

EMILIA ROMAGNA

N.1
2010

CULTURA CULTURE
L'ocarina va in Oriente
The ocarina takes over the East

ECONOMIA ECONOMY
Laboratori del futuro
Laboratories of the future



MONUMENTI DELLA NATURA

NATURE'S MONUMENTS

Emilia-Romagna has conducted a census of the "fruit tree patriarchs", centuries-old trees in which no-longer existing genetic traits have survived

L'Emilia-Romagna ha censito i "patriarchi da frutto", alberi secolari in cui sopravvivono caratteristiche genetiche oggi scomparse

Sommario

N. 1

ER

EMILIA
ROMAGNA



4
IL TERREMOTO
NELLA "PICCOLA
ITALIA"
SULLE ANDE
THE EARTHQUAKE
IN "LITTLE ITALY"
IN THE ANDES

Roberto Franchini

6
I BISNONNI
DEL BOSCO
THE
GREAT-GRAND
PARENTS OF THE
FOREST

Paola Fedriga

12
LABORATORI
DEL FUTURO
LABORATORIES
OF THE FUTURE

Anna Maria Martina

14
L'ENERGIA?
E' SOTTO TERRA
ENERGY?
IT'S UNDERGROUND

Paola Fedriga

17
L'OCARINA
CONQUISTA
L'ORIENTE
THE OCARINA
TAKES OVER
THE EAST

Pierfrancesco Pacoda



22
NUOVA
EPICA
ITALIANA
A NEW
ITALIAN EPIC

Pierfrancesco Pacoda

24
ARRIVEDERCI
A CARACAS
SEE YOU
IN CARACAS

Claudio Bacilieri



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20
FERRARI
SU DUE RUOTE
FERRARI
ON TWO WHEELS

Renato Bertacchini



29
A PASSO
DI DANZA
TO THE RHYTHM
OF DANCE

*fotografie di
Andrea Samaritani*

34
L'UOMO
DEI BESTSELLER
THE MAN BEHIND
THE BESTSELLERS

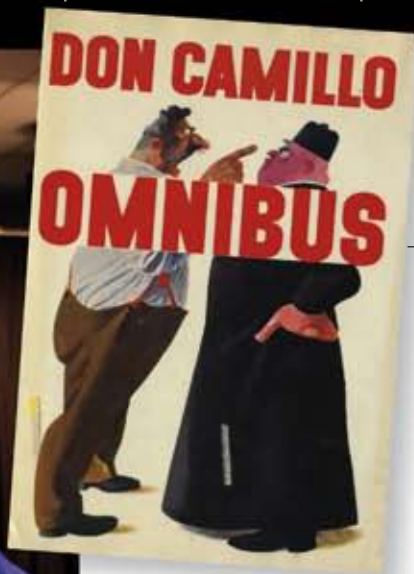
*Guido Conti
e Paola Dubini*

39
TURISTI
SUL-PO
TOURISTS
BY THE PO

Anna Maria Martina

42
SPOON RIVER
D'EMILIA
THE SPOON RIVER
OF EMILIA

Claudio Bacilieri



Rubriche

16-28-38

REGIONE &
NOTIZIE
REGION &
NEWS

45

LETTERE

TRANSLATIONS AT PAGE 48

THE GREAT-GRANDPARENTS OF THE FOREST

by Paola Fedriga

They are patriarchs just like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the progenitors of the Jewish people with whom they share their ancient age and perhaps that wisdom that comes from having lived a long time and having seen so much. These, however, are not people but trees. More precisely, about a thousand centuries-old trees that the Association of Forlì "Patriarchs of Nature in Italy" have conducted a census of, in Emilia-Romagna: chestnut, mulberry, hazel, olive trees, but also pines, service trees and jujubes that have arrived from distant eras.

Trees which have managed to reach the exorbitant age of eight hundred, sometimes even one thousand, and that day after day, month after month, despite wars, bad weather and disease, continue to contribute to the great breath of the universe. The region of Emilia-Romagna has dedicated two photographic volumes to a selection of the great elderly of nature, approximately 200 blossoming patriarchs, where their characteristics and peculiarities are described. The effect is a particularly suggestive journey in the discovery of not only the flora but also of the territory. The oldest of them all is probably a chestnut tree in Montebraro, a hamlet of the Zocca municipality, in the province of Modena. It is a true celebrity in this area, there are signs indicating it, making it easy to find. The folk tradition dates it back even to the times of Matilde of Canossa, between 1050 and 1100. It is 12 meters tall and the circumference of its trunk base arrives at 15 meters. It is not the only specimen that belongs to this species. The cultivation of chestnuts in the Emilian Apennine was widespread and important and constituted a precious means of support for generations of farmers and this is also why they are so numerous and centuries old. The chestnut of Corneto in Brisighella, in the province of Ravenna, is approximately 500 years old and takes the name of the old village, at present abandoned, which was even quoted by Dante in the Divine Comedy. Moving on in Emilia, one cannot forget the chestnut of Camugnano, in the hills of Bologna. On the trunk of this 800-year-old tree there is a sign saying "Bar of Bugeon", a folk name given because of the fact that there is a bench, which can seat up to 12 people, carved along the interior circumference of its trunk. This is not a rare case. Very often, the enormous trunks of these trees demonstrate cavities that were once used as refuges and shelters for tools.

The presence of olive trees is less predictable. This type of cultivation is more often than not associated with milder climates, however in Emilia-Romagna, and in particular in the area of Brisighella, it has its own very important tradition. Actually, the oldest olive trees among the ones in the census, are in Tabiano, in the province of Parma, where the stump dates back to the 16th Century, and in Montegridolfo, in the

INDEX OF THE TRANSLATIONS

TRADUZIONI: *Benediet School, a cura di Agata Bienna e Bruna De Luca*

THE GREAT-GRANDPARENTS OF THE FOREST	48	by Paola Fedriga
THE LABORATORIES OF THE FUTURE	48	by Anna Maria Martina
ENERGY? IT'S UNDERGROUND	49	by Paola Fedriga
THE OCARINA TAKES OVER THE EAST	49	by Pierfrancesco Pacoda
FERRARI ON TWO WHEELS	49	by Renato Bertacchini
SEE YOU IN CARACAS	50	by Claudio Bacilieri
TOURISTS BY THE PO	50	by Anna Maria Martina
THE SPOON RIVER OF EMILIA	51	by Claudio Bacilieri

province of Rimini, where the olive tree is thought to be 700 years old. The olive tree of Tabiano presents another element of great interest: it belongs to a variety which is unknown today. In fact, these old plants are also very often the last carriers of genetic patrimony which no longer exists and which should be studied and protected. In these situations the historical interest goes side by side with the scientific and naturalistic interests, besides for the commitment to promote the recovery of traditional varieties that are typical of the region and in this way to stop the loss of biodiversity.

It is also still unclear what variety the Pianoro Vine, in the province of Bologna, belongs to, otherwise named the "Vine of Fantini" from the name of the geologist who first photographed it in 1965. This plant could be about 340 years old, and is similar to the Negrettino vine, but its origin is still uncertain. The history of the Hazel of Aia is also wrapped up in mystery. It is a centuries old giant, about 25 meters tall, that lives in the village of the same name close to Sogliano al Rubicone (Forlì-Cesena). It is considered a unique patriarch on a European scale due to the particular characteristics of its trunk and foliage, which are very different from others of the same species, which are often presented in the form of a shrub.

Among the cultivations that have marked the history of the countryside of the Emilia-Romagna Region one cannot forget that of the mulberry tree. There are very few surviving mulberries today, the last witnesses of an economy of subsistence in which the breeding of silkworm was an important economic resource for

many peasant families. The mulberry was precious for its leaves (that constituted the basic diet of silkworm), but also for its fruit, mulberries, which are very hard to find these days, and finally for its particularly luxuriant branches which offered shelter in the heat of the Po region summer. For this reason, mulberries were almost always situated in the middle of the country courtyard, where they also served the purpose of lightning conductors. One of the oldest mulberries noted is almost 200 years old and is found in Scandiano, in the province of Reggio Emilia, right in the centre of the town, in a square which today is used as a public garden but that was once an open field. The mulberry of Consandolo in Argenta (Ferrara) continues to give shade to the yard of a farmhouse with its thick foliage: it is more than 15 meters tall and it hovers over an old farmhouse which is reached by following a street decorated with old statues. It is possible to admire an exceptionally impressive double row of mulberries in Bertinoro (in the province of Forlì-Cesena), in the locality of Madonna del Lago: these plants, which are still in perfect condition despite their 140 springs, edge the entrance path to an old farmhouse. Besides for the mulberry, the cornel and the service tree are also "forgotten fruits". In Bagno di Romagna, also in the province of Forlì-Cesena, there is a very old stump of a cornel that could be 500 years old, and the almost 300-year-old service tree of Becco in Predappio is one of the tallest in Italy, 8 meters tall. Whilst, the "green pomegranate tree, with beautiful scarlet flowers" was planted by the one and only Carducci, who then described it in his poem "Pianto

Antico," written after the death of his son Dante. The tree still exists in the courtyard in what was once the residence of the poet in via Broccaindosso in Bologna, which is known today as the House of the Pomegranate.

THE LABORATORIES OF THE FUTURE

by Anna Maria Martina

Promoting industrial research and transferring scientific knowledge and results towards a productive system. This goal of the Emilia-Romagna Region, which in recent years has brought to life a net of structures dedicated to specific subjects of industrial interest, is coming to an end with the foundation of ten technopolies, which will constitute the new and wide high technology net. The fields in which these labs will operate are mechanical technology and new materials, food farming, construction, life science, energy, environment, information and communication technology, and design.

We are dealing with physical places in where research labs will take up office and will be able to expand and organize themselves to work with corporations. This project has taken up 234 million (130 from the Region, 90 from Universities and from research centres, 14 from local enterprises that contribute to providing areas and infrastructure). In fact, technopolies are developing scientific university campuses, like those in Parma and Modena, with areas dedicated exclusively to industrial research or realizing the reutilization and requalification of areas and industrial and urban sites of great value like Bologna, Ravenna, Faenza, Forlì, Cesena, Rimini, Spilamberto, Vignola, Reggio Emilia and Piacenza (where the Polytechnic and the Cattolica of Milan have their seat). "The work of the technopolies," explains the president of the Region, Vasco Errani, "represents a strategic choice in improving the quality of the new economy in our factories, food farming and in the development of the region. At the same time it proposes the construction, through a regional platform, of an enterprise in order to give value to, reward and give work to researchers, who are the heritage of a knowledge society. In this area Emilia-Romagna must be among the leading regions on a European scale. This is not a question of publicity but concrete facts, with relevant resources invested by the Region". 160 thousand meters squared will be appointed to this objective, intended to host 46 research laboratories and 7 innovation centres, 1800 researchers will be involved, of which 520 will be young researchers. The infrastructural investment is worth €8 million; 54 will be invested in scientific equipment, whilst 112 will go to the contracts.

"We are making an extraordinary commitment to research and innovation, which represent the pillars of the development of the regional and National system," says the Economic councilor, Duccio Campagnoli. The numbers of the high technology net project are truly those of an en-

terprise for industrial research and indicate the value and priority that the Region has given to this commitment.”

The coordination of the net will be carried out by Aster, a consort company activated by the Region, Universities and research bodies and will have a “hub” in the technopoly of Bologna which will be realized in the ex-factory of Bat, British American Tabacco, known as the Tobacco Factory. Due to the dismissal of many of its activities and productivity reorganization and also due to the purchase of the area by the Region, a great technopoly will arise in this enormous 100-thousand-meter complex. It will not only host a sizeable amount of research laboratories promoted by the University of Bologna, Enea, the Rizzoli Orthopedic Institute, and also those proposed by important economic organizations, but it will also accommodate other services for the whole regional net. ☺

ENERGY? IT'S UNDERGROUND

by Paola Fedriga

New geothermic reserves in the area of Brisighella, in the north of the province of Modena and in the province of Ferrara, invaluable in reducing the need for fossil fuels. An innovative regional project targeted at locating the most suitable areas for storing carbon dioxide, and in this way contributing to reaching the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol and the commitments made by the European Union regarding the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions (20% by 2020 and 50% by 2050). Yet another experimental initiative in the province of Ravenna which aims at filling methane gas deposits with sea water, contrasting the subsidence induced by the extraction of gas; but also new high quality and renewable water resources that have been discovered along the Po River from Piacenza to Rimini. The subsoil is turning out to be a more important resource for environmental protection. Also Emilia-Romagna, where both the Region and local enterprises have started up various studies and experiences in this direction, is trying to take advantage of the once unknown potentials concerning the reduction of pollution and the exploitation of natural resources.

“The law on energy policies in the Emilia-Romagna Region – explains the regional councilor to productive activities, Duccio Campagnoli – is moving in the direction of sustainable development and of respect for the Kyoto parameters. In order to reach these objectives we must apply all the solutions: it is important to continue experimentation in order to obtain more and more efficient technologies. In this hard-working region, certainly even the subsoil will do its part.” The energy unleashed from the underground is not always the destructive force we see in earthquakes and volcano eruptions. In fact, if it is appropriately directed, it can serve to heat houses ecologically. A mapping of the “hottest” zones of

the Emilia-Romagna subsoil has been carried out in Emilia-Romagna in order to locate the most important and most suitable geothermic energy reserves to be exploited. The project, which demonstrates the cooperation of the Region with numerous local administrations, like the Province of Modena, the Municipality of Ferrara and the Municipality of Brisighella, has located potential reserves at accessible depths, in particular in the northern area of the province of Modena and Ferrara. For example, 400 meters below ground level, in the area of Mirandola, there is a temperature of about 50 degrees Celsius. The geothermic potential of the subsoil are still only being minimally exploited. There are only two very important district heating experiences in Emilia-Romagna: in Ferrara and in Bagno di Romagna. “Geothermics, together with other forms of renewable energy – comments the councilor to soil and coast defense, Marioluigi Bruschini – is not a Utopia but an immediate economic and environmental necessity. As we wait for the Hydrogen era it is important for us to make a bigger effort in the clean energy sector, as all the macroeconomic and environmental indicators suggest”. A new aquifer has been discovered where the Po River used to flow more than 10 thousand years ago and represents a precious high quality water reserve, which goes from Piacenza to Rimini. Up to 2km wide and positioned 20-30meters below ground level, it was located by the region in the mapping of the underground water reserves present in the whole Emilia-Romagna territory. It is now being monitored as it seems to constitute a further water reserve which is to be used, in limited time frames, in order to guarantee the supply of water in the periods of greatest demand. There are two advantages in particular: it is not located deep underground and so it would reduce the risk of subsidence when extracted and it would be refilled quickly, directly from the Alps, guaranteeing a non-exhaustible resource. “This new availability of underground water should not, however, make us lose sight of the three objectives of our water protection plan, which remain essential: saving, recycling and conserving water resources – adds the regional councilor to the environment, Lino Zanichelli, who announced that “€ 200 000 has been allocated in the budget for the realization of new irrigation scheme, with a low impact on the environment, in the province of Parma, one of which is already in an advanced state”. Trapping CO2 emissions underground, where there are unused natural cavities and suitable geological structures, is the aim of the joint project of the Region and the Municipality of Ferrara, which have identified the most suitable “containers” for this goal, which are located at a depth of between 800 and 2000meters and with the greatest guarantee of capacity. These are saline aquifers located between the province of Ravenna and Ferrara. Experiments concerning the storage of carbon dioxide have already been carried out in the United States, Canada and Germany and a European directive on the car-

bon capture and storage has recently been adopted in order to support these techniques for the saving of energy and the increase of renewable energy to reach the objectives laid out by the Kyoto Protocol and the commitments taken on by the European Union. Finally, water instead of oil and methane gas could be an efficient cure for subsidence. In fact, the introduction of sea water enables us to fill the spaces left in the subsoil (one of the causes of the lowering of the ground level) from the extraction of methane gas. This is an experimental project being carried out in a gas field in the province of Ravenna by the Region in collaboration with Eni, the Municipality and Province of Ravenna. ☺

THE OCARINA TAKES OVER THE EAST

by Pierfrancesco Pacoda

In South Korea, the scholastic institutions have made learning it compulsory because – they claim – playing it helps the development of the left and right cerebral hemispheres and it stimulates intelligence and concentration. Whilst in Japan, the Minister of Culture advises it, especially to housewives over the age of sixty who would like to keep their intellectual capacities fit. We are not talking about a new scientific invention, but about a small handmade object made of terracotta, which was born in Budrio in the middle of the 19th Century and was loved by Giuseppe Verdi, who went into raptures over the performance of his Rigoletto at the opera of a “specialized” orchestra. We are talking about the ocarina, a musical instrument that introduced the small town in Emilia-Romagna to the world thanks to a global diffusion, legions of enthusiasts, and, above all, collectors in all countries, which can be seen by the rare instruments conserved in Museums of Music, from China to Canada. A recent study estimates that there are about 70 thousand enthusiasts in Japan, 100 thousand in South Korea, however the craze is also spreading in China, while in England the four-hole ocarina (even in the super cheap plastic version) is quickly starting to substitute the flute in primary schools as the instrument used for children's first approach to musical composition and performance. What about Italy? As of this year, the Ministry of Public Schooling has started up the first university course in “Terracotta wind instruments”, a two-year programme hosted by the Frescobaldi Conservatory in Ferrara.

“It all started from the great passion for the ocarina of the maestro Giorgio Fabbri, director of the Conservatory, who became active at the Ministry by supporting the educational value of the figure of the ocarinist,” explains Emiliano Bernagozzi, the soul of the Ocarina Group in Budrio, who strongly fought for the foundation of the course. “Last year,” he adds, “the Korean Ministry of Culture introduced the study of the ocarina in all the classes of compulsory education. In this way, 200 thousand children between

the ages of 8 and 14 will need teachers and it's easy to imagine the professional prospects that will present themselves before the graduates of the course of Ferrara.”

There is also a strong demand for concerts as the Budrio group is forced to refuse up to 40 performances a year in the East. What is the next step? “To obtain the Doc acknowledgement for the ocarina of Budrio,” answers Emiliano Bernagozzi. “We are working on a rigorous disciplinary which we will lay out. We would not want people to start thinking in a couple of years that the ocarina is a typical Korean instrument. ☺

FERRARI ON TWO WHEELS

by Renato Bertacchini

From the Apennines to the Plain, between Emilia Road and the West, the horses do not gallop through the fields. Here they paw the ground at four or due gallops of their engines. They are the racing “meteors”, the cars and motorcycles that continue to have a very high price in the region and are the source of troubles. Accidents aside, drivers, manufacturers and team managers have often wasted away work and patrimonies. Only Enzo Ferrari didn't lose out with engines, on the contrary, he earned world glory and fortune. This was thanks to the human perseverance of the Drake, of his ferocious and fixed determination. This “supreme mechanical Moloch”, as Edmondo Berselli, from the same region, says, was the spectacular hero of an industrial adventure and after his father's death (the owner of a small workshop with five workers in Modena) and also that of his brother, he sold his mother's precious furniture in order to buy his first racing car. This is how he founded the Scuderia Ferrari in 1929, an extremely difficult year due to the horrible Wall Street crisis, the downfall of the American stock exchange and of the European market.

The place chosen is Modena, in the heart of the Italy that counts. Then, from nearby Maranello, the headquarters of the Scuderia Ferrari he will tell friends and coworkers, “Come here to me for I am the Pope in Maranello”. At the beginning of the 30s, the Scuderia Ferrari is first on the peninsula for both racing cars and motorcycles, the remarkable and legendary English four-gear Ridges. The team's coat of arms is a rampant horse. If Ferraris soar through the track, this is thanks to a small black horse which was given to me by my mother and was inherited from a famous aviator” (Francesco Baracca, who had the very same black horse on the fuselage of his plane). Motorcycle racing, the original field of Scuderia Ferrari's best drivers, including Tazio Nuvolari and Achille Varzi, Piero Taruffi, engineer, and Luigi Fagioli. However, the real outstanding drivers, Ferrari's two-wheel champions, are Giordano Aldrighetti, from Milan and winner of the Italian Championship in 1933; Aldo Pigorini (from Novate Milanese), Italian Cham-

pion in the 250 and 500; Francesco Lami, called the "Arrow of Faenza". After clamorous successes in motorcycle racing, three Italian Championships and 44 victories, suddenly in 1934, Ferrari's manager entrepreneur suspended the motorcycle races. No one ever asked why. Nunzia Manicardi fills this gap and reveals the secret behind this decision with the fresh and highly documented volume *The Mystery of Ferrari's English Bikes* (Edizioni Il Fiorino, Modena 2009). A teacher and journalist with four degrees and an expert in historic engines (That Diabolical Ferrari, Adolfo Orsi's Maserati, Stanguellini, The Magician of Engines, The Biella Circuit: Yesterday and Today), Manicardi reconstructs Enzo Ferrari's interrupted dream: to race the Italian 500 cc, Guerzoni Dux, alongside English motorcycles, which dominated the marketed and tracks at the time. The 20th Century was born and raised in the pursuit of Engines and Speed – the Futuristic dogma put into practice by the Paris-Beijing car race, Lindberg's transatlantic flight and the inauguration of the Monza Circuit in the Park of Villa Reale – and so, it is no surprise that Ferrari wanted a Motorcycling Team, the younger sister, however no less important, and be admired by men." Fascinated by these new customs, the girl from Bologna launches herself with enthusiasm into the life of the beautiful, unimaginable and supreme Caracas of the 50s, speaking Spanish and keeping a fair distance from other Italians so as not to meet the fascist party officials protected by the dictatorship of Pérez Jiménez. But when she arrives, Romulo Gallegos, a great writer, is in power and her enthusiasm is such that she learns Antonio Arraiz's poem off by heart -

The lack of money to invest in new models. Saving and supporting the Regime in times of autarchy. Fear of being surpassed by the Guzzi House, the growing competition. Increasing the Auto sector and beating the terrible Germans, their Mercedes and Auto Union financed by Hitler with Nuvolari. The myth of Speed that opened and maintained the 20th Century gave the past, present and future a completely different meaning. Ferrari declared: "The future is always in the hands of those who know how to anticipate it." Drake's maxim does not apply to motorcycles, whose future returns and is blocked in 1934, shortly before the sanctions hit the Regime's economy and against which Enzo Ferrari, Italian and perseverant, invented self-sufficient ethanol, in other words ethyl alcohol taken from the beetroots of Emilia-Romagna. 🍷

SEE YOU IN CARACAS

by Claudio Bacilieri

After being welcomed by customs workers with some tamarind juice and exchanging her first words with the natives of La Guaira, the seventeen-year-old Bolognese girl looked around herself. It was hot and full of flowers: she decided that she liked Venezuela. It was love at first sight, between her and her new country, in the distant 1948. Marisa Vannini did not emigrate out of hunger. In other words, hunger was a problem that all Italians faced in the darkest

moments of the war. Born in Florence, Marisa originated, on her mother's side, from a prosperous family from Sestola, in the Apennine of Modena, which included land owners, judges, lawyers and mayors. In Bologna she attended the primary school in via Zamboni, middle school and attended Galvani Secondary School until the bombings over the city forced the family to take refuge in Sestola. The winter of 1944 was very difficult. The Vannini Ricci family was antifascist and their house was watched and searched. Cold, hunger, fear, the life of fugitives. The country residence of her grandmother, the figure present on the cover of Marisa's latest book *En la piel de la Guerra*, was burnt down by an unknown person. In the meantime, the Ricci House with its pine forest was given away to nuns and turned into a refuge. Boys and girls prepared themselves by studying modern languages, besides for Greek and Latin.

In Arrivederci a Caracas Vannini gives an account of her first fifteen years in Venezuela, a fantastic country in which "the girls went out accompanied by chaperons (elderly women who accompanied them into society) and used to sit by the window to observe the passers-by and be admired by men." Fascinated by these new customs, the girl from Bologna launches herself with enthusiasm into the life of the beautiful, unimaginable and supreme Caracas of the 50s, speaking Spanish and keeping a fair distance from other Italians so as not to meet the fascist party officials protected by the dictatorship of Pérez Jiménez. But when she arrives, Romulo Gallegos, a great writer, is in power and her enthusiasm is such that she learns Antonio Arraiz's poem off by heart -

"He de amarte tan fuerte que no puedo ya más, / y el amor que te tenga, Venezuela, / me disuelva en ti..." – and passes her days at the Biblioteca Nacional. Marisa and her brother, Carlo, attend secondary school and later University: he chooses Architecture, whilst she chooses Literature. Marisa graduates in 1956, but because she fears not being able to finish her studies (the Universidad Central de Venezuela closed every now and then for political reasons), she also decides to sign up at the Pedagogical Institute of Caracas. This is how she begins her experience as a primary and secondary school teacher; then, as she is strong in both fields, she continues two doctorates, one in Caracas and the other at the University of Bologna in Modern Philology in 1971. She also manages to specialize at the Dams in Bologna, run by Umberto Eco. At the Institute of Italo-Venezuelan Culture she gives life to Italian and Spanish courses for foreigners, who begin to arrive in large numbers due to the modernization introduced by the use of petroleum. In consequence, the Faculty of Italian and Latin Language and Literature is born. In 1968 she is also entrusted with teaching Children's Literature and a Seminar for young writers. In 1960, Marisa Vannini married a Polish doctor, Eugenio Gerulewicz. When the Russians arrived her future husband escaped from his country on

a bicycle to Switzerland, where he completed University. When Karol Wojtyła reached Caracas, Marisa and Eugenio were granted a private audience. The Pope recognized Eugenio and said to him in Polish: "You were at the University of Cracow". Three children were the fruit of their marriage: Leonardo, a painter, Gerardo, a musician and composer, and Donatella, a doctor. In her villa in the Florida of Caracas, which seems to have stopped in time with important furniture and two grand pianos that dominate the Empire-style salon, Marisa remembers the most beautiful moments in her life as a *caraqueña* de adopción. These are mainly connected to her intellectual liveliness, which brought her to write books, to travel around her country far and wide and to participate in congresses all around the world, even today despite being almost eighty years old. Before her translation of Dante's *Inferno*, Venezuelans only had access to Edoardo Crema's version. The Nacional of Caracas, a newspaper and also editor, asks Vannini for a more agile and poetic version with a language that speaks out to young people. Marisa thinks about her students and writes it completely in pencil, in metrics, under the palms of the beach where she spends her weekends. She carefully corrects the text, the drafts, the notes but doesn't give any thought to the cover. So, when she first sees the printed version it almost falls from her hands, "They had put a Venezuelan devil, one of those ugly, dancing folklore devils, on the cover. I was very disappointed, but here they like it so much that in the bookshops people don't ask for *El Infierno* de Dante, but for *El diablo* de Dante, and even for *El diablo* de Marisa Vannini".

Many of her memories are linked to the magical world of the Indians. For an Italian like herself, the forest was a mysterious environment that aroused a natural curiosity. She took her children there whenever she could. She made friends with the indigenous peoples, who she then hosted at her home when they needed to negotiate with the government for water, electricity or documents. In Venezuela there are 500 thousand Indians who are divided into about thirty ethnic groups. In 1980 Marisa decides to collect their legends. Together with Javier Armato, an expert in the Yupka Indians, who is now a member of parliament and professor of indigenous languages in Maracaibo, she takes a recorder and some notebooks and ventures into the forest, climbing mountains and fording rivers and streams. She crosses all of the Sierra di Perijá, on the border with Columbia. The effect of this work is the book, *El mundo mágico de los Yupka*, which was however rejected by editors. It took twenty years, in 2001, for the book to see the light of day, published by Monte Avila, a publishing house. Since then it has been reprinted every year. Other books based on her experience with the indigenous people were born, such as *El chamán de los Cunaguaros* (2008), which was written to make about eleven indigenous ethnic groups known to young people, *La Fogata*, a youthful novel about the

Yanomamo Indians and their customs, and also *El Oculito*, where the protagonist is a young girl that is the descendent of a Dutch privateer and a cacique of the Cumanáns.

These are all anthropological novels that explain the diverse world of the native inhabitants of Venezuela, their founder customs and myths. However, perhaps her most famous book is *Italia y los italianos en la historia y en la cultura de Venezuela*, published in 1966 and reprinted many times.

This piece of work is essential in becoming acquainted with the presence of Italians and the influence the Italian culture had on Venezuela, starting from Boccaccio's Decameron, which was the first Italian book to be read on Venezuelan soil: it arrived at the beginning of the 16th Century on illegal boats intended for the soldiers who had decided to spend the rest of their lives dulcemente in the tropics of Cubagua and Margarita. Among the books of the Spanish conquistadors one could also find Orland in Love and *The Frenzy of Orlando*: chivalry literature more popular than the meditative masterpieces like Dante's Comedy.

Even though at the beginning of the 20th Century there were less than 30 thousand Italians in Venezuela, some of whom had fought with Garibaldi and were present since 1850, our culture still left its trace. It is enough to consider the number of performances of Italian opera in Caracas, especially Verdi and Rossini, from 1854 to 1900 and the success of writers like Carducci, Pascoli, D'Annunzio, Olindo Guerrini, widespread and translated thanks to the magazine, *El Cojo Ilustrado*. Let's not forget the Antonelli military architects who constructed fortresses in the Caribbean in the 16th Century, including the Castle of Araya, or the cartographer, Agostino Codazzi, who inaugurated a method for becoming familiar with and analyzing natural patrimony, and who fought as a soldier in the name of Simon Bolívar.

To be precise: all the personalities mentioned, except for Rossini and D'Annunzio, were from Emilia-Romagna. Marisa Vannini is now the president of the natives of Emilia-Romagna in Caracas. She complains about how it's difficult to learn Dante's Italian because the current regime of currency control it is difficult for Venezuelans to travel. She would like to continue participating in conferences for researchers, to finish the work she has in progress and to publish her unpublished work. She still has the energy of that young girl, who used to devour books in the mountains of Modena, whilst the war raged around her. 🍷

TOURISTS BY THE PO

by Anna Maria Martina

Berths, cycling tracks, road signs, information centres, gastronomic itineraries, a guide and a portal for the unitary promotion of

river tourism by the Po. A lot of work has been done to make the main Italian river a tourist destination to the likes of the great European rivers (the Seine, the Loire, the Rhone, the Ebro, the Rhine, the Danube and the Thames). However, there is still room for growth: for example, an updated yearbook of river tour agents does not exist in any of the four regions crossed by the river. Such an initiative is usually presented by institutions or privately owned businesses within the limits of their own geographic and administrative borders. Moreover, information on the river offer is almost always "masked" behind nature tourist offers and behind the general term "itinerary".

These are the results of the research of Kpl (Knowledge Po Leadership), carried out by the Study of Giaccardi & Associati within an interregional project called "Enhancing the Tourist Value of the Po River" and coordinated by the Tourism Service and Tourist Area Quality of the Region. The research analyzed the state of the tourist offer in the territories of the Po in order to give institutions and private operators in Emilia-Romagna, Lombardy, Piedmont and Veneto (the four regions involved in the project) further tools in orienting choices and strategies so as to convert the 652km of the Po, from Monviso to its Delta, into a successful tourist destination at an international level.

"The Po is a potential tourist destination," emphasizes the regional councilor to Tourism, Guido Pasi. "We are trying to change it from potential to real, at the same time preserving the naturalness of the river and its context and carrying out the necessary actions. It is important to build a feasible, coordinated and intelligent tourist offer together with the territory and enterprises."

From an analysis carried out among 50 operators, administrations and companies in the area of the four regions of the Po, we can see that 80% of tourist flow in the territory of the river is due to excursions, in other words visits without overnight stays. 67% of the people questioned think that the tourist offer is mainly linked to the territory and not the river, while almost everyone believes that river tourism is a product capable of attracting mainly families and groups (contrary to research carried out on the same issue which reveals that river tourism is individual tourism in 90% of cases). Finally, 97% of operators, administrations and companies in the area agree on the promotion of the Po as a unitary tourist product and on the realization of a common internet portal for all four regions. 70% of the 47 foreign operators questioned do not treat the Po River as a tourist product and are not connected with its tourist and territorial system.

This research is part of the interregional project called "Enhancing the Tourist Value of the Po River", which is promoted by the four regions that are crossed by the Po and includes a total investment of € million. Since 2005 as part of the interregional project, besides for research

and study activities, many different activities have been financed, including the realization of berths, the connection of cycling tracks and river signs, the creation of gastronomic itineraries, the support of enterprises for the requalification of receptive structures or for the development of tourist services, the first unitary tourist guide of the entire river channel of the Po in collaboration with Touring Club, promotional activities with exhibitions, performances and vocational training for operators.

The final step of the interregional project is the realization of an interregional portal for the unitary promotion of river tourism at the Po, from Monviso to its Delta for all four Regions. ☛

THE SPOON RIVER OF EMILIA

by *Claudio Bacilieri*

Even Emilia has its own Spoon River, a countryside cemetery with grey gravestones hosting far off gazes. The framed photographs in porcelain ovals on those graves no longer take us back to unknown existences forever buried under the dust of time. The granddaughter of the photographer who took those photos has reconstructed the life that beat behind the faces that "have the smiles and the melancholy" of the people of the Reggio Emilia mountains. The pivot of all the stories that Rosa Maria Manaria presents in her book, *They have the smiles and the melancholy* (Aliberti, 2008) is the story of her grandfather, Amanzio Fiorini, the photographer-clock smith of Nismozza. This village's small cemetery in the Reggio Emilia Apennine in the high valley of Secchia, lies on a hill overhung by the peak of Mt. Ventasso, also called poetically in *tel Fade*, "the place where there are fairies": here almost all the dead rest with the expressions captured by Amanzio's objective. Like many mountain villages, Nismozza has been affected by emigration. In order to escape a destiny of poverty, at the age of sixteen, in 1900, Amanzio Fiorini left for Genoa, where he learnt the trade of clock smith. When he returned to Nismozza he understood that fixing alarm clocks would not guarantee him a future due to the little money that circulated in the village. So, in 1908, after getting married he chose the road to America, destination Chicago. The emigrants from the Reggio Emilia mountains dug your sewers, living – as they used to say – "from star to star" because they went under when it was still dark and came up after dusk. Sesto Fiorini is buried in Chicago.

He had brought with him a photograph as big as a wall of Ventasso taken by his brother, Amanzio and in his pocket he kept a chestnut husk from his mountains. Other fellow countrymen set out to the English mines, whilst the women became wet-nurses in the city or worked for rich families. In Chicago Amanzio Fiorini found work in a clock factory. In his free time he read books on Physics and took photographs

with a Kodak. He returned to his homeland at the outbreak of the First World War: he was sent to Piedmont, to Romagnano Sesia, to run the unit of precision machining in a bullet factory. With the money that he had earned in the United States he built a house in Nismozza and mustered the courage to open a photographic studio next to his clock workshop. Time became the master of his life, closed between photography and clocks, between capturing the moment and minutes passing by. Time, as James Hillman would say, was the vocation, the demon, the "code of the soul" of Amanzio. He named his daughter with the name of an American brand of watches, Elgin.

Thousands of mountaineers passed through his studio, thousands of faces stamped on silver bromide slates, many of which rest in peace in the small cemetery between the last houses of the village and the mountain.

They came for a family picture, everyone squeezed around the head of the family; for a document photo; to spend their beauty (girls); to sanction the unity of marriage (newlyweds). As a background, Amanzio used an improbable sea landscape with waves and palm trees, in contrast to the normal scenery of forests and chestnuts.

His photographic archive, now property of his family, depicts a mountain anthropology of great interest, so much so that some of his photos were published in important photographic magazines, such as *Time* and *Life*, and also in an exhibition in Beaubourg, in Paris. Thousands of glass negatives tell stories of hope, famine, painful events (the chilling picture of partisans killed by the Nazis in the winter of '44) and also the happy occurrences in the community, the everyday life of the Secchia valley, the work in the fields, the Autumns and the Springs, the clear skies of the Apennine, the wind blowing through the branches, the scent of the elderly – "a scent of stove smoke, of rabbit hutches, of pipe tobacco, of hay and of fat," reminisces Rosi Manari. These photographs bring to life a world long passed. Melancholy is present in the title of the book and is shown in the memory of these existences. For the author, remembering, as it was for Leopardi, is perhaps the best way to contemplate your own nothing. However, it is a nothing filled with voices, plots, sounds, songs and colours that the heavy iron gate of the small cemetery shelters from those who are in too much of a hurry and neither have the time and nor wish to look back.

Between substance and death – said Kleist – nothing happens except for a nothing to fill with poetry. It is the poetry of the humble that rises from the small tombs of earth covered with white gravel, where the mountaineers of the past rest. For example, don Spero, who had been imprudent enough to hide partisans in the presbytery, and who someone, perhaps a German, hit with a hand bomb while he was slowly strolling and reading the book of hours. Or Tugin, who in Amanzio's photo looks more

like a wild being from the forest than a person: depending on the season he would sleep in the stable, in the hayloft, in the chestnut dryer and became familiar with a bed only when he fell ill and died.

There are existences that are marked by strange signs, premonitions, coincidences. Carolina, daughter of Carlo delle Fratte, was a beautiful and prosperous girl who left Nismozza in 1915 and went to Liguria to be a servant, like many girls of her age. After a couple of years she moved to Palermo where she went into service at the home of a noble family, that of Emanuele di Belforte.

Carolina was to take care of the aristocrat, who was a widower, and his adolescent son. After years of cleaning, Carolina married the count and became the Countess of Belforte. When she happened to return to her village – writes Rosi Manari – "she glided elegantly through the dusty streets of Nismozza and looked haughtily at her fellow countrymen of the past. In the village there were some people that remembered her fashionable shoes, handbag, lace and especially the fact that she had abandoned her dialect and spoke in a polished Italian. However, when her husband died she was overwhelmed by the serious financial difficulties of the family and was forced to abandon Palermo without a dime. She returned to Nismozza and was accommodated in some rooms in a farmhouse at the end of the village. Her tombstone in the cemetery is modest but at least carries the title of Countess.

The scandal of world's pain is redeemed by the peace of a small cemetery, by the serenity that you can breathe there. Even the story of Argentina Fiorini, Amanzio's sister, seems ironic today. Argentina was a communist, so convinced that she always wore a pair of red knee-length socks. After visiting the market of Nismozza, people said that they had seen "that woman with the red socks". She also went to Genoa to work as a servant and returned with a daughter, Emilia, who was not acknowledged by her father. When she grew up, Emilia emigrated to Argentina with her husband and two children. Her mother followed her many years later and destiny had it that Argentina died in Argentina hit by a bus. Some decades later, in the mid 60s, Emilia's first son appeared in Nismozza one summer's day. His relatives welcomed him warmly, but remained dumbstruck when the boy, in speaking of his mother and his life in Argentina, praised the military junta in power at the time and defended dictatorship. He left the same night without the regret of any of his relatives. It was Emilia's younger son who compensated this disappointment and put things back into place – he too appeared suddenly in Nismozza on a summer's day. He talked badly of the soldiers in power in Argentina, making his relatives so happy that they exclaimed: "He has the same blood as Emilia and Argentina".

Now it is the wind that presides over the memories of the old cemetery of Nismozza. ☛

QUESTA TERRA
PULSA DI LIBERA
IMPRESA,
DI PICCOLI
IMPRENDITORI
CHE QUI HANNO
TROVATO
E CREATO
RICCHEZZA.



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SI VUOLE
IMMAGINARE
MA ANCHE
TOCCARE,
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HANNO
ATTRAVERSATO
NEI SECOLI
LA REGIONE,
LASCIANDO
TRACCE
PROFONDE,
TESTIMONIANZE
INDELEBILI.

EMILIA-ROMAGNA UNA REGIONE ANIMA E CORPO

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DEL TEMPO
LIBERO
IN EMILIA-
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È CHE SEI
SEMPRE
OCCUPATO.



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