

The muslim cemetery Comparison between cultures: features of the places, cities and architectures

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The treatment of the topics concerning the muslim cemetery, which represents the object of this specific investigation, is divided into four main sections.

The first one is conceived to be a primal endeavour in approaching the wide-expanse of the whole islamic world that, in parallel lines with all the other important and formal theological traditions, is very often affected by ceremonies, religious beliefs, principals, rules and customs that become very lasting in time, permeating in this way the society's cultural aspects. Proceeding in the same direction, also the whole architecture featuring this particular world, which appears to be very different and very distant from the western countries, cannot ignore these kind of considerations connected with the dogmatic basis that regulates one's muslim life-style. For this reason, it becomes essential to give some indications about peculiar death practices of the islamic faith which, throughout the analyses of the principles that regulate all of the funeral rites, it is possible to achieve the comprehension of the causes that allows the production of this kind of architectural structure, putting also in evidence the highly symbolical meaning which is strongly rooted in their specific culture.

The second section, in a different way from the other one, presents a more specific architectural research that begins by making some kind of considerations about the typical town-planning that labels all the islamic cities in general and goes on by promoting the possible localizations that cemeteries may undertake in those particular circumstances, putting therefore the accent either on those features that result common to different spatial ambits, either taking up those elements that provoke interruptions in the structures above. Therefore, since the wideness of the subject investigated, there are given only few and brief indications about the most common architectural patterns regarding funerary architecture, starting from the examination of the simple and humble funerary stele and ending with the featuring of the "mausoleum" type, being described in all of its monumentality and many varieties, thanks also to an accurate datation and description of all the elements that will be found later when we'll be talking about the islamic architecture concerning the western world, especially Europe.

In the third section, after it has been made a list of all the places in which it is probable to discover the presence of muslim cemeteries in their whole world, we pay attention to the european cemeterial reality, moving by the consciousness that the slopes being deeply interested by Islam's impact are mainly two, both of them occurring in different periods as much. Regarding the arabian-barberry side, emblematic are the realities of Spain and Sicily, that make the acquaintance of the islamic domination during the medieval era and for which we take in examination the muslim cemetery of the spanish city of Toledo. The balcanic slope, instead, is strongly connected with the ottoman rule and represents the object of a deeper analyses since the contemporary historical ambit of its development is very interesting for the kind of research that has been former promoted.

The panorama that argues about the treatment of cemeteries in Europe describes also the situation that deals with the contemporary funeral ambit, putting in evidence the main differences that exist in all countries for what regards the settlement about mortuary regulations and the practices related with the present-day question of the corpses' repatriation. It's not possible moreover to forget the great topic concerning the military cemeteries, since they give a valueable contribution in testifying the islamic presence in european areas, mostly in France. In last analyses, the description of the islamic cemeteries in Italy runs through the historical stages that are joined with the presence of the turkish slaves in the city of Livourne and the one of the muslim merchants in Trieste. The existance of these two historical cemeteries, belonging to the XVIII° and XIX° centuries, are widely proved by record-office's material, this last one is also supported by photos in order to testify their physical presence on the italian territory.



Picture that represents the Turkish cemetery of Livourne, situated close to the city-graveyard called "ai Lupi"



The view of the Ottoman cemetery and the mortuary chapel located in Sant'Anna's area in Trieste

This last part also begins with a long historical digression that touches even the actual situation that concerns the constructions of new cemeteries in Italy, joining this way the same debates that are actually being discussed throughout all Europe in general.



Photo of the muslim cemetery
inside the Flaminio graveyard of Rome

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