

La Via dei Librai

The international city



In the collective imagination the name of Palermo evokes something legendary, mythical. This city had been at the center of a refined culture, I think of the Palermo of the Normans or that of Federico II, of which it is also fabled in America.

*Prof. **Iorizzo**, University of Oswego, New York*

Are we still the international city of which history speaks?

How are we declining this vocation? furthermore: is Palermo a model of an international city?

Are there other models? simple questions that lead us to a reflection on "The international city": of yesterday and today.

The city's millennial history leaves no doubt about its fundamental role in relations in the Mediterranean and in Europe.

A vocation, that of the "all-port" city, which has constantly led its inhabitants to have an international outlook.

Even Goethe, in his *Italienische Reise*, tells us about his experience of the international Palermo. As soon as he arrived in the city, in April 1787, in the inn located in the Grimignani house in via di Porto Salvo, the German poet tells of being greeted by a hotelier: a nice old man long accustomed to seeing foreigners from every country.

An international identity, radicated in city districts, which today are experiencing a new phase not only of recovery and awareness. Maredolce, the Zisa, the Miqweh, the Cathedral are they perhaps not architectural testimony of a knowledge that has passed through the city, but which has also been redesigned by its inhabitants?

The greatness of a cosmopolitan architecture is accompanied by the grandeur of a heritage produced by the positive cohabitation of various cultural expressions within the city: the Tamil community, just to give an example, the largest in Italy. From here a further reflection: is the international city limited to the vestiges of the past, or is it a new impulse for the 21st century?

"La via dei Librai" completes its first positive five-year period with a broad reflection on the theme of The international city, in a moment of ferment within a city that has increasingly needed to redefine its international vocation.

The Via dei Librai is the Cassaro itself, and the Cassaro is the story of the city's culture over time. This is why, if until today we have implemented an initiative to read about our reality and its acquired and historicized identity - necessary but by no means nostalgic - we intend to periodically propose a "challenge", a goal to pursue, that it is possible to reach, granted the necessary time, from our community. The path of a cultural initiative is certainly more significant if witnessed by concrete acts at each stage.

Today, faced with the current problems of what happens in Palermo and in the national and supranational scenarios, our journey aims to explore the international dimension of the city, the links, the legacies, the relationships that all make of Palermo a truly international city, historically, currently and in the future.

We do not intend, however, to simply consider the historical perspective from the present to the past; rather, not neglecting the teachings of the experiences already achieved, we intend to explore and propose a reading and the idea of a perspective that makes us better understand, understand and know the possibilities, and lead the city community to prepare for conscious choices about the future of its identity.

Is the perspective of Palermo that of the "international city"? With which features, and how?

Questions, to which everyone can give their own answer.