

# Colonization and Third Scape

by Fabio R. Lattuca

Borgo Giacomo Schirò was the first rurale village built during the colonization of the sicilian latifondo, situated in Contrada Malvello - Località Cozzo Monnello, in the area of Monreale. This zone was strongly subjected to the reform policies so much so that over the years other villages were founded (D. Borzellino, Aquila, Saladino) and others were projected but never realized (G. Bonanno e G. Ferrara).

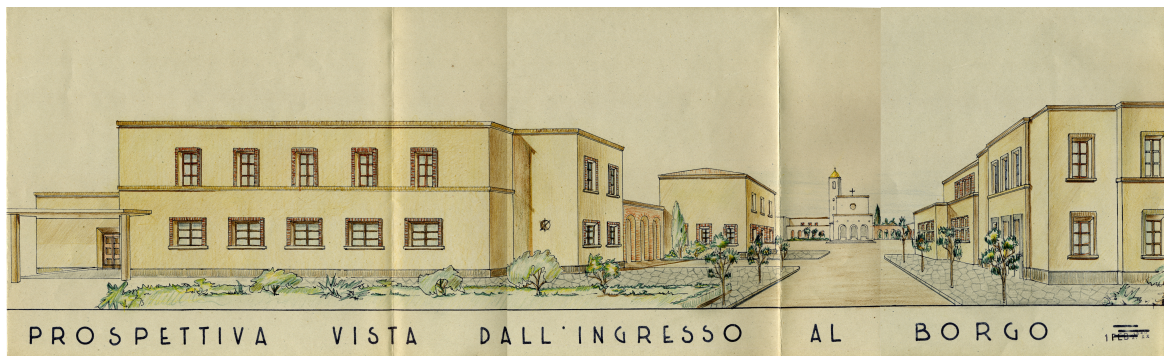


Figura 1 - Entrata al Borgo. Archivio ESA, riproduzione vietata.

By the foundation of Borgo Schirò (1939), started a policy of land transformation, aimed at "breaking" the latifondo and has already begun with some experiments – like the *cantoniere* houses and the workers villages of the last 20's – which proved to be unsuccessful and that, if it had acted with foresight, anticipating a further failure of the operation.

As claimed by Carlo Ruini, it could not deal with a subject so deep and visceral, as that of the latifondo and the trust land, with a law - the No. 1 of January 2, 1940 - not suited to cope with the need for a structure agricultural economy as varied as that of Sicily. In fact, again suggesting the Ruini, was a fatal mistake to impose a single system without taking into account the particularities of small businesses.

The whole thing was exacerbated by the strict guidelines imposed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry that compromised the real possibilities of the reform.<sup>1</sup>

According to Giovanni Lorenzoni the fascist attempt did not know how to implement a real agrarian reform. It has been tried rather to impose the system of land division and the formation of small businesses in an environment ill-suited, with financial and technical effort and with very disappointing results.

In the selection of intervention areas, the preference went to those zones where it would meet less resistance, even if it was land they could hardly operate to the disadvantage of the intensification of human settlement and cultivation. The lack of a development plan and the incompetence of the executive directors were as a result of the needless waste of tens of millions. The borghi, finally, were often abandoned, because arose in the middle of desert areas without connection to the major urban centers and without possibilities of distribution of agricultural products.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, Borgo Schirò summarizes the conditions that Ruini and Lorenzoni denounced by the middle of '900. Despite the implementation of expansion scenario, the abandonment and neglect have created a process and / or a short circuit to which the borgo has turned into a borderland, in a zone of hybridization, devoid of aspects defined. It is an urban space "surreal, consists of the services alone in the absence of a residential fabric"<sup>3</sup> placed inside a static environment in which the identity rural is predominant. Today, looking over the eucalyptus trees that surround the hill on which stand the buildings, you can see large tracts of land not very dissimilar from the latifondo of seventy - eighty years ago.

The borgo, in which there are no accommodation facilities but only designed to provide essential services to the farmers, it is so stripped of the basic characteristics of a small town or a small city.

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<sup>1</sup> For more info, you can read Carlo Ruini - Le vicende del Latifondo Siciliano, Sansoni, Firenze 1946.

<sup>2</sup> For more info, you can read Giovanni Lorenzoni "Trasformazione e colonizzazione del latifondo siciliano", in *Economia, Rivista di Economia e di Scienze Sociali*, Vol. III, Ed. Carlo Cya, Firenze 1940, pp. 66 – 78.

<sup>3</sup> Barbera P., *Architettura in Sicilia tra le due guerre*, Sellerio, Palermo 2002.



Figura 2. La chiesa di borgo Schirò. Riproduzione Vietata

It may, therefore, re-consider and re-evaluate, from a new perspective, some of the fundamental characteristics of the "Third Landscape" developed by Gilles Clément in the last decade. If the french author, in fact, tends to separate the rural areas from the cities, proposed like spaces characterized by specific waste, in Borgo Schirò - as in most of the foundations cities of Sicily - we are in front of a product ambivalent, in which the intersection of the elements creates a new situation of otherness.

These principles, not only involve the architectural and landscape aspects but also deeply affect the sound environment inside and outside the square, the church and the main structures. It is thus possible to rethink the soundscape as a "third soundscape", a direct consequence of balance and dynamics that influence the visual environment in which the village is settled.

Like the residue spatial, invisible because incorporated by the constant and unremitting action of the nature, the sounds produced by birds and animals (biophonies), now the only inhabitants of the borgo, re-semantise spaces giving them new form and life. In this context, we create landscapes determined by the overlap of sonic natural sources - such as wind (geophonies), constant and

enveloping in all areas of the village - which interact with matter, with objects and with tiny fragments of forgotten life, now lost (antrophonies).

The sound, intended as an exploratory medium and characterized by sonotope,<sup>4</sup> allows you to define your own stand in the place and recreate a proprioception within the context. It is in the light of this consideration, need to be away from the anthropocentric view and, instead, begin to value the idea that the acoustic environment is the result of the language of a landscape, in which each element, through sound communication, creates its own cognitive processes. These mechanisms provide the ability to interpret and define your own Umwelt, the subjective world and the universe in which make action.

So, whenever you get closer to a Sicilian rural borgo has the impression to calibrate their presence respect to the place, the space, being careful not to break up a dynamic equilibrium constant and imperishable. The human dimension of these places which were designed, today must leave space at the nature that slowly reclaims the landscape in a process in which man is invited to participate only if they accept the balance between the parties.

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<sup>4</sup> Overlapped geophonies, biophonies e antrophonies.

# “Rappresenting” the sound of the church of Borgo Schirò

by Pietro Bonanno

The church of Borgo Schirò, like many of those we met along our research, presents some stimulants peculiarities in terms of sound, considering the material in itself and considering the meaning that the same material has in terms of inspiration during the recording (field - recording) and during the "presentation of the place through a form" (soundscape composition).

Not knowing how the neglect and degradation have affected, we were enchanted by the beauty trough wich the place processes the sounds; perhaps, this is one of those cases where closing the eyes, it can get an idea of other landscape radically different from what it lives by opening them, while the two landscapes together, in their paradox, produce a collision that has stimulated interest for this site. Listening how the church resonates, it is struck by its reverberation that we have handcrafted measured in 400 / 500ms of early reflections (playing at the exact center of the church towards the altar) and RT60 of 2.2s. A visitor, entering in this sacred place, reminiscent of the sounds of the Far - East based on small gestures of great intensity, like a Taiko Japanese, issued in this case by an important biophonie of the place: the pigeons. Their flight happens only once at the entrance; testifies a unique sound event that can be captured only in a precise moment, not more repeating for the duration of the inspection.

Another source of inspiration was the dialogue between the interior and exterior materials. In addition to the gestures of the Japanese pigeons, inside the church, you can see the human presence through something there is no more. The pews and stained glass disappeared, destroyed the altar, the graffiti on the walls testify a shouting through the absence, the absence of something. The exterior have the same degradation of the interior; now it is impossible to clearly delineate the roles of the historic buildings and the entire village has become exclusively a place of transit or ephemeral entertainment. Yet even the outside world, in a way, is a "cathedral inside a cathedral." Beyond the references closely related to the religious world, as the fountain that mentions the “Cantico delle Creature”, or the

cross that indicates the presence of a sacred place, the trees simply by their presence the village with their hair and make up some sort of further natural church. The fence in the right side of the church, also listened closely or with contact microphones, looks like a small symphony of bells (in a place where the bells are entirely disappeared).

Last appearance in our investigation was linked to the "skin" of the Church of Borgo Schirò, or said in other words, the way in which the Church, and the elements around it - the natural cathedral "Borgo" - resonates through the geophonies in site (the wind, in particular way). For this purpose, we have considered the priority use of the contact microphones which would allow us to get to all the effects within the material. Recording, we used two of them, trying - and sometimes succeeded - to propose a virtual stereo or in MS mode, imagining a possible spatial location that the contact microphone does not have.

Collected the materials, we wondered how this could get a sense for the "representation" of a site. This point deserves a clarification. In addition to the physical experience of listening a place - by own ears - , there is a listening abstract, schizofonic, outside the context of the digital medium. How to do this in a way that makes sense linked to the landscape (if it is our intent)? The representation is precisely the act or practice that allows us to reproduce, and often, try to experience the enjoyment of something that we imagine or have lived in a particular way according to a specific language.

The composition, selecting its accuracy with the internal rules of perception based on attention, was the language used for this representation; wants to be the result, in our case, an immersion which has on one side an imprint natural - or naturalistic -, but that also has an vision beyond the true focus on the depth of the material itself and its meaning for us composers.

In an effort to make the place, we have used various technologies and procedural strategies, many of which have their own unique characteristic: bring out the most important components of the material, however, defining them as figures perceptual and linking them as a backdrop .

In this regard, we have created a small 'pulse' do-it-yourself formed by the overlapping of sounds in mono-strong gestural dynamics and different in spectral

terms, to be used as 'impulse response' of a convolution reverb. Thanks to this “modern” technology, we can separate the reverb itself so as to submerge any sound event we want in a place that we caught earlier. This allowed us to have by the reverberation of the church of the Borgo Schiò as a sort of virtual space in which to present the expression of materials.

Another procedural strategy was the granular synthesis, which has allowed to create a table different destinations for each material collected and, depending on the arhythmic or less of the provision of the grains, a unique sound, statuary, concentrated of all the resonant characteristics of the place (a kind of drone) or a sound fragmented, fragmented, magmatic, the sign of all the micro-temporal characteristics of the place.

These two techniques, the main work, together with the creative use of the sample rate to slow down the characteristics that interest us and make obvious a mounting designed to allow communication between the different aspects of each material have resulted in a formal attempt to dive away deeper in a real place, but described according to our imagination. A lucid dream in which they were symbolic introspection guided by the different meanings that the place has intersected in time and space, to a dissolution circular culminated in a return to reality.

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