

*Spies on Hajj: A Story of "Seeing Like a State"*

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Throughout 1830-1914, the expansion of cheap steamship travel allowed swarms of Muslims to crowd Mecca in order to participate in the Hajj pilgrimage. Many of these Muslims belonged to the French, British, Russian, and Dutch Empires, all of whom viewed Mecca as doubly threatening. The Ottomans lacked the infrastructure necessary to accommodate the influx of pilgrims, creating unsanitary conditions fruitful for infectious diseases like cholera that claimed an overwhelming amount of lives. At the same time, British officials were panicked about a potential loss of power due to Pan-Islamism, a proposed collective Islamic faith that Empires viewed as a challenge to European imperial rule. Historians have primarily examined the technological advancements of the steamship in relation to free travel and mass migration but overlook the spies employed by the British Commonwealth of Nations to monitor daily practices of pilgrims.

This paper examines three British spies, in particular, Christiann Snouck Hurgronje, Sir Richard Francis Burton, and M.Siddık Gümüş in order to depict the British's religious intolerance and strive for political security. The use of espionage on many of their subjects as a method of maintaining power and creating harmony within their population underscores the British's intention to manage Muslim subjects for taxation, conscription, and identification purposes, which reflects James Scott's concept of "seeing like a state."