *Personal Narrative*, Vol I, xxii.

with the word "Rot" written to the side.[142] Burton's passion is unsurprising in context. In Stanley Lane-Poole's introduction to the 1906 memorial edition of Burton's *Personal Narrative*, he argues that, in Burton's mind, there was a "moral superiority in the larger, more fundamental deception" of claiming to be a "born Muslim" instead of "a renegade from Christianity."[143] Isabel Burton described her husband's disguise as one of practicality. She noted that while European converts to Islam had under gone the *ḥajj* had received only "outward friendship" and had "been carefully kept out of what they wished to know and see," thus necessitating Burton to undertake the *ḥajj* disguised as a non-convert which made him "the only European who had beheld the inner and religious life of the Moslems as one of themselves."[144] Burton himself was so attached to his identity as Abdullah that he included the name in his signature on letters he sent after his pilgrimage.[145]

European Privilege to Enter the Islamic Holy Cities

Furthermore, there is something to be said about the privilege Keane invokes, as Burckhardt and Burton did before him, to undergo the *ḥajj* as a disguised Muslim rather than as a genuine believer. In this, it is important to remember that in entering of Mecca and Medina, the European travelers were violating the sacred landscape these cities held

[142] John Hayman, "Introduction," in Burton, *Sir Richard Burton's Travels in Arabia and Africa: Four Lectures from a Huntington Library Manuscript*, Ed. John Hayman (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1990), 6.

[143] Lane-Poole, "Introduction," in Burton, *A Personal Narrative*, ix-x.

[144] Isabel Burton, *Life*, 102.

[145] Ben Grant, "En-crypt-ing: Burton/Abdullah," in *Postcolonialism, Psychoanalysis, and Burton: Power Play of Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 56.

within Islam. As mentioned above, a tradition dating back to the second caliph ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab (d. 644) meant non-Muslims were prohibited from entering the “land of the Arabs” which by the nineteenth century was commonly considered Mecca and Medina. A similar policy remains in effect in Saudi Arabia today. This prohibition was something recognized in all three books. The very title of Burckhardt’s book references this point, calling Mecca and Medina the “Territories of the Hedjaz which the Mohammedans Regard as Sacred.” Further, William Ouseley, editor of the posthumous volumes recording Burckhardt’s pilgrimage, quoted Edward Gibbon’s eighteenth century understand that Western “notions of Mecca must be drawn from the Arabians. As no unbeliever is permitted to enter the city, our travellers are silent.”[146] In this, Ouseley placed Burckhardt as a pioneer among Orientalists, attempting to fill in the blank spaces of Western knowledge. Burton, for his part, later acknowledged the sacredness of Mecca and Medina, describing in the preface to the third edition of his book that he had journeyed to “the penetralia of Moslem life.” In his lectures on his journey in the Hijaz, he opened them with a discussion on how other Westerners did not fully appreciated “the significance of the rite” of the *ḥajj*. [147] He goes on to describe the area as “the Moslem’s exclusive and jealously-guarded Holy Land.”[148]

Keane also noted it, writing that that, in Muslim eyes, Mecca was “ground so holy” and “that should any but a true believer stand on, it would open and swallow him.”

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[146] Ouseley, “Preface of the Editor,” in Burckhardt, *Travels in Arabia*, Vol I, xv. Original quotation from Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol V, 177n18.

[147] Burton, “Lecture 1: The Visitation at El Medinah” in *Sir Richard Burton’s Travels in Arabia and Africa*, 15.

[148] Burton, “Lecture 1: The Visitation at El Medinah,” 15.

However, Keane also notes that he did not truly understand the significance of the pilgrimage until after his was over:

> I had often heard it said and myself believed that this great concourse of people which every ear assembles at Meccah, ostensibly on a pilgrimage, really meets for a great mart of fair held there; but now having made the journey I know that this is not the case. It is a true pilgrimage, the outcome of a belief in the tenets of a religion, the commands of the Prophet.[149]

Yet none of this awareness led to any acknowledgement of the violation these travelers made of such sacred spaces. Keane, after explaining the holiness Muslims ascribed to these cities and the *ḥajj*, goes on to add that "the community of Mecca is composed of the most bigoted Mohammedans, the fanatical scum of the whole Mohammedan world," using this as an explanation as for why Christians and other non-Muslims were banned from the region.[150] It is also worth remembering the words of Herman Bicknell, a European *ḥajji* from the 1860s who described the pilgrimage in a tourist-like, almost cavalier, way while also encouraging others English travelers to undergo the *ḥajj* as well.[151] Moreover, as discussed above, the moral outrage reviewers and other travelers had with the journeys of these European *ḥajjis* was more the fact that they were pretending to be Muslims than their violation of the Islamic Holy Cities.

It is worth noting, however, that not all Europeans visiting the Hijaz ignored this issue. A contemporary Arabian explorer of Burton's, William Gifford Palgrave obliquely criticized Burton's approach stating that:

> To feign a religion which the adventurer himself does not believe, to perform with scrupulous exactitude, as of the highest and holiest import, practices which he

[149] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol I, 13.

[150] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol I, 14.

[151] Haji Muhammad 'Abd Ul Wahid [Herman Bicknell], "The Mecca Pilgrimage," 9.

> inwardly ridicules, and which he intends on his return to hold up to the ridicule of others, to turn for weeks and months together the most sacred and awful bearings of man toward his Creator into a deliberate and truthless mummery . . . seems hardly compatible with the character of a European gentleman, let alone that of a Christian.

In the preface to the third edition of *Personal Narrative*, Burton defended himself against the above charges of ridicule and Palgrave's chastisement of his choice to disguise himself as a Muslim, but does not take up the issue of disturbing the sanctity of the sacred cities of Islam that Palgrave hinted at. Isabel Burton, however, did note that, when visiting the Kabaa', her husband "did not go in mockery, but reverentially."[152] Blunt, who only traveled Jeddah just after Keane's ḥajj, discussed this issue more directly through a note of apology in the preface of his book:

> To Mohammedans the author owes more than a word of apology. A stranger and a sojourner among them, he has ventured on an exposition of their domestic griefs, and has occasionally touched the ark of their religion with what will seem to them a profane hand; but his motive has been throughout a pure one, and he trusts that they will pardon him in virtue of the sympathy with them which must be apparent in every line he has written.

Yet, even when Keane writes about his transition from Indian *ḥajji* back to an Englishman, there are no hints of any moral or ethical issue with his pilgrimage or his Muslim impersonation as there was at the beginning of his book. He described that, while travelling from Mecca to Jeddah after visiting Medina, he was preoccupied with thinking about his return to the Western, or at least Western-controlled, world:

> It seemed as if I had not seen an countryman for years and years, whereas it had only been a few months . . . . I began to wonder what I should say to the first Englishman I met, and how it would sound to hear English talked as the common language again. I spent most of the night as we rode along talking to myself in

[152] Isabel Burton, *The Life of Captain Sir Richard F. Burton*, 101.

> English, and practicing saying "Good-morning;" for my own language on my own tongue had really come to have an unfamiliar sound to me.[153]

Upon arriving in Jeddah, he passed a Frenchman he had met before, but did not introduce himself as he "did not wish to undeceive my companions as yet, out of consideration for their feelings."[154] This line is the only hint at any reflection Keane made with regards to his impersonation. After getting a meal, he met up with some other Frenchmen and then visited the British Consulate. He then detailed that "[a]fter talking to a countryman I almost dreaded going back to my fellow-pilgrims; and positively hated the title of Haji . . . . Their habits and ways . . . suddenly took the most degraded and disgusting form in my eyes."[155] Like Burton before him, when he met up with a man he had worked with three years before, he chose to remain in his disguise and "talked to him for two hours in broken English, without his having a glimmering of whom he was talking to" until "to his astonishment, I proved my identity" as an Englishman.[156]

Ultimately, he returned to his fellow pilgrims as he had no money with him and the Consulate told him that, as a result, he would have to travel to India as a Muslim as that was the only way any ship captain would allow him on board with the other returning *ḥajjis*. Once on the ship, despite retaining the dress of a pilgrim, he "had thrown off all semblance of a Mohammedan, and talked in the most undisguised English."[157] As the ship closed in on Bombay, Keane completed his transformation back into being a proper

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[153] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol II, 162.

[154] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol II, 166.

[155] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol II, 167-8.

[156] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol II, 170-1.

[157] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol II, 178-9.

Englishman, donning the dress of a sailor, and avoiding the pilgrims he journeyed with. He signed off of the ship as an Englishman having originally left Jeddah as an Indian Muslim. However, he had one last chance to reflect upon his disguise and subsequent transformation back to his original identity. Several days after disembarking in Bombay, he recalled that he "met the Amér in the street. Either he did not know me, or he thought me an undesirable acquaintance and cut me."[158] If Keane had any guesses as to why the Amér would have considered him "undesirable," he does not mention them. Instead, he adds that he hopes the reader does not look at him in the same light.

Ability to Undertake the Ḥajj

At the same time, and perhaps more importantly, it should be noted what Keane's *ḥajj* demonstrates about the changing global connections in the nineteenth century. Despite the Hijaz remaining ostensibly under the control of the Ottoman Empire and the holy cities of Mecca and Medina being clearly off-limits for non-Muslims, Keane was able to access it, but his access was intrinsically different from that Burckhardt and Burton. Isabel Burton described that, just two decades before Keane's *ḥajj*, "it was almost impossible to visit the Holy City [of Mecca] as one of the faithful."[159] Yet, by the 1870s, the globe had become more connected than ever before. In 1862, Burton estimated that the number of pilgrims on Mount Arafat ranged around 50,000 while by 1880, Wilfrid Blunt counted over 90,000 pilgrims.[160] The Suez Canal, although not used by Keane, had

[158] Keane, *Six Months in the Hijaz*, Vol II, 182.

[159] Isabel Burton, *The Life of Captain Sir Richard F. Burton*, 101.

[160] Burton, *Personal Narrative*, Vol II, 188; Blunt, *The Future of Islam*, 10.

promoted this connectedness. The first *ḥajj* conducted after the opening of the Suez in 1286/1870 comprised almost double the number of pilgrims as the previous year's *ḥajj*.[161] The use of steamships, present in the Indian Ocean since the 1830s, also contributed to this growth and underwent a major change just before Keane's pilgrimage. Steamships had effectively reduced the method of travel in the Indian Ocean from one dependent upon the monsoons and trade winds to one that could be complete, regardless of time of year, in roughly three weeks.[162]

However, the advent of the steamship came with the concomitant decline of the use of caravans. Irwin remarks that "[b]y the late 1870s," during the time of Keane's pilgrimage, "the overland Hajj from Damascus had declined from tens of thousands to eight hundred."[163] Thus, not only did Keane have better access from the sea to the interior of the Hijaz than that of his predecessors, it was also becoming increasingly difficult European *ḥajji*s to literally fall in the footsteps (or, perhaps more accurately, hoof-steps) of Burton and Burckhardt. The steamship travel to and from the *ḥajj* during Keane's pilgrimage was largely monopolized by the British, although the Dutch were starting to become competitive in this market.[164] This shift in mode of pilgrim transportation is directly referenced by Keane in the title of his final chapter, "Pilgrims in English Ships." Whether Keane was aware of the changes that had occurred in the Indian Ocean world

[161] Ochsenwald, Table 3, 61.

[162] Slight, *The British Empire and the Hajj*, 67.

[163] Irwin, "Journey to Mecca," 207.

[164] Irwin, "Journey to Mecca," 198.

since Burton and Burckhart's *ḥajj*s, it is impossible to say. What matters, however, is that such a change was big enough to be noted in the chapter's title, subconsciously or not.

Keane's Legacy

As seen above, his sense for adventure had sent him first to the sea and, after he became bored with that life, he sought follow in the footsteps of Burckhardt and Burton in Arabia—both in undertaking the pilgrimage itself but also, like Burton, profiting of it afterwards through his two volumes retelling his journey. This need for adventures—and publishing them in books—were a recurring theme in Keane's life. He followed up his volumes on the *ḥajj* with another book on his life in the Merchant Service. Here, Keane dazzled his readers with scenes from the venturous life he lived on the sea. In his second chapter, he regaled his readers with the experience of killing his first shark:

> Who does not remember his first shark? How, on the first really fine day, when the wind was light, the water smooth, and the vessel just forging gently ahead on her outward passage through the tropics, someone—the man-at-the-wheel, was it not?—cried out "Shark-O!" You remember the general excitement there was in catching and killing the fish.[165]

The theme of capturing, killing, and eating sharks reoccurs throughout the rest of the book as Keane seems to have grown fond of the creature. Chapter seven of *On Blue-Water* is devoted to dispelling the myth that sharks were, by nature, man eaters. After this, he published another two-volume book, already discussed above, entitled *Three Years of a Wanderer's Life* in 1887. In this book, he delighted his reader of his travels across the globe from British India to Norway to China to the United States and Brazil.[166]

[165] Keane, *On Blue-Water*, 9.

[166] Keane, *Three Years of a Wanderer's Life,* Vols I and II.

In the 1890s, he spent his time exploring the interior of Australia "mostly in unexplored country."[167] He lived in Australia for the remainder of his life working in the agricultural sphere and "independent criminal investigation, with very surprising results."[168] He died in Queensland, Australia, on September 1, 1937.

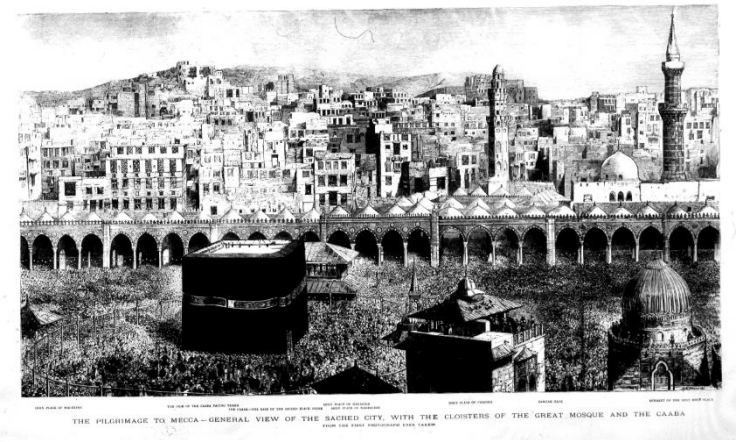

Figure 3 - Mecca and the Ka'ba, Photo: Muḥammad Ṣādiq Bey, c. 1880, reprinted in *The Graphic*, Vol XXV, no.643, March, 25, 1882, in *The Graphic: An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper* (London), Vol 25, January to June, 1882, 293.

Yet, despite his numerous post-*ḥajj* adventures, his pilgrimage remained what most people remembered him by, if they remembered him at all. When *The Graphic* (London) published the first photograph taken of the Ka'ba as well as a photograph of the pilgrims at Medina in 1882, they chose to quote from Keane's *Six Months in Meccah* to describe the pilgrimage to their readers. *The Graphic* tells its readers that "[o]wing to its extreme sanctity and the extreme fanaticism of the pilgrims, few Europeans have ever visited Mecca."[169] They admitted that the photographs, the first of their kind, came from "a Mahomedan pilgrim."[170] This pilgrim *The Graphic* declines to name was General Muḥammad Ṣādiq Bey from Egypt who had taken these photographs during his *ḥajj* in 1880.[171] But, they add that Keane "is

[167] "KEANE, John Fryer Thomas (All Hajj Mohammud Amin)," in *Who was Who*, Vol III, 734.

[168] "KEANE, John Fryer Thomas (All Hajj Mohammud Amin)," in *Who was Who*, Vol III, 734.

[169] "The Pilgrimage to Mecca," *The Graphic*, Vol XXV, no.643, March, 25, 1882, in *The Graphic: An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper* (London), Vol 25, January to June, 1882, 287.

[170] "The Pilgrimage to Mecca," *The Graphic*, 287.

[171] See Irwin, "Journey to Mecca: A History (Part 2)," 208.

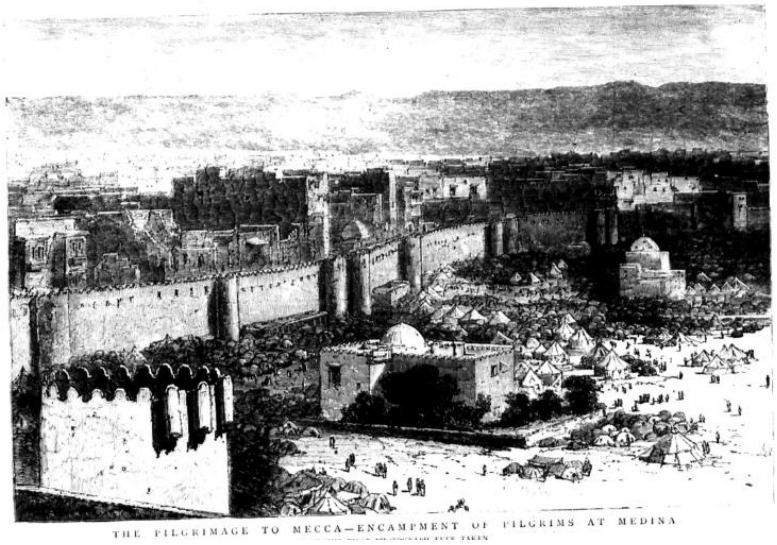

Figure 4 - Medina, Photo: Ṣādiq Bey, c. 1880, reprinted in *The Graphic*, Vol XXV, no.643, March, 25, 1882, in *The Graphic* (London), Vol 25, January to June, 1882, 296

the most recent of these adventurous travellers" who sojourned to the Hijaz disguised as a Muslim "and has given us a most interesting account of his visit."[172] Thus, Keane's legacy provided the English public writ large to enjoin in a tour of Mecca and Medina, now with pictures instead of Burton's carefully drawn diagrams. This legacy continued through the early twentieth century. *The Times* (London) included in their obituary on Keane that:

> [Keane] was a man of remarkable gifts and adventures, and was most often linked with Sir Richard Burton in Moslem eyes . . . . [but] Keane was probably unknown to the present generation, but there will be many old travellers and students of Mohamedan life who will be sorry to hear of his death. He had all the qualities of life that suited him. He was adventurous and reckless, and being indifferent to his own interests he never sought any recognition.[173]

While the last sentence is obviously problematic given his extensive writing on his travels as well as the claimed intentionality Keane had in undertaking the *ḥajj*, this obituary demonstrates the lasting legacy, if somewhat obscure, he had as *Ḥajji* Mohammed Amin.

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[172] "The Pilgrimage to Mecca," *The Graphic*, 287.

[173] "Mr. J. F. Keane: Gifts and Adventure," *The Times* (London), November 23, 1937, 19.

Conclusion

Keane, as previously mentioned, kept up his life of adventure after completing his pilgrimage. A few years later, he travelled across the globe, retelling these journeys in *On Blue-Water* and *Three Years of a Wanderer's Life*. But, recalling above, his *ḥajj* was the journey that stuck with him. Every obituary mentioned his title of *Ḥajji* Mohammed Amin.[174] Thus, Keane, who is now often no more than a footnote in history, was recognized for his place in the line of European *ḥajji*s in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this thesis, I have attempted to outline how studying Keane affects our understanding of late nineteenth century Western exploration in Arabia. However, there is much more in *Six Months in the Hijaz* remaining to be studied in detail. Among this is his discussion of the stations of the *ḥajj* themselves as well as his descriptions of the multiethnic milieu of Mecca and Medina, especially during the *ḥajj* season. Keane's account deserves much more attention than a few footnotes in the extensive historiography of Europeans and the *ḥajj*. As such, it is fair to say that he deserves to be placed back into the historiography of English explorations of the Hijaz. He represented a new form of non-Muslim *ḥajji*, that of the tourist, in a superior way to others like Bicknell whose *ḥajj* is only recorded in one extant article in *The Times* of London. The "tourist" *ḥajji*s performed the pilgrimage, not out of any academic or imperial needs or wants, but for their own personal enlightenment, adventure, or gain. This is not to say that Burkhardt or Burton did not have these goals in mind, merely that Keane did not any other reason to undertake the *ḥajj* like they did. This "tourist turn" also does not exclude

[174] "KEANE, John Fryer Thomas (All Hajj Mohammud Amin)," in *Who Was Who*, Vol III, 734; "Deaths," *The Times* (London), November 23, 1937, 1; 'Mr. J. F. Keane: Gifts and Adventure," *The Times* (London), November 23, 1937, 19.

continual European travel to Mecca and Medina for academic or imperial reasons; Christiaan Snouck Hurgroje's travels in the 1880s were made those exact purposes.

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