



Pilgrimage: Past and Present in the World Religions

Simon Coleman, John Elsner

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From the Great Panathenaea of ancient Greece to the *hajj* of today, people of all religions and cultures have made sacred journeys to confirm their faith and their part in a larger identity. This book is a fascinating guide through the vast and varied cultural territory such pilgrimages have covered across the ages. The first book to look at the phenomenon and experience of pilgrimage through the multiple lenses of history, religion, sociology, anthropology, and art history, this sumptuously illustrated volume explores the full richness and range of sacred travel as it maps the cultural imagination.

The authors consider pilgrimage as a physical journey through time and space, but also as a metaphorical passage resonant with meaning on many levels. It may entail a ritual transformation of the pilgrim's inner state or outer status; it may be a quest for a transcendent goal; it may involve the healing of a physical or spiritual ailment. Through folktales, narratives of the crusades, and the firsthand accounts of those who have made these journeys; through descriptions and pictures of the rituals, holy objects, and sacred architecture they have encountered, as well as the relics and talismans they have carried home, *Pilgrimage* evokes the physical and spiritual landscape these seekers have traveled. In its structure, the book broadly moves from those religions--Judaism, Christianity, and Islam--that cohere around a single canonical text to those with a multiplicity of sacred scriptures, like Hinduism and Buddhism. Juxtaposing the different practices and experiences of pilgrimage in these contexts, this book reveals the common structures and singular features of sacred travel from ancient times to our own.

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