

Introduction. Processions and Royal Entries in the Petrification of Space during the Medieval and Early Modern Periods

This monographical section is based on a selection of the contributions presented at the workshop on *Processions and Royal Entries in the Petrification of Space during the Medieval and Early Modern Periods*, which took place at the CCHS in September 2019, organized by Ana Rodríguez and Mercedes García-Arenal as part of the research activities of the CSIC Interdisciplinary Thematic Platform (PTI) *Historia Social y Cultural del Mediterráneo: Contextos locales y dinámicas globales* (PTI-MEDhis), and funded by the ERC-Advanced Grant *Petrifying Wealth: The Southern European Shift to Masonry as Collective Investment in Identity, c. 1050-1300*. Our initial aim was to explore the possibilities of a comparative approach to processions in Byzantine, Islamic and Western Christian contexts. For comparison's sake we tried in the first place to put together studies of royal entries (but also entries by other ecclesiastical or municipal authorities, even diplomatic missions) in towns and cities across a broad geographical scope and period: from Byzantine Constantinople to Portuguese Kochi, from Medieval Spain or France to Early Modern Habsburg Prague or Portugal. What we present here is a selection of essays in which, unfortunately, Islamic cities are not as well represented as we would have liked, although the role of Islam and Muslims, especially Muslim buildings, is indeed present (see the contributions by Ana Rodríguez, Katerina Hornickova and Michael Strout, Borja Franco, and Francesc Ortiz-Ruiz), as is Muslims' physical or emotional presence.

Late medieval and early modern urban celebrations have attracted academic attention in recent decades, particularly in terms of their ritual and ceremonial culture, and from the point of view of ephemeral architecture. Less attention, however, has been paid to processions as spatial phenomena, or to the specific practices and networks related to space in the construction of communities. Yet an understanding of these diverse modes of spatial organization is crucial for a better grasp on how religious, civil and royal control of such ceremonies functioned, and how a network of buildings demarcated itineraries that in turn set boundaries and demonstrated influence. Herein lies the novelty of the essays gathered here: they scrutinize the processional topography and the meaning of those landmarks that, with a combination of sacred and profane elements, show or restore royal authority. They all consider, to varying degrees, urban spaces as a stage for festivities that are

part of urban symbolic communication. The multilayered set of meanings conveyed by urban processions, whose ostentation and inventiveness interacted with their audiences, also conveys the efforts at creating a sense of community. Processions aim at creating an emotional bond through events that include music, chanting, scent from incense, floral decorations, rich cloths, and tapestries hung from buildings. Moreover, urban space and topography as selected for the itinerary of processions create a relationship with the past as well as a selection of memory. We believe that the essays gathered here allow for a comparative analysis of processions as acts of power by either external or internal authorities, together with the role of architecture—permanent rather than ephemeral—in ceremonies connecting specific urban landmarks. This analysis enables us to understand the dominant social patterns inherent in festive staging, through what we believe to be a novel approach.

The essays are, as we have said, wide-ranging in time and space. They are also authored by scholars of different academic traditions and different disciplines. Most of the essays are based on new or scarcely used primary sources, from the Praxapostolos Dresden A 104 of Viky Monopoulou and its supplicatory, liturgical processions, the *Book of Ceremonies* on which Leslie Brubaker bases her analysis of processions in Constantinople; to Vincent Challet's urban chronicle of Montpellier, known as *Petit Thalamus*; or Jeremy Roe Agostinho d'Almeida Gato's *Triumphos Festivais*, an account of the celebrations held for the acclamation of King John IV of Portugal in Kochi in 1641. The richness and detail of these sources are evidence of the importance accorded to the theatrical and ritual aspects of the processions, of the significance of the itineraries and the parts of the city involved, and of the precision of all the relevant details—in short, the importance that royal and municipal authorities attached to such events, and the fundamental role they played in the life of cities.

While the primary sources presented in these essays are of considerable importance, the essays that deal with them are by no means merely descriptive. Rather, they problematize how urban spaces work, and how urban identities and spaces are constructed through perambulation. How the integration and segregation of communities are present in different types of processions, and how the integration of different parts of cities involves the audiences and participants. We are also made to observe

the dialectics between ecclesiastical and civil communities staged in processions that reinforce the identities not only of the city generally, but also, more specifically, of the urban elites, in processional landscapes where a liturgical geography is built up through repetition. Because of their hierarchical and confrontational nature, we are also invited to examine the potential of processions to reveal and perform urban conflicts through organizational phenomena such as marching orders, hierarchies, or different models of inclusion and exclusion, making them a powerful tool of civic control and as well as contestation.

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Ana Rodríguez
Instituto de Historia, CCHS-CSIC
e-mail: ana.rodriguez@cchs.csic.es
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5877-0225>

Mercedes García-Arenal
Instituto de Lenguas y Culturas del Mediterráneo, CCHS-CSIC
e-mail: mercedes.garciaarenal@cchs.csic.es
ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9592-3585>

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