Religious heritages as spatial phenomena: Constructions, experiences, and selections

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Abstract

This special issue explores the relationship between religious heritages and space. We will approach religious heritages as spatial phenomena to analyse how heritages are constructed, manifested, lived and experienced, celebrated and cherished but also neglected, disputed or contested *through* and *in* space(s). This introductory paper starts by untangling religious and heritage discourses triggered by the July 2020 Hagia Sophia transformation into a mosque. Furthermore, we refer to anthropological theorisations of *religious* and *heritage* and the ambiguity of sacralisation and heritagisation. Diverse theories of space and interconnectivity of time and spatial dimensions in the context of religious heritage sites are presented as inspiring tools for anthropologically oriented studies. While cases analysed in this special issue concern European societies (in England, the Netherlands, Denmark, Poland), broader theoretical questions are instructive and could be applied to other geographical locations, especially when heritage discourses and processes of heritagisation interact with various conceptualisations of sacred and secular.

KEYWORDS: heritage, religions, space, religious heritages, Europe, heritagisation

Introduction

The last decade has brought a significantly growing interest among anthropologists in topics related to cultural heritage and processes of heritagisation. Various anthropological approaches have turned towards critical analysis of the term heritage, its diverse usages and its political transformations in local and global contexts of today's world. Also studies particularly dedicated to relations between heritages and various conceptualizations of the "sacred" in seemingly secular, as well as explicitly religious contexts, have attracted anthropologists sensitive to the ambiguity of heritagisation processes. This special issue touches on these topics in the context of research conducted within an international project on the heritagisation of religion and the sacralization of heritage in contemporary Europe.[1] The papers collected here discuss ethnographic case studies from England, the Netherlands, Denmark and Poland that focus on the relationship between "religious heritages" and their spatial dimensions. We believe that approaching religious heritages as spatial phenomena is particularly useful for scholars who want to apply qualitative methods and approach heritages as lived experiences and constructed through bottom-up practices. These practices are always connected with particular spaces and their tangible dimensions, such as architecture, buildings and other spatial structures (e.g. monuments), concrete landscapes and cityscapes.

Disputing the Hagia Sophia

Before we introduce the broader theoretical framework and anthropological discussion on space and religious heritages, let us briefly recollect the recent public debate that involved a particular religious heritage space, namely the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. In the summer of 2020 UNESCO representatives and other international institutions dedicated to the maintenance of museums and preservation of cultural heritage, together with religious leaders (mostly Christians and Muslims), scholars and politicians from various countries and factions publicly expressed their—often emotional—opinions about the decision made by the Turkish authorities to change the official status of the Hagia Sophia building from a museum to a mosque. The decision implemented in July and the immediate international responses pave a path for a broader reflection concerning the relationship between space(s), religion(s) and heritage(s) and also how these relations appear and are shaped by contemporary discourses (official and popular) and various cultural practices.

The Hagia Sophia can be described as a spatial phenomenon that occupies an iconic site on the west side of the Bosphorus Straits. This location is reflected in diverse and symbolically burdened discourses concerning the international and intercultural status of this historical building which is often described as marking the "edges" or "borders" of the European continent. The Hagia Sophia, as one of the most renowned buildings in Istanbul's landscape, is also an essentially palimpsestic and multilayered structure. Its diachronic transformations reflect the city's changing balance of religious and political powers. Constructed as the Byzantine imperial basilica in 537 CE, it became the Roman Catholic cathedral during the Latin occupation of Constantinople (1204–1261), and then became an Orthodox Christian cathedral once more. In 1453, with the Ottoman capture of the city, it was transformed into a mosque. Hence, the building refers to various religious traditions and varying conceptualisations of spatial representations of the sacred. In 1935, as part of the broader program of Turkey's modernisation implemented by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, this complex religious space was turned into a museum. It was promoted as a "secular space" where mosaics and icons were restored and visitors were encouraged to regard it as a historic monument. Listed in 1985 as part of the Historic Areas of Istanbul on the UNESCO World Heritage List, Hagia Sophia was still interpreted in religious terms by many Christians and Muslims. It also turned into one of the most popular Turkish tourist attractions.

The recent decree "reverting" the Hagia Sophia to a mosque, signed by the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, reflects his ideological campaign which uses the concept of religion as a political tool both within the country and the international arena (Aviv 2020). What interests us here and relates directly to the topic of this special issue, is the complexity of the relationship between a religious heritage site, political powers over space and often competing claims to its meanings that reveal the connection between the religious and the secular.

On *religious* and *heritage*

The Hagia Sophia dispute that followed the Turkish decision revealed various values, often perceived as religious or secular, attached to the same site by different institutions and groups of people, as well as different uses of the term heritage. While the Director-General of UNESCO stated that the Hagia Sophia's 'status as a museum reflects the universal nature of its heritage, and makes it a powerful symbol for dialogue' (UNESCO, 2020), the Turkish authorities claimed that they had to protect their ancestors' heritage and pointed to the religious *and* heritage functions performed by the Notre Dame and

Sacré Cœur in Paris. The UNESCO statement treated heritage as a secular umbrella that embraced the various religious traditions within the walls of the Hagia Sophia and connected them with a "universal" value for humankind. The Turkish leaders, on the other hand, linked the concept of heritage with "our ancestors" and a particular religious-national identity. They used heritage as a justification for returning the Hagia Sophia to its religious functions as a mosque. Not surprisingly perhaps, this was met with criticism by representatives of Christian churches and with reflection about the non-Muslim religious heritages supposedly embedded in the walls of the Hagia Sophia.[2] Additionally, the Muslim-Christian tension initiated a discussion about a possible conceptualisation of "pagan heritage" since it was noted that the first religious building on the spot of today's Hagia Sophia was most probably 'an ancient pagan temple' (Abdou & Zervas, 2020).

To untangle the various meanings and modes in which heritage references appeared during the Hagia Sophia dispute it is useful to turn to anthropological tools and recent theoretical debates on the concept of religious heritage. As indicated by Birgit Meyer and Marleen de Witte in their pioneering anthropological text on the relations between 'heritage-making and religion,' the 'interplay between the fields of "heritage" and "religion"' includes two seemingly contrasting processes: the *heritagisation of the sacred* and the *sacralisation of heritage* (Meyer & de Witte, 2013, p. 277). Whereas the first process tends to "profanise" religious forms by placing them within a framework of heritage through which, as the authors claim, 'their initial sacrality is being lost' (ibid.), the second process is imbued with sacralising powers that lead towards the "canonisation" of what is labeled, approved and authenticated as heritage.

However, these two processes have been more frequently analysed as not necessarily working in opposing directions. As Meyer and de Witte also note, in some cases the heritagisation of the sacred can overcome its 'potentially profanizing dimensions' and lead to further sacralisation, by adding to religious sites, objects or practices 'a new kind of sacrality' (2013, p. 278).[3] Scholars studying contemporary societies in different parts of the world have noted the annexation of heritage discourses by religious institutions and communities which has led to a situation where heritagisation and sacralisation can work hand in hand to create and heighten "sacred aura". At least in certain social and

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[2] Some Orthodox Christian leaders during public appearances or religious sermons expressed their disappointment and worries connected with the Turkish authorities' decision. Similarly, the World Council of Churches revealed its concerns about possible tensions. Pope Francis also mentioned the Hagia Sophia (Santa Sofia) during his Angelus prayer in the Vatican on July 12, 2020.

[3] These observations related to a specific case study about the museumification of the living quarters of a Brazilian Candomblé priestess published by Maria Paula Adinolfi and Mattijs van de Port (2013).

political contexts the "religious aura" of sites, objects and practices can be reinvigorated, reinforced, confirmed, and increased by the attachment of "heritage aura". Heritagisation as a social process (Isnart & Cerezales, 2020) can, in fact, correspond well with the complex political, social, economic but also "spiritual" dimensions of various religions and religious traditions. This also reminds us that the boundaries between what is defined as secular and religious are highly contextual and much more uncertain than what the oversimplifying Euro- or Western-centric reading of the secularisation paradigm suggests (see e.g. Asad, 2003; Davie, 2007; Lambek, 2013). As recently argued by Cyril Isnart and Nathalie Cerezales, 'the schism between religion and cultural heritage is not a universal rule…. Religious buildings, rituals, and objects do not always lose their original religious values and powers when entering the heritage realm' (2020, p. 6).

Diversifying space, diverse theories

Accepting the ambiguities and tensions inscribed in the very concept of religious heritage we propose to examine how various religious heritages are constructed and manifested, lived and experienced, celebrated and cherished but also neglected, disputed or contested *through* and *in* space(s). We refer to "space" as an important category that contextualises and at the same time actively constitutes the religious heritage sites discussed in the papers published in this special issue. The authors of the papers refer to diverse conceptualisations and uses of space. However, although the papers differ in respect to terminology and detailed theorisation, all of them can be situated within a post-"spatial turn" anthropological approach that recognises space as '*differentiated, kinetic, interrelated, generated* and *generative*' (Tweed, 2011, p. 117).

Although the spatial turn developed within anthropology during the 1990s and 2000s (Laszczkowski, 2016), it drew on a variety of older theoretical approaches and "spatial interests" that had emerged in various branches of anthropology and other social and human sciences. For instance, in anthropological studies of religion, space appeared as an important analytical category first in classical phenomenological approaches. Influenced by scholars like Gerardus van der Leeuw and Mircea Eliade, this approach focused on the differentiation of space between sacred and profane. Spatial categories, described in terms of "home", "temple", "centre", "axis mundi" or "border", accentuated the heterogeneity of space and its varying validations in the context of religious world views and rituals (see van der Leeuw, 1956; Eliade, 1949). Distinguished sacred space, which Eliade referred to as hierophanic, was seen as connected with the emanation of the sacred. This stance referred not to situational but rather substantive definitions of

sacredness that were rooted in Rudolf Otto's influential philosophical analysis of *das Heilige* (the holy) as an *a priori* category (Otto, 1958; Kowalewski & Królikowska, 2016; Chidester, 1994). Sacred places were then somehow "given" to be experienced by people as 'powerful centers of meaningful worlds' (Chidester, 1994, p. 212) and space was organised around them, being differentiated between what was perceived as sacred (located in the vicinity of the sacred centre) and profane (located at a distance from the sacred centre).

While these historical approaches often generalised religious categories and offered a rather static understanding of space and its classifications, a further development of critical and existential phenomenology, with its focus on experiential, perceptual and bodily aspects, strongly contributed to the reformulation of spatial anthropological research. This development was informed by the philosophical writings by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, which had inspired Maurice Merleau-Ponty's corporeal and existential understanding of space as well as the analysis of movements and other "spatial practices" by Michel de Certeau (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; de Certeau, 1984). Their studies not only emphasised that the interaction between space and human bodies shaped perceptual experiences and knowledge production processes, but also focused on the very spatiality of existence and the situatedness of being (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 252). Approaching space from the perspective of personal and communal spatial experiences consequently brought a shift within phenomenologically oriented anthropology from a static understanding of space towards approaches that recognised its contextual, interactive and dynamic character.

Similar relational and constructivist interpretations of space were developing among geographers. Yi-Fu Tuan, John Agnew, Edward Soja and Doreen Massey were among the first to transgress the Cartesian, objectively measurable geometric approach to space (Tuan, 1977; Agnew, 1987; Soja, 1989; Massey, 1994). Many of these studies contributed to the further elaboration of bodily and experiential perspectives on space within anthropology. Yet another development of geographical and sociological theories explored the "politics of space" concentrating on the role of hierarchies, powers and their unequal distribution among various social actors participating in spatial practices, as well as exploring control over spaces and bodies (Foucault, 1975; Harvey et al., 1996). Henri Lefebvre proposed probably the most influential and fundamental theorisation of space in *The Production of Space* (1991). Originally published in French in 1974, this Marxist grounded sociological work is so persistent and comprehensive that today scholars from

various disciplinary backgrounds still draw on its theoretical, methodological and terminological propositions. For Lefebvre, space as a social product is:

> … not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationship in their co-existence and simultaneity—their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder. It is the outcome of a sequence and set of operations, and thus cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object. (1991, p. 73)

His spatial triad that refers to three aspects of social space as "conceived space", "lived space" and "perceived space" (Lefebvre, 1991; Knott, 2005) not only emphasises the multivocality of space but also its dynamic and processual character and the tensions between "official" conceptions and representations of space and its more grassroots, bottom-up usages. Building on Lefebvre's theory, anthropologists not only eagerly embraced the analysis of the political and economic dimensions of social space but also turned towards 'everyday practices, repeated bodily movement, language, narratives and symbolization' (Laszczkowski, 2016, p. 16). As anthropologists developed various theorisations of space by building on ethnographically grounded research, they also decisively embraced a constructivist approach. Hence, in some theoretical formulations Lefebvre's "production of space" was transformed into "the construction of space" to emphasise the intimate, usually non-evocative and non-explicit interactions between humans and spaces (Low, 1996, 2017).

The growing interest in spatial analysis also led to various conceptualisations and debates concerning the differentiation between space and place. This is still an ongoing debate that refers to various intellectual traditions and terminological trajectories. While methodologically many ethnographers find the space-place dichotomy very useful and theoretically fruitful, some voices call for more complex approaches that would prevent splitting space 'into seemingly separate planes of matter and "meaning"' (Laszczkowski, 2016, p. 17). More recent studies also turn towards the questions about agency and the affordances of spatial and architectural forms, as well as explore blurring or porous borders between what is defined as "human" and "non-human" subjects, or what is seen as "cultural" and "natural" environments and landscapes. When referring to spatial analysis many anthropologists embrace broader shifts within the discipline and eagerly scrutinise both the power of affects and emotions and the importance of materiality and sensuality in knowledge production, revealing thereby 'the complexity of the mutually constitutive relationships between social forms and space' (ibid.). All four papers in this special issue draw on these constructivist and relational approaches in their discussion

of the diverse interactions between individuals, groups, institutions and exact spatial phenomena designed, selected, labeled or lived as sites connected with religious heritages.

Spatialisation of time

While the heritagisation of religion is always a complex, deeply contextualised process, it enables religions to link to the past not only through their histories or experiences of the believers, but also through values evoked and produced during heritagisation. Heritage discourses employ these values both in environments perceived as religious or secular, anchoring them in the past. These discourses operate in time-spaces which influence, shape and define each other. Nuala C. Johnson demonstrates that, in the context of heritagisation, the concept of space establishes an interpretive lens for understanding the past (2015) and we believe that exactly the same can be said about the past: it provides an interpretive lens for understanding space.

Reflection on time is inherently inscribed into the studies on heritage. Heritage discourses draw from the past, often selectively: skipping certain moments in time, omitting some histories, meandering through time, but eventually they bring the past into the contemporary world and, moreover, make this past into a variety of forms that are tangibly present in social life. Although attempts at taming time are constitutive for heritage-making, all these practices are performed in particular spaces and through them, and the relation with the past is established within them. The space and time relationship is also particularly important in the planning of heritage and tourism (Johnson, 1999), hence investigating heritage one cannot escape its embedding within time-space.

Heritage spaces often are related to a particular selected architectural structure, object, event which forms its core and delineates ways of engaging with the past. Neil A. Silberman observes that 'heritage places should therefore be seen as stages for a kind of performative action, in the expression of a value or a sense of identity, whose subjectivity and ephemerality contradicts the very notion of the "timelessness" of cultural heritage' (2016, p. 29). Thus objects of heritagisation, through their uses, locate heritage in particular histories. They drag these histories from the magma of the past, historicising heritage and allowing people to locate it in time. This temporal connection affects also the heritage spaces related to these objects. Heritage spaces are created through performative actions undertaken within heritage-making processes, as well as through social uses of heritage.

Heritage therefore transforms spaces, but in a mutual relation it is also transformed by them. This seemingly trivial observation proves that reflection on heritage is difficult to perform without the spatial perspective and that space, just like time, has a key position within heritage studies. Moreover, as Johnson demonstrates through her studies on tourism in Ireland space can be privileged over time in the heritage-building process. Complexities of history possibly melt in the details of space construction, yet she warns against a reductionist approach that analyses time and space in terms of binary opposition (1999). The spatialisation of time seems inevitable, since heritage, history and time are framed by space, but it is time-space that constitutes a fuller perspective for discerning heritage. Importantly, focusing on space does not mean ignoring time.

The practical connectivity between time and spatial dimensions in religious heritage sites was very well revealed in the case of the Hagia Sophia dispute which we discussed at the beginning of this introduction. Yet another, and is some ways a contrasting example—while located on the other edge of the European continent than the Hagia Sophia and in a rather different social, political and religious context—is the debate over the Cordoba mosque-cathedral and its religious heritages. Scholars, who have undertaken very careful research on the Cordoba mosque-cathedral, refer to the embeddedness of various pasts within this architectural structure and how these pasts are used in contemporary political debates concerning Spanish identity (Astor et al., 2019). D. Fairchild Ruggles, who closely scrutinises historic and more recent uses and transformations of the Cordoba mosque-cathedral, reveals how displaying various pasts to visitors is intimately connected with the promotion of a specific "stratigraphy" of forgetting and remembering (2011). Her analysis of the 2005 creation of the museum dedicated to archeological remnants of the pre-mosque Visigothic church of San Vincente inside the today's mosque-cathedral, emphasises the role which the past and "historical origins" plays in contemporary identity and political claims, especially competing discourses about the Muslim presence within Spain. This example, like the Hagia Sophia case recalled earlier, demonstrates that heritage sites are multivocal and processual spaces that are actively involved in selecting and mediating pasts to their present day users and visitors.

Case studies discussed

The main assumption of "spatialising heritage"[4] is to see heritage-related practices in space; to engage with research not only on time and history but also places, embodiment, discourses, actions and performativity and to approach them through their con-

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[4] Spatializing heritage is a reference to Seta Low's "spatializing culture" (2017).

nection to socially, historically, politically, emotionally, discursively and bodily constructed space. In this special issue we look at religious heritages as spatial phenomena, but we still perceive them in their historically born contexts. We have brought together articles that introduce the spatial approach towards the reflection on religious heritage. Importantly, each of the contributions not only proposes different approaches to the reflection on the relationship between space and heritage, but also offers different perspectives on religious heritage and the relationship between heritage and the sacred.

The opening article by Clare Haynes presents a dense description of contemporary artistic installations displayed in a medieval church building in Norwich, England, that has been transformed into an exhibition space. Reflecting on religious heritage and the transformation of churches into secular buildings, she reveals the history of discussed installations from their conceptual beginnings, through placing them in the church structure, to their reception by the audience. The story concerns, however, not only art pieces, but also, and sometimes even above all, the St Peter Hungate church which is, in many ways, present in these art works. Artistic installations were created to be exhibited in the church and so they bear its mark. The medieval building constituted a reason, an inspiration, a displaying space for the art pieces, and also influenced the audience's experience.

This very tight link between artists, their work, and the space is explored by Clare Haynes with reference to the heritagisation of a sacred building. The religious character of this secularised place is still present in its materiality and in some visitors' experiences and practices. Although the building belongs to Norwich's medieval heritage, it escapes further easy categorisations. Its ambiguous religious-secular character became the subject of the art works presented there. The artists joined in the play between the sacred and the secular, the past and the contemporary, the solemn and the vulgar. Making use of the building's architecture, engaging the memory of its original purpose and embodied knowledge about churches, they created in different ways a specific heritage space, fuelled also by the audience's performative practices.

The role of performative practices in the transformation of heritage space is also emphasised in the article by Irene Stengs. She focuses on André Rieu's music performance which took place in the medieval heritage site of Maastricht during the summer of 2019. The city's historical architecture was involved in the performance through the direct references made by the performers and by Rieu himself, and also as a stage for the whole event. Importantly, references to heritage buildings exceeded Maastrich. The main role during the performance was played by two churches—the Saint Servatius Basilica,

which formed a part of stage setting, and the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, which suffered a dramatic conflagration in April 2019. Both appeared in very sentimental stories told by Rieu during the performance.

The aim of his concerts is to move people. The music, costumes, atmosphere, together with Rieu's personal story shared with the audience, are designed to trigger emotions. Analysing the role of religious buildings in evoking emotions through performance, Irene Stengs develops the notion of "affective space". With great precision she shows how religious heritage—represented here mostly by two churches—works in non-religious contexts and contributes to the heightening of emotions. During Rieu's concert heritage becomes one of the elements co-creating the emergence of affective space which has the potential to move both believers and non-believers.

The relationship between secular and religious understandings of religious heritage is also discussed by Oscar Salemink, Rasmus Rask Poulsen and Sofie Isager Ahl. They deploy a theoretical perspective for examining the different results of heritagisation at three World Heritage Sites in Denmark, namely: Jelling, Roskilde and Christiansfeld. These are also religious sites but their sacralisation derives not only from the religious practices performed there, but also from the process of heritagisation itself. Thus the meaning of the sites is created also by heritage managers and tourists. Consequently, all these spaces are heterogeneous and, as presented in the article, differently approached by various groups of visitors.

In order to discern these approaches the authors introduce the categories of the "holy" and the "sacred". Drawing on Rudolf Otto's work, they use the notion of the holy to describe the specificity of the religious connection with the sites. Drawing on Émile Durkheim's approach and more recent considerations of the relationship between heritage and the sacred by Birgit Meyer and Marleen de Witte, the sacred is viewed as embracing the secular uses of these spaces. These ideal types of the holy and the sacred are then used to develop an ethnographic description of Jelling, Roskilde and Christiansfeld, as well as consider the various modes of space creation, which meet, but also compete, at these heritage sites. The authors observe that interpretation of religious heritage spaces must engage a complex theoretical perspective, since parallel to their religious uses, they inevitably become subjects of the heritage gaze and their heritagisation invites secular practices, which may, but do not need to relate to the religious character of the place. However, it is the religious which significantly contributes to heritage spaces authentication.

Seemingly, "the other way round" process of sacralising secular space is the subject of the final article by Monika Golonka-Czajkowska. She presents the history and performative potential of a monument commemorating the Polish poet, Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855). The monument was erected in 1898 on Kraków's Main Market Square, which has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since the late 1970s. As the author demonstrates, the monument since its very beginning was, on the one hand, attributed meanings related to Polish dreams about independence and Polish nationhood (when the territories of Poland were partitioned), while on the other, it had deep personal meaning for those visiting the square and those working and living nearby. These two main narration threads—the monument's significance for Polish identity and intimate relations between people and the monument—allow Monika Golonka-Czajkowska to present the complex process of sacralisation of space from the erection of the monument up to contemporary events happening around the statue.

The sacred character of the monument can be deciphered through the particular uses of its space and in practices concerning it. The sacralisation of space is, in this case, an emergent and evocative process, strictly related to the historical and spatial contexts. The author shows that the influence of the monument on space derives not only from its materiality, the troubled history of the monument itself (e.g. its demolition during the Second World War and reconstruction in 1955), but also from associations with Adam Mickiewicz himself, whose Polishness and contribution to Polish literary heritage is repeatedly contested and defended. Thus, the sacralisation of space involved various elements of the nation's past and Kraków's heritage deemed as sacred at different moments of history. As this paper reveals, the interplay between heritage and sacrality is inevitably dynamic, especially at sites located in lively public spaces, which are used by a variety of institutional and individual actors.

Closing remarks

Spatial categories and various theorisations of space have provided anthropologists with analytical tools to deal with the complexities of heritages and their sacralisations in obviously religious as well as more ambiguous contexts. Religious heritage sites can be connected with competing spiritual traditions or interpreted through secular discourses, institutionalised under an umbrella of "universal values", or sacralised through nationalising ideologies. These aspects can be seen in a variety of discourses and uses of space. The tangibility and materiality of space refers also to basic human experiences and interactions between people and their environments. These interactions can deeply engage

the senses, emotions and memories connected with particular geographical and historic contexts. In this special issue we have sought to explore a variety of spatial aspects and local contexts. All the authors analyse case studies connected with contemporary European societies and their interactions with various local and national pasts performed *through* and *in* particular religious heritage sites. However, we believe that theoretical approaches and analysis presented in the papers are instructive and possibly applicable also in other geographical locations especially at a time when heritage discourses and processes of heritagisation interact with various conceptualisations of the sacred and secular.

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Povzetek

Tematska številka raziskuje odnos med versko dediščino in prostorom. K verskim dediščinam bomo pristopili kot do prostorskih pojavov, da bi analizirali, kako se dediščine gradijo, manifestirajo, kako jih doživljajo, častijo ter negujejo, a tudi zanemarjajo, jim oporekajo ali jim nasprotujejo skozi in v prostoru. V uvodu predstavljamo verske in dediščinske diskurze, ki jih je julija 2020 sprožila preobrazba Aja Sofije v mošejo. Obravnavamo tudi antropološke teoretizacije religije in dediščine ter dvoumnosti sakralizacije in verske dediščine. Različne teorije prostora ter medsebojne povezanosti časa in prostorskih razsežnosti v okviru območij verske dediščine so predstavljene kot navdihujoče orodje za antropološko usmerjene študije. Medtem ko primeri, analizirani v tej tematski številki, zadevajo evropske družbe (v Angliji, na Nizozemskem, Danskem, Poljskem), so širša teoretična vprašanja poučna in bi jih bilo mogoče uporabiti na drugih geografskih lokacijah, zlasti kadar diskurzi dediščine in procesi preobražanja v versko dediščino trčijo ob različne konceptualizacije svetega in posvetnega.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: dediščina, verstva, prostor, verska dediščina, Evropa, preobrazba v dediščino

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