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- THE PONTINE PLAIN AND ITS
LONG HISTORY

- THE FLOW OF THE SHAKTI

- LA NATURA CI CURA

- SPAGHETTI ALL'ARZILLA

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THE PONTINE PLAIN AND ITS LONG HISTORY



By Carlo Tasciotti

Former FAO staff member

The Pontine Plain, which has an area of 1 180 km² and an altitude of 50 m asl, is a part of southern Lazio, which on the Tyrrhenian side runs from Anzio to Terracina, while inland it is limited by the Volsci Mountains, a pre-Apennine hilly and mountainous, coastal and sub-coastal chain of southern Lazio, which includes the group of the Lepini Mountains, with its highest mountain named “La Semprevisa” (1 536 m), the Ausoni Mountains and the Aurunci Mountains. Along the coast of the said plain stands the historic Circeo Promontory, which in ancient centuries was considered an island. According to mythology, the sorceress Circe lived in the said promontory, which in the Odyssey is considered to be



the fabulous island of Eea. In fact, in Book X of the Odyssey it is written about Ulysses: “And we arrived at the island Eea: Circe lived there with beautiful curls, a terrible goddess with a human voice”. Circe is a figure of Greek mythology and is the daughter of the god Elios and Perseide, consequently she is the sister of Perse, Aete and Pasiphae, wife of the famous king of the island of Crete, Minos. So while living in a lonely place, the sorceress Circe had famous ancestors. The Odyssey is one of the two great Greek epics attributed to the poet Homer. It tells of the events concerning the hero Odysseus (or Ulysses, with the Latin name), after the end of the Trojan War, narrated in the Iliad.



The two poems represent the fundamental texts of Western classical culture and are still commonly studied in classical schools and read all over the world, both in the original version and in its numerous translations.

The time of the sorceress Circe can be hypothesized before the 9th century B.C., given that the Iliad and the Odyssey are presumably composed by scholars in that period. However, the oldest original of the Odyssey dates back to the end of the eighth century B.C., when the said text was used by the Athenian tyrant Pisistrato, in

the sixth century B.C., who decided to standardize and give written form to the poem that had hitherto been handed down almost exclusively orally.

Returning to the story of the Odyssey, Ulysses, after visiting the country of the Lestrigoni, that is Sardinia, along the Italian coast, arrives at the island of Eea, inhabited by the sorceress Circe. The island, covered by dense vegetation, seems uninhabited and Ulysses sends 22 members of



his crew under Eurilochus on reconnaissance; in a valley the men discover a palace from which a melodious voice resounds. All the men, with the exception of Eurilochus, enter the palace and are welcomed by the mistress, who is none other than the sorceress Circe. Men are invited to a banquet, but as soon as they taste the food they are transformed into pigs. Immediately afterwards Circe pushes them towards the stables and locks them up. Eurilochus quickly returns to the ship and tells Ulysses what had happened; then Ulysses decides to go to the sorceress to try to save his companions. Heading towards the palace he meets the god Hermes, that is the messenger of the gods, who reveals to him the secret to remain immune to Circe's spells: if he mixes a magical herb called moly into what Circe offers him to drink, he will not undergo any transformation.

Ulysses reaches the sorceress, who offers him a drink as she had done with her companions; but Ulysses, having taken the precaution of mixing the moly with the drink, does not transform into an animal. Ulysses threatens to kill Circe and she recognizes her own defeat and gives back human form to her companions and also to all the others transformed into ferocious beasts.



Ulysses spends a year with her, having a son, Telegono, by the sorceress, but also a daughter called Cassifone. Ulysses is forced to yield to the wishes of his companions, who want to return home, so he asks Circe for the best way back and the sorceress advises him to visit the underworld and consult the shadow of the soothsayer Tiresias, then Ulysses leaves with his ship.



In the Archaic period it seems that the first occupants of the Circeo promontory were the Pelasgians, Hellenic populations who migrated along the Mediterranean sea, but the foundation of the city, which is today San Felice Circeo, is traced back to the last King of Rome, namely Tarquinio the Superb in the year 519 A.C. The expansion of the Roman state took place through colonization, that is, the construction of cities in the conquered territories, but always regulated by laws and procedures. The lands were given to army veterans, or to the landless, to cultivate them. However, the founded city had to do so to limit the expansion of the nearby Volsci people from the mountains and control the expansion of the Carthaginians by sea.

The territory of the Circeo and the large neighboring plain were coveted by an estensive mughs over time, so there was a great interest in occupying it. In its physical structure, the Circeo promontory was also a source of extraction of alabaster since the time of the Etruscans and the ancient Romans; activity suspended in time, but resumed at the beginning of the sixteenth century and until the end of the eighteenth century for embellishments in the Roman basilicas of San Pietro, San Paolo and Santa Maria Maggiore.

The ancient peoples tried to justify events through the intervention of the gods. Legend has it that the swamp was the work of the goddess Juno, the queen of the gods, who out of jealousy wanted to punish the nymph Feronia who lived here and who was one of the many lovers of Jupiter, the king of the gods.

Almost all the territory of the Pontine area in ancient times was covered by marshes; later on some parts were dried up to obtain fertile land. The first historically verified reclamation attempt in the northern part dates back to the time of the Latins and there is evidence of the discovery of an extensive drainage system with underground tunnels. In fact, the Latins and the Volsci founded several cities in the plain, among which tradition has reported the names of Suessa Pometiae, Satricum, Ulubrae (Ninfa) and Tiberia (among the municipalities of Cisterna, Cori, Sermoneta).

In the middle of the Pontine swamp ran the Via Appia, the Roman road that connected Rome to Brundisium (Brindisi), one of the most important ports in ancient Italy, from which the trade routes to Greece and the East originated; considered by the Romans the regina viarum (queen of the streets) the Via Appia was 14 feet wide, just over 4 meters, a measure that made it possible for two wagons to pass at the same time, to which another 4 meters were added for two sidewalks; each mile was marked by a cylindrical stone that reported the distance from Rome, located at Porta Capena, near the FAO building.



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In 204 B.C. the consul Marco Cornelio Cetego had a canal dug parallel to the Via Appia, to protect the consular road from flooding and instability.

When Julius Caesar gained power, he conceived the gigantic project to divert the course of the Tiber towards the Agro Pontino as far as Terracina, draining the marshes and at the same time providing Rome with a safer port than Ostia. After his death the project was

ridiculed in the Senate by Cicero. In the imperial age, the Romans managed to wrest more land from the swamp and allowed the birth of some centers along the Via Appia Antica that crossed the area. However, interventions on this road by the emperors Nerva, Traiano, Caracalla, Septimius Severus and Constantine are documented.

Much of the current Agro Pontino, after the barbarian invasions, returned to swamp despite the attempts to save the reclamation carried out by King Theodoric the Great. In the Middle Ages the assaults of the Saracens pushed most of the population to take refuge in the neighboring mountains.

In the Middle Ages the Pontine marshes became a fief of the Caetani family, originally from the city of Gaeta, whose Pontine branch was based in Sermoneta and Cisterna. In the fifteenth century, Pope Martin V approved a reclamation project.

Leonardo da Vinci in the sixteenth century set the task of reclaiming the Pontine marshes; the project, although approved by Pope Leo X, never went through due to the Pope's death. The system studied by Leonardo is extraordinarily correct and was the point of inspiration for the subsequent reclamation projects of the fascist period, which led to the creation of the new cities of Littoria (later Latina), Aprilia, Pomezia, Sabaudia and Pontinia. Some 4 701 farms were built and assigned to the Opera Nazionale Combattenti and to settlers from Veneto and Friuli. At the beginning of the sixteenth century,



Pope Leo X granted his brother Giuliano de' Medici the reclamation of the Agro Pontino at his own expense, in exchange for ownership of the restored lands. The new Pope Sixtus V conceived a general reclamation plan that he entrusted to the architect Ascanio Fenizi of Urbino. In 1637, under Urban VIII, a Dutch company headed by Nicolò Cornelio de Witt took over the reclamation work, which would not begin due to the death of the concessionaire. In the eighteenth century Pope Pius VI conducted impressive hydraulic works by creating a network of canals that still exist (Linea Sisto and Linea Pio) and reclaimed most of the marshes in the area of Sezze and Terracina. In 1775 Pius VI approved a master plan inspired by the experiences of the Tuscan Maremma led by Leonardo Ximenes. It was also proposed to dig a large canal along the Via Appia, navigable up to Terracina; the works began in 1777, under the direction of the hydraulic engineer Gaetano Rappini. The works lasted twenty years, with the employment of thousands of workers. Once the territory was freed from the marshes, the drainage of rainwater was ensured through small channels called Fosse Miliari, because they were dug at a distance of one mile from each other. With the French Revolution, the works suffered a sharp slowdown.

In the following centuries the few areas free from water became the site of small provisional villages, consisting of typical straw and wooden huts, called “lestre”, inhabited by peasants and shepherds. Many of them died from malaria. Every year in autumn the cowboys organized an impressive cattle fair and to attract customers they organized shows, rodeos and acrobatic games.

The forests also became a refuge for brigands fleeing the papal police. In the eighteenth century, a provision of the Pope effectively regularized this situation by granting the right of asylum to the brigands who hid in the surroundings of the castle of Conca (today Borgo Montello), as long as they no longer moved from the area.

The boundless forests also attracted many nobles of the capital, who, as guests of the Caetani, delighted in long hunting trips, as well as visitors from all over Europe, among the most famous, the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

In 1871 the Agro entered the Kingdom of Italy. After the Unification, the new government presented numerous reclamation projects which however remained on paper. At the beginning of the twentieth century a project that provided for government funding to private individuals who had started the reclamation of their land caused a financial scandal, with waste of public money and corruption: it was the so-called “scandal of the Pontine”.

In 1924 an impressive reclamation work began on the entire territory previously known as the Pontine Marshes. The fascist regime in 1926 threatened the appropriation and reported the first successes. Large-scale reclamation only began in 1928, when the government subsidized the landowners and the agricultural bourgeoisie in the area, paying up to 75% of their costs.

The workers were initially recruited for the most part from poor populations in Northern Italy (especially from Veneto), often without any agricultural experience. In Mussolini's opinion, the works were progressing too slowly, so in 1931 the project was entrusted to the Opera Nazionale Combattenti - ONC. In the years preceding the management by the ONC, the reclamation works took place exclusively between November and April to limit the malaria risk. Under the ONC, however, the reclamation continued throughout the year and since then began a hitherto unknown number of victims.

During the Second World War (1944) the German troops, in an attempt to delay the advance of the allies, had deliberately damaged and destroyed many reclamation works, causing the flooding of hectares of land, causing in many areas also the dramatic return of the malaria.

Even today, the persistence of the state of agricultural land rather than swamp is only possible thanks to electricity; the network of drainage and drainage channels is in fact served by numerous water pumping systems which allow the water to flow by gravity towards the sea.

The active reclamation system consists of main collection channels, i.e. the largest, which collect the water coming from the secondary channels, of smaller dimensions, which in turn collect the water coming from the small minor canals; all together these canals constitute a vast water collection grid which actually replaces the “diffuse collector” of water constituted by the pre-existing swamp, which collected all the water coming from the nearby hills and mountains.

In some cases the drainage channels may not have the necessary slope to bring the water to the sea, being 2-3 meters below the sea level itself, so at a certain point they are interrupted by the de-watering systems, which raise the waters for those few meters and reintroduce them in the continuation of the channel (or in another adjacent channel) which, starting from a higher altitude, can finally have the necessary slope to carry the water to the sea.

Even today you can see the particular richness of the flora and fauna of the Circeo National Park, when you visit its forest, a very rich and extremely varied ecosystem, declared a “Biosphere Reserve” by Unesco. It can be visited all year round along the numerous paths, both pedestrian and for cycling, that cross it. The distance from Rome is 80 km.

THE FLOW OF THE SHAKTI

Dedicated to Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli



by Janine Claudia Nizza (Text and drawings)

Janine has been teaching Yoga Flow in Rome since 2002. She is Yoga Alliance Registered International ERYT 500 PLUS since 2019 and Graduate in Painting from Academy of Art of Rome since 1992. She has authored many yoga articles for the Fao Casa Gazette, Vivere Lo Yoga, Yoga Pills, Yoga Journal Italia, Yoga-Magazine.it and Yogapedia.it (check her article: Vinyasa Flow Yoga)

FLOW IN YOGA

The concept of FLOW permeates nature and its creatures: the gazelle's leap is always graceful both in flight and in landing, the flower blossoms petal after petal expanding its corolla with the same harmony of the fragrance it emanates; there is no function without beauty.

Out-of-tune notes and awkward movements are the aberrations of blocks; being fluid and in tune means "retuning" through listening. Postural imbalances and traumas cause stiffness in the body and fears cause mental immobility.

Through yoga practice, it is possible to recognize and overcome them: there is no action without reflection, and between them, there is reciprocity and interdependence.

The first step is to become aware that an inner decision propagates like a WAVE in the surrounding environment, leading to change and knowledge of both. The asana and its breath are cathartic, they change matter and spirit by modifying the body/mind.



Nadis Mudra

Careful observation of the flow in yoga leads to identifying the **Flow of Shakti** and under its "effect" everything we think, write, say and do propagates with harmony and naturalness. It also makes it possible to perform "fluidly" every asana, from the simplest to the most complex as Mother Nature is enlightening; admirable and measured whether in the chirping of a sparrow or a stormy sky.

KUNDALINI AND SHAKTI

Kundalini literally means “curl of a lock of the beloved’s hair” but in yoga the term is used to define “the flow of energy and awareness that exists within each of us”. Shakti, literally means “energy” and “power”, the term is used in some texts of the Tantric tradition, represents the power of God to give rise to the phenomenal world and the conscious plane of Creation.

When the Kundalini begins to ascend to the higher chakras its name becomes Shakti: “Personified Divine Energy”; this is identified as “dynamic”, its spiral movement, along the spine and the areas of the brain connected to it, travel with a pranic movement. Elise Everarda says:”... Ignoring spiritual growth is **Tamasic**, glorifying the sexual self is **Rajasic**, gradually awakening the Kundalini is **Sattvic**.”

The **Flow of Shakti** is an attempt to describe the “movement” of its passage through the various marvellous and fascinating “stages” crossed by the “powerful energy” along the main Nadis Sushumna (Energetic Channel) that crosses longitudinally the spinal column.

With the practice of the Shakti Flow Vinyasa, one embarks on a “yogic journey” towards those awakening sensations that the Asanas and the Ujjayi breath bring through awareness flowing Prana in the 7 Chakras.

THE KUNDALINI CHUTE

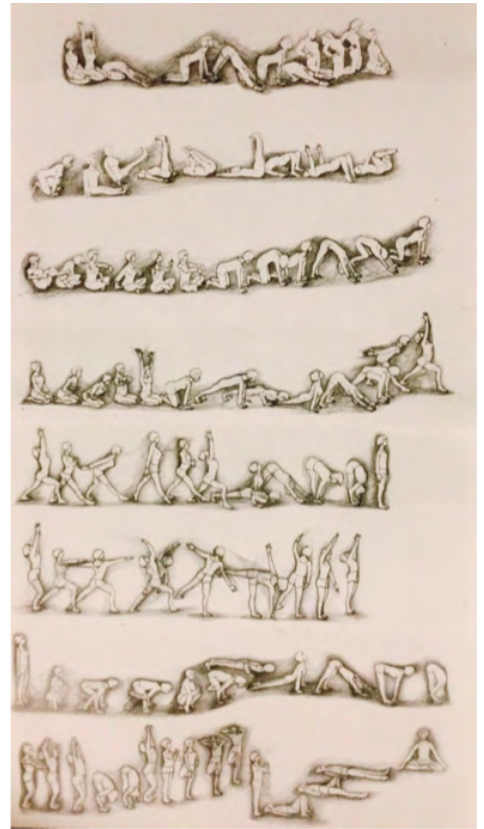
Chakra: **Muladhara**/ Sense connected: **Smell**/ Element: **Earth**

Imagine a warm burrow dug under the roots of a tree in the earth, the light does not penetrate but it is cosy, external noises are barely heard; it resembles a mother’s womb, protected, reassuring.

Viparita karani

Gently awaken the Serpent coiled at the base of the Vertebral Column. The body is inverted but without effort, the warmth we feel from the pelvis flowing towards the chest and head is the “movement” induced by the posture to our “sleeping snake” at the bottom of our Spine. With our eyes closed we visualise Kundalini awakening, invited to ascend towards Svadisthana Chakra and mentally repeat the Beejamaantra LAM.

Open Flow: well-being, joy, correct evacuation, feeling at home in the world, love for life.



The flow of Shakti Vinyasa

SWINGING THE SHAKTI

Chakra: **Svadishtana**/ Sense connected: **Taste**/ Element : **Water**

A silvery stream among the rocks drags the leaves with it, meeting steep beds, tree trunks and stones. It never stops, it always flows over obstacles: it is an excellent vehicle and teaches us to let every emotion flow.

Marjarasana (cat & dog tailbones tilt)

The wave created by the movement in posture winds from the pelvis to the entire Spine: it stimulates the Shakti and “cradles” it.

Muladara Chakra participates to the thrust: we perceive the dance of the navel that rises and falls fulfilled by Shakti. We mentally repeat the Beejamantra VAM.

Open Flow: positive emotions, empathy, joy in contact, contentment, warm body.

AGNI VINYASA

Chakra: **Manipura**/ Sense connected: **Sight**/ Element: **Fire**

Fire is the fire that lights up the night and warms the day. It can melt metals and forge tools. Its heat rises upwards; if governed it is useful for our lives, but if it spreads unchecked it destroys everything it encounters, it teaches us the “alchemical” power to transform all elements and the Courage.

Virabhadrasana A

Arrange the Solar Plexus open, the arms towards the sky like swords of light: “a road sign” inviting the Shakti to follow the warm upward current.

We visualize its passage through the Diaphragm. We mentally chant the Beejamantra RAM.

Open Flow: Destiny is in our hands, we have the power of free will, we digest well, we manifest the courage within us, we protect the fragile creatures, our goals and intentions are adorned with grace.

SHAKTI FLOWS IN HALF-MOON

Chakra: **Anahata**/ Sense connected: **Touch**/ Element: **Air**

Among the artists who have best represented the wind, I have chosen for you Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli’s interpretation of Chopin’s Op. 35 in B minor. To learn to love, one must “die in the Ego”. Here the music turns into murmurs and whispers with sounds of rapid whirlwinds that seem to drag the leaves between the gravestones: a “listening picture” for a difficult element to represent. Air, as we know, is like Love, it cannot be trapped; it creates passages by opening doors, it blows on the sails of vessels, it supports the wings of those who fly, it pervades the immeasurable vastness.

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Ardha Chandrasana

Remaining balanced with the arms between Heaven and Earth, gracefulness of the element “Air” in the leg that rises to the height of the throat and directs the Shakti towards the fifth chakra; but it is in the fourth chakra that the first stage of spirituality resides. Flowing into the heart for the “balancing effect” of the posture, a mixture of compassion and unexpected joy crosses the chest and shoulder blades. Mentally repeat the Beejamaantra YAM.

Open Flow: generosity, happiness in giving, flexibility and adaptability, inner peace, optimism, healthy circulatory system and heart, harmony in everything.

NADA KRAMA

Chakra: **Vishuddhi**/ Sense connected: **Sound**/
Element: **Ether**

Sound can transcend Space and Time, a soft tone of voice can comfort. A thunder in the sky can frighten; the symphony of celestial spheres is divine joy, the “Ether” is Akasha, the source of Youth. The mind can radiate its light like a pure diamond.

Bakasana

Strong energetic support from the lower chakras, the head is aligned with the coccyx, Vishuddi Chakra in extension and Bindu Visarga in suspension: Shakti in his gait crosses the throat, receiving the Nectar of Regeneration. Beejamaantra: HAM.

Open Flow: Abundance of ideas, freedom and independence, gift of language that communicates fluidly, high personality, development of a strong Immune system; reaching the ability to realize one’s dreams and visions.

THIRD EYE DRUM

Chakra: **Ajna**/ Connected sense: **Mind**/ Element: **Light**

Light gives form to the colours that night hides, the energy lights up even the darkest places in the Universe; it is radiant and nourishes all Creation.

Utkatasana

It is not the force that supports the body, the forehead is relaxed, all the chakras are perpendicular to the floor, suspended and crossed by the Flow of Shakti similar to a comet that illuminates the Divine Eye: its beejamaantra is OM. Breathe slowly to maintain

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the grip of Uddiyana Bandha so that the weight of the body “roots” in the soles of the feet. While bending the torso in Uttanasana, strike the hands on the mat as if it were a drum.
Open Flow: The gift of foresight, clairaudience and harmony between the Feminine and Masculine opposites. Knowledge of the true Self. Balance in all even organs of the body, development of intuition, Telepathy gift and Awareness at the highest level.

SHIVA & SHAKTI DANCE

Chakra: **Sahasrara**/ beyond Senses and Elements

“Form is Emptiness, Emptiness is Form”. Point of no return, as in the Event Horizon in physics. Union with all planes of Existence. The place where Matter is transformed into Light, wordless communion and where Shiva and Shakti dance merge into the ONE.

Vrkhasana

With one foot off the yoga mat and the balance of the body resting on the one rooted on the ground, please hold the hands in Crown Mudra; the dristi is Nasagrai (the tip of the nose). Stability wins over precariousness. We are the “original cause”: it is the last destination of the Flow of Shakti that leads back home the Beings to the Universe. Beejamanta OM.

Open Flow: Flow is a means of moving Kundalini towards the understanding of its original nature, when Prakriti and Purusha were not separate. This propulsive “tail of the Flow” (similar to the spermatozoon) once it reaches the highest point fertilises Shiva and Shakti fulfilling its manifold “reunifying” task.

For details of the Vinyasa Sequence, accompanied by hand-drawn images, we invite you to also read the article published in original version in the following yoga portals:

<https://www.yoga-magazine.it/2021/04/il-flow-della-shakti/>

<https://www.yogapills.it/vinyasa-il-flow-della-shakti/>

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MOSTRA FOTOGRAFICA: L'ALBA A BAGAN



di Alessandra Modesti

Funzionario FAO, laureata in Scienze Politiche indirizzo Politico-Internazionale, specializzata in geopolitica e Scienze Forensi. Appassionata di fotografia

ALESSANDRA MODESTI
L'ALBA A BAGAN
MOSTRA FOTOGRAFICA

RACCONTO FOTOGRAFICO DI UN VIAGGIO IN MYANMAR
REPORTAGE IN BIANCO E NERO CON STAMPE FINE-ART SU CARTA BARITATA IN SALI D'ARGENTO

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E SOLO SU PRENOTAZIONE (DALLE 10 ALLE 19) - SARA' PRESENTE L'AUTRICE

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RACCONTO FOTOGRAFICO DI UN VIAGGIO IN MYANMAR
REPORTAGE IN BIANCO E NERO CON STAMPE FINE-ART SU CARTA BARITATA IN SALI D'ARGENTO
La mia mostra vuole essere un omaggio alla popolazione di questo incantevole paese in un momento tanto difficile. E' trascorso poco più di un anno dal mio viaggio in Myanmar e il ricordo di questa terra e del suo popolo è ancora vivo.

Le fotografie scattate su pellicola in bianco e nero rievocano paesaggi mozzafiato e il misticismo di una cultura millenaria. Chi ha fatto un viaggio in Birmania conosce bene quella sensazione di pace interiore e stupore che trasmette questa terra. La mostra vuole essere un fermo immagine sulla vita di questo paese pochi giorni prima della pandemia e del golpe militare. Spero che presto potremo tornare a visitare questi luoghi di straordinaria bellezza e rivedere i templi tingersi d'oro alle prime luci dell'alba.



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LA NATURA CI CURA

Quell'altissima armonia e sintonia che si crea tra noi e la natura è fonte di benessere



di Enrica Romanazzo

Sostiene e promuove da anni le attività della FAO STAFF COOP. Nel contempo segue ed organizza eventi in difesa dell'ambiente e per la valorizzazione del territorio salentino



Passeggiare tra i boschi o sulla spiaggia, osservare i colori del mare o di un tramonto suscitano emozioni e sensazioni benefiche che rigenerano corpo e spirito. La natura ci regala anche rimedi naturali che aiutano il nostro organismo in tantissimi modi. Esistono erbe che accelerano il metabolismo, favoriscono la digestione, possiedono proprietà antinfiammatorie ed antiossidanti. Noi siamo quello che mangiamo e per favorire il nostro benessere dobbiamo nutrirci quanto più possibile con i prodotti della terra. Frutta, verdure, prodotti biologici ad andamento stagionale sono quello che serve per un'alimentazione sana e disintossicante. Uno stile di vita sano caratterizzato da alimentazione corretta ed attività fisica ci aiuta ad affrontare meglio le insidie di tempi in cui gli attacchi virali rischiano di compromettere la nostra salute psicofisica.

In tempi di pandemia ho avuto tempo per documentarmi ed esplorare le proprietà benefiche di piante che fungono da antibiotici e cortisonici naturali come l'ALOE dalle proprietà immunizzanti, antibatteriche antimicotiche, antiparassitarie, depurative, antiinfiammatorie, disintossicanti. L'Aloe aumenta le difese del sistema immunitario, aiuta a metabolizzare gli enzimi degli altri alimenti ed è efficacissima contro le intolleranze alimentari.



Degna di attenzione è la QUERCETINA, una molecola di origine naturale che sembra inibire il Sars-CoV-2. Uno studio internazionale a cui ha partecipato anche il Cnr ha rilevato infatti che la quercetina funge da inibitore specifico per il virus responsabile del Covid-19, mostrando un effetto destabilizzante sulla 3CLpro, una delle proteine fondamentali per la replicazione del virus. Lo studio è pubblicato sull'International journal of biological macromolecules.

LA QUERCETINA

La quercetina è un flavonoide ampiamente distribuito nel regno vegetale: la troviamo nella frutta, nella buccia e nella scorza di mele e cipolle, nel cacao, nei frutti rossi e nei broccoli. Fonti particolarmente ricche sono gli agrumi, l'olio di oliva, le cipolle, il vino rosso, il tè verde.

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I flavonoidi furono scoperti dallo scienziato ungherese Albert Szent-Györgyi, lo scopritore della vitamina C (vinse il premio Nobel per la medicina e la fisiologia nel 1937), il quale osservò che i flavonoidi hanno un effetto sinergico con la vitamina C.

La quercetina è il flavonoide maggiormente utilizzato per i disturbi metabolici e infiammatori e la principale attività attribuita è quella antiossidante.

Essa infatti contribuisce a ridurre la formazione di radicali liberi e sostanze pro-infiammatorie rivelandosi di fatto un prezioso alleato per la nostra salute.

Inoltre, ad essa vengono attribuite proprietà vasoattive in quanto aumenta la resistenza dei capillari e ne regolano la loro permeabilità.



Numerosi studi scientifici dimostrano inoltre che la quercetina possiede le seguenti attività: antinfiammatoria, anti-estrogenica, nella riduzione della formazione del tessuto endometriale, nella riduzione significativa della pressione sistolica in pazienti borderline, in particolare se in sovrappeso, anti-aterosclerotica mediante l'inibizione dell'ossidazione delle LDL e il conseguente danno endoteliale arterioso, di protezione cardiovascolare, antivirale, immunomodulatoria, antiallergica, gastroprotettiva.

I CIBI RICCHI DI QUERCETINA

In commercio sono disponibili diversi integratori di quercetina, ma è possibile aumentare l'assunzione di questo flavonoide estremamente benefico per l'organismo anche attraverso il consumo di cibi integrali, che forniscono anche sostanze fitochimiche, vitamine e minerali aggiuntivi che lavorano in sinergia per offrire benefici bonus.

Per aumentare il livello di quercetina, è consigliabile l'assunzione quotidiana di una varietà di questi alimenti:

- **capperi:** alimento con il più alto contenuto di quercetina. Ne contiene 181 mg /100 g. Ricchi di flavonoidi, sono benefici per il metabolismo del colesterolo, poiché ne abbassano i livelli nel sangue, svolgono un'azione antinfiammatoria e antitrombotica;
- **cipolla rossa:** contiene vitamina C, ferro, vitamina E, selenio, iodio, zinco e magnesio. Diuretica e depurativa. La cipolla rossa contiene 20 mg/100 g di quercetina;
- **mele rosse:** ricche di vitamine, ferro, calcio, sodio, potassio, fosforo, zinco, magnesio e rame. Contenuto di quercetina: 4,4 mg /100 g;
- **uva:** il frutto con il più alto apporto di flavonoidi, con i frutti di bosco, specie mirtilli (18 mg/100 g) e ribes nero (6 mg/100 g);



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- **ciliegie:** ricche di vitamine C e A, contribuiscono al buon funzionamento delle difese immunitarie. Contengono inoltre acido folico, calcio, potassio, magnesio, fosforo e flavonoidi come la quercetina;
- **scalogno:** contiene iodio e antiossidanti, utili per la salute della tiroide e del cervello, e contro il colesterolo;
- **cavolo, broccoli e cavoletti di Bruxelles:** contengono zolfo, calcio, selenio, magnesio, potassio, fosforo, rame, sodio, vitamine del gruppo B, tra cui l'acido folico, e vitamina C, che rende facilmente assorbibile anche la vitamina E. Hanno proprietà antinfiammatorie e antiossidanti, che rallentano l'invecchiamento cellulare. I broccoli, ad esempio, contengono 3,2 mg/100 g di quercetina;
- **pomodori:** i pomodori coltivati biologicamente hanno fino al 79% in più di quercetina, rispetto alla frutta convenzionale. Contengono potassio, fosforo, vitamina C, vitamina K e folati. Il colore rosso dei pomodori è dovuto a un antiossidante, il licopene;
- **agrumi:** ricchi di calcio, potassio, ferro e fosforo, vitamine A, B e C, flavonoidi, antiossidanti, terpeni e pectine.
- **peperoni verdi e gialli:** ricchi di quercetina, solanina, potassio, beta-carotene, fibre. Hanno potere depurativo e diuretico;
- **noci, mandorle e pistacchi:** ricchi anche di acidi grassi Omega3.

Attenzione alla carenza di Omega 3 e a come si può manifestare.

- **asparagi:** gli asparagi cotti hanno un concentrato più elevato di quercetina, rispetto a quelli crudi;
- **grano saraceno:** il cereale che ha il quantitativo più alto di quercetina. Ha anche basso indice glicemico e tante fibre, caratteristiche che lo rendono adatto all'alimentazione dei diabetici, e stimolano il regolare transito intestinale.
- **tè nero e verde:** contengono tannini e composti polifenolici con proprietà astringenti - responsabili della sensazione di secchezza delle fauci dopo aver bevuto una tazza di tè - antisettiche e disinfettanti;
- **infuso al sambuco:** il sambuco contiene flavonoidi (sambucina), acidi grassi, tannini e polifenoli. È indicato per contrastare i sintomi del raffreddore e le infezioni alle vie respiratorie.

Le mele e gli agrumi aiutano anche a preservare la salute dei denti.



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SPAGHETTI ALL'ARZILLA

A traditional recipe of the Lazio region



by Flavia Beniamini and Mattia Maria Rossi

They are two Chefs who have had the luck, the audacity and the opportunity to travel the world doing what they love and have always wanted to do: cooking. After working for more than ten years in major international restaurants, they returned to Rome for the birth of their little Romeo and to undertake the activity of Chef at Home with the creation of the Flavorossi project

Welcome back to our monthly gastronomic column that allows us to travel together through the regions of Italy, to learn about and rediscover the historical dishes of the Italian tradition.

The dish we will talk about today is a dish of popular origin that was consumed throughout

Lazio, a dish that, as often happens in preparations that use “poor” raw materials, tries to exploit all the strengths of the ingredients, without having any waste.



Today we will go together to get to know Spaghetti with Arzilla (or Razza, Ray or Sprightly in English)

The Arzilla has always been a very common fish on the coasts of Lazio and, as long as the Tiber represented a source of livelihood for the people of Lazio, it was also very present in the blond Roman river.

In the past it was customary to cook soup on Fridays and in particular on Good Friday and Christmas Eve, considered “lean” days according to Catholic religious precepts. It was the custom of Roman housewives to cook the leftovers of pasta, which at the time was sold loose, in the broth of the arzilla. The soup, however, did not have a great flavor, so, to make it tastier, it was traditional to add Roman broccoli, different from common cauliflower both in shape and taste, which gave the soup a very particular flavor and smell.

As often happens with historical dishes, reproductions of this iconic fish soup can be found throughout Italy. Each recipe has small structural changes, due to climatic differences and the raw materials available in the different regions, with changes, sometimes radical, even in the name:

- *Clavellado in Liguria;*
- *Baracola in Veneto;*
- *Razza di scoglio in Toscana;*
- *Spinosa Macchiata in the Marche;*
- *Rascia in Abruzzo;*
- *Rascia Petrosa in Campania;*
- *Pigara Petrosa in Puglia;*
- *Picaredda Spinusa or Petruzza in Sicilia;*
- *Rasciuna de funnu or Capitana Scritta in Sardinia*



Despite the spread nationwide, the Broccoli and Arzilla soup is one of those dishes that invariably moistens the eyes of true Romans. To the point that the famous actor Aldo Fabrizi dedicated a poem to it:



*Sta minestra barsamica de pesce,
specie si er brodo è fatto co' l'arzilla,
ve basta solo d'assaggia 'na stilla
pé di: "Mò panza mia poi pure cresce!"
È peggio de 'na droga sconosciuta
che intossica er palato e nun dà tregue:
tutti li venerdì, 'na ricaduta.*

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Traditional Spaghetti all' Arzilla

Ingredients for the pasta:

- 1 kg arzilla
- 500 gr broccoli
- 150 gr spaghetti
- 1 pz celery stick
- 1 pz onion
- 1 pz carrots
- 1 pz garlic cloves
- parsley
- whole peeled tomatoes
- anchovies
- extra virgin olive oil
- salt
- pepper



For the recipe for the broccoli and Arzilla soup, put the spruce in a saucepan with the onion, carrot and celery cut into pieces. Cover with water and cook for about 30 minutes. Fry in a saucepan with a drizzle of oil, 1 clove of crushed garlic and chopped parsley, 2 anchovy fillets and 3 peeled tomatoes into small pieces. Season with salt and pepper and add the broccoli florets and let them flavor, then wet them with the cooking broth of the arzilla, filter it, and cook over low heat for 10 minutes. Add the broken spaghetti and cook them, adding more broth if necessary, for another 10 minutes. Complete the soup with the Arzilla pulp, more parsley and a few lightly seared broccoli florets.

Our reinterpretation

This time we decided to completely overturn the original recipe, while keeping the ingredients that make up the dish. Today we offer you a Tagliolino all'Arzilla with Roman broccoli sauce, garlic crumble and lime zest (the only ingredient not present in the traditional recipe).

Ingredients for Roman broccoli sauce:

- 200 gr of Roman broccoli
- 20 gr of extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 clove of garlic without a core
- 1/2 chili pepper without seeds
- 50 gr of water

In a pot of boiling salted water, blanch the Roman broccoli cut into florets for 5 minutes, drain and in a pan sauté oil, garlic and chili pepper over low heat.

Then add the blanched broccoli and water, raise the heat, and cook for 5 minutes. Finally put everything in the blender, and then pass with a knitting strainer.



Ingredients for egg pasta:

- 100 gr of flour
- 50 gr of whole egg

Form a volcano with the flour and place the egg in the center, slowly incorporate the flour into the egg with a fork. Once the dough is blended, continue to knead it with the palms of your hands until the dough is smooth, use a damp cloth and squeeze it very tightly, then let it rest for an hour.

Roll out the dough into a thin sheet, put a little flour on top so that the dough does not stick on itself and roll it up; at this point with a sharp knife cut the pasta of the thickness you prefer (we recommend using the pasta machine to facilitate the process).



Ingredients for the oil and garlic crumble

- 1 head of garlic cut in half
- 100 grams of extra virgin olive oil
- 200 grams of stale bread

Put the oil and garlic in a saucepan and bring everything to 70 degrees, leave at temperature for 30 minutes.

Take the stale bread, clean it from the crust and cut it into regular cubes, season it with 50 grams of garlic oil and put it in the oven for 20 minutes at 140 degrees, whisk it coarsely in a blender and put it back in the oven for 10 minutes always at 140 degrees.

Ingredients for the arzilla broth

- 1 Arzilla
- 1/2 onion
- 1/2 carrot
- 1/2 clove of garlic
- 100 ml of white wine

Once you have cleaned the bone from the Arzilla, take the fillets and cut them into large cubes which we will use at the end to cook the pasta.

Cut the bones into pieces and toast them in the oven for 15 minutes at 200 degrees.

In a saucepan, put a drizzle of olive oil, add the browned bones and vegetables; once the vegetables begin to wilt, blend with the white wine, evaporate the alcohol and add the water.

Bring to a boil, lower the heat and cook for 1 hour, strain and continue to cook over low heat until it has reduced by half.

Start cooking the pasta in a pot of salted water, in the meantime, put a drizzle of garlic oil in a pan and sear the Arzilla cubes well; once well browned, blend with the Arzilla broth and let it reduce further. When the pasta is still “al dente” (if you don’t want to use tagliolini, we recommend, as in the original recipe, to use spaghetti) put it in the pan with the arzilla and its broth, reduce until the starch of the pasta has pulled the broth of the arzilla, forming a thicker cream.

Once the pasta is well whipped, put a spoonful of Roman broccoli sauce in a bowl and spread it slightly.

Roll the noodles / spaghetti to form a nest and place the Arzilla cubes on and around the nest, sprinkle everything with the garlic crumble and finish with a grating of lime zest.

Enjoy your meal!





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