The Joiner's Museum 2

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Ancient
joiner's work-shop tools:

a collection of pieces of the 17th, 18th, 19th centuries

and of the beginning of 20th.

(Part Two)

The
first shop is the WHEEL-WRIGHT's or WAINWRIGHT's one, it comes from an old and known Begamask family, who has produced and repaired wood carts for generations; it is the Ubiali family from Mozzo. The cart is one of the oldest inventions, which were realized with wood for the man's service, to make easier his movings and his goods' transports. The cart's wheels were originally full, and they changed in lighter and more complex structures.

In 1706 the wainwrighters entered in the blacksmiths' corporation, sharing with them part of the working systems. Among the various tools, showed on the walls and on the pavement, stand out those classical for the wood and iron working and, most of all, the "primitive" counter for the assembling of spokes with hubs and with the hoop. A very important specimen of the 17th century announces as well the presence in the Museum of a big collection of carts of different shape and origin.

The
MASTER-CARPENTER or SAILMAKER shop is totally transported from Venice, offering a varied series of known or unknown tools for the realization of different boats and sails, of which is also exposed a very explanatory model of hull structure; the miniature models of some sailing-ships and simple fishing-boats are also exposed here. The MODEL-MAKER laboratory comes from a Bergamask industry, the Battagion company, which produced machines for bakers and pasta factories. It contains many tools and different wood models, also supporting the industry for the production of wood prototypes.

Ingenious
is the wooden "combination", which is able to offer different contemporary services: with the band-saw and the circular saw, with the planing machine and the drilling machine, with the grinding machine and the toupie. Another curious "combination" is the one in the CAGE MAKER shop. This machine was able to mill, to drill a hole in the little wood poles and also to sharpen tools with a grindstone. The wood cages, used in open spaces for hunting, are ordinarily made. On the contrary,

those for canaries are of refined look and technique, being used mainly at home. In the laboratory there are exposed some very imaginative specimens.

There are some models of wood skirting board, those wintry with leather side are completely closed, to protect from the cold, and they have strong nails, to avoid slips; on the contrary the summer models are lighter and with a simple leather band. All these object belong to the CLOG-MAKER shop, who was an artisan whith very old origins; it seems even, that they are dated with the advent of the Christian Era; he was obliged to live in the woods to find easily the primary goods. In the last centuries the real shops were not numerous, because all the farmers, mainly on the mountains, produced the goods at home during the long wintry evenings: for example clogs, ladles, handles for tools, rakes, spoons, bowls and many other tools, which were realized for domestic rural usage; but also some furniture was created.

Many houses had a sort of machine, which was called in the Bergamask dialect "cavra" for its profile vaguely similar to that of a goat. On this tool the operator, who sat astride, after having sketched out a stump with the use of particular curved and sharped axes, proceeded to the realization of tools in a detailed way; during this work he used particular blades with two handles, gouges and files. The "cavras" have different shapes and functions, and many tools are exposed, also used for making chairs, that were often realized besides by farmers also by CHAIR-MAKERS, who worked door-to-door moving from village to village.

The SHOEMAKER shop is shown with wood shapes of different measures, the typical banquet and stool, and also with many tools hung in order; this place is interesting for the different tools and the classical wooden "forms", which were used to mould footwear.

This exibition room ends with equipment for the working of grapes and for the manufacture of BARRELS and VATS. The cooper trade has old origins too; already practised by the Celts, in 1410 the coopers founded a corporation, also with Statute articles, to protect an activity very articulated and complex. This corporation was engaged into the realization of a product, which was widely used in different productive sectors: from the wine production to the dairy's one, but also in transports, preservation and tanning.

It was the guardian of secrets and sedimentary procedures, acquired and handed down from father to son. Concave or smooth planes, scrapers, axes, gimlets and gouges are very numerous; the barrels were mainly realized with chestnut-tree or oak wood. The three examples of wood presses for squeezing the dregs of pressed grapes are really valuable, to testify the different criteria of working, respectively used in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

The
last big place is reserved to the expositions of different machineries and tools used for the wood working and also to the exhibition of two workshops. Two huge trunk saws, with their respective long trolleys, stand out in the all expositive place, from the band-saw and the circular saw, from the toupie, from the thickness-plane to trolleys used for the transport of trunks; and also from the last century, a trimming machine for the saw-mill with a flowing counter on wooden rollers. The CARVER shop supplies a very interesting split of the techniques and the tools for this working.

All the exposed material belonged to different artisans, who operated in the lower Bergamask territory, where this activity is still now widely practised. Different specimens of pedal and manual drillings are exposed with careful drawings, and some finished decorum examples, with several tools for the marking, the cutting, the painting and also the sticking.

The
LUTEMAKER shop comes completely from Cremona, which is the capital "par excellence" of the lutemakers; it is maybe the place that provokes more curiosity and surprise for the evocative charm it can give off. It sends back to an ancient work, which maybe more than anyone else marries art and technique, and is also surrounded by something misterious for the secrets and the rules that govern it. It is very fascinating, too, for the charm that music coming from its products has been raising up for centuries.

This is a learned work, which is perceived through the models and the little tools used for the finishing working; those delicate ones, which are made with very little planes to remove small, particular parts of wood. It is very surprising the presence of some old paints, British made and contained in little cases of glass.

The wealth of the Museum is also enriched by a voluminous collection of furnishing drawings, about 600, mainly realized in water-colour, that formed the archive-catalogue of the famous and antique industry "Erba" of Mariano Comense.

Text by CESARE ROTA NODARI - to go back to Part One click here «

MUSEO DEL
FALEGNAME

(THE JOINER'S MUSEUM)

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