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Between the Colonial and the Islamic:
Chromolithographic Postcards in North Africa, ca. 1890-1930

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Art History

by

Ava Katarina Tabatabai Hess

2021

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2021

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Between the Colonial and the Islamic:
Chromolithographic Postcards in North Africa, ca. 1890-1930

by

Ava Katarina Tabatabai Hess

Master of Arts in Art History

University of California, Los Angeles 2021

Professor Lamia Balafrej, Chair

Postcards produced in colonial-era North Africa include the black-and-white picture postcards that reproduce Orientalist photographs but also colorful illustrated postcards printed using chromolithographic methods, which often depict narrative scenes, figures, and creatures associated with Islamic belief and history. Examples of this latter type have gone largely unmentioned in either the literature on colonial visual culture or Islamic art, but were reified by the Euro-American institutions that collected them as images belonging to ‘popular’ or ‘folk’ Islam. How might the presentation of their genesis as images made by Muslims, for Muslims, be complicated by the insignias of the European printers they bear, or by the market through which foreign tourists and collectors purchased them? This paper uses the case study of a postcard collection housed in the Newark Museum archives to argue that these prints are fundamentally

hybrid and widely networked, both in the content of the images themselves and their circulation as objects. It traces various threads connecting iconographies, media, geographies, and forms of labor in an entangled world of commercial image production that crosses Europe, North Africa, and other parts of the Muslim world. These threads, in turn, reflect the power of chromolithography to move imagery from place to place and medium to medium with precision and consistency, but also a flexibility that allows for constant transformation. Crucially, we come to see how prints themselves function as active agents in an interconnected network through which so-called Islamic images are constantly being shared, co-produced, and reinvented.

The thesis of Ava Katarina Tabatabai Hess is approved.

Saloni Mathur

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Lamia Balafrej, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2021

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59. *Postcard of the Prophet Riding a Buraq* [Back of postcard], postmarked December 14, 1918, ink and paper, 3 x 5 in.

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In 1966, the Moroccan filmmaker Ahmed Bouanani released one of his first short films, *Tarfaya, ou la marche d'un poète*, which tells the fictionalized story of a young boy from southern Morocco who travels the country as an apprentice to a wandering poet.¹ In one scene, the poet enters a village pushing a cart decorated with postcard-sized images of saintly figures, fantastic creatures, and epic battles as an excited crowd gathers to hear him tell their popular tales (fig. 1). Bouanani's better known short, *Mémoire 14*, also features a similar printed image in its opening and ending sequences (fig. 2). Both films nostalgically reimagine Morocco's pre-colonial past by using a mix of original footage shot by Bouanani and ethnographic footage from colonial archives in order "to address the ethnographic distancing typical to the colonial cinematic vision, and to strive towards a more nuanced self-image."² Like this reappropriated archival footage, the printed images that make various cameos in Moroccan avant-garde cinema also take on a life of their own, one beyond the imperial conditions of their original production.

The limited tonal range of black-and-white film, however, obscures a crucial dimension of the prints: their vivid color. These were chromolithographs, polychromatic prints mass-produced through a method of off-set printing invented sometime before 1837.³ A single sheet including numerous self-contained scenes could be printed and cut into individual postcard-sized prints or sold as a larger-format poster (fig. 3). One such poster featuring the same scenes that had so enthralled the audience of *Tarfaya*'s vagrant bard hangs on the wall of a farmer's humble abode in *Wechma* (Traces), a Moroccan feature directed by Hamid Bennani and edited by

¹ The film's title also appears in Arabic as *Tarfaya Aw Masseurat Sha'er* and English, *Tarfaya, or a Poet's Journey*.

² Ahmed Bouanani: *I want to possess in the world that which brings joy to the eyes...*, (Rotterdam: Kunstinstituut Melly, 2016), 6. Exhibition guide, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.fkawdw.nl/files/Exhibition%20Guide%20May%202016.pdf>. See also Peter Limbrick, "Vernacular Modernism, Film Culture, and Moroccan Short Film and Documentary," *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 56, no. 2 (2015): 399-400.

³ Michael Twyman, *A History of Chromolithography: Printed Colour for All* (London: British Library, 2013). The German inventor of lithography, Alois Senefelder (1771-1834), began experimenting with color in his process in 1818, though technical developments only allowed for chromolithography to become commercially viable in 1837.

Bouanani in 1970 (fig. 4). The following pages explore the dizzying world opened up by these printed images, guided by a collection of illustrated postcards housed at the Newark Museum in New Jersey. These 101 chromolithographs were purchased by the museum's founder as he traveled across North Africa in the 1920s. Both horizontal and vertical in orientation, they all measure 3½ by 5½ inches, and I refer to them here interchangeably as prints and postcards.

That the majority of the artworks discussed in this paper are explicitly Islamic in the nature of their content while also including human figures will likely appear as a contradiction for any who share in the widespread misconception that figural images are forbidden across the Muslim world. Beginning here with their movement through the streets and walls of cinema implies that figural Islamic images were not exotified by Maghribi filmmakers as singular or rare phenomena but instead presented as a part of everyday life. And yet, if these prints were produced at least half a century before the films in which they appear, what can narrative cinema tell us about their reception and use in the real world? Scholars of Arabic literature have suggested that prints “served as illustrations for live performances,” as in the scenes staged by Bouanani, but a lack of ethnographic research leaves uncertain precisely how, when, and where this would have been the case.⁴ With so little information on their possible use, this study turns to the images themselves and the possible conditions of their production—conditions that situate prints within a network of interconnected iconography and visual practices spanning media, historical periods, and geography, throughout the Islamic world and beyond.

The scene in *Tarfaya* nonetheless speaks to a close association made between these prints and forms of oral storytelling long considered part of ‘popular’ or ‘folk’ Islam. Today, we are

⁴ John Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image: Themes in Literature and the Visual Arts* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1999), 34. See also Bridget Connelly, *Arab Folk Epic and Identity* (Berkeley: University of California, 1986), 206-207.

granted access to the prints through institutions, collecting practices, and modes of knowledge production that have structured how we see their images as well as the language we use in referring to them as '*images populaires*.' Part of the project here, then, is to reflect on the evaluative paradigms we have inherited, which tend to dichotomize colonizer and colonized, foreign and native, Eastern and Western, traditional and modern, sacred and profane, or high and low art. How have our understandings of mass-produced, figural, or non-elite traditions of Islamic art been historically delimited by these false binaries?

Anonymous, ephemeral, reproducible, and highly mobile, Newark's postcards may raise as many questions as they answer, but they also pose critical challenges to traditional art historical conceptions of authorship and localized understandings of production. Most of all, they are fundamentally hybrid images that were produced by colonial printers and tell Islamic stories. I approach these colonial North African prints as a type of 'Islamic' image that is plural, multi-layered, and widely networked, both in the content of the images themselves and their circulation as objects. Chromolithography proves itself a medium capable of moving images—from place to place and medium to medium—with consistency and precision but also a flexibility that allows for constant transformation. This paper traces threads that connect various iconographies, media, geographies, and forms of labor that begin to unravel the entanglements between various human and non-human actors mobilized in the creation and consumption of printed imagery. Crucially, we come to see how prints themselves function as active agents in an interconnected network through which images are constantly shared, co-produced, and reinvented.

North African Postcards in Newark

The postcards discussed in this paper are global, in the sense that they permeate personal and institutional archives around the world, and because they are both connected to and connect

global visual-material traditions. But, since even global histories must be apprehended from a particular vantage point, I will begin from the locale where I first encountered them: Newark, New Jersey. Contextualizing the prints examined here within the stories of how they traveled to us, across space and time, hints at some of the stakes involved for various historical actors in presenting them as ‘popular,’ ‘folk,’ or ‘native’ images. These actors include artists, collectors, and institutions who also helped extend the reach of North African prints far beyond the well-worn route between colony and metropole.

From 1924 to 1929, the founder of the Newark Museum crossed the Atlantic on four trips, visiting Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt and staying for months each time. These were collecting expeditions intended to grow the permanent collection of the young institution that he, John Cotton Dana, had opened in 1909. Among the roughly 2,000 North African objects his travels would yield are 101 chromolithographic postcards whose illustrations are figurative, predominantly Islamic in theme, and vibrantly colorful. This postcard acquisition was recorded in the year 1928, but a dearth of archival information makes it difficult to pinpoint more precise dates, geographic origins, or other details of their production. Moreover, given the mobile and reproducible nature of print, it cannot be assumed that Dana bought the postcards in the same locations they depict, or if he bought them piecemeal or in bulk from a single vendor.⁵

Today, the postcards live in a small postcard archive consisting of three shoebox-sized containers tucked away in a corner shelf of the museum’s library. The archive is geographically organized, and its “North Africa” section also includes the more typical type of postcard to come

⁵ My deepest gratitude to Christa Clarke for sharing her knowledge of the Newark Museum’s institutional history, especially its early African collections. It is tempting to conclude that the majority of the postcards were produced or acquired in Algeria, where Dana spent the most time and where many of the represented cities, villages, or shrines were located, as well as certain postcard publishers or printers. Dana traveled to Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco in 1927 and 1928, but to Egypt only in 1924 and 1929, making it unlikely that they were purchased there. However, as will be explored below, the postcards crossed borders in ways that make limiting our understanding of where they are ‘from’ to specific countries, or even the Maghrib as a region, ultimately unproductive.

out of the region. This is the black-and-white ‘picture postcard’ that re-presents what is known in the scholarship on Orientalist photography as “*scènes et types*,” ethnographic ‘types,’ exoticized street scenes, and, most notoriously, erotically staged women of the ‘harem.’⁶ The illustrated color postcards under consideration here, however, have gone largely unmentioned in either the literature on colonial visual culture or Islamic art. An emphasis on the ornamental qualities of their design contrasts with the associations of photographic depth typically invoked by the word ‘postcard:’ human or animal figures are instead rendered flatly with pronounced outlines against either vacant or detailed backgrounds. While the photographic postcard touts and exaggerates its indexical qualities, the illustrated postcard gives the impression of something drawn or painted by hand, even if it too relies on chemical processes and techniques of mechanical reproduction.

To produce a chromolithographic image, its reverse or mirror image—the print’s ‘matrix’—must first be drawn with ink or a grease-based crayon on a stone plate. Once the plate has been coated with a combination of acid, gum binder, water, and oil-based ink, the image is transferred to paper through the application of pressure. For polychrome prints, a separate additional plate is used for each color; both these and single-color lithographs feature textures unique to stone-printing which result from manipulations of the surface and porosity of the plate’s material, often made of limestone.

Despite the prominence of Islamic themes and Arabic text in their designs, Newark’s postcards also feature inscriptions or insignias in French that signal the imperial conditions underlying their production. Lithographic print technology was brought by Europeans to North Africa as early as the eighteenth century, but the development of indigenous lithographic printing

⁶ Ali Behdad and Luke Gartlan, “Introduction” in *Photography's Orientalism: New essays on Colonial Representation*, ed. Ali Behdad and Luke Gartlan (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2013), 2.

took off across the region starting in the 1870s.⁷ These were often state-sponsored ventures focused primarily on the production of textual material, whereas the commercial printing of images was operated privately and sustained more European involvement.

Commercial image printing in North Africa during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, as in Europe, involved the collaboration of publishers (called *éditeurs* in French colonial contexts) and printmakers (*imprimeurs*).⁸ Sometimes these collaborations took the shape of stable, long-lasting partnerships, as in the case of the publisher Éditions Bonestève and the printing house Éditions Baconnier in Algiers. Both were successful, generations-old family businesses managed by *Pieds-Noirs* (people of European origin born in Algeria during French rule between 1830-1962) who had originally moved from France and reestablished their printing franchises in the colony.⁹ Specialized in art prints, and color printing in particular, they partnered frequently for the production of posters and postcards—some of which are among those held at the Newark Museum, indicated by the inclusion of Bonestève’s logo and publication series numbers (fig. 5). However, other relationships between publishers and printers were ad hoc or remote. A publisher based in Cairo, Algiers, or Tunis could send matrices to Europe for printing, or vice versa, and several Newark postcards bear the initials *P.E.* in reference to a German

⁷ A lithographic press was brought to Egypt during Napoleon’s military expedition in 1798-1799. Leonard Koos, “Going Postal: On Colonial Algeria,” *Modern Language Association of America* (paper presentation, Washington, D.C., 2005): 2, https://case.edu/affil/sce/Texts_2005/Koos%20MLA%202005.pdf. On the development of lithographic printing in the region see, e.g., Fawzi Abdulrazak, “Printing as an Agent of Change in Morocco, 1864–1912,” in *The Book in Africa: Critical Debates*, ed. Caroline Davis and David Johnson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 44-64; Juan R. I. Cole, “Printing and Urban Islam in the Mediterranean World, 1890-1920,” in *Modernity and Culture from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, ed. Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C. A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 344-364; Ian Proudfoot, “Mass Producing Houris’s Moles, or Aesthetics and Choice of Technology in Early Muslim Book Printing,” in *Islam: Essays on Scripture, Thought and Society*, ed. by Peter G. Riddell and Tony Street (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

⁸ Vertu, Aurélie, “Les marques typographiques d’imprimeurs et de libraires (XVe-XIXe siècle),” *Rapport de recherche bibliographique, École nationale supérieure des sciences de l’information et des bibliothèques* (2004).

⁹ Berthonnet, Arnaud. “Le tourisme en Algérie (de 1880 aux années 1940): une histoire à écrire.” *Revue Tourisme* 15 (2006): 6; see also Béatrix Baconnier, *Algérie en affiches: 1900-1960* (Luynes: Éditions Baconnier / Copagic, 2004).

printmaker.¹⁰ Beyond postcards, in fact, the design of all kinds of printed material found across North Africa—from postage stamps to poster-size advertisements—involved diverse actors and forms of labor in varied processes of commission, collaboration, and co-production.

The height of chromolithographic production occurred from the late 1880s through the 1920s—decades that overlap with what has been called the “golden age” of the postcard, when the small-format correspondence was purchased and sent around the globe at an unprecedented rate.¹¹ Today, this historical moment of hyper-mobility is reflected in the proliferation of colonial-era postcards in archives, museums, and private collections around the world. That copies of Newark’s postcards, or larger versions of them, are found across institutions worldwide is what makes its humble but rich archive a strong case study, one able to represent the wider corpus of color prints bought and sold in North Africa around the turn of the century.

In what capacity did such prints find their way to Newark? Inexpensive and mass-produced, chromolithographs resonated with John Cotton Dana’s dual appreciation for the artistic value of everyday objects and objects from around the world. A librarian by training, Dana established his museum as an alternative to the ‘high art’ museum model epitomized by the Metropolitan Museum of Art just across the Hudson River.¹² It was during a trip to Germany in 1912 that he found a model he admired in the Folkwang Museum, whose displays combined “ethnographic works from so-called primitive cultures with modern art and design, proposing the former as sources of inspiration for the renewal of Western forms of decorative arts.”¹³ Dana

¹⁰ Germany was one of the world’s preeminent postcard producers until the interwar period. Saloni Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 114.

¹¹ Mathur, *India by Design*, 116. We can somewhat safely assume that Newark’s postcards were printed between 1890-1930, and postmarked copies of the same postcards held at other institutions corroborate this. For reasons that have yet to be explored, however, it seems that the production of the diverse types of images discussed in this paper—not only in print but across media—largely dropped off once chromolithography began to decline in the 1930s.

¹² Christa Clarke, “From Ethnology to the Arts of Global Africa: A Century of Collecting at the Newark Museum,” in *Arts of Global Africa: The Newark Museum Collection*, ed. Christa Clarke (Newark: Newark Museum, 2017), 13.

¹³ Clarke, “Arts of Global Africa,” 14.

returned to Newark—then, a bustling industrial and commercial city—aiming to stimulate taste in good design among its citizens, many of whom were factory workers, and to encourage innovation in goods at once practical and aesthetic. His exhibitions displayed foreign objects alongside Newark-made industrial products; as a result of viewing them, he promised his museum visitors, “your products will sell better and at higher prices, your homes will give you more pleasure, your knowledge and sympathy with the peoples of other lands and other times will be broader and deeper, and you will get more enjoyment out of every working hour.”¹⁴

During his collecting trips to the Maghrib—a geographic region comprising Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco—Dana’s museological agenda translated to seeking contemporary objects capable of representing the region as diverse, cosmopolitan, and firmly a part of the modern world. A description Dana wrote of Algerian textiles he acquired, woven by hand and semi-commercially, could equally apply to his postcard purchase: “They are...not ‘Museum Pieces’ in that they are not ancient, rare or costly. But they are brilliant in color, attractive in design, serviceable, and, on the whole, tell much of the peoples from whom they have come.”¹⁵

Unfortunately, Dana recorded little of who the chromolithographic postcards came from. Their only surviving information is found in their brief and patronizingly worded object file, likely noted by Dana himself. It reads, simply, “Postcards of Arabic design. Natives buy them nowadays to tack up on their walls.”¹⁶ Pausing to unravel these two sentences, a number of questions and mysteries surrounding the postcards immediately begin to emerge. Does their “Arabic design” imply that their makers were Arab? If so, how is the possibility of their genesis

¹⁴ John Cotton Dana, *A Plan for a New Museum* (Woodstock: Elm Tree Press, 1920), 57.

¹⁵ John Cotton Dana, “Algiers’ Little Girl Rug Makers Described by John Cotton Dana,” *Newark Sunday Call*, April 15, 1928. Quoted in Clarke, “Arts of Global Africa,” 17.

¹⁶ Object file, postcards P1987-2035 (101 cards), purchased 1928, Newark Museum Library, Newark, New Jersey.

as images made by Muslims, for Muslims, complicated by the insignias of the European printers they bear or by the market through which tourists, like Dana, were able to purchase them?

The Making of *Images Populaires*

Instead of contemplating these questions and the critical reflexivity they entail, Dana and other collectors took for granted the “Arabic” origin of the prints, without bothering to further investigate their use in “native” contexts. In such ways, Dana’s institution converged with its contemporaries just as it also diverged from them. The expansive global scope of its early collections was unique—especially within the United States—but in its organizational structure, the Newark Museum followed typical taxonomic biases of the day: indigenous arts of the Americas, the Pacific, and Africa, for example, were all subsumed under the museum’s department of “Ethnology.”¹⁷ Moreover, if Dana’s appreciation for the artistic value in quotidian objects was unusual in some respects, the fact that the postcards were never accessioned into the museum’s permanent collection also bespeaks the secondary position commonly occupied by prints—color prints and postcards especially—within museums and art historical scholarship.

Looking to a specific example will help give a sense of the types of images found in Newark’s postcards, their overlaps with holdings at other institutions, and the regimes of value through which these prints were ‘made popular.’ Newark’s archive includes multiple copies of a postcard whose design shows a man and a woman riding a galloping horse across an expanse of green (fig. 6).¹⁸ The male rider points the way ahead with a long sword, his gaze directed at the viewer. Two birds fly alongside them, from the right to the left side of the composition. The card was printed using the colors black, yellow, green, red, and blue, but it is among the less elaborate

¹⁷ Clarke, “Arts of Global Africa,” 14.

¹⁸ Of the 101 chromolithographic postcards from North Africa held in Newark’s archive, only roughly half feature unique designs, which is to say the archive contains multiple copies of certain postcards.

of Newark's designs. A different postcard on the same subject, for example, features more diverse variations in texture, a detailed landscape, and an additional decorative border (fig. 7).

Like many of Newark's postcards, these two are fundamentally about mobility, and in particular the history of people and religion moving into and through the Maghrib. Their hand-rendered Arabic inscriptions identify the male equestrian as Abdallah ibn Ja'far, referred to simply as Sidi Abdallah, the head of a Meccan caliphate who helped lead the Muslim conquest of North Africa in the seventh century. In legends told about him, Sidi Abdallah seizes Tunis and rides off with the daughter of the city's then Byzantine ruler, Gregory the Patrician. If the parable represents, for some, the relations between the indigenous peoples of Tunisia and successive invaders (Phoenicians, Roman, Arab, and French), it is not without certain implications of tragedy—indeed, in some versions, the Byzantine princess escapes her fate by jumping from the back of a camel to her death.¹⁹ But the visual story told by these postcards is decidedly more positive. Sidi Abdallah and Yamina, the Arabicized name given to the princess in most tales, are shown as an amorous couple and the introduction of Islam to North Africa is celebrated by a “buoyant image where everything curves upward in triumph: Sidi Abdallah's sword, his black moustaches, the princess's headdress, the polka-dotted charger's tail, and the birds' wings.”²⁰

The story of Sidi Abdallah and Yamina traces back to *Futuh Ifriqiya*, a seventh-century chronicle of the Muslim conquest of northern Africa by the Abbasid historian 'Umar al-Waqidi, which, although no longer extant, lived on in traditions of folklore and oral storytelling.²¹ A closely connected literary tradition is the genre of Arabic epic-oral poetry known as the *sira* (pl.

¹⁹ Mohamed Masmoudi. *La peinture sous verre en tunisie* (Tunis: Cérès productions, 1972), 48-50.

²⁰ Roger Benjamin, *Kandinsky and Klee in Tunisia* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), 61.

²¹ Mohamed Masmoudi, “Une peinture sous verre à thème héroïque,” *Cahiers des arts et traditions populaires: revue du Centre des arts et traditions populaires*, no. 2 (1968): 11.

siyar), one that also focuses on the histories of Muslim conquest and foundational myths of Arab identity, refracted through stories of romance and heroic battles.²² *Siyar* were recited for public audiences in North Africa from the medieval era to the nineteenth century, sometimes in multimedia performances accompanied by music or visual art, as in Bouanani's film.²³ The rotating cast of mythico-historical characters associated with *siyar* and *Futuh Ifriqiya* appears throughout nineteenth and twentieth-century painted and printed images of the Arab world. Sidi Abdallah and Yamina are also frequent subjects of under-glass paintings, where they are often situated in complex scenes where various human characters, animals, and fantastical creatures embrace or battle one another (fig. 8). A more understated example from Tunisia, however, undoubtedly shares the same pictorial reference as the matrix of Newark's postcard described above (fig. 9).

North African forms of storytelling that are oral in nature, diverge from historical facts, and make use of vernacular rather than exclusively classical Arabic have been codified in literary studies under the rubric of "folk literature" since at least the 1970s.²⁴ It is likely that the intimate connection of epic-oral literature to certain iconographies in print or painting contributed also to these visual genres being seen under the same light. Sabra Webber has contextualized the birth of Maghribi folklore studies within the ethnographic scholarship and *mission civilisatrice* of French colonizers, such that "colonialist interpretations of the indigenous folklore had to be consistent with other representations of a people in need of civilizing."²⁵ Examples of textual and visual

²² Dwight Fletcher Reynolds, *Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance in an Arabic Oral Epic Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 5. Newark's postcards also include scenes from *Sirat 'Antar ibn Shaddad*, about the pre-Islamic knight and poet 'Antar and his star-crossed lover 'Abla, as well as *Sirat Bani Hilal*, which recounts the eleventh-century migration of the Banu Hilal Bedouin tribes from Arabia to North Africa.

²³ After the nineteenth century, this practice became localized primarily to Egypt.

²⁴ Susan Slyomovics, "Praise of the Prophet and Praise of Self: *Sīrat Banī Hilāl* and Epic Narrative Performance," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 49, no. 1-2 (2018): 52.

²⁵ Sabra Webber, *Romancing the Real: Folklore and Ethnographic Representation in North Africa* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 198.

folklore—a term challenging to define given the varied, sometimes contradictory meanings it has accrued since the nineteenth century—were thus collected “with an eye to ensuring that these charming folk practices were preserved even as they regrettably, but necessarily, were lost from everyday practice as Maghribians became more ‘civilized.’”²⁶

Collected images of folk stories and other subject matter explored in this paper appear in Francophone literature referred to as ‘*images populaires*.’ This amorphous term can designate any number of works associated with non-elite visual practices in Islam from the nineteenth, twentieth, and even twenty-first centuries; they are united only in their collective differentiation from what the author deems to be normative Islamic art or practice. Often such publications provide minimal contextual information on the printed, painted, or digital *images populaires* they reproduce and pay little attention to the specific material or visual affordances of a particular medium. Scholars like Webber have sought to elevate various types of lore as legitimate subjects of study in established disciplines while also reclaiming ‘folklore’ as a less pejorative term, one that instead encompasses the overlapping and mutually constitutive ways that ‘folk’ or ‘popular’ culture exist with what is traditionally seen as ‘mainstream’ or ‘high’ culture—and it is in this spirit of critical intervention that I readopt the term *images populaires* here.

In museums, *images populaires* of various media are found mostly in ethnographic collections like that of Quai Branly in Paris, an institution originally dedicated to the material culture of indigenous peoples in colonized territories.²⁷ Its collection includes a number of large-format chromolithographs featuring the same images found on Newark’s postcards.²⁸ A framed

²⁶ Webber, *Romancing the Real*, 200.

²⁷ Sally Price, *Paris Primitive: Jacques Chirac’s Museum on the Quai Branly* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

²⁸ The Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam is another ethnographic museum with copies of the same printed images held at Quai Branly and Newark. See Mirjam Shatanawi, *Islam at the Tropenmuseum* (Arnhem: LM Publishers, 2014).

print of Sidi Abdalla and Yamina acquired from an amateur ethnographer in 1979 is nearly identical in its composition and color scheme to Newark's postcard but larger in scale, at 31½ by 45 centimeters (fig. 10). Only slight alterations between the two versions are noticeable, in the rendering of the hands and decorative details like the shape of Sidi Abdallah's turban.

Islamic chromolithographs almost never appear in museum collections dedicated expressly to art. Exceptionally, a large-format print with the same protagonists is housed at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, providing yet another point of comparison between the positioning of the Sidi Abdallah postcard at Newark and its analogs at other institutions (fig. 11). Published in Algiers by Bonestève, the print is closer in scale to Quai Branly's version but features an additional French caption and decorative frame with Qur'anic suras that are not immediately relevant to the pictorial subject. The rarity of such a print being included in a modern art museum can be understood through its arrival as part of the personal archive of a well-known artist.

The Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky bought this chromolithograph while traveling in Tunisia from 1904-1905. Roger Benjamin and others have considered how this storied trip taken by the artist, and the indigenous handicrafts he collected, informed developments in his career upon his return to Europe. The rarity of images with men and women sharing a horse, and the "deep attachment" Kandinsky felt towards the Sidi Abdallah print throughout his life, has led to speculations that his famed 1907 *Riding Couple* painting owes something to his prized print (fig. 12).²⁹ Similar iconography is re-presented in the work of Russian illustrator Ivan Bilibin who returned from Egypt in the 1920s with a collection of chromolithographs (fig. 13). Following a more typical trajectory, Bilibin's prints eventually joined a museum with a geographic focus,

²⁹ Benjamin, *Kandinsky and Klee in Tunisia*, 60, and note 16 on 196. As noted by Masmoudi (*Peinture sous verre*, 48), the coat of Sidi Abdallah's horse is almost always black in Tunisian depictions, and often spotted—which Kandinsky's dotting technique in *Riding Couple* seems to recall. However, if this is a possible additional factor contributing to these speculations of influence, it is not made explicit in the relevant literature.

Moscow's State Museum of Oriental Art, where they were displayed in a 2020 exhibition titled *Prophets and Heroes: Arabic Folk Prints of the 19th-20th Centuries*, alongside others collected by Russian Orientalist and folklorist Yuri Zavadovsky.³⁰

That artists, ethnographers, and museum directors all bought the same printed images reflects the robust tourist market that existed for them from early on. And yet each collector preferred to believe that these were 'indigenous' images which happened only by some happy accident to land in foreign hands. At Quai Branly, the stakes involved in conceiving of the Sidi Abdallah print as uncomplicatedly 'native' are more immediately recognizable since the value of an object in the context of a colonial ethnographic museum so often adheres to a reliance on notions of authenticity and cultural preservation. On the other hand, a nearly identical print could also accrue enough "positive modernist value" through its association with Kandinsky to be accessioned into the permanent collection of a modern art museum.³¹ The mechanism through which such accrual occurs is found across narratives of 'primitivism' in modern art, in which the non-Western object serves as raw material inspiring change and growth in the work of Western artists—or Western industrial goods, as in the case of Dana's institution—while remaining itself static and incapable of being influenced. As Hal Foster writes, "the artifact is evacuated even as it is elevated" to the status of art.³² While Islamic art was not traditionally considered 'primitive' within the racialist hierarchies of early European art historical scholarship, in the case of *images populaires*, their association with folk religion and culture certainly drew them closer. Like the trajectory of more classically 'primitive' works, information on *images populaires* was lost in the

³⁰ Evgenia Karlova and Ilya Zaitsev, eds., *Prophets and Heroes: Arabic Folk Prints of the 19th-20th Centuries from the Collections of Ivan Bilibin and Yuri Zavadovsky* (Moscow: State Museum of Oriental Art, 2020), 10.

³¹ Finbarr Barry Flood, "Picasso the Muslim: Or, How the Bilderverbot became modern (Part 2)," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 69/70, no. 1 (2018): 255.

³² Hal Foster, "The 'Primitive' Unconscious of Modern Art," *October* 34 (1985): 61.

process as they were “ventriloquized by their modern supporters,” being made relevant again to the museum or to scholarship only by virtue of the canonical artists who admired them.³³

The transfer of these prints from Africa to the collecting institutions of Europe was predicated precisely on their ability to be viewed as images made for the decorative or devotional purposes of indigenous Muslim populations—regardless of how imprecise such knowledge, like Dana’s two-sentence note, might be. Since the time of the prints’ collection, years of occupying a subordinate position to elite Islamic artforms and years of being decontextualized within museum displays and publications has rendered invisible any details surrounding their use and meaning within North African contexts. Here, I considered the ‘making’ of *images populaires* as an epistemological category assigned to certain forms of art—one that the remainder of the paper seeks to slowly undo by turning to their historical making as physical artworks. What follows is an attempt to reconstruct some of the moves made by these images, and the complexity and nuance implied in the possible conditions of their production, their makers, and their publics.

Al-Buraq Takes Flight

In another Newark postcard design that thematizes movement, the Prophet Muhammad rides on the back of a creature with a horse’s body, a woman’s face, and large, feathered wings (fig. 14). Together they fly through an atmosphere of clouds, guided by an angel in elaborate dress and greeted by three others. This tale of celestial ascent has a long and rich history of visual and literary representation connecting the far reaches of the Islamic world.³⁴ In its reproducibility and portability, the medium of print was responsible for transporting images of

³³ Finbarr Barry Flood, “Picasso the Muslim: Or, How the Bilderverbot became modern (Part 1),” *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 67, no. 1 (2017): 60.

³⁴ See, e.g., the contributions to Christiane Gruber and Frederick Colby, eds., *The Prophet’s Ascension: Cross-Cultural Encounters with the Islamic Mi’raj Tales* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

this scene with precision and consistency, while, at the same time, its flexibility allowed limitless adaptations for local contexts. Rather than serve as microcosmic reflections of a global visual network, in other words, these colorful prints served as active agents in the processes that expanded it.³⁵ Tracking the continuities and transformations of images as they travel between paper, walls, skin, glass, and other material conditions, can help us also to identify the specificities of chromolithography as a medium and of postcards as physical objects. But, as objects cross borders and iconographies cross media, how does an image itself come to embody these movements and translations? Taking up this question, the remainder of the paper emphasizes the mobility and mutability of prints to help challenge the notions of authenticity that informed how they were collected by Euro-American institutions.

The scene in the postcard described above references the Night Journey, two miracles performed by the Prophet Muhammad on a single night around the year 621, with the aid of a flying creature known as al-Buraq.³⁶ In the first leg of the journey (*isra'*), al-Buraq carries the Prophet from the Great Mosque in Mecca to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, as the archangel Jibra'il (Gabriel) leads the way. The *mi'raj* refers to Muhammad's subsequent ascension to the seven realms of heaven. Al-Buraq appears also in four additional Newark postcards: two are profile views against a decontextualized, ornamental background (figs. 15-16); one includes only al-Buraq and Jibra'il, passing the Prophet's Mosque in Medina on their way to find Muhammad (fig. 17); and the last depicts al-Buraq, Jibra'il, and the Prophet flying over the Ka'bah (fig. 18).

³⁵ For an art historical approach concerned with how images embody and mediate the conditions of their production and circulation, see Jennifer L. Roberts, *Transporting Visions: The Movement of Images in Early America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 2-3. Roberts proposes "a highwayman's art history—one that interprets pictures on the road, on the sea, on the move" and that hinges on "subtle but significant shifts in traditional concepts of agency to acknowledge works of art as active delegates rather than passive intermediaries."

³⁶ A brief account of the Night Journey is given in *surah* 17 of Qur'an but further elaborated in various hadiths.

Representations of these scenes, while also popular topoi of Arabic and Ottoman traditions, thrived in illustrated Persian *mi'rajnamas* from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries.³⁷ *Mi'rajnama* (Book of Ascension) is a broad term for manuscripts encompassing either leg of the Night Journey and varied combinations of figures that sometimes include Muhammad, whose face might be veiled unlike in Newark's postcards where it is always left exposed (fig. 19). Around 1830, the first lithographic press was brought from Bavaria to Tehran by way of St. Petersburg, and it ushered in the printing of *mi'rajnamas* for wider audiences (fig. 20).³⁸ As these textual-visual accounts took on a more popular appeal, al-Buraq was increasingly integrated into colorful murals on the walls of Qajar-era public and private buildings, mostly shrines and mausoleums but also on occasion private residences or public bathhouses (figs. 21-22).³⁹

Al-Buraq is typically shown with a peacock tail in these Iranian iterations as well as those from Central or South Asia, but with the tail of a horse or mule further west. Across the board, however, the hybrid creature is represented as a winged steed with a human, often feminized, head. It is among the most common subjects of chromolithographs—both large and small—that were collected well into the twentieth century in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as South Asia and West Africa.⁴⁰ While depictions of al-Buraq in textiles, paintings, and sculptures

³⁷ Christiane Gruber, "Between Logos (Kalima) and Light (Nūr): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting," *Muqarnas Online* 26, no. 1 (2009): 229.

³⁸ On lithographic printing in Iran more broadly, see Nile Green, "Stones from Bavaria: Iranian Lithography in its Global Contexts," *Iranian Studies* 43, no. 3 (2010): 305-331.

³⁹ For a comparative study of Qajar manuscripts, lithographs, and murals, see Alireza Baharloo and Aliasghar Fahimifar, "Aesthetic Elements in Qajar Popular Wall Paintings of the Prophet's Mi'raj (In Comparison with Those in Prints, Images of Lithography and Miniature)," *Culture and Folk Literature* 5, no. 13 (2017): 75-110.

⁴⁰ For examples from the Levant, South Asia, and Central Asia (especially Afghanistan), see Pierre Centlivres and Micheline Centlivres-Dumont, *Imageries populaires en Islam* (Geneva: Georg Editeur, 1997); from Nigeria, Katrin Schulze, "Religious Posters in Kano, Nigeria: Adapting Imported Media into Local Visual Piety," (paper presented at *Time for Medialisation: Integration Media and Transcultural Communication within Islamic and Area Studies*, Institut für Asien- und Afrikawissenschaften, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany, April 10, 2010): 6, <https://www.iaaw.hu-berlin.de/en/transregion/mediality/publications/papers/schulze>; from Ghana, René A. Bravmann, *African Islam* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983), 55-57.

also demonstrate regional preferences, the medium of print seems to have encouraged or allowed further modifications for local contexts or niche markets. Print alterations could involve replacing the sites over which al-Buraq flies from those in Jerusalem or Mecca to, for example, the Giza pyramids or the Taj Mahal (fig. 23). Or figures are dressed in costumes associated with a certain era or cultural milieu: angels often sport Qajar fashions on single-color lithographs from Iran, while in the example from Newark, they all wear the red Ottoman fez (figs. 20, cf. 14).

Other forms of adaptation are less literal, implying modifications in meaning rather than pictorial form. A scene that clearly recalls St. George and the dragon is reimagined in a Newark postcard as Khalid ibn al-Walid, an Arab Muslim commander in the service of the Prophet Muhammad, from whom he received the honorary title *Sayf Allah*, “The Sword of God” (fig. 24). This adaptation opens onto possible avenues of research between Islamic figural images and Christian ones, such as the portable chromolithographic icons sold at nineteenth-century European pilgrimage sites. Several Newark postcards also feature the Prophet’s son-in-law ‘Ali, often associated with Shi‘i visual practices related to martyrdom. In one, ‘Ali slays the demon Ras al-Ghul with his double-bladed sword Zulfiqar (fig. 25). Examples like these, it has been argued, suggest how scenes of historical or mythical battles might be recontextualized in Sunni-majority North Africa where they are made to relay, in a more general sense, the inherent good or strength of Islam—embodied by a Muslim hero—prevailing over forces of evil.⁴¹

Images of ‘Ali, as well as St. George, appear also in Tunisian under-glass paintings that borrow pictorial elements directly from chromolithographs like those at Newark (figs. 26-28).⁴²

⁴¹ Masmoudi, *Peinture sous verre*, 41; John Renard, *Seven Doors to Islam: Spirituality and the Religious Life of Muslims* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 97. See also Bridget Connelly and Henry Massie, “Epic Splitting: An Arab Folk Gloss on the Meaning of the Hero Pattern,” *Oral Tradition* 4, nos. 1-2 (1989): 106, 116.

⁴² Masmoudi, *Peinture sous verre*, 20. Masmoudi claims that this twentieth-century painting of ‘Ali slaying Ras al-Ghul was “directly inspired by images printed in Algiers during the last century” (my translation). Note that a very similar print appears in the opening and closing shots of Bouanani’s short film, *Mémoire 14*, from 1971 (fig. 2).

The production of these paintings, also called reverse-glass paintings, requires the same maneuver of reversal and “negative intelligence” on behalf of the practitioner that (chromo)lithography does.⁴³ Under-glass paintings register a sense of luminosity from within, but colors appear brighter and textures more varied in chromolithographs, depending on the combination and amount of each material involved in the process—acid, ink, and stone—and the specific techniques applied. Physical examples in both media exhibit idiosyncratic visual effects that add to a work’s dynamism, but that do not translate when reproduced in print or on screens: looking at an image through glass affords a curious if minimal sensation of depth while the slight variations in off-set printing can capture a wavering or doubling effect in the eyes of the viewer.

Under-glass paintings are found across North Africa and the Sahel region, but the practice is understood as having spread to the rest of the continent from Tunisia where it was introduced by diplomatic channels between Tunisian beys and Ottoman Turkey, or by the Italian colony settled in northern Tunisia since the eighteenth century. To date, the only in-depth study of Tunisia’s under-glass tradition was published in 1972 by the former director of the Centre des Arts et Traditions Populaires in Tunis, Mohamed Masmoudi.⁴⁴ It examines paintings from the Centre that resonate closely with Newark’s postcards, both in the range and specificity of their subjects and in certain aesthetic dimensions, such as their use of color, ornamentation, shallow depth, and sometimes identical compositions. Under-glass painting flourished around the same time as chromolithography in cities like Tunis, Sfax, or Bizerte that were also centers of printing not only in Tunisia but for the whole Maghrib, which suggests that these two distinct media

⁴³ Jennifer L. Roberts, “Reversing American Art,” Wyeth Foundation for American Art Programs (lecture, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, November 20, 2013): <https://www.nga.gov/audio-video/video/wyeth-roberts.html>.

⁴⁴ Masmoudi, *Peinture sous verre*. This scholarly oversight is especially surprising given that Tunisian under-glass painting is not an anonymous tradition: Masmoudi identifies preeminent named figures of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Mahmoud el Fériani, Haj Taïeb Lakhal, or Ali El Fekih.

experienced a close, entangled relationship rather than a unidirectional line of influence from one to the other. Notably, al-Buraq is also a common subject of these Tunisian paintings, and Masmoudi's study includes one side view of the creature enclosed within an ornamental frame of floral motifs that recalls the same relation of forms found in Newark's example (figs. 29, cf. 15).

Striking also are the resemblances between examples of under-glass paintings in Senegal—where they are known as *suwer*, a Wolofization of the French *sous-verre*—and North African chromolithographs. These similarities have not gone unnoticed by African arts scholars, who attribute the rise of the especially vibrant under-glass tradition in Senegal to the importation of color prints by Arab merchants from Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, and Morocco starting in 1895.⁴⁵ Fearing that popular prints might influence further conversion to Islam in West Africa, colonial authorities banned their importation—an unintended consequence of which was the translation of printed imagery to glass by Senegalese painters.⁴⁶ A rare example of a *suwer* that functions more like a multi-media work intimates just how cherished these prints were through its physical preservation of an imported al-Buraq print, pasted onto the painted glass panel (fig. 30).

In other cases, print compositions were directly copied or even traced onto *suwer*. A replicated image of an Algerian saint, praying as he floats on the ocean, likely held additional resonance in Senegal where the famous saint Amadou Bamba is said to have performed similar miracles (figs. 31-32).⁴⁷ The *mi'raj*, too, is a common theme of *suwer* and one example reveals nearly identical compositions, ornamental details, and techniques of perspectival flattening as a

⁴⁵ Anne-Marie Bouttiaux-Ndiaye, *Senegal Behind Glass: Images of Religious and Daily Life* (Munich and New York: Prestel-Verlag and Tervuren: Royal Museum of Central Africa, 1994); Allen Roberts and Mary Nooter Roberts, "'Paintings like Prayers': The Hidden Side of Senegalese Reverse-Glass 'Image/Texts,'" *Research in African Literatures* 31, no. 4 (2000); Mamadou Diouf, "Islam: Peinture sous verre et idéologie Populaire," in *Art pictural zaïrois*, ed. Bogumil Jewsiewicki (Quebec: Les éditions du Septentrion, 1992), 29-40.

⁴⁶ Roberts, "Paintings like Prayers," 78.

⁴⁷ Bouttiaux-Ndiaye, *Senegal Behind Glass*, 56.

Newark postcard, implying a high likelihood that its maker had encountered the same print or postcard as the one purchased by Dana (fig. 33, cf. 18). The only major difference here is that the hair and skin tone of the figures—the Prophet, Jibra’il, and al-Buraq’s face—take on a darker complexion. If certain representational differences attest to the potential for print to adapt to the needs of local audiences, then striking consistencies elsewhere signal the medium’s role as a vehicle that transported iconography across far distances. Moreover, the difficulty in physically moving murals or glass suggests that print material played a crucial intermediary role in the translation, transmission, and creative reinterpretation of Islamic imagery.

In 1928, the same year that Dana purchased his postcards, a different *mi’raj* postcard was printed in Germany. There, the transnational company Liebig released a series of collectible chromolithographic postcards that used stories from the life of Islam’s Prophet to advertise their commercial product: preserved meats.⁴⁸ The series engages some of the same scenes as the postcards held at Newark, but their perspective and figures adhere to a more classical ‘European’ sensibility (figs. 34, cf. 35). For example, in Liebig’s interpretation of the *mi’raj*, al-Buraq appears as a horse, rather than a mythical hybrid beast, that the Prophet rides along a staircase to heaven (fig. 36).⁴⁹ The meat purveyor evidently produced this series in different European languages to tailor it to local audiences, but, while they did also export to the Middle East and North Africa, it remains unclear whether the postcards were used to improve sales there. Would such images have been intended for European markets only, or imagined as scenes capable of

⁴⁸ Liebig produced serial advertising cards since the company’s founding in 1872. See Maurice Rickards, *The Encyclopedia of Ephemera: A Guide to the Fragmentary Documents of Everyday Life for the Collector, Curator, and Historian* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 195-196.

⁴⁹ Art historians like Christiane Gruber have begun to explore the role played by early print technology in the adoptions and reappropriations of European images of the Prophet Muhammad within Muslim contexts, but images of the Prophet produced expressly for commercial uses or as advertisements remain less studied. “Prophetic Products: Muhammad in Contemporary Iranian Visual Culture,” *Material Religion*, 12:3 (2016): 277-282.

appealing to Muslim and non-Muslim audiences alike? Were they reimported into parts of the Islamicate world and, if so, how might they have interacted with print production there?

Delocalizing the Site-Specific

Of the commercial industries that contribute to the cross-cultural exchange of imagery, the industry of Islamic pilgrimage constitutes a major one that has helped move visual material as well as people, religious beliefs, and goods around the globe. Turning from images of celestial flight to more earthly examples of mobility are two Newark postcards centered on the *mahmal*, a ceremonial palanquin that was used from the thirteenth to early-twentieth centuries to transport high-profile visitors to Mecca by camel (fig. 37-38). These postcards, and the few non-figural examples of Newark's collection, join a wide array of artistic output related to Islamic holy sites.

The amount of literary, visual, and material culture produced in connection to the Hajj, the holy pilgrimage to Mecca, mirrors the magnitude of its scale in the life of an individual pilgrim—as a spiritual experience, a privilege and honor, and a massive financial and logistical undertaking. Juan E. Campo has looked to how Muslim visualizations of the Hajj “result from mediated practices of representation and re-presentation” that can link pre-modern textual descriptions and manuscript illustrations with modern prints and, today, even electronic media: “in addition to being mediated, these images are also mediating through their capacity to connect viewers (1) as a community horizontally with each other and with actual landscapes over great distances, (2) vertically with higher beings and the cosmos, and (3) temporally with the past, present, and the future.”⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Juan E. Campo, “Visualizing the Hajj: Representations of a Changing Sacred Landscape Past and Present,” in *The Hajj: Pilgrimage in Islam*, ed. Eric Tagliacozzo and Shawkat M. Toorawa (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 269.

Visualizations of the Hajj often center around representations of Mecca. Some of the earliest examples are found on the quasi-legal certificates (*ijazat al-hajj*) that confirm the performance of Hajj or *‘umra* by an individual or their proxy, and served a dual function as both semi-official documents and souvenirs.⁵¹ Dating as far back as the twelfth century, they usually take the form of paper scrolls that combine written text with images drawn by hand or block-printed (fig. 39).⁵² Spatial representations of holy sites and cities, especially those significant to the life of the Prophet Muhammad, also appear frequently in one of the most widely circulated texts of the Sunni world: *Dala’il al-Khayrat*, a prayer book devoted to the Prophet and composed by the fifteenth-century Moroccan Sufi scholar, Muhammad al-Jazuli.⁵³

Modern print souvenirs of holy sites, like Newark’s postcards but also larger-format versions at other institutions, share in several important respects with these earlier predecessors.⁵⁴ One is the convention of labeling the notable features of a sacred site with written captions, as demonstrated in the postcard of Bayt al-Maqdis in Jerusalem (fig. 40). Secondly, many chromolithographs also share a spatial representation of sites that is consistent with how medieval examples combine plan views with elevations. This schematic, as has been explored by David Roxburgh, engages the viewer by inviting them to visualize accessing the architecture or topography in varied ways: it “actually permits multiple points of imaginary entrance and internal movement that would be constrained in other visual modes, such as the perspectival view or the bird’s eye topographic view.”⁵⁵ And lastly is the way that sites are combined or

⁵¹ While the Hajj occurs during specific dates according to the Islamic lunar calendar, *‘umra* is a pilgrimage undertaken to Mecca at any point in the year.

⁵² Campo, “Visualizing the Hajj,” 275.

⁵³ Venetia Porter, *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam* (London: British Museum Press, 2012), 54.

⁵⁴ Large-format chromolithographs of holy sites can be found in, e.g., Centlivres, *Imageries populaires*, 58-69.

⁵⁵ David J. Roxburgh, “Visualizing the Sites and Monuments of Islamic Pilgrimage,” in *Architecture in Islamic Arts: Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum*, ed. Margaret S. Graves (Geneva: Aga Khan Trust for Culture, 2011), 34.

juxtaposed in medieval and modern images. A common visual convention in copies of *Dala'il al-Khayrat*, established in manuscripts and lithographed versions since the eighteenth century onward, is the pairing of the Sacred Mosque in Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina (fig. 41).⁵⁶ In chromolithographs too, the Hajj landscape can be interpreted either as the sites typically visited by pilgrims, or extended beyond Mecca to include other sacred locations, such as the Prophet's Mosque or Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, where Muhammad flew during the *mir'aj*.

One Newark postcard combines views of the Ka'bah and Mount Arafat, both associated with Mecca, with a more specialized third location: the shrine of Karbala in Iraq, visited by Shi'a pilgrims to commemorate the death and sacrifice of Imam Husayn (fig. 42). The inclusion of this site attests to the international migration made by postcards whose images might have been originally intended for specialty audiences. As previously noted, the prominent inclusion of figures associated with Shi'i belief and visual practice suggests that imported iconography could assume locally relevant meaning in the region, at least when amenable to being generalized as stories about the strength or benevolence of Islam. Here, however, the specificity of Karbala as a site implies that networks of souvenir exchange and commerce connected Sunni and Shi'a-majority regions, with images traveling both in and out of North Africa.

The trustworthiness of pilgrimage certificates presumably stemmed from their being produced and purchased in Mecca itself. But not all forms of commemorating, confirming, or announcing the achievement of Hajj were so localized. In fact, they could even take place in one's own hometown or home, as in the case of murals commissioned by loved ones to celebrate a pilgrim's return.⁵⁷ Dating this practice to at least 1599, a travel account of Cairo by Ottoman

⁵⁶ Simon O'Meara, *The Ka'ba Orientations: Readings in Islam's Ancient House* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 120.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., Ann Parker and Avon Neal, *Hajj Paintings: Folk Art of the Great Pilgrimage* (Cairo: AUC Press, 2009 [1995]); Remke Kruk and Oort Frans, "Hajj Murals in Dakhla Oasis (Egypt)," in *Hajj: Global Interactions through*

bureaucrat Mustafa Ali tells us that these early wall paintings featured verses from the Qur'an and "various embellishments" that might have included renderings of sacred topography, like those found in the contemporary murals of Upper Egypt where the practice continues today (fig. 43).⁵⁸ If so, might paper material brought back from Mecca, including illustrated certificates or prints, have served as reference material for commissioned painters?

If the Hajj souvenir industry was not restricted to a production or circulation emanating from the site of its occurrence (i.e., Saudi Arabia), neither were the souvenir industries of other pilgrimages. In 1920s Cairo, the medium of under-glass painting served yet another purpose in exhibiting the skill and patterns of tattoo vendors to potential clients (fig. 44). Colorful panels displayed designs that—in addition to human figures, and especially saints—also included the *mahmal* and architectural motifs of non-specific mosques or saintly shrines that could "attest to a pilgrimage to Mecca, Medina, or to the grave of a saint" (fig. 45).⁵⁹

It was possible, too, that an Egyptian pilgrim to Mecca at the turn of the twentieth century could buy a souvenir on-site that was produced back home without even realizing. Hajj numbers grew sharply in this period, partially due to new and increased modes of transportation but also as "the advent of modern print culture and photography brought about a revolution in the representation of pilgrimage landscapes and contributed significantly to the rise of mass pilgrimages, such as those to Mecca, involving millions of participants."⁶⁰ As the industry of

Pilgrimage, ed. Luitgard Mols and Marjo Buitelaar (Netherlands: Sidestone Press, 2018), 163-184; Venetia Porter, *The Art of Hajj* (London: British Museum Press, 2012), 87-89.

⁵⁸ Mustafa bin Ahmet Ali, "Halatü'l-Kahire Mine'l-Adati'z-Zahire," in *Mustafa Ali's Description of Cairo of 1599: Text, Transliteration, Translation, Notes*, trans. Andreas Tietze (Austria: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975), 33.

⁵⁹ Emmanuelle Perrin, "Motifs de tatouages égyptiens: Répertoire et propositions de lecture," *Cahier du Gremamo*, no. 20 (2010): 48.

⁶⁰ Campo, "Visualizing the Hajj," 278. Helping facilitate this rise were early Ottoman photographers of Mecca interested in spreading images with pan-Islamic resonance, who often reproduced the same views and angles found in earlier illuminations or engravings.

pilgrimage grew, so too did the need for souvenirs. Soon Saudi Arabia was outsourcing mass-produced souvenirs to cities already established as cosmopolitan printing centers. Printers like Dar Masr in Cairo or Al-Manar Press in Tunis produced color prints and postcards that were sold to local clientele but also re-imported to Mecca and Medina for sale to pilgrims there (fig. 46).⁶¹ As significant as the Hajj industry was and continues to be, however, the Liebig *mir'aj* postcard demonstrates that globalizing commercial interests of various kinds, not strictly those related to pilgrimage, also drove the production of Islamic-related imagery beyond the borders of the Muslim world.⁶²

Returning to one of Newark's *mahmal* postcards reveals another image with far-flung origins. It is a busy scene set outside a generic desert city, where a crowd gathers to watch the traveling procession go by (fig. 37). The pictorial reference for this illustration appears to be an earlier stencil-colored lithograph from around 1880 (fig. 47), or a later chromolithographic version of it (fig. 48).⁶³ According to the lithograph's Arabic inscriptions, it was sold in Cairo at "[the shop of] Hassan Uways on Abidin Street, Egypt." No European names are included on the print, but its original publisher was in fact Camille Burckardt, a French printmaker working for the Wentzel printing firm in Weissenberg, Germany. From there, the print and others featuring aerial views of pilgrimage sites were exported on contract with Uways into Egypt.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Inscriptions on figure 46 identify that it was printed by Dar Masr in Cairo for Maktabat Abd Allah Fida in Mecca.

⁶² In another example, fierce competition between Sweden and Japan to corner the large market for matches in India in the late 1800s involved a type of chromolithography even more miniature than the postcard: the matchbox label. Labels were designed with imagery made specifically to appeal to either Hindu or Muslim Indians. Takashi Oishi, "Comparative Perspectives on the Intraregional Networks of Indian Merchants: a Review of the Match Economy from the Perspective of the State and 'Big Business'" in *Chinese and Indian Merchants in Modern Asia: Networking Businesses and the Formation of a Regional Economy*, ed. Chi-cheung Choi, Tomoko Shiroyama, and Takashi Oishi (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 190-228. I thank Nile Green and Aomar Boum for bringing this little-known history to my attention and suggesting its generative potential for new avenues of research on North African matchbox labels.

⁶³ Ladan Akbarnia, ed., *The Islamic World: A History in Objects* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2018), 124, fig. 1. For the chromolithographic version, which features brighter colors and less inscriptions than the stencil-colored lithograph, see Kjeld von Folsach, Torben Lunbæk and Pedar Mortensen (eds), *Sultan, Shah, and Great Mughal: The History and Culture of the Islamic World* (Copenhagen: The National Museum, 1996), cat. no. 22.

⁶⁴ David-Georges Picard, "L'imagerie populaire en Alsace," *Nouvelles de l'estampe* 232 (2010): 58-59.

That this image was designed and printed in Germany suggests that the Hajj souvenir industry originally outsourced to Egypt may have been involved in further outsourcing of its own. A Sotheby's sale in 2012 made the origins of the print public, implying that anonymous authorship was mutually beneficial for Uways and Wentzel: "The fact that this print was actually made in Europe appears to have been deliberately obscured to improve its sale potential in the Middle East."⁶⁵ This anecdote speaks to the fundamentally overlapping and highly mobile conditions of print production, while also hinting at marketing strategies that possibly motivated the presentation of such prints as being 'Islamic' or 'indigenous' in a more straightforward sense. If, however, the anonymity of the artworks discussed here stems in part from commercial stakes invested in keeping certain authors unnamed, then the varying examples of al-Buraq imagery demonstrate how it also derives from processes of citation, reference, and copying that take place across media and seem especially prevalent in the case of printed ephemera.

Maraboutic Politics Between Lens and Stone

From images that are themselves about transit, I shift now to an image in transit from one medium to another. Writing on commercial image production in colonial India, Christopher Pinney has described how "chromolithography was created and consumed within a visual culture in which there was a continual spillage between genres."⁶⁶ Here, I will consider the spillage between photography and chromolithography within the movement of ideas, news, and politico-religious affinities unfolding across colonial North Africa. In a historical moment of heightened mobility, political upheaval, and social transformation, what networks did images travel along

⁶⁵ Sotheby's, *Travel, Atlases, Maps & Natural History*, Lot 156 (London: Sotheby's, May 9, 2012), <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2012/travel-atlases-maps-natural-history-l12401/lot.156.html>.

⁶⁶ Christopher Pinney, "'A secret of their own country': Or, how Indian nationalism made itself irrefutable," in *Beyond Appearances?: Visual Practices and Ideologies in Modern India*, ed. Sumathi Ramaswamy (New Delhi: Sage, 2003), 124.

and whose influence did they extend? And what happens to the image itself as it moves from lens to stone?

While Pinney rightly notes that the “conversation” between idioms of chromolithography and photography “created mutually reinforcing expectations and validations,” they each also have a notably distinct visual lexicon.⁶⁷ Since the publication of Malek Alloula’s *The Colonial Harem* in 1981, increasing scholarly attention has been paid to gendered representation in early photography from North Africa, and Algeria especially.⁶⁸ But if women are disproportionately overrepresented in picture postcards, they rarely appear in illustrated ones—a difference that is immediately recognizable if one compares the photographic postcards collected by Dana and those of what he calls “Arabic design,” in which only one woman comprises the sole figure of any composition. She appears in two slightly varied designs, both by Bonestève, seated and facing the viewer with a fan in one hand and a string of prayer beads in the other (figs. 49-50).

This female figure is identified in Arabic by one postcard as “*murabita Zaynab*.” Zaynab bint Shaykh Muhammad (1850-1904), known colloquially as Lalla Zaynab, was a Kabyle Algerian woman renowned for her piety and saintly qualities. She served for many years as the leader of the Rahmaniyya Sufi order in al-Hamil, her small oasis hometown, but only after a bitter struggle over succession with her male cousin and the colonial authorities who favored him to replace her father. An exceptional figure in history as in the postcards, Lalla Zaynab’s “indocility toward those in authority—male military officers and their indigenous Muslim allies—provoked panic in Algiers in an era celebrated as the apogee of French Algeria.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, trans. Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

⁶⁹ Julia A. Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, Colonial Encounters (Algeria and Tunisia, 1800-1904)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 10. See also Clancy-Smith, “The House of Zainab: Female Authority and Saintly Succession in Colonial Algeria,” in *Women in Middle Eastern History*:

Marabouts, from the Arabic word *murabit*, are public religious leaders who serve as the head of a local Sufi order or center (*zawiya*).⁷⁰ They played an especially important historical role in the landscape of “maraboutic politics” that took hold of the Maghrib during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and was characterized by struggles between possible successors after the death of an important leader. These moments stoked preexisting tensions between local communities and colonial authorities, both of whom took advantage of the opportunity to support successors that might yield power in their direction.⁷¹ The appointment of a new *marabout* could thus have political implications for wider anti-colonial resistance movements on a regional scale. As Julia Clancy-Smith notes in *Rebel and Saint*, “If sufi orders have traditionally crisscrossed various kinds of borders and frontiers—political as well as spiritual and social—protest movements in nineteenth-century North Africa did likewise.”⁷² Spiritual mediators between earthly communities and ethereal realms, *marabouts* also mediated local, regional, and international politics, for which mobility and the gaining of followers across a wide lay of land was crucial.

Local saints and holy persons, mostly men, form nearly half the subjects of Newark’s postcards. Arabic captions refer to them variably as *wali*, *sayid*, or *murabit*—each with a slight variation in implication or meaning—whereas French captions, if included, are less differentiated in their terminology, opting for *marabout* or sometimes *cheikh*.⁷³ Often famous personages, the figures’ physical features and the landscapes around them nonetheless look generic. Since their

Shifting Boundaries In Sex and Gender, ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 254-274. Many thanks to Susan Slyomovics who first introduced me to Clancy-Smith’s scholarship.

⁷⁰ Note that Newark’s postcard uses the feminine cognate of *murabit*, translated as *marabouta* in French or English.

⁷¹ The term “maraboutic politics” was first used by Dale F. Eickelman, e.g. *Moroccan Islam: Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Center* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), 61, but taken up also by Clancy-Smith and others.

⁷² Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint*, xiii.

⁷³ For a brief explanation of some of these terms, see Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint*, 278, note 71.

visual components might refrain from telling specific stories, chromolithographic postcards relied instead on written captions to anchor their recognition, interpretation, and meaning as they traveled. Newark's captions provide the figure's name and any combination of where they are from, the location of their shrine, the name of their sect or order, and miracles or achievements from their lifetime. This specificity stands in contrast to photographic postcards, whose English or French captions tend only to offer generic descriptions or pithy invented dialogue between individuals assigned first names at random (fig. 51). In his study of Algerian picture postcards, David Prochaska notes that *marabouts*, who formed a popular subgenre of colonial photography, were often represented anonymously by the French as part of a generalized 'type.' Whether posed by a veritable historical figure or a paid studio model, his (or her) name was often only given when accompanying text about an insurrectionary, i.e. criminal, act they participated in.⁷⁴

In chromolithographic postcards, *marabouts* and other holy persons might be shown in the midst of an action, such as praying or performing a miracle (figs. 31, 52), but they often assume a static or sedentary position, facing the viewer frontally as though posed for a portrait (fig. 53). In the background of either type of image sometimes appears a domed white structure. This is the tomb or commemorative shrine of a local holy person, known alternately as a *qubba*, *qabr*, or *maqam* in Arabic and as *marabout*, again, in French or English. The postcard images are therefore asynchronous representations, in that the individual poses in front of the mortuary shrine that would have been built and dedicated to them after their death.

Lalla Zaynab appears indoors, unlike other *maraboutic* postcards whose male figures are shown outside, but consistent with the tendency in early photography from Algeria to represent women in domestic spaces. In fact, Newark's polychrome illustrations clearly reference a

⁷⁴ David Prochaska, "The Archive of *Algérie Imaginaire*," *History and Anthropology* 4, no. 2 (1990): 381.

historical photograph of the *marabouta* that circulated as a postcard by Collection Idéale P.S., one of three major picture postcard publishers in colonial Algeria (fig. 54).⁷⁵ Newark's versions demonstrate deliberate amendments to the lens-based original and a more playful approach to space, with the peaked top of their highly ornamental frames recalling the exterior of the tent structure whose interior is implied by the photographic referent. Lalla Zaynab's body is also bestowed a grander presence, sitting more upright and occupying more space within the frame.

In this comparison between Lalla Zaynab postcards, it is primarily iconographic elements that are translated between media, but photographic techniques or conventions can themselves be made subject to transmediated appropriations. The material specificities of chromolithography, for example, might be manipulated to reproduce certain photographic effects, using a printer's adept understanding of the textures afforded by stone. A Newark postcard featuring the traditional steward of the city of Mecca approximates a shallow depth of field common to photographic portraits: bold lines in the foreground emphasize the focus on his figure and decorated costume, while the landscape behind him remains un-contoured, employing only color and stippling to communicate a soft focus (fig. 55). Another postcard encloses the busts of seven late-Ottoman figures in circular frames, a compositional form that evokes practices of displaying and printing photographs in albums, newspapers, journals, or official documents (fig. 56).

The presence of Ottoman political and military leaders, especially Mustafa Kemal, in five of Newark's postcards immediately raises questions around the possible political context and use of these mass-produced prints (fig. 57).⁷⁶ Across the Maghrib, the large demographic of non-Arab Muslims meant that political mobilization against colonial power occurred more frequently

⁷⁵ Koos, "Going Postal," 10.

⁷⁶ Ismet Pasha and Young Turks associated with the Second Constitutional Era of the Ottoman Empire also appear on Newark's postcards. Similarities between chromolithographic prints and under-glass paintings extend to representations of political leaders, especially Kemal, as well. See, e.g., Masmoudi, *Peinture sous verre*, 63.

around the term ‘Muslim’ than ‘Arab,’ helping explain this investment in images of strong Muslim leaders, even those at a far remove.⁷⁷ Despite local Turkish oligarchs being regarded as oppressive while Algeria was itself under Ottoman rule, some Algerian religious notables helped circulate news about the Ottoman Empire, as a mighty Muslim world power, to encourage collective political identification and action.⁷⁸ As Arthur Asseraf demonstrates, news of the Turkish War of Independence (1912-1923)—in which generals including Mustafa Kemal, better known in later years as Atatürk, resisted the Allied partition of the Ottoman empire—was received enthusiastically as a “‘liberation war by proxy’ for Algerian Muslims, and Kemal himself was wildly popular,” to the point that his portrait even hung in Algerian homes.⁷⁹ Were these postcards similarly intended for, or used by, Maghribi audiences? If so, were the possible political implications or repercussions of their images perceived by or lost on the non-Muslim printers and tourists who were also crucial to their production and circulation? Lastly, could the *maraboutic* postcard have also served any political or proselytizing purposes?

Marabouts of the era did employ at least certain technologies of mass reproduction to extend their influence. By the end of the nineteenth century, as the Arabic printing press became widely available in Tunis, the city became a printing hub for Algerian religious leaders and scholars (*‘ulama*) who sought to avoid colonial restrictions on what could be published in Algeria.⁸⁰ While scholarship has helped uncover the movement of texts, ideas, and people along networks of Sufi printing across the Maghrib, the mobilization of figural images towards similar

⁷⁷ Arthur Asseraf, *Electric News in Colonial Algeria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 95.

⁷⁸ Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint*, 75-77.

⁷⁹ Asseraf, *Electric News*, 96, 158.

⁸⁰ Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint*, xiii. For example, the biography of the influential Sidi Muhammad ben Abi al-Qasim (1823-1897), Lalla Zaynab’s father, was only printed in Tunis (ca. 1890), despite the Sufi leader spending his entire life in al-Hamil, Algeria.

ends has yet to be fully explored.⁸¹ But by the 1930s, if not earlier, Algerian *marabouts* and *'ulama*, especially those associated with reformist and pan-Islamist movements, had also grown cognizant of the benefits that could potentially result from circulating their own images: even those who had previously disparaged photography now posed willingly for portraits.⁸² Some have suggested that the photograph of Lalla Zaynab reproduced on the Collection Idéale P.S. postcard—which continues to circulate online as the only image of her—was taken by her father and predecessor, the great Rahmaniyya leader himself, Sidi Muhammad ben Abi al-Qasim.⁸³

The circumstances in which Lalla Zaynab's photograph was taken remain subject to guesswork. There is similarly insufficient evidence to argue that *marabouts* were themselves involved in the production and dissemination of illustrated postcards, but these nonetheless offer very different images of locally significant religious figures than do their photographic counterparts. Prochaska argues that the colonial picture postcards of Algeria emphasize the inferiority of women to men even when portrayed in the same role or *'type:'* a *marabouta*, for example, is typically shown in coarse cloths compared to the more refined dress of a *marabout*.⁸⁴ Chromolithography proposes an opportunity to reverse this dynamic. The decorative patterns surrounding Lalla Zaynab in Newark's postcards are activated by vivid reds and yellows that dizzy and dazzle beholders while also lending an air of luxury to the image. Compared with the drab black-and-white postcard, this exaggerated use of color strikes a decidedly celebratory tone.

Given her complex reception as a historical figure, Lalla Zaynab makes an interesting choice of subject for a postcard. She earned the disparaging nickname "*fille insoumise*"

⁸¹ See, e.g., contributions to Rachida Chih, Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, and Rüdiger Seesemann, eds., *Sufism, Literary Production, and Printing in the Nineteenth Century* (Würzburg: Ergon-Verlag, 2015).

⁸² Omar Carlier, "L'émergence de la culture moderne de l'image dans l'Algérie musulmane contemporaine (Alger, 1880-1980)," *Societes Representations* 2 (2007): 339.

⁸³ Karlova and Zaitsev, *Prophets and Heroes*, 50-51.

⁸⁴ Prochaska, "*Algérie Imaginaire*," 396.

(“disobedient girl”) from her colonial adversaries; meanwhile word of her strength, piety, and saintliness had reached far enough beyond Algeria that several Western women, among them Isabelle Eberhardt and Helen Gordon, traveled to al-Hamil to meet her.⁸⁵ The *marabouta*’s respect and popularity among her own followers, her marginalization by colonial authorities, and the interest expressed in her by certain foreign travelers muddy any clear-cut sense of who these postcards were printed for. Yet even if we remain unable to reconstruct precisely who made them, to whom they were sold, or what functions they served, chromolithographic images provoke certain speculation as to their participation in spreading information and increasing the influence of certain historical actors. In contrast to the other saintly postcards in Newark’s collection, the omission of Lalla Zaynab’s name arouses certain curiosities: did these representations serve as half-guarded identifications? Was she so famous that explicitly naming her was rendered gratuitous, or were there political benefits for her recognition to remain restricted?

The hybrid nature of these North African prints encourages us to reject their reification by Euro-American institutions as so-called authentic Islamic images. On the other hand, a different reading of them as ‘Islamic’ images might be possible if we look instead to their historical reappropriations by Sufi networks or political movements, through which they could even come to threaten the imperial and colonial systems that participated in their own creation.

Conclusion

Chromolithography’s power to move certain kinds of imagery was apprehended even in its own time by colonial authorities and was, in certain contexts at least, perceived as a threat. A

⁸⁵ Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint*, 10.

rare, documented reference to these color prints (erroneously referred to as “*gravures colorées*,” or color engravings) comes to us from Senegal, in the 1908 decree that banned their importation:

All these publications and engravings that present a hostile character or one that is simply susceptible to promoting maraboutic action ought to be destroyed...One cannot deny what a marvelous instrument of propaganda the propagation of thousands of these rough engravings constitutes here, [that are so] vivid in color and that present the defenders of the only true religion in the most favorable light.⁸⁶

Noting that the Governor General of French West Africa’s reference to Islam as the “only true religion” is sarcastic, it is likely that colonial anxiety over images of Islamic themes or figures, especially *marabouts*, was heightened in this part of the continent where there existed a more vigorous proselytizing agenda than in the north. Still, his words may illuminate modes of thinking that informed the wider colonial imaginary: it was their susceptibility to spreading, mixed with their popular and even rough or crude (*grossiere*) nature, that made chromolithographs so dangerous. The irony of Europeans being involved in various aspects of producing and circulating images that were then banned by European authorities elsewhere bespeaks the deeply ambivalent, entangled nature of these prints, as well as their generative political potential.

The Senegalese decree presumably refers to large-format prints, but postcards were integral to spreading the same images even further around the globe. “The postcard, in short, was always everywhere. Mass-produced, dispersed, and always in motion, it was the quintessential traveler of the modern age,” writes Saloni Mathur, “The postcard is therefore a cosmopolitan form and a constant reminder of the imperial conditions that establish the basis for modern cosmopolitanism.”⁸⁷ Though focused on picture postcards from colonial India, Mathur’s words ring just as true for the illustrated postcards of colonial North Africa examined here. If mobility is the postcard’s distinguishing feature, it is a mobility that results from imperial conditions of a

⁸⁶ William Ponty quoted in Roberts, “Paintings like Prayers,” 78 (their translation).

⁸⁷ Mathur, *India by Design*, 115.

physical nature—the postal infrastructure connecting African and European cities, for example—but also those of a less material nature that have structured a vision of these postcard images as uncomplicatedly ‘Islamic’ or ‘Arabic’ in their origin, rather than fundamentally hybrid.

The institutions that preserved the delicate, disposable objects explored here served to further their dispersal around the world. But of course, the vast majority of postcards were dispersed through their use and not their preservation. Every once in a while, a postcard bearing the marks of its physical transit appears in the collection of a museum or library, like the Harvard Art Library’s *mi ‘raj* postcard—a copy of the same one held at Newark—that was sent from Palermo to Florence in 1918 and whose handwritten note wishes its recipient happy holidays in Italian (figs. 58-59). But a great many more used postcards live online, in the blogs of stamp and postcard collectors or traded on Ebay. My focus on the ‘front’ or ‘image’ side of the postcard here has been due to the simple fact that none of Newark’s examples bear writing on the back. However, the postcard’s defining characteristic, other than its mobility, is that it has two sides. So, what might we glean from tracking down and reading these personalized messages? If the notes written on colonial picture postcards are “frequently at odds with the visual image in a predictable kind of illogic,” do illustrated postcards exhibit a similar pattern of dissonance between front and back, between the image and the “scribble?”⁸⁸

This ‘flip’ side of a postcard can tell us much about its movements, its reception, and the publics with which it interacted, but there may be yet more ‘flip’ sides to discover. Bouanani’s films that began this paper tease us with the possibility that these prints led other, more secret existences as well—ones not captured by notes or addresses, stamps, and inked postmarks. Images that did not travel by mail traveled instead by foot, on wheels, in hands, and across walls, and it is in these untold stories that we might discover the full and rich social lives they led.

⁸⁸ Mathur, *India by Design*, 129.

Figures

[Image Redacted]

Fig 1. Ahmed Bouanani, *Tarfaya, ou la marche d'un poète (Tarfaya, or a Poet's Journey)*, 1966, film [still], personal email correspondence with Omar Berrada, March 2021.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 2. Ahmed Bouanani, *Mémoire 14*, 1966, film [still], 00:32, *Les Archives Bouanani*, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://archivesbouanani.wordpress.com/2020/07/26/heureux-celui-dont-la-memoire-repose-en-paix/>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 3. *Image Populaire*, n.d., paper, chromolithography, 64.5 x 50 cm., Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.quaibranly.fr/en/explore-collections/base/Work/action/show/notice/385443-image-populaire/>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 4. Hamid Bennani, *Wechma* (Traces), 1970, film [still], 13:15, *YouTube*, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zsC78z4cL5Q>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 5. [*al-Buraq*, Back of postcard]: Éditions Bonestève, Modèle déposé, no. 162, purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 6. [*Sidi Abdallah and Yamina*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 7. [*Sidi Abdallah et la fille du roi de Tunis*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 8. Mahmoud El Fériani, *Abdallah Ibn Jaqfar et L'la Yamna fille du Grand Roi de Tunis*, 1890, under-glass painting, 74 x 64 cm., private collection of Ali Bellagha, in Mohamed Masmoudi, *La peinture sous verre en tunisie* (Tunis: Cérès Productions, 1972), 2-3.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 9. *Abdallah et Yamina*, ca. 1880s, under-glass painting, 28 x 34 cm., Centre des Arts et Traditions Populaires, Tunis, in Mohamed Masmoudi, *La peinture sous verre en tunisie* (Tunis: Cérès Productions, 1972), 51.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 10. Image Populaire, fuite de Abdallah avec Yamina, 20th century, paper, paint, chromolithography, 32.5 x 42 x 1.5 cm., Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.quaibranly.fr/en/explore-collections/base/Work/action/show/notice/25993-image-populaire-fuite-de-abdallah-avec-yamina/page/1/>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 11. Édit. Bonestève / Imp. Baconnier, Sidi Abdallah et la fille de roi de Tunis, ca. 1905, print (reproduction photomécanique sur papier), 32.2 x 42.2 cm., Le Centre Pompidou, Paris, accessed March 23, 2021, https://collection.centrepompidou.fr/artwork/150000001047723?filters=query%3Asidi%20abdallah&page=1&layout=grid&sort=by_author.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 12. Wassily Kandinsky, Couple Riding, 1906-1907, oil on canvas, 55 x 50.5 cm., Lenbachhaus, Munich, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.lenbachhaus.de/en/discover/collection-online/detail/reitendes-paar-30003112>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 13. Ivan Bilibin, [Illustration for “One Thousand and One Nights”], 1931-1932, color lithograph, 31.5 x 90 cm., Artnet accessed March 23, 2021, <http://www.artnet.com/artists/ivan-yakovlevich-bilibin/illustrations-for-one-thousand-and-one-nights-I0tIJkbAeUByUUlOnx6YLw2>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 14. [*al-Buraq, Jibra'il, and the Prophet Muhammad*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 15. [*al-Buraq*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 16. [al-Buraq], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 17. [al-Buraq and Jibra'il], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 18. [al-Buraq, Jibra'il, and the Prophet Muhammad], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 19. Nasrallah Munshi, “*The Prophet Muhammad’s ascension*,” from *Kalīla va Dimna*, ca. 1350-1400, manuscript folio, possibly Shiraz, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Persan Ms. 376, fol. 2v., in Christiane Gruber, “Between Logos (Kalima) and Light (Nūr): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting,” *Muqarnas Online* 26, no. 1 (2009): 238.

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Fig 20. “*Payambar savar bar Buraq va Jibra’il istad-e dar pish-e oo (The Prophet Riding al-Buraq with Jibra’il Beside Him)*,” from *Mir’ajnama Shoja’i Mashhadi*, 19th century, lithograph, in Farzaneh Najafi, “*Noqush-e Fereshteh va Div dar Naqashiha-e do Bana-ye Mas’habi-ye Mazandaran dar Qiyas ba Naqashiha-ye Divari-e Qajar* (Images of Angels and Demons: In the Paintings of Two Religious Buildings in Mazandaran in Comparison with Qajar Murals), *Pajuheshnama Grafik va Naqashi (Journal of Graphic and Painting Research)*, vol. 1 (Fall / Winter 2013), accessed March 23, 2021, DOI: 10.22051/pgr.2019.21715.1006. (My translation).

[Image Redacted]

Fig 21. *Mir’aj-e Payambar*, ca. 1830s, mural (external wall of Imamzadeh Zayn al-Din in Yazdelan, Kashan), in Alireza Baharloo and Aliasghar Fahimifar, “Aesethetic Elements in Qajar Popular Wall Paintings of the Prophet’s Mi’raj,” *Culture and Folk Literature* 5, no. 13 (2017): 98.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 22. Majlis-e Mi'raj-e Payghambar, 19th century, mural (external wall of Buqqa Baba Vali in Baba Vali village, Daylaman), in Alireza Baharloo and Aliasghar Fahimifar, "Aesethetic Elements in Qajar Popular Wall Paintings of the Prophet's Mi'raj," Culture and Folk Literature 5, no. 13 (2017): 96.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 23. Buraq with Taj Mahal, 20th century, poster print, private collection of Sandra Freitag, in Yasmine Seale, "Out of Their Love They Made It: A Visual History of Buraq," The Public Domain Review, September 21, 2016, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://publicdomainreview.org/essay/out-of-their-love-they-made-it-a-visual-history-of-buraq>.

[Image Redacted]

[Image Redacted]

Fig 24. [*Khalid ibn al-Walid*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 25. [*'Ali slaying Ras al-Ghul*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 26. Khelifa Jelassi, *Achterglasschildering met als voorstelling Ali in gevecht met het monster Ra's al-ghul*, 20th century, reverse glass painting, 39 x 48 in., Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://collectie.wereldculturen.nl/#/query/743cecef-bed5-49dd-bb9b-4b936637f969>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig. 27. *Ali et Ras El Ghoul*, n.d., under-glass painting, 29 x 31 cm., Centre des Arts et Traditions Populaires, Tunis, in Mohamed Masmoudi, *La peinture sous verre en tunisie* (Tunis: Cérès Productions, 1972), 36.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 28. [*Saint Georges devenu héros de Légende tunisienne*], n.d., under-glass painting, 68 x 49 cm., private collection of Ali Bellagha, in Mohamed Masmoudi, *La peinture sous verre en tunisie* (Tunis: Cérès Productions, 1972), 19.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 29. [*al-Buraq*] (uncaptioned), n.d., under-glass painting, in Mohamed Masmoudi, *La peinture sous verre en tunisie* (Tunis: Cérès Productions, 1972), 72.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 30. Al Boraq, n.d., chromolithograph with a painted background, 50 x 61 cm., in Anne-Marie Bouttiaux-Ndiaye, *Senegal Behind Glass: Images of Religious and Daily Life* (Munich and New York: Prestel-Verlag and Tervuren: Royal Museum of Central Africa, 1994), 38, plate 1.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 31. [Sidi Ouali Dhadha], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 32. Prayers on the Waves, n.d., under-glass painting, 33 x 42 cm., in Anne-Marie Bouttiaux-Ndiaye, *Senegal Behind Glass: Images of Religious and Daily Life* (Munich and New York: Prestel-Verlag and Tervuren: Royal Museum of Central Africa, 1994), 56, plate 20.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 33. Al Boraq Flying over Mecca, n.d., under-glass painting, 40 x 50 cm., in *Anne-Marie Bouttiaux-Ndiaye, Senegal Behind Glass: Images of Religious and Daily Life* (Munich and New York: Prestel-Verlag and Tervuren: Royal Museum of Central Africa, 1994), 46, plate 9.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 34. Leibig's Extract of Meat Company, Il ragno di Maometto (The Spider of Mohammad), c. 1928, chromolithographic postcard, Look and Learn: History Picture Archive accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.lookandlearn.com/history-images/M849923/Mohammed-and-the-spider>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 35. [Surah al-Ankabut (The Spider)], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 36. Leibig's Extract of Meat Company (Liebig Fleish-Extrakt), *Der Erzengel Gabriel führt Mohammed zu Allah*, 1928, chromolithographic postcard, in Diana Darke, "The Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Art," Diana Darke (blog), February 15, 2015, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://dianadarke.com/2015/02/15/the-prophet-muhammad-in-islamic-art/>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 37. [*Mahmal Procession*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, approximately 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 38. [*Mahmal*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 39. Pilgrimage proxy scroll, 1206, handwritten and hand-painted on glazed (abadi) paper using ink and watercolour, 55 x 26.5 cm., Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, accessed March 23, 2021, http://islamicart.museumwnf.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;tr;Mus01;7;en.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 40. [Bayt al-Maqdis], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

*Fig 41. Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Jazūlī, *Dalā'il al-khayrāt wa-shawāriq al-anwār fī al-ṣalāh 'alā al-Nabī al-mukhtār*, 1793 or 1794, manuscript, 11 x 17 cm., accessed March 23, 2021, <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/2026736>.*

[Image Redacted]

Fig 42. [sites of Mecca and Karbala], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 43. Khaled Hafez, Courtyard of a house, 2009, photograph, in Venetia Porter, The Art of Hajj (London: British Museum Press, 2012), 89, plate 54.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 44. Tattoo display board from the National Geographic Society Museum of Cairo, 1920s-30s, wood and painted glass panels, in Emmanuelle Perrin, “Motifs de tatouages égyptiens : Répertoire et propositions de lecture,” Cahier du Gremamo, no. 20 (2010), 1.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 45. Tattoo designs of mosque and mahmal, from the National Geographic Society Museum of Cairo, 1920s-30s,, 1920s-30s, under-glass painting, in Emmanuelle Perrin, “Beautiful Wounds: The World of Traditional Egyptian Tattoos,” *Rawi Magazine* 6 (2014), accessed March 23, 2021, <https://rawi-magazine.com/articles/tattoos/>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 46. Dar Masr, Cairo (Printed for Maktabat Abd Allah Fida, Mecca), Pilgrim's certificate depicting the Ka'bah and al-Haram, 1895-1905, paper, lithography, 43.5 x 64 cm., Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11840/1031194>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 47. Wentzel, The Egyptian Mahmal on its Way to Mecca, ca. 1880, coloured lithograph, 42.5 x 59 cm., The Khalili Collections, London, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.khalilicollections.org/collections/hajj-and-the-arts-of-pilgrimage/khalili-collection-hajj-and-the-arts-of-pilgrimage-the-egyptian-mahmal-on-its-way-to-mecca-arc-pt76/>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 48. The Holy Mahmal, 20th century, print on paper, 34 x 48 cm., The David Collection, Copenhagen, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/cultural-history-themes/five-pillars/art/39b-1995>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 49. [Lalla Zaynab], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 50. [Lalla Zaynab], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, approximately 3 x 5 in., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 51. Jean Geiser, [*“Ya Mohamed! Adjéri...fissa, fissa”*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 52. [*Marabout*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 53. [*al-Tayyib bin Sidi Issa*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 54. Collection Idéale P.S., *ALGÉRIE – Grande Marabouta Lala Zinep*, acquired between 1950-2011, collotype on card stock, 14 x 8.9 cm., Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://collections.mfa.org/objects/573189/algerie--grande-marabouta-lala-zinep?ctx=09572eff-bab6-4ed6-9b62-6cf07618a71b&idx=0>.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 55. [*Sharif of Mecca*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 56. [*Ottoman figures*], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 57. [Kemal Pasha], purchased 1928, chromolithographic postcard, 9 x 14 cm., Newark Museum Library, Newark.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 58. Postcard of the Prophet Riding a Buraq [Front of postcard], postmarked December 14, 1918, ink and paper, 3 x 5 in., Harvard Fine Arts Library, Special Collections, Boston, accessed March 23, 2021, https://images.hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=HVD_VIA8001267430&context=L&vid=HVD_IMAGES&search_scope=default_scope&tab=default_tab&lang=en_US.

[Image Redacted]

Fig 59. Postcard of the Prophet Riding a Buraq [Back of postcard], postmarked December 14, 1918, ink and paper, 3 x 5 in., Harvard Fine Arts Library, Special Collections, Boston, accessed March 23, 2021, https://images.hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=HVD_VIA8001267430&context=L&vid=HVD_IMAGES&search_scope=default_scope&tab=default_tab&lang=en_US.

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