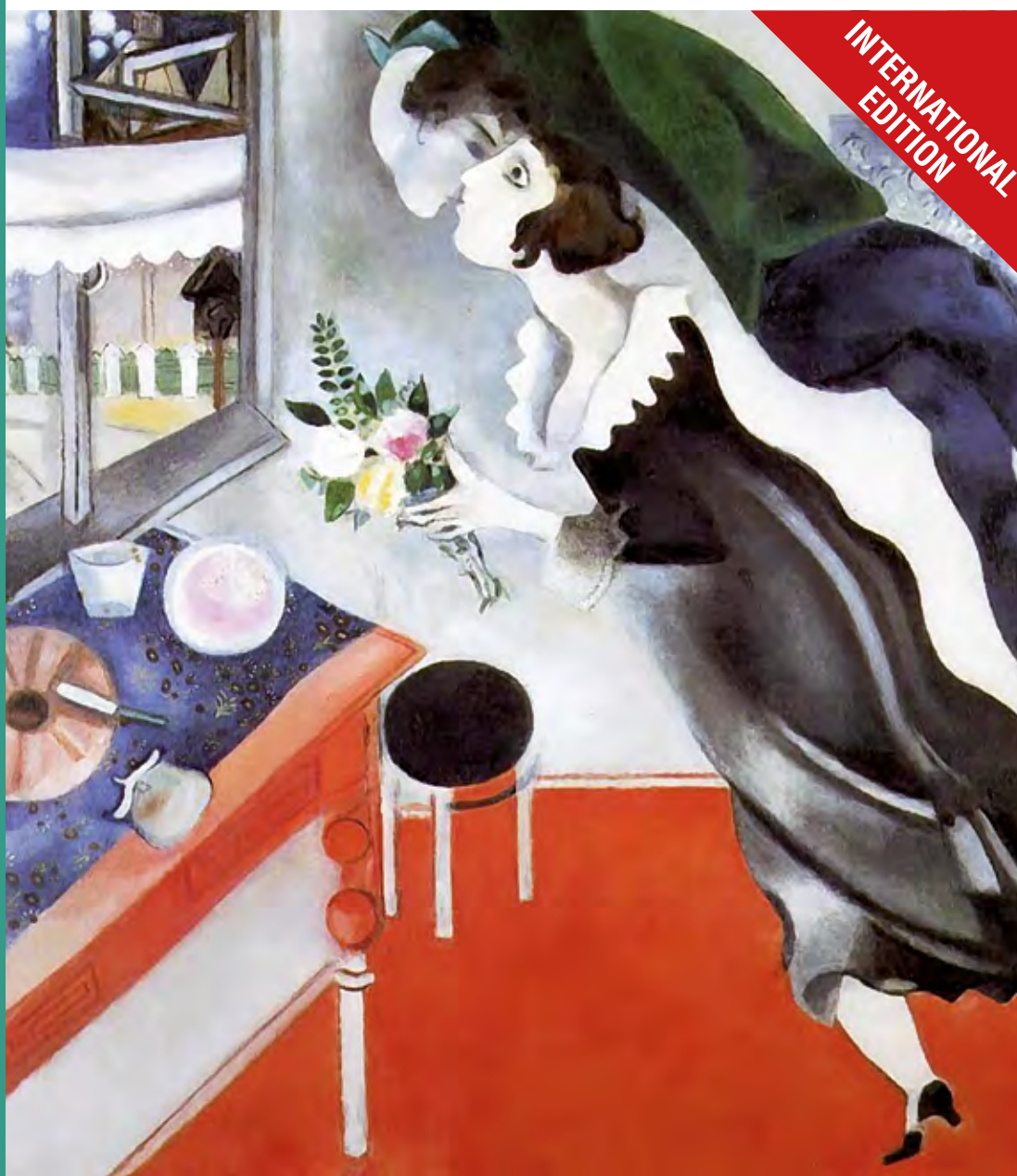


CIVILTÀ DELLA TAVOLA

ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA



ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA

ISTITUZIONE CULTURALE DELLA REPUBBLICA ITALIANA
FONDATA NEL 1953 DA ORIO VERGANI

www.accademia1953.it

EDITOR IN CHIEF
PAOLO PETRONI

COPY EDITOR
SILVIA DE LORENZO

LAYOUT
SIMONA MONGIU

THIS ISSUE INCLUDES ARTICLES BY
ETTORE BOVE, GIGI PADOVANI,
PAOLO PETRONI, GIANCARLO SARAN,
MARILENA TRALLI.

PHOTO CREDITS
ADOBE STOCK, GLORIA NOVI.



PUBLISHER
ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA
VIA NAPO TORRIANI 31 - 20124 MILANO
TEL. 02 66987018 - FAX 02 66987008
PRESIDENTE@ACCADEMIA1953.IT
SEGRETERIA@ACCADEMIA1953.IT
REDAZIONE@ACCADEMIA1953.IT
WWW.ACCADEMIA1953.IT



MONTHLY MAGAZINE
REG. N. 4049 - 29-5-1956
TRIBUNALE DI MILANO

REGULATIONS REGARDING PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

The Italian Academy of Cuisine, in its capacity as data controller, hereby informs its members that their personal data are handled with respect for the principles of integrity, lawfulness and transparency as well as protection of privacy and members' rights, to implement the management of the member-association relationship as delineated by the Association's Statute and By-laws, and for any related purposes where applicable. The processing is carried out by authorised parties, in paper and computerised form, in compliance with the provisions of the aforementioned EU regulations and current national legislation. To view all the information provided under EU regulations, and in particular to learn what members' rights are, please visit the Association's website.



Rivista associata
all'Unione Stampa
Periodica Italiana



L'ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA
È STATA FONDATA NEL 1953 DA ORIO VERGANI
E DA LUIGI BERTETT, DINO BUZZATI TRAVERSO,
CESARE CHIODI, GIANNINO CITTERIO, ERNESTO DONÀ
DALLE ROSE, MICHELE GUIDO FRANCI, GIANNI MAZZOCCHI
BASTONI, ARNOLDO MONDADORI, ATTILIO NAVA,
ARTURO ORVIETO, SEVERINO PAGANI, ALDO PASSANTE,
GIAN LUIGI PONTI, GIÒ PONTI, DINO VILLANI,
EDOARDO VISCONTI DI MODRONE,
CON MASSIMO ALBERINI E VINCENZO BUONASSISI.



On the cover: graphic elaboration of *The Birthday* (1915) by Marc Chagall, displayed in the exhibition *Chagall. Sogno d'amore (Chagall: Dream of love)*, Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore alla Pietrasanta, Naples, from 15 February to 30 June.

Focus of the President

- 2** The forgotten amatriciana
(Paolo Petroni)



Current Events • Lifestyle • Society

- 3** The pizza revolution
(Gigi Padovani)



Territories • Tourism • Folklore

- 6** The soup of Matera
More than a memory
(Marilena Tralli)
- 7** Traditional crapkata
(Ettore Bove)



Cuisine • Products • Food Technology

- 8** The hog of the sea
(Giancarlo Saran)



The forgotten amatriciana

by Paolo Petroni

President of the Academy

*Something has moved,
thanks to the
Academy's help.*

Two and a half years after the earthquake which struck central Italy, conditions in the worst-affected areas appear in limbo: the usual rubble, almost no reconstruction, only prefabricated yellow emergency shelters in bad repair. After the parading politicians (of all stripes), the solemn promises, and the generous contributions by many citizens, little or nothing has been done to tidy up, rebuild and return some dignity to those who have most keenly suffered the deaths of loved ones and the destruction of homes and businesses.



“Almost nothing has been done to return some dignity to those worst affected,”

The budgeted 15 billion Euros have not been spent, having been stalled by a devilish morass of inefficient coordination, pared-down offices whose approval is necessary for projects to proceed, the asphyxiating bureaucracy of project competitions, and the fear of being investigated on procedural technicalities. The Italian Academy of Cuisine, with considerable tact and generosity, gathered approximately 100,000 Euros to be distributed among twenty-odd restaurant, livestock and agricultural businesses. The funds were immediately delivered directly to these beneficiaries.

The Academy then awarded the Orio Vergani Prize (a machine worth 10,000 Euros) to the devastated Amatrice Hotel Institute



which had been “temporarily” transferred to Rieti. Speaking of the Hotel Institute, let us be honest: who knows if it will ever be rebuilt in Amatrice, and even if so, who would wish to study, work and live in a depopulated ghost town, by now inhabited only by the elderly, bereft of any social and economic fabric? Nowadays, in the words of an Academician living in Amatrice, the atmosphere there is sombre and saturated with resentment and anger. People are stuck, passive, embittered. They keenly feel that there is no overarching plan for getting things done, no coordination of reconstruction efforts, no resurgence of productive activity.

“The Academy directly delivered the 100,000 Euros gathered through the solidarity of Academicians,”

Occasionally buses arrive, emblazoned with the slogan “Lunch in Amatrice”: tourists eat in the (donated) ‘Food’ area, purchase “amatriciana kits” and immediately depart. We are proud of what the Academy has achieved, within its limitations. We are comforted by the thanks of those receiving our contributions. Among many, I cite the touching words of two beneficiaries: a restaurant and a cheese-making establishment.

“I whole-heartedly wish to thank you again, on behalf of the entire staff, for your kindness and responsiveness in aiding those who, like ourselves, resolve to continue investing in this quake-ravaged land, maintaining the daily struggle against innumerable difficulties. Your contributions were invested for purchasing furnishings and equipment for the bar that we opened in March 2017 to serve everyone who remained here even in the direst months, while waiting to reopen our restaurant in the ‘Food’ area. Thanks, with all our hearts.”

Giovannino Hotel and Restaurant

“We remain grateful for your concrete and substantial assistance. With your help, we managed to improve our production process and acquire new equipment for our cheese workshop. Following the quake which struck us, we rolled up our sleeves to the point of increasing production, which might appear foolhardy considering the undiminished emergency that surrounds us. Thanks again for your wonderful help.”

Antonio and Paola Aureli



The pizza revolution

by Gigi Padovani

Journalist, food writer

"Franco Marengi" Study Centre

*It has entered
haute cuisine
with quality ingredients
and innovations
in dough and
cooking techniques.*

It started as a street food in Naples, where urchins darted out of narrow shops (carry-out only) to sell *pizza a portafoglio* (the twice-folded 'wallet pizza'), kept warm in portable ovens with shoulder straps. This was the early 18th century, in such historic Neapolitan establishments as Zi Ciccio in Piazza Cavour (1732) and Port'Alba in Piazza Dante (still operating since 1738). That doughy disc, adorned by the most varied ingredients, now generates annual profits exceeding 62 billion Euros, and apparently five billion pizzas are baked each year. This typically Italian food's worldwide success has, alas, contributed to its distortion, especially by large industries which offer squalid imitations of the Neapolitan pizza master's ancient art, celebrated in 2017 (the profession, not the pizza) by UNESCO through inclusion on its World Heritage list.

But change is afoot: the past decade or so has witnessed a veritable 'pizza revolution' - thus defined by the Neapolitan journalist Luciano Pignataro in his puncti-

liously researched new publication, *Pizza: A contemporary history* (Hoepli, 29 Euros) - which has borne this vernacular, affordable and artisanal food to the pinnacles of haute cuisine. If it is true that the roots of its name are lost in the mists of ancient Roman history, only in 997 does the term *piza* appear in a codex published in Gaeta. Bartolomeo Scappi, cook to Pope Pius V, would later imbue it with historic dignity in his *Opera*, describing a sweet version

“The revolution was initiated by four or five eminent pizza masters who changed everything,,

while noting that “this pizza can be garnished in any way”. Pizza has many 'cousins' around the world, such as the Greek, Arab and Jewish *pita* and the Indian *naan*, but its main dissemination is due to Italian emigrants to the United States in the early 20th century. To ascertain this, question Americans: you will find them convinced that it is a national dish of theirs, whether in the gigantic New York style or in the deep-dish variant from Chicago.

Whoever has tasted these abominations knows how much they differ from the Neapolitan original, based on a high-hydration dough and brief cooking. In Italy it became a 'national dish' - equally to spaghetti - only after the Second World War, with some exceptions, as in Milan, where there are records of the *pizzeria* (pizza restaurants) A Santa Lucia (still active since 1929), in Via San Pietro all'Orto, and Di Gennaro (founded in 1934) near Piazza del Duomo.



Interview with Franco Pepe

● **Do you recognise yourself in the currently fashionable definition of 'gourmet pizza' frequently used for these new developments in recent years?**

Pizza is a people's dish and must remain so: in fact the term 'gourmet' is itself selective. I would, instead, view this as an evolution, a goal achieved: we have initiated a dialogue between pizza and haute cuisine. Today chefs have taught us to choose the best ingredients, transform them and transfer them to our simple disc of dough. Indeed, we pizza makers have never had an authoritative 'school' to train us technically and theoretically: in essence we are bakers, dough-kneaders. Now, finally, we turn to toppings: felicitous ingredient combinations are paramount. We understood this when we were able to enter the kitchens of great chefs, who began collaborating with *pizzaioli*. These were, in a sense, our 'remedial courses'.

● **How did you develop a passion for this profession?**

I was born near a wood stove, in my father's Antica Pizzeria Stefano Pepe. When my father passed away in 1996, I began this journey with my brothers; then in October 2012 I branched out from the family business and opened Pepe in Grani ('Peppercorns' - a play on his name), in an alley in the historic centre of Caiazzo. Just when everyone was leaving, I used bank loans to refurbish an 18th-century building. I was told that I was crazy and my venture wouldn't last a fortnight. On the eve of my fiftieth birthday I risked, I bet on seven young people whose numbers have now reached 37, plus two more in each of my other pizzerie, in Franciacorta, Geneva and Hong Kong. They believed in me, trusted me and followed me.

● **A very speedy growth...**

I felt the necessity to assess myself: whenever I achieved something, I invested in my project, every day during these six years.

● **Is there a contradiction, as they say today, between modern pizza with high-quality toppings added after baking to a long-leavened, relatively thick bready dough disc, and the traditional Neapolitan thin raised-crust pizza, baked for 60 to 90 seconds in a wood-burning oven at a high temperature, almost 500 degrees Celsius, with all its ingredients already assembled?**

Whoever bakes the pizza with all ingredients together is faithful to the identity of Neapolitan pizza, but I prepare pizzas in both ways: some toppings can be added before baking, but I know that others are best added immediately thereafter. I use my dough disc and my selection of ingredients to 'talk' to my customers' palates. Two examples: my 'Margherita Sbagliata' ('Wrong' Margherita) and 'Memento' are different pizzas which represent a certain geographical region. The first was created in 2013 and is topped, after cooking, with a mozzarella base and oil, then decorated with red stripes of cold puréed riccio tomatoes of the Upper Caserta region, and green stripes of basil and oil reduction. The second, instead, is made with creamed Alife onions, chickpeas and raw wild chicory. I shall ask a question: why in Naples do they continue adding basil to pizza before baking, despite knowing that aromatic plants shouldn't be baked? Is it incompetence or merely dogmatic adherence to tradition?

● **Today, Italian cuisine is acclaimed worldwide: is pizza helping that success?**

I recently toured the USA with Carlo Cracco, Massimo Bottura, Corrado Assenza, and Marco Stabile and I was the only *pizzaiolo*: for me, being in such a milieu with my pizza has great significance. This is the correct answer.



Franco Pepe is part of a new generation of pizza makers who have transformed this garnished circle of dough, representing Italy around the world.

The 'revolution' which Pignataro describes and painstakingly reconstructs is that initiated by four or five eminent pizza masters (*pizzaioli*) who changed everything - ingredients, leavening techniques, cooking, and, not least in importance, venue style: less informal and more comfortable.

Their names? The 'pioneer' is undoubtedly Enzo Coccia, now the owner of La Notizia (Via Michelangelo da Caravaggio, on the hill, in Naples), who changed his family restaurant's opening hours in 1994, opening only in the evening and investigating longer leavening times for easier digestibility. Then, in central Italy, Gabriele Bonci in Rome began producing thicker pizza with many toppings, while in the north, the fountainhead of the 'Veneto School' was assuredly Simone Padoan, in San Bonifacio, near Verona. Other Neapolitan pizza masters - invited to participate in exalted cuisine symposia - have experimented in Italy and abroad; they include Gino Sorbillo (from a historic family, operating in Via dei Tribunali), who by now also works in Milan and New York in Times Square; the brothers Francesco and Salvatore Salvo - with their 50 Kalò project - and now **Franco Pepe**, who started in Caiazzo (near Caserta) and was anointed "World's best pizza master" in the "50



Best Pizzas ranking. We know how reliable these trendy rankings can be, but the 55-year-old Pepe has clearly given this

food considerable thought, even attaining international success in Switzerland and China as well as Italy's Lombardy region.

“That doughy disc, adorned by the most varied ingredients, now generates annual profits exceeding 62 billion Euros,”

Today the pizza revolution has assumed manifold forms. Neapolitan pizza is certified by two standards: one was created in 1984 by the Authentic Italian Pizza Association, founded by Antonio Pace in the historic establishment *Ciro a Santa Brigida*; the other, dating from 2008-2010, is the

European TSG recognition: Traditional Speciality Guaranteed. Over time other variants have appeared: the Roman *for-naro* ('baker's') pizza, the fried pizza celebrated by Sophia Loren in *The Gold of Naples*, Bari-style pizza, the *sfincione* of Palermo, the *pizza a metro* ('pizza by the metre') of Vico Equense, and the innumerable *focacce*, especially those from Liguria. In his list, Pignataro also adds *piadine*, but their history is slightly different. Regarding ovens, the more eco-friendly electric oven produced by a Neapolitan company (dome-shaped with a half-moon opening) appears to be overtaking its traditional wood-burning counterpart. So a revolution it may be, but not a 'gourmet' one, explains Franco Pepe in his interview with us: because pizza **must remain a people's dish** and not a dressed-up overpriced roll sold to dupes.

Gigi Padovani

THE MAGAZINE'S CONTENTS AND GRAPHICS ARE BEING OVERHAULED

NEW INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Academicians' contributions to their magazine are not only appreciated but indispensable. To allow **more space for the first portion of the magazine**, and ensure less haphazard and unrelated contents, **the articles will be arranged in the following sections and headings:** ● President's Focus; ● Current Events - Lifestyle - Society; ● Traditions - History; ● Territories - Tourism - Folklore; ● Cuisine - Products - Food Technology; ● Restaurants and Cooks; and ● Health - Safety - Law.

The first part will grow to 40 pages (the other 32 will be dedicated to Academic life: Delegations' activities, convivial gatherings and the Academicians' handbook).

Academicians should therefore consider some essential guidelines ensuring prompt and satisfactory publication of the contributions to which they dedicate passion and effort.

● **Texts of the articles:** the **texts must fit into one of the aforementioned sections**, among which authors may suggest the most suitable. The articles **must be sent electronically, in Word format** (no pdfs), **using the email address redazione@accademia1953.it**.

● **Mere descriptions of conferences** or meetings **will not be published**, while **articles drawn from such events' most interesting talks will be much appreciated**.

● **Text length:** it is important for texts to be between **3500 and 7000 characters long** (including spaces), thereby avoiding cuts which are unpleasant both to inflict and to suffer. Standard computers are capable of counting characters.

● **Timing:** the layout for each magazine issue is **prepared in the month preceding its publication**, to ensure its prompt arrival to subscribers. Those desirous of submitting time-sensitive material should bear this in mind.

● **Publication of articles is at the sole discretion of the Editorial Office**, which of course reserves the right to undertake necessary checks or revisions and to publish according to space availability.

● **The heading "From the Delegations" is renamed "Studies and Meetings by Delegations";** to facilitate readability, **please limit articles to a maximum length of 1500 characters, including spaces**.

Accounts of meetings outside the author's own Delegation will not be published, nor those **held in Academicians' homes** except where they are part of important events. **Please also avoid food and wine lists**, for which the dedicated social event form should be used.

● **Social event forms.** This section is renamed **"Activities and Social Events"**. Forms should be sent to the Secretarial Office (segreteria@accademia1953.it) within 30 days after the event has occurred. **Forms received later than this will be discarded.**

Comments in the forms must not exceed **700 characters** including spaces, to avoid the aforementioned unpleasant cuts.

Under this heading, likewise, **please do not send articles on social events held outside your own Delegation's territory**, or those **held in Academicians' homes**, or in any case occurring anywhere other than restaurants or public venues: these will not be published.



The soup of Matera

The *New York Times* has defined Matera as “Italy’s best-kept secret” – or indeed, if we borrow Carlo Levi’s words upon arriving at Matera station, “the city that wasn’t there”. “I reached a road flanked only on one side by old houses, and on the other by a ravine. In that ravine lay Matera”.

“In the Sassi caves lurks the peasants’ capital, the hidden heart of their ancient civilisation. Whoever sees Matera cannot fail to be impressed, so expressive and poignant is its doleful beauty”. Carlo Levi, Christ Stopped at Eboli.

From the difficult living conditions of the last residents of Sassi, which Levi denounced as “a national shame” to the world, the city itself has rediscovered a new human and social dimension, by knowingly cho-

“The European Capital of Culture for 2019 has a representative dish: crapiata,,

osing to immerse the roots of its future in the centuries-old values of its ancient ways. And precisely through the slogan “Open Future”, Matera announced its candidacy

as a European cultural model, intending to create a city open to culture and art. On the festivities’ opening day, Italian President Sergio Mattarella emphasised the importance of Matera’s recognition for both Italy and Europe, “**which can demonstrably acknowledge and honour its cultures**”. And when we speak of culture, we also speak of cuisine, which **Matera interprets with its representative dish: crapiata.**



More than a memory

by **Marilena Tralli**
Matera Delegate

Tentori has defined crapiata as the symbolic celebration uniting the residents of all the city’s neighbourhoods.

In Matera, the ancient ritual of *crapiata*, probably of Roman origin, took place on the first of August in the Sassi area, whose inhabitants all joined in celebrating the end of the harvest. **The previous evening, the women would soak the remaining pulses from the preceding year, gathering them in one vast cauldron alongside the new wheat, for several hours of open-air cooking.**

Tullio Tentori (1920-2003), among the founders of Italian cultural anthropology, the first university professor of that subject and for a long time Superintendent of the National Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions in Rome, undertook meticulous research about Matera and the lifestyle and

THE CURRENT RECIPE

Ingredients: 500 grammes of combined fresh wheat, chickpeas, borlotti and cannellini beans, dried fava beans (shelled but unpeeled), grass peas, and lentils; 200 grammes of new potatoes with skin, vegetables and aromatic herbs (onion, garlic, celery, carrots, bay leaves, rosemary).

Preparation: soak the pulses overnight in warm water, separating the lentils and the wheat. Drain the water and rinse abundantly before cooking. Boil all the pulses in salt water except the lentils, which must be added half way through alongside the new potatoes, vegetables and aromatic herbs. Cook the wheat separately since it needs more cooking time; then add it to the legumes. Serve with a drizzle of raw olive oil to taste.

socio-cultural conditions of the Sassi area. He wrote a brief work entitled *Matera: More than a memory*, published in the collective study *Sassi and Temples: The location of anthropology between culture and environment*, edited by Lucilla Rami Ceci (Armando Editore, 2003). Tentori writes: “*Crapiata*, as people from Matera well know, is **a symbolic celebration uniting the residents of all the city’s neighbourhoods**: on this occasion, every family contributes parts of their harvest to be boiled in salt water in a communal cauldron. The food thereby obtained is shared”.

“*Crapiata*... was the material and symbolic expression of the mutually sustaining relations between the inhabitants of a neighbourhood. It meant conviviality, which, however, was not confined to the group... *Crapiata* was therefore one element in a strategy which consolidated identity and solidarity within a social micro-system while also mediating some relations between its members and the external world (such as links involving work, health, education, technological progress, emigration and more). The processes barely delineated here with regard to the neighbourhood... appear to be substantially those which must have always characterised the interactions of humans from their remotest origins: a world in which recognition of one’s identity blended with a cooperation favouring common development. I envision, of course, an ideal *crapiata* to be celebrated and experienced within a far broader scope than that briefly described here: a *crapiata* of global conviviality wherein every social group can flourish and grow while sharing those basic resources which permit the true development of all with contributions from all – the birth of a ‘civilisation of conviviality’.”
Tullio Tentori, *Matera: More than a memory*

Traditional *crapiata*

by Ettore Bove
Potenza Academician

Among the dishes which best represent food history in the Sassi area of Matera, there is the soup of dried legumes and cereals called *crapiata*. When turning one’s attention to **this dish, assuredly simple but by no means poor**, one must consider that, at the end of the harvest, the crops gathered were kept in old wooden chests. Between the end of July and the beginning of August, these capacious receptacles were to be emptied of their remaining contents to create space for the new harvest. **The inhabitants**

of Sassi would celebrate this passage between old and new harvest by gathering, in their various neighbourhoods, around fires bearing large cauldrons containing these dry pulses and cereals, flavoured with a few bay leaves. **Rich in symbolic significance, this dish became a communal neighbourhood meal** to be shared not only to celebrate the newly finished harvest but also to attract good auspices for the future harvest. Very little survives of that thanksgiving festivity observed by the farmers of Matera, because

It represents the food history of Sassi.

the Sassi area, now purged of its poor families, has graduated from ‘national shame’ to World Heritage site. The festival is resurrected, at least in its historical significance, in early August in La Martella, the residential scheme built by noted architects over half a century ago to house the former inhabitants of Sassi. In this regard, we must specify that when we talk of ‘traditional *crapiata*’, we mean a soup, seasoned with bay leaves, composed almost exclusively, in approximately equal proportions, of durum wheat (the chief crop of the arid hills around Matera), chickpeas, lentils, dry fava beans, borlotti and cannellini beans, and grass peas. **Only in name does this version survive**, since over time other ingredients and spices were added, such as potato, celery, dried peas, onion and garlic, which have nothing to do with the traditional version. Those who hasten to visit the European Capital of Culture for 2019 cannot help feeling intrigued about this dish, which, through **felicitous combination of tangible and intangible elements**, has contributed for millennia to the history of a civilisation which only recently vanished.





The hog of the sea

by **Giancarlo Saran**

Treviso Academician

Franco Marengi Study Centre

A tale of tuna steaks, scrapings and slurry.



In the historical memory of those inhabiting the southern Adriatic and Tyrrhenian coasts, **the tuna fish has always been the equivalent of the hog:** no part was wasted - though it provided the added value of the *mattanza*, an adventurous, near-epic maritime *corrida* in which tuna was pursued and hoisted aboard. The evolution of tuna processing also profoundly affected food habits. **The prized Atlantic bluefin tuna has been superseded by the more commercial yellowfin tuna**, and among the tins and jars on offer, one's choice of tuna ingredients hardly transcends the fillet. However, the accrued lore capable of rescuing tuna-based culture can provide surprises at the table which are well worth the effort, though some forgotten cuts are found nowadays only in a small region between western Sicily (with Trapani as its capital) and, across the sea, Carloforte

in southern Sardinia. Best-known among the delicacies of what the tuna fishermen's terminology call 'the fifth quarter' is undoubtedly **roe (*bottarga*)**, ideally consisting of Atlantic bluefin tuna eggs extracted from the egg sac and painstakingly processed by salting and pressing between wooden planks, lending it a parallelogram shape. Roe processing was one of the 'rest' activities of tuna fishermen (*tonnaroti*) after the fishing season, and roe was once considered a coveted and precious gift. *Bottarga* is not only delicious but even... virtuous, being rich in omega-3s (which are useful for cardio-vascular health).

“Bottarga is not only delicious, but also rich in omega-3s,”



At the table, it can be found **grated over spaghetti** (with added saffron in the area of Cagliari), but also **thinly sliced**, elevating simple tartlets to warp-speed scrumptiousness levels by no means inferior to caviar. **Some creative chefs have even combined it with beef carpaccio, rhubarb and almond foam.** On the Sardinian coast, seafood pizzas dusted with *bottarga* have been sighted. The eggs can also be found fresh, to adorn pasta, alongside some lemon juice, after light frying in oil and garlic. **And then there is the male counterpart of *bottarga*, the seminal fluid sac known as *lattume* ('milkiness') or *figatello*.** It is flesh-pink, unlike the darker *bottarga*, and its processing yield is low, involving an 80%



average weight loss. However, its delicate flavour and soft consistency become engraved in one's taste memory, such that the *tonnaroti* considered it a sublime delicacy, as recalled by one of the legendary *rais* (tuna-fishing captains) in Favignana, Gioacchino Cataldo, who recently passed away: the iconic face of a vanished world.

“Lattume has a soft consistency and a delicate flavour,”

Its uses are legion: in salad, boiled and sliced, seasoned with lemon, oil and basil, or used over pasta, diced and crispy-fried and then briefly pan-fried with cherry tomatoes. Or **fried and served over salad with tomatoes, red peppers and lemon zest - a typical temptation found in Carloforte**. Or again, 'Venetian-style', a Sicilian dish despite its name: diced and fried, over oil and onion, seasoned with salt and black pepper. In the Cagliari area it is also served grilled.

The path from gonads to head may be brief when chasing the swift-swimming tuna. So we find the cheeks, a particularly tender and flavoursome cut, especially prized in Japan, where it is used in sushi; whereas in Italy, cheeks can be found in a raw appetiser from Catania (seasoned with extra-virgin olive oil and parsley) or pan-fried. The progeny of the samurai, furthermore, go to great lengths to obtain the eyes, boiled and seasoned to taste, and reminiscent of hard-boiled eggs.

Continuing this visceral voyage, **we reach the pulsing heart**. This is the first product of tuna processing. Connoisseurs obtain it as fresh as possible because it tends to dry out quickly. It can be enjoyed thinly sliced in the manner of truffle, by itself seasoned with oil and lemon, or lending more substance to an

endive salad. Remaining among the vital organs, **there are the lungs**, salted and dried in naturally ventilated areas. They also lend flavour to salads, but can also perform well stewed: onion is pan-fried in oil, tomato is added later and lightly cooked, and the lung is added near the end, creating a dense creamy texture. It takes stomach to develop a passion for offal, and if so, one cannot ignore **the stomach itself, known as *belu* in the coastal areas of Sulcis-Iglesiente**. Most versatile, it can be eaten fresh, or dried, salted and thinly sliced, but also smoked. It was traditionally given to tuna fishing crews, in hearty one-pot dishes which satisfied their weary appetites, combined with oil-fried onion and potatoes, this being locally known as ***belu accumudau*** or, in its dictionary definition, **tuna tripe**. From the stomach the journey is brief to the intestine: a delicacy so coveted by devoted connoisseurs that it is reserved well in advance. Also called 'sausage', it can be grilled and then placed in salad. Etiquette and experience suggest preparing it outdoors because of its potent cooking smells. **Rare but delicious is the bone marrow, savoury and reminiscent of iodine**, found in a soup with nasturtium, a flower with a caper-like fragrance. And since we are talking bones, let us consider ***ficazza*, among the most decadent tuna products**. This is one of the

chief delicacies of Taranto and Favignana, where it is also known as **'tuna salame'**. It is in essence an assembly of the various parts remaining on the bones after filleting, ground and stuffed into the intestine; it can last long in the fridge.

“The cheeks are tender and delectable,”

It has many uses: for example, thinly sliced with oil and lemon, though their prime function is to substitute the pork element in carbonara; another use is with *busiate* (a typical pasta of Trapani) and pistachio. The final scrapings left over from the generous 'hog of the sea' can yield the redoubtable *buzzonaglia*, a 'jam session' of leftovers preserved in oil. It also has its devotees which doggedly seek it, serving it to best advantage over spaghetti.

The end credits cannot overlook a cold salad known as *caponada di tonno*, in which a durum wheat biscuit, crumbled, adds substance to a medley of offal with tomato, basil and capers; or the *'tonnaroto appetiser'*, combining *lattume*, fresh eggs and *ficazza*.

So when you find the industrially distributed heavily discounted tuna tins, curiosity will compel you to investigate first-hand, and on location, the manifold wonders which tuna can offer to eager palates.

Giancarlo Saran

VENTRE DI MOGLIO

In 2001, the Academy's Delegation of Albenga and Ponente Ligure notarised and registered the historic recipe for ventre (literally 'abdomen'). It consists of salted dried tuna stomach, cooked in a casserole with Ligurian aromatic herbs, extra-virgin olive oil and Pigato white wine. It brings to mind the legendary years of Sardinian tuna expeditions, for which Ligurian sailors departed from the bay of Alassio. It is recorded that in 1795, twenty brigantines with over a thousand sailors set sail for Sardinia. Alongside their pay, they were rewarded with some portions of the fish: hence this popular, flavoursome and unique dish. In Moglio (in the territory of Alassio) a festival is held in August celebrating this recipe.