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978-0-521-86479-4 - The Invention of Sacred Tradition  
Edited by James R. Lewis and Olav Hammer  
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## THE INVENTION OF SACRED TRADITION

The dictionary definition of tradition refers to beliefs and practices that have been transmitted from generation to generation; however, “tradition” can rest simply on the claim that certain cultural elements are rooted in the past. Claim and documented historical reality need not overlap. In the domain of religion, historically verifiable traditions coexist with recent innovations whose origins are spuriously projected back into time. This book examines the phenomenon of “invented traditions” in religions, ranging in time from Zoroastrianism to Scientology, and geographically from Tibet to North America and Europe. The various contributions, together with an introduction that surveys the field, use individual case studies to address questions such as the rationale for creating historical tradition for one’s doctrines and rituals; the mechanisms by which hitherto unknown texts can enter an existing corpus; and issues of acceptance and skepticism in the reception of dubious texts.

JAMES R. LEWIS is Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin. He is editor of a number of collected works and author of numerous books and articles including *Legitimizing New Religions* (2003).

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521864794](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521864794)

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First published 2007

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-0-521-86479-4 hardback

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