Conclusion

Grazia Deledda remains unique amidst the most notable writers of the early 20th century; an individual with characteristics that distinguish her in the national and cultural panorama.

For decades, after leaving Sardinia and settling down in Rome, when she went about her daily life, she continued to say, “we Sardinians do this and that,” or “in Sardinia we think this is so,” and so on and so forth, thus displaying a rooted attachment that is not easy to detect in other intellectuals.

Many Sardinian writers, even when they write in Italian and reach national and international success, just as Grazia Deledda did, still remain the bearers of a world view, of an ethical cultural patrimony, that is original and different from the anthropological attitude considered national. Cooking, with all its traditions, responds to the primary need for food, and it is also connected with customs that, in Deledda’s narrative, help to define the Sardinian nature.

In Barbagia, the heart of the island, meat is a staple ingredient in many recipes and the product of local farming, like the other components of its peasant cooking. It is the same food that shepherds still offer their visitors, curious to see their pens and animals; it is the sort of food that is also offered in one’s friends’ hospitable houses. Today, when everyone is fond of a return to nature, nothing could be more natural than lamb on a skewer, eggs, and fresh cheese.
Unfortunately, it is unlikely that one can recapture the solidarity, the simplicity of those gifts described in Deledda’s novels, or the frank relationship with food that plays an important role in the rites of hospitality and life.

Sardinian culture, today demonized as a culture of violence, was originally marked by a strong connection with life’s currents or primordial drives, known to those human beings who are complete, who are “whole,” and who live according to rhythms and times that allow the enjoyment of *eros* and food, which could not be more distant from the rush of fast food. This humanity was immersed in nature, drinking new wine in autumn and full-bodied, warming wine in winter.

Grazia Deledda learned the importance of food, hospitality, and conviviality, and the essence of nutrition, within her native culture; but later, they became essential and meaningful to her whole work, even the Italian novels.

After leaving for the mainland, where she spent more than half her life, she was aware that her stories narrated very distinctive human destinies. They belonged to her compatriots, so dear to her; but with time, she also came to tell the stories of the people of Italy. In a letter addressed to Edouard Rod and dated February 2, 1907, she wrote: “As I had occasion to write before, I have two novels ready. The first, *L’edera*, will be published in February in *Deutsche Rundschau*. (…) But it is not *L’edera* I am thinking of, as I am certain of its uniqueness, despite being one of my Sardinian novels. No, right at this moment I am concerned with *L’ombra del passato*. Its first chapters have appeared in
this issue of *Nuova Antologia*, and it is set in an area surrounding Mantua, in Lombardy. I believe I have achieved something new and profound with this work.”

This brief catalogue of recipes in Deledda’s novels creates a better picture, more complete and truer, of Grazia Deledda’s work, which comprises not only her unforgettable Sardinia, but also other regional and individual realities that she came to know when she went to live on the peninsula. Grazia Deledda was a truly Italian writer too.