

# CIVILTÀ DELLA TAVOLA

ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA



**ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA**  
A CULTURAL INSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ITALY  
FOUNDED IN 1953 BY ORIO VERGANI

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## L'ACCADEMIA ITALIANA DELLA CUCINA

FOUNDED IN 1953 BY ORIO VERGANI  
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DINO VILLANI, EDOARDO VISCONTI DI MODRONE,  
WHIT MASSIMO ALBERINI AND VINCENZO BUONASSISI.

## CIVILTÀ DELLA TAVOLA

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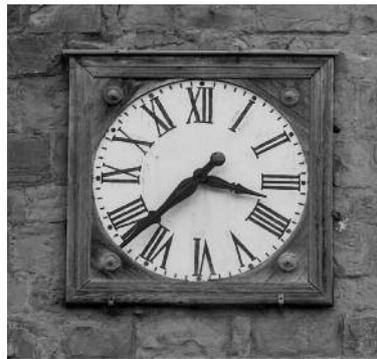
On the cover: Detail from the painting "The Outdoor Wedding Dance" (circa 1610) by Pieter Bruegel the Younger, private collection, USA.

# Amatriciana: the symbolic dish which has nurtured solidarity

*The Academy comes to the aid of our traditions.*

BY PAOLO PETRONI  
President of the Academy

When a terrible earthquake devastated various areas of central Italy in late August, the September issue of this magazine had already been printed and was ready for swift delivery to our readers: consequently we were unable to modify its content. Therefore we published a special edition of our monthly Newsletter online, to inform the public about the general situation and about the Academicians potentially involved in the quake. Luckily, none were reported injured, though unfortunately two Academicians residing in Accumoli and Arquata del Tronto had their homes destroyed. As you presumably know from television and newspapers, both funds and people (including Francesco Palomba, our Delegate for Rieti and a Red Cross official; his sister Giovanna; Alessandro Caponi, a physician and Councillor for Ascoli Piceno, who spared no effort notwithstanding the loss of his home in Arquata; and Giuseppe Marrani, former Delegate for the Apuan Alps region and an official of the national Civil Protection force) have been decisively mobilised. This is by no means the first calamity to visit our peninsula, but never before did so many associations rush to the aid of the stricken areas: in particular, chefs, restaurants, the Slow Food movement, and likewise



- and immediately - our Academy, with a programme which, being far from generic, is tailored for the provision of direct and personal assistance to organisations and individuals in line with our statutory aims. The credit for all this goes to a humble but celebrated recipe: spaghetti all'amatriciana (Amatrice-style spaghetti). This dish is famous throughout the world, and, together with spaghetti alla carbonara and tagliatelle with ragù, it is one of the main symbols of our traditional cuisine.

Many are aware that this pasta was apparently created in Rome by a cook from Amatrice: here it is often termed 'matriciana', it uses bucatini rather than spaghetti, and it often features guanciale and a little onion. It is said that at Amatrice, 'amatriciana' was instead prepared without tomato and termed 'gricia'. Even Ada Boni refers to gricia as 'amatriciana' in her celebrated book dedicated to Roman cooking. But in the face of the recent catastrophe, none of this matters much: what is imperative is to help Amatrice and the other stricken towns, which were largely unknown before these events. And it must be pointed out that if Amatrice had not been among the areas affected, things would have gone differently. A dish, a symbol, has been more effective than any number of words.

*On the occasion of its Ecumenical Dinner in October, the Italian Academy of Cuisine will pay homage to our quake-stricken friends with a flavoursome dish of amatriciana pasta, whether red or white, linked to an entirely voluntary donation in favour of restaurants, cooks, hotel management students, artisans, butchers, bakers and others, according to the indications provided by our regional branches. The funds will be delivered rapidly and directly, without middlemen or deductions for expenses.*

Accademia Italiana della Cucina - raccolta fondi Aree Terremotate  
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Causale: donazione a favore del terremoto Centro Italia agosto 2016



# Gricia and amatriciana: golden rules of preparation

*Recipes which symbolise the Rieti province,  
and today also represent worldwide solidarity.*

BY FRANCESCO MARIA PALOMBA  
*Delegate for Rieti*

**L'** 'Amatriciana' or 'matriciana' is a pasta-based dish which takes its name from Amatrice, a city in the province of Rieti. Its main ingredients are guanciale (jowl bacon), pecorino cheese and tomato. It is on the official list of traditional food products of the Lazio region.

The ancestor of *amatriciana* is 'gricia' (or 'griscia'), also known as 'white amatriciana'. Its name is said to derive from Grisciano, a small town a few kilometres away from Amatrice, in the environs of Accumoli.

The recipe has a specific geographical origin and has long been deeply rooted in the region. It is a simple pasta dish, invented before the arrival of tomato in the region by the shepherds of Amatrice who took along rucksacks full of

pecorino, black pepper bags, dry pasta and guanciale when they stayed up in the mountains for what were often rather long stretches of time. Since not all the types of pasta now available existed at the time, it is thought that *spaghetti* was the pasta they used.

With the arrival of tomatoes in Europe and the invention of tomato sauce in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, *amatriciana* was developed. The first written record of tomato sauce being used as a condiment for pasta is in the cooking manual entitled *L'Apicio moderno*, written in 1790 by the Roman cook Francesco Leonardi.

The dish became increasingly popular in Rome between the nineteenth and early twentieth century: news of it reached the capital along with the she-





pherds who seasonally moved their flocks to the Roman countryside. The dish was originally named 'matriciana' rather than 'amatriciana', since the inhabitants of Amatrice called themselves 'matriciani' without the initial 'a'. Therefore the famous dish also took that name, which morphed over time to 'amatriciana'.

Several taverners and innkeepers in Rome came from Amatrice, such that the term 'matriciano' came to mean 'inn serving food'; and *amatriciana*, though invented elsewhere, soon became a classic of Roman cuisine.

The recipe strictly requires *spaghetti* rather than *bucatini* (hollow *spaghetti*), as witnessed inter alia by the billboards at the entrance of Amatrice, proclaiming it "the city of spaghetti all'amatriciana". Some variants, differing only slightly among themselves, are found in Amatrice families: for instance, one or two smashed cloves of garlic may be added; the ingredients can all be mixed in while raw, or instead the guanciale, fried and drained, can be added when the tomato is already simmering; a spoonful of rendered lard or half a glass of white wine can be added; or *bucatini* can be used instead of *spaghetti*.

According to Secondino Freda, *amatriciana* was invented by a skilled cook

from Amatrice resident in Rome, who created the oft-claimed recipe in the capital and called it 'spaghetti all'amatriciana' in honour of his native area, since it was a variant of *gricia*. In favour of this theory is the fact that the tomato used for *amatriciana* is 'casalino', typically found around Rome. Another, less plausible hypothesis is that some guests at a Roman nobleman's luncheon asked the cook what was the flavoursome dish offered them, and she answered "spaghetti alla matriciana", because *guanciale* was termed 'matrice' in Roman dialect at the time, probably by association with sow bacon.

There are now efforts to have *amatriciana* recognised as 'Traditional Speciality Guaranteed', a designation better known as TSG and introduced by the EU to protect products dependent on traditional recipes or production methods.

This certification, governed by Council Regulation (EC) No. 509/2006 (which replaces the preceding regulation 2082/92), differs from other schemes such as PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) in that it concerns agricultural and food products whose specificity depends on production methods or composition linked to regional

tradition, even if they do not necessarily originate in that region. A TSG product must adhere to a precise production protocol.

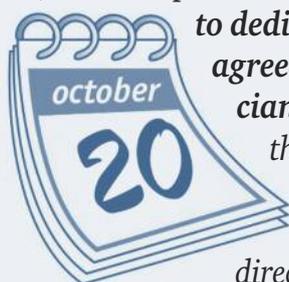
The two recipes below follow the traditional methods of ingredient selection and preparation. The suggestions below are crucial both for *gricia* and *amatriciana*:

- Use high-quality dry durum wheat *spaghetti*.
- The *guanciale* must never be replaced by *pancetta* (which derives from pork belly and changes the flavour). *Guanciale* comes from the jowl and is therefore a finer fat with a more subtle and fragrant flavour compared to *pancetta*; it is the most indispensable ingredient.
- Use moderately aged *pecorino* from Amatrice, preferably *marzolino*, namely the variety produced in spring when the sheep can browse among the finest herbs: it is delicately flavoured, not overly salty, and faintly piquant (absolutely avoid *pecorino romano*, which is much saltier).
- Avoid oil, whose acidity could alter the taste; at most, use a spoonful of rendered lard with a delicate and sweet flavour.
- It is best to use a cast-iron pan to prepare this dish.

FRANCESCO MARIA PALOMBA

### ECUMENICAL DINNER 2016

Our ecumenical gathering, which invites all Academicians in Italy and abroad to a virtual dinner table, will take place on 20 October at 8:30 PM. The President has invited all Delegates worldwide



to dedicate the Ecumenical Dinner not only to the cuisine of reuse as previously agreed, but also to the cuisine of Amatrice, by including *spaghetti all'amatriciana* in the menu in both its red (with tomato) and white or 'alla gricia' (without tomato) versions. In the course of the convivial meeting, the Delegates will also gather totally voluntary donations for each dish served and will deposit them in the Academy's dedicated fundraising account. The proceeds will be directly delivered to the restaurateurs, cooks or professional institutes indicated to

the President by the Delegates thus tasked, according to region. On this occasion too, the Academy will do its part in support of our regional cuisine.



# Olindo Guerrini and his delicious treatise

*“...it is economically sound to serve lavish and sumptuous meals, because one can live off the leftovers for a week!”*

BY PINO JUBATTI  
*Vasto Academic*

The 2016 Ecumenical Dinner, whose ‘rediscovered theme’ is the cuisine of reuse, coincides with the centenary of the passing of the great Olindo Guerrini (1845-1916), marked last June at Casa Artusi in Forlimpopoli and in Sant’Alberto di Ravenna where Guerrini was raised, in a proud homage to an eminent local figure and, first and foremost, of his acclaimed book on the “art of re-using leftovers”. This followed a brilliant introduction by Honorary President Giovanni Ballarini on that work’s gastro-historical aspects and the complex personality of its author, known by many flippant pseudonyms including Lorenzo Stecchetti. The concept

of reuse has, incidentally, not escaped the mainstream news, since everyone is now aware of the noble (and indeed papally blessed) gesture by Massimo Bottura, chef of the Osteria Francescana restaurant, who directed the delicious reuse of the numerous leftovers from the Milan Expo, an operation dubbed “Refettorio Ambrosiano”, in which over ninety needy homeless individuals in Milan were treated to a succession of banquets - an initiative with a glamorous aftermath, since the respected actor Robert De Niro teamed up with Bottura to launch a similar project in the Bronx! Let us return to the 2016 Ecumenical theme: reuse of leftovers. It would be a





fascinating topic for an audience of a sufficient age to fully appreciate the deeper and semantically complex meaning of the word 'reuse' - or better, to understand the significance of a long-dormant gastronomic ritual, once the culinary warhorse of an irreverent poet and man of letters in a frightening time of scarcity and rationing, and now revived at the dawn of the third millennium. Indeed, it is worth noting that Guerrini/Stecchetti chose to complete his magnum opus, *L'arte di utilizzare gli avanzi della mensa* (*The Art of Reusing Leftovers*), in the middle of the Great War, shortly before he passed away (the work was released by the Formiggini publishing house two years later, in 1918). This became a resource of considerable importance, not only for its literary worth but for its apparent 'survival value' in view of the persistently gloomy wartime atmosphere. However, such an assessment is not quite accurate. Firstly - setting aside a few publications of the time, explicitly dedicated to economising on food for the benefit of the needy proletariat, if not the so-called 'war cuisine' - this would contradict the message inherent in the book's subtitle (*and flavoursome frugality*). Secondly, it would demonstrate an incomplete understanding of the elevated message of the book (which, interestingly, is a collectible work also because of the illustrations by the acclaimed painter and caricaturist Augusto Majani, better known by the pseudonym Nasica). Today, in circumstances so remote from the specific war-

time conditions which gave rise to the book, we must strive to understand careful nutrition, a challenging concept for those who are witnesses or victims of overfeeding and its regrettable pathological consequence elegantly termed 'obesity'. Returning to the forthright subject matter of the book - notable for presenting both the practical and the hedonistic rewards of reusing leftovers, virtues dramatically demonstrated by the aforementioned Bottura episode - it is incumbent to disseminate its contents and the ideas of its author, a genius, gourmet and man of letters. To clarify: reuse - a habit which persisted throughout most of the twentieth century and now survives only among the social classes which have no other choice, notwithstanding socio-ideological confusion on the matter - does not arise from need caused by severe food scarcity such as that which gave rise to the celebrated book. Since the aim is to offer pleasant methods of 'economising for the family', the concept embodies a set of precise habits regarding expenditure and consumption, as eloquently implied by the couplet printed under the title (attributed to a niece of Guerrini). This differs markedly from the impudently modern and morally suspect paradigm tastelessly termed 'consumerism'.

In the Introduction, the author's jocular tone exhibits rare amiability ("In truth, given the import of the book, I should say 'Appetiser' instead of 'Introduction', but I prefer to follow the older custom, since if there is an art which resists fu-

turism, that art is cooking... The art of cooking is conservative and traditionalist, as this example demonstrates"). A century later, the work remains relevant even to those who achieve "starred status" through questionable machinations and considerable expense. It would, of course, be silly and reprehensible to gloss over Guerrini's contact with the pride of Forlimpopoli, Pellegrino Artusi, whose letters were brimming with helpful advice. The two interacted on a human and intellectual level: for instance in 1899, Olindo Guerrini presented Pellegrino Artusi with a satirical recipe entitled "grillò abbragiato", intended to bring about "the ultimate defeat of nineteenth-century cooking and French fads". Touché! The end of the Introduction eloquently captures the essence of that friendship - sealed with an autographed copy of the third edition of Artusi's classic *La scienza in cucina* (*Science in the Kitchen*) - in the passage where Guerrini meditates: "But a flaw which no contrition or confession will rectify is the frequent absence of quantities, weights and cooking times, indications which instead render Artusi's book so useful and valuable... Then again, any cooks with a modicum of experience in the art will soon find their bearings. These minor difficulties can be overcome with patience and good judgement. The modest but judicious donkey can prepare meatballs, unlike many professors whose judgement is merely feigned!".

PINO JUBATTI



### THE ACADEMY SILVER PLATE

*An elegant silver plated dish engraved with the Academy logo. This symbolic object may be presented to restaurants that display exceptional service, cuisine and hospitality. Delegates may contact the Milan Headquarters ([segreteria@accademia1953.it](mailto:segreteria@accademia1953.it)) for more information and orders.*



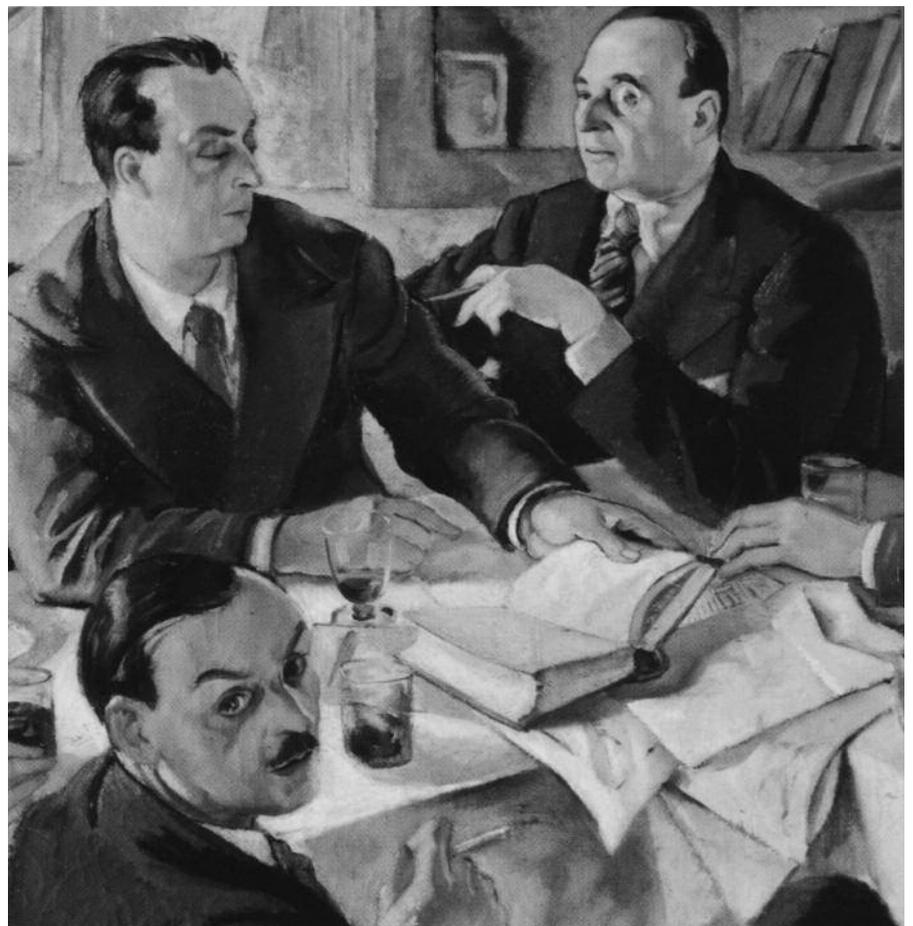
# Orio Vergani's secrets

*Through his niece's recollections, the Cremona Delegation retraces both famous and obscure episodes in the life of the Academy's founder.*

BY CARLA BERTINELLI SPOTTI  
*Cremona Academician*

The Cremona Delegation attracted a large and attentive audience with its interesting meeting “Orio Vergani: a timely vision”, dedicated to the rediscovery of the human and cultural sides of the Academy's founder and organised in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and the Soroptimist association. To gain some real insight into his character, the journalist Francesco Ballarini held a dialogue with Vera Pescarolo, who is not only a woman

steeped in culture and cinema, but also Orio's niece. She recounted his life starting from his birth in Milan in 1898, in a family vigorously involved in literature, theatre and journalism. His mother, Maria Podrecca, was a close associate of Anna Kuliscioff and had a strong personality and a commitment to political and social issues. Her brothers were active on the political and artistic scene of the time: Guido was a journalist and editor of the political satire newspaper





*L'Asino (The Donkey)*; Vittorio had founded the Teatro dei Piccoli, a renowned musical marionette theatre which remains active today. This is where Orio was initially apprenticed, but differing ages and worldviews soon caused Orio to depart for Rome and join the staff of the newspaper *Il Messaggero*. There he met a number of 'greats' including Luigi Pirandello, who became an important reference point for Vergani where theatre and the art of writing were concerned. Recruited to the newspaper *Corriere della Sera* by Ugo Ojetti in 1926, he remained there for 34 years, writing thousands of articles on culture, politics and sports. In Rome he had frequented the Aragno café, a haunt of painters, journalists, and men of letters and culture; in Milan he patronised Bagutta, a rustic restaurant where artists, literary authors and journalists gathered each week: a transition from the literary café to the literary dinner. And so it was that on the evening of 11 November 1926, the Bagutta literary prize was established. The award menu was as follows: Pepori-style mixed appetisers; Bagutta-style ravioli in broth; Ugo's mixed fry; boiled chicken with speedy vegetables; and abundant cheese, fruit and wine. Vera knew this place well, for her uncle often took her there. Orio described it thus: "...a place where we gather as the Milanese do, eat Tuscan food, and pay Roman-style, splitting the cost equally. A perfect trinity of Italian unity... an experience more human than literary; a meeting of gentlemen whom only a distinctive and stern upbringing could induce to abandon their victuals for a moment and return a greeting. Friends united by a love of conviviality... The prize dinner was an extraordinary gastronomic and literary experience, a delightfully boisterous atmosphere fortified by home-style cooking and earnest fraternal solidarity".

The combination of culture, friendship and freedom, however, was considered inconvenient, and in 1936 the Ministry of Popular Culture forced the closure of the prize. The Bagutta prize resumed in 1947, accompanied by other food

and literature events. Food and cuisine began to attract attention, and Orio was always on the front lines. As a journalist, he often wrote about sports, contributing to the legendary status of the Giro d'Italia and the Tour de France, both of which he covered 25 times. He did this in his own style, however. Vera remembers occasionally joining him at some of the stops along the Giro d'Italia, and there was a distinctive atmosphere in the traditional restaurants where meals were held. Indeed, her uncle always prepared parallel artistic and gastronomic itineraries for the Giro and the Tour. The eminent journalist and historian Indro Montanelli recounts how "...he knew everything about the Giro d'Italia and the Tour de France - except who had won that leg of the race, because on the way he'd stopped at a trattoria famous for its roasts or stockfish, whose delights would be praised in his subsequent article". Vera spent considerable time in her uncle's house in Milan, with her aunt Mimì and cousins Guido and Leonardo, and remembers that "he often brought regional specialities home from his travels round Italy; he would also frequently visit shops where high-quality goods were sold, such as Peck in Milan, and bring us foods which we'd never encountered before, describing their particularities and flavours for us. It was a rare thing, because food and cuisine weren't often discussed in people's homes as they are now. Instead, Orio would make us understand what a risotto really was, and how to eat well... Going out to eat with him was like going to the theatre or an art exhibition, such was his culture on the topic".

The establishment of the Academy amazed all his relatives, even though he had always had the strong desire to bring renown to the gastronomic arts of Italy's many regions.

Honorary President Giovanni Ballarini concluded the meeting by recounting the foundation of the Academy and its significance. The idea came to Vergani during the Tour de France, when he noted how the French were able to pro-

mote their cuisine, wine and cheese. As he admitted himself, the Academy was born "from the travel notes of an itinerant journalist who was flabbergasted when, in the civilised Veneto region, waiters offered him Milanese cutlets and expressed amazement when he asked for the Treviso sausages dubbed 'luganeghe', a local speciality; while the restaurateur, who hailed from Conegliano, also in the Veneto, hurriedly offered him Tuscan wines rather than the wines of his own Piave region". He immediately called upon Dino Villani, and, meeting him in Suzzara, introduced his idea. They rejected the name 'club' "since it doesn't have the prestige in Italy that it does abroad, while the term 'Academy' seemed overly grand and hyperbolic". But some time later, they met with Ernesto Donà dalle Rose at the Continental in Milan, and 'Academy' was in fact the word they chose. Giovanni Ballarini emphasised that Vergani perceived the cultural implications of food within its human aspect, and was therefore able to create an institution with an elevated cultural profile, which he envisioned as an Academy in the Italian Renaissance and classical Greek sense. Vergani conceived the Academy as an association for protecting and improving traditions and standards and acknowledging human and universal preoccupations, which are independent of time and place, while forging a distinctive identity which would foster continuous research, study and understanding. For this ambitious and challenging project he selected first-rate personalities at the top of their fields, whether they be culture, economics or publishing, to present a coherent conception of gastronomic civility. It was clear from the start that in Italy, cuisine is traditional and regional, embodied in recipes passed from mother to daughter and ingredients found only in a particular area and nowhere else, in dishes that change with the terrain. These are traditions and flavours to whose protection Vergani and the Academy contributed and still contribute today.

CARLA BERTINELLI SPOTTI



# Spaghetti alla bolognese on trial

*The best-known Italian dish abroad, after pizza, is not part of Bolognese cuisine. Ragù accompanies tagliatelle rather than spaghetti.*

BY PIERGIULIO GIORDANI PAVANELLI  
Bologna Academician



**T**he vexed question of ‘spaghetti alla bolognese’ has appeared frequently in the press, especially in Bologna, in recent months. Giancarlo Roversi, honorary Academician and eminent scholar of Bolognese history, maintains that centuries ago, thin vermicelli noodles - rather than *spaghetti* - were dressed with *ragù* in Bologna, but this doesn’t necessarily justify the current ‘spaghetti alla bolognese’ custom which, as discussed below, seems not to have existed for a considerable time. It was and remains common to enjoy *farfalle*, *gobetti*, *penne*, *gramigna* and other dry and preferably short *pasta* with meat-based *ragù*, but not *spaghetti*; in fact, at least until a few years ago, it was the custom, especially on Fridays,

indeed, if the spaghetti and the sauce are of good quality, this can be a tasty, nutritious and enjoyable food. Of course, if local restaurants want to offer ‘spaghetti alla bolognese’ to cater to tourists, that is another matter entirely, a purely commercial decision which has nothing to do with local food culture and history.

If it’s true, as it may well be, that vermicelli with *ragù* were eaten in Bologna centuries ago, it is also true that these came from the south, namely from Gragnano or Torre Annunziata, and were therefore costly specialities enjoyed not by the masses but by the wealthier classes, such as the aristocracy or the new rich.

The authentic traditional speciality of Bologna is tagliatelle with *ragù*. It is

to prepare *spaghetti* with a tomato and tuna sauce. We are well aware that ‘spaghetti bolognese’, namely *spaghetti* with *ragù*, is the most widespread Italian dish abroad after pizza: from Manila to Washington, from New Delhi to Moscow, there will always be restaurants offering this dish. But if we go to a restaurant in Bologna which offers local traditional food and ask for spaghetti alla bolognese, we’ll never find them! This dish is no longer part of the city’s food culture. This doesn’t mean that the dish itself is bad; in-

deed, it is difficult to determine whether tagliatelle or spaghetti are superior, since this depends on personal preference; however, we believe that a fresh, egg-based pasta such as tagliatelle complements a good meat *ragù* better than a dry pasta such as spaghetti could.

In 1972, the Bologna Delegation deposited the ‘golden rule of tagliatelle’ in the Chamber of Commerce in the presence of the famed gastronomic scholar Luigi Carnacina and the Commendatore Francesco Majani (patron of the still-extant Majani chocolate manufacturer). It is recorded that the width of the Bolognese tagliatella, when cooked and served, must be equivalent to the height of the Torre degli Asinelli divided by 12.27, or precisely 8 millimetres (6.5 to 7 before cooking).

Concerning *ragù*, its recipe was deposited in the Chamber of Commerce on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 1982, again by the Bologna Delegation, and its current incarnation is provided in the Academy’s recipe book.

A final note: in 1931 the ‘Fameja Bulgneisa’ (‘Bolognese Family’ in local dialect), headed at the time by the Nobel laureate Guglielmo Marconi, held a celebratory dinner to mark the putative 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the invention of the tagliatella, giving no credence to the legend attributing it to Master Zafirano, who is said to have invented it in 1503, inspired by the hair of Lucrezia Borgia, wife of Alfonso d’Este; and not even to the other, more Bolognese legend involving the tresses of Lucrezia d’Este, who married Annibale Bentivoglio, lord of Bologna, in 1487.