

Book Reviews

General

Turner, Victor and Edith Turner. *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture. Anthropological Perspectives.* (Lectures on the History of Religions Sponsored by the American Council of Learned Societies; New Series, 11.) xx-281 pp. in 8°. With 13 pl. and 2 maps. New York 1978. Columbia University Press. Price: \$ 18.75.

This is an outstanding scholarly work. And such it is, in spite of the deep and broad limitations the authors, contrary to their original plans, had to impose upon themselves (*infra*). In order to understand their specific approach, one must pay attention to the work's subtitle: *Anthropological Perspectives*. It is from these perspectives that the authors examine "the theological doctrines and popular notions which promote and sustain Christian pilgrimage, and the symbols and images which embody them". In other words, the authors did not intend "to write a comprehensive history of Christian pilgrimage". Such a task should, so they thought, be left to professional historians. Guided by the views of F. A. HANSON (*Meaning in Culture*, London 1975), they rather intended to ask institutional questions, and not individual ones, about the pilgrimage data. An examination of pilgrimages from the perspective of individual questions would largely have meant an involvement "with medical and psychological anthropology, with structures of guilt, anxiety and stress which impelled pilgrims to undertake penitential pilgrimages". Instead, the authors were primarily interested in institutional questions; and consequently, they inquired into the structure of values, norms, symbols, rules, relationships manifested in the same behavior about which it is legitimate to ask individual questions. They felt that "institutional questions elicit the objective coordination of cultural fields better than individual ones" (xiii ff.). This makes it understandable that they received their first clues to guide them through their study from initiation rites of preliterate (tribal) societies (cf. 2 ff.).

It was, as already intimated, the authors' original intention to compare the pilgrimage system of several major historical religions. Besides Christianity, they mention Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam, in the study of which the phenomenon of pilgrimage has, so they believe, "been surprisingly neglected by historians and social scientists". Soon, however, it became apparent to them that the study of Christian pilgrimage would by itself be an enormous task; and they considered it all the more awesome because of their own Catholic affiliation. As concerns the latter point, it can, in the opinion of the reviewer, be readily attested to the TURNERS that they achieved their objectives not only with scholarly competence but also with genuine objectivity.

Chapter One, which forms the Introduction to the work, and Chapter Seven, the Conclusions, are of special interest to the readers of *Anthropos*. However, before dealing with these two chapters, the titles of the other five chapters, in which the subject matter as such is studied, should be given, and some explanations and remarks be added. Thus it will be easier to deal adequately with the Introduction and the Conclusions.