

# Introduction: Experiments with Religious Space

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«What is left? Innocence: the dream of a return to the sources when man and the world were one in an original pancaaly. Or the attentive hope of a unique aesthetic, of a dazzle that would not force one to close the eyelids. *Mehr Licht!*»<sup>1</sup>.  
(A.J. Greimas)

## 1. An Extraordinary Convergence

In introducing this issue of the «Annali di studi religiosi», the journal of the Center for Religious Studies at the Bruno Kessler Foundation, Trento, Italy, an outstanding concomitance must be noticed: despite the apparent multifariousness of the sections that compose the issue, they all ultimately deal with the spatio-temporal coordinates of the religious dimension. Furthermore, they all focus on the tensions and torsions that these coordinates undergo as a consequence of systemic and infrastructural cultural change. Technology, which the Bruno Kessler Foundation posits at the heart of its endeavors – studying and producing the most advanced applied sciences we live by – is an essential agency of this change. As technological conditions of religion change, religion is altered too, giving rise to new manifestations of the ritual. But not all in the historical existence of religions is technological advancement; unexpected events also happen, natural or human-provoked catastrophes that set back the hands of the clock and that, like in a painting of Dali, stretch and bend the confine of religion in a different and unprecedented fashion. The pandemic of COVID-19 was one of these incidents; it is now perceived as distant in time and forgotten; humanity has gone back to its usual ways, sometimes with extra emphasis; yet in those two-three years, a

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *De l'imperfection*, Périgueux, Pierre Fanlac, 1987, p. 99: «Que reste-t-il? L'innocence: rêve d'un retour aux sources alors que l'homme et le monde ne faisaient qu'un dans une pancaalie originelle. Ou l'espoir attentif d'une esthesis unique, d'un éblouissement qui n'obligerait pas de fermer les paupières. *Mehr Licht!*» (trans. mine).

gigantic symbolical forced experiment took place; people found themselves confined in new, restricted spatial coordinates; they were encouraged to reinvent themselves, and many found in religion a grammar for such renewal. Religions too, inevitably, felt the pressure of spatial constrictions.

The first section of the issue, then, deals with systems of beliefs under spatial constraints. The session, which is directed by Jenny Ponzio and Magdalena Kubas and is linked with ERC starting grant project NEMO-SANCTI (University of Turin), stems from a session at the 2022 World Congress of Semiotics at Thessaloniki, Greece, where semioticians from Turin and elsewhere participated hand in hand with ISR-FBK researchers. The result is now in the pages of this journal: a daring reflection on the semiotics of narrow religious, spiritual, and ethical spaces. Religion then becomes a theoretical and methodological goldmine for semiotics and its reflection on meaning in relation to time and space.

## 2. Quantum Semiotics

A bolt of lightning rips through the night of semiotics, illuminating it along an irregular thunderbolt, which for an instant brightens with a flash the whole night silhouette around but then immediately disappears, lingering like the shadow of a dazzling path in blindness. This glimpse is the relation of sign and meaning, the two fundamental objects of semiotics, to time and space, the patterns that Kantian philosophy enshrined as radically foundational to the human condition. The question touches the heights of abstraction but can be summed up with a question of rather simple resonance: do signs live in time and space, live of time and space, or is it time itself, space itself, that live in signs and of signs<sup>2</sup>? Is it possible, philosophically as in the study of human experience, to establish a priority between the sign dimension and the Kantian schematic dimension? On the one hand, one might answer – perhaps more in proximity to Charles Sanders Peirce – that the sign is a dynamic of human existence, of the human's existing in relation to meaning, and of meaning in relation to the human, which cannot but descend surely into time<sup>3</sup>, and perhaps also

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the issue raised by A. De Tienne, *The Flow of Time and the Flow of Signs*, in «American Journal of Semiotics», 31, 2015, 1-2, pp. 29-53, <https://doi.org/10.5840/ajs2015311/22>.

<sup>3</sup> For a speculation on time in Peirce, see R. Kvelson, *Time as Method in Charles Sanders Peirce*, in «American Journal of Semiotics», 2, 1983, 1, pp. 85-107, <https://doi.org/10.5840/ajs198321/28>; P. Øhrstrøm, *Peircean Diagrams of Time*, in «Semiotica», 186, 2011, pp. 259-274, <https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.2011.055.2011>.

into space. In short, there would be a before and an after of semiosis, although these may be articulated along a logical rather than a chronological directrix. This means that, in order for us to just imagine the functioning of signs, it is essential to presuppose a logical before and an after, the one in which meaning does not exist, or at least is only potential, the other in which the sign epiphany takes place, and then it can be seen that something is not merely something but stands for something else<sup>4</sup>. This leads one to think, on the other hand, that this standing for something else does not merely involve a temporal logic of priority and posteriority – incidentally numbered in Peirce with the arithmetic nomenclature of his model of semiosis, as firstness, secondness, and thirdness – but also involves a spatial displacement between something that can signify something else since it is juxtaposedly located in a logical, not chronological but topo-logical place of greater accessibility to cognition, and something else that instead can be signified because it is, precisely, topo-logically more inaccessible and remote<sup>5</sup>. The dialectic of ostentation and concealment, which expresses the deep erotics of semiosis, would thus be possible only by contemplating a spatial dimension. If, however, the study of alternative arithmetics and geometries, and especially the deepening of spatio-temporal relativity in Einsteinian and quantum physics, has relativized – as is well known in the history of twentieth-century philosophy – Kant’s own schemes, while not achieving to replace them with equally explanatory coordinates, it is then permissible for semiotics itself to desire, through different paths, to annex the broad domains of space and time, imagining not, with Peirce, that sign and meaning live in and of them but rather assuming, with Hjeltmlev and then especially with Greimas, that it is instead space and time that are signified, that are the fruit of semiosis<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Suggestions for a philosophical semiotics of time, albeit from different perspectives, can be found in J.C.M. Pinto, *The Reading of Time: A Semantico-Semiotic Approach*, Berlin - New York, De Gruyter Mouton, 1989; B. Uspenskij, *Semiotics and Culture: The Perception of Time as a Semiotic Problem*, in «Sign Systems Studies», 45, 2017, 3-4, pp. 230-248, <https://doi.org/10.12697/SSS.2017.45.3-4.02>; M. Leone, *Time and Meaning: A Cultural Semiotics of Temporal and Aspectual Ideologies*, in M. Leone (ed.), *Aspettualità / Aspectuality*, special issue of «Lexia», 27-28, Roma, Aracne, 2017, pp. 17-63.

<sup>5</sup> On (ambiguous) spatial implication in semiotics temporal meta-language, see T. Remm, *Time in Spatial Metalanguage: The Ambiguous Position of Time in Concepts of Sociocultural, Social and Cultural Space*, in «Trames», 14, 2010, 4, p. 394, <https://doi.org/10.3176/tr.2010.4.07>.

<sup>6</sup> See L. Guillemette - L. Hébert, *Signes des temps: Temps et temporalités des signes*, Québec, Presses de l’Université Laval, 2005; D. Bertrand - J. Fontanille, *Régimes sémiotiques de la temporalité: la flèche brisée du temps*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 2006; cf. B. Richardson, *Spatiality and Symbolic Expression: On the Links Between Place and Culture*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

### 3. Time and Temporality of Meaning

This relativizing challenge of semiotics to Kantian schematics is often envisaged, in the Greimassian vulgate, as the idea that time dissolves into temporality, and that it is, as this same vulgate puts it, an «effect of meaning». Put in this way, the question could not but provoke the screeches of Ricoeur and others<sup>7</sup>, who nonetheless perhaps underestimated the scope of the question, just as they also unconsciously underestimated, perhaps, the semiotic relativization of Kantian schematics in structural and generative terms, within a school of thought, the Greimassian one, as is well known much more linguistically or even anthropologically than philosophically equipped. For in this second version of the relationship between sign and meaning on the one hand, and space and time on the other, it is not a matter, trivially, of discoursivizing the latter by using the former as the fabric and matter of such discoursivization. In short, it is not a matter of thinking, again, of time and space as «discursive effects». This in fact places the question at a level that is philosophically rather superficial and easily dismantled. Instead, one must question whether space and time themselves are not at bottom a kind of sign, or two different faces of semiosis. Time, then, would not therefore be the chronological container of semiosis, nor would space be its topological envelope, but one and the other, time and space, would in fact be the contents of semiosis, would each be an essential mode of the manifestation of meaning<sup>8</sup>. Time then could be defined as the way in which semiosis manifests itself within the relation between what stands for something else and what something else is stood for, and thus as the gap, if only in human perception and cognition, but perhaps also in the essence and ontology of things, between what seems and what is. Time would be a way of measuring the distance between being hidden and shown together by the sign and the sign itself.

### 4. Space and Spatiality of Meaning

Space, on the other hand, also a content of semiosis, would be a way of presenting the relations between signs and the relation between beings,

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. P.M. St. Pierre, *Quelle Heure Est-Il, Monsieur Ricoeur? A Semiotic Narratology of Duration, Term, Tempo, and Rec(oe)urrence, Tol(le)d from the Criticism of Paul Ricoeur*, in «Semiotica», 114, 1997, 1-2, pp. 21-30, <https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.1997.114.1-2.21>.

<sup>8</sup> For a cybernetic approach to the temporal content of semiosis, see J. Szulc - G. Besler, *Time as a Constitutive Element of Information Expressed in Signs*, in «Kybernetes», 43, 2014, 6, pp. 911-923, <https://doi.org/10.1108/K-06-2013-0120>.

a kind of map of sign phenomenology in relation to the map of its ontology<sup>9</sup>. The issue is very complex, but it translates, especially in this second approach, into the prospect of a new way of considering space and time both in the groove of Peircian semiotics and in that of Greimassian semiotics, in the form of a kind of reversal of Kantian schematics. In the vein of structural and generative reflection, this reversal could be translated not only into a philosophical lucubration, as is traditional in Peirce's semiotics, but also into a program of work on texts<sup>10</sup>. At this point, then, space and time in texts would no longer be of interest merely as meaning effects<sup>11</sup>, as they have often been trivialized by Greimas' epigones, but as differential outcomes. In short, it would be a matter of studying time and space as they are revealed within the sign and semiosis machines that are texts, for, especially in the most philosophically interesting textual creations, the central contribution of the textual exercise itself would precisely consist in enacting the results of temporal and spatial transformation.

## 5. Narratives as Quantum Labs

In the school of Greimas it has often been enunciated, as in a mantra, that textuality expresses a narrativity whose purpose is to stage and circulate value oppositions traversed by an ideology; perhaps, however, the stakes of the textuality and narrativity are even higher, and consist in an attempt at showing, through culture, the sign fabric of which space and time are woven. In short, space and time would not be, as Greimas's vulgate often claims, mere discursive coordinates of textual enunciation, but rather the object of value of narratives, the purpose of which time and space would thus be not to adorn narratives with a spatiality and a temporality, but to show how one and the other, our way of experiencing time and space, in time and space, are dependent on our way of experiencing semiosis, of living by signs. A narrative, then, would be a semiotic machine for catching a glimpse, as in the flash of lightning, precisely, that space and time are in fact signs, that is, they are the result of the consubstan-

<sup>9</sup> Cf. M. Thiering, *Spatial Semiotics and Spatial Mental Models: Figure-Ground Asymmetries in Language*, Berlin - Boston, De Gruyter Mouton, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> See K. Wenz, *Raum, Raumsprache und Sprachräume: Zur Textsemiotik der Raumbeschreibung*, Tübingen, G. Narr, 1997; E.W.B. Hess-Lüttich - J.E. Müller - A.J.A. Van Zoest, *Signs & Space = Raum & Zeichen*, an international conference on the semiotics of space and culture in Amsterdam, Tübingen, G. Narr, 1998.

<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, M.C. Bobes Naves, *La Valeur sémiotique du temps dans le récit*, in «Kodikas», 7, 1994, 1-2, p. 107.

tially human way of being in the world<sup>12</sup>, and that this way also puts us in touch with other ways, or *Umwelten* as they may be<sup>13</sup>, if they share the same characteristic, that is, a certain way of constructing space and time with signs<sup>14</sup>. According to this conception, a narrative would thus not be, Ricoeur-style, a device for coming to terms with an ineffable time of human existence, and especially with the time of the end and death, but rather a laboratory of quantum semiotics<sup>15</sup> in which it is shown, as is the case in all the most sublime texts of human poetics, that time and space are woven with signs, and imbued with semiosis, and that they change as the signification that emerges from things to consciousness changes.

## 6. Types of Spatio-Temporal Experiments

Technically, the laboratory of quantum semiotics that are texts would process time and space by evaluating the effects of their transformation, especially if it occurs in a radical way. There are many ways of transforming space and time in narrative in order to probe how they reveal their sign nature therein, but they can be subsumed into a few experimental macro-categories. As for time, the coordinates of its experimental textual study are essentially concentration and dilution<sup>16</sup>: one can reveal the

<sup>12</sup> See E. Zerubavel, *The Language of Time: Toward a Semiotics of Temporality*, in «Sociological Quarterly», 28, 1987, 3, pp. 343-356.

<sup>13</sup> See J.T. Fraser, *The Extended Umwelt Principle: Uexküll and the Nature of Time*, in «Semiotica», 134, 2001, pp. 263-273, <https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.2001.027>.

<sup>14</sup> Comparable approaches are in L.B. Mazur, *The Semiotic Multistability of Time: Literature as a Window onto a Classic Challenge in Psychology*, in «Theory & Psychology», 29, 2019, 3, pp. 358-376, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354319848496>; R. Sabre, *Semeiotic Time*, in «Semiotica», 235, 2020, pp. 113-117, <https://doi.org/10.1515/sem-2018-0108>; J. Zeng - M. Wang, *The Narrative Function of Temporal Signs: Toward a Semio-Narratology Approach*, in «Chinese Semiotic Studies», 17, 2021, 3, pp. 371-385; <https://doi.org/10.1515/css-2021-2003>.

<sup>15</sup> Cross-fertilization of quantum theory and semiotics has been recently evoked by several authors in various terms; see V.I. Arshinov - V.G. Budanov, *The Phenomenon of Complexity and Quantum Semiotics*, in «Voprosy Filosofii», 12, 2021, pp. 67-77, <https://doi.org/10.21146/0042-8744-2021-12-67-77>; I.A. Surov et al., *Quantum Semantics of Text Perception*, in «Scientific Reports», 11, 2021, 4193, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-021-83490-9>; F. Galofaro - Z. Toffano, *Verso una semantica quantistica? Applicazioni al discorso religioso*, in M. Leone - A. Santangelo (eds.), *Semiotica e Intelligenza Artificiale*, Roma, Aracne, 2023, pp. 107-130, <https://doi.org/10.53136/97912218042947>; cf. F. Merrell, *Cultures, Timespace, and the Border of Borders: Posing as a Theory of Semiotic Processes*, in «Semiotica», 154, 2005, pp. 287-353, <https://doi.org/10.1515/semi.2005.2005.154-1-4.287>.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. J. Brockmeier, *The Language of Human Temporality: Narrative Schemes and Cultural Meanings of Time*, in «Mind, Culture and Activity», 2, 1995, 2, pp. 102-118, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039509524692> and P. Eisenlohr, *Mediating Disjunctures of Time: Ancestral Chro-*

sign nature of time by accelerating its course in the story or, instead, by slowing it down; as for space, on the other hand, these coordinates are mirrored with respect to temporal ones in textual compression and dilation: by compressing the space of the story or, instead, by dilating it, one unveils, on closer inspection, the sign nature of our spatial schematics, the semiology of our topology. The technical apparatus best suited to this experimental study is that of aspectuality, which in fact, as was pointed out by a monographic issue of «Lexia», is actually a study of respectuality in the Peircean sense, of the way in which the signifier and the signified look at each other, adopt the one a perspective on the other<sup>17</sup>. In structural linguistics and then in semiotics, aspectuality has stooped primarily to the study of temporal curvatures, but there is nothing to prevent it from also bending, as indeed has already been abundantly done – albeit without understanding the philosophical nature of the exercise – to the study of space. The lattice of concepts that aspectuality theory offers can serve to observe, as in a particle accelerator, what happens to space if it compresses or dilates, and what to time if it concentrates or dilutes. Just as in the great laboratories of quantum physics, it is in the extreme alterations that revolutionary theoretical knowledge about the nature of reality is produced; after all, albeit with its usual evanescence, the Lotmanian evocation of the explosion is perhaps but a reference to this, to the attempt to understand how time reveals its profoundly sign-like nature when it is accelerated to the point of bursting<sup>18</sup>.

## 7. The Social Laboratory of COVID-19

The social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been interpreted by many as a kind of planetary sociological laboratory. They could also be seen as a kind of global semiotic experiment<sup>19</sup>, in which an attempt is

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*notopes in Ritual and Media Practices*, in «Anthropological Quarterly», 88, 2015, 2, pp. 281-304, <https://doi.org/10.1353/anq.2015.0023>.

<sup>17</sup> M. Leone (ed.), *Aspettualità / Aspectuality*.

<sup>18</sup> See S.H. Kim, *Lotmanian Explosion: From Peripheral Space to Dislocated Time*, in «Sign Systems Studies», 42, 2014, 1, pp. 7-30, <https://doi.org/10.12697/SSS.2014.42.1.01>.

<sup>19</sup> A number of articles have concentrated on the semiotics of temporal change as a result of the pandemic; see M.A. Doane - D. Galili, *Unreal Time: A Conversation on Film Theory, Media Historiography, and the Scales of Pandemic Catastrophe*, in «Framework», 62, 2021, 2, pp.179-197, <https://doi.org/10.13110/framework.62.2.0179>; M.J. Flexer, *Having a Moment: The Revolutionary Semiotic of COVID-19*, in «Wellcome Open Research», 5, 2020, 134, <https://doi.org/10.12688/wellcome-openres.15972.1>; J.N. Ruse et al., *Remaking Time: Cultural Semiotic Transformations of Temporality*

made to understand the sign nature of space, that is, how space is imbued with semiosis, essentially by compressing it. From this point of view, this was a diametrically opposed experiment to those of dilation in both social and textual realities. Semiotic experiments of spatial dilation are, in social life, all border expansions, from travel to migration, from continental to interplanetary exploration; in their textual counterpart, these expansions give rise to real textual genres, usually related to the strand of adventure, travel narrative, but also escapism. Even more experimental or even 'quantum' perspectives are then provided by genres that expand space by multiplying it, and in fact by playing with spatial and temporal dimensions together, as is the case in all tales of abnormal dislocation, from hagiographic legends of ubiquity to mostly science fiction tales of travel through time. The pandemic can be interpreted as an involuntary semiotic laboratory of spatial compression, in which billions of people were forced to think coercively around the meaning of space<sup>20</sup>. The coercive nature of the experiment should be the subject of reflection, and broaden to a consideration of how any spatio-temporal alteration not acted upon but suffered, not embraced but tolerated, not created but found, perhaps does not have the same heuristic value as alterations that are instead freely chosen in reality or reconstructed in textuality; in other words, it is one thing to deliberately compress the space of existence in the exercise of asceticism, and quite another to end up in a prison jail. The pragmatics of these voluntary or involuntary compressions are different, although they may be underlain by common semantics. In a recent article, I tried to reflect on the literary genre I called «odeporics of immobility», that is, of all those texts in which one imagines exploring a world in which space had become radically compressed<sup>21</sup>. Many of these texts draw from actual experiences of spatial compression, and yet they must transcend it precisely in order to mature a philosophical reflection on the meaning of space as well as on meaning in space. The culmination of this textual quantum aesthetics has been identified by me in Borges's short story *The Aleph* (1945), in which a spatial and temporal compression are

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*During the Early Days of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Lockdown*, in «Integrative Physiological and Behavioral Science», 57, 2023, 1, pp. 235-255, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-022-09711-6>.

<sup>20</sup> That was partially tantamount to a semiotics of waiting; see M. Kärrholm - G. Sandin, *Waiting Places as Temporal Interstices and Agents of Change*, in «Trans Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften», 18, 2011, available at [http://project.sol.lu.se/fileadmin/user\\_upload/project/ccs/Sandina\\_Kaerrholm\\_Waiting\\_Places\\_as\\_Agents\\_of\\_Change\\_.pdf](http://project.sol.lu.se/fileadmin/user_upload/project/ccs/Sandina_Kaerrholm_Waiting_Places_as_Agents_of_Change_.pdf) (last accessed 27/03/2023).

<sup>21</sup> M. Leone, *Mirrors, Selfies, and Alephs: A Semiotics of Immobility Travelogues*, in «Cultura: International Journal of Philosophy of Culture and Axiology», 18, 2021, 2, pp. 113-137, <https://doi.org/10.5840/cultura202118215>.



staged together, a compression that is also a concentration, giving place and giving time together to a very particular tale of ubiquity, in which it is not the body that is ubiquitous in multiple simultaneous spaces, but instead it is the body that perceives, through this mystical device that is the Aleph, a spatio-temporal ubiquity of the whole in perception, a thickening of all space and all time in one point of consciousness. As has been pointed out by several interpreters, Borges proposes a secular and, so to speak, portable, telluric version of the mystical vision of Dante, who likewise, in the account of his heavenly ascension, constructs an experimental textuality to recount the thickening of time and space in the divine circle of the trinity. Borges wrests this experiment from the heavens and, with metaphysical irony, reproduces it in a basement, as a kind of inverted Dantean mystical-beatific vision, in which the whole of all space and time is manifested not celestially but subterraneously.

## 8. Spatiality Explored

Linguistics posits a difference between metaphor and *catacrexis*; the latter is a metaphor that is no longer perceived as such; when people eat Turin's *gianduiotti*, for instance, they do not realize anymore that they are a sweet metaphor referring to the like-sounding Italian word *lingotti* (in English, «ingots»); by their name and the golden color of their wrapping, *gianduiotti* would originally say: «eat this chocolate, it is as precious as gold». But now the name *gianduiotti* is so common that the reference to «ingots» is mostly overlooked. The same goes for religious space: it is invented, created, turned into ritual spatiality by communities of faith, yet the meaningful power of this topology is then solidified into the spatial habits of a spiritual tradition. In some cases, as society goes through radical alterations of ideological paradigms, the meaning of religious space is even lost. The metaphor can become a *catacrexis* but can also disappear into meaninglessness. The section of the issue entitled «spatiality», which is directed by Valeria Fabretti and summons the research energies of a group of young students of religious space active between Trento and Rome (ShaRP network, led by Maria Chiara Giorda) seeks to unearth the meanings of religious space by pinpointing its social conditions of existence especially when it most reveals its fabric: in situations of conflict or coexistence between different faiths, but also in those technological settings in which religious space transmogrifies into alternative matters, for instance into the digital matters of virtual realities.

## 9. Spatial Experiments with Digital Religion

There are two domains, indeed, in which contemporary human cultures experiment with space more than in any other context; one is the range of the new forms of extended reality, from VR to AR; the other one is videogames. These two experimental arenas, which often blend in complex ways, are forerunners to the emergence of new ways of understanding space and time in relation to meaning and human agency. The «Annali di studi religiosi» have therefore asked two young specialists, Gianmarco Thierry Giuliana and Federico Biggio, to survey the literature in these two fields, and to reconstitute an exhaustive panorama of what is happening to religion in the realms of extended reality and videogames.

## 10. Daring with Criterion

The Center for Religious Studies at the Bruno Kessler Foundation is undertaking daring explorations at the new frontiers of the religious dimension; this issue, for instance, focuses on spiritual space and spatiality as they evolve under the pressure of emerging catastrophic contingency (session 1), progressive social complexification (session 2), and rampant technological change (session 3). Yet no adventurous exploration of this kind could be carried on without a precise compass. The compass of ISR-FBK is methodology. It is the ambition of exploring the new, while adapting old but solid apparatuses of knowledge to new grounds. That is why the fourth session of the issue enshrines the methodological zest of the center's researchers; in communicative but meticulous ways, they try to express in dense paragraphs how they best conceive research on religion.

## 11. A Garden, not a Cathedral

The issue ends with a 'free' section in which the journal gives space to particularly imaginative and novel contributions on the study of religion. The «Annali di studi religiosi», indeed, are not conceived and edited as if building a cathedral, with its massive, precise, but imposing proportions. It is rather a garden, where some sections grow more than other depending on the contingencies of thought and reflection, and where a precious space is also always left to new sprouts, which are given a place to flourish and, perhaps, become the new imposing trees of knowledge of the future.