

People of the Prophet's house : artistic and ritual expressions of Shi'i Islam



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Notes :

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Sommaire : Part 1: Introduction. -- 1. Shi'i art and ritual: contexts, definitions and expressions / Fahmida Suleman and Shainool Jiwa -- 2. Are there Shi'i forms of art? / Oleg Grabar -- Part 2: Pilgrimage and patronage -- 3. The Shi'i shrines of Iraq / James W. Allan -- 4. Glorifying the Imamate: architecture and ritual in the Shi'i shrines of Syria / Yasser Tabbaa -- 5. Evanescent meaning: the place of Shi'ism in Fatimid mosques / Jonathan M. Bloom -- 6. A Shi'i building boom in 14th-century Qum: the case of Bagh-i Sabz towers / Robert Hillenbrand -- 7. Pilgrims and patrons: ziyāra under the Samanids and Bavandids / Melanie Michailidis -- Part 3: Inscriptions on art, architecture and coinage -- 8. Early Qur'ans signed by the Shi'i Imams / Sheila R. Canby -- 9. Writing about faith: epigraphic evidence for the development of Twelver Shi'ism in Iran / Sheila S. Blair -- 10. The writing on the walls: selections from the Twelver Shi'i epigraphs of Lucknow's Hussainabad Imambara / Hussein Keshani -- 11. 'Alī walī Allāh and other non-Qur'anic references to the Ahl al-bayt on Islamic coinage before the Saljuq period / Luke Treadwell -- Part 4: Iconographic studies: Shi'i contexts and beyond. -- 12. Between the past and the future: the fālnāma (book of omens) in the 16th and early 17th centuries / Masumeh Farhad -- 13. Exploring Ahl al-bayt imagery in Qajar Iran (1785-1925) / Maryam Ekhtiar -- 14. Shi'ism and contemporary Iranian art / Venetia Porter -- 15. Dhu'l-faqār and the Ottomans / Zeynep Yürekli -- 16. The Hand of Fatima: in search of its origins and significance / Fahmida Suleman -- Part 5: Ritual expressions. -- 17. Lasting legacy: Shi'i art and architecture / Peter J. Chelkowski -- 18. 'Arūze Qāsem - a theatrical event in Shi'i female commemorative rituals / Ingvild Flakerud -- 19. Cinema as a cultural reservoir for the Shi'i performing art of ta'ziya / Nacim Pak-Shiraz -- 20. Some historic ta'ziyas of Multan / Tryna Lyons -- 21. Chirogh rawshan: Shi'i ceremonial practised by the Ismaili communities of Xinjiang China / Amier Saidula -- 22. Building and performing Shi'i Islam in Sufi Senegal: a photo essay / Mara A. Leichtman.



Despite their distinct theological differences, Shi'a and Sunni Muslims, followers of the two main branches of Islam, share a number of core beliefs including an allegiance to and love for the Prophet Muhammad and members of his family. For Shi'a Muslims, reverence for the Prophet and allegiance to his household (Ahl al-bayt, 'People of the House'), comprising his immediate family and their descendants, constitutes an essential principle of belief that has directly impacted how Shi'i artists, rulers, patrons and ritual participants have conveyed their love and loyalty through material culture and religious ritual. The 22 essays in this volume, richly illustrated with over 200 colored images, present a diversity of beliefs and practices expressed through the arts, architecture, material culture and ritual that spans Shi'i history from the tenth century to the present day. With contributions from experts in the fields of anthropology, religious studies, art and architectural history, numismatics, film studies and contemporary art, the book also calls attention to the global diversity of the artistic and devotional expressions of Shi'a Muslims from across Trinidad, Senegal, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, India and China. Additionally, some essays draw upon important female Shi'i figures and female ritual practices and many chapters underscore the theme of love for the Ahl al-bayt beyond Sunni and Shi'i demarcations. This work contributes to a growing body of scholarship dedicated to the religious arts and rituals of Shi'a Muslims around the world

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