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Book Reviews

Stausberg, Michael (2011) *Religion and Tourism: Crossroads, Destinations, and Encounters*. Routledge, New York, NY. 292pp. ISBN 978-0-415-54932-5, \$47.95 / \$130.00

In his work *Religion and Tourism: Crossroads, Destinations, and Encounters*, Michael Stausberg describes the intersections and interfaces between religion and tourism. Writing from a religious studies perspective to a religious studies audience, Stausberg launches his literary quest by questioning the traditional tourist / pilgrim dichotomy arguing that the boundaries between religion and tourism are undoubtedly permeable - that pilgrims often resemble tourists and that tourists frequently adopt pilgrim-like personas. Building on the works of Cohen (1981), MacCannell (1999), Turner (1969) and others, the book explores the importance and role of sites, spaces, and places as points of convergence and divergence for tourists and pilgrims. Moving past the traditional pilgrim / tourist structure, the book also investigates niche forms of so-called faith tourism including folk and indigenous traditions and posits that far from declining, religious tourism is on the rise, with a significant portion of the contemporary tourist population engaging in religious pursuits.

The book is organized into nine chapters and further divided into three parts. Each chapter is succeeded by a 'souvenirs' or summary section that outlines, in bullet form, the key points of the chapter. As a self-proclaimed survey of religion and tourism scholarship, the book reads like an introductory text and is by no means exhaustive. Part 1 highlights the ways in which religion and tourism are similar and distinct and identifies where they intersect, at times becoming indistinguishable. Part 2 delves into the spaces and places in which religion and tourism operate and how these spaces are often shared, contested, co-created, or designed to mimic one another. Part 3 describes various types and forms of religious tourism and contextualizes them in contemporary forces such as globalization and mass migration. This concluding section also examines the role of various media in shaping and framing the religious and touristic experiences of modern man.

While Stausberg claims, in some respects, to depart from traditional explications of religious tourism his

work, in reality, parallels that of the major contributors in the field. Where he does introduce a unique perspective (Chapters 3) is in his argument that rather than replacing the traditional religious pilgrimage, the modern tourist pilgrimage operates in tandem with, even reinforcing religious pilgrimage. Another point of departure (Chapter 4) is expressed in the author's contention that the difference between tourist and religious sites is opaque and that the transformation from house of worship to 'tourist temple' is a subtle one. With this in mind, Stausberg also duly notes that due to the forces of globalization and tourism, exposure to religion via tourism and *vice versa* is inevitable. With this in mind, the author's call (Chapter 9) for those who study religion to accept tourism as a legitimate form of religious enactment and expression rather than relegating it to the status of frivolous and, taken to the extreme, even apostate is of utmost importance.

For a clear and concise overview of religious tourism scholarship, this book is a logical, comprehensive, and contemporary choice. For a critical, weighty covering of the topic, the author of this review recommends one look elsewhere. Furthermore, while the author is somewhat self-deprecating in his opening acknowledgements, the book appears to achieve its intended purpose, to introduce tourism as a notable and needed avenue for research to a field that largely neglects it.

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France, Robert L. (Ed) (2014) *Along the Way: A Web- Enhanced Book: Pilgrimage Scenes from the Camino Frances to Santiago De Compostela*. LIBRI Publishing Oxfordshire (U.K). 293 pp ISBN 9781907471278

Theme. An academic's knowledge of history, literature, music and architecture influencing the images, thoughts, experiences, emotions and rationale of being a contemporary pilgrim walking the Camino Frances to Santiago De Compostela.

My Thesis. This is a magnificent thought provoking work, one that succeeds in weaving a historical and contemporary literature review into a travelogue, coupled with an evocative photographic record of the journey. The reader is challenged to reflect on the depth and meaning of the 'Camino' against the expertise or 'Camino Cultural Capital' of the author.

Robert France completes an exhaustive literature review of previous studies and commentaries on the 'Camino', past and present, and continuously emphasises how this publication is unique in approach, beginning with the route chosen to complete, the time of year to do it and how the book is written using a thematic approach. The attention paid to architectural detail, coupled with a photographic record, produces something of 'distinct scholarship'. The keenness of the author's observation and the images he uses to convey this are reminiscent of the approach taken by Christopher Alexander - the respected American thinker and architect in his book *A Pattern Language*. The style of writing is a constant weaving of knowledge, facts, personal thoughts, emotions and criticism into a pattern of themes such as adventure, joy, contact and contemplation. The book skilfully combines profound observations with personal reflection so that the author's journey goes beyond the spiritual and physical. The author quotes Walter Starkie on how a pilgrim tries to collect his memories as a 'backward journey through time and a forward journey through space'.

The reader is constantly aware of Robert France's 'Camino / Cultural Capital' be it in Architecture, Landscape, Literature, Art, Food, Film, Music or Electronic Games. The details of observations given, often crafted into stories, engage all the senses, which provokes a transcendental reflection or meditation on the places and artefacts and how they came to be. This inspires interest and curiosity to follow the route. Occasionally, the critique by the author borders on

cynicism leaving the reader disillusioned as to what would satisfy him. Yet, eventually Robert France allows himself to express emotions such as the 'most moving experiences of the entire pilgrimage and one of the most spiritual moments I have ever felt inside a church'. Frankly, he admits he prayed for the first time in years. This allows for a wider audience to participate in what is powerful about the 'Camino' and in particular this book. Robert France's dedication and determination is never-ending, evidenced in particular, when four years after the pilgrimage he engaged in the 'Portal of Glory' ritual with a replica of it in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. 'The long pilgrimage of places and pages is over.'

By: **Frances McGettigan**. Lecturer in Tourism, Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Studies, Athlone Institute of Technology, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. Ireland.

Katic, M., Klarin, T. & McDonalds, M. (eds). (2014) *Pilgrimage and Sacred Places in Southeast Europe*. Zurich, Lit Verlag GmbH. ISBN 978-364390504-8 232pp

Religious tourism has been positioned as one of the main attractions in the tourism industry worldwide, however, we lack a serious debate respecting the fact any pilgrimage may be framed inside tourism. This book, which is edited by Katic, Klarin and McDonald, resulted from the event *Pilgrimage and Sacred Places in Central and Eastern Europe, place, politics and religious tourism*. Although pilgrimage is defined as an act of faith, devotion and penitence, which leads to redemption, in the age of mobilities, scholars signify 'religious tourism' as a transitional period where religion becomes the primary aspects of attraction. It is almost impossible to summarise the rich arguments of this book in a book review, therefore, we will discuss the common-threads of all chapters.

It is difficult to believe that in a secular world, people are moving for religious purposes. Methodologically, there are many differences between modern and medieval pilgrims as has been widely studied by historians, and religious-tourism, as pointed out by the editors. This is the reason why a project of this nature is not only necessary but illustrative.

The breakthrough in technologies associated with more free time derived in the adoption of new mobile practices, which have been adopted by modern

parishioners in their pilgrimages. As a modern activity, tourism has demanded new infrastructure and transportation systems, which also concern religious tourism. Pilgrims today are not so different from medieval times, and of course, the travelers' demands are determined by the needs of being away from home. An additional problem for applied research seems to be the conceptual discussion about religion and spirituality. Today, in postmodern times, a whole portion of society consider themselves to be spiritual though they are not attached to any religion. In the current lines of research, the acceptance of pilgrims as tourists is not widely questioned by the academy. The discussion on all of these inter-related themes is placed in this book to develop a new conceptual platform in pilgrim-related studies and of course this one of the key merits readers will find in exploring this trailblazing book.

Methodologically, diverse case studies provide fresh alternative meanings of religious tourism, but this also represents its main weakness. There is no clear definition, since the number of chapters authored by diverse scholars, show different ways to consider travellers, tourists and pilgrims. A tourist may visit a sacred temple, without making any sacrifice while religious tourism may not be framed in any religion. Beyond the historical discussion, what characterizes tourism is not the quest for authenticity as the specialized literature suggests, but the 'curiosity' for something new, fuelled by modernity. Here, because of time and space, we may not discuss to what extent tourism was present in ancient cultures, but what we have to be clear about is that curiosity, as a vital element, is not present in pilgrimage simply because travellers looked for 'redemption', which is based on a gift-exchange nature of experience.

In a secular world, the gap between pilgrimage and tourism seems to be enlarged (Korstanje, 2015). Of course, the problem of sacredness has not received the correct attention. MacCannell suggests that sacred places exerted a great degree of attraction for the public. Nothing is further from the truth, as Korstanje and George put it. Based on the Falkland's case, they draw attention to the needs of reconsidering MacCannell's view because he confuses authenticity with sacredness. This leads us to remind that the term paradise, which remains the archetype of any sacred space, stems from two words, 'pairi' (outskirt) and 'daeza' (enclosed area). Not surprisingly, paradise suggests a far remote area which is accessed only by means of sacrifice and hard-work. This is exactly the

point that distinguishes pilgrimage, which is marked by suffering, from hedonist tourism. Another radical difference lies in the fact that while pilgrims are subject to diverse risks and threats, tourists travel in atmospheres of 'controlled-risk'. One might speculate that sacred spaces are physically and symbolically isolated from daily life. The arrival of mass-tourism is not only a risk, but also represents a moral offense to the Gods (Korstanje & George 2012).

What would be more than interesting to discuss is the trend of postmodernity which seeks to commoditize real sacred spaces into visual spectacles, subject to an 'allegory' which is emptied from its original meaning. This is exactly how ideology works. This begs a more than interesting question: why do temples, churches and synagogues receive, in these times, more tourists than parishioners? Are we seeing the decline of religion, or simply the emergence of a fictionalization of daily life?.

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- By **Maximiliano E Korstanje**, University of Palermo Argentina