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Editorial: Pilgrimage as a Multi-Faceted Diamond

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Editorial: Pilgrimage as a Multi-Faceted Diamond

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Introduction

The long-anticipated Sacred Journeys 9th Global Conference was held in a hybrid format at the University of Primorska's Department of Tourism, in Portoroz and Piran, Slovenia, from July 6-8, 2022. With over forty presenters from multiple countries this was indeed another truly global gathering. The nine papers presented in this special issue of the IJRT&P take the reader to Australia, France, Ireland, Japan, the Pakistan-India border, Senegal, Spain, and the USA. They cover a remarkable array of topics, from understanding miracles to ceremonial ritual during pilgrimage, nocturnal pilgrimage, patriotic pilgrimage, the roles of religious guides, human rights pilgrimage, vertical pilgrimage, and, finally, autoethnography and pilgrimage. There is also a working paper that speculates on the origins of pilgrimage in the context of the first migration from Africa to Australia at the dawn of time. Also included is a film review of a unique, semester-long study abroad program on the Camino.

Pilgrimage truly is a multi-faceted diamond. The topics raised in this issue of the IJRT&P include:

Ṭūbā, Senegal – Ceremonial Rituals

The Grand Magal in Ṭūbā, in Senegal is the third biggest pilgrimage in the Muslim world after the pilgrimage to the mausoleum of Imam al-Hussayn in Karbala, Iraq, and the pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. This paper by Tahar Abbou deals with the pilgrimage to Ṭūbā that celebrates the life and teachings of Shaykh Amadou Bamba, the founder of the Sufi Mouridiyya Brotherhood. The mausoleum of Shaykh Bamba is believed to be

infused with his spiritual power, and this paper examines the ceremonial ritual performed by the pilgrims, as well as the social and economic impact of this religious celebration.

Mallorca (Majorca), Spain - Nocturnal Pilgrimage

Maja Balle explores the social and economic framing of the nocturnal pilgrimage to a shrine at Lluc Mountain, Mallorca, by members of the local community, the church, the governmental sector, and others. The 50-kilometer-long Des Güell a Lluc a Peu takes place in a context of voluntary engagement where local Mallorcans work together on handling the logistics and food supplies for participants.

India-Pakistan Border – Patriotic Pilgrimage

For over sixty years the Attari-Wagah checkpoint at the border between India and Pakistan has been a site for the 'Beating Retreat', a colourful ceremony of lowering the national flags performed jointly by the Indian Border Security Force and Pakistan Rangers. This emotional ritual, which is included in many popular tourist packages, is generally perceived as both a demonstration of aggressive intent and as a symbol of goodwill and cooperation between nations. Slogans are chanted and spectators become active participants of the performance. This paper by Anna Bochkovskaya focuses on the 'slogan dialogue' role in the patriotic pilgrimages to the Attari-Wagah border.

Understanding Miracles

Sacred places where archaic miracles were performed, and the promise of further miracles in the modern age, are the

topic of Stephen Haller's paper. By contrasting scientific and religious perspectives on miracles, Haller asks what role miracles play in religious tourism today. He argues that there are fundamental limits to our understanding of the universe, which implies that mysteries will always remain. A modern-day pilgrim need not believe in the supernatural to find meaning in unexplained events, but merely needs to recognise that even ordinary things will remain fundamentally unexplained.

Japan – Religious Guides

In his paper, Nicholas Prozano examines the roles of guides in Japan's religious tourism industry, in particular religious figures who engage in guiding activities for the public. Shippōryū-ji, a Shugendō temple, is the focus of the case study. Utilising a questionnaire, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews in Japanese with religious guides. Prozano concludes by showing the importance of religious guides in contemporary religious tourism. The implications for policy-makers are presented, including the role of guides in helping to evaluate visitor expectations and satisfaction, as well as the potential for authenticity-based policies.

Ireland – Human Rights Pilgrimage

E. Moore Quinn discusses the National Famine Way along Ireland's Royal Canal. It traces the remarkable trek of the 1,490 tenants who were evicted from County Roscommon during 'Black '47,' the worst year of the Great Irish Famine. From Dublin, the evictees were taken to Liverpool and then placed on four so-called 'coffin ships' bound for Canada. The path along the Royal Canal is 165 kilometres and is shared by hikers, bikers, 'boat people,' site-seekers, commemorators, and self-identified famine 'pilgrims.' This paper begins by applying a model that approaches the Way as a five-pronged cultural heritage complex, in particular as seen through the lenses of transmedia.

Lourdes, France – Pilgrimage and Healing

Dane Munro writes that the essence of the Lourdes' grotto and spring in the French Pyrenees is its miraculous healing reputation, which began in 1858. One hundred years later, the Order of Malta, an international charitable institution, organised its first annual pilgrimage to Lourdes, which is its spiritual headquarters. The Order draws members from all over the world to Lourdes along

with their *malades*, or the sick and suffering. These are people who suffer from a wide range of ailments. Their pilgrimage is fully subsidised by the Order. The author has been visiting the pilgrimage site of Lourdes for the last 20 years and provides deep insight into this pilgrimage of healing.

Yosemite, USA – Vertical Pilgrimage

The sheer rockface known as El Capitan in Yosemite National Park and its environs constitute the 'holiest of holies,' the 'centre of the universe,' or 'Mecca' for rock climbers. The walls are simply the tallest, steepest, and most challenging on the planet. For 'big wall' climbers who undertake this 'vertical pilgrimage', El Capitan has unmatched mystique and allure. In this paper, John Shultz explores climbing as pilgrimage asceticism. The research presented is part of a larger effort focused on contemporary serial climbers on El Capitan who structure their entire lives around the cliff. The methods employed are generally ethnographic with elements of auto-ethnography and demonstrate the potential of using an ascetical lens for analysis in the budding field of pilgrimage studies.

Work in Progress: The Very First Pilgrimage to Australia

One hundred thousand years ago, give or take, the forebears of some of Australia's First Nations—by some accounts as few as 150 people—left Africa on an immense journey. After some 2,000 generations, the passage through new and unfamiliar territories of these first modern human beings terminated in a supercontinent that included Australia, Papua, and Tasmania. By some estimates, no more than 150 people—the same number that had originally left Africa—made the final sea crossing that separates Indonesia and Australia. Research on such ancient migrations emphasises population growth, the 'selfish gene,' and the territorial imperative, as key drivers of mobility. In this working paper, Ian McIntosh speculates that the numinous was the equal to any other factor in migration, which is why he calls this vast trek an inspired journey or the very first pilgrimage.