

## FOREWORD

On the subject of sacred spaces and their relationship with spaces that have a dazzling quality to their landscape, A. Dupront mentions the consecration of spaces “d’accidentes cosmiques”, where the natural is anthropomorphised. William Christian speaks of “dramatic sites of the landscape” and Caro Baroja alludes to high and stunning spaces as places that exude a certain numinous air, that facilitate the possibility of hierophanies and that may favour that which is deemed as sacred. These authors, held in the highest of esteems by Carlos Alberto Ferreira de Almeida – whom this Congress honours –, have long been recurring voices on the subject of this section.

C. A. Ferreira de Almeida, whilst discoursing on the topic of consecrated mounts, states that the places that were most favoured by pilgrims «aqueles que apresentam penedos de formas ou posições insólitas, lapas ou fontes, verdeiros e arvoredos, porque isso permite um peculiar sistema de acções e itinerários e, porque o homem tem uma necessidade fundamental de significados, tornam a imaginabilidade desse local muito rica, até pelas lendas etiológicas que se lhe associam, permitindo um conjunto de vivências que os possam unir a esse ambiente» (“were those boulders that were strangely shaped or oddly dispositioned, grottos or fountains, green spaces and groves, for they allow for a peculiar system of actions and itineraries and, because man has a fundamental yearning for meanings, are extremely fertile soil to the pilgrims’ own imaginary landscape – a landscape shaped by the aetiological myths associated with these spaces –, permitting a set of experiences that tie them to these environments”). The subject of this Section had these very reflections by C. A. Ferreira de Almeida as its starting point.

The evolution and transformation of the consecrated space, its nature and motives, the relationship between shapes and meanings, the dynamics of transformations and the accrual of artistic programs are aspects that are highly regarded and studied nowadays in the fields of architecture and devotion.

The various types of architecture conceived for the performance of concrete rituals, that provide justification and confer meaning to the spirituality of a community, are

manufactured spaces that materialise and embody the human articulation between their earthly *sojourn* and the period of transcendence.

The research on sacred spaces in a systemic perspective, the analysis and interpretation of the shapes and meanings in its articulation with the rituals and the relation of its semantic transformations in the various historical-artistic contexts are elements that are common to all essays in this Section – essays which we organised in a chronological manner.

According to the trends of historiography in the last years, religious practice has been considered as a physical and spatial phenomenon as much as it is from a devotional, visual and intellectual point of view. Architecture is now understood as a matrix of sacred space and of devotional and/or liturgical action, rather than a mere conceived object.

The relations between architecture and liturgy, between devotion and the position of images within the religious building, constitute an instrument of analysis and interpretation of architecture itself. They define the sections of the building, the modular components, the circulation systems, etc.

The notion of sacralised space goes beyond the restricted framework of internal spatiality defined by the relationship between architecture and liturgy. In present section the sacred spaces will be analysed in several degrees: the scale of the temple; the average scale of the set where the building is inserted and the degree of interactions between the territory and the constructed heritage asset.

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