

The Time Machine Soup  
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## SOUP AND THE CITY

The primitive domestication of fire and the transition from raw to cooked are the first steps towards hygienic food preparation and cooking. In this regard, stew, broth and soup are gigantic steps for civilisation. Boiled water eliminates bacteria and germs, preventing illnesses, softening meat, vegetables and fish, facilitating ingestion, improving digestion, relieving the stress on jaws and promoting the development of the skull and the brain.

In gastronomic culture, soups and stews play a fundamental role in daily nutrition. They are the basis for the preparation of most dishes and the leitmotiv of the table. In the beginning, in the primitive pots that cook the food which is the driving force of civilisation, magic, pharmacy and gastronomy are all one and the same thing.

The pot of soup eternally cooking in the hearth, in the fire at the centre of the home, where traditional life unfolds since the earliest times, is the centre of culture. The city, in terms of its conformation as a collectivity, is the juxtaposition of dwellings, homes, fires, and soup pots.

The creation of the bowl and the tureen, aside from a symbolic perpetuation of a mother's womb and breast, was a form of storage and thus an invention of the time: with the hands freed - which in the gesture of withholding food forced one to keep moving and to keep searching - man could finally pause. The grain or the game, stored or cooked in the container, were also the centre of the living space, the fire, the home where everything began, in the community, a city.

At the dawn of our western civilisation, the Omphalos of Delphi, the inverted bowl-shaped navel, a symbol of the defeat of Cronus, the god of time, by his son Zeus, was the centre of the universe for the Greeks. This baetyl has carvings of chains, where time is symbolically trapped, and is crowned with the two eagles launched by Zeus from opposite ends of the universe to determine the centre of the world where their paths crossed. These symbols are evidence of an ancient religion, of the matriarchy whose echoes still resonate in Parmenides' poem, and also connect with the tradition of the augurs, the founding of cities based on the ritual of reading the behaviour of birds in flight in a forest clearing, in a temple (time).

A representation of spirituality, the bird as a soul can travel between the material and spiritual worlds and can therefore communicate with men and gods. As migrants, they are capable of reversing their path. Their comings and goings mark the seasons, providing us with certainty about the weather and the ability to prepare for the rigours of winter. They often fly in a V or A formation, in surprising shapes in their mass evolutions, like the beautiful patterned formations of starlings for example. Perhaps this is why our ancestors thought it reasonable to predict the future by their flight formations.

### **Magic goose pâté**

The foundational rite of Western settlements, mainly Greek, Etruscan and Roman, is rooted in the belief that "divine will" is manifested through various animals for the establishment of a centre from which the new city, the "polis" will develop its urban geometry from the sacred place chosen by these gods.

This place was consecrated by following a sacred animal: a wolf, a woodpecker, and in Roman times, various birds. The job of the diviner, the augur, was to know how to interpret these messages.

What does this primitive foundational rite consist of? A priest or magistrate, the so-called Augur, studies the sky, "contemplating" the birds. On the ground or elevated on a square or circular structure divided into four parts, a "temple" that determines both its relationship to time, contemplation, and to the sacred place or temple as we understand this term today.

The Augur priest traces with his staff, on the ground or by gesturing in the air, a space of contemplation that will eventually materialise into a place of worship: originally empty (forest clearing) and later in a building, with a cross-shaped layout marking the cardinal directions, north, south, east and west.

This contemplation of the Augur consisted of waiting, remaining quietly alert so as not to miss the signs from heaven: the wonders, the angelic signs that can only be perceived as such in a higher spiritual state. One waits for a sign, an angel, a winged figure that takes the form of a bird. This divine messenger is often an eagle, or thunder and lightning. Manifestations of the divine will through the channels of its possible manifestations on earth, transforming actions of heaven on earth.

The "Haruspex" or liver diviner, eviscerated the entrails of the bird carrying the omen; cutting it open and dividing the liver into parts, attributing divinities to each one of them. The reading of the prophetic signs of these parts determined their suitability for the foundational ritual. If the liver of Prometheus is eternally devoured by the eagle as punishment for stealing the secret of fire from the gods, the haruspex will devour the liver of the birds that trace signs in the sky. Does the magical pate of the geese with its V-shaped formation mark the place where the new city is to be born? After all, the hepatic steatosis necessary to produce foie-gras is a self-inflicted disease of the geese as a way of storing energy for their long flights.

On the basis of this rite and after securing the altar, the surveyor traced the main axes of the city, the "cardo" and the "decumanus", the north-south and east-west lines around which the sun revolves. The transposition of the city's layout was not necessarily a literal reflection of these coordinates. Climate, geographical features, prevailing winds, health, etc. were as considered in the negotiation of the layout.

Back to fire for a moment. In our small Basque universe we have a constellation of "omphalos" which we call "Korta" or Sel. They are stones that define a circular territory that was originally used for livestock farming under usufruct arrangements with landowners, the military and the church, primarily. The advantage of this form, so contrary to Roman orthogonality, is that it creates natural intervening spaces not used for industrial purposes, where life finds a way outside of domestication. It would be innovative to look back and conclude that perhaps this way of inhabiting the territory allowed the city and the countryside to be conveniently diluted. Shepherds built their primitive huts on these naval-stones more than a thousand years ago, and like a Russian doll, successive homes were built and destroyed, right up to our "baserris". Many of our surnames are the names of these stones. One of the ancestral soups that were made in the mysterious circles survives. "Mamia" or "coajada", is a soup made from sheep's milk that retains the toasted flavour of the stone that causes it to boil in an inclined birch wood bowl. The "basserris" were said to be cider-making machines, fermented apples, where our relatives inhabited the intervening space.

## Fermentation

But what if fermentation came before fire? In fact, let us not forget that soup is a word that alludes to bread soaked in broth. The soup is the bread, not the liquid. In the beginning, bread fermented from various cereals was indistinguishable from primitive beer which was more solid than liquid. Perhaps this is why some scholars view alcoholic fermentation as the real origin of cities. It would no longer be fire, or cooking or birds that were the origin of cities, but beer. Considering that on any given afternoon one can observe thousands of citizens consuming the comforting alcohol in our cities replete with bars, this does not seem like such an impossible hypothesis. Perhaps beer makes us believe for a while that we are back in that wild, pre-urban period when we were not prisoners of time.

## The future of food in cities

Some authors warn us about the destruction of our countryside. In Europe, there is hardly any place left that is not used to produce or distribute food for cities. Paradoxically, cities have become a refuge for wildlife. As insects, birds and mammals disappear from the countryside, they find opportunities for survival in the cities. This highlights "nature's" hostility towards life nowadays. Hyper-fertilised and polluted with pesticides and phytosanitary products, it is a poisonous place for animals.

Perhaps the cultivation of animals for meat could be an inexhaustible source of protein and a solution to the recovery of extensive livestock farming. Similarly, technology and science will provide solutions to crop food sources for all nutrients. This would undoubtedly be an opportunity to recover our natural heritage and our lives. Over-fertilisation and the indiscriminate use of pesticides are probably the biggest problem we face. A problem that is silently destroying the planet, including cities.

As for the soup, number 13 of our TMS project, the soup of the future, we imagine a soup vending machine with an infinite array of freeze-dried ingredients to create any imaginable flavour, with everything necessary to sustain life from a nutritional point of view. These would be free vending machines, of course, which would certainly be called MATRIX.

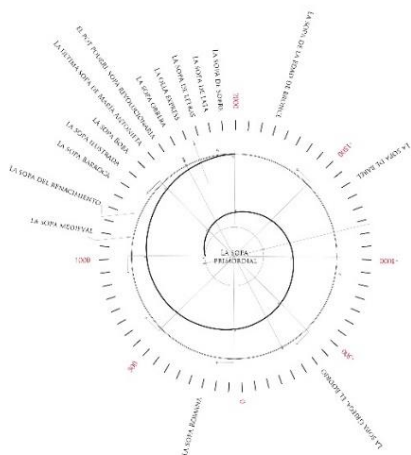
## TMS

The Time Machine Soup is a time machine that offers a journey back in time through twelve stations. We stop at each one of them to savour a soup made according to the customs of each era but interpreted from a contemporary perspective. In addition to taste, the other senses - sight, hearing, touch and smell - also play an important role in this journey, which is fuelled by something as simple and comforting as soup. Before this machine sets off on its journey to the past, and with the aim of warming up the engines, the guests are given the keys to the project while they enjoy a glass of wine:

1. TMS tells the story of women's cuisine, the transmission of family culture, the culture of the grandmother, as opposed to men's cuisine, the chef, a figure that was created in the army to supply the troops and not to provide wellbeing for the family.
2. Fire, cooking, soup, the first sterilisation. Cooking is the key to human development through food: asepsis, the elimination of germs and the way of making vegetables and proteins digestible. Humans are Homo sapiens thanks to the invention of fire, cooking and soup.

3. Time, Oteiza's eighty grandmothers. At 60-year intervals between grandmothers and granddaughters, in this particular transmission of culture only 80 years separate us from the caves.

4. The eternal soup that is always boiling, adding the products that are hunted, domesticated and discovered, social changes, technological changes and revolutions.



**Artistic details/ Credits of the project:**

A playful exhibition & happening to travel back in time through the flavour of twelve historical soups.

Santos Bregaña & Hika Teatroa in collaboration with:

Xabi Erkizia Sound Harkaitz Cano Texts Iñigo Cojo Recipes

Frédéric Duhart Anthropology Iban Garate Organisation



Molitoris, Ulricus. De Ianiis et phitoniciis mulieribus Teutonice vnholden vel hexen, (Reutlingen-Otmar, 1489), fol. 15r.



Delphi, Greece. The Omphalos of the Via Sacra. According to ancient Greek mythology, this is the landmark of the centre of the World. Creative Commons License.



The Brothers, Disputing Over the Founding of Rome, Consult the Augurs, pl.7 from the series *The Story of Romulus and Remus*. 1575



Moon tureen from antique goddess collection. Design by Santos Bregaña. Photograph by José Luis López de Zubiria. 2016



Map of Boundaries and Pasturelands of Nabarniz Parish (Bizkaia), 1767. Spain: Ministry of Culture. Archive of the Royal Chancery of Valladolid. PLANS AND DRAWINGS. ITEMISED 0482.



THE TIME MACHINE SOUP

SANTOS BREGAÑA:



In recent years, Santos Bregaña has combined his work as a designer and art director of Atelier Laia - Factory of Perplexities- with his artistic work and teaching at the schools of architecture in Pamplona and San Sebastián, as well as the Faculty of Fine Arts in Bilbao.

In 2002 he directed TABULA, a publishing company dedicated to the dissemination of gastronomic culture. In 2008 he received the Sphere Award from the Art Director Club NY in recognition of his work for the Mugaritz Restaurant from its beginnings. In 2016 he created and directed "Time Machine Soup" on the occasion of San Sebastian being the European Capital. In recent years he has worked as art director and designer for Mirazur, considered the best restaurant in the world on the 50 Best list. His work has been exhibited individually and collectively in Dublin, Paris, New York, Milan, Athens, Berlin, Helsinki, Moscow, Tokyo, Miami, Washington, Seoul, Toronto, Mexico DF, Madrid, Sao Paulo, Lisbon, Manila, etc. Some of his most relevant creations have been acquired by the Museu del Disseny de Barcelona.