

TERRITORIO DELLA RICERCA
SU INSEDIAMENTI E AMBIENTE

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07

Linguaggi delle città

le città
si raccontano



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i linguaggi delle città...
le città si raccontano

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all'agricoltura, deteneva funzione battesimale e cimiteriale. Il territorio lauretano era soggetto a costante trasformazione urbanistica, con prevalenti interventi di ricostruzione o riutilizzo di edifici antichi e recupero di apparati decorativi lapidei; analogamente, si rileva riutilizzo di *spolia* classiche nella composizione delle partiture architettoniche della chiesa.

È ascrivibile alla pittura campana di area beneventana il ricco e complesso repertorio figurativo rinvenuto a Pernosano, che attesta compresenze bizantino-orienteggianti e classico-occidentali. Nell'abside sinistra della Chiesa ipogea, il gruppo dei santi vescovi - dipinto con estrema attenzione al particolare, decisa e fluida applicazione del colore ed intense lumeggiature - è testimonianza di una corrente colta, classica, intensa, matura e culturalmente aperta.

Segue una analisi dell'arredo scultoreo altomedioevale della chiesa, che conserva vari frammenti lapidei, tra cui materiale di spoglio di epoca romana, quali capitelli, fusti di colonna, lastre di rivestimento, are sepolcrali, iscrizioni. L'apparato decorativo è piuttosto articolato, con affreschi a soggetto figurato e geometrico sulle pareti, mentre l'arredo liturgico contempla plutei, lastre e pilastri; manufatti di produzione tipicamente occidentale, definita "longobarda", diffusa nell'Italia centro-settentrionale a partire dal secolo VIII. La decorazione plastica della Chiesa è correlata alla scultura di Cimitile, dunque a quella napoletana del periodo fine secolo IX/X secolo; Pernosano, come Cimitile, era ubicata in un territorio di intensa osmosi, in un'area di confine tra il principato longobardo di Benevento e il ducato bizantino di Napoli; si pensi all'ornato a losanghe sulla faccia esterna dei pilastri del protiro, di matrice bizantina. L'apparato scultoreo in pietra denuncia chiaramente, oltre agli indubbi valori formali, le ragioni funzionali di arredo della chiesa nella fase più intensa di impegno costruttivo.

La pubblicazione si conclude con una sezione dedicata agli affreschi di Santa Maria Assunta, corredata da una ricca serie di immagini (ivi compresi riferimenti alle basiliche di Cimitile). Vi si celebrano i santi Paolino, Felice e Massimo, disposti a figura intera, lo zoccolo dipinto a finte specchiature marmoree ai lati dell'altare, il *velum* con decorazione di cerchi intrecciati, la Trasfigurazione di Cristo, un ciclo agiografico di santa Cecilia, Gesù benedicente sorretto dalle mani della Vergine ed infine un Santo, probabilmente San Felice.

Tra l'altro, nello stesso periodo in cui veniva stampato il volume in oggetto, è nato a Pernosano un *Laboratorio di Ricerche Medioevali* intitolato ad Émile Bertaux, storico dell'arte dello scorso secolo, impegnatosi nel primo *corpus* di storia dell'arte italiana meridionale. Tra gli obiettivi principali, la tutela del complesso di Santa Maria Assunta in Pernosano, nonché attività di informazione e sensibilizzazione fin dall'età scolare.

Lo studio del complesso monumentale ha aperto nuove prospettive di ricerca sulla complessità culturale, la raffinatezza artistica e la committenza principesca in età longobarda, sulle relazioni politico-economiche tra chiesa, borghesia e nobiltà locale, sulla evoluzione della cultura decorativa nell'Italia meridionale ed i relativi valori compositivi e formali.

Studi, Piani e Progetti

Belfast cultural heritage and the language of murals in the contested city.

Remembering the past, re-imagining the future

di Candida CUTURI

The memories of Northern Ireland religious/political conflict are vivid through Belfast tangible and intangible testimonies.

Belfast walls save the signs of a city deeply marked by violence and crime during "the Troubles", begun in the late 1960s and last for about 30 years, though the conflict had roots dating back centuries.

The toil of the Troubles left 3,700 people dead and 40,000 people injured. The Good Friday Peace Agreement, signed by British and Irish governments and the main political parties on April 1998, came from a peace process begun in 2003, leading to ceasefires by the IRA and Combined Loyalist Command. The Agreement established provisions and the potential for a long-term political settlement, starting from new forms of governance (the new Assembly and Executive) and fostering economic development (Ellis and McKay, 2000).

Murals painting, started at the beginning of XX century and spread during the Troubles in residential areas, has continued throughout the peace process.

Belfast territory is marked by deep spatial segregation, based on ethno-nationalist and social segmentation, particularly in neighbourhoods such as Shankill and Lower Falls in West Belfast,

but also in Tigers Bay and New Lodge in North Belfast, and elsewhere¹. The conflict between divided communities is clear in the boundaries, limits and interface zones (Gaffikin *et al.*, 2008a).



“Peace Walls”, somewhere topped with barbed wire, actually physical lines of demarcation dividing Shankill and Falls Road communities in West Belfast, making them gated communities (photos by C. Cuturi, 2010)

Spatial dynamics suggest that the city is becoming more Catholic/Nationalist, while the suburban territory and surrounding towns

¹ Community background (2001): 94,2% Protestants in Shankill and 97,6% Catholics in Lower Falls (West Belfast); 90,1% Protestants in Tigers Bay and 97,7% Catholics in New Lodge (North Belfast); 74,8% Protestants in Donegall Pass and 92,4% Catholics in Markets area (South Belfast) (Census data base, 1971-2001, set up by Shuttleworth *et al.* at QUB; Gaffikin *et al.*, 2008a).

mostly Protestant/Unionist. Anyhow there is a predominance of Protestants in East Belfast, Catholics in West Belfast. Particular dynamics/relations are emerging in terms of brownfield land, demographic changes and divided communities; situations which planning must take into consideration in the perspective of building shared places. Most brownfield land is within or near Protestant areas; on the other side there is a strong residence demand by the Catholic community. Therefore derelict sites regeneration turns out as a delicate operation, for a possible perception of territorial invasion (Gaffikin *et al.*, 2008a).

As outlined within the Greater Shankill *Strategic Regeneration Framework* (2008), relatively recent developments, either side of the “Peace Lines”, issue a challenge to the future removal of the barriers, blocking potential linkages.

Wall paintings in Belfast and Londonderry, aimed at glorifying both loyalist and republican paramilitarists and marking the territory, have often been considered as symbols of Northern Ireland’s division. Flags, painted kerbs and murals are still common as symbols in public areas, to demarcate sectarian boundaries and as a deterrence, deepening the distances (Albert, 2009). As ideological expressions, murals promote practices of exclusion/inclusion: they can either intimidate/threaten opposite groups or mobilize/empower the community they arise from (Lisle, 2006).

On the background of debates about public art, these visual representations are being considered within a wider perspective, beyond Northern Irish struggles between two communities, but with reference to issues of global concern: other international conflict situations such as in Palestine or Turkey; political infighting; themes connected to race, gender and age; economic disparity and unemployment. Such cross-cutting cleavages make Belfast more than just a divided

city, but a city concerned about tensions and issues of urban life arising on a global level. Actually the polysemic signs, images and messages embedded within the murals make them something more than just ideological expressions of either loyalist or republican community (Lisle, 2006).

Once a mural has been painted, it undergoes a process of transformation or even erase. As an artifact in public space, it tends “to be used, re-used and abused” (Lisle, 2006).

Some murals undergo a slow process of decline, others are deliberately removed (e.g. after political expiry), either replaced or simply obscured. Murals have a “transitory permanence”, depending on the interests of the community, on political processes/campaigns, on the quality of materials used and weather conditions, etc. On the background of the regional development strategy for urban renewal and estate clearance, regeneration programmes have promoted housing design which does not allow the display of traditional mural painting (semi-detached houses replacing the older terraces). “Designing out crimes” initiatives, such as inserting windows and doorways in gable walls and creating a buffer zone between the house and the street, aim to reduce potential graffiti and murals (McCormick and Jarman, 2005).

During the last decade the use of symbols has been changing slowly, in the perspective of a greater sensitivity and mutual respect, and sectarian murals have been painted over. Some paramilitary murals have been transformed into more welcoming images connected to heritage and culture. There has been a shift from themes connected to armed terrorism, on both side of the sectarian divide, towards social/cultural issues and community celebration (Celtic mythology, George Best, Clive Staples Lewis, etc.).

There is a debate about the preservation of Belfast traditional murals on one side and the need for deleting them on the other. Some people

maintain the role of the murals as a legacy of the past (local history and identities) and a key tourist attraction (sometime as relics of the past), other people think it appropriate to remove sectarian murals for an actual reconciliation.



Shankhill (Loyalist/Unionist area):

Mural at the end of a terrace row, celebrating Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England (top); On the background of murals connected to military/paramilitary forces and their leaders and martyrs, the story of the Brown Square Gold Rush, replacing the previous Scottish Brigade mural (down) (photos by C. Cuturi, 2010)

The murals, regularly visited by tourists, tell the story of Northern Ireland Conflict and make of some places in Belfast and Derry/Londonderry open-air museums (Albert, 2009).

The *Re-imagining Communities Project* - established by the Shared Community Consortium and lead by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland - aims to improve Belfast communities' environment; it focuses on public art as a contributor to the

regeneration of neighbourhoods, particularly replacing sectarian murals, emblems and graffiti by positive images linked to the community's culture.

Unfortunately segregated residential areas continue to be places of conflict between divided communities: violent actions are registered again, in North, West and East Belfast, after a five-year period of calm since 2003 (Gaffikin *et al.*, 2008a).

This year two new murals depicting Loyalist paramilitarists, holding gun machines and ready for action, have been painted along Newtownards Road, in East Belfast, and riots have been run less than half a mile away from the regenerating Titanic Quarter².

Despite all the difficulties Belfast has faced - such as de-industrialisation, deprivation, sectarian division and political conflict - some issues are slowly being addressed and a new civil society is gradually emerging (Ellis and McKay, 2000).

Belfast is developing approaches and instruments to preserve and enhance its unique heritage - architecture and visual arts, music and literature, shipbuilding and community traditions - being aware of the potential benefits to be gained socially, culturally and economically.

In the last decade regeneration processes have been increasingly based on partnership arrangements and European funding, allowing an integration between voluntary/community organizations and the private sector³.

2 Cfr. Bowcott O., "In this part of Belfast, no one seems willing to forget the past", *The Guardian*, 24 June 2011.

3 Among the instruments: "Shaping Our Future" (1998), regional development strategy aimed at the metropolitan area, the City Centre, cultural tourism development and Belfast international image; "Belfast: Capital City" (2002), for urban regeneration, focused on drivers of change and inhibitor factors; "Your City, Your Space" Strategy (2005), involving local communities; Strategy for Cultural Tourism and the Action Plan "Developing Belfast's Opportunity" (2002), concerning also

Some policies and programmes have moved towards conflict resolution and reconciliation, fostering cross-community dialogue and community activism and preserving/enhancing the rich tangible and intangible heritage.

On the other hand - on the background of increasing competitiveness and globalisation - new investments have been promoted into mixed-use developments (cultural attractions, office space, residence), sometime perceived as standardised and apart from Belfast identity.

Despite the aspiration to making the city centre a *neutral* area, some people believe that certain waterfront developments contribute to deepen social polarization and physical segregation. Anyhow the waterfront regeneration, run by Laganside Corporation, has given a certain vitality to a previously-derelict area (Titanic Quarter, the Waterfront Hall, Odissey Complex and Gasworks, as well as the historical Cathedral Quarter) (Cuturi, 2010).

Some spaces in Belfast, such as Lanyon Place, Cathedral Area, Donegall Square, are perceived as good public places, marked by high standard architecture and public art, good connections and urban vitality. The city is going to promote a functional hierarchy of public spaces, to be connected through an accessible spatial network, linking civic spaces of the city centre with different kinds of parks and sporting centres, through protected green corridors using linear elements, such as water courses or derelict railway lines (Gaffikin *et al.*, 2008b).

Integrated community planning and collaborative planning can contribute to addressing issues of segregation, multiple

community festivals, the theatre movement involving both Protestants and Catholics, projects of art training; "An integrated cultural strategy for Belfast" (2007). Besides we stress the role of European Funds, through *Objective 1* and *2*, and various Programs such as *URBAN*, *URBACT*, *CHORUS*, *INTERACT*.

deprivation and reconciliation. Following a period of “technocratic neutrality”, there are new rethinking and critical evaluation about the approach to Belfast urban environment and the planning system as a whole, aspiration toward innovation and flexibility, social communication and interaction, sensitivity to local needs.



Falls Road (Republican/Nationalist area):

Remembrance Garden, recalling people died/imprisoned for political reasons: mural depicting the loyalist burning of Bombay Street in 1969 (top);

Large murals relating to issues of global concern, such as international conflict situations: pro-Palestinian mural against “barbarian Israeli aggression”, replica of Picasso’s *Guernica*, etc. (down) (photos by C. Cuturi, 2010)

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Eventi

Incanti e scoperte... e rivoluzioni di là dal Mediterraneo

Francesca PIROZZI

C’era una volta il paesaggio mediorientale, le infinite tonalità iridescenti del cielo, le dune infuocate dai riflessi abbaglianti, i giardini lussureggianti colorati di fiori e maioliche lucenti, i tendaggi variopinti dei mercati cittadini, il contorno mistilineo delle architetture moresche, le piccole strade assolate e silenziose nelle ore del mezzogiorno. C’erano una volta le civiltà leggendarie d’oltremare, gli ambienti segreti degli harem popolati da velate odalische, le lente carovane di beduini nel deserto, le movenze inebrianti di musicisti e danzatrici, le mistiche atmosfere di preghiera. Immagini di terre lontane, esotiche e misteriose, intrise di fiabesca invenzione, di romantica avventura e di raffinata sensualità. Immagini da mille e una notte, come quelle riprodotte nei dipinti di Hayez, Pasini, Ussi, Morelli, Guastalla, Netti, Caffi ed altri ancora, accomunati da quella magnetica fascinazione per le terre levantine che irrompe nel Vecchio Continente a partire dalla spedizione napoleonica in Egitto, e si accresce via via, fino al tardo Ottocento, sulla scorta dei racconti di esploratori, narratori e faccendieri al seguito delle delegazioni diplomatiche del giovane stato unitario o di turisti di un *Grand Tour*, che non è più solamente italiano, ma mediorientale.

Coinvolti da questo mal d’Africa, anche molti artisti intraprendono viaggi nelle terre di Tangeri, Tunisi, Il Cairo, Costantinopoli, Smirne... tal altri, rimanendo di qua dei confini europei, si abbandonano audacemente al sogno e allo studio