



Pilgrimage and Household in the Ancient Near East

By Joy McCriston

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In this book, Joy McCriston examines the continuity of traditions over millennia in the Near East. Tracing the phenomenon of pilgrimage in pre-Islamic Arabia up through the development of the Hajj, she defines its essential characteristics and emphasizes the critical role that pilgrimage plays in enabling and developing socioeconomic transactions. Indeed, the social identities constructed through pilgrimage are key to understanding the long-term endurance of the phenomenon. In the second part of the book, McCriston turns to the household, using cases of ancient households in Mesopotamian societies, both in the private and public spheres. Her conclusions tie together broader theoretical implications generated by the study of the two phenomena and offer a new paradigm for archaeological study, which has traditionally focused on transitions to the exclusion of continuity of traditions.

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Review

"Highly recommended." -Choice

"...this is a very significant book for understanding the longterm history of the Middle East, and it does an important job in forcing prehistorians to look at their work within the context of written history while reminding historians of the deeper roots of Middle Eastern culture." --Current Anthropology

About the Author

Joy McCorriston is Associate Professor of Anthropology at The Ohio State University. She has published forty academic articles and book chapters on the origins of food production, the development of agricultural economies through the Bronze Age and Southern Arabian prehistory. She currently leads the Ancient Human Social Dynamics in Arabia Project in Oman.

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