



## SPECIAL SECTION: PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LANDS

### Introduction

#### Contested Narratives of Storied Places—the Holy Lands

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■ **ABSTRACT:** The articles in this special section on pilgrimage and the Holy Lands provide a wide range of perspectives on the practice, representation, and production of sacred space as expressions of knowledge and power. The experience of space of the pilgrim and the politically committed tourist is characterized by distance, impermanence, desire, contestation, and the entwinement of the material and the spiritual. The wealth of historical Christian and Western narratives/images of the Holy Land, the short duration of pilgrimage, the encounter with otherness, the entextualization of sites, and the semiotic nature of tourism all open a gap between the perceptions of pilgrims and those of ‘natives’. Although the intertwining of symbolic condensation, legitimation, and power makes these Holy Land sites extremely volatile, many pilgrimages sidestep confrontation with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as inimical to the spirit of pilgrimage. A comparative view of the practices of contemporary Holy Land pilgrims demonstrates how *communitas* and conflict, openness and isolation are constantly being negotiated.

■ **KEYWORDS:** conflict, Holy Land, home, materiality, narratives, performances, pilgrimage, sacred spaces, tourism

Edith Turner (2005: 7145–7148) provides the following definition of pilgrimage: “A religious believer in any culture may sometimes look beyond the local temple, church, or shrine, feel the call of some distant holy place renowned for miracles and the revivification of faith, and resolve to journey there.” According to this definition, the space of pilgrimage is a renowned place, a storied place. Like Mount Moriah of Isaac’s sacrifice, it is “one of the mountains I shall tell thee of” (Genesis 22:2; King James translation), a distant space beyond a horizon that becomes a focus of vision and imagination, one that calls people to take to the road to journey there—a place that creates desire and, perhaps, transformation. The spiritual charge or ‘magnetism’ (Preston 1992) of the place, the accretion of new stories around the original ones, the transmission of those narratives in text, ritual, and iconography through generations and beyond borders—all this leads to the success of a site’s career, but it also sows the seeds of conflict. The sheer number of individuals attending the site makes it a source of legitimation for believers with differing visions and a



point of contestation between the conflicting claims of locals and visitors, laity and hierarchy, and more. Should one lapse into comfort, into taken-for-grantedness at such a place, some other will be there to remind one that claims and stories must be voiced (yet again), flags unfurled, and rituals displayed to reassert a sense of belonging to what cannot be fully possessed.

### Space and Place in Pilgrimage—Centers Out There

The study of space and place in religion has developed at a rapid pace since the spatial turn in anthropology in the 1990s, although studies of pilgrimage and the Holy Land—both in social scientific and in theologically oriented works (Davies 1974; Halbwachs 1941, 1992; Smith [1978] 1993, 1987)—preceded the trend. In her comprehensive review article “Religion, Space, and Place,” Kim Knott (2010) identifies two major tendencies in studies of religion and space. The first, phenomenologically oriented, deals with place as a “fundamental form of embodied experience—the site of a powerful fusion of self, space, and time” (Feld and Basso 1996: 9). The second is “a social constructivist approach ... interested in the production, practice, and representation of space, and its relationship with knowledge and power” (Knott 2010: 37). While some pilgrims’ experiences testify to this sometimes mystical fusion with sacred space, the latter approach is central to the articles in this section. In it, spaces and places are recognized as “politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions” (Rodman 2003: 205).

The spaces that are the focus of five of the articles in this special section are those of the Holy Land. The Holy Land serves as a paradigm for narratives of consecration and contestation of space because there has been so much devotion and contestation among so many groups there for so long. The sustained attention to the Holy Land in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, in colonial and nationalist movements, and in the daily news throughout the West has shaped the spaces of the Holy Land and scholarly research on the sanctification of space. The examples from the Holy Land illustrate a number of common traits of the pilgrim’s experience of sacred space: desire, distance, impermanence, contestation, entextualization, and the entwining of the spiritual and the material.

In his pioneering work on collective memory, Maurice Halbwachs (1941, 1992) treats the Christian Holy Land as an exemplary model for how the sedimentation of memory in space is socially constructed. In describing Peter’s denial of Jesus at the house of Caiaphas, Halbwachs (1941: 151–152) writes that Peter needed to distance himself from Jesus in order to become a witness. “Sacred places ...,” Halbwachs (1992: 199) states, “commemorate not facts certified by contemporary witnesses but rather beliefs born perhaps not far from these places and strengthened by taking root in this environment.” People “need to establish distance in order to preserve a collective memory” (ibid.: 196). Christian holy places were marked out in accordance with Christian sacred narrative and liturgical practice (Markus 1994). Here, dogma and liturgy (selectively consecrating and forgetting specific past events) precede sacred place and continue to reshape places in their image. Those images are projected onto the space from a distance in space, time, and culture, imposing (imperial, ecclesiastical) power on the ‘center out there’ (V. Turner 1973).

Sacred spaces, “drawing together pilgrims from all over the world, aim to center them through their own patterns, create potentiality for transformative experiences of whatever kind, and then disperse the pilgrims in all directions” (Bajc et al. 2007: 325). Unlike spaces of home, pilgrims’ sense of place is not home; it is marked by impermanence, by *not* dwelling. Unquestionably, ‘home’ means different things to different persons and in different contexts. As Shelley Mallett (2004: 65) summarizes, it is “(a) place(s), (a) space(s), feeling(s), practices, and/or an active state of state of being in the world.” In an age of increasing mobility, it may be less a particular physical

structure and more a pattern of regular doings, a place where space-time can be routinized, controlled, and made familiar.

Rapport and Dawson (1998: 10) seek to loosen the links of home and space, arguing that, in an age of heightened mobility, being at home is “a cognitive environment in which one can undertake the routines of daily life and through which one finds one’s identity best mediated.” But for many, home is, by definition, opposed to wandering: “The journey is opposed to the dwelling as the road is opposed to the hearth” (John Gager, cited in Dovey 1985). Even when the pilgrim claims to seek a spiritual home, the decision to go on pilgrimage involves the desire to go out of place—to uproot oneself from the quotidian home to get to a ‘center out there.’ To the extent that the pilgrim does manage to feel at home in the spiritual home of pilgrimage, it may create a tension between the ideal home and the previous lived-in home (Mallett 2004: 70). As Bonnie Wheeler (1999: 36) writes, pilgrimage demonstrates that “life is the struggle of restlessness against rest; this piercing into life exiles us from our quiet roots.” Perhaps the ideal was best exemplified in C. Bawa Yamba’s (1995) study of West Africans who travel to Sudan as *hajjis*, where they remain in a permanent state of liminality, of suspended being, preserving their purity by being not-at-home. By refusing to settle down and make the place in which they live a habitation, a dwelling, they maintain their status as ‘permanent pilgrims’.

At sacred places, the disciplinary power of sacred texts mediates the experience of pilgrims in ways different from those experienced by the ‘native’ at home. As Zali Gurevitch (1997: 208) writes: “[N]ativity is thus founded on the identification of voice (self) and place (world). It is being-in-place as dwelling—the self and the world cosmologized in the place.” In the case of the Holy Land, on the other hand, “the book that tells the place’s story ... also resists the place as a totality that harmonizes the relation between humans and their immediate earthly abode ... The Judaic story of place subverts the settled idea of nativity” (ibid.: 213, 208). If “dwelling involves a lack of distance between people and things, a lack of casual curiosity, an engagement which is neither conceptualized nor articulated, and which arises through *using* the world rather than through scrutiny” (Thomas 1993: 28), sacred places have an additional evocativeness that often challenges daily routines and calls for the symbolic processing of experience (Fernandez 2003: 187).

While home implies a relationship that is rooted in the experiences of everyday life repeated over a long period of time, most pilgrims, even if not walking dusty roads, live out of their suitcases as they make their way from one hotel to another. They cannot help but encounter strangeness, a challenge to the pre-reflective actions that make home into home. True, some pilgrim groups and individuals may structure their voyages so as to create enclaval spaces that become habitual and comforting, such as the tour bus or a chapel that one returns to frequently for worship (see Donna Young’s article, this volume). Nonetheless, even there, pilgrims are frequently preoccupied, integrating their spiritual experience with concerns for family and events back home. The correspondence of certain enclaval spaces with the pre-formed (and often projected) image cultivated in the pilgrim’s home and its isolation from the dwelled-in home experience of the ‘locals’ is what enables the pilgrim to feel at home out there (cf. Dubisch 1995: 95). The life-world of their homes or the idealized home of religious visions may infuse the unfamiliar with an uncanny sense of familiarity. Alternatively, when the imagined home and the actual world at the site of pilgrimage do not properly align, it may lead to disappointment or even anger. The experiences of the circular motion of pilgrimage may lead the pilgrim to attain a greater sense of belonging upon his return to the place from which he set out (Rapport and Dawson 1988: 9). In some cases, however, the pilgrim may be so severely decentered that she no longer feels at home in her former home (E. Cohen 1979).<sup>1</sup>

The distinction between pilgrim space and home space was already noted by the philosopher Philo of Alexandria, a pilgrim to the Temple in Jerusalem two thousand years ago. The Jews

dispersed throughout Europe and Asia, he wrote, “consider the Holy City as their mother city (*metropolis*), because in it is the holy Temple of God Most High. The villages that they have inherited from their ancestors of preceding generations they consider their homeland (*patris*), for there they were born and raised” (Box 1939: 45–46). While the *patris* is the daily life-world of home, the *metropolis* is the mythical place of origin, akin to longtime Greek colonists’ attachment to their motherland, Hellas (Amir 2005).<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, at a pilgrim’s ‘center out there,’ the ‘local’ may be subject to the often denaturing power brought by the pilgrim and her host society or religion. In speaking of pilgrimage to the Second Temple, the Midrash proclaims: “One does not rent out houses in Jerusalem, because one does not own them” (Goldin 1955). Ideally, the House of God attenuates and challenges human possession; thus, the ideal future Temple in Ezekiel belongs to no tribe but, as “an offering to God,” is intertribal and ex-territorial (see Ezekiel 45:1–8, 49:9–22; Zimmerli 1983).<sup>3</sup> Jerusalem residents must open their houses to pilgrims, the guests of the Master of the House. Residence in places of pilgrimage often imposes surveillance of the moral state (Bax 1992) and the daily lives of the local inhabitants, including the urban fabric of the city. While such conditions and regulations of pilgrimage may create *communitas* among people who do not know each other (V. Turner 1973), they may also generate conflicting narratives and practices (Eade and Sallnow 2000; Sallnow 1982) on the part of groups and individuals seeking to domesticate and lay claim to significant space and the cosmic order that holy places anchor.

In this special section, three of the articles focus on Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land. In the articles by Anne Meneley and Alejandro Paz, we have extended our purview to certain storied spaces of religious or political tourism as well—what Hecht and Friedland (2006: 34–35) place under the rubric of “central places, holy places, sacred places and memory places.” Furthermore, each of the articles illustrates how difficult it is to separate religion and politics, given that they are often nourished by the same stories. Our choice of the term ‘Holy Lands’ to encompass the five articles in this section places an additional frame on this space.<sup>4</sup> We recognize the term’s Christian origins and its subsequent privileging of the role of the biblical text and Christian tradition over the everyday vocabularies of most of the land’s residents. But our use of the plural form (‘Holy Lands’) underlines the multiple, always partial, often contested views and experiences of the space(s), as well as the ongoing influence of Christianity on local spatial practices.

The spaces we explore in these articles are contested between Israelis and Palestinians, and this struggle is reflected, willfully ignored, or reinforced in the religious and political discourse of Western visitors from outside the area. In the Holy Land, the influence of two thousand years of Western Christianity has strongly shaped colonial projects (Obenzinger 1999; Said, 1979; Vessey et al. 2011), Zionism (Feldman 2007; Raz-Krakotzkin 1998), and current Western policies (McAlister 2005: 30–33). Many places of pilgrimage are contested among various denominations, sub-groups, and political movements within religious, ethnic, or national groups (Bilu 1988; Bowman 2000, 2011; R. Cohen 2008), and between commoditizing forces of the hospitality industry and ecclesiastical bodies (Bowman 1992). The theoretical tools used to understand storied spaces will be primarily drawn from the social constructivist vein, because pilgrims’ experience of place is mediated by the reading and embodiment of texts, as well as socialities and ways of seeing and experiencing brought with them from their life-worlds elsewhere. Such experiences of place are also co-produced through the guides, itineraries, and logistics of the global tourism industry, which unconsciously reproduces many of the ways of seeing and practicing space common in medieval or pre-modern pilgrimage (Adler 2002). Through focusing on contemporary religious and non-religious pilgrimage performances in the Holy Land, we hope to clarify the conflicts and confluences that typify the spaces of storied and conflicted ‘centers out there.’

## Narratives and Practices of Storied Space

Our approach to sacred and storied spaces views space as a social construct. It is “a product of cultural, social, political and economic relations ... it is not an objective structure but rather a social experience ... it is a conception constructed by way of people’s social practices in their involvement with the world” (Simonsen and Baerenholdt 2004: 1). Thus, any understanding of space demands attention to its representation, production, and practice and an awareness of how it interacts with power and knowledge (Knott 2010).

Power is exercised on space through narrations and performances. Narratives of space and place vary cross-culturally (Feld and Basso 1996; Küchler 1993; Rodman 2003) and change historically, often in reaction to, or in accommodation with, the views of more powerful others. Narratives may also vary among members within a particular culture—between clergy and laity, men and women, or members of different generations.<sup>5</sup> In the storied spaces examined here, narratives have been especially important in claiming and shaping space and practices of movement.<sup>6</sup> The cultural diffusion of mythic or authoritative stories of places and the practice of communal rites or ceremonies transform many of these marked places not only into “legitimate theatre[s] for practical actions” (de Certeau 1984: 125), but also into consciously designated sites of memory, *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1989), privileged venues for religious or commemorative practices. In a poem entitled “Ecology of Jerusalem,” Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai (1996: 136) writes:

The air over Jerusalem is saturated with prayers and dreams  
like the air over industrial cities.  
It’s hard to breathe.

In storied places, the surfeit of prayers and dreams—the desire to experience the transcendent in place—generates a surfeit of historical markers, plaques, buildings, flags, and testaments. Like the initials of lovers carved into stone, these foundation stones of past glories and future visions bespeak tokens of desire. And this desire is often jealous, exclusive, a rage for the possession of the beloved site or object.

Ecclesiastic or state power may inscribe its understandings on the landscape by constructing buildings, streets, and churches; by acts of preservation, excavation, or restoration (Herzfeld 1991); by display, destruction, signposting, fencing, gating, or ordinance and access regulations. These create ‘facts on the ground’, that is, they produce an imposing presence in the landscape that is recognized as belonging to some national or religious community (Abu El-Haj 2001). They objectify our experience of social interaction, structure subsequent movements, and assume dramatic qualities that make the words into a ‘scene’, “an opened text, whose narrative we read even as we interact” (Richardson 2003: 75).

Many of these techniques of inscription were classified by de Certeau (1984) as hegemonic ‘strategies’ used by the powerful. He also elaborated on a second range of practices, which he termed ‘tactics’—frequently improvised actions such as demonstrations, marches, graffiti, religious services, dramatic performances, and ways of walking in the city. Because of their impermanence and their accessibility by weaker groups, such actions are often glossed as ‘resistance’. Yet in the case of storied sites, this assignment of differential power to construction versus performance or to strategies versus tactics may be problematic. A single place may “shap[e] and expres[s] polysemic meanings of place for different users” (Rodman 2003: 212). Performative enactments, even if spontaneous, may ‘get into the ritual’, leaving traces that extend the temporal effects of the performance to be represented elsewhere, canonized in sacred text or calendrical rites or materialized in stone in new shrines or monuments. As Friedland and Hecht (2006: 34)

formulate it: “Rites depend on Rights; the very construction and officiation of any sacred site, no matter how meager, has a component of authority.” Performances may be a way of resisting the hegemonic order imposed on space, but they may also be used to assert the right of the powerful to public or contested space.

Thus, in the Holy Land, Constantine built churches that materialized the Gospel sites celebrated in Byzantine liturgies (Halbwachs 1941, 1992), while imposing an imperial ideology on the landscape, transforming it from Roman Palestine into Terra Sancta. The colonial forces (Britain, France, Germany, Russia) did the same in the nineteenth century, erecting churches in Jerusalem and throughout the country to impose their power on the disintegrating Ottoman Empire (Ben-Arieh 1979) and assert Western claims to the Holy Land (Said 1979). As the panorama became a dominant way of seeing and exhibiting visual mastery in the West (Thomas 1993)<sup>7</sup> and over the rest (Mitchell 1989), Protestant pilgrim itineraries structured movement to replicate Holy Land panoramas exposed in Western locales (Long 2003; Mitchell 1989; Wharton 2006), privileging mountaintop views. Eventually, these ways of consuming landscape were also adopted by Zionism (Feldman 2007), and new panoramic viewing platforms were constructed to facilitate such ways of seeing. The naming, mapping, excavation, and touring of biblical sites instituted by the British Palestine Exploration Fund as well as earlier biblical geographers (Silberman 1982) became the basis for Israeli map making (Benvenisti 1997), archaeology (Abu El-Haj 2001), hiking practices (Katriel 1995; Selwyn 1995), guiding narrations (Katriel 1995; Katz 1985), and tour guide training. As theme parks multiply in number and prominence among Western Protestants, new ‘Disneyfied’ holy sites, such as Nazareth Village or the Jordan River baptismal site, have been built to accommodate and materialize the Western Protestant gaze on the past and the Orient (Ron and Feldman 2009). These are also enclaval spaces (Edensor 2000: 332–333), where the movement of visitors can be isolated from the Oriental marketplace and life-world and carefully controlled—including, for example, the ‘staged authenticity’ of select natives (MacCannell 1976: 91–106)—often for the economic benefit of the Westerners who run these sites.

## **Religious and National Sacred Spaces—Contestation and Conflict**

The special attention rendered to sacred spaces and the intertwining of legitimation, symbolic condensation, and power make these sites extremely volatile. The catalogue of violent acts triggered at sacred sites is substantial. Sometimes, it is the act of violence itself that makes the place sacred (Chidester and Linenthal 1995; Feldman 2008; Landres and Stier 2006: 8; Schäubele 2011).<sup>8</sup> This is particularly true for sites of national commemoration: the cult of the fallen (Mosse 1991), war memorials and battlefields (on Custer’s last stand, see Linenthal 1993: 121–171),<sup>9</sup> reinterments of heroes (Verdery 1999), and commemorations of sites of terror (Sturken 2007). This record of violence has led many scholars to view religious claims to space as intrinsically exclusive and as a major cause of bloodshed. Such an orientation arises from two partially related factors: first, the centrality of conflict as a theme in recent anthropology in general, and in the anthropology of pilgrimage in particular, and, second, the salience of writing on the ‘clash of civilizations’ between Islam and the West.

Since the late 1980s, anthropology has made ‘conflict’ and ‘resistance’ key terms of analysis, looking everywhere for power relations of domination and micro-expressions of resistance to them (Brown 2004). In the anthropology of pilgrimage, scholars have sought out examples of hierarchy and status differences, the marking of borders, and animosity among pilgrims (Dubisch 1995: 41–47; Sallnow 1982; Winkelmann and Dubisch 2005: xii–xvii) in reaction to earlier characterizations of pilgrimage as a universal paradigm of liminality, *communitas*, and transformation

(see V. Turner 1973). Thus, Eade and Sallnow (2000) named their important collection *Contesting the Sacred*. The articles in it characterize pilgrimage as a realm of conflicting discourses, and subsequent scholars have continued to seek out the conflicts and fragmentation of pilgrimage.

Yet religious sharing of sacred places has always existed, even among monotheistic religions. We know of many sacred sites shared by more than one religion: Jews and Muslims at saints' tombs in North Africa (Ben-Ami 1998), at Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem, and at the Cave of Elijah in Haifa; Muslims and Christians in Java (Courstens 2009), Bosnia (Duijzings 1993), Palestine (Bowman 1993, 2012a), and Jordan (Jansen 2012); Catholics and New Age worshippers in France (Fedele 2013; Weibel 2001); and Jews and Christians in medieval Palestine (Limor 2007) and at the Western Wall today. Some pilgrimage sites are places where syncretic practices are performed, blurring the boundaries between religions (see Albera 2012a). Two recent collections (Albera and Couroucli 2012; Bowman 2012c) provide nearly 20 ethnographic studies of shared pilgrimage sites, and these do not include the many sites shared by different denominations within a particular religion. Dionigi Albera (2012b: 240) contends that "[c]ompetition and mutual hatred are not ... part of the DNA of Mediterranean religious 'cultures'"—nor are they typical of pilgrim sites in general.

I suggest marking the distinction between multiple discourses and active sites of conflict. Places of pilgrimage are palimpsests of many historical eras and, like all religious symbols, are characterized by multi-vocality and ambiguity. A single place may shape and express "polysemic meanings of place for different users" (Rodman 2003: 212)—what some scholars of pilgrimage refer to as 'confluence' (Coleman 2002; Wheeler 1999). Meanings of places may vary within a society as well, based on one's position in the hierarchy (clergy/layperson), gender (Crain 1992; Dubisch 1995: chap. 10; Jansen 2012; Sered 2005; Winkelman and Dubisch 2005: xx–xxvii), or generation. Some sites used by multiple publics are characterized by syncretism (Bowman 2012a), while, for other sites, groups or ecclesiastical authorities may develop a variety of practices and regulations to allow them to be shared with minimal friction (Olsen and Ron 2013). These include assigning separate spaces within the sites for pilgrims or celebrating rites on different days or times of day. In contrast, some clergy or pilgrims responsible for those sites intentionally ignore differences among the pilgrims. For many (although by no means all) pilgrims, conflict is inimical to the spirit of the pilgrimage, and narratives and itineraries will overlook potential causes of discord (see Kaell's article, this volume).

Active conflict at religious sites is often a product of modern nationalism. Given the totalization, rigidity, and abstraction of nationalist practices as a whole (Kapferer [1988] 2000: xxiv), spaces sacred to the nation tend to be preoccupied with the marking of territorial and group boundaries (Marvin and Ingle 1999). Hence, they are less negotiable than most religious spaces of pilgrimage. While religion often renders territorial conflicts more violent (Breger et al. 2012a: 1; Schäubele 2011), when nationalism becomes involved with religious sites, it tends to lead to a hardening of lines, notions of purification, and conflict (Albera 2012b; Benvenisti 1996: 69–105; Friedland and Hecht 1999). Thus, the rise of post-colonial nationalist movements throughout the Mediterranean Basin led to the migration of religious minorities from many areas where interreligious mixing took place at sacred sites.<sup>10</sup> Clearly, when the fault lines between religions and those between national or ethnic groups coincide, the potential for violence increases, and the possibilities for sharing at pilgrimage sites vanish.

The articles in this special section on the Holy Lands examine the interactions between religious and political others at sacred and storied sites. The pilgrims' motivations and actions take place in the context of a long-running political conflict—the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—in which Zionism and Palestinian nationalism were profoundly shaped by religion (for Zionism, see Handelman and Katz 1998; Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983; for Palestine, see Aburaiya 2009;

Zilberman 2012). Sacred sites, especially in Jerusalem, were critical to forming the national identity of both peoples (Friedland and Hecht 1999: 214), and both the Hamas/Islamic jihad and the Temple Mount Faithful Movement have orchestrated pilgrimage as a manifestation of presence, a reclamation of territory and legitimacy from the impure national-religious other (Breger et al. 2012a: 5).<sup>11</sup> Some Holy Land pilgrims employ references to sacred texts or morally loaded religious language in support of one party to the political conflict (Belhassen 2009; Bowman 1992; Feldman 2011; Shapiro 2008), but more often pilgrims seek communion and meaning while remaining oblivious to the struggle (see Kaell's article, this volume). Pastors, guides, tour itineraries, group rituals, and the space of the tour bus can often create the 'environmental bubble' (E. Cohen 1972) that enables them to stay that way.

Communitas and conflict are constantly being negotiated (Wheeler 1999: 28). Thus, a comparative view of the intersections of religious and national identities at sacred sites may help us identify the factors that make for exclusivity or openness to others in contemporary pilgrimage.

### **Sizing the Frame—Religious Pilgrimage and Committed Tourism**

A sacred place is a place of clarification (a focusing lens) where ... the ordinary ... becomes significant, becomes sacred ... by having our attention directed to it in a special way ... [Sacred and profane] are not substantive categories, but rather situational or relational categories, mobile boundaries, which shift according to the map being employed. There is nothing that is sacred in itself, only sacred things in relation. (Smith 1982: 54–55)

Replacing 'sacred' with 'pilgrimage' and 'profane' with 'tourism' in the quotation above, we employ a similar logic in our use of the term 'pilgrimage' to cover the spaces dealt with in this collection of articles. I have often visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with groups of American Evangelicals, who witness the practices of Russian Orthodox pilgrims as they prostrate themselves, weep, and embrace the Stone of Unction—and then empty their shopping bags of souvenirs so that each item may receive a blessing from contact with the slab. The Evangelicals' somewhat disgusted response is "We're not pilgrims!" When asked, however, "Are you tourists then?" they hem and haw in their efforts to find a formulation they can live with. The olive pickers studied by Meneley (this volume) express disgust with the "tourist hordes" who weep over Christ at the Holy Sepulchre but appear not to recall Christ's suffering when they witness Palestinians "at the harrowing checkpoint." Self-proclaimed pilgrims and tourists make use of the same infrastructure of hotels, tour buses, guides, restaurants, and airlines.<sup>12</sup> Those who prostrate themselves with tear-filled devotion at the Stone of Unction may spend the next day smearing mud on their bodies at the Dead Sea—only to return to the Holy Sepulchre for vespers. Between their two prayers, do they cease to be pilgrims? As Simon Coleman (2009: 31) reminds us in describing pilgrimage to Walsingham: "[C]ultural and material spaces can prompt engagement from visitors, be they casual tourists, or pious and experienced pilgrims. Even ironic pilgrims may find themselves caught in a more emotionally powerful experience than they might have expected." Thus, in the articles in this section, while Hillary Kaell and Donna Young highlight the pervasiveness of the concerns that pilgrims bring with them from home, Meneley and Paz show how the techniques and rhetoric of local trip producers transform visitors into pilgrims.

The self-classification of pilgrims, like that of ethnic identity (Barth [1965] 2004), is situational. Scholars' attempts to draw rigid distinctions are no more fruitful. Catholic scholars may wish to classify Protestants as only 'religious tourists' (Nolan and Nolan 1989; Todd 1984). Government tourist industries and ecclesiastical authorities may use such classifications as a way of selectively



allocating finances and resources (e.g., ‘true pilgrims’ may not require as much investment in the tourism infrastructure). Some scholars of pilgrimage, implicitly reinforcing particular Christian understandings of the approach to the sacred (such as penitential practices or the quest for miracles, pardon, merit, mystical experience, or supernatural assistance, few of which are traditionally at the center of Holy Land pilgrimage), may feel uncomfortable having the (‘superficial,’ ‘curiosity seeking’) tourists in their midst (Margry 2008a). Historians may find the tourist-pilgrim divide a comfortable way of highlighting certain distinctions between pre-modern and modern phenomena (Cohen-Hattab 2004) or even between modern and postmodern ones (Bauman 1996), often by simplifying one or the other. Badone (2004: 185) suggests that the desire to separate tourists from pilgrims reflects structures of Judeo-Christian and classical culture that oppose serious pilgrimage to frivolous tourism, as in the following chart.

<b>Tourism</b>	<b>Pilgrimage</b>
Money	Asceticism
Consumption	Poverty
Evil	Good
Low	High
Materialism	Spiritual

Other scholars have highlighted the continuities between the pilgrim and the tourist (Adler 2002; Badone and Roseman 2004a: 1–11; Coleman and Eade 2004; Graburn 1989) or the deeply motivated visitor to religious and to secular sites (Chidester and Linenthal 1995; Reader and Walter 1993). Erik Cohen’s (1979, 1992) studies on pilgrimage and tourism are useful in this regard. By classifying five tourist/pilgrim experiences, ranging from the diversionary to the existential, he enables us to look at structures, motivations, and cosmologies of travel that unify or distinguish modes of tourist and pilgrim experiences. Furthermore, a diachronic study of the similarities and differences between the self-identified pilgrim of the past and the religious tourist of the present may instruct us much about the way in which each age relates to the sacred (Tomasi 2002: 20).

Alan Morinis (1992a: 4) chose to define pilgrimage as “a journey undertaken by a person in quest of a place or state that he or she believes to embody a valued ideal.” We see an obvious continuum between institutionalized religious pilgrimage and other visits to highly marked spaces of symbolic significance (Badone and Roseman 2004b), including battlefields, monuments, cemeteries (Chidester and Linenthal 1995; Handelman and Katz 1998; Kapferer [1988] 2000; Kertzer 1988; Mosse 1991; Stier and Landres 2006; Verdery 1999; J. Young 1993), and other spaces of popular culture heroes (Reader and Walter 1993). Moreover, the application of the pilgrimage frame to certain types of emotionally pregnant or identity-seeking tourism—such as Afro-American slavery roots tours to Ghana (Ebron 2002), Palestinian visits to destroyed villages in Israel (Ben-Zé’ev 2011: 101–123), Vietnam vets’ biking trips across the US to Washington, DC (Dubisch 2008), or Scottish diaspora roots tours to the Scottish highlands (Basu 2007)—focuses our attention on the road, the senses, the power of place and the desire to attain it, as well as the ongoing search for commitment and belonging upon one’s return. As recounted in my own work (Feldman 2008), on Israeli school voyages to Holocaust Poland, using the nomenclature ‘pilgrimage,’ rather than, say, ‘educational excursion’ (preferred by the Ministry of Education), enabled me

to focus attention on the motivations, rituals, and bodily experiences of the voyage in ways that deepened understanding of the practice.

In the case of the Holy Land, pilgrimage has traditionally been undertaken to re-enact religious history, reaffirm basic tenets of faith, and assert one's membership in the larger community of the faithful, as opposed to focusing on penance or seeking healing and miracles (Turner and Turner 1978). Hence, the border between pilgrimage, religious tourism, heritage, and political tourism is often quite fluid. For these reasons, we include in this special section, under the rubric of pilgrimage, the performances of the City of David for a wide variety of visitors, both Israelis and foreigners, as well as Meneley's account of volunteer olive pickers in Palestine. Even if the interlocutors distance themselves from most contemporary Holy Land pilgrims, for the temporary community of olive pickers, "[o]live trees are holy." Meneley hints that olive picking in Palestine may be a way of enacting ethical values while maintaining one's distance or ambivalence toward organized Christianity. In each of the articles, pilgrimage provides a lens for understanding commitment, moral earnestness, and the search for community.

### **Holy Lands—Place, Practice, Perspectives, Materialities**

The five articles in this section, written by authors of diverse nationalities, religious (dis)affiliations, and political perspectives, cover a wide range of contemporary enactments of Holy Land pilgrimage. In each case, the terrain of Holy Land pilgrimage is populated by religious and political others with overlapping, often conflicting claims. These articles provide multiple perspectives on the intersections of pilgrimage and political power.

In some cases, the other may be presented as a foil to persuade visitors to identify with one party's claims to conflicted space and the legitimacy it grants (cf. Feldman 2011; Shapiro 2008). Thus, in the City of David (Paz), the Palestinians of Silwan, when not studiously ignored, are depicted by Israeli settler guides as extraneous to biblical history; they are a hindrance to the process of revelation of the past (concealing the cistern of Jeremiah under mounds of garbage) and, ultimately, to the biblical prophecy of return and redemption, as exemplified by the Jewish-Israeli settlers of the City of David. For olive-picking pilgrims (Meneley), Israelis are encountered only as soldiers or as border control officials. But even when openness to the other is promoted as an explicit goal, as in the discourse of the Sisters of Sion (Young), it proves difficult to achieve in practice for three key reasons. First, the dense itinerary privileges enclaval pilgrim spaces (Edensor 2000: 332–333), including the chapels (for Young's pilgrims), hotels, and pilgrim hostels to which pilgrims retreat each evening (in all case studies except Meneley's). In the case of the group tours examined by Kaell and Jackie Feldman, the tour bus frequently isolates the group from the surrounding auditory and olfactory input and provides a raised vantage point (such as the panoramas many enjoy) for viewing the street, while keeping the Orient safely on the other side of the window. Second, because of the semiotic nature of tourism (Kellner 2010: 96–97, 203–204), even vernacular landscapes and cultures are constantly scanned for signs of difference (from the home world) or typicality. Third, the networks of support, faith, and religious/political practice from which many of the pilgrims emerge intensify the in-group experience while providing Christian or activist political narrative filters for seeing what is out there in the terrain (cf. Bajc 2007). All these open a gap between the pilgrims' sense of place and the lived experience of natives.

Pilgrims' filters may minimize the virulence or intractability of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Thus, Kaell shows how the trope of the symbolic child as innocent or as a victim provides pilgrims with a sense of moral righteousness without engaging the complexities of the conflict. The

Israeli-Palestinian struggle, and conflict in general, is seen as inimical to pilgrimage, which for many is about ‘putting it all together’. It is not about fostering doubt, challenging faith, or confronting complexity, but about reinforcing the hope, strength, and belief that can help pilgrims through their tribulations back home. In the tour of the Sisters of Sion analyzed by Young, the empty tomb of Christ serves as an organizing metaphor. Although Jewish-Israeli guides offer many geographical-historical explanations and First (Old) Testament readings on the tour, each is followed by a priest, theologian, or religious, who reads and meditates on a New Testament text. While the priest or religious does so, the Israeli guides go ‘off duty’ and check their cell phone messages. When the ethnographer seeks to introduce the current situation of Palestinians in Silwan into the discussion of the City of David, it is waved off as being ‘far away’. The site is later integrated into a tour of unequal allocation of resources to Jewish and Arab neighborhoods, but not into the biblical discussion of the empty tomb.

In his discussion of Jerusalem’s contested and shared sacred sites, Glenn Bowman (2007: 35–36) reminds us: “Ethnographic knowledge is by its nature perspectival, and profoundly partial; the wider theoretical and anthropological knowledge the anthropologist carries ... cannot produce an image of the ‘real’ city all of these groups share. This is because, at least in the experiential sense, there is no ‘real’ Jerusalem which can be caught in any single representation; Jerusalem is the compound setting of the life worlds of the peoples that cohabit in it whilst engaging it, and each other, differently.”

### **The Materiality of Holy Land Pilgrimages**

In the introduction to their recent edited volume on material religion, Dick Houtman and Birgit Meyer (2012: 1) write that the relation between ‘things’ and religion “has long been conceived in antagonistic terms, as if things could not matter for religion in any fundamental way. This antagonism resonates with a set of related oppositions that privilege spirit above matter, belief above ritual, content above form, mind above body, and inward contemplation above ‘mere’ outward action, producing an understanding of religion in terms ... of an interior spiritual experience.” This devaluation of materiality, which the authors attribute to modern Protestantism, applies to scholarship on Holy Land pilgrimage as well. Perhaps the centrality of the biblical text for Holy Land sites (as opposed to stories of miracles and healing) and the Protestant and Western colonialist interest in rediscovering and laying claim to biblical lands account for this emphasis on texts and interiorized motivations, even in a practice as bodily as pilgrimage.

The articles in this special section, in contrast, assert the importance of materiality in pilgrimage. In each case that is examined, religious beliefs or deeply held ideological commitments are expressed through and shaped by material objects, even if this is not acknowledged by participants or their spiritual leaders. Thus, while some Protestant pilgrims assert a theological divide between the material and the spiritual,<sup>13</sup> closely corresponding to the distinction they make between ‘we/us’ (Protestant) students of the Bible and ‘they/them’ (Catholic or Orthodox) pilgrims, Protestants are as prone to use the material to convey religious devotion during pilgrimage as are Catholics, although they may employ different discourses to do so (McDannell 1995).

Thus, olives and olive trees create loci for solidarity among pickers of various nationalities and ages and between volunteer pickers and Palestinian villagers. It is through their bodily placement—picking olives off the trees and sorting them on the ground—that the group becomes a community. The olive oil that is then produced becomes a taste of solidarity, a viscous substance whose circulation and consumption create pathways linking Western ecclesiastical and political communities to the Holy Land of Palestine (Meneley 2008).

Paz's article shows how the physicality of juxtaposed biblical ruins and fluttering settlers' flags makes the continuity of Jewish presence in the City of David self-evident. Alongside skilled rhetorical strategies, the emplacement of a key performance in the enclaval space of a sunken pit (*bor*) is in tune with the increasing theatricality enabled by the reshaping of Protestant worship space (Kilde 2002). According to the rabbi settler narrating the City of David site, it is these emplaced performances that connect people to place "via all kinds of capillaries and arteries and veins." The performance moves people from the mounds of garbage to Jeremiah's pit, making them enact the transition from Palestinian neglect to Israeli settlers' rediscovery of biblical bedrock/prophecy. Thus, the garbage and pit are physical stages on which convincing embodied performances of the past can be presented—just as panoramic promenades overlooking a Palestinian neighborhood create a picturesque viewing frame that supports a trope of picturesque antiquity while maintaining a distance from Palestinian everyday life. The rhetoric and performance, as Amira Mittermaier (2011) has discussed more generally, spur modes of imagination that are not opposed to material reality but rather help to complement what is taken as reality, and even bring that reality into being.

For Kaell's pilgrims, the shabby nature of Palestinian child vendors' clothes, the abundance of necklaces or scarves covering their small arms as they ply the streets, and the very material presence of the Separation Wall that imprisons them—all this influences the categorization of the vendors as innocent biblical children or as feral 'street Arabs'. The pilgrims will often retreat from interaction with them, seeking the safety and privacy of their bus while their Palestinian driver keeps the children outdoors. The bus is a domesticated space where pilgrims spend the majority of their waking hours on some days; it is where they store souvenir purchases, play music, and claim seats with their Bibles, hats, and maps in hand (compare D. Young 2001: 40–43). Just as the private car is often seen as an extension of the driver's body (Michael 2001; Urry 2004: 31), the bus is an extension of the group's body. Furthermore, the increased height of the windows above the street (up to a yard higher than they were in the 1980s) enables the passengers to take possession visually of other people, as well as diverse objects and environments, often from a distance. They do not focus on other drivers (Urry 2004: 26) but on the Palestinian children marginalized to walk the dusty or muddy streets.

Feldman's article shows how objects such as souvenirs and videocassettes may become spiritual aids, sources of educational information, expressions of political solidarity, or crass commercial objects, depending on how they are presented by spiritual leaders (see also Feldman, forthcoming; Kaell 2012). Likewise, pilgrim monies may be viewed as blessed love offerings, aids in proselytizing, or defiling, latter-day manifestations of money changers in the Temple. In determining the religious value of money, the visibility of green cash changing hands, or its invisibility (enclosed in a sealed greeting card with missionary literature), is no less significant than the words accompanying its presentation.

Young's article about her journey through Israel and Occupied Palestine reveals how important the Holy Rite was for the Christian pilgrims on her voyage. Over and above the shared expression of emotion, tears, helping hands, and uttered prayers and wishes, the ultimate sign of participants' concern for her was their desire that she take Holy Communion with them and "ignore the rules" (that to partake of the Communion, one must be a baptized Catholic). While certain sites may offer the objects and scenes that correspond with the Bible and religious imagination, thus facilitating the perception of God's presence, at times the materiality of the site, even for devout Catholics, may be in profound tension with the significant events celebrated there. In such cases, the vision of the 'empty tomb' is invoked, not to create a seamless flow between person and place, but as a challenging reminder of the transcendence of God and the void at the heart of being that challenges any taken-for-granted dwelling in place.

Even when the Bible plays a central role, as it does in Holy Land pilgrimages, several studies have shown that it is no less a material object than a text (Malley 2004). The Bible is not so much read as enacted (Friedland and Hecht 2006: 34). It is displayed, marked up, and employed by pastors and guides to call out significant sites (Feldman 2007). The visuality of the Bible and its presence in a field of vision with sites one can point to (often with the bound book itself), walk through, climb, and touch emphasize the haecceity of the Bible in the Holy Land as a place where one can say—as Orsi (2009: 215) attests to for the Irish village of Knock—that “here, the transcendent broke into time.” These materialities may not only affect pilgrims through their correspondence to pre-existing images (Jesus’s parable of the mustard seed generates a planting ritual) but actually generate new ones. Thus, in Young’s article, the archaeological tell, or mound, becomes a metaphor, and a pilgrim describes how he “scraped away at levels of sediment that had accrued over a lifetime, distancing him from God.”

In sum, places of pilgrimage, like politically charged commemorative spaces, are characterized by their “shifting interface between symbolic forms, narrative strategies and material practices” (Schramm 2011: 7). The articles in this special section underline the materiality of religion, countering and complementing the strong discursive tradition within pilgrimage studies.

### The Positioning of the Authors

In this collection of articles, we find a clear gender divide that marks the positioning, and hence the perspective, of the ethnographers. Caroline Bynum (1996) highlighted the partial nature of knowledge by challenging Victor Turner’s universal models with a gendered perspective on the liminality of pilgrimage. She argued that Turner’s conception of liminality and the transformative power of pilgrimage speaks to powerful men who control social structure, whereas women, who are outside of that structure, see pilgrimage in terms of continuity rather than change. Through Christ, women see themselves as becoming fully human, more profoundly who they are. Thus, an analysis from the women’s point of view would focus on the meshing between the practice of pilgrimage and life at home, before and after (see Dubisch 1995; Frey 1998).

In the three articles in this section written by women, the authors place themselves (with varying degrees of explicit reflexivity) as fellow pilgrims, highlighting the continuity between pilgrims’ lives before, during, and after their Holy Land pilgrimage. Kaell demonstrates how the Western image of the innocent/savage child in Israel/Palestine helps visitors integrate their pilgrimage experience into their own search for hope and solace as middle-aged Christian women (see also Kaell 2010). It also harmonizes with their forms of engagement with politics at home. Meneley positions herself and her fellow olive pickers with the oppressed Palestinian farmers. Their volunteer work often builds on their personal experiences of displacement and injustice in their home countries. Young shows how the metaphor of the empty tomb of Jesus, promoted by the Sisters of Zion, organizes the experience of the conflicted Holy Land while granting cosmic significance—and often psychic and social healing—to individuals struggling with crises of faith (Winkelman and Dubisch 2005: xx–xxvii).<sup>14</sup> The condensation of emotions engendered through recurring communal ritual practice and biblical study inscribes a process upon participants that they take back to their life at home, with its challenges of aging, caring for loved ones, or resuming religious duties.

The male ethnographers, on the other hand, anchor their critical analyses of the pilgrimage from the viewpoint of the Jewish-Israeli guide or the Israeli producers of the narrative. Thus, Feldman demonstrates how tour guides accommodate the pilgrims’ classifications of money as white or black, sacred or profane, for their own benefit and that of their drivers. The pilgrim moralities

exemplified by Jesus chasing the money changers out of the Temple are questioned by exposing the structure and power relations of the tourism industry that make lack of transparency essential for the economic well-being of Palestinian drivers and Israeli guides, as well as by detailing pastors' complicity in perpetuating this structure. In Paz's article, Israeli settlers in the City of David/Silwan fashion a significant piece of the 'holy basin' of Jerusalem in their own image. They attempt to sidestep the current 'politics' between settlers and Palestinians by producing an allegedly non-political, historicist reading of biblical history. By attaching emotional valence to place and asserting an authoritative scientific discourse of archaeology, such practices of entextualization marginalize alternative self-definitions (Kelner 210: 192). Furthermore, this emplacement of the biblical text, shared by Protestants and Zionists, generates a discourse that grants the narrator settlers the status of heirs to biblical history and destiny in a highly contested Israeli-Palestinian space.

## Conclusion

History is compressed in these places. They are intensely located in the present, but the past impresses them, and they bleed into the future ... Our genealogies and thus our identities are realized in space and in place. (Friedland and Hecht 2006: 19)

Pilgrimage practices and narratives illustrate the human nature of "the symbolic labor that goes into making space sacred" (Chidester and Linenthal 1995: 17). In each of the case studies detailed in these articles, the historical scripts, sacred texts, images, and categories that the pilgrims bring with them interact with what they are shown and told on the contested ground of the Holy Lands. In a place charged with so much violence and so many stories of so many opposing groups, one is tempted to regard pilgrimage narratives as no more significant than the graffiti initials of visitors carved into the ancient sacred stones. But this would ignore the power of pilgrimage for its participants.

Far from being a relic of another age, pilgrimage to the Holy Land and elsewhere is growing steadily, shaping people's understanding of the world. The spaces of pilgrimage work on people; they may provide healing and integration for the fragmentation in people's lives because they correspond with their ongoing religious practice yet are separate from the lived experiences of home. Sometimes, in one of the most contested landscapes in the world, they may even provide a more inclusive view of humanity and belonging. Pilgrimage practices and emplaced stories make certain claims to space, certain representations of space as being 'natural', 'legitimate', or 'divinely sanctioned'. Pilgrims' experiences shape their ongoing religious and political understandings and are often translated into political action, whether it be lobbying for a stronger Israel or supporting the Palestinian cause. Thus, pilgrimage contains enormous potential to shape Western views that have profoundly influenced the lives of people in the Middle East and continue to do so. This articles in this collection point to how this is being done.

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## ■ NOTES

1. This corresponds to the ideal (but exceptional) type that Erik Cohen (1979: 189–191) characterized as the 'existential tourist', who makes the pilgrimage/tourist destination the elective center of meaning for his life. He may then experience daily life at home as a state of exile from the elective center to which he returns occasionally or frequently in order to recharge his daily life with meaning.
2. Amir (2005: 111) notes that *metropolis* in Philo is synonymous with *hieropolis*, the holy city, a term particular to Philo.
3. Zimmerli (1983: 469–470) comments on Ezekiel's characterization of the Temple as a *terumah*, a gift to God: "Yahweh is the owner of the sacred *terumah* and ... neither priest nor Levites have any property in it." Zimmerli goes on to say: "No human hand is to reach out for it as if it belonged to him. Rather this 'selected area' which lies around the historical center of the land is to be an area which is freed from the possession of the twelve tribes—the permanent reminder that the land is a gift" (*ibid.*: 542–543).
4. De Certeau (1984: 130) reminds us that "every power is toponymical and initiates its order of places by naming them."
5. For different generational conceptions of home among Palestinians during visits to pre-1948 villages, see Ben-Ze'ev (2011: 101–123).
6. For an interesting reflection on the relation of narrative and movement, see Rapport and Dawson (1998: 28–34).
7. In speaking of the importance of the shift in painting in the fifteenth century in forming Western perceptions, Julian Thomas (1993: 21–22) writes: "Perspective art represents a form of visual control,

which freezes time and presents things as they empirically appear to be. At the same time, perspective establishes ... a fixed relationship between object and subject, locating the viewer outside of the picture, and outside of the relationships being depicted ... Landscape painting is thus a representation of space which alienates land, such that it can be appropriated by a gaze which looks in from outside." He then links this way of looking and the development of modern strategies of monitoring and surveillance, as put forth by Foucault.

8. In his book *Violence and the Sacred*, René Girard (2005) sees the violence turned against the scapegoat as being at the foundation of ritual, religion, and, indeed, civilization.
9. In some cases, if the animosities have long been laid aside, members of warring nations may meet at the battlefield or military cemetery for common commemoration. Thus, we find shared ceremonies of British, French, and German nationals at World War I battle sites. Gallipoli became a place of Australian-Turkish reconciliation (West 2008). But Reagan's 1985 visit, along with Helmut Kohl, to the Kolmeshöhe Cemetery—the World War II military cemetery near Bitburg where members of the Waffen-SS were also buried—was a controversial failure (Jensen 2007). Designed to mark and improve relations between the US and Germany, the visit offended Holocaust survivors and other victims of Nazism. This example demonstrates how victims of violence may refuse to allow for facile reconciliation in charged spaces, even four decades after the event (see also Argenti and Schramm 2010).
10. Albera (2012b: 222) cites instances of such nationalist movements in Turkey, North Africa, Israel, Greece and former-Yugoslavia (cf. Bowman 2012b: 1–5).
11. Sometimes opposition to a common enemy becomes the cement that draws together pilgrims of different religions, as Bowman (1993, 2012b) documents for Palestinian Muslims and Christians in Beit Sahour. At times, the presence of a religious other is needed for authentication of a site, as with, for example, Byzantine pilgrim authorities' mobilization of the Jew as a reluctant witness to the power of Christ at Golgotha (Limor 1996).
12. Frey (1998: 26) notes that walkers and bikers on the road to Compostela referred to themselves as 'true pilgrims', as opposed to those traveling by bus, car, or plane. The Church and municipal authorities have encouraged this status distinction by awarding certificates to those who can demonstrate that they have walked or biked at least 100 kilometers.
13. In some religious traditions, interconnections between the material and the spiritual are completely accepted. See, for example, Ian Reader's (2013) documentation of Japanese temples' promotion of pilgrimage through department store exhibitions.
14. Bonnie Wheeler (1999: 35) spoke of this kind of challenge in pilgrimage narratives: "Some hope to assuage their fear of sacred abandonment ... the creative vacuum of God's withdrawal."

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