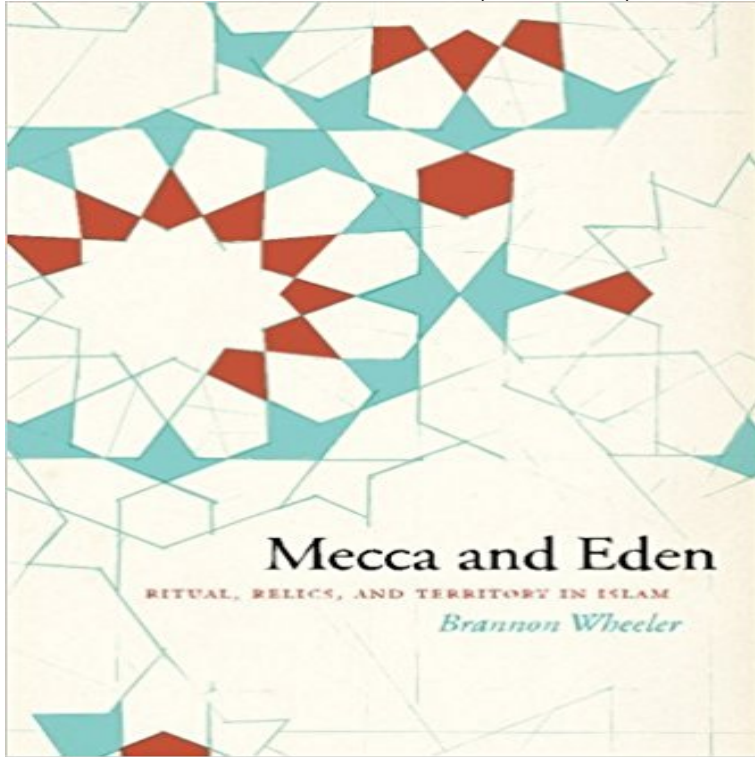


Mecca and Eden: Ritual, Relics, and Territory in Islam



Nineteenth-century philologist and Biblical critic William Robertson Smith famously concluded that the sacred status of holy places derives not from their intrinsic nature but from their social character. Building upon this insight, *Mecca and Eden* uses Islamic exegetical and legal texts to analyze the rituals and objects associated with the sanctuary at Mecca. Integrating Islamic examples into the comparative study of religion, Brannon Wheeler shows how the treatment of rituals, relics, and territory is related to the more general mythological depiction of the origins of Islamic civilization. Along the way, Wheeler considers the contrast between Mecca and Eden in Muslim rituals, the dispersal and collection of relics of the prophet Muhammad, their relationship to the sanctuary at Mecca, and long tombs associated with the gigantic size of certain prophets mentioned in the Quran. *Mecca and Eden* succeeds, as few books have done, in making Islamic sources available to the broader study of religion.

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