

1 Introduction

A Historical Approach to Sacralised Space: Methodological Perspectives

Summary 1.1 Keywords. – 1.2 Interactions. – 1.3. – A Glimpse on Today's Situation: Co-existence, Creation and Re-Creation of Meaning. – 1.4 Religious Studies. – 1.5 Christian Liturgical Heritage. – 1.6 *Exempla et Imitationes*: Images of Jerusalem and Rome. – 1.7 The Role of the Liturgical Christian Heritage in Today's Cities. – 1.8 A Contribute to the Debate.

Body, rite and city are interacting elements in order to create a syntax of meaning into a community. They generate a living symbolic space that mirrors and influences mental images, behaviours of individuals and groups, ideas and models.

At the same time, they are also the points of a debate that, during the last fifty years, have interwoven different lines of analysis now composed in a problematic way in the context of Religious Studies, about a general re-consideration of sacral and religious features of society.

1.1 Keywords

These lines of study, based on differentiated methodological approaches, need some specific interpretative frameworks, suitable to interact at epistemological and hermeneutic level thanks to instrumental definitions and key concepts deeply linked with the anthropological dimension.

1.1.1 Body

The body, considered a hub of cultural signification, is the fulcrum of any discourse about space and spatial interactions.

A living body performing an action and the objects that surround it immediately receive a new layer of significations. The same happens to other bodies involved in the act (or merely present to the act): a vortex forms around the perceived body; my world is no longer present only to me but it becomes shared and co-participated; something new is being created; the other body is no longer a fragment of the world but rather the place of a certain elaboration and of a certain 'view' of the world.

This concept of embodiment is borrowed from the teaching of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and of Pierre Bourdieu, elaborated and discussed over the past fifty years around the interpretative frameworks of cultural identity, religious group and urban landscape.¹ As place of experience and conscience, the body is both a constitutively open space, and as a border permeable to pain, pulses, sensations, stimuli. It is the boundary limit of the self and a contact area, an interpenetration with the outside world and with others. At the same time it is presence, force, organic consistency. In the act of staying, just existing, it marks, fixes, determines. His movement, when it is perceived and acted as a gesture, has a creative power: it gives life to reality, displays, performs and, what's more, makes it present.

The body, thanks to its gestures, makes the rite possible. The celebration of the rite is the place where the body gives meaning to the world: interacting with some other bodies generates a dynamic living being which is able to transform reality.²

1.1.2 Liturgy

In the context of Christianity, these elements are not only relevant, but specifically featured.

¹ Methodological points of reference: Merleau-Ponty, *Sens et non-sens*; Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception*. About the teaching of Pierre Bourdieu and its continuity: Dubois, Durand, Winkin, *Le symbolique et le social*. Further methodological and epistemological remarks in: Frank, *Chair et corps*; Le Breton, *Anthropologie du corps et modernité*; Le Breton, *Corps et société*; Le Breton, *Il sapore del mondo*; Henry, *Incarnazione*.

² In the context of the researches of Julien Ries, see in particular: *Symbole, mythe et rite: constants du sacré* and *La coscienza religiosa*. On this basis, further theoretical elaborations are examined in: Terrin, *Il rito*. See also: Panikkar, *La religione, il mondo e il corpo*.

Both the Christian theology, founded on the dogma of the Incarnation, and various ecclesiologies identifying the community of believers with the same mystical Body of Christ, define the relationships between body, rite and society as a strong bond, as an interdependence making sacred the individual lives of the *fideles* involved in the liturgy.

Even if these topics are the very object of the history of liturgy, in the last decades they have spread dramatically in the domain of the Medieval Studies, with consequent interdisciplinary implications. Indeed the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages provide an extraordinary number of cases highlighting the interpenetrations between rituality and society, together with the capacity of Christian liturgies to adapt and renew and to revitalize different cultures and people.

Liturgy is memory and re-enactment of the events of Salvation in time and space. Thanks to gestures, words and silences repeated in an unchanged sequence, it brings facts considered foundational to life, marking events of the history of a community, featuring its characters.

Perceived thanks to the senses and the intellect, it communicates the divine into the sensitive dimension of the experience. This service offered to the *populus fidelium*, transmits contents interacting with the recipients, who become themselves protagonists of the celebrations.³

The faithfuls gather in the space, in places dedicated to worshiping, conceived, projected and used for the liturgy.⁴ In fact, the ceremony of consecration introduces the presence of God in the space of the men with a precise ritual marking the divine descent on earth: a small segment of the world is transformed in an exceptional space, appointed with supernatural powers.⁵

At that point the identification is complete: “The material church where people gather to pray God signifies the Church built in heaven with living stones”.⁶ Accordingly, the architectural space is structured to communicate and to underline the contents of the liturgies. Space is created by gestures and is structured mirroring the movements of the bodies.⁷

The sequences of acts and movements are repeated over time: repetition itself structures and consolidates a liturgy in use, in relation with a community of recipients. This process is played in a space and

3 Löw, s.v. “Liturgia”.

4 An early study is: Gamber, *Domus ecclesiae*. About general perspectives: Bonaccorso, *Il rito e l'altro*; Hart, Guthrie, *Faithful Performances*.

5 Bacci, *Lo spazio dell'anima*, 5.

6 Davril, Thibodeau, *Guillemi Duranti*, I: 13.

7 See the cases examined in Ganz, *Mobile Eyes*, see in particular: Schweinfurth, “Creating Sacred Space as Cosmic Liturgy in Late Antiquity: Two Case Studies from Ravenna”, 61-89; Bacci, “Remarks on the Visual Experience of Holy Sites in the Middle Ages”, 175-97; Fenlon, “Space, Motion, and Image: Ritual Acts in Early Modern Venice”, 273-92.

contributes to his sacralisation:⁸ a place becomes sacred by virtue of the event remembered and reliving there. The architectural buildings are consequential results of these passages.⁹

The same happens in the larger space where a place is inserted, be it an urban space, a territory or the whole Christian *oicumene*.

From a historical point of view, the building of the urban space can be considered a depository of symbologies enacted by continuously performed liturgies into a community.¹⁰

1.1.3 City

A definition of space borrowed from Henri Lefebvre and from the critical epistemological debate originated around his key works¹¹ focuses on the human being, who perceives the world and gives sense and meaning to things. By doing so he builds an interpretative narrative interspersed with topological interrelations, distances, hierarchies between places.¹²

Nevertheless, if we want to interpret the complex symbolic acting of the communities in the space, the points of reference remain some intuitive theories of Maurice Halbwachs. Particularly, the idea of ‘work of memory’ as dialectic and continuous process of building of meaning is a basic methodological key, still useful if we want to find innovative elements clarifying the origins of our contemporary urban landscapes.

Actually, if we want to go beyond definitions based on functions, the city is defined as a symbolical space, as a domain where signs, buildings, stones, architectures receive meaning that refers to something else, into a cultural code.

⁸ See various methodological approaches in the essays collected in: Gittos, Hamilton, *Understanding Medieval Liturgy*.

⁹ The studies have been developed starting from some paradigmatic works. See as examples the proceedings of the congress *Lo spazio del sacro: luoghi e spostamenti* promoted by Stanford University and Studio Teologico Fiorentino during the seventh centenary of the edification of the Duomo of Florence: Verdon, *The Space of the Sacred*. See also Safran, *Heaven on Earth*, in particular Ousterhout, *The Holy Space*, 81-120. A systematic analysis is in Kopp, *Der liturgische Raum in der westlichen Tradition*. See also: Yates, *Liturgical Space*; Hamilton, *Defining the Holy*; Gittos, *Sacred space in Anglo-Saxon England*.

¹⁰ In this perspective, an analysis of late antique and byzantine spaces is in: Bogdanovic, *Perceptions of the Body and Sacred Space*.

¹¹ For a general updating about the complex terrain of Lefebvrian writings regarding cities, urbanization and the production of space, see: *The Routledge Handbook of Henri Lefebvre*. For a synthesis, see also: Kipfer, Saberi, Wieditz, *Henri Lefebvre; Memory, Narrative and Histories*.

¹² These concepts are developed in Connolly, *The Maps of Matthew Paris*.

Urban space can also be characterized as sacred space: some specific elements make the sacred present, evoke, recall and remember the hierophanies. They contribute to generate forms of meaning in the daily life of residents and of those known as 'foreigners', visitors, outsiders.¹³

In Christian environment, manifestation of the sacred, processes of sacralisation of the space and memory are linked by very specific connections.

The collective frameworks of memory interact with the same history of Salvation. The history of Salvation lives and makes itself present in the liturgy. Thus, the liturgical space is not only the place of a hierophany, but it becomes a way of seeing the world, a set of attitudes and beliefs, expectations and norms.

The Christian worship is itself a practice of memory, a way of remembering, a complex system of gestures, words and images interacting with the life of believers.

This system displays and performs itself in the space and the space becomes an active part of the whole.

The way of these mutual interactions in time is the very object of the history of liturgies and of the History of Christianity, in general.

The Christian tradition indeed originated extraordinary forms of spatialization.

The Halbwachs interpretation of historical and social building process of the Via Dolorosa and of the Christian memory of Jerusalem opened some lines of analysis,¹⁴ but religious dynamics appear richer and more complex.

In the case of Christian liturgies and devotions, we are not only faced with a simple narrative, but also with true genesis, with a vivification connecting the theological level with the cultural one, with social relevant concerns.

The *ipsissima loca* of Jerusalem and the devotional pathways connecting them are the active protagonists of an extraordinary series of processes of duplication and of *imitatio* relating architectural buildings, city landscapes, construction techniques, liturgical objects, drawings and representations to one another. Mental images are directly involved, created and re-created.

The processes become more and more complex when we consider different identity groups interacting in the same space: the work of memory and the mental images overlap and interact in different

¹³ About the use of interdisciplinary approaches, see: Wagoner, "Collective Remembering as a Process of Social Representation".

¹⁴ See the groundbreaking works: Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*; Halbwachs, *La Memoria collettiva*; Halbwachs, *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en terre sainte*.

and various ways. At this point we need different innovative interpretative frameworks.

Religious groups structure and legitimate their identity all around the manifestation of the sacred; liturgies make their presence continue. Sites made sacred by ritual performances become both elements of identification and gathering places.

But this is not all: they are recognized as elements of memory, linking them to the history of the communities they belong to.

The exclusive use as well as the memorial connection with foundational events or with eminent people bond groups and places together.¹⁵ The spaces themselves are transformed: they can be limited, closed, used as elements of separation, discrimination, exclusion or seclusion.

Symbolical concerns can become prevailing: their image can be distinguished and separated from their physical and material dimensions becoming an icon, an emblem of a religious group.¹⁶

The resilience of minority groups shows also with the defence of rites, memories and mental images. When they can safeguard and continue some liturgies, they greatly improve the chance to defend themselves. The use of limited symbolic spaces can foster a subsequent adaptation and integration in a changed social situation.

The cities, as living bodies engaged in continuous transformations, hold more religious places corresponding to constellations of groups living together day by day building new forms of common existence. A final asset of coexistence can be also the result of a puzzle of different spaces, variously used on the basis of hierarchies and balance of power between social groups.¹⁷

1.2 Interactions

Three terms, body, liturgy and city mutually interact, giving life to a cultural syntax based on the experience, specifically on the religious one.

The genesis of a sacred symbolic space is dynamic, open to changes and overlapping meanings. Its centuries-long development is rooted into liturgical actions and devotional paths, both centred around the body, considered as performing subject able to create meanings

¹⁵ Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization in Jerusalem*.

¹⁶ As example of analysis based on the same approach to the city history, see: Menjot, Clark, *Subaltern City*.

¹⁷ About this kind of frame work applied to the city of Rome: Kaizer, Leone, Thomas, Witcher, *Cities and Gods*. Significant in this regard, from the methodological point of view, are the studies on the medieval city collected in Aguiar Andrade, Tente, *Espaços e poderes na Europa urbana medieval*.

and to build a sense, a complete interpretation of the existence. It is also an actor of change and, at the same time, a subject open to transformations and to be transformed, even at a neuro-perceptual level.

In a historical perspective of study, the main aim is the analysis of the liturgies focusing on three general critical concerns: identity dialectic processes between difference and common belongings; innovative forms of social and cultural integration; changes of individual perceptions during the experience of the sacred.

1.3 A Glimpse on Today's Situation: Coexistence, Creation and Re-Creation of Meaning

Contemporary global cities are both places of coexistence and spaces of creation and re-creation of meaning.

The great migrations and the emergence of multicultural society unfold their effects in creative, open and problematic ways: generating deep changes, originating identity and religious conflicts, or composing new processes of integration. This latter kind of transformations involves directly also sacred and sacralised spaces, rites and gestures, considered as chances to build, to deconstruct and re-build meanings. Acts of semantization and re-semantization impact on shared memories, open identities, forms of identity and cultural belongings including their differences, but composing them in a common higher belonging.¹⁸

Similar processes are evident also in the past. Socio-political changes originated stratified meanings, with religious implications, concentrated around spaces, signs and architectures.

Migrations, overlapping and replacement of different populations are associated with new establishing of symbolic codes: places and sacred sites have polarized identity changes and transformations.

1.4 Religious Studies

The relationships between religious groups and the space are at the core of the contemporary Religious Studies.

Key concepts as locating and re-locating, as well as placement, replacement and displacement are used to interpret complex phenomena related to migrations, coexistence of different communities, use and re-use of symbolic places, semantization and re-semantization of urban landmarks.¹⁹

¹⁸ Some hypothesis are described in: Bernardi, Giaccardi, *Comunità in atto*.

¹⁹ An overview on the contemporary debate: Kovács, Cox, *New Trends and Recurring Issues in the Study of Religion*; Moser, Feldman, *Locating the Sacred*. About gener-

Body and space are the centre of relationships which define culture, identity and society.

In this game of relationships amongst men, groups and space religions play a dynamic role: during a rite a space is truly created, not merely characterized as a symbolic context. Liturgical processes generate new places that can become an environment of deep individual experience, as well as active elements into the groups and into the city.

In the last two decades, the international studies on the sacred dimension in Late Antiquity and Middle Ages have focused on the idea of performance-experience regarding two main aspects. The first is the relationship between the public (both the worshippers and the outsiders looking at them or interacting with them) and the forms of representation (whether cultural, ritual and dramatic or architectural, plastic and figurative). In this case, the result is a performative interpretation of the links between the person and images, spaces, architectural elements, urban environment, devotional paths.

The second aspect is the dramatic dimension of liturgies, ritual practices, devotional expressions as prayer, meditation, preaching.

They are both connected with rituals and devotions developed in and around specific sacred spaces and along pilgrimage paths.²⁰

Starting from these observations studies have so far outlined the primary role of the concepts of experience and participation, not merely regarding the liturgies, but also in a general connection with the whole dimension of the sacred, embodied in the daily life of individual believers, groups and societies.

The connections between religious experience and identity have been examined in the same methodological perspective, pointing out the processes of communicating and transforming cultural and religious identities.

Anthropological issues are emerging, if we assume that religious experiences are founded on cross cultural and cross traditional elements, such as sensitive perceptions, violence, power relationships, symbolic natural elements, gender identities and relationships, gestures and body language, eating habits, funerary attitudes.

Therefore the study of the space's implications appears more and more relevant, becoming a reading key for a religious and cultural discourse lived through (and thanks to) the experience.

al epistemic issues: Elliott, *Reinventing Religious Studies*; Thurfjell, Jackson, *Religion on the Borders*; Droogers, van Harkshamp, *Methods for the Study of Religions Change*.

20 Some key studies: Fabietti, *Materia sacra*; Freedberg, *The Power of the Images*; Howe, *The Variety of Sensorial Experience*; Bernardi, *Agenda aurea*; Aronson-Lehavi, *Street Scenes*; Bino, *Dal trionfo al pianto*; Bino, *Il dramma e l'immagine*; Boquet, Nagy, *Sensible Moyen Âge*; Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336*; Carruthers, *Machina memorialis*.

1.5 Christian Liturgical Heritage

Christian liturgical heritage has a cross-reference value. It emerges as a mine of habits, gestures, texts performed in various ways in different societies, that they have oriented and transformed.

On the one hand, believers bring into the liturgies their sensibility, their culture, their demands and needs, inducing changes and adapting the celebrations.

On the other hand, rites themselves impress precise leanings in the community, thanks to their repetitive character and to their close connection with scriptural and theological foundation of the Christian creed. Performed liturgies act both on conscious levels of religious traditions, and on deeper anthropological aspects of transmitting models (behaviour, gender, power and relational models).

This study displays a historical reading about interactions between body, liturgy and city with a focus on Christian context, particularly on medieval Latin liturgies.

In Christianity, due to the dogma of the Incarnation, the body itself is the place of the manifestation of sacred; the sacraments make the presence of the Divine tangible and alive inside the matter; the participation in the celebrations involves individuals and communities in a general process of sanctification and sacralisation. Christian liturgy generates anew living body. Together a new space is created.

This is in the city and interacts with the whole urban society, in a theological eschatological perspective of dialectic between earthly city and heavenly one.

The Middle Ages have been a great time of liturgical creativity. Specifically, the period between ninth and twelfth centuries have been a sort of liturgical laboratory: complex semantic codes integrated together texts and gestures proclaimed and acted during the celebrations. These interactions and overlapping allowed exchanges between the religious and ritual codified heritage and the true life of believers, during violent and tumultuous changing times.

The same *Christianitas latina*, even if it defined its linguistic and ritual features marking the differences between the Eastern Churches and between many other previous liturgical traditions, nevertheless has included in its re-elaboration many different elements coming from various urban, monastic or local liturgical traditions which all recognised the Pope's authority and therefore accepted by Rome. The result is a rich and various heritage, even if uniformed with repeated periodical reformations and actions of linguistic adaptation.

The Roman Latin Church has been compared to Greek and Eastern liturgies more than once.

A first occasion of confrontation has been offered by communities and monks and faithful Greeks who took shelter in Rome and South-

ern Italy during iconoclastic conflicts and during political clashes originated inside the imperial court.

But the Levant was the most relevant and challenging milieu of exchange and contamination: the institutional laboratory of Latin Reigns and the settlement of Latin ecclesiastical hierarchies marked differences and contrasts with byzantine and eastern ritual praxis. At the same time, the long age of pilgrimages together with the fragile coexistence of different Christian communities in Jerusalem and in many other cities fostered not only mutual knowledge but also ecumenism: in everyday life devotions, gestures, sanctuaries, major feasts were shared and co-participated.

This way, the disputes between different liturgical traditions have interwoven with doctrinal controversies, political fights, social transformations, migrations, sieges, battles and famines, in a dense network of events and cultural assets.

Liturgical texts mirror the real life of communities and groups, becoming themselves historical sources. The same vicissitudes of codes, *scriptoria* and libraries light the evenemential context, as well as new buildings and re-used architectures suggest performative and devotional praxis.

Evangelians, evangelistaries, omiliaries, rituals and other liturgical normative texts describe an extraordinary richness of historical motives, elements and connections.

For this reason, their contents and the data emerging from the texts need to be matched with sources of some other typology, such as chronicles, papal documents, reports, diplomatic accounts, crusade's narratives.

Liturgies actually performed in specific real situations emerge by crossing and filtering the information.

There, the whole society participating in the rite reveals many multiple aspects, going well beyond the religious level.

Between these concerns, the deep connection linking the celebrations with the physical urban space emerges.

Mostly processional and stational liturgies created a strong dialectic between inside and outside, between buildings and squares, streets, elevated positions, perspectives, burial sites, sanctuaries *extra muros*.

The action itself of going, of walking, makes the movement of the entire Christian community along the path of conversion real. At the same time, it allows to include, to stay close, to walk together with "others", into a whole society that moves and changes.

Places are sacralised and re-sacralised by repeated passages; meanings and significance are confirmed and obliterated step by step, thanks to gestures and *stationes*, where the Word of God is proclaimed.

Images and relics are used as mobile tools able to evoke the presence of the sacred in the context of this general dialectic enacted into the urban space.

All the elements contribute to build a meaning and to create a *narratio per res et per loca* shared by participants and understood also by outsiders.

1.6 *Exempla et Imitationes*: Images of Jerusalem and Rome

In this narrative, aspiring to be universal, Jerusalem and Rome have a peculiar role, from the point of view of both historiography and specific historiographical lines setting.

Memorial places and places of the history of Salvation become space references for the whole Christian community spread all over the world.

The history of the Promise of God to the Jewish people, as well as the Incarnation, the life of Jesus, his death and resurrection are connected with specific geographical sites.

Starting from Eusebius and Hieronymus, the Christian thought has investigated those places both on the basis of toponyms quoted in the Biblical texts and of direct knowledge *in situ*.

Thus the *ipsissima loca* entered in Christian heritage: as theatre and leading actors of the Salvation's events they became part of the liturgies, together with the proclamation of the Word.

According to a similar process, also the spaces of Rome became elements of preaching, of calendars and celebrations dedicated to Saints in the whole *oicumene*, thanks to the sites that preserve the burials of Peter and Paul and the relics of the martyrs.²¹

Along the centuries the two cities have established themselves as *exempla*, models to be imitated all around the world thanks to substitute copies that became pilgrimage sites, in a process of multiplying and propagating the symbolic image of Holy Places.

The same topological and topo-mimetic genesis regards the whole Christendom and can be considered a general phenomenon outlining some relevant aspects of the religious dimension, considered *latu sensu*.

Meanwhile Rome and Jerusalem, real cities, have been deeply transformed: their physical spaces have been modified and adapted to new social and political situations.

Both were open cities, where different groups of people lived together; both have been besieged, invaded, exposed to massive migrations.

The liturgies performed by their Christian communities were influenced and shaped according to the events; rites were adapted to

²¹ In the path of the historiography on Christian Rome, see Romano, *Liturgy and Society in Early Medieval Rome*; Reynolds, "The Liturgy of Rome in the Eleventh Century". See *infra*, ch. 4.

include minority groups or to celebrate relationships of power; liturgical traditions generated new devotional forms thanks also to strangers and pilgrims contributions. Tragedies, massacres, *diasporae* have been overcome and absorbed into new multiple identities thanks to the work of memory.

In other words, we are witnessing the origin of moving liturgical models that, in turn, have been variously imitated in the *oicumene*. The historical analysis of these changes and mutual influences sheds light on the transformations of Christianity itself together with several aspects of its enculturation in different contexts.

Resilience and change become the main keys to interpret historical events, cultural and religious processes and phenomena.

1.7 The Role of the Liturgical Christian Heritage in Today's Cities

The Liturgical Christian heritage, if considered as a dynamic and historical complexity of images and performative events, even today offers insights and points of reflection on many issues: the process of integration between religious ethnical and linguistic differences, the circulation of models of social cohesion. Examples of reconciliation after wars and massacres, forms of work of memory inside minority groups, strategies of identity preservation can also be provided.

Ritual traditional motives could be read as chances for social cohesion and cultural re-generation, or, vice versa, as potential of conflicts and glaring divisions in global contemporary metropolis.

1.8 A Contribute to the Debate

Along these critical and methodological lines, this book introduces some case studies of codified medieval memorial processional and stationar liturgies, rites that show both how rite and city can interact and how Christian communities can integrate different groups enacting the celebrations.

The ability to translate the changes (even dramatic) of the society into the liturgy and, from there, into a renewed vision of the city and of the life is highlighted as well.

The interactions between body, sacrament, performance, image are relevant: during the rites, sacred images, relics and devotional objects become semantic fulcrums moving inside the urban fabric, where they contribute to general processes of symbolization.

The case studies refer mostly to Jerusalem and Rome, even if the same phenomena are going on in several contexts of Christendom, in Europe, Near East and Africa.

The analysis of such themes, starting from the case studies built on historical documents, takes on a value also with regards to the complexity of the modern global cities, where religious aspects and identity processes can be reason for social cohesion and cultural renewal and or vice versa may cause conflict and laceration risks.

The work is structured in a methodological introduction and four chapters.

The first one highlights how the space of Jerusalem is translated in the living space of each community by way of the celebrations of the Holy Week, becoming ideal and memorial heritage of the whole Christianity. The deep changes affecting the city during the first Islamic domination, the Crusaders Reign and the following new Muslim conquest have been incorporated and absorbed by liturgical processes based on the imitation and duplication of memorial spaces.

The second chapter resumes a description of liturgies enacted in Jerusalem between ninth and thirteenth centuries and shows their adaptation to deep transformations lived by the variously composed local Christian community. Different groups found innovative ways to live and celebrate in the same space, keeping alive their specific languages, traditions, and rituals, sharing some common worships and processions during the Holy Week and some great feasts.

The third chapter is dedicated to the architectural mimesis of the Holy Sepulchre and of the physical spaces of Jerusalem into Christian urban contexts, in western Latin world, Russia, Ethiopia, India.

The last one examines some elements of semantization and re-semantization in the urban space of Rome from the Early Middle Ages to the beginning of Modern Age. Thanks to the major processional liturgies performed using sacred images, the tragic caesurae and rips experienced by the population would find a “stitching”, a composition in a higher unit embodied in common rites, parades, ceremonies where every identity or social group has its own role.

Even the Jews, the *infideles* of Europe, were assigned a symbolic position recalling the forms of their social discrimination and subordination.

