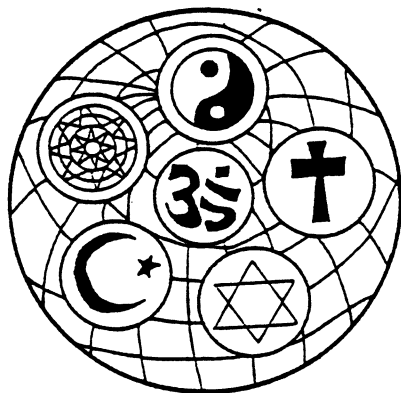


Geography of Religions & Belief Systems



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Volume 19: Issue 2

Summer 1997

EDITOR'S NOTE

I am happy to report that we have a summer edition of the newsletter to share with you. Many of you may be away from your desk at this time, but we hope that you will return to find the newsletter in your mailbox in time to vote on a much needed revision of the specialty group bylaws. Look inside for details. You can keep the insert as your record of our bylaws whether they change or not. In addition we will bring you news of the business meeting in Fort Worth last spring as well as the call for papers for the Boston meeting. Your contribution and participation in GORABS programs is most welcome, and we hope to hear from as many of you as possible on the topics covered in this edition.

I would also like to encourage members to submit their essays and reviews for future publications. I have materials for the fall issue, but will need your contributions to prepare the spring issue for next year. If you have a map or graphic associated with your submission, please make sure it is of publishable quality from the outset and note the format of the newsletter for its dimensions. You can contact me if you have any questions.

FUNDING FOR THIS NEWSLETTER IS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES AT SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY

GORABS Feature Essay*

THE POWER OF SACRED SPACE: AN ANALYSIS OF TWO PILGRIMAGE CENTERS IN BRAZIL by Zeny Rosendahl,
Department of Geography, State University of Rio de Janeiro,
NEPEC-40 Andar, Bloco D--Sala 4007, Av. Sao Francisco Xavier
524, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

This study measures the propulsive force of the sacred in the spatial reorganization that annually occurs in two pilgrimage centers when there is an in-flow of a multitude of believers to celebrate the day of the local patron saint. The two sanctuaries are located in the village of Muquem and the small town of Santa Cruz dos Milagres, which are in Goias and Piaui respectively. Remarkable religious events occur such that a village of 200 and a town of 1,800 inhabitants are transformed into active centers of pilgrims from places beyond their states' borders. On days of greater celebration, Muquem receives about 60,000 pilgrims and Santa Cruz dos Milagres about 30,000.

An analysis of the two religious centers reveals the singular and repetitive organization common to both. Muquem is located 447

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GORABS FOCUS ON:

Gisbert Rinschede

Dr. Rinschede is professor of geography and department chair at the University of Regensburg in Germany. He has distinguished himself through his work on transhumance, the geography of North America and in the geography of religion with a strong focus on pilgrimage and tele-evangelism. Dr. Rinschede's work is published primarily in German language venues too numerous to list here. His more recent work in English is representative (shown below). Acting as one of the founders and key editors of Geographia Religionum, Dr. Rinschede has contributed a wealth of research to our field. Contact him for more information so that your library can order back issues. Gisbert Rinschede can be reached at this address: Institute for Geography, Department of Geography Didactics, University of Regensburg, University Street #31, Regensburg Germany 93040. (0941)-943-4396, or FAX 943-4949, or e-mail: gisbert.rinschede@geographie.uni-regensburg.de

1997 "Pilgrimage Studies at Different Levels," in Sacred Places. Sacred Spaces-The Geography of Pilgrimages ed. by Stoddard and Morinis. Baton Rouge, LA: Geoscience Publications.

1996 "Geographical Aspects of Religious Broadcasting in the United States," in Human Geography in North America ed. by Frantz. Innsbrucker: Geographical Studies, Volume 26.

1994 "Catholic Pilgrimage Centers in Quebec, Canada," in The Spirit and Power of Place: Human Environment and Sacrality Varanasi: The National Geographical Journal of India, Volume 40.

1994 "The Pilgrimage Center of Loreto, Italy: A Geographical Study," in Sacred Places. Sacred Traditions ed. by Dubey. Allahabad, India: Pilgrimage Studies #3.



CALL FOR PAPERS

BOSTON AAG MEETING

The last week in March of 1998 is slated for the annual meetings. GORABS is organizing several sessions. Since the deadline for submission of all materials to the central office is September 3, 1997, it is imperative that you contact us as soon as possible. Suggested themes for sessions include: Early Euro-American Religions/Religions of European Settlement of North America, African Religions and/or African Religious Traditions in Diaspora, Religions of the New Immigrants to North America and Native American Religions. If your work does not fit one of these themes, we will create a session with other GORABS contributors who also have worked on diverse topics. Surinder Bhardwaj is working on the African session and Carol Prorok is working on the new immigrants session. If you have a paper on any other topic, you can still send it via C. Prorok and she will make sure there is an organizer and chair for that session. Also, we are looking for alternative ways of presenting our material. If you have any ideas, feel free to act upon them! Finally, if you are organizing your own GORABS session, please let a board member know about it so that we can announce it in the newsletter.

ADDRESS CHANGES

The editor appreciates notification of address changes as soon as they are known. Anyone's newsletter returned due to an incorrect address will be eliminated from the mailing list.



Feature Essay

Continued from Page 1

km north of Goiania, the capital of Goias. To reach Muquem, a visitor must travel the last 47km on unpaved roads. Decadent center of the 18th century golden era, Muquem had in 1990 only 29 houses of which 15 were of the pre-molded type; the remaining ones were made of wattle and daub. Local commerce includes one butcher's shop (that opens only on Sundays) and 3 small shops in precarious conditions. Santa Cruz dos Milagres is located 167km from Terezina, the capital of Piaui. Access to this small town is also difficult in that one must use 54km of unpaved roads, and even cross intermittent streambeds on foot. This area was also an important one in the 18th century when the Jesuits were great landowners and cattle ranchers. The best houses are located on the main street, which is the only way to the church stairways. Houses are made of brick and roofed with old-fashioned colonial tiles or with straw. Thus, they are typical of the northeastern rural landscape. Most inhabitants are engaged in primary economic activities.

The location of both sacred sites in areas sparsely populated and difficult to access reaffirms the link between religious centers and isolated and inhospitable places. The resignation to suffering and to deprivations is inherent to the pilgrim's attitude. "It seems to us much more than simple coincidence the link that exists, in Brazil, between religious function and decadent towns" (Franca 1975:129).

The Sanctuaries

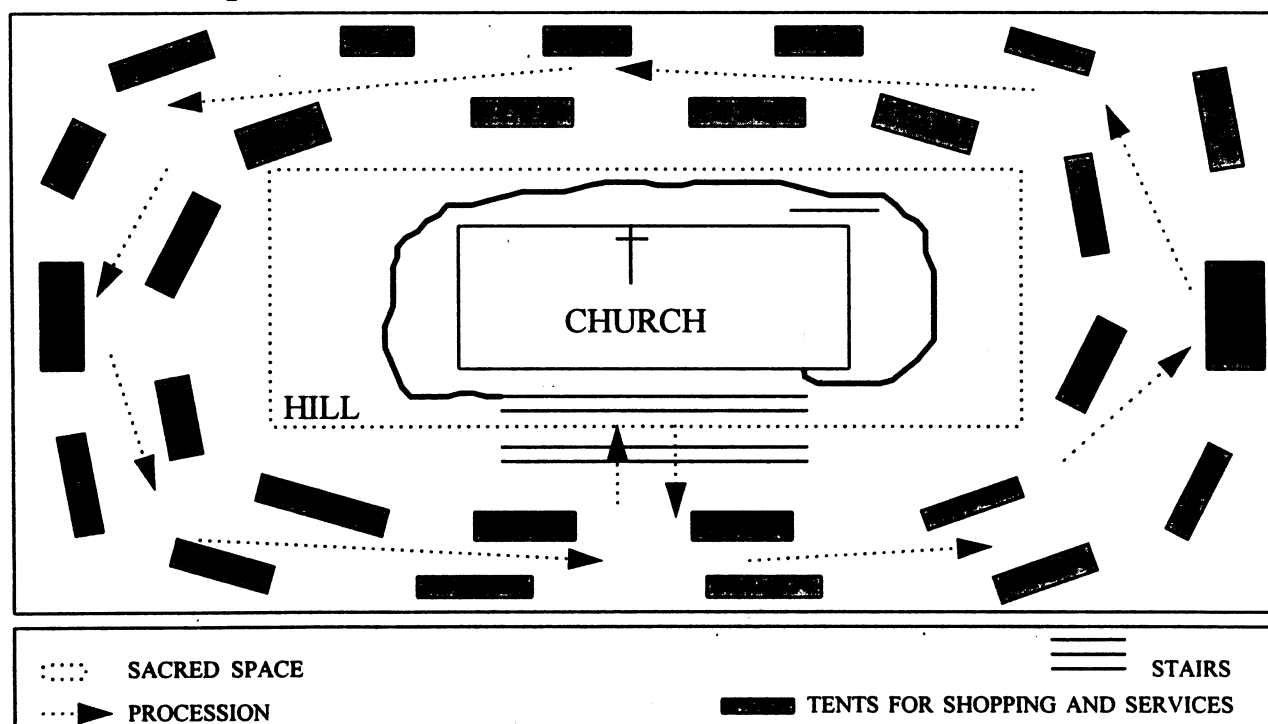
The buildings of both churches dates from the 18th century which was characterized by the expansion of social and eco-

nomic power of all religious orders in Brazil. This lasted until many were expelled in the Pombal era of the 1760's. Initial dates of the pilgrimages to Muquem and Santa Cruz dos Milagres are unknown. The first miracle in both sanctuaries happened in the 19th century. They are attributed to charismatic figures of beatified persons and eremites, who are the "signal of graces and miracles of God". As we know, beatified persons were common people to the population of the time and were sensible to the longing of the oppressed, establishing a continuity of popular beliefs and religious practices peculiar to popular Catholicism.

Muquem's feast occurs in August and is dedicated to Nossa Senhora d'Abadia do Muquem (Our Lady of the Abbey of Muquem). In Santa Cruz dos Milagres the feast occurs in September in honor of the miraculous wood cross left in the church by a beatified person.

Feasts, processions and pilgrimages are the most sensational practices of popular religion. Pilgrims meet every year to make or honor promises: cripples, sick and old persons join with those whose piety is expressed as devotion to the saint. They arrive with their hammocks, pots, "stoves", plates and food to eat during the feast. Most come by horse, foot or by motor vehicle. In Santa Cruz dos Milagres, for instance, the bigger trucks can carry 200 pilgrims each trip. Pilgrims build lightweight shelters of buriti and babassu palms leaves in Muquem, and of babassu or carnauba palm leaves in Santa Cruz dos Milagres. The palm leaves serve as coverage and tree trunks are placed one over the other as walls. They are supported by stakes with physical size

Muquem - Goiás -- SACRED SPACE SCHEME



Feature Essay Continued from Page 3

depending on the owners' wishes. It is possible to distinguish the shacks of the well-to-do pilgrims: they are larger and have divisions to separate places for cooking, sleeping and the bathroom. Most pilgrims use public bathrooms built by the church. In Muquem there is a supply of water for the pilgrims with public taps. Santa Cruz dos Milagres does not provide such service. Pilgrims use the water of the Sao Nicolau river for cooking and washing.

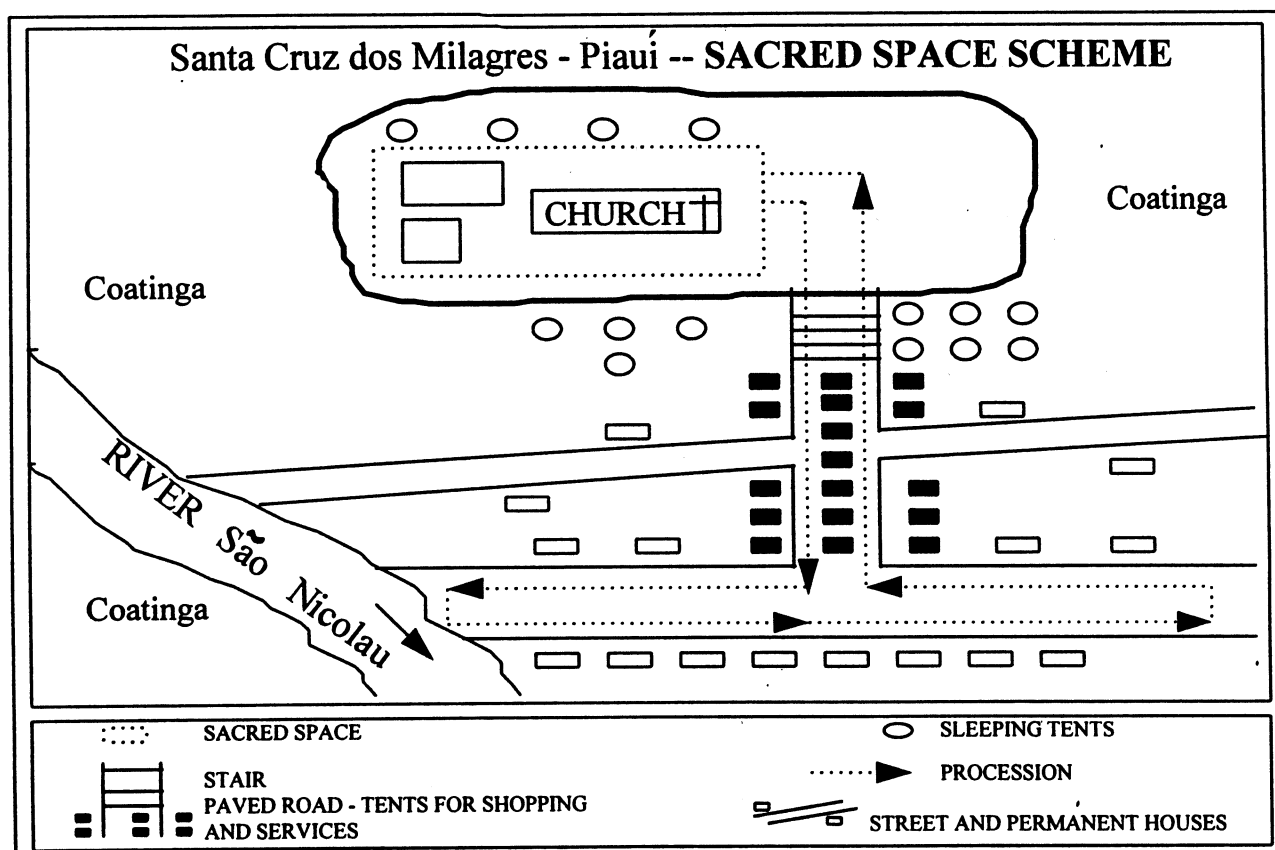
Their devotional routes are centered on visits to the sanctuaries. The two celebrations are characterized by the permanence of the pilgrims in the sacred space during the feast period when they benefit by the presence of the priest serving mass, receiving Holy Communion, baptizing their children, and even marrying, which places the couple under the total protection of the saint. The faithful organize these activities, for they are guardians of the traditions that the priest respects. In these pilgrimages sacred time and sacred space have a close relationship. Sacred space is the place of the saint, the superior place, where the symbolic meeting of the saint with people, without intermediaries, visibly occurs. Sacred space is the place where the faithful completely communicate with the divine.

Sacred and Profane Space in Catholic Sanctuaries

The pilgrims impress upon this space an extraordinary condition of religious effervescence. Through an experience with the sacred the pilgrim can get closer to a reality which transcends this world. Pilgrimages represent in a clear way the Durkheimian duality: the difference between sacred and profane. In them, common persons change themselves, distinguishing the "ex-

ceptional" from the "quotidian" (Durkheim 1968:492). Sacred and profane coexist, but it is difficult to distinguish their boundaries. Here, the sacred is at the top of hill where it shelters the devotional symbol and mingles with Church. Profane space, in the lower part of the terrain, is the space designated to commerce and leisure, which is a spectacular mixture between religious ceremony and profane activities (see figures). Mass, processions, and the sermon represent the mark of the official sacred. Dancing, frequent drunkenness and fights testify to the comingling of the profane.

Spatial organization of these pilgrimage centers is characterized by presenting a core, which can be called a fixed point. It is qualified as strong, definite, and consecrated. In Muquem, the fixed point is the Nossa Senhora d'Abadia image, and in Santa Cruz dos Milagres it is the wood cross; but, in both of them, the fixed point is inside the Church. The surrounding area has all of the necessary elements for pilgrims to perform their religious acts and practices. Thus, the fixed point and the surrounding area define sacred space. Profane space is directly linked to the sacred and consists of the set of non-religious activities that are strongly articulated with the sacred. In Muquem and Santa Cruz dos Milagres it comprises the area of the pilgrim shacks and of the merchants. Also, a remarkable commercialization of the sacred by politicians is noted, because both in Muquem and in Santa Cruz dos Milagres, in an election year, several candidates to the government of the state, congressmen and mayors distributed their propaganda, and were present at the religious ceremonies.



Feature Essay

Continued from Page 4

Permanence of the Sacred in Space

Further analysis of the sanctuaries brings us into contact with the expressive triangular form of power whose vertices are PEOPLE-CHURCH-STATE, and which frequently have a dramatic character due to disagreements and disputes. However, popular Catholicism has survived and continuously struggles for freedom and autonomy of religious expression in the sacred spaces of Catholic sanctuaries. The gathering of 60,000 persons in Muquem and 30,000 in Santa Cruz dos Milagres changes for a few days these desolate villages into "towns" full of life. An attempt to compare Muquem and Santa Cruz dos Milagres, two centers of religious convergence isolated from the developed areas, is due to the innumerable similarities between them, and also because they have preserved popular religiosity in its most significant characteristics. Each year sacred space in Muquem and Santa Cruz dos Milagres is ritually recreated. Besides its religious function, the pilgrimage experience also includes events of a social character: to meet godparents and relatives who live far away, and during the feast, reinforce the solidarity of the group.

The search for religious protection and extra-group contacts leads pilgrims from different places of Brazil to an escape from the rural quotidian, from spiritual silence to feasting in sacred time and space. The practice of "making" and "paying" promises in sanctuaries, the characteristic obtaining of graces, and the search for material goods through divine favor, is present in its innumerable modalities. Pleas for health, jobs and love are the most frequent as pilgrims go there in search of supernatural help to solve their material necessities. Thus, religious circulation constitutes a solution for frustrations of terrestrial life as a method of 'obtaining' and 'doing' that which cannot be obtained and done in everyday spaces. The sanctuaries symbolically maintain a direct connection between the pilgrim and the saint.

Durkheim, E. 1968 *Les formes elementaires de la vie religieuse*. Paris: PUF.

Franca, M.C. 1975 "Pequenos centros paulistas de funcao religiosa," Sao Paulo: *IGEOG/USP*, Vol. I & II.

BYLAWS REFERENDUM

AAG dues-paying members will find a guide sheet with proposed changes to the bylaws inserted with this newsletter. Please review the changes and vote. A ballot is included for this purpose. Send the ballot to Dick Jackson at BYU by October 1, 1997.

MINUTES

The following is an abbreviated version of the minutes of the general business meeting held at the AAG Meeting in Fort Worth on April 3, 1997--Bob Stoddard presiding. Submitted by Dick Jackson.

1. Minutes of 1996 Business Meeting in Charlotte, N. C. approved unanimously.
2. Treasurer's report approved unanimously. Balance: \$1592.46
3. Election Results: Chandra Balachandran was elected Secretary/Treasurer, Robert Kuhlken and Darrel McDonald become new board members. Rebecca Dobbs is our new student representative. Surinder Bhardwaj will serve one year in place of C. Balachandran and Chad Emmet remains to finish his term. Dick Jackson takes over as Chair and Bob Stoddard now holds the position of Past-Chair. Thanks were expressed to Robert Stoddard for his service as president for the past two years, and to Benjamin Tillman, Mohammad Hemmasi and Peter Halvorson for their service on the board of directors.
4. The Sopher Award for best student paper read at the AAG meetings was given to Sinclair Sheers for her paper "Christian Mappaemundi and Jain Religious Maps: Comparative Created Worlds". No entries were received for the Sopher Young Scholar award to untenured faculty.
5. Much discussion ensued concerning the amount of the Sopher awards relative to the SG's income. It is suggested that we raise money, through donations, specifically to support the Sopher Award and to assist our students in attending the Hawaii meeting.
6. Much discussion also dealt with the process of reviewing the submissions for the Sopher Award with the result that we will follow the same procedure as this past year.
7. Allan Gleason's GORABS Bibliography project is still in progress. Contact him if you have news of recent citations.
8. The GORABS Homepage is up and running via Chandra's account in North Dakota. It is only a matter of time before the newsletter will be available on the internet.
9. Meeting adjourned at 7:05pm

IT'S TIME TO SHARE

Members and friends of GORABS now have an important opportunity to share their resources in the furthering of our academic specialty. It is especially important to, and symbolic of, our group's progress that the Sopher Young Scholar Award continue. In this regards, we strongly encourage people to submit their papers for the competition. In addition, you can support the monetary gift that accompanies the award by making a donation to GORABS-Sopher Award when you re-up with the AAG this fall. On the line for Voluntary Contribution/ Other just indicate the amount with a notation of GORABS-Sopher Award. Similarly, you can donate to our (one-time student support) Hawaii Fund. Make sure you note GORABS-Hawaii. These donations are tax deductible and, moreover, documented on your AAG form. **DON'T MISS THIS IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next issue (Fall 1997) of the *Pennsylvania Geographer* will be an excellent compilation of GORABS papers. If you are not a member of the Pennsylvania Geographical Society, you can still order a copy of this issue. Look in the next issue of this newsletter for details.

Rana P.B. Singh announces a new bi-annual journal; *Sacred Earth & Eco-Healing* which will be published by the Society of Heritage Planning & Environmental Health. Key emphasis include deep ecology, pilgrimage-tourism, sustainability, and peace through pilgrimage. Short essays (not more than 3000 words or more than 2 BW photos/line drawings) are invited for the first issue. Contact Dr. R.P.B. Singh, NO. B 29/12 A (II Flr.), Lanka, Station Road, Varanasi, UP 221005 India (Fax: 091-542-317-074). In the U.S. contact John M. Malville: malville@spot.colorado.edu

Rana also announces a conference. The International Conference on the Cosmology and Complexity of Pilgrimage will be held in New Delhi in January 1999. Contact him for more details.

A new edition of the **GEOGRAPHY IN AMERICA** volume will be produced by the AAG and the specialty groups play an important role contributing to it. Look for an announcement in the next edition of the newsletter regarding proposals for this essay.

!!!!OOPS!!!!

The last edition of the newsletter (Winter 1997) was numbered incorrectly.

It should be Volume 19: Issue 1. Please mark this in the heading of that issue. Sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused.

GORABS NEWSLINE

Whenever space permits, the editor is happy to include in GORABS any news about you or your program that would be of interest to our members. Please type or print legibly. Also, send your vita to the editor if you would like to let the rest of us know a little more about you.

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Telephone: _____

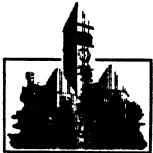
Fax: _____

Research in Progress: _____

Recent Publications: _____

Program Activities: _____

GORABS NEWSLINE



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