



Contesting Rituals: Islam and Practices of Identity-making (Ritual Studies Monograph) **(Ritual Studies Monograph)**

Pamela J. Stewart

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This book fills a current need in Islamic Studies for a perspective on the nuanced investigation of ritual practices rather than a concentration on politicized forms of ideology. The essays in this volume, all written by scholarly specialists with first-hand fieldwork experience, take up a number of questions central to Islamic religion and ritual, focusing on rituals as practices of making identities. Identities are seen as changing in response to historical forces rather than as unchanging and rigid, and the overall vision of Islam is seen as pluralistic rather than monolithic. Several of the essays deal with gender relations, showing that women may in practice gain some prominence in local contexts beyond what might be allowed by reformist "Islamicizing" authorities. This is particularly the case when the focus is on varieties of Sufism. The essays also recognize that elements of conflict and contestation are commonly present in ritual contexts because of struggles over power, hence the title "Contesting Rituals"; Politics, gender relations, and conflict between central reformists and local ritual specialists are all involved in these contestations. Overall, the volume aims to show the multiplicity of Islam and to demonstrate how the themes of multiplicity and unity are played out continuously over time. The contributors to the volume are Kelly Pemberton (South Asia), Anna M. Gade (Indonesia), Susan J. Rasmussen (Africa), Alaine S. Hutson (Africa), Shampa Mazumdar and Sanjoy Mazumdar (USA), Sean R. Roberts (Uyghurstan), and Liyakat Takim (Iraq). The editors, Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern, provide an introductory overview.

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