



Argonauta

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ACT IV

(Part 2)

THE STRADIVARI

LOS GIGANTES

The bread from the ground to the table

Bread is not an obvious food, but is, on the contrary, the result of a long production process and a refined food civilization.

The process is not so simple as it is not just a mixture of water and flour, but a process that requires experience and control of capable hands.

From the sowing to the harvesting of the wheat, from the threshing of the grains to their grinding to be converted into flour, from the dough of the flour with water and yeast to baking in the oven. The phenomenon of leavening, which man discovers in nature, but which he succeeds in replicating, is astonishing, and absolutely decisive.

The Egyptians, excellent farmers, were the first true bakers, systematically adopting the leavening technique, adding a piece of dough left over from the day before to the amalgam of flour and water.

A practice that much later will be called natural leavening.

A good leavening is the result of many factors, but the main one is the ability of the dough to form the gluten mesh, that is the structure that holds the starch and the leavening gases and gives the bread the right swelling.

In contact with water and in the presence of the mechanical energy of the dough, the proteins derived from flour (glutenine and gliadina) give rise to gluten or better, to the gluten mesh, a very resistant reticule that gives structure to the dough and makes it extensible, so that it does not break during leavening. This is the strength of the flour: the thicker the mesh, the greater the tenacity of the dough.

If the protein content of the flour is adequate, while the gluten mesh is being formed, at the same time the wheat enzymes (alpha and beta amylase) begin to attack the starches by breaking them

down and transforming them from complex sugars into simple sugars.

If added to the dough, the yeasts begin their action: the various types of microorganisms feed on simple sugars and begin to grow and reproduce.

The sourdough is the yeast par excellence, the eternal yeast of common use in traditional bread making: a simple dough of flour and water, which left for some time in the air, as if by magic, ferments naturally.

This compound is teeming with microorganisms, present both in the flour and in the surrounding environment: a real culture in which, in addition to many different strains of fungi. There are bacteria that participate in fermentation by producing lactic and acetic acid and allowing the baking processes to be enriched, during cooking, of aromatic compounds, giving the bread a varied range of flavours.

At the time of ancient Rome, the inhabitants of Rome still fed on a simple porridge of flour, while in Greece a kind of pastry cooked on the fire was common; only through the Egyptians, master bakers, did the Mediterranean populations learn the art of baking, perfecting the technique even with the construction of ovens.

“It is white that the ethereal snow wins in candour,” the eulogy of Arcestratus of Gela (4th century BC) continues: “Allow yourself the loaves of Thessaly called krimnitas, which the whole world knows as chondrinos. Excellent, too, is the flour bread that is produced for the Athens market, for every mortal; just as good is the bread that is baked from the ovens of Eritrea, where grapes grow abundantly in every delicate, rich moment of the seasons: it will delight you at banquets.”

The baking of bread in Rome was introduced in 168 BC by some slaves captured in Macedonia, after the defeat of King Perseus.

At the same time the grinding activities were perfected, with the art of milling, and at the same time the first shops for sale arose.

During the Roman Empire, bread, which had become the staple food for a large part of the population, was guaranteed to everyone: panis streptipcius, an ancestor of today's pizza (a light mixture of flour, water, milk, oil, lard and pepper, quickly cooked in thin sheets), artologalum (a kind of pastry that served

as an appetizer), panis adipatus (seasoned with pieces of lard and bacon), panis testicius (ancestor of the Romagna piada), prepared and consumed by the legionaries in their camps.

A bread named ador was reserved for the sacrificial offerings, the palatius for the imperial tables and the white and very fine siligineus for those of the rich.

While the black panis plebeius appeared on the poor man's table, gladiators and athletes ate the nutritious canfusaneus, the soldiers' satchel contained the castrensis and the nautilus was on the ships.

With the barbarian invasions in the Middle Ages, bakery slowed down, leaving only the art of bakery to the monasteries. A clear resumption of the use of bread is rediscovered in the Renaissance, a period in which each social category has its own at disposal: the bread of the pope and that of the king, the bread of the knight and that of the esquire.

In the Italy of the 1600s, poverty was rampant, and on the eve of the great shortage of food that preceded the "Manzonian plague" of 1630, an unknown citizen of Parma wrote:

"If a warning were to be held in all the cities there would be no more famine, because undoubtedly God provides food for all, and to those peoples who lack it is due to their lack of it and of bad governance and of their own interest, which many times it is the cause that poverty suffers great disadvantages, and mainly in the provision of bread and forment (the main food of the Almighty God for the sustenance of man) with which poverty is maintained daily without any other comparison."

With this thought, the anonymous author divides the food universe into two categories: the first occupied exclusively by

bread (the main food of the Almighty God for man's sustenance), the second enlarged to include all the rest of the most different foods, called compote (comparison). In the 17th Century unpopular taxes weighed on bread, from the tax for flour to the duty for cooking in the ovens owned by manor property.

Bread has had and still has a great role in history, because the history of bread has always been inextricably intertwined with that of the poorest and most painful part of the populations.

The lack of bread (or the only fear of not having any) is a nightmare that constantly winds through the history of humanity.

The oven of Gruccio, as told by Alessandro Manzoni in his Promessi Sposi, was the shop in Milan, in Corsia dei Servi (today Corso Vittorio Emanuele) which was attacked by the revolting crowd, on St Martin's Day in 1628, against the price of bread.

Immediately after the revocation of the calmieri imposed by Ferrer (the Grand Chancellor of the State of Milan who exercised the office between 1619 and 1635), the crowd knocked down the door and entered the oven, plundering everything he succeeded in, taking away and wasting a large amount of flour.

The rioters abandoned themselves to the senseless destruction of the shop, removing various furnishings and tools and then burn them in a large bonfire in Piazza del Duomo. Renzo also attended the assault, who had just arrived in the city, and who limited himself to observing things from the outside without taking part in the riots.

In the 19th Century the oven was refurbished by Ambrogio Valentini and finally closed in 1919 (later the house was demolished).

"The food of this banquet shall be of fourteen ordered manners, that is, fourteen songs of love, as materialized virtues, which without the present bread had of any obscure shadow, so that to many beauty more than they were able to taste. But this bread, that is, this provision, will be the light which every colour of their judgment will make parvenire."
Dante Alighieri. Convivio

The city as a large canteen (banquet), which offers to the participants (i.e. to those who have a desire to know and know) a difficult dish accompanied by bread, which will facilitate its assimilation.

The songs will correspond to the food, while the various explanatory comments to the bread.

Volcano City

Carlo Ravaoli

The theme of the volcano and the city is part of a cycle of five works centered on the sense of precariousness of the world and on the greatness and power of nature as opposed to the interference of men. Through these works, where urban landscapes and natural landscapes coexist, the artist offers an opportunity for reflection on the emptiness and groundlessness of the claims of men towards nature and its resources.

A city climbs, climbs up a slope to the crater, covering every millimetre of the cone's surface which is dominated by thousands of buildings. The city is apparently empty, but not lifeless, and a suspended atmosphere of calm and tranquillity seems to hover over the houses, defined with precise attention.

But this sense of stillness is contrasted above by the bubbling of the lava whose glows can be glimpsed from the mouth of the crater. And precisely in this encounter between two opposites man stands, capable of challenging the power of nature, trying to harness its power in his favour, but always and in any case at the mercy of it.



Making bread made us human

Literature also sanctions the universality of wheat and bread in our days:

"(...) we will cultivate earth and planets on wheat,
bread to every mouth,
to every man,
everyday
it will come because we sowed it,
why we did it
not for a man
but for everyone (...)."
(Pablo Neruda)

After 10,000 years, Wheat and Bread are still in our fields and on our tables, but in addition to the times, the spaces have also expanded enormously: the few hundred meters that separated the field from the oven have become thousands of kilometres. Wheat is now grown all over the world and bread has not lost its soul, but it certainly risks losing its freshness.

Bread in the Mediterranean Basin

it was a particularly popular cult food.
In Judea, the name of a city, Bethlehem, Beit Lehem in Hebrew, literally means house of bread.
Not surprisingly in Bethlehem would be born whom in the Gospels defines himself as the bread of life.
Jesus offers humanity the gift-forgiveness

of his body transubstantiated into Eucharistic bread.

It is no coincidence that the prayer of Christians puts together the Our Father and daily bread,

among those who do not eat because they have no food and those who waste it because they have too much.

Today, it is more true than ever

what an old Gypsy proverb says:

"While the rich dream their dreams, the poor dreams of bread".

*"Always dear to me was this hermitage hill, and this hedge, which goes so far of the last horizon the gaze excludes. But sitting and looking, take it forever spaces beyond that, and superhuman silence, and very deep stillness in my thoughts I pretend, where for a little while the heart is not afraid. And like the wind I hear rustling among these plants. I that one infinite silence to this voice I am comparing and I remember the eternal, and the dead seasons, and the present and alive, and the sound of her. So, between this infinity my thoughts drown: and shipwreck is sweet for me in this sea."
Giacomo Leopardi*

A state of anguish due to the indefinite presence of which we know nothing, but that supports us with invisible arms, that protects us with a red cloth ... underlying our balance, our permanent centre of gravity: "And the shipwreck is sweet to me in this sea."

Unconscious

Davide Conti

In this work Davide Conti re-elaborates one of the most powerful iconographies from an emotional and symbolic point of view in the history of the figurative arts, the so-called Vesperbild, the image of vespers, defined in this way since it refers to the moment in which the Virgin collects hugging the body of her son taken down from the cross on the evening of Good Friday. In the arms of the mother lies Christ who with his extreme sacrifice is bringing to fulfilment his divine essence, but at the same time, he has become even more human. His flesh, his body, at the very moment of death, became even more earthly to be welcomed in that last sweet embrace in the arms of Mary, in whose pain the passions of every human being are reflected and amplified.

But here the woman, the mother is no longer, replaced by an indefinite presence and instead of the sore face of Mater the void welcomes the observer. And in that void which is, however, presence and at the same time attracts to itself and rejects, suffering and despair no longer resound, but inhabit the unknown, a sense of infinity and unfathomable. And it is precisely to this emptiness that Christ who transfigured himself into the emblem of the perfect synthesis between opposites, the divine and the human become the same, and who represents, according to the Jungian reading, the symbolic expression of that Self, of that totality, in which the "complexio oppositorum," the synthesis of opposites, finds fulfilment precisely.



Man is what he eats

Ludwig Feuerbach

Although today only concrete things are considered true, food, in addition to its nutritional value, is a metaphor for existence and for the symbolic values of symposium, friendship, community gathering.

Reconnecting to the ancient model of Hippocrates, the founder of Western medicine, food establishes that the human being is omnivorous, identifies belonging to a food culture rather than another, selects the social class, recalls the diet received as children: somehow food identifies and shapes the identity.

"A doctor must know what a man is in relation to what he eats, what he drinks and his whole regime of life and what consequences each one derives from." (Hippocrates)

The evils are often those that we have produced, because we do not avoid the avoidable ones, that is, those that come from the food we eat, from the water we drink, from the air we breathe, from the places we live.

For the ancient Greeks there were two food regimes, dairy products and vegetables for the poor, meat for the rich and for the priests who gave this a sacred value, using it for rituals and sacrifices to the gods.

The Romans were the first to introduce a sort of globalized diet, thanks to the import of food from the colonies, which however changed with the collapse of the Empire, returning simple, poor for the poor and rich for the powerful, princes, feudal lords, vassals or men of the Church, who ate so much meat until they died of gout.

It was in the 15th Century that a real Italian cuisine began, a cuisine of excellence compared to the European one. Mantua, Modena and Ferrara were the capitals of the Renaissance cuisine of the Palazzo, sophisticated and accurate, which was so successful in the courts that it became the object, for its opulence and beauty, of 15th and 16th Century paintings.

The most recent diet sees fasting, the ethics of mortification, the distancing of desire from its satisfaction, the application of the sacrifice of the penitent, stripped of all religious connotation, to a diet, which at the distance of desire replaces motivations of social acceptance, the result of precise aesthetic conditioning.

Food globalization intervened by confusing our ancient brain, the emotions, the terminal senses of taste and smell, entangling the memory of the memory. The reminiscences of infantile foods, of the country food, of the pivotal foods of our culture, end up losing the olfactory and gustatory memory in favour of the never satisfied pleasure of the modernity of foods belonging to distant cultures, in search of continuous novelties, in a cyclical one after the other, where the old novelty leaves space to the illusion of the new.

The comparison with inner stability is easy: we are no longer faithful to taste because our brain, our ancient memory, is disoriented. The need for fast, perennial, fleeting change refers to the search for a lost inner stability.

The art of cooking has sensationally passed from the table to television, becoming a media tool, making chefs more important than poets, painters, sculptors, musicians.

In the hypnosis of an anomalous wave of images, in reality we no longer cook and we increasingly resort to frozen foods or precooked foods, diverting our brain to recognize unnatural tastes and sensations.

The nervous system can no longer identify what it likes and what it doesn't.

In this oblivion, however, still 900 million people of the world population still suffer from hunger.

The ship, with its Argonaut, is lost in infinity ...

All humanity is therefore called to abandon itself to that void to that unfathomable that becomes a mirror of the known and unknown essence of the human being. Sergio Antolini, businessman, born in Rimini on January 26, 1957 and raised in Santarcangelo di Romagna, the "family" town, after completing his studies, at the age of 24, he dedicated and controlled, together with his brother Alberto, the business founded by his maternal grandfather, Fernando Paglierani, in 1926, and later developed by his father Primo.

The industrial group is active in the mechatronic sector (production of machines for filling bags), in the construction of milling plants (wheat and corn mills), it extends into food (pasta and flour) and agriculture, with the cultivation of cereals, rice and medicinal plants.

His work leads him to frequent and continuous travels, in five continents, making him a citizen of the world.

Sergio, together with his brother Alberto, hold numerous industrial patents for machines for packaging powders, as well as machinery for grinding wheat.

Last but not least, to them the rediscovery of the stone mill for the revenge of the "forgotten flours," obtained by grinding ancient grains. In 2014, together with his sons Luca and Matteo, with the contemporary reconversion of a location of great historical value, located along the ancient Decumano Massimo of the Roman town of Rimini, he created Augeo, a space dedicated to exploring the different languages of the art scene national and international.

As producer of the video performance "Sulla retta via," created by the artist Filippo Berta, in which a line of people moves along the shore of a deserted beach, that of Rimini, shares the suggestive metaphor of the impossibility of man to find a balance between his own intuitive-emotional nature and the role that society imposes, which conditions and corrupts the individual essence.

In 2015, again as a producer, he promotes on this occasion site-specific works by the duo Guerra de la Paz, who arrived from Miami for their Rimini residence.

In 2019 Sergio supports for charity with the event of art, culture, music, cinema, theatre and dance, in the great "premiere" dedicated to Collodi's puppet, a project coordinated by Amici di Augeo and the Papa Giovanni XXIII Association for sharing among the peoples.

In January 2020 culture and solidarity are again present in Augeo with the show "Cosmic Ballerina," which sees the participation of students from the La Scala Theatre Academy in Milan.

The charity event is in favour of the "Segno" association, a shelter for minors tried by a dramatic past.

Again, in January 2020, he expresses himself with "Snaporaz the journey," of which he is the creator and director, a talk show in homage to "The city of women" by F. Fellini on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the film and in the context of the celebrations of the centenary of the birth of the Rimini director, in the presence of the semiologist Paolo Fabbri, the poet Rosita Copioli and the director Marco Bertozzi.

In December 2020 he contributes to the volume Pantagruel published by the publishing house "Nave di Teseo."