

fao Casa gazette

FEBRUARY 2011

Carnival Festivals

**Letter from Cairo n.10:
Suez by the Sea**

Images and Outlooks

**Il Lavoro Nobilita
...and what it is to
work with love?**

**La Letteratura Orale e la
Leggenda dei Baoulé**

FAO Staff Coop Library

**“White Egrets” poem by
Derek Walcott**

The Virtues of Garlic

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fao CASA gazette

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Carnival Shop Window in Venice

photo by Michaela Rossi

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Typewritten electronic contributions for the FAO CASA Gazette are welcome. These can be in English, French, Italian or Spanish - articles, poems, drawings, photographs, etc. in fact anything interesting that staff members and/or their families in Rome or the field may like to contribute. No anonymous material will be accepted, and the Editor reserves the right to choose and/or reject material that is not in keeping with the ethics of the Organization. Send contributions electronically to the Editor at jill.stevenson@fao.org or leave signed copies with the COOP Office on the ground floor of Building E. The deadline for editorial material is due on the 1st of the month preceding the date of issue.

The Editor may schedule articles according to the priorities and editorial requirements of the FAO Staff COOP.
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Some less famous Carnival Festivals ... *Cozumel Carnival, Mexico*



The dates for Cozumel Carnival 2011 have now been officially confirmed and the main events will run from Wednesday 2 March to Wednesday 9 March 2011. This means the biggest seafront parades will be from Saturday 5 March to “Fat” Tuesday 8 March. After the seafront extravaganza, the music keeps playing and parties continue well into the night.

Pre-Carnival events will begin on Saturday 5 February with the introduction of the Carnival King and Queen candidates and a variety of other exciting Carnival dance and music frenzies will also take place during February. Costumed revellers battle in dancing competitions and bands play live music around the city. People line the streets, dancing with the performers and catching gifts that are showered on them.

The island’s spectacular annual *Mardis Gras* has over 130 years of history and is

held around February every year, although the exact dates vary. The week of main Carnival events concludes every year on ‘Fat Tuesday’ with dazzling technicolour processions along Cozumel’s downtown seafront.

The main events and parades will start on 5 March and come to a climax on 8 March with the burning of “Juan Carnival” bringing 2011 festivities to an end.

The origins of Carnival are unclear, but most agree that it started as a pagan celebration in ancient Rome or Greece. Balls were imported from Italy in the late Nineteenth century, and had their golden era in the Thirties, with legendary balls at the Copacabana Palace, and the Municipal Theater in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

There is much more to this extravaganza than the Parades. Street dancers randomly



together to have a great time how can you go wrong?!

roam through town. It is loads of fun, free, and it happens all over the island. You are more than welcome to watch and participate. Besides the fun of a great Parade, there is live music, food, drinks and every manner of distraction in the town square. With so many people gathered

This year's grand event will be interesting to cover and you can be sure to see the best pictures and video of this most special event right here on Cozumelmexico.net!

Every year is different. It will be very interesting to see how this year's participants carry on the tradition of one of the islands most spectacular events!

Carnival in Panama

Women dressed up in 'mantumblers', water-cannons and sardines being buried in little coffins? It can only be the annual madness of... Carnavaaaaal! Panama City's Carnival follows that of Las Tablas in terms of sheer exuberance and festive spirit.

A unique element of Carnival in Panama is the tradition of the *culecos*, where overheating celebrants are hosed down with water from passing trucks. On the Monday night of Carnival, settled husbands throughout Panama take the opportunity to 'howl' and roam freely, so any unmarried women might want to keep an eye out for wedding rings on the hands of courting strangers.

Floats with carnival queens, drummers, dancers, marching bands and more float down the streets in grand parades and, on the final day, there is the symbolic burial of sardines in little coffins. With steamy Latin dancing, copious liquor and the blazing sun



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overhead, you would be hard pressed not to enjoy yourself at this Carnival. There are expensive thrones and also dresses for the queens.

There are stage shows of salsa, meringue as well as 'Tipico' music singers. Floats carry the queens and there is a parade followed by fireworks. On the last day, cannons and

also sardines will be buried in small coffins in a symbolic manner. Panama Carnival is a huge party with lots of fun and excitement along with madness. People celebrate the Carnival with tradition and culture. The event is attended by a huge number of visitors and spectators.

Curacao Carnival (Fudeka) 2011



Curacao carnival will be held from January to 8 March 2011 in Curacao, an island towards southern Venezuela in the Southwestern Caribbean Sea. A unique and exhilarating experience, the long lasting celebration is a great experience for both the spectators on the road side as well as participants, who can march and dance in the Carnival groups. The fun event has hidden treasures. People are invited in the celebrations. There is world class fun, enjoyment and music. One can enjoy the colourful costumes which are exotic and vibrant. The Tumba rhythm is sure to compel people to thump their feet to its sounds. Competitions will be held for people from all age groups. International carnival Queen will be held on 12 February

2011. Some of the events of the carnival are Children Tumba Contest, horse parade, children's and teen Carnival parade, Carnival feast for elders, street music festival.

The culmination of the Carnival is on 6 March 2011 with "Gran Marcha" which is a grand Carnival parade. On 7 March there will be children's farewell parade. On 8 March there will be farewell Carnival parade. On 11, 12 and 13 March, there will be award ceremonies. Thus, you are invited to come and participate in one of the biggest celebrations to witness the impressive Carnival. You will surely love the fun and the party.

Finally, one world famous Carnival ...

VENICE Carnival 2011



The Carnival of Venice is the most important and magnificent of Venetian celebrations, a much appreciated cocktail of tradition, spectacle, history and transgression set in a unique city, a festival that attracts thousands of people each year to the city from around the world.

The Carnival has ancient origins, a celebration that greets the passing of winter into spring, a period in which everything is apparently connected, including the illusion of the more humble classes becoming similar to the powerful, since everyone is disguised behind a mask.

The Carnival of Venice officially began in 1296, when the Senate of the Republic authorized the Carnival with

an edict declaring the day before Lent as a day of celebration. After a break of almost two centuries, the traditions of the Carnival were recovered by the Municipality in 1980 and since then the event has been held with great success each year. Each year has a different, underlying theme for the Carnival, which is developed under various points of view, from one of culture to that of pure spectacle.

For two weeks St. Mark's Square, the theaters, streets, squares and public buildings become the protagonists of numerous initiatives and shows: actors, acrobats, dancers and musicians bring a celebration atmosphere to the city for a few days, which is similar to that of the Seventeenth century. Anyone wishing to sample aristocracy during the

Carnival can go to the Venetian palaces which host masked balls and gala feasts in costume. The city is home to various fashion houses where you can hire splendid period costumes, wigs and masks.

In addition to Venice, carnivals are also held inland, for example in Mestre, Treviso and on the Brenta Riviera, where you can take part in the beautiful allegoric carriage parades, which only take place during the last weekend of the Carnival.



The broad outline of the next Carnival of Venice, tribute to Unification of Italy and to women, has been presented at the Casino of Venice after being introduced to the Mayor of Venice. The 2011 edition will be extended with one extra weekend, and the conclusion of the event will be a silent regatta of row boats along the Canal Grande, that will be illuminated only with candles, symbolic and suggestive symbol of

rejoining with the city. Besides, Ca' Vendramin Calergi, seat of the Casino of Venice, opens as one of the institutional locations of the Carnival.

The suggestions have mainly been two, given by the particularities of the calendar 2011: the celebrations for the 150 years since the Unification of Italy and the coincidence of Mardi Gras with 8 March, the Women's Day. The references in the title are to the cinema masterpiece of 1954 "Senso" by Luchino



Visconti, and to the Princess Sissi, icon of fashion and elegance in the Nineteenth century.

The programme will develop from Saturday 26 February to Mardi Gras (8 March), with a prologue in the preceding weekend, 19-20 February, novelty of the 2011 edition thanks to the dates of the Carnival ■




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Letter from Cairo #10. Suez by the Sea

by Peter Steele

Water lines always fascinate and none more so than straight ones in the sand, and when this particular one links the Indian and Atlantic Oceans and, quite literally, joins Asia to Europe, you have to take note. Land bridges always attract the armies, the merchants, the travellers and the adventurers; and they leave a little of their history, their traditions, their languages and, in their genetic material - they leave their descendents. You can chart back 5 000 years to Pharaonic Egypt and before, and the subsequent invasions by the Persians, Alexander of Macedonia, the Romans, the conquest by the Arabs, Ottoman rule and, more recently, the French and the British – desperate to control that line of water in the sand. In 2012 Egypt will have enjoyed 60 years of modern day independence – only five more years than Ghana – and yet Egypt represents the oldest political entity in human history. Just imagine.

Suez Town

You do *not* go to Suez for the delights of the town, which sprawls along the shores of the Red Sea at the southern most point of the Suez Canal. You probably go because you have family there, because this is the crossing point into the Sinai Peninsula for the many hundreds of thousands of Muslim pilgrims who catch the buses and travel the roads from North Africa to the holy cities of Saudi Arabia for the annual Haj. Or you may go simply because you want to watch the ships in the canal.

There is a hint of romance in the concept of 'Suez' (*as-Suways* in Arabic) and not least because of the canal constructed by French money and expertise and Egyptian labour just on 150 years ago. Therein is the hint of distant lands - of India, China and Australia linked directly to the ports of Europe. The traders, travellers and armies of the Nineteenth century and earlier had long exploited the short overland route that existed across the sands of Egypt. Trouble was you still needed a ship at the other end to continue the voyage, no matter that you could comfortably cross the 150 km of land linking the two seas in less than a week. And, as the ships got bigger, the route around the Cape of Good Hope became more profitable.

Industrial heritage

In the mid-Nineteenth century Ferdinand de Lessups and his project engineers de Bellefonds and Moigel and their 1.5 million workers literally



War memorial. Neighbouring states in many parts of the world continue to disagree and, in a worse case scenario this results in war; and it is the young men who tend to pay the price. Memorials celebrate them for a generation of two. This one was slowly falling apart.



Port Tawfiq and the Suez Canal. The town from the deck of a ship heading north into the canal from the Red Sea. Pirates off the coast of East Africa have seriously affected the flow of traffic through the canal in recent times.

changed the face of the planet; and not simply with more cost-effective shipping links but with vision, dogma, tenacity and a technical revolution the likes of which had never been seen before. Construction started in 1858 the ancient pharaonic way with people and shovels, pickaxes and baskets (no wheelbarrows in those days) but, five years later, steam-powered dredgers, hammers, scrapers and conveyers had taken over from the armies of workers; and civil engineering practices have never looked back. The canal opened officially in 1869.

And it's not as if the Franco-Egyptian contractors were the first to exploit the idea of a canal either; for Pharaoh Nekau II started one 600 years BCE linking the Nile to the Red Sea, but he failed to finish it. The Persians completed the canal about 100 years later, and it was further developed and then neglected during the Roman era. It was reported in use right through into the Seventh century AD; and it can still be traced today.

Suez is modern Egypt

You can't really get a feel for all this from the modern city of Suez, however; for the town is now home to more than 500 000 people and, like

everywhere else in Egypt, this is people living in modern apartment blocks, cruising the esplanades overlooking the Bay of Suez in their modern Chinese-made cars or 40-year old Fiats and Renaults and generally going about their daily lives. To the south of the town on the western coast and above Adabiya Port the barren Ataka Mountains provide a backcloth of changing colour for the 20 or more ships anchored off-shore waiting their turn to enter the canal. The canal is one-way only, but has four passing places with traffic in convoys carefully monitored for position and speed.

Suez is twinned with Prestina in Kosovo (*now there's Hobson's choice of where to live*) and, in reality, it is made up of two towns – Suez proper which is about 3 km from the canal and Port Tawfiq where the canal enters the Red Sea and where the ship watchers gather. There are even a handful of reasonable-looking hotels there to cater for them. There was a cruise ship in port at the time of my visit and I watched an elderly Japanese couple under a large black umbrella wander along the canal promenade with a local wanderer in tow. The woman was all pastels and wearing flowing silks; she looked dainty and doll-like and completely out-of-place in the trash



Satellite photo. The line in the sand joining Port Said on the Mediterranean with the Gulf of Suez. The Bitter Lakes, Nile Delta, Sinai and the Eastern Deserts can be clearly seen from space.

strewn grass-ways by the canal with the heat reflecting off the buildings. It was hot. None of us saw the convoys of ships that were supposed to be there – there were none to be seen.

Port Tawfig is the more interesting part of Suez; it owes its existence to the canal and provides a small legacy of the old colonial town that dates back to the time of construction - but it is fast disappearing. Round by the yacht club the roads were lined with trees that met over the road and provided tunnel-like shade, and there was an empty park in a square covering a hectare or more with geometric pathways and private houses set back from the street. Faded European elegance and run-down and, judging by appearances, not particularly appreciated for its history.

Ancient origins

This part of the Gulf of Suez has been occupied since ancient times. More recently and for over 300 years, the Ottoman Turks dominated the region with a small naval trading station at Suez, but the modern city developed after the canal was built when the dominance of Turkey was in decline. In fact, it is largely because of the

Israelis that the city appears so modern nowadays when compared to similar towns elsewhere in the country. Fighting along the canal in the 1967 and 1973 wars reduced Suez to rubble, which resulted in the development of a new town built on 85 km² of desert lands further inland from the site of the old city. This is where the main bus station is located, and where the Cairo bus stops. From here you catch a taxi bus or taxi into the commercial downtown area. The town is open, with wide straight roads, lots of green areas and relatively clean looking buildings. But this is like saying a brick wall is interesting – when you have already seen many others.

There was little point in looking at modern football stadiums, fertilizer plants, refineries or more walls and, once round the port and a walk along the Corniche – all new and sparkling (but awash with trash) - there was absolutely nothing to do. Late afternoon and prayers had finished for the day – it was Friday; and there were children splashing in the sea surrounded by plastic debris, soft drink cans, water bottles and other trash. It was quite surreal - like playing in a floating rubbish dump. The beach was invisible

under layers of trash (you could see where the separate tides had left their lines of trash). And the rhetorical question is: why build such an elegant esplanade – over 5 km long - and then leave it to waste (and covered in waste). And the infrastructure had been trashed too – most of the seats had been overturned and broken; and this had clearly taken some effort for they were made of concrete and fixed into the ground. Vandals with tractors?

War memorial

Even the modern war memorial on Sharia al Galaa – less than 30 years old and set on a deck in a small derelict park was fading fast. Comprising a concrete platform with a number of concreted pylons reaching into the sky with everything clad in dark marble, it must once have been both stark and elegant by local standards. But large parts of the cladding had fallen away to expose the underlying concrete and steel reinforcing, and the deck was crumbling at the corners. The park was a green oasis of overgrown grass, with poorly maintained trees and, covering everything (*yes, you guessed it*) was a sea of plastic and paper trash. Sad to consider so many hundreds of young men lost in the fighting - so quickly forgotten by the next

generation of town people.

Catch a taxi driver

I had entered the name and number of the taxi driver into the cell phone that morning, and promised to call him to take me back to the bus station at the end of the afternoon. We had arranged a time and place, but I needed to confirm it. The phone, however, had led a life of its own during the day and was dead by the time I came to use it. Sure, you need to charge these things, but I had forgotten the night before (and the phone holds my emergency numbers too – those people I can call who speak Arabic and English). No issue, true to form and just five minutes later than planned - I could see the Cheshire Cat grin – all teeth - through the windscreen; Mohamed and his battered Renault 12 flew round the corner and screeched to a halt in a cloud of road dust. It was very hot and very dusty at five that afternoon. Suez is a deal hotter than Cairo – but more open and without the aerial pollution; more breathable air, more pleasant. The bus station provided toilets, ice cold Coke in a refrigerated dispenser and a shady spot in which to wait for the air-conditioned bus back to Cairo. It had been a long but interesting day ■



Suez town. Apartment blocks and the main street in shade mid-afternoon on a quiet Friday. Few people are about in the heat of the day. Looking towards the Corniche and the Gulf of Suez.

Images and Outlooks

*Editorial Committee
FAO Casa Gazette*

Colleagues and friends,

Everyday we are subjected to the many changes around us and this makes for an interesting approach to life - particularly where we are able to embrace these changes with enthusiasm.

Our gazette is an important means of linking our estimated readership of more than 10,000 people around the globe.

The gazette belongs to you all, and it reflects that way in which we see ourselves and exchange news one-to-the-other, and it helps provide a corporate view that is different from the more formal public images that we present. Equally important, is the content of your journal - reflecting as it does the letters, articles, comments and news that is submitted by everyone.

A new year has begun and as international civil servants our main concern is and will be to continuously fight with all our forces against hunger and poverty. We are one family, one body. However like the cells of a body we are scattered all over the world, we live different experiences in various parts of the globe. Space physically separates us, probably we will never meet but we have a means of communication to know each other, to share our hopes, our lives, our thoughts, our experiences; it is the "FAO Casa Gazette". The Editorial Committee of the FAO Casa Gazette would really appreciate receiving from all of you articles (typewritten electronically), poems, short stories, pictures, drawings and paintings.

You do not need to be a journalist, you do not need to be a professional writer, you only need the goodwill and the desire to share an experience which could awake curiosity, emotions, minds, which could warm hearts, which could enrich each other. The "space" which separates us will continue to exist but for a little moment we will all feel closeness .

Is there anything that you would like to communicate? You may be living under difficult conditions but for sure you know and meet interesting and unique people. You have the opportunity to show us interesting places and lifestyles where probably the majority of us will never visit. If you feel you want to share an experience with your colleagues through the FAO Casa Gazette, we would only be too happy to publish it? Our only request is that your contribution should not contain offensive statements towards member countries or religious beliefs and cultures of any population(s), nor harsh criticism of our Organizations. This is because the FAO Staff Coop is a social, cultural and sports entity and not political.

We look forward to meeting you on the pages of the FAO Casa Gazette and extend to you and your families best wishes for 2011.

Remember, the FAO CASA Gazette belongs to everyone!

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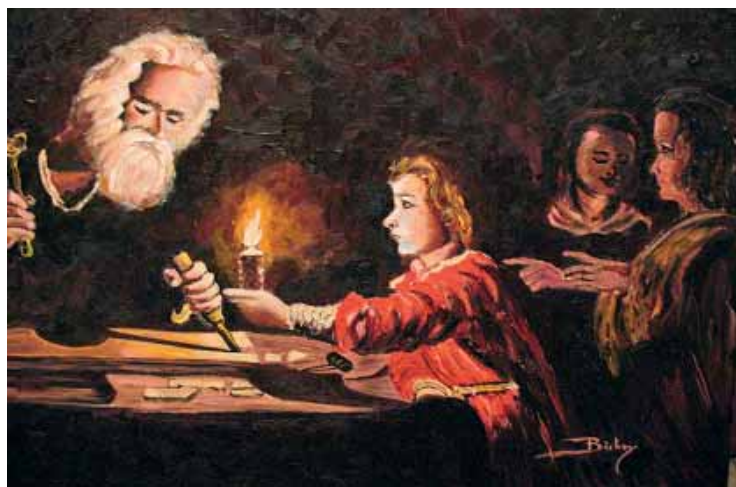
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Il Lavoro Nobilita

*“...And what is it to work with love? ... It is to sow
Seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy,
Even as if your beloved were to eat the fruit!”*

by Fahmi Bishay



*Figure 1. Carpentry labor: love made visible.
Painting by Fahmi Bishay after the Italian Master: Bartolomeo E. Murillo, (1650).
Oil on canvas (50X70 cm)*

“Il Lavoro Nobilita” is an Old Italian proverb meaning: **“Labor ennobles you”**. (According to Webster’s Dictionary, *ennoble* means **“to raise to the rank of nobility”**.) This wonderful Italian proverb applies to all kinds of (moral) labor from a head of state to a street sweeper. It is an absolute concept.

While the author of this article fully endorses the proverb and admires its inclusiveness, he, however, wishes to

postulate that the proverb is actually true only when labor is performed with **love and affection**. To appreciate this premise, let us see what Kahlil Gibran said about the nature and scope of **working with love**.

In 1923 Gibran wrote: *“...Work (labor) is love made visible. ... You work that you may keep pace with the earth and the soul of the earth.... When you work you are a flute through whose heart the whispering of the hours turns to music.... When you work you fulfill a*

¹ Kahlil Gibran, "The Prophet"; First published in 1923; Reprinted One hundred and thirty-six times; Alfred-A-Knopf, Inc, New York, 2003.

part of earth's further dream assigned to you when that dream was born. And in keeping yourself with labor you are in truth loving life, And to love life through labor is to be intimate with life's inmost secret."

An outstanding example of work with love is Saint Joseph's labour in teaching carpentry to Jesus Christ (Figure 1). In the painting you can see Saint Joseph working the wood with his own hands while young Jesus Christ holds the candle for light. Observe the beauty, dignity, love and determination in the face of Saint Joseph with nobility written all over his face. And observe the young Jesus holding the candle and looking up with kindness, respect, admiration and love to the Master: Saint Joseph. During all his life on planet earth, Jesus has laboured with love in teaching man how to love your enemy, in curing the sick, in raising the dead, and ultimately in sacrificing his life to save humanity. It is in our deeds and labour in trying to follow this magnificent model that our labour can ennoble us.

Figure 3 shows another example of work with love. In the painting the young man is fetching the water for his lover. She is holding her jar and longing for her friend's gift of life.

While work with love ennoble you, work **without love is disastrous**. Gibran further declared that: "... and if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better that you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy. For if you bake bread with indifference, you bake a bitter bread that feeds but half man's hunger. And if you grudge the crushing of the grapes, your grudge distils a poison in the wine.

And if you sing though as angels, and



*Figure 2. Even crushing grapes must be performed with love and affection lest the wine will be sour:
(A Photograph by Fahmi Bishay.)*

love not the singing, you muffle man's ears to the voices of the day and the voices of the night" (Ibid p.25).

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La letteratura orale e la leggenda dei Baoulé

di *Flavia Carbonetti*

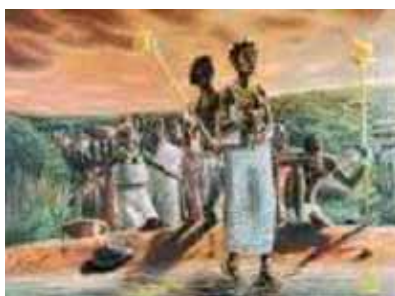
(da alcuni scritti di mio padre
Mario Carbonetti)



In un mondo nel quale internet e la telefonia mobile hanno raggiunto i più reconditi angoli del pianeta, dove gli scienziati confermano che i viaggi nel tempo non sono un'utopia, dove il teletrasporto è già una realtà e la meccanica quantistica è di pubblico dominio sembrerebbe anacronistico parlare di letteratura orale. Invece, conoscere ed apprezzare questa forma di trasmissione del sapere che, per molti popoli, è stata un'importante mezzo di comunicazione, non può che farci assaporare una tradizione preziosa, per non dimenticare; perché l'uomo che dimentica perde la sua identità ed anche la sua anima.

La leggenda dei Baoulé è un brano, che racconta la storia della migrazione di un'importante tribù della Costa d'Avorio ed appartiene alla letteratura orale, mezzo di espressione tra i più importanti dei popoli africani. Le civiltà africane sono civiltà orali, basate sul verbo-parola, sul ritmo e sul simbolo. La trasmissione del patrimonio culturale di ogni gruppo etnico è stato assicurato da alcuni individui specializzati, la cui memoria è stata coltivata e perfezionata nel corso di colloqui interminabili attorno ad un fuoco di brousse.

Il ritmo che si esprime nella parola, soprattutto nella parola scandita, che si esprime anche nel canto e nel gesto che accompagna le parole, è un mezzo mnemotecnico che permette di meglio conservare e trasmettere il messaggio culturale. L'eloquenza è accompagnata sempre dal gesto. Il narratore non si accontenta di elevare la voce, di abbassarla, di farla vibrare, di trasformarla secondo il personaggio: i suoi occhi ruotano, si sgranano e si chiudono, la sua testa dondola; le sue mani, le braccia, tutto il suo corpo partecipano alla recita e, al momento venuto, il suo pubblico troverà naturale che egli si alzi, che egli corra, che si butti a terra o si metta a danzare. Il narratore, questo professionista della parola, poteva essere lo stregone, oppure il trovatore-poeta, cantore e musicista.



LA LEGGENDA DEI BAOULE'

CORO:

*Toffè, akuman gne
Bongo, Bongo akuman gne
Bongo, seya, akuman gne
Ehyè, ô akuman gne*

*Toffè, tu ne hai viste
Bongo, Bongo tu ne hai viste
Bongo, qui tu ne hai viste
Poveretto, tu ne hai viste*

NARRATORE:

Molto tempo fa viveva, ai bordi di una placida laguna, una tribù pacifica di nostri fratelli. I suoi giovani erano numerosi, nobili e coraggiosi, le sue donne erano belle e gioiose, e la loro regina, la regina Pokou, era la più bella tra le belle. Da molto tempo la pace era su di loro e anche gli schiavi, figli dei prigionieri dei tempi passati, erano felici accanto ai loro felici signori.

CORO:

*Mi houn Anò
Mi houn, Anò, blâ - ô
Ebolo nigué, mo ba gnan min*

*Marito mio, Anò
Marito mio, Anò vieni
I geni della boscaglia mi portano via*

NARRATORE:

Un giorno vennero i nemici numerosi come i filugelli. Bisognò abbandonare le capanne, le piantagioni, la laguna pescosa e abbandonare le reti, tutto, per fuggire. Essi partirono verso la foresta, lasciando sulle spine i loro pagni, poi le loro carni. Bisognò fuggire senza riposo e senza tregua, sempre tallonati dal feroce nemico. E la loro regina, la regina Pokou, marciava per ultima, portando suo figlio sulle spalle. Al loro passaggio la iena ghignava, l'elefante ed il cinghiale fuggivano, lo scimpanzé grugniva ed il leone stupito si teneva lontano dal loro cammino. Infine apparve la boscaglia, poi la savana e ancora una volta l'orda intonò il suo canto di esilio:

*Mi houn Anò
Mi houn Anò, blâ - ô
Ebolo nigué, mo ba gnan min*

Sfiniti, stremati, dimagriti, essi arrivarono verso sera ai bordi di un grande fiume, il cui corso si rompeva su enormi rocce. E il fiume muggiva, i flutti salivano sino alle cime degli alberi e di lassù ricadevano rombanti, mentre i fuggitivi erano paralizzati dalla paura. Costernati essi si guardavano gli uni gli altri. Era questa l'Acqua che li faceva vivere, l'Acqua, la loro grande amica? Un cattivo genio doveva averla eccitata contro di loro. Intanto i conquistatori si avvicinavano sempre di più. E, per la prima volta, lo stregone parlò: "l'Acqua è diventata cattiva – egli disse – ed essa non si calmerà se non quando gli avremo dato ciò che noi abbiamo di più caro." E il canto della speranza risuonò.

CORO:

*Ebe nin flê nin bâ
Ebe nin flê nin nân
Ebe nin flê nin dja'
Yapen'sè ni dja wali*

*Qualcuno chiama suo figlio
Qualcuno chiama sua madre
Qualcuno chiama suo padre
Le belle figlie si sposeranno*

NARRATORE:

E ciascuno diede i suoi braccialetti d'oro e di avorio e tutto ciò che aveva potuto salvare nella fuga. Ma lo stregone respinse tutto con i piedi ed indicò il giovane principe, il bambino di sei mesi: "Ecco – egli disse – ciò che noi abbiamo di più prezioso"

E la madre atterrita strinse il suo bimbo sul seno. Ma la madre era anche la regina e, dritta sull'orlo dell'abisso, essa levò il bambino sorridente al di sopra della testa e lo lanciò nell'acqua muggente.

Allora alcuni ippopotami, degli enormi ippopotami, emersero dalle acque e, ponendosi uno a fianco dell'altro formarono un ponte e, su questo ponte miracoloso, il popolo intero passò cantando:

*Ebe nin flê nin bâ
Ebe nin flê nin nân
Ebe nin flê nin dja'
Yapen'sè ni dja wali*

E la regina Pokou passò per ultima e trovò sull'altra riva il suo popolo prosternato. Ma la regina era anche madre ed ella poté dire soltanto "**Baoulé**" che vuole dire "il bambino è morto".

Era la regina Pokou ed il popolo conservò il nome di **Baoulé**.



La letteratura orale, di grande ricchezza, comprende forme quali i racconti, le favole e le leggende. Il racconto, sempre narrato di notte, mette in scena ora gli uomini, ora gli animali, più o meno umanizzati, che vivono in un mondo soffuso di meraviglia. La favola si rallaccia sempre agli animali e sottolinea per lo più una morale. La leggenda ha per base un fatto storico più o meno deformato dal tempo e dagli errori di trasmissione: essa è di un'importanza capitale in tutti i paesi a civiltà orale, perché essa racconta le origini delle tribù, le loro migrazioni, le loro relazioni nella guerra e nella pace, l'introduzione di nuove piante, di nuove tecniche, di nuovi prodotti, l'origine di diverse manifestazioni religiose e sociali, in poche parole tutto ciò che può ricostruire l'evoluzione della comunità. Essa è spesso pervasa di orrori, di sogni e di fantasia, ma in assenza di storia scritta diviene una sorgente di informazione da non disprezzare.

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Caribbean Poet wins TS Eliot Prize for Poetry ... Nobel laureate Derek Walcott has won the internationally prestigious TS Eliot Prize for Poetry for his collection “White Egrets”

(Source: from BBC Report)



St Lucian Nobel laureate poet Derek Walcott has won one of the most prestigious poetry prizes in the world. He scooped the TS Eliot Prize for Poetry on Monday 24 January for his 2010 collection “White Egrets”. Mr Walcott was chosen from a shortlist of ten authors.

The judges said they felt that his *White Egrets* was a moving, risk-taking and technically flawless book by a great poet. The collection covers difficult subjects such as the complex colonial legacy of the Caribbean but also the wonders of modern St Lucia - where Walcott was born eighty years ago and now lives. It also includes two poems written to United States president, Barack Obama.

Derek Walcott won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1992.

‘Sixty Years After’ by Derek Walcott

In my wheelchair in the Virgin lounge at Vieuxfort,
I saw, sitting in her own wheelchair,
her beauty
hunched like a crumpled flower,
the one whom I thought
as the fire of my young life would do her duty
to be golden and beautiful and young forever
even as I aged.

She was treble-chinned, old,
her devastating smile was netted in wrinkles,
but I felt the fever
briefly returning as we sat there, crippled, hating
time and the lie of general pleasantries.
Small waves still break against the small stone pier
where a boatman left me in the orange peace
of dusk, a half-century ago,
maybe happier being erect,
she like a deer in her shyness,

I stalking an impossible consummation;
those who knew us
knew we would never be together,
at least, not walking.
Now the silent knives from the intercom went through us.

*This poem is from *White Egrets* by Derek Walcott, published by Faber & Faber*

The virtues of Garlic

by Edith Mahabir



No one really knows the origins of garlic, where it was first cultivated although it has been grown in the Mediterranean region from ancient times, as recorded by the ancient Egyptians. Today it is grown in most temperate zones of the world. Garlic is renowned for its medicinal properties, for example it is used as a disinfectant for the respiratory organs, the intestine and to combat hypertension or high blood pressure. It is precious for its therapeutic virtues and its components include; water, protein, fats, carbohydrates, fibre and minerals such as arsenic, bromium, calcium, iron, phosphorus, iodio, magnesium, manganese, potassium, sodium, zinc, to name a few It also contains vitamins A, B, C, D and H.

Some examples of the use of garlic by ancient populations in Asia and the Mediterranean from records dating as far back as 1500 B.C. reflect pretty much present day usage and convictions. These include:

- Ancient India when garlic was used to reduce pain in the joints and treat fever.
- It was consumed in large quantities in Egypt and they attributed to it more than twenty therapeutic uses as listed in Ebers Code of 1550 B.C..
- The Greek historian, Herodotus, referred that the Egyptian pyramids were built by slaves who were fed with bread, onions and garlic.
- The Greek doctor of medicine, Hippocrates, who lived in the Fifth Century B.C. also studied the virtues and properties of garlic.
- The Jews after the Exodus from Egypt brought to the promised land in the Middle East the habit of flavouring food with garlic.
- The ancient Greeks were also large consumers of garlic, especially for flavouring bread, it was also customary for athletes participating in the Olympic Games to eat cloves of garlic before their competitions.

The Roman farmers and soldiers also consumed large quantities of garlic. The latter dedicated the plant to Mars, and before going into battle they would eat garlic as a stimulant The Naturalist, Plinio il Vecchio (23-79 A.D.), conducted indepth studies on the properties and therapeutic value of garlic, which was used as an antidote against poisons, and to treat stings and insect bites.



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During the Renaissance garlic lost a lot of its prestige because of its odour but in the last decades of the 1900s it recovered it among the knowledgeable public due to its numerous renowned therapeutic properties. This recognition continues unabated to the present day and it is widely used to prevent cardiovascular diseases, tumours, calcification of arteries, which is the major cause of heart attacks, strokes and circulatory problems caused by the increase of cholesterol in the blood.

The first scientific proof of the therapeutic value of garlic was recorded in 1858 when Louis Pasteur, French chemist and biologist, discovered its usefulness in blocking the reproduction of numerous types of harmful bacteria.

The only inconvenience of garlic is its strong odour and taste which, however, can be reduced by cooking; it maintains intact its properties although it reduces the acute taste. The pink variety is less strong. Garlic remains an indispensable condiment in cookery worldwide – it is used to flavour all types of meat, fish, seafood, mushrooms and most varieties of vegetables. It is often mixed with kitchen herbs such as parsley, rosemary, sage, oregano which are the most common.

A few simple recipes from Italy to demonstrate the wide use of garlic are presented below.

Spaghetti with garlic, oil and hot pepper

(Spaghetti aglio, olio e peperoncino)

Ingredients

1 glass extra virgin olive oil
4 cloves garlic
3 dried hot red peppers
chopped parsley
300 gr Spaghetti

Method: Pour the oil in a casserole with the crushed garlic cloves, and fry lightly until they begin to get a blonde colour. Discard the garlic and remove the casserole from the fire. When the oil becomes tepid add the chopped parsley and the finely chopped red peppers. Return to the fire and cook for another minute.



In the meantime cook the spaghetti in abundant salted water until it is *al dente* i.e. cooked but not too soft. Drain thoroughly and season with the desired amount of the warm sauce. Serve hot. This dish does NOT require parmesan cheese but should be eaten simply as it is.

This sauce can be bottled (tightly sealed) and kept in the refrigerator for up to 10 days and simply heated before use.

Salsa verde (Green sauce)

Ingredients

1 bunch parsley
 1 large cloves garlic
 2 salted anchovies
 2 slices toast bread
 vinegar
 ½ tbsp capers
 1 spring onion
 1 boiled egg
 abundant extra virgin olive oil



Method: Mince finely the bunch of parsley leaves (eliminating the stems), together with the cloves of garlic; clean the anchovies removing the spine; soak the bread in the vinegar then squeeze out the moisture; finely chop the capers, spring onion and boiled egg yolk. Mix thoroughly all ingredients with a fork to a paste, add abundant olive oil to dilute the paste and form a sauce. Let it rest for at least half an hour before using as a condiment for boiled meats.

Beef Pizzaiola style

Ingredients

4 large slices beef
 2 cloves garlic
 250 gr canned tomatoes chopped
 olive oil
 dried oregano
 salt, black pepper



Method: Remove any fat and gristle from beef. In a large enough frying pan heat the oil and cook the slices of beef for 2 minutes each side. Season with salt, black pepper and oregano then add the chopped tomatoes. Simmer over medium heat for 5-7 minutes, turning over a couple times the slices of beef. By this time there should be a thick tasty sauce. Serve hot with bread of your choice.

Farmers salad

Ingredients

100 gr bacon chopped
 1 head radicchio salad
 2 cloves garlic
 1 hot pepper (also dried)
 olive oil
 wine vinegar
 salt, pepper



Method; Clean, wash thoroughly the radicchio and cut up in pieces; place in a salad bowl. Heat the olive oil in a casserole and fry the chopped bacon, garlic and hot pepper together until golden in colour. Add the vinegar according to your taste, mix well. Pour the condiments prepared over the salad, add salt and pepper mixing delicately. Leave the salad for 15 minutes before serving to allow flavours to penetrate.



Time after time

There are forms of co-operation that almost become a new tradition

Allianz 

Our case, for example.

De Besi - Di Giacomo offers to FAO, WFP and IFAD staff a precious opportunity allowing subscription of Allianz household insurance policies at very favourable conditions.

All events and damages related to your house - fire, plumbing water damages, theft, etc. - are covered with our household policy that offers you also third party liability coverage and legal protection. Our offer also includes motor insurance policies at advantageous conditions.

Allianz is a leading group in the insurance and financial markets, with approximately 7 million customers in Italy.

For more information

FAO

Room D.006 Office hours: 8.35 - 13.30 / 14.45 - 15.45
Telephone numbers: +39 06 570-56066, -52914, -54549, -55774
E-mail: dbg.ufficihao@debesidigiaco.com
Claims: with surveyor present on site weekly by appointment
Tel. +39 06 570-55773

WFP

Room Y101 Office hours: 9.00 - 12.15
Telephone numbers: +39 06 651-32924

IFAD

Tuesday/Thursday/Friday: Building 2 Room 808.
Office Hours 14.30 - 16.20



DE BESI - DI GIACOMO