



# GEORGOFILI WORLD

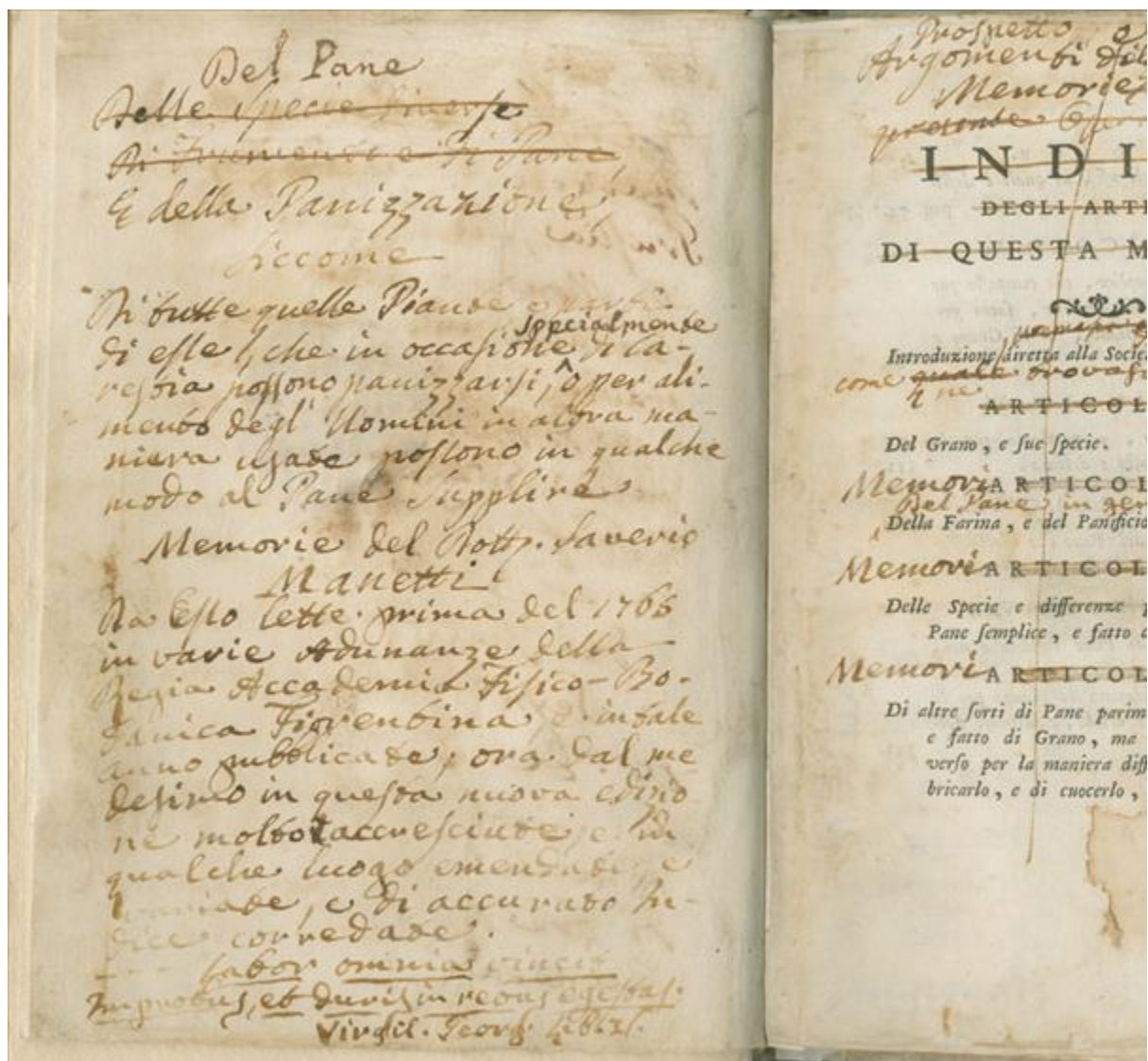
Newsletter of the Georgofili Accademy

## SAVERIO MANETTI AND HIS TREATISE "ON DIFFERENT WHEAT SPECIES AND BREAD AS WELL AS BREAD-MAKING"

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If I were a baker

*I would like to bake*

*A big loaf of bread*

*To feed all those people*

*Who have nothing to eat...*

Thus begins Gianni Rodari's poem **Bread** published in 1960 in his collection "Nursery Rhymes in the Sky and on Earth". A golden brown loaf of bread "bigger than the sun", "as sweet-smelling as violets". A loaf of bread that everybody would eat, that would feed everybody: the poor, children, "old people and birdies".

And this beautiful, poetic and delicate rhyme finishes as follows:

*It will be a date*

*to learn by heart:*

*A day without hunger!*

*The greatest day in all of history*

A dream, a wish in this poem; the resolution of "EXPO 2015. Feeding the planet".

Learned, intelligent and sensible people of past centuries had faced the same problem although in a more limited context. They had to face the problems of people's destitution, famines, and the starvation that decimated the hands needed to work in the fields and small manufacturing towns.

It was first and foremost a moral problem, dictated by the philanthropy of these sensitive and cultured people. However, it was also undoubtedly an economic problem because the massive loss of the population class that did the manual labor, weighed on the entire economy of the society of the time, jeopardizing it.

Georgofili member Saverio Manetti, one of the eighteen founders of the Florentine Academy, was among the first who attempted to find a solution to the hunger that followed

the terrible, recurrent famines in past centuries, characterized especially by the loss of wheat and thus of the main food, bread.



In his treatise *On different wheat species and bread as well as bread-making*, published in Florence in 1765, he not only analyzed wheat and its varieties, flour and the bread-making process, different kinds of bread, its other unusual types for packaging, baking, and shape. He also analyzed bread made with flours other than wheat flour, extensively describing the bread's appetizing effect and the pleasure that gladdened the tables of both the rich and the poor. He finally examined the "faults" of flour and bread, its varieties in other populations, seeds, fruits, and plants suited to making bread when there was a wheat shortage.

The Georgofili Academy is lucky as it has a unique copy of this work in its library. In fact its book collection contains a volume that assembles three copies of Manetti's treatise, each one abundantly enriched with paper strips, explanatory notes, and handwritten observations made by Manetti himself. A sort of "working paper to the third power" used by the author to put down on paper a thought, a reflection and to transcribe strange recipes: all probably preparatory for a subsequent edition of the work that was never carried out.

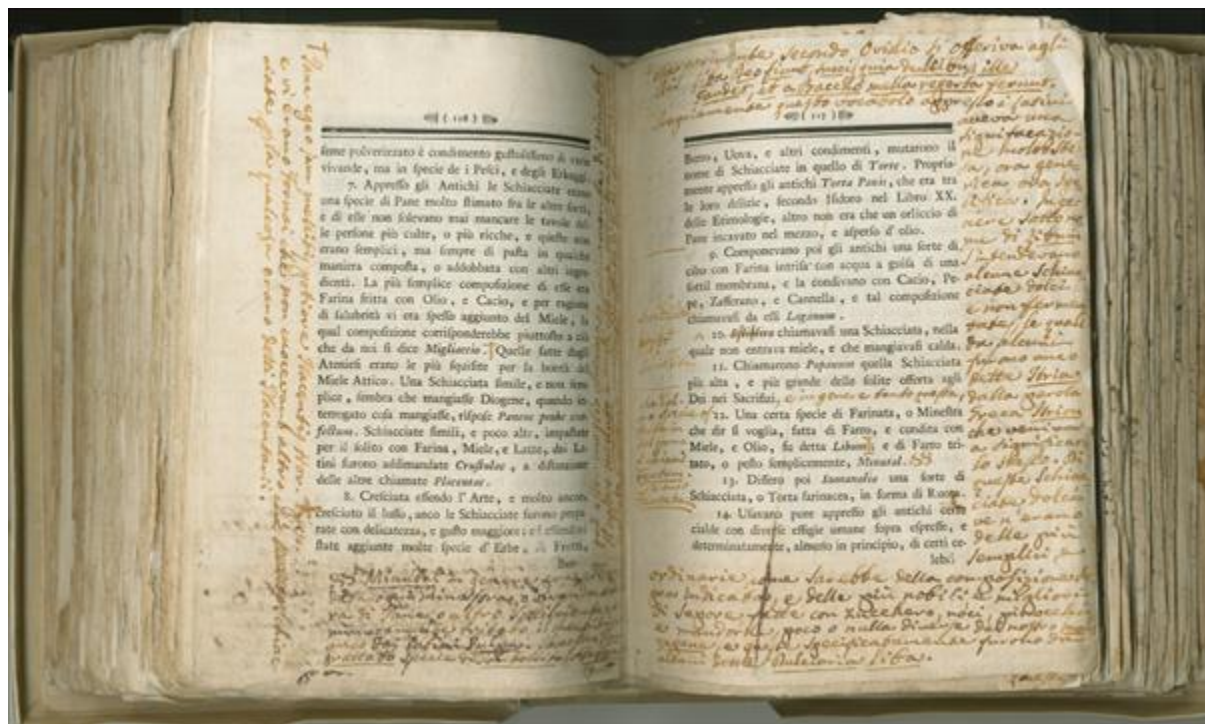
We readers of today are amazed by the wealth of information and by the curiosities that Manetti offered readers more than two centuries ago.

Among the author's many notations, we would like to present today's readers with a

curious recipe for a bread made to appetize and delight and directed especially to those who wanted to enrich their table but could not afford “exotic” goods:

### **On a kind of chocolate**

*a kind of particularly inexpensive chocolate is worth mentioning here, invented and made for some years now in Alsatia, that, even if it lacks some of the qualities of the basic and genuine chocolate, has nevertheless, at least in part, its taste and color and is even more nutritious. Put two or three spoonfuls of flour in a pan or iron pot on the fire and toast it, stirring continuously with a wooden spoon without adding water. When it begins to turn black, slowly pour a bottle of milk into the pot and, continuing to stir, add a certain quantity of sugar and a little cinnamon. Let it boil as if it were chocolate but always continue stirring. When you think it has boiled enough, remove it from the fire. Add two or three egg yolks and whip it as you would with chocolate and then pour it into cups.*



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