

ER

EMILIA
ROMAGNA

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CULTURA CULTURE
Una cura per la Cultura
A cure for culture

PORTFOLIO PORTFOLIO
Gli anni delle stragi
The years of the massacres



SULLE ALI DEL DRAGONE

L'Emilia-Romagna
vola a Shanghai
per far conoscere
le sue imprese,
le sue università,
la sua cultura.

**ON THE
DRAGON'S
WINGS**

Emilia-Romagna
is flying to Shanghai
to introduce its enterprises,
its universities, its culture.



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grands
trans-
Parents



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ON THE DRAGON’S WINGS

by Gianni Boselli

In order to conquer “The Land of the Dragon”, the Region Emilia-Romagna has been using its soul. Bologna – “Land with a soul” was the title chosen for the exhibition space of the Region Emilia-Romagna at the 2010 Shanghai Expo, within the Italian Pavilion, which was open from September 1st to September 15th. This space interpreted the general theme of the Exhibition: “Better City, better life”, describing a region which has always been characterized by the utmost attention for quality of life in all possible meanings. For the Region Emilia-Romagna (its institutions, universities, the associations which represent entrepreneurs and the companies themselves) the great international exposition was a chance to tighten our collaboration with China, to exchange and share experiences, as well as to strike cooperation agreements. The 2010 Shanghai Expo (which was open for as many as 184 days, from May 1st until October 31st 2010, and which saw the participation of 200 countries) was set up on the two banks of the river Huangpu, connected by a bridge and river ferries. The whole area covered approximately 5,3 square kilometres, divided into the Pudong section on one bank (about 4 square kilometres) and the Puxi section on the other (approximately 1,3 square kilometres): eight collective pavilions, in addition to a museum dedicated to the Expos. The route devised for the region Emilia-Romagna within the Italian Pavilion, in collaboration with the Italian Commission for the Expo and the Confederation of the Italian Industrialists in the Ceramic sector, led visitors to the discovery of the very best of the whole region in various fields: culture, tourism, science, economy and manufacture. All the very best was shown: engines, ceramics, wine, food, textiles and fashion, and most importantly the industry of university knowledge. Each one of these was represented by high definition films which were shown in the region hall, thus making up a virtual route accompanied by reproductions of the traditional porticoes of the region. The virtual journey in the region Emilia-Romagna was marked by a series of activities which spanned the whole duration of the exhibition. Over 30 promotional events, workshops, seminars, bilateral meetings, fairs, exhibitions involved over 200 companies operating in the territory of Emilia-Romagna, 120 of which work in China (90 of them are small- and medium-size enterprises operating as temporary associations of enterprises), thanks to the support they receive from the Region (which has invested over 1,3 million in order to enable those companies to enter China), by means of tenders and other instruments. It should be stressed that another 100 companies from Emilia-Romagna have been present in China for years, over ninety of which operate in the Shanghai area. Particular attention was paid to the living/building sector, one of the top industries in the economy of the region and, more generally, on the increasingly big efforts made by the region Emilia-Romagna in the green economy and green technologies sector, in energy saving and eco-compatibility. The list of partners of the Region in China includes Tongji University. Among the agreements between the Chinese university and the university of Bologna, there is an exchange programme for a bilateral master degree in mechanical engineering. The meeting between the President of the Region and the temporary Vice Chancellor of Tongji University resulted in a tightening of our collaboration. “Land with a soul” started off from some architectural and artistic elements which have always characterized the urban environment in Emilia-Romagna: porticoes and squares. In Emilia-Romagna, squares have historically been the centre and “soul” of the social, cultural and economic life: places where the whole community can meet and discuss. For this reason a portico, graphically processed in order to become immaterial and, therefore, symbolic, accompanies visitors as they discover the very best of Emilia-Romagna

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in various sectors. By means of texts, images and films, visitors go through a sort of virtual journey and can get to know all the main features of Emilia-Romagna: its environmental beauties, its landscapes and architectural attractions, its rich cultural environment, without forgetting a complex entrepreneurial sector, characterized by highly specialized production lines such as engines, wine and food products, fashion, household goods and the building sector. In addition to this, the Shanghai 2010 Expo Bureau chose Bologna as an “excellent case history”: the capital of Emilia-Romagna was represented (in a pavilion of its own) for the whole duration of the Expo. The regional capital was granted an exposition area for the entire duration of the event in the Urban Best Practice Area. The Region supported this presence in a synergy with the Municipality, the Province, the Chamber of Commerce of Bologna, the Fair of Bologna and Promobologna.

A CURE FOR CULTURE

by Franco Giubilei

In the same rooms where, until six years ago, hospitalized patients were hosted, now there is a large anthological exhibition by Daido Moriyama, a photographer who immortalized some moments of the daily life of his home country, Japan, by portraying numerous features of a fragmented reality. A cycle is coming to completion. The building of the former Sant’Agostino Hospital is about to become a real top-quality exhibition area of the town of Modena, thanks to the transformation (still underway) of the eighteenth-century complex into a “new cultural place”, devised along the lines of a project made by a group of prestigious architects, especially Gae Aulenti. Built between 1753 and 1758 by order of Duke Francesco III d’Este, the building which looks out onto the square by the same name was transformed into the structure we can see today between 2007 and 2008, thanks to an investment of 16 million Euros made by the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Modena. Due to its strategic position, at the very beginning of Via

Emilia Centro, and especially due to the architectural structure of the building, the former hospital is perfectly suitable for this new function, as proved by the excellent results of the exhibitions which have been held here so far. Besides hosting the exhibition centre, which will undergo a further restructuring phase and be integrated with conference rooms and didactic classrooms, Sant’Agostino is meant to host a library and the Photography and Image Centre, as well as other cultural services. There are works underway which, in a few years’ time, will make it possible to transfer the Estense University Library and Poletti Civic Library here: this will make it possible to move the books from the two libraries in question to the monumental part of the Sant’Agostino complex. As a consequence, an innovative reading hub will be established, based on the appreciation of materials and enriched by a service model such as to attract a large number of scholars and users.

If this is true for the soon-to-be “library hub”, similar observations can be made for the Photography and Image Centre: once it has been completed, this structure will host a new cultural institution focussing on photography and image, which is being given momentum by the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Modena. A dear idea of the intention to make Sant’Agostino play a key role is given by the preparation of exhibitions such as the current Moriyama retrospective, or the upcoming exhibition called “Contemporary photographs from the Middle East and Africa” – starting on November 27th with the public presentation of the third set of acquisitions of the international contemporary collection of artistic photographs, films and videos edited by Filippo Maggia, who in this case investigates contemporary art in the Middle East and Africa through the photographs and videos of 21 artists from 12 different countries. Along with the gathering of a collection of contemporary photographs and the organization of exhibitions and events according to an intense programme which will also carry on for the next few years, it should be mentioned that, once again with the support of the Fondazione Fotografia, investments are being made in training activities, supporting young artists and collaborating with other Italian and foreign cultural institutions.

After its completion, the Centre will also include an autonomous exhibition space, besides the facilities necessary for didactic and training activities, and will also develop its collaborations with other institutions such as the “Giuseppe Panini” Fotomuseo, which have already started. Among the activities which will be held at Sant’Agostino, the Linguistic Centre for Internationalization is worth mentioning: this structure will provide mainly linguistic services, with a particular emphasis on international mobility of students and researchers, cultural exchanges and work internships. The University of Modena and Reggio Emilia will play a key role in the management of the Centre: both the University Linguistic Centre and other university services will be hosted here. Finally, the former hospital will host commercial businesses, shops, service centres and other support functions which may both support the cultural centre and be able to work autonomously, also on the basis of the position of the architectural complex in question. The presence of these businesses is considered consistent with the idea of creating a place to be visited on a daily basis, for a large number of hours per day, and for a wide range of different purposes. An element which should not escape our attention is the role which will be played by commercial activities in the economic sustainability of the overall management of the former Sant’Agostino Hospital. As regards the activities started in order to establish a new cultural centre, the whole requalification project involving the former hospital was possible thanks to the collaboration between Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio, the Municipality of Modena and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage. This collaboration project resulted in the drafting of a protocol in 2007 and was carried on the following year with work groups which dealt with architectural and town-planning issues, besides the identification of the functions of the new structure. This complex work resulted in some planning guidelines, then the Fondazione applied an open and transparent procedure to choose the planning group in charge of the preliminary and final project: 59 groups, including 20 foreign ones, replied to the public notice issued in July 2009. An assessment commission was established for this purpose. It identified 15 groups which were asked to send a full organization proposal, project idea and an economic quotation. Subsequently, the commission named five groups to the board of directors, which asked two groups to submit some more detailed analyses as well as their replies to some observations. In May 2010, the board unanimously resolved to entrust the project to the group including Gae Aulenti Architetti Associati di Milan, Studio Associato Architetti Doglioni e Daminato, Consorzio Leonardo di Modena. The selection of the winning group was motivated by the quality and cohesion of the designers in it, which combine top-quality skills both in the field of architecture and in engineering, system designing, restoration and librarianship. In addition to this, their architectural and technical solutions match the objectives specified by the preliminary document, with reference to both functional and preservative elements. Finally, their proposals are the best from the point of view of costs and time. As regards the implementation time, one year is necessary for the designing phase, then in 2011 the company which will carry out the works will be selected, whereas construction works should start by the end of 2011. Works will come to an end between the end of 2014 and the beginning of the following year.

DESIGN LIGHTNINGS

by Piera Raimondi

He was not a designer, but he changed Italian design forever. He introduced some elements from the artistic practice into the industrial sector, thus creating furniture and items which affected the fashion of an epoch. Since then, there has not been a single furniture magazine, a single article or publication dealing with the history of design made in Italy which does not contain an image of the **Arco** lamp. Created in 1962, this is a

floor lamp endowed with a simple design, very elegant and archetypal, conceived by the Castiglioni brothers and created by him.

We are speaking about Dino Gavina, an enlightened entrepreneur, a magnificent day-dreamer, who proves that where there is energy, intelligence, intuition and a vision, you can do a lot, even if you live far from the important places, from the metropolises. Indeed, you can shift the centre of attraction, at least momentarily: this is what happened with Bologna and the design sector in the Sixties and Seventies.

Dino Gavina, who passed away in 2007, is now being celebrated by his own town of Bologna with an exhibition-event, **Design lightnings**, at the Mambo museum until 12th December. Many of his creations are shown, real made in Italy icons which describe his entrepreneurial and intellectual life and his relations with many artists and architects – **Lucio Fontana**, **Marcel Duchamp**, **Man Ray**, **Sebastian Matta**, **the Castiglioni brothers**, **Carlo** and **Tobia Scarpa**, who worked with him.

A theatre and visual art lover, in 1948 he founded “Dino Gavina”, a shop-laboratory in the town centre, while in 1950 he made his first product envisaged for mass-production: the **Tripolina** little armchair, with a chromium-plated iron rod in its structure.

At the Triennale exhibition of Milan in 1957 he met **Kazuhide Takahama**, the person in charge of the organization of the Japanese pavilion. That was the start of a friendship and working collaboration which would last for his whole life. Takahama, invited by Gavina, moved to Bologna and designed a wide range of pieces of furniture, many of which are still being produced. In 1960, Gavina founded **Flos**, a company producing lamps, managed on the basis of innovative criteria from the very start, which in addition to **Arco** also boasts another historical item still being produced and which has become a symbol of design made in Italy, namely **Toio** by the Castiglioni brothers. In order to understand the importance of this experience, we should remember that in those years in the lighting sector there was basically no product suitable for a contemporary house, excluding some Scandinavian models. In 1962 he went to New York to meet **Marcel Breuer** and asked him for permission to produce the furniture which the great Hungarian architect had designed in 1924-25 for the **Bauhaus** school, which seemed perfect for mass-production. And the market proved he was right. The **Wassily** armchair, still being produced, is an example of this phase. In the few years after that, Gavina organized some important exhibitions: Lucio Fontana’s metal plates and Marcel Duchamp’s ready-made items, thus expressing his passion for contemporary art. This passion resulted in the “Dadaist” experience of the Centro Duchamp, established in San Lazzaro di Savena in 1969 and inaugurated by Man Ray, who worked there several times. The Centro is a cultural association which meant to host and support artists and researchers in various sectors, whose objective was to detect new forms and production and communication.

Merely two years later, in 1971, Gavina is ready for the **Ultramobile** series, conceived in order to introduce “functional” works of art in house fittings. This is the time of the immortal surrealistic **Traccia** little table by Meret Oppenheim and the **MAgriTTA** armchair by Sebastian Matta. An idea by Enzo Mari, in 1974, resulted in **Metamobile**, a project for large-scale production of furniture with simple rough boards and nails. In 1983 a new enterprise was established, **Simongavina Paradiso terrestre**, producing furniture and fittings for outdoor places. After selling Simon, in 1996, all his activities merged with Paradiso terrestre, until 2007, the year in which he died. In 2008 his memory was awarded the Golden Compass for his career.

Throughout his entrepreneurial experience, with his open and curious mind, Gavina widened the range of cultural references which characterized his production. He was a modern client, a creativity catalyst, who triggered productive energies. From the very start, he understood that everything we see on a daily basis has an aesthetic value, it is civilization, and has an ethic value. ☘

CHARDIN, THE PAINTER OF SILENCE

by Piera Raimondi

“Oh, Chardin! It is not white, red, black that you blend on your palette: it is the very essence of things, it is the air and the light which you pick up with the tip of your brush and fix on the canvas”. These few lines summarize the whole painting of Chardin, his intimate substance. It was the year 1763, the author is philosopher Denis Diderot.

The “great wizard of silent compositions”, the painter of silence reaches Italy, for the first time, with an important monographic exhibition dedicated to him by the town of Ferrara, in cooperation with the Prado Museum. This extraordinary master is described by more than fifty paintings coming from public and private collections from all over the world, selected by Pierre Rosenberg, Chardin’s greatest expert, a member of the Academy of France and a former manager of the Louvre museum. A meditative and intimate painter, Chardin has not been very popular in Italy, therefore this exhibition is a unique chance to meet him. “Rather short, but strong and muscular”, Jean Siméon Chardin was born in Paris in 1699, in a milieu of artisans, his father being a billiard-table maker.

Jean Siméon soon became an apprentice in the atelier of a painter specialized in historical subjects. His training took place outside the traditional schools: neither did he study at the Académie Royale, nor did he travel to Italy in order to see the great masters of the past. Young Chardin has some clear ideas, he prefers direct observation of reality rather than studying classical painting. In order to do so, there is no need to leave Paris; except for some quick trips to Versailles and Fontainebleu, apparently Jean never left his home town. His relish for reality led him, from the very start, to still nature, a genre which at that time was considered to be minor and, therefore, not very well paid.

At that time, around the year 1721, shortly after Watteau’s and Louis XIV’s deaths, Paris was conquered, for the last time, by Italian painting, particularly by Venetian artists like Ricci and Pellegrini, and the most fashionable subjects are historical and mythological ones. Pictures are paid according to the subject: still nature is lowest, followed by genre painting, portraits and finally historical and mythological pictures. Painting what you can see, what is real was considered to be easier. But our Chardin cannot paint what is not under his eyes, he does not make any preparation drawings, he prepares his compositions in his atelier and paints still nature using daily objects arranged on wooden boards on neutral backgrounds, he reproduces their shapes, their range of materials, studies their changing colours and light reflections. Those were the years when he produced such masterpieces as *Dead hare with a gunpowder bag and a game-bag* (1728), dominated by a sense of balance determined by an abstract, suspended background, and *The ruy-fish* (1726), portraying an animal hanging and brutally ripped. This last work, together with *The buffer* (1728) allowed Chardin to enter the Académie Royale as an animal and fruit painter. The commission accepted the painter the day after these two pictures were exhibited, because of their “superb” colours and the extraordinary way he represented light, which “creates some magical effects”, so that some of the assessors mistook them for Flemish pictures of the previous century. Despite his original training, Chardin soon became a protagonist in the Parisian artistic scenario, where he earned a living with his pictures, but more importantly with their printed reproductions, which enjoyed great popular success, of which he owned the rights.

In the following decade, that is in the 1730s, Chardin decided to step up in the hierarchy of genres and carried out some research into the human body, portrayed

in home environments while simple daily activities are being carried out. This is the heart of the eighteenth century and Paris is the centre of a flamboyant, noisy, shining world, but you should forget the rustle of Fragonard silk or the eroticism of voluptuous Dianas or Minervas. Chardin’s world is a chaste, pure world, dominated by silence and contemplation. The world of Chardin’s humans is a serious, calm, hard-working one. In his paintings there are no anecdotes, all ornaments are banned, his very refined painting is the poetry of daily life, a means to celebrate, in a sensitive way, the gestures of common people, whom Chardin turns into the protagonists of his epoch. This is the reason why he painted *Benedicite* (1740), *The scullery maid* (1738), *The errand boy* (1735-36), *A young apprentice drawing* (1733-34). This last work opens the section of the exhibition dedicated to genre paintings. In this little picture, Chardin lets us into a painter’s atelier, where a young apprentice is sitting on the floor, with his back bent over a sheet, drawing. The bare room, the young boy’s posture and even the hole in his coat immediately let us know how hard and even devoid of satisfaction (including from an economic point of view) it is to go through the years of training which are fundamental to acquire the technical skills necessary to become a good artist.

Canvases in this period still express the tenderness with which the artist looks at the subjects he represents. One of Chardin’s favourite themes is Parisian middle-class children’s games, like in *Soup bubbles* or in *A girl playing badminton*. The first painting, three versions of which can be admired at the exhibition, portrays one of Chardin’s most common subjects and exemplifies his extraordinary sensitivity in representing youth. There is some magic in the child rising on his tiptoes to watch a soup bubble which an older child is making. In the latter painting, dated 1737, the simple composition and the tender colours match the girl’s sweet concentration.

At the end of the Thirties, Chardin newly started painting still natures, focussing even more on the changes of light effects on objects and figures. His touch becomes even more painstaking, shapes are animated by vibrant strokes which almost decompose matter and which would exert such a deep influence on modern artists Braque, Cézanne, Morandi. *Necessaire for a smoker* (c. 1757) and the extraordinary *Bunch of flowers* (c.1755), some of the greatest achievements of his art, date back to this period. His exceptionally fresh execution and the daring range of colours of the *Bunch of flowers* seem totally original if compared with the works of his contemporaries.

Besides daily objects, hunting trophies, the dead animals which had marked his career about twenty years earlier, reappear. The return of these themes reaches intensely emotional peaks, for instance in *Two dead rabbits with a game-bag and a gunpowder bag* (c.1755), in which the bodies of two dead rabbits express a painful feeling. Still natures in the Sixties, like *Wild strawberry basket* (c. 1761) and *Service table* (1763) also seem to be like small universes, to be explored as you are seduced by the reflections of the fruits on the glass and water. Worlds in which you breathe peace and silence.

Towards 1770, some health problems forced Chardin to slow down his activities. Being affected by a disease which would progressively cause him to lose his sight, Chardin abandoned oil colours, whole pigments and binders made him suffer terribly, and he started working with pastel crayons.

With this technique, he made expression studies portraying young people, the elderly, himself and his second wife, Françoise-Marguerite Pouget, who had been his model for his last genre pictures. He proved still able to produce some masterpieces, like *Portrait of a young man* (1777), his last painting. At the age of 80, on 6th December 1779, Chardin passed away in his house at the Louvre, where he had worked and lived since 1752, thanks to a privilege granted to him by Louis XV, who greatly admired him. ☘

FRANCESCO’S ROOTS

by Francesco Guccini

Many times I have wondered if I would still like those delicious things I used to eat at the mill of my grandparents on my father’s side (for instance, roast rabbit cooked in lard on a cheap stove, fried mushrooms, homemade pork ham cut with a hand knife, sausage in oil, Sardinian cheese, homemade bread baked in a wood-burning oven once a week, tortellini at Christmas and many more).

I cannot answer, since everything is shrouded by a sort of nostalgia, which is nostalgia for my childhood and boyhood, the daily life of the first five years of my life and for the Christmases, Easters and the long, extraordinary months of the subsequent summer holidays.

Because the mill, MY mill, my great-grandfather Francesco’s (called Chicón) mill was, and still is, despite the fact that it does not work anymore, a mythical place. It is an isolated building, which was expanded from the original unit by means of the additions of various buildings for various purposes: a stable for a horse or donkey and a small stall for a pig; upstairs, a hayloft (called “cavanna”); next to it a hen house (“gallinaio”); some small stalls for rabbits (“conili”); a large room with various tools and various functions and a knife-sharpening system. You would cross a street (now an asphalt street) and you would find the well (inside the house, of course, there was no running water); around it you would find the vegetable gardens where you would get salad, tomatoes (which we used to make purée, at the end of the summer), onions, peas, parsley, basil, as well as potatoes, corn and bean fields, some more fields where you could find cherry trees (we would make cherry jam), apple trees (in winter, heaps of apples would perfume our bedrooms), pear trees, walnut trees, plum trees and fig trees. Leaning on the wall, there were some Isabella grapes (“vidana” (pergolas). In the neighbouring farm, the farmer would grow wheat; two cows would give us two flasks of milk every day, with its cream we would make a butter pat (but my grandparents preferred to cook with oil, the Tuscan way). In the river there were fish (even shrimps, my father said, but after a dam was built upstream in the Twenties, they disappeared). In the chestnut wood there were chestnuts and marrons, the woods would give us burning wood and faggots for the oven and for lighting the chimney (because, of course, there was no heating); in the right season, in the woods you would find mushrooms, edible boletus (“ciupadelli”), royal agarics (“cocchi”, but you cannot find them anymore, because the woods are dirty), black nightshades (“rissule”), chanterelles, strawberries (“frole”), blueberries (“pig-natini”). In the late summer, you would see huge baskets of beans and large pole frames (“bàggiolo”) shining due to the yellow colour of ears of corn drying in the sun. They would buy oil, dry pasta (they would make fresh pasta at home) and wine, Tuscan wine for every day consumption and some bottles of sparkling Trebbiano for holiday desserts. Each Saturday we would go to the butcher’s (on foot, it was one kilometre away, but at that time you would mostly travel on foot) in order to buy some meat for the broth and Sunday’s boiled meat (I only tasted beef-steaks and minute steaks when I was an adult).

Every now and then, they would buy a piece of Sardinian cheese (a habit that seasonal workers took on in Sardinia when they went there to make charcoal), some salted sardines which, having removed its bones and washed it in water and vinegar, would be placed in a glass container, in layers, with oil, parsley, oregano (you could find bushes of it along the river) and early garlic. Sometimes a bit of chocolate (“for the boy”, that was me); for Christmas, some oranges and some tangerines would also appear.

It was a self-sufficient world. There was no radio (only in the mid-Fifties did my parents give my grandparents a small radio they had won from Cooperativa Postele-

grafonici) and, naturally, there had never been a television set. There were few lights, none around, few on the mountains. Obviously, there was no toilet, but at least there was a latrine, a round hole in the middle of a marble plate leading straight to a black well; it was in the house, even if using it during cold seasons, for a person like me who had already got used to the comfort of living in town, was quite hard.

In summer, we would go to the river. Excluding the terrible winter cold (except in the kitchen), when sometimes the water would freeze in the jars in our bedrooms (but you get used to anything), a chilling weather partially improved by embers-fed bed-warmers or a brick warmed in the chimney or boiling water poured into a cannonball case left by the Americans which was sealed, covered with a piece of cloth and put under the blanket, and the snowfalls which forced you to shovel off the snow in order to reach the town, it was a perfect world. A self-sufficient, autonomous world. The mill I saw is a four-storey building; five, if we count the mysterious and dark attic under the roof, the “dead place”. You start from the basement; here, you should forget the type of mill with a vertical wheel outside like in commercials: the millstone was activated by a horizontal wheel which, being pushed by water (taking advantage of the water drop from above and the pressure of a pipe), whirled like a top anticlockwise and made a truncate cone wooden element surrounding an iron board nailed to the mobile millstone (the millstone at the bottom is fixed) upstairs, on the floor of the actual mill and millstones, where wide and deep stone boxes collected the flour. Please, be satisfied with these few words and these probably unclear technical explanations.

It was an old-fashioned complex, a world which would survive like this until the late Fifties. This watermill in the Pistoia mountains was a house of cards, an unlikely structure held together by means of poor technical measures, sometimes brilliant in their simplicity, and yet it worked, and had been working that way for centuries. We would go there to grind, depending on the season, wheat, corn, “black stuff” (minor cereals and animal foodstuff). In the late Autumn and throughout the winter, it was chestnut time. People would come even from distant towns, riding their mules or donkeys (and once a great-aunt of mine was kicked in her leg by a mule). Animals would also enter the large hall, the “entrance hall”, and people would put down their bags full of stuff on the “basculla”, the wide scales on which I was regularly weighed every time I would go back there on holiday. On a piece of wall on the right side of the stairs which led upstairs, they would mark my height as I grew, from the first time, in May 1945, at the eve of the adventurous trip to Carpi to find some news about our relatives living on the plain, until the late Fifties. They would also come on foot, with such loads that nowadays seem legendary, even as heavy as one hundred kilos, one hundred and fifty kilos, brought here from distant and isolated areas which are still hard to reach on foot today. Heavy burdens to be carried down to the mill and then, after the grinding, to be taken back up on the mountains. In summer, exhausted, they would wipe their sweat, sit down and rest, they would chat and tell each other stories heard in town and in neighbouring towns, gossip, with in the background the noise of the millstones and the rhythmic, harsh sound of the “battola”, which would beat the rotating millstone board every round and pass on the vibration to an inclined wooden element, thus making material to be milled fall down into the round hole of the millstone on top. In winter, they would go to the kitchen and sit beside the chimney to warm up. Some people, those who came from farthest places, accepted some soup. Their house was always full of people, voices, movements. Every now and then, a strange person dressed in rags would come. He would not enter, he would stop on the threshold and start saying some prayers. “Ai è al povretto!” (“The beggar is here!”) is the sentence you would here in the house. One of the women would get a loaf of bread and give it to him. He would put it in his

knapsack, finish his prayer, thank and leave. I never found out where he came from, who he was. But what kind of world was it? It is hard to say today, you have the impression that you are telling stories lost in time, in a rural civilization, at that time merely aiming to survive, by now forgotten, of Middle Ages which were partially still there, even if there were some electrical lights, but used very little in order to save as much money as possible (how many times I was reproached because I would read in bed at night! “A letto a s’va per dormire, mia per legg’re!”, “You go to bed to sleep, not to read!”). With an ethics of physical work and fatigue which would be passed down unto you, and which for a certain time was my own. It was important to work from sunrise to sunset, it was important to “carry” a weight, spade a whole plant, saw with a pitchfork (called “frina”) a field of liverwort, put it into the “gòrgola” (a big, large-meshed wicker basket) or in the “net” (a pole and rope system which would tighten to form a large sausage), put it on your head and shoulders and take then to the “cavanna”. It was important to be able to make a “balzo”, that is to fold an old jacket in order to turn it into a sort of pillow to protect your nape, shoulders and back from the weight you would carry. It was important to wear a white shirt on Sundays in the summer, “inaugurate” a dress on Easter day, if you could afford it. It was important to woo just one girl, marry her and live with her all your life, till death do us part. There were a hundred more important things, all lost and forgotten in the mists of time. And my grandparents, I must admit, were well-off people.

The watermill, obviously, needed that. At a short distance there flowed (and still flows, although at a much lower level now) the stream Limentra (which we called “the river”), which flows into the river Reno one kilometre downstream, at Ponte della Venturina, in a place quite rightly called “The two rivers”. The noise a flowing river makes is incredible; even in summer, when it flows calm and peaceful, it keeps people up for a few nights, if they are not used to it. Now that I do not live at the mill anymore, but half a kilometre upstream, on the left bank, sometimes I open the window upstairs and in the silence of a Pavanese night, I can clearly hear it flow. In winter it is often in full spate and its noise is deafening, especially due to rocks, including big boulders, which are carried by the stream and hit each other. It was often so swollen that it touched the house, lying several metres from the riverbed. Once, in 1938 (but I was told this story) a very heavy rainfall resulted in broken tree trunks and branches being carried by the river and blocking the dam discharge galleries. As a consequence, the water burst the river banks (an expression I learnt a long time before it was used on television to report about recent disasters) and a landslide hit the house, sweeping away part of it, the hen house, destroying the floor in two living rooms, flooding wheat and flour sacks, filling the millstones with rocks and mud, carrying away half of the bridge which stood two hundred metres downstream, leaving the dead bodies of many animals and a young woman in the surrounding muddy fields. A disaster, a tragedy which, although I did not live through it personally, mysteriously I keep on seeing in my dreams.

FEASTING WITH PORK, BUMPING PIGS OFF

by Leonetta Corsi

The popular feast of Saint Bartholomew is celebrated in Bologna on August 24th, when bread, wine and roast sucking pig are distributed for free. Celebrated again in 2002, this has been a commemoration of the **Festa della Porchetta (roast sucking pig feast)** which took place in town for over five centuries, until 1796; some say it meant to celebrate the arrival in Bologna of King Enzo, Frederick II's beloved son, who was captured by the troops of the free Municipality. Enzo was

captured in 1249 and the event was allegedly celebrated by throwing to the crowd a large roast pig, along with some birds, game, bread, salamis, sweets, cheeses, gold and silver coins. From that moment in Piazza Maggiore in Bologna, on Saint Bartholomew's day, the whole town performs, in suitably arranged areas, theatrical shows, horse races, jousts, circus attractions and fire-works. Recent studies, however, have questioned the authenticity of this origin, as very tight similarities have been found between the Bolognese tradition and some archaic rituals which marked the end of summer and announced the beginning of the rainy season.

You can discover much more about this event in the book called **La Festa della Porchetta a Bologna. Fra tradizione popolare, arte e pubblico spettacolo**, edited by Umberto Leotti and Marinella Pigozzi (Edizioni Tecnostampa, 2010), presented some days ago at ArteLibro.

Pigs and pig culture are also dealt with in another short book, available these days, called **Maiàli si nasce, salami si diventa** (Pendragon editore, 2010), “almost a small encyclopaedia of the world of swine”. Written in cooperation by journalist Gabriele Cremonini and world famous Bolognese delicatessen seller Giovanni Tamburini, this book is rich in curiosities, anecdotes, stories, tales and recipes: “An act of justice and gratefulness for pigs”, the authors say. The publisher has kindly allowed us to let you read a passage from the book, called **Bumping pigs off**, and to give you a refined recipe for a pork dish (this goes without saying).

Bumping pigs off (from Gabriele Cremonini and Giovanni Tamburini, "Maiàli si nasce. Salami si diventa")

For those who had a pig and lived in the countryside or on the mountains, pigs were traditionally slaughtered once a year, between December and January, for this reason, when someone was not very talkative, people would say: “*He only speaks when they kill the pig*”. The date of start of the pig slaughtering season was Saint Andrew's day (30th November): “*On Saint Andrew's Day the small pig we slay*”, whereas the final one was Saint Anthony's Day (17th January). The pig was taken from the pigsty in the early morning, having prepared some hot water, the tackle and having sharpened the knives necessary to slaughter it. Its snout was tied (in a very prudent way, because an angry animal can bite so fiercely as to pluck off an arm!), held still by two sturdy men, the pig was killed, its blood was drained, then he was washed and *scraped*, his entrails were removed and carefully selected. This operation – so some tales narrate – was often carried out in such a way as to make the animal suffer as much as possible, because it was believed that the more a pig screeched, the better its blood was, and blood was a fundamental ingredient in blood pudding (but also to clean its meat from the blood and make it easier to store).

Nothing would be thrown away: the meat, depending on the part of the body, was used to make ham, *coppa* (pork neck salami), salamis, sausages, bacon and *zampone* (stuffed pig's trotter); the tongue was pickled (whereas in Monghidoro it was and still is put into guts just like a salami); the bones were used to make broth; the bristles were given to the shoe repairer and the offal (and quite often the chops) was eaten straight away or offered to some esteemed guest, like the priest, the veterinarian or the landowner.

In addition to a large number of sayings about pigs and pig slaughter, there are also many superstitions. For instance, you should not kill them in the presence of women who are undergoing their bleeding days or pronounce any word of sympathy or their agony will be prolonged. **You should not slaughter a pig on a Friday, on the 7th, 13th or 17th day of the month**, or in the first few days after the new moon, otherwise the meat will be poor and tend to go bad easily. And when a pig is slaughtered, children should stay in bed, with their head under their blankets.

In Romagna, in order to heal it from the most common

diseases, especially those attributed to the **evil eye**, a piece of its ear or tail was cut off, boiled and thrown into the pigsty. Finally, drinking water instead of wine when you eat pork meat is believed to bring bad luck.

Pork chine with pomegranate

Ingredients (for 4 people): 600 g of chine of pork, leek, one glass of beer, 2 pomegranates, 2 spoonfuls of extra virgin olive oil, salt and pepper.

Preparation: cut the sleek into thin pieces and slightly fry it in oil in a large saucepan. The put the chine of pork in it, add salt and pepper and brown it. Pour a glass of beer (or white wine, if you prefer) on top of it and cook over a moderate flame for 30 minutes, having put a lid on the saucepan. Add the pomegranate grains and cook for another 20 minutes. Serve hot. 🍷

A RECKLESS LIFE

by Claudio Bacilieri

“*My perilous and sports life*”: this is the way Alfredo Giovannini meant to entitle the autobiographical book of his youth, written in pencil on squared paper in 1942-43. Carefully stored by his granddaughter Mirella, his diary was transcribed, with Ivan Rossi's help, and published in 2006 with the title “*Polvere di strada*” (Road dust). The title refers to the dust collected on the road, filtered through holed newspaper pages and sold to Avignon as a powerful insecticide. This is one of the many episodes which characterized Alfredo Giovannini's reckless life, which lasted a hundred years and was marked by emigration, escapes, departures, expedients, a thousand different jobs, war, prison, a passion for sports and women.

An adventurous life which started in Lugo di Romagna, a town in the province of Ravenna, where Giovannini was born in 1890. He was a precarious child: when his schoolteacher hit him with an iron ruler, he threw an ink bottle at him. Result: immediate expulsion from school, his education thus stopped in third grade. Bad crowds did the rest: you start by stealing some fruits, then you sometimes spend the night not at home, sleeping under the wooden seats of the racetrack, you travel in goods trains without paying, eventually you force the locks of charity boxes in a friars' convent in Ravenna. But so far, these actions are just childish things, which only resulted in young Alfredo being beaten by his father, the jailor of Lugo.

In order to avoid getting bored, between a job as a messenger and one as an errand boy, he joined two friends who stole a piece of cloth from a shop. This is when he was put in jail for the first time, for 40 days. In July 1906 he was newly sentenced to seven months in prison, but he was innocent: he had accepted an invitation to lunch and a pair of new shoes from two friends, without knowing that they had been paid for with stolen money. In order to escape a complex situation, in February 1907 Giovannini decided to follow a team of workers heading to Germany. He left Lugo under 70 cm of snow, by train he reached Burbach, in Saarland, where he worked in the railway maintenance sector for some months. Having dropped shovel and pick, he moved to Friedrichsthal, where he worked as an errand boy in a baker's shop managed by some people from Cesena. He changed towns and jobs various times, until he reached Lugano and fell in love with it. The Swiss town was full of immigrants from Romagna, ready to help him. But every job was short-lived: confectioner, mason, waiter, and let us not forget magic tricks, which later on would enable him to make ends meet.

In the pension where he lived, Giovannini had fun and, in his spare time, he would make a nut or egg disappear, by performing some self-taught tricks. A Greek man saw him and proposed to start a collaboration: he would be his manager, while Giovannini would be a magician. Two days later they started touring hotels in Lugano and Mendrisio, with a repertoire which earned them

quite a lot of money. In Lugano, Giovannini met Pierina, whom he fell in love with, and who quite soon would give him a child. When the Greek left, once again he was on the road, without a job. Fortunately, he met a man from Imola, who suggested he take part in a foot race in town. Alfredo, who would train in Germany after work, jogging with young Germans, accepted. He performed well and eight days later won the 1908-09 Lugano championship, along with a gold medal and a champion scarf. He repeated the feat the following week, winning the 16km marathon of Mendrisio, while at the Luino one (20 km) he ranked second after the Italian champion of that year. This is how his career as an athlete started, while life kept on being tough: “I would get by as well as I could”, he wrote in his diary. “To him sports – says his granddaughter Mirella – meant running, escaping, leaving, arriving, freedom, life. For over a hundred years”.

In Lugano, his first son was born. In order to feed his family, Giovannini moved to Gallarate, where he found a job in a factory, at the cotton dryer. He soon lost his job, due to his sports events; then from Milan, with Pierina and the child, he went back to Lugo, right on time to found the Club Sportivo Romagnolo, run and win a large number of competitions, have a second child called Custode, work in an electric workshop and for a telephone company. Finally, in 1910, he left the town to start his military service.

He was sent to Ventimiglia, to the 1st Bersaglieri Regiment. The barracks are surrounded by a wall on a diff dropping sheer to the sea, which he would climb every evening to pay a visit to “a little Geman girl who worked at the Grand Hotel” and a tailor: “I had a wife and two children, that is true – he wrote – but I was young, I was only twenty, and you need to enjoy your life (...) . A young man's pastimes and some delicious hours in the shadow of the night in the avenues along the sea”. France was round the corner: a sergeant's harassments led Giovannini and another *bersagliere* to escape towards freedom. A little thought about wife and children, the German girl and the tailor, and off they went, on the first train which could take them beyond the border. The two deserters reached Nice in the heart of the carnival. At the end of the celebrations, having no money in their pockets, they had to find a way to survive. In Avignon they sold 70 bags of road dust, pretending it was anti-lice powder. They were hired in an amusement park: they assembled and disassembled the slides. Giovannini also worked as a huckster, the French laughed at hearing him rant in their language. In Nîmes he met Marinette, “the most beautiful woman I had ever conquered”. They met “in the soft light of street lamps” and loved each other in her house. Alfredo followed the amusement park to Marseille, where they put up the tents of the American Park. On Sundays, he would go to the velodrome and compete with the white and blue shirt of Marseille, where he pinned, on his heart, a little Italian flag. From 1911 to 1914 he competed all over France, winning many races. At Béziers he was beaten by merely one metre by the world champion, in Marseille he qualified to the final and took part in the Paris competition “Complete Athlete”, which would never take place because the war broke out. Meanwhile, he assembled and disassembled slides in southern France. He went back to Marinette with a sports newspaper showing a 20cm picture of him, which she cut out and framed. Marinette lived with her husband and a little girl, who was actually Alfredo's, without her husband knowing it.

Alfredo invited Pierina to Marseille and found her a job in a beer company. He kept on leading a wandering life in search of a job, which would invariably last too little, thus forcing him to leave again and look for another destination. He worked in a tile factory, then as a painter in Lyon, where he ran for Lyon Olympique Universitaire, he newly betrayed Pierina and managed a bar-restaurant, without any success.

The war came, the Germans marched to Paris, havoc reigned. In the port of Marseille, Alfredo put Pierina on a ship to Genoa: he wanted her to reach her rela-

tives in the province of Mantua. Eight days later, he also chose to go back to Italy, although he was a deserter. Upon suggestion from his father, he handed himself over to the 6th Bersaglieri Regiment in Bologna. He was sent to the 7th Regiment, based in Brescia, from where he escaped, leaving his military uniform behind and only wearing shorts, a shirt and jogging shoes. He ran through the fields to Montichiari, then he paid a visit to Pierina, whom he would never see again (she died in January 1915, far from her children as well), reached Parma, slept under the stars, carried on by means of some tricks, paying attention never to come across the police, hopped on a tram in Milan, ran to Como and, from there, crossed the border to Switzerland, having received some clean clothes from his brother, who was serving in the army in Como.

In Lugano he tasted freedom again. But hotels were closed, there was no work, he had to move to Genève where, at the French consulate, he took a decision: he enlisted in the Garibaldina Legion as a volunteer, wearing Garibaldi's red shirt under the Foreign Legion uniform. When the legion was terminated, he went back to Marseille, where he found a job as a painter and glass-maker. He made some new conquests: a divorced woman, a refugee, a cook.

When Italy joined the war, Giovannini, in May 1915, went back home. Having enlisted as a *bersagliere* again, he refused to be promoted as a corporal and, for this reason, he was sent to prison in Venice. Sent to the Karst, he could never stand discipline and was imprisoned again for running in the fields wearing a costume. At Varmo, in the region Friuli, he always managed to spend the night outside with a girl or widow and come back to prison in the morning, by jumping over walls or from windows. One day, as he was eating with some other soldiers in a field, he was almost touched by some cannonballs. On that day he decided to leave the front and to go back and see his family again “before dying”. He crossed trenches, rivers and barbed wire, hopped on goods trains, reached Lugo in an adventurous way, where he hugged his family again but only stayed for three hours, before escaping in the country again. The following day he was arrested and the following week he was tried, sentenced to life imprisonment, degraded and put in jail at Palmanova. While the Italian army was retreating along the river Piave, he was transferred from prison to prison, before being sent to Sardinia, where he was tried again for desertion and sentenced to 28 years' imprisonment and forced to go back to the front immediately. His diary stops here. Having returned to his civil life, Giovannini enhanced his skills as a magician, working side by side with his new wife, Genoveffa. Magnetism, mind reading, “talking death”: he would invent anything in his tours in Italy, Switzerland and France, in order to get by. Meanwhile, he carried on with his sports career, until 1928. He achieved his last victory, at the age of 38, in a 75-metre hurdles race in Forti, in the Romagna championships. Giovannini's last transformation made him become a wandering photographer. He started taking pictures towards the mid-Twenties, when he immortalized parties, weddings, people and meeting places in towns, political and sports events. He particularly liked to portray common people, daily life. In summer he would move to Cervia on the Romagna coast, where it was easier to earn money. His granddaughter Mirella remembers that in Cervia in the Sixties, before dinner, he would go to the darkroom to develop photographs. During the day he would work as a photographer on the beach, in the evening he would perform magic shows at summer camps. In his adventurous and wandering life, he undoubtedly had fun. Indeed, he lived for as long as a hundred years. 🍷

FROM RICE TO COFFEE

by Claudio Bacilieri

Five towns in the Bologna plain: a small community north-east of Bologna, in the period between 1880 and 1912. **Castel Maggiore** and **Castenaso**, closer to the

city and hosting some factories and small firms, managed to spare themselves from the destiny which affected **Budrio**, **Medicina** and **Molinella**, where the agricultural crisis entailed the exodus of over two thousand people towards the Americas. Although the Bologna plain was a fertile land, farmers were hungry. On 11th June 1878, seven hundred farm labourers and rice weeders protested in front of the Molinella municipal palace, shouting: “Bread and work!”. This first strike was followed by some others, caused by the fall of the price of rice, the “white gold” which, from the beginning of that century, had made this land rich and shaped its landscape, characterized by then by a well-ordered network of canals and drains.

The shrinking of rice fields made thousands of rice-field workers unemployed, and municipalities had to take measures, resorting to their scanty financial resources to distribute food to the poorest families. In Molinella, there were continuous manifestations, which were also attended by a large number of women: very long strikes, invariably interrupted by the arrival of the police. The army was controlling the town, as many as ten thousand soldiers were deployed here.

Meanwhile, emigration officials were touring the countryside looking for cheap labour to send to America. They distributed propaganda leaflets which promised heaven in Brazil. The first mass exodus from Molinella took place in October 1888: 215 people – almost all farm labourers and their families – headed to the province of Sao Paulo.

Departures reached their apex in the years 1890-95. In 1895, over 400 people left for Brazil from Budrio, the same number of people from Molinella and 331 from Medicina. Brazil and Argentina were the main destinations, followed by the United States, particularly for people from Medicina. In Brazil, the people of Budrio and Molinella headed to the state of Minas Gerais, whereas those of Medicina chose Sao Paulo. The destination was determined by the “official calls” which granted a free journey or by the frequent chain of migration: those who had already migrated and had settled down, somehow, invited their family members and fellow townspeople to come over.

The book by researcher Lorenza Servetti called “*Trenta giorni di nave a vapore. Storie di emigrazione dalla Valle dell'Idice* (1880-1922)” (Thirty days on a stea mship: emigration stories from the valley of the river Idice (1880-1922) has reconstructed this diaspora by inspecting municipal and church archives, the prefecture and police headquarters records, landing lists and censuses, looking for pictures, personal souvenirs, interviews and getting in touch with relatives and descendants overseas through the Internet.

Italians in **Brazil** replaced the blacks working in coffee plantations when slavery was abolished. If children were happy among bunches of bananas, thick tangerine hedges and coffee bags stacked in barns, share-croppers in a *fazenda* had to undergo harassments on the part of the *fazendero*, the suffocating heat, hard work, isolation due to the big distance between plantations and towns. Among the 500 people from Budrio, Medicina and Molinella who migrated to Minas Gerais in that year, there was the Cesari family: every evening, mother Maria would inspect her six children's feet in order to make sure they were not infected by parasites called *bi-chos do pé*: “those little beasts which came from the forest”. And some, like Luigi Franceschi, wrote a letter from a *fazenda* in Ouro Fino in January 1891 begging the priest of Budrio to take him out of “*this Siberia*”, finding him a job as a farmer at home, in order to allow him to deparn “*this foreign land, where we are being massacred by many types of insects*”. Cesare Panzacchi from Medicina, who landed in Brazil in 1898 with his wife and three daughters, was luckier. After spending a few years in coffee *fazendas*, he took advantage of his eldest daughter's wedding to move to São João del Rei, in Minas Gerais, where together with the in-laws he dedicated himself to growing vegetables. Like the Panzacchis, the Forlani and Giovannini fami-

lies stayed in Brazil, giving a contribution to the development of their new country with their sacrifices. Together they started a baker's shop and then a carpenter's shop in Minas Gerais. Luigi Forlani's sudden death of pneumonia at the age of just 33 in 1905 dragged his wife Teresa, a widow with six little children, into a tragedy. When her thirteen-year-old daughter Alma married Joaquim Pereira, a good artisan from the local area, their destiny changed again. Their wedding generated 13 children, who had a chance to study and make a career: the name of the second born, Victor Pereira Forlani (1911-2004), a manager at the Ministry of Agriculture, has been engraved in the mausoleum built in Brasília to perpetuate the memory of pioneers of the new capital.

In general, things went better for those who migrated to **Argentina**, where the main problems included the large distance of the fields from towns, the difference of the landscape (a huge *pampas* without trees), life in the *estancias* alongside the gauchos, who called our townspeople *gringos del campo*, in order to highlight their excessive love for the land. However, in comparison with Brazil, Argentina can boast a higher number of successful stories, like the one of Pietro Chiodini's sons from Budrio who arrived at the beginning of the twentieth centuray and managed to buy two cinemas in Buenos Aires. Or like the Bollini brothers from Medicina, who went back home in the Fifties with so much money (hidden in their mattresses, rumour has it) as to buy a house and a laboratory in Bologna.

Giovanni Scarabelli from Molinella spent most of his life in Rosario, where he was invited in 1899 by sculptor Luis Fontana (father of Lucio, the famous painter) to work in his studio. Scarabelli, who had just finished his artistic education in Bologna, bought Fontana's studio in 1905, becoming the main artist in town. He was the author of many sepulchral monuments in the El Salvador cemetery, of the monuments to Independence and the Gaucho and, in Esperanza, he executed the monument to Agriculture, in cooperation with Fontana (1910), as well as other works at Paraná and Córdoba, where he died in 1942 before his dream to come back to Italy could come true.

From rice fields in the Bologna plain to cotton fields in Mississippi, the distance is not short. The first ones to try to make a career in cotton in the **United States** were the Mascagni family from Medicina, who landed in New Orleans in 1895. Today their descendants still live in Greenville, “the queen of the Delta”. Here “Frank” Mascagni, eldest son of pioneer Enrico, became manager of the Plum Ridge plantation and then executive of the Diary Company. From 1902 to 1907 there is evidence of 200 departures, most of which towards Vicksburg on the Mississippi river, the rest to Mound in Louisiana. Also in the cotton lands scattered in the Delta in the states of Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana, a hard life was awaiting on labourers: wooden houses which resembled huts, unhealthy weather, mosquitoes, very hard work, growing debts and racism against Italians, considered to be a sort of “white-skinned niggers”. However, some of them succeeded. For instance, the Noè family from Medicina: brothers Alfonso and Fortunato reached Vicksburg in 1903 and scattered between Mississippi and Tennessee and Colorado. Fortunato's descendants now own large cotton and soya plantations at Clarksdale, Mississippi. In Vineland, among the New Jersey orchards, we can find the descendants of the Italian farmers from Delta and invited to come here to grow grapes, like the Sadelis from Medicina and the Lellis from Molinella. Anthony, a doctor at Alliston (Alabama) is the last link of the chain of the Fava family from Molinella, who managed restaurants in Greenville until 1959.

The descendants of the Gardinis from Budrio now live in Sao Paulo, Brazil and in Dallas, Texas. All of them certainly do not agree with what the woman who migrated from Budrio only to come back from Brazil with her daughters, shouted at Christopher Columbus's statue in Genoa: *Colombo, azidant a tè e a quant t'è dduert la Meria!* (“Columbus, damn you for discovering America!”). 🍷

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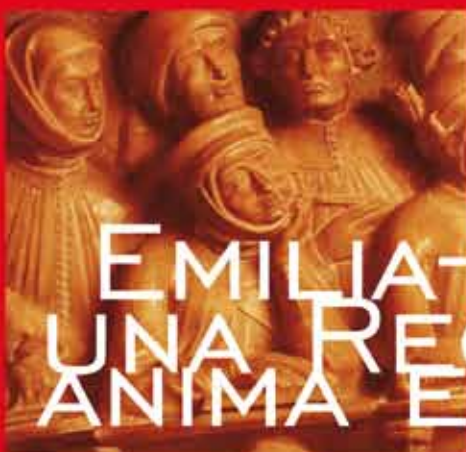


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