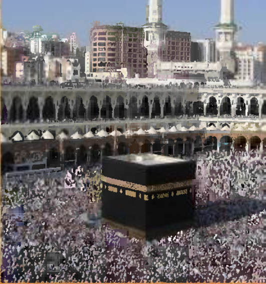

Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Management

An International Perspective

2nd Edition

Edited by Razaq Raj and Kevin Griffin

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Edited by

Razaq Raj

Leeds Beckett University, UK

and

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1

Introduction to Sacred or Secular Journeys

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Introduction

The principle behind this new edition is to demonstrate to the reader the intrinsic details that have a crucial role to play within the religious tourism and pilgrimage management process. The connection with other generic disciplines will become evident within the text, leading the reader to a more complete understanding of the key management concepts. The new 2nd edition provides an updated and valuable resource for scholars of religious tourism management from other disciplines, who may not have considered how intricately management is contextualized within and intertwined with the marketing, finance and operation of religious and pilgrimage sites. The 2nd edition lays a foundation for scholars, practitioners and students who do not study management, but who are concerned with the appearance and development of religious tourism and pilgrimage.

In discussing the sacred or secular journey, it is important to begin with an acknowledgement of the work undertaken by the authors who have laid the foundations for our current understanding of this concept. Smith's 1977 (revised in 1989) seminal work *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* is regarded by many as the touchstone for much tourism material of an anthropological nature and indeed this is particularly true on the topic of sacred journeys, which was introduced to many by Nelson H.H. Graburn's chapter entitled 'Tourism: The Sacred Journey'. Building on a range of classical writing such as Durkheim's early 20th-century work, Graburn presents an engaging discussion which juxtaposes the profane/workaday/stay-at-home life with a touristic/nonordinary/sacred one. This sacred world closely resonates with the Turnerian concept of communitas (Turner and Turner, 1978) which relates to spontaneously entering a spiritual and social state, while travelling on a pilgrimage.

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Developing this idea further, Morinis (in 1992) suggested that such spiritual journeys may in fact be an internal experience, rather than an external physical one. Wayne Fife, developing this and applying it to missionaries, suggests that one of the purposes of a spiritual journey is to turn the 'old self' into a 'new self'; thus the core of a spiritual journey is the transforming encounter between the familiar self and the 'other' – thus the 'centre' which is being sought can be considered to be located within.

In the current literature there is relatively limited research exploring the understanding and motivation of religious tourists' patterns of visitation to sacred sites. However, there is common agreement on some issues in the investigation of religious tourism, such as the term 'religious space' referring to both the confined space within a shrine, sanctuary, cathedral, etc. and the religious space pilgrims travel through on their pilgrimages. They also point out that a wide scope of potential areas for future research also exist within the general area of study. This ranges from the need to explore and refine the sacred–profane continuum to the role of guides, interpreters and interpretation at religious sites. In a sense, what emerges is the eclectic nature of the study of religious tourism and pilgrimages, not least because of the complex and changing relationships between visitors and the visited on a global stage; while on the one hand a strengthening of religious devotion is evident, on the other there is the fragmentation of religion into new, quasi-religious and secular movements. The recurring issue here is the management of potentially competing sacred and secular uses of religious sites.

Within ever-changing global political landscapes, religion has retained a significant place as a social movement with complexity of structures and functions that pervades cultures and traditions. It is clear that while there is no single or simple definition of the complex concept of religion, it is a system of recognizable beliefs and practices that acknowledges the existence of a 'super-human' power and enables people to both address and transcend the problems of life (Hinnells, 1984, p. 270).

This book is a timely reassessment of the increasing linkages and interconnections between shared sacred and secular spaces on a global stage, and explores key learning points from a range of contemporary case studies of religious and pilgrimage activity, related to ancient, sacred and emerging tourist destinations and new forms of pilgrimage, faith systems and quasi-religious activities. It is an eclectic collection of case study-based chapters in which individual authors are invited to express personal, theoretical and empirical research insights on pilgrimage, religion and tourism. Therefore, a key strength of this updated book is the presentation of current and diverse empirical research insights on aspects of religious tourism and pilgrimage. The book is designed to present the reader with both common and disparate elements of these phenomena reflecting the powerful unifying and contradictory elements of this field of study. This chapter initially explores the complex nature of the concepts of religion and tourism and the interaction between the two. It subsequently explores the emerging experience economy, and the implications for how an expanding symbolic economy has the capacity to change the expressions of religious tourism and pilgrimage. The final part highlights the key elements of the various chapters.

Religion

Religion is an age-old and dynamic concept which embraces a breadth of activity such as ancient, living/current and emerging new religious and quasi-religious movements, also including traditional living religions of primal societies and modern secular alternatives to religion. While there are common elements to the concept of religion which include transcendent deities, heavenly beings, demons and divinations, there are defining elements which characterize distinct religious movements. Furthermore, in articulating the Western conceptualization of non-Western religions, Hinnells (1984) cautions about the potential distorting of non-Western religious concepts, in particular highlighting that cultures such as the Aborigines of Australia and Amerindians have some of the oldest living religions which have been subsumed and influenced by Western religious narratives. Hinnells (1984) also highlights the challenge of giving adequate coverage to the full spectrum of ancient, living and quasi-religions and warns that the emphasis might easily stray towards certain major religions to the exclusion of others.

Sherratt and Hawkins (1972) recognize that there is a balance to be achieved between definitions of religion being too narrow and restrictive, and yet too general and broad. With these considerations in mind they consider the defining elements of religion to include some belief in a supernatural being (or beings) which are ‘usually worshipped or venerated because they are transcendental or powerful’ and that religion is primarily ‘a state of mind which motivates action and belief . . . [and has] a ritual and emotional element’ (1972, p. 245). They acknowledge that these definitional elements are not a catch-all for every religion (for example, Theravada Buddhism), but their definition has common definitional elements encapsulated by Campbell’s comprehensive definition of religion being: ‘A state of mind, comprising belief in the reality of a supernatural being or beings, endued with transcendent power and worth, together with the complex emotive attitudes of worship intrinsically appropriate thereto’ (1957, p. 248).

These complex emotive attitudes of worship are highlighted in the Christian tradition (which can also be applied to other religions) by Hinnells (1984, p. 47) as being expressed by five ‘Arguments for the Existence of God’ based on an ontological, cosmological, teleological, moral and experiential argument. Existentialist philosophical doctrines challenge what they perceive to be the dogmatic restrictiveness of organized religion, with quasi-religious movements, such as dialectical materialism underpinning Marxism, offering competing narratives to dominant religious world views (Hinnells, 1984, p. 108). Consistent with this view, Rosenau highlights that ‘Non-institutional religion, new spirituality, is a central focus; [which] is offered as an alternative to modern, organized mainstream [religions]’ (1992, p. 149). Included within forms of non-institutional religion are New Age postmodernists who, in rejecting the rigidity of institutionalized religion, embrace the ‘mystical and the magical’ (1992, p. 152). While the main focus of this book is on the more traditionally defined aspects of religion, this diversity of interpretation as to the changing nature of religion is welcomed and addressed within this text.

The study of religion encompasses a diverse range of academic disciplines, traditionally attracting the attention of historians, orientalists, classicists, archaeologists, sociologists, anthropologists, linguists, art historians, philosophers and theologians (Hinnells, 1984). Increasingly, the study of religion is combined with other emerging academic disciplines to express new insights into the significance of religion within the contemporary socio-cultural mileu (Hinnells, 1984, p. 128). A postmodern discourse of religion would not position the concept within one academic discipline, and would 'question any possibility of rigid disciplinary boundaries' (Rosenau, 1992, p. 6). Within Religionswissenschaft (the science of religion) are a group of disciplines including the phenomenology of religion, which includes a classification of ideas, actions and symbols in a study or method of describing and gaining empathetic understanding of religious phenomena without offering explanation of truth or falsity of religious beliefs (Hinnells, 1984, p. 250). This is contrasted with theological discourses of belief systems and 'revealed truths' which vary according to the different theologies under consideration. This discipline can even include the emergence of 'Death of God' theologies (influenced by Nietzsche) which challenge the utility of the 'language of God' for modern secular man. More mainstream are sociological discourses which include functionalist perspectives applied to the study of the science of religion, based on an understanding and sense that religious functionality creates societal solidarity.

The study of world religions requires one to understand a diverse collection of practices, rituals and ideas which articulate 'professions' of faith, and to paraphrase Sherratt and Hawkins (1972) the intellectualization of 'professions' of faith is more than an understanding of 'abstract philosophical notions'. Their historical categorization of religion traces the origins of world religions to the emergence of rudimentary religion in which 'profession' of faith by ancient primal societies is linked to animism (which they view as belonging to the same epoch as to the early evolution of humans) and the notion that living things are animated by spirits which are distinct from living human beings (1972, p. 10). They argue that while animism is 'without scriptures and oral tradition', like religion it 'is more concerned with unseen forces but, like magic, it deals with an area which cannot be manipulated by ordinary methods'. They go on to claim that 'magic and religion have become intermeshed' (1972, pp. 10–11). Animism's link to the emergence of mainstream religions is evidenced in a common characteristic – the notion of 'soul survival' beyond human death.

In cataloguing the emergence in the Near East and the West of the religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Sherratt and Hawkins (1972) described the association of these religions with polytheist beliefs in many gods and the monotheist belief in one God. The major religions of India and Southern Asia are Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Sikhism and the religions of the Far East are Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto and Mahayana Buddhism. Sherratt and Hawkins (1972) highlighted the emergence of modern religious groups including Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons in the 19th century. Their categorization of religions include *theistic religions*, which cover religions of the Near East and the West 'where the object of ultimate concern is a transcendental being e.g. Islam, Christianity and Judaism', and *non-theistic religions* of India and Southern Asia ‘where the object of ultimate concern is an all-pervading power or “higher principle”’ (1972, p. 246). They also argue that movements such as Communism, which has ritual elements and characteristics of other religions, form part of a categorization of *secular or quasi-religions* (1972, p. 248).

Tourism

There are inherent complexities within the phenomenon of tourism, because of its ‘conceptual weakness and fuzziness’ and the fact that it is a multifaceted and multidimensional phenomenon (Cooper *et al*., 1993, p. 4). It has unclear origins, but is commonly associated with religious pilgrimages and the ‘Grand Tour’ and various other significant movements of people from their usual place of residence to some other destination (Lavery, 1987; Holloway, 1989; Towner, 1994). Burns and Holden (1995) described tourism as both ‘enigmatic and bizarre, enigmatic in as much as there remains aspects of it difficult to define, and bizarre in that it sets out to make theoretical sense of people having fun’ (1995, p. 1). Mill and Morrison’s view is that: ‘Tourism is a difficult phenomenon to describe, all tourism involves travel, yet all travel is not tourism’ (1985, p. xvii). Burkhart and Medlik concur, adding that ‘much of this movement is international in character and much of it is a leisure activity’ (1981, p. v). Krippendorf (1987), in considering tourism, views the obsession with travel as a feature of postmodern societies, which is consistent with Urry’s view that ‘people are much of the time tourists whether they like it or not’ (1990, p. 82).

Tourism as a global industry is a generator of large numbers of international arrivals, with 1087 million recorded in 2013, and with prospects of international arrivals rising to 1.8 billion by the year 2030 (Kester, 2014). Despite its susceptibility to global acts of terrorism and war, famine and disease, it continues to be viewed as a growth industry. The ubiquitous nature of tourism as a global phenomenon is not without its problems, with Krippendorf identifying that the 1960s signalled the ‘beginning of universal and unrestrained tourism development euphoria’ (1987, p. 68). Turner and Ash (1975) recognized that the early global growth of tourism’s celebrated economic benefits also created unwelcome socio-cultural and environmental problems. Mathieson and Wall (1982), in their analysis of the impacts of tourism, position the tourism industry as a powerful agent globally for economic growth in both developing and developed countries, but with associated negative environmental and socio-cultural externalities. Reflecting on these negative impacts of tourism, and their impact on activities such as pilgrimage, Burns and Holden recognize that:

> what started as pilgrimage, as education for elite, or amusement for the masses has been transferred into a global consumer product in much the same way that Pepsi-Cola, Benetton, McDonalds etc. have all become standardised, rationalised global phenomena.
>
> (Burns and Holden 1995, p. 9)

In line with its global credentials Poon (1993, p. 32) recognizes the 'Fordist' characteristics of mass tourism as a standardized packaging of tourist products, which are consumed without social, environmental and cultural concerns. Similarly, Shaw and Williams recognize that mass tourism is:

> now deeply embedded in the organization of life in the more developed world. Over time the objects of what Urry terms the tourism gaze, have changed: winter sports have been added to coastal holidays, and the field of mass tourism has become increasingly internationalized.
>
> (Shaw and Williams 1994, p. 175)

Wheeller (1993) and Towner (1994) offer counter-views to the vilification of mass tourism and warn against framing it in a negative and oversimplified manner, with the crude caricaturing of tourism as a major environmental predator. Towner in particular views this onslaught on mass tourism as an elitist and value-laden response: 'Spas "declined" when the upper classes forsook them for more exclusive destinations, seaside resorts "waned" when their social tone altered. No matter that the actual number of visitors increased; they were the wrong sort of visitors' (1994, p. 724).

In addition to examinations such as those outlined above, many tourism academics have focused on the motivations and behaviours of the tourists themselves. 'Cognitive-normative models' as developed by Plog (1974) and later by Cohen (1979), instead of simply discussing the interaction of the tourist and the environment, try to illustrate the motivations behind travel. Plog (1974) constructed a very useful 'psychographic continuum' of tourists, ranging from psychocentric, to midcentric and allocentric travellers. Allocentrics were viewed as the most adventurous tourists, in search of remote locations, while midcentrics seek 'limited adventure' and psychocentrics choose destinations characterized by familiarity and security. Cohen (1979) modified Plog's typology, identifying five distinct modes of travel: recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental and existential, with these broad categories clearly applying equally well to both 'modern pilgrims' and tourists in search of 'pleasure'.

These models highlight that in some instances there is a spiritual dimension to motivations for tourism, with the second category of tourists seeking diversionary recreational experiences in artificial 'pleasure environments'. Urry (1990) identifies this search for artificial pleasure environments as part of the condition of postmodernism, and the 'dissolving of . . . boundaries' (1990, p. 82) of cultural forms in society, with tourists engaged in 'pseudo-events and disregarding the "real" world outside' (1990, p. 7). This search for the artificial, added to tourism's reputation as being a resource-intensive industry (McKercher, 1993), raises ethical questions about the responsibility of how the tourism industry and tourists interact with host communities and the natural environment. An ethical response to the prudent use of resources for tourism creates a special challenge in the aspiration to achieve intra-generational and inter-generational equity. Prosser (1992, p. 37) considers that holidays are the 'high point of our leisure lives, as we are removed from the norms and structures of everyday life', and that 'one of the central dilemmas of tourism is that, by definition, it is a selfish and self-indulgent experience' (1992, p. 37).

McKercher speculates that as a resource-dependent and a private sector-dominated industry, with investment decisions being based predominantly on profit maximization, that ‘tourism is an industrial activity that exerts a series of impacts that are similar to other industrial activities’ (1993, p. 14). Furthermore, as a multifaceted industry, it is difficult to constrain and standardize within a coherent legislative framework or voluntary implementation of a code of ethics. In terms of the ‘responsibilities’ of tourists, McKercher (1993) views them as consumers, not ‘anthropologists’, and that essentially tourism is a form of entertainment. While he raises questions of how agencies and organizations might ameliorate and ‘manage’ the externalities of tourism, he argues that modifications to tourist activity might be dependent on the emergence of new forms of tourism. In this respect Palmer (1992) argues that we have an obligation of bequeathing ‘an undiminished bank of natural resources’ (1992, p. 182) to future generations, as part of a sustainable society. He identifies that the bequeathing of resources requires a more cautionary approach to development, with new forms of tourism adopting ‘softer development paths’ (Jafari, 1989; Poon, 1993).

Burns and Holden (1995) note that ‘these ideas have also increasingly found favour in postmodern societies, in search of the alternative as a means of giving new meaning and values to social order’ (1995, p. 208). Consistent with this statement, Urry (1990, p. 13) views the search for the ‘alternative’ as consistent with changes from ‘post-Fordist’ to more individual patterns of consumption, prompting more specialized purchasing and segmentation of consumer preferences.

In part Urry views the search for new tourist products as disillusionment with mass tourism products and ‘contemporary consumerism’ (1990, p. 13). He argues that an industry has emerged with specialist travel agents catering for a ‘discriminatory independent minded clientele’ (1990, p. 96) engaging in ‘connoisseur leisure’ (Shaw and Williams, 1994, p. 198). Nevertheless, Shaw and Williams identify that ‘the essential features of mass tourism – spatial and temporal polarisation, dependency and external control, and intense environmental pressures – will remain little changed’ (1994, p. 200).

However, Hitchcock (1993) recognizes a desire for a move away from uncontrolled and poorly managed tourism, towards alternative and appropriate forms of tourism, which signal ‘a shift in the centre of gravity of mass tourism’ (1993, p. 25). He recognizes that organizations such as Tourism Concern and the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism (ECTWT) have lobbied for ‘softer forms’ of tourism which replace exploitative tourism. Hitchcock recognizes the potential benefits of alternative tourism ‘encouraging people both inside and outside the tourism industry to look more critically and questioningly at how tourism is affecting destinations’ (1993, p. 26).

The Experience Industry

Boorstin (1964), in lamenting the ‘Lost Art of Travel’, cites the example of Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Travels with a Donkey* as a metaphor to contrast slow and meditative forms of travel with more rapid travel, characterized by air travel. This rapid travel sees tourism as a 'superficial pursuit of contrived experiences – a collection of pseudo-events' (Richards, 2001, p. 14). This leads to the creation of *spectacle* through an array of manufactured tourist attractions, which are designed to mimic the awe-inspiring nature of religious and holy sites. These tourist attractions create manifestations of pseudo-events, satiating superficial experiences. Richards, in considering this, cites the work of MacCannell (1976) who views tourist attractions as 'symbols of modern consciousness' and also considers sightseeing as 'a modern ritual' with attractions venerated though 'sight sacralization' (2001, p. 15). Thus, as tourism has evolved, 'must-see' attractions replace 'must-see' religious sites, such that tourist attractions have become 'the modern cathedrals of consumption' (Ritzer, 1999, p. 17).

In this new form of interaction, these 'cathedrals of consumption' have an enchanted, sometimes even sacred, religious character for many people, but, in order to attract ever-larger numbers, such cathedrals of consumption need to offer, or at least appear to offer, increasingly magical, fantastic and enchanted settings in which to consume (Ritzer, 1999, p. 8 cited in Richards, 2001, p. 17). Richard's thesis is that both cultural and religious sites are not immune to this process but that in order to succeed, all attractions take on 'symbolic value and meaning' (2001, p. 17).

Richards (2001) highlights the work of Edensor (1998) who differentiates between 'enclavic' spaces of consumption such as hotels and attractions, which have dominant discourses controlled by the 'international tourist industry', and 'heterogeneous' spaces, which are largely unplanned, where consumption is typified by tourists who literally become '"performers", creating experiences for themselves and their fellow visitors to consume' (Richards, 2001 p. 18).

In Boorstin's treatise on the inauthentic experiences of modern tourism, there are parallels between the perceived qualities of the traveller from previous centuries and the authentic experience of religious worship which they experienced. Travel in this former age had associated dangers, was arduous and involved a 'journey into the unknown', qualities also associated with religious veneration as part of the act of pilgrimage (1964, p. 14). The subsequent decline of this form of traveller and the rise of 'the tourist' (which Boorstin mapped to the mid-19th century) was, according to Fjagesund and Symes, linked to the decline of the traditional elitist associations with travel. And while a throwback to the 'exclusivity of the Grand Tour' (2002, p. 48) was articulated through travel literature of the 19th century, most notably the poems of William Wordsworth, the metamorphosis of the traveller into a tourist embodies a process of touristification (Picard, 1996) and a sense of the self-identity as to what it means to be a tourist, perhaps redefining what people 'do' as tourists.

Richards argues that 'the problems of growing cultural competition between cities has more recently led to a shift from consumption-led to production-led strategies' (2001, p. 12) and central to this is an increasing interest in festivalization and commodification of destinations. Inherent in this is a worrying implication that 'traditional culture is not sufficient – popular culture must be added to the production mix' (2001, p. 13). Richards (2001) cites the work of Pine and Gilmore (1999) in suggesting that economies have ‘gone through a transition from extracting commodities to making goods, delivering services and currently staging experiences as the primary arena of value creation’ (2001, p. 55). The corollary of this thesis is that destinations are marketing themselves as places to visit to consume experiences and to engage in ‘enchantment’ (Richards, 2001, p. 58), rivalling not only other experience-based economies but also religious-based experiences. Therefore religion as a tourist experience will increasingly become part of the symbolic economy.

Religion and Tourism

There is a range of historical examples of linkages between religion and travel. Sherratt and Hawkins characterize Islam as a ‘vital, vivacious and expanding religion’ (1972, p. 93) in which Muhammad’s migration (the *Hijra*) from Mecca to Madinah (Medina) in AD 622 was the genesis of the rapid spread of Islam throughout the world. Embodied within the Five Pillars of Islam is the notion of pilgrimage and the obligation that once in a lifetime Muslims should undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca (‘if able to do so’). Paralleled with this is the formation of a Non-conformist church through the emergence of Methodism in England, which saw John Wesley, its organizer, travelling over 250,000 miles on horseback to preach sermons (Sherratt and Hawkins, 1972). What is emerging from reflecting on similarities such as this is a body of academic literature which recognizes a systematization of religion, pilgrimage and tourism.

Nolan and Nolan (1992) were some of the earliest authors to address religious tourism, describing the European religious system as comprising religious attractions, pilgrimage shrines (both non-touristic and touristic) and festivals. They highlighted the interaction between ‘pious’ pilgrims and secular tourists, acknowledging that ‘Regardless of their motivations, all visitors to these attractions require some level of services, ranging from providing for the most basic human needs, to full commercial development that rivals the most secular resort’ (1992, p. 69). Despite Turner and Turner’s earlier contention that ‘if a pilgrim is half a tourist then a tourist is half a pilgrim’ (1978, p. 20), Nolan and Nolan (1992) suggest that: ‘At a well-visited shrine, visitors on any given day may represent a gradient from very pious and seriously prayerful, to purely secular and basically uninformed about the religious meaning of the place.’

Although visitors representing these extremes usually exhibit different behaviours, there is no dichotomy between pilgrims and tourists: ‘Many fall into the range of intermediate categories’ (Nolan and Nolan, 1992, p. 69). The authors suggest that despite the potential incompatibility of these different visitors it is possible to manage potential conflicts. These potential conflicts have more recently been catalogued by Wall and Mathieson (2006) who, through their historical analysis of linkages between the impacts of tourism on religious centres, cite meetings of the World Council of Churches (1970) and the Caribbean Ecumenical Consultation for Development (1971) as early examples of the Church being worried about how tourism, through growing commercialization, might have detrimental socio-cultural and environmental