



Argonauta

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Wheat, in the double meaning of primary and archaic food good and ritual-symbolic sign, is part of the Mediterranean agricultural culture, of which our fertile and generous country of ears is also a metaphor in Greek mythology, as much as in the readings of the Gospel.

The Greek goddesses Demeter and Persephone (Ceres and Proserpina in Roman mythology), mother and daughter united by a fatal destiny of loss and discovery, are inherent in the cyclical alternation of the seasons and in particular the spring regeneration.

Same is the destiny for wheat, a metaphor of life and death, of the passing of time and of periodic reformation, whose seed from the darkness of the earth announces and faces the mystery of life.

In the pagan celebrations of the Eleusinian mysteries, born in Greece, in Eleusis in the seventh century BC, then extended to Rome, the rape of Persephone/Proserpina is told, expressed in art by the pictorial and sculptural masterpieces of Dante Gabriele Rossetti and Gian Lorenzo Bernini respectively.

“First Ceres moved the clods with the hooked plow, first

gave the world wheat and sweet food, first founded the laws: everything is a gift from Ceres.

“(…) There is a large island, Sicily, which sits above the body of a giant (…)

“There is a lake near the walls of Enna, deep, which is called Pergo, and not even the Caistro hears more swan songs on its waves.

“A large forest crowns the waters from all sides (…)

“In these woods Proserpina, while playing to gather violets and white lilies, and fill the baskets and breasts with childish zeal, trying to overcome her companions, she was immediately seen, loved and kidnapped by Dite, so she rushed into the 'love. The terrified goddess calls her companions and her mother in a sad voice, but more her mother.

“She tore her robe at the top hem, and the gathered flowers fell from the loose robe; and there was so much candor in her young years that even this loss caused the virgin pain.”

(Ovid, The Metamorphoses)

The goddess Ceres was particularly loved by men; protecting the work in the fields, making the fruits ripen and the wheat golden, covering the land with flowers and herbs for all months of the year.

The daughter Proserpina, a blonde and sweet girl, always smiling, beautiful, while collecting flowers on the shores of Lake Pergusa, near Enna, is kidnapped by Dite/Pluto, god of darkness, and becomes his wife and queen of Hades, forced to live underground.

After nine days and nine sleepless nights of dismay, Ceres, the mother, decides to turn to Jupiter begging him to get her daughter back, but without obtaining any result.

Ceres, mad with grief, then decides to cause a great drought ... and after the drought the famine where men and beasts die in large quantities.

Shaken Jupiter sends Mercury to Pluto to order him to return Proserpina to her mother.

Pluto has to obey, but before departing from his beloved Persephone, he offers her to eat the pomegranate, symbol of marriage, engaging her, unbeknownst to him, to Hades forever.

Jupiter, however, moved with compassion, allows Proserpina to spend six months each year together with her mother (Spring and Summer) and the remaining six months together with Pluto.

From the days of the candlestick, the coldest of the year, to

the Spring Equinox, up to the Summer Solstice: about five months during which the wheat is transformed passing from germination, tillering with the formation of lateral shoots, flowering with flower fertilization and the stem raising.

After a lunar cycle of six lunations, the flowering of wheat is expressed, with clustered flowers of white color with reddish reflections. And finally earing, that is the formation of the ears with the consequent ripening, up to the harvest time, variable according to the wheat types and climatic conditions: June for the south, July for the north.

The ancient technique, now surpassed by sophisticated machines guided by satellite instruments, involved harvesting all by hand, with the Messoria Sickle, a curved blade with a wooden handle.

The sheaves, nothing but bundles tied for the first drying, necessary for the wheat to separate more easily from the stem during the subsequent beating phase, changing the fields aspect:



The Abduction of Proserpina

Davide Conti

In the work of Davide Conti the female figure plays a fundamental role. Thanks to her intense beauty, understood in the broadest sense of the term and not dictated by predefined aesthetic canons, thanks to her spiritual power and her charismatic strength, she is often the protagonist and the one who moves the ranks of the stories told in the images created by Davide Conti .

She is the one who, both in the guise of deus/dea ex machina, and as a victim, weaves the precious thread of personal destiny and of the world and draws the complex geometries of life, whether she is Amazon, Salome, siren, Proserpina, ondina o Parca.

Bold geometries the intertwining of bodies, caught in the height of the action, makes it visible and physically tangible, carrying a vocabulary of feelings, senses, and emotions into the physical body.

The touch, the bending of a body, the gaze become meanings that are revealed, breaths that become essence, thanks to an elegant mastery in the management of light and shadows that highlight these subtle relationships, and these links between bodies, souls and destinies.

from the blonde expanse, in a sensual dance in the wind, to the circularly grouped crop in sheaves, in ritual homage to the Solar Circle, for maturing under the rays of the sun.

The beating follows, to separate the ripe wheat from straws and stalks, and screening, to divide once again the grain from the chaff and the good seeds from the empty ones. The grain, thus cleaned, is divided into a part destined for mill grinding, to be transformed into flour, and in part for the subsequent sowing.

From the technique to the symbologies of the ancient mystery cults, where the sieve as an initiatory instrument is revealed by its use itself in the image of a winged and naked divinity, in the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii, who beats an initiate, leaning on the legs of another woman, with a whip, recalling the action of beating the grain, a practice of purification.

The neophyte, like Persephone, is compared to a seed, which turns into a sprout, takes root and 'makes its way' to realize its potential, chasing its own Ego, its own realization, for the entire first phase of its initiatory life.

He thinks of nothing but himself, to become what he feels he can be, until the time comes when, like the ear, he must be reaped.

So the neophyte dies and the initiate is born, the fruit of the goddess who joins the community of brothers by entering a spiritual dimension, more altruistic.

The initiate, like the harvested ear, therefore, offers himself and his seeds, that is, the richness of his personal experience, which he has matured over time and can still perfect.

"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while the men slept, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.

"When the grass sprouted and yielded fruit, the weeds also appeared and the householder's servants came and said to him, 'Lord, did you not sow good seed in your field? How is it, then, that there are tares?'

"He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us to go and get it?'

"But he replied, 'No, lest, by gathering the tares, you uproot the wheat along with them. Let them both grow together until harvest; and at harvest time I will say to the reapers: first gather the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but the wheat, pick it up in my barn'."

Mt 13, 24-30

The man who sows the good seed, the enemy who sows weeds, the servants, the wheat, the weeds, the time of the harvest, the reapers and at last the respective fate of wheat and weeds.

Then Yahshua (Jesus in Hebrew) left the crowd and went into the house; his disciples approached him to say: 'Tell us the parable of the weeds in the field.' And he replied: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world.

"The good seeds are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the daughter of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest represents the end of the world and the reapers are the angels.

"Therefore, as the weeds are gathered and burned

in fire, so will be at the end of the world. The Son of man will send his angels, who will gather all the scandals and all the workers of iniquity from his kingdom and throw them into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's kingdom."

Mt 13, 36-43

The weeds
can get confused
with wheat,
but in due time
the distinction
between the two plants
will become evident

Figurative in purity, it expresses dominion, transmitting, thanks to the legible expressions and positions of each actor, scents of emotions generated by the sensual perception of the senses, overcoming the basic vision suggested by the frontal lobe

