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NERESINE

HISTORY AND TRADITION

HISTORY OF A PEOPLE

STRADDLING TWO CULTURES

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For our mother and father

Romana, and Silvio

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PRESENTATION

Neresine. Nadalina. Nadalina Massalin. My almost mythical great grandmother, the mother of my grandmother was born in Neresine, she is mythical for me because she has lived and was always only in my fantasy. I never met my *bisnonna* nor have I ever seen any of her appearance, there is not even a photograph of her. Nevertheless, she greatly impresses me: I like her, thinking of her I have always loved. I do not know why but, she always has a smile for me, she gives me the will, the pleasure to live: she tells me of her provenance but shields me from her fears, the injustices, the violence, the darkness and the tears of her times (above all of my mother) which I must endure and I am forced to associate with my outset every time we talk about it.

Nadalina instead with innocence and happy unawareness tells me of her, “*windy island*” with its very beautiful Sea, the countryside, the olive trees, the quince trees and, above all the fruitful gardens so dependable for the daily meals. The garden is growing *radicchio* for meals, *alla Neresinotta* with boiled potatoes.

My *bisnonna* entertains me with her story about her goat “*capretta*” the absolute fraternity with it, afterward similarly lived by her daughter (my grandmother) and my mother, I missed it all, they in their youth always had a “goat for friend”.

In my imagination Nadalina comes to meet me in the way my mother told me she was: “...peasant, poor and illiterate, with her hair snug on top of her head, today we may call it *chignon*, bun. I wonder what she called it in her dialect. She was dressed like all peasants women: with the long, down to the ground, black cotton skirt curled to the waist under the tight vest, an apron over the skirt (also black or at most, my mother used to tell me, with little bright flowers on a black background) and, always, coquetry or to better say, the joy of a fresh and fragrant carnation from her garden on her waist, to collect a draping nock of her apron...”

I have tried to find her in this beautiful narrative on Neresine, that has given me so much more information than I ever had on the Island, on the Lussino of my grandmother and mother, and therefore mine: I sought for her, Massalin in the appendices roster of surnames, she is not there and it is right and normal not to find her, people like her do not and cannot objectively make history. Not even in the history of a small Quarnero Sea Island unknown to most people, more than history they are a part of geography, the nature of a place: my *bisnonna* Nadalina I think of I know her like the strong and slender olive trees of her island, like the fragrant carnations of her garden, like her Sea so intensely green and azure, I am really proud of her. I am proud of that which, without too much imaginative efforts, I think may have been the courage of her life, of her unexhausted working capacity that enabled her to survive the daily battle, to put together the lunches and dinners for her family, the joy with which she participated in her town’s festivities.

The enthusiastic innocence void of envy with which she appreciated the wellbeing of others that, like her, were born in Neresine, in that beautiful panorama and had become rich, famous and, brought along the entrepreneurship of Neresine all over the world.

Deep down I like the fact that I do not have in my fantasy to share her with anyone: never had my grandmother or mother spoken to me about a husband of her, my eventual *bisnonno*, of whom although, she probably bore his Venetian surname. No for me Neresine declines only through womanhood. And she, Nadalina who knows to which *gender pride* she associated with, as we say today in reference to “female gender”, pride to which I had dedicated much of my writings, it may have come down from her, my *bisnonna* Nadalina from Neresine, of her independence, of the pride with which she in her poverty lived, with her happy communion with

the nature of the island, of her pleasure of the beauty which, she could only express with the carnation pinned to her waist.

The beautiful paper that I just finished reading, among other things it tells me that the language of the autochthonous people was the Slav (that anyhow, had nothing to do with the Croat), but my *bisnonna* Nadalina, who knows and why spoke Italian (naturally, in the Istro-Veneto dialect version) as spoke Italian my maternal grandmother and mother. My grandmother fled Lussino as the many that is told in this book, which did not have the opportunity of an option: when she returned to Lussino, in her small stone house by the harbor, she looked from its windows the same outspread of Sea that saw her own sky-blue eyes. Of *bisnonna* Nadalina I don't know, there is nothing left of her, no concrete evidence that she had lived there, could be that in the time of the 1947, Istrian tragedy, there was nothing left already and, no one after, could tell me which was her house, the garden she kept, or the paths she habitually followed. It belong to a "first" confident and healthy to which in my fantasy continues to belong her whole island. Neresine, of which just for this I like to think, for as much as it is unlikely, that the name wants to signify "the island, the bay of Nereo, God of the Sea". Because I like the idea of committing to the myth, to poetry, both of them together, Nadalina and her Neresine.

Anna Maria Mori

PROLOGUE

This story has been written with the intent to satisfy the ever present curiosity of knowing ones ethnic, historic and cultural roots, of which the present generations of Neresinotti and of its descendants, by now scattered all over the world, manifest an ever increasing interest.

The work therefore, does not intend to rewrite a history never written before, nor to interpret or to give support to any political side, but to tell the origin and the evolution of the town with the events, as they really happened through the centuries. It cannot be considered a “history of the town” in fact that book already exists *Neresine Na Otoku Lusinju* (Neresine on the island of Lussino) by Enver Imamovich, a Bosnian citizen, who arrived in Neresine as a tourist in the nineteen seventies. Published in 1979, the volume was financed by Government funds from the Cultural Department of what was then called the Federated Republic of Bosnia. Its author was liege to the political regime of the time, and he could not avoid, nor could he have been able to do it, being restrained by the political-nationalist scheme to which his work was responsive. Not by chance, an entire chapter titled “*Dolazak Harvata na otok*” (The arrival of the Croatian in the island) is dedicated to a Croatian ethnicity in the island of Lussino, which never happen in the way described. Furthermore, the author not being personally involved, relied on the sayings of Domenico Rucconich (Limbertich), known in town as one of the most inflamed Croatian nationalist.

Given these conditions, the book by default became a gathering of inaccurate historical inventions in which the history is distorted, and in part ignored. While it is amply described what happens starting in 1945... It omits the exodus and persecutions against the “Italians”. Among the most comical inaccuracies for example, was an old photograph full of people in the main square taken from the concrete paved street *saliso* by the church, during one of the usual oceanic speeches by Mussolini, it was broadcasted at full volume. In the photo, you see the radio together with the flag on the window of Casa of Fascio the Fascist House (the actual Beluli house). The image was called a usual “Yugoslav socialization meeting of the people” in the main square. The book by Imamovich, given the source, is after all a true testimonial of how, and by whom the town was actively governed, after the establishment of the communist regime of Tito.

In the reconstruction of the history of Neresine, we have drawn the information from original documents found in various official archives, from documents, and manuscripts of our ancestors kept here, and there among the descendants, and above all from the oral tradition of past generations. Unfortunately, it was not possible to consult the archives of the town of Neresine, because, all the papers it contained – certainly those prominent to the last one hundred years of the town existence, but, also ancient ones – have been intentionally burned in 1945, by the members of the just established *Narodni Odbor* (Popular Committee) to erase all past history. In the process of destroying the documents, the *Odbor* members availed themselves, the help of “*povero*” (town fool) Mauro, who gifted with a good memory, and his own particular intelligence, managed to save from the flames, maybe unknowingly, some papers of enough interest. Other papers were destroyed in successive years by a “*fortuitous fire*” which happened in the municipal building, without causing damages to the building itself or other structures. Some other documents, instead, kept in copy by members of the various *Consigli Comunali* (town hall councils) of the Austro-Hungarian period, and after, have fortunately been found by descendants, enabling the reconstruction of the pertinent principal town events with historical exactness.

Matteo Nicolich writes in his “Storia Documentata dei Lussini” published in 1871.¹ *“La storia non è sempre, né solo ricordo di avvenimenti importanti o descrizione di opere insigni, ma soprattutto è ricerca delle radici, scoperta di un passato in cui ognuno possa riconoscersi, affermazione di valori che diano significato al presente e preparino l’avvenire. Nel ricordo degli avi ... tenete viva l’opera da essi saggiamente intrapresa e felicemente diretta, affinché i vostri emuli e rivali non abbiano il vanto di rintronarvi”*. (History is not always, only the remembrance of important events or description of remarkable works, but above all is the research of the roots, discovery of a past in which everyone can recognize oneself, affirmation of values that are relevant to the present, and prepare for the future. In remembering the ancestors... keep alive the works by them wisely undertaken, and happily directed, so that your emulators, and rivals do not have the chance to stun (boast, and confuse) you. It is exactly in this spirit that we are now beginning to tell the history and traditions of Neresine, and the evolution of its people *straddling two cultures*).

NOTES

1 - Dr. Matteo Nicolich was the physician of the two Lussini and probably of the surroundings, from 1836, to 1883. His contemporaries remember him as a man who has dedicated with generosity, and abnegation a life to the onerous professional tasks, often compensating for health necessity of the needy at his own expenses. To him is attributed the merit of having sensibly reduced infant mortality, and that of childbirth. He reduced the incidence of infective diseases with an extensive monitoring surveillance, and the promotion of deep hygienic education in the schools. He constantly fought tuberculosis, brought in by the Austrian sick’s, which came to Lussino, hopeful of finding healing from its maritime climate. Dr. Nicolich was born in Lussinpiccolo around 1810, to a modest family, attended the first scholastic cycle, presumably by the hybrid school of the “*revolutionary*” priest *Don Martino Nicolich*, set up, and organized in his own house.

In 1826, he is enrolled in the first course in humanity at the Italian Gymnasium in Fiume; the next year he is at the Italian Gymnasium in Zara. In 1830, he is in Padua University, where he enrolls in the medical faculty, the first year. The curriculum of studies is exemplar, stellar, with many “well” and “well valid”. On January 6, 1836. “*Compiuti avendo gli obblighi tutti prescritti dal vigente Piano degli Studi ... previo giuramento di fedeltà e sudditanza, il Promotore lo fregiò della Laurea in Medicina*”. (“Completed having all obligations prescribed by the in force Plan of Studies... upon swearing fidelity, and subjection, he was awarded the degree in Medicine by the Promoter”) He lead all his industrious life in the native island, from which he has rarely departed, he expired silently on February 23, 1883, with the population in general anguish.

I

PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

One island, two islands.

The town of Neresine is located on the northeastern part of the island of Lussino, more or less, four kilometers from the ancient center of Ossero. To be precise, to the point at which the island of Lussino is connected to that of Cherso, by a rotating bridge on the narrow channel, that separates the two islands, now-a-days named Cavanella. The channel few meters wide, in antiquity was an isthmus, or rather a thong of land that joined, without a solution of continuity, the two islands. In very old times, perhaps in the antique Grecian age, to conjoin the north and south stretch of sea, and to provide a shipping passage, they dug a channel named Euripo.

Venetian cartographers, commissioned by the Venetian Republic, were the first to study and represent on geographic papers the oriental area of the Adriatic Sea. They name the two territories east, and west of the channel, "*Island of Cherso*," and "*Island of Ossero*". Afterwards, toward the end of the XVIII century, the island of Ossero becomes, in this instance by assuming a tabular convention, "*Island of Lussino*."

Following the maritime traffic increment, the channel was further enlarged, until, in the XIX century, it reached the present dimensions of eleven meters. The two islands of Cherso and Lussino remained always united by a rotating bridge. Notwithstanding their artificial separation created on the bygone days emphasized perhaps, for parochialism and supremacy motives, the separation is completely arbitrary, being it from the geographic, cultural, and ethnic point of view.¹

The oldest inhabitants.

The islands of Cherso and Lussino were inhabited since times of antiquity, but the origin of Neresine is not very old. A trace discovered indicates a prehistoric human presence in the islands, for example the grottos of *Sredi-Struasa*.

The first settlements documented from archeological exhibits of historical significance pertains to the Castellieri civilization (XV - XIII century B.C.), the fortified dwellings with peripheral dry stonewalls, still noticeable on the high and shore points of these islands, on the oriental side of the Istrian peninsula, and in the northwestern coastline of Dalmazia. According to some scholars, these first inhabitants were the Histri, Carni, and Japidi.

Afterwards around 1000 B.C., the new settlers were the Liburnians, a population of warriors, sailors, and traders establishing themselves in the eastern coastline zone of Istria (between the present Albona, and Fianona), in the Quarnero's islands, and in the Adriatic Oriental coastline, between Senj and Šibenik.

On the origin of this people there are two hypotheses; one most plausible is of them to descend from *Libu*, an ancient people of Indo-European origin, who invaded Egypt in the late twelfth century B.C., (called by the Egyptians "the people of the sea"). Afterwards they sailed up the Mediterranean Sea heading on one side, towards northwest of the Italian peninsula, founding the city of Liburnus, the actual Livorno, which took the name from them, and on the other side

towards northeast, settling down in the eastern territories of the Adriatic Sea. The second hypothesis considers them of Illyrian ancestry. This last hypothesis, however, appear weaker because from the earliest proto-memories, the Liburnians were considered skilled sailors, dedicated to sea traffic as well as piracy, and their language was more akin to that of Venetians than to that of Illyrians, in fact according to ancient historians even the Venetians come from the south-eastern Mediterranean. The Illyrians, however more primitive, were not considered very familiar with the sea.

About the V century, B.C. begins the first Greek establishments in the islands, as shown by unequivocal archeological relics discovered in the Ossero's surroundings, even confirmed by historical tradition, and corroborated by papers from geographers and writers of the ancient world and Middle Ages.

The oldest legend establishes Ossero's position in tight relation with the Greek myth of the Argonauts, and its leader Jason. While during his adventurous trips in search of the Holy Grail, and escaping with Medea from the Colchis pursuers, with her help, he killed her brother Absirto, a prince of the same Colchis, right there on the bay of Ossero. From the death, and burial of Absirto in these islands, derived their olden name "*Absirtides*," and the same Greek name Absoros, from which, therefore *Ossero*. Certainly, these myths give us a glimpse on the presence of ancient civilizations in our islands, in a period even prior to the Homeric epoch.²

The Latin history begins.

A part from Greek settlement of Ossero, surrounded by strong walls datable, according some scholars, at IV century B.C., the Liburnians were the exclusive dwellers of the region, at least until the Roman conquest of around the 168 B.C.

A historical mention remember that in the 387 B.C., they assailed, with their ships, the Lesina island an ally of Dionysus the Old of Syracuse, but were ruinously defeated by the more numerous fleet of this last one.

On 48 B.C., we found them allied with the Roman fleet of Pompeo against Caesar.

On 29 B.C., Ottaviano lessens their turbulence. From then, defeated also the neighbouring Japidi, Liburnia was definitively annexed to the already consolidated Roman Illyricum.

The maritime sea cleverness of the Liburnians was very appreciated by Romans, so far as to take their swift, and fast ships, as new war ship, so named "*Liburne*".

After the political stabilization of the region imposed by Ottaviano, the Roman began to found their strongholds.

The Roman presence documented by the maps of the period, by important archeological relics, and by the names of various places: Caput Insule (Caisole), Crepsa (Cherso), Hibernicia (Lubenizze), Ustrina (Ustrine). In the same Neresine, in the area of the present *magaseni* harbor was discovered traces of significant Roman dwellings, in the small bay, surrounded by a thriving forest, may have been a small hamlet used by the rich Roman families of Pola, for pleasant Summer excursions. Actually, when at the end of the XIX century newer constructions went up in the area defined as (Camalich, Bonich, and Bracco) some archeological relics were found which due to neglect were lost or reused for the new houses. Among the relics found were also some antique coins. Those of lesser metals were of no interest, consequently and unfortunately they were lost, while the golden ones were kept, and are still owned by descendants of the finders.³

Most likely the island Lussino gets its name from the Latin “*Luscinia*”, which means nightingale, (local nocturnal beautifully signing bird), in the meaning of land of the nightingales. The older islanders remember well the songs of the nightingales that during the spring evenings, and nights sang marvelously, yearning songs from the top of a tall oak tree. The nights in May, in certain part of the Island, were particularly known for the beautiful signing of these little brownish birds. (These birds can no longer be found, they have totally disappeared). Another hypothesis is that the island name derives from the Latin words *Lux*, and *Sinus* (bay or tract of shining Sea) after the splendid inlet. It needs to be said, whoever, that all the attempts to assign the name of “*Lussino*” to ancient inhabitants, and even more improbably to that of Slavic origin were found to be without a historical merit. The local people speaking Slavic since the beginning have used the name of *Veloselo* (big town), and *Maloselo* (small town) for the villages of Lussingrande, and Lussinpiccolo. In the end however, the Latin version *Lussino* is the most accredited by scholars, and philologists.

With the advent of the Roman subjugation of the region, and the entire eastern coastline of the Adriatic Sea, the area became, in all aspects a Roman province, whereas the beginning of the Latin history.

The Roman principal centers of the Quarner zone were *Pietas Julia* (Pola), *Tarsatica* (the antique Trsach then Fiume), *Crepsa* (Cherso), *Curicta* (Veglia-Krk), and *Arbe* (Rab); they were all part of the Dalmatian province whose capital was *Salona*. The Avars, and Slavs destroyed *Salona* in the VII century, and its fleeing towns people settled, and established Spalato on the area of the old Diocletian Palace.⁴

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476, A.C. the islands together with Dalmazia passed under the dominium of the Eastern Roman Empire. Ossero, Cherso, and Caisole managed to become autonomous, and as a result the people of these islands, for centuries to come, lived with Latin customs, habits, commercial, and judicial organizations with a language of their own namely the *Dalmatico*, a neo-Latin language with Liburnian words which was spoken throughout the Middle Ages, and beyond.

The Quarner chronicles tells us that the last *Dalmatico* speaking person was a Veglia citizen who died in 1898.⁵

The descent of the Slav tribes.

The first Slav tribes who were still pagan predators began to descend on the region around the VI-VII century, establishing themselves as a people after the siege, and destruction of Salona in 609. The Croatian stock started to develop ethnical-political homogeneity around the first half of the IX century. Then by moving toward the coastline region discovered for the first time the Sea, as depicted by the Croats patriotic iconography in a well-known painting titled “*Dolazak Harvata na Jadran*” (the Croatian arrival on the Adriatic). The kingdom of Demetrio Zvonimir (1076-1088), then realized the Croatian political consolidation including territorially the central, and southern Dalmatian region up to the Narenta River.

Given their lack of familiarity with the sea, it is presumable that the setting down of the first Slav families in the outer Quarner Island, such as Cherso, and Lussino happen later in accordance with the Latin cities that needed work force for cultivating the fields, and taking care of pasture. This first Slav immigration was absorbed without any ethnic or social repercussions. The Slavs, settled down in the country-side near the major centers such as Ossero, and Cherso. They

converted to Christianity, and easily absorbed the local laws, and customs while keeping their language, and names.

In the following centuries other, converted Christian Slavs settled in the small villages on the island of Cherso. Of this, there are significant testimonials of burial stones discovered near Valon (*Valunske ploce*), with bilingual inscriptions: Latin, and the VeterSlav language called "*Glagolito*," which was introduced by the Evangelizing Saints Cyril, and Methodius in the IX century.

The Eastern Roman Empire, although in power did not pay too much attention to the Northern Adriatic possessions; consequently, in the following centuries life on the islands was not always peaceful.

In 842, the Saracens, under Saba leadership, destroyed Ossero. After which some Slavs began pirating against the Venetians, using the islands as barrier.

The Doge XII Tradonico, and Doge XIV Orso 1ST Partecipazio, after some events managed at the end to defeat the Saracens, and the Slavs. Charlemagne conquest did nothing to change the life on the islands.

The Serenissima long domain.

Since the year 1000 after the massive campaign of Doge Pietro Orseolo II against the Narentani pirates, the islands were brought under the Venetian influence; Ossero became the Venetian presidium for the whole Quarner area. From this point on the historical events of the islands are documented in detail in many ready available publications to which we refer those wishing deeper knowledge.⁶

During the Middle Ages the islands like the rest of the entire Eastern Adriatic seaboard kept themselves busy with various vicissitudes under the Venetian Republic administration. Toward the middle of XIV century the king of Hungary, Ludovic the Great d'Angiò, started a war against Venice for the conquest of the eastern Adriatic seaboard, and supported by allied Genoese fleet managed to prevail over Venice. In 1358, because of the pact of Zara, the islands, and the entire Dalmazia became Hungarian domain.⁷

After the death of King Ludwig in 1382, no male heirs were left for the throne. This unleashed in all its territories a war of succession by various pretenders, which bled significantly the kingdom finances. In 1409, the King Ladislao finally relinquished to the Republic of Venice, for 100,000 golden Ducati, the nominal rights over central Dalmazia with Zara, and the northern islands of the Quarner.

After fifty years under Hungarian rule the Dalmatian cities were in general economic crisis, and because the king had little power he was unable to govern Dalmazia, or to oppose the forces of another claimer of the crown of Hungary. From this time, and until 1797, these territories become politically, and administratively an integral part of the Venetian Republic.

The new arrivals are Slavs, Venetians, and Dalmatians.

After the XV century, other settlers migrated in the two islands: Slav Christians, squeezed out of the Balkans by the advancing Turkish Empire. They also came by invitation from the Venetian administrators, in order to develop the territory, and to replace the local people that had been

decimated by diseases, (pestilence). The new settlers preferred the rural zones, establishing some villages such as, Orlez, San Martino, Belei, Neresine, San Giacomo, Ciunschì, Puntacroce, etc. And eventually spilling over to the major towns like Cherso, and Ossero bringing along part of their linguistic heritage.⁸

Until the XII century, there was no significant presence of relevant settlements in the island of Lussino, the cultivable lands, grazing, woods, and useful for fabrication, or in any case, valuable, were managed remotely by the richest families of Ossero, and Cherso. Most of the land in northeast of Lussino, and the southern part of Cherso belonged to the families of Ossero. The most important among them were the Drasa, and the Catholic Church; which was run by the bishop of Ossero.⁹ Findings in some papers, documentation, and administrative dealings on the management of major estates; a very interesting is the one of Garmosal, the present *Garmosaj*, which documents the repartition of the property, and the agricultural activity of those days. It is interesting to note that in the antique romance language “*the Dalmatico*” the word Garmosal meant place with woods, shrubbery, and grazing.

The first known settlements in the island of Lussino territory happen after the year 1384. In the stories written around this time it tells of eight foreign families who obtained permission to build their houses in the southern part of the island of *Lussino*, named as such for the first time. Four were in the place now called, *Lussingrande*, and four in the place now called, *Lussinpiccolo*. They were granted permission to own these by the city of Ossero, on condition that every family would pay a yearly tribute of one golden Ducato.¹⁰

After approximately forty years, the community of *Lussingrande* grew to fifty families, including the immigration of more people prevalently sailors, and fishermen from the lower Venetian region, and Dalmazia. The development of the village of *Lussinpiccolo* was later thanks to groups coming from the Dalmatian coastline familiar with the sea, a precise characteristic of the *Liburnian* people. The other settlements, like Neresine, San Giacomo, and Ciunschì are much more recent, and it had happen likely around the XVI, and XVII centuries.¹¹

NOTES

1. Even in Lussinpiccolo, it was wisely thought to dig a channel on the isthmus of Privlaka, keeping also, here the land connectivity with an analogous rotary bridge, without ever thinking of dividing the territory in two new islands of Neresine, and Lussino. To solidify the geographic, cultural, and historical continuity the regional government established in 1945, reunited administratively the two territories constituting the singular town councils of Lussino, and Cherso. Keeping, however, under the Lussino administration the entire southern part of the island of Cherso; including the towns of Ossero, Belei, Ustrine, and Puntacroce.

2. It appears very suggestive, and the Osserini always nurtured the legend of Medea, and Jason, her mythological spell, with great conviction. However, reviewing the geographical position of our islands in reference to the land of the Colchis (Black Sea), and the lack of specific historical traces relevantly connecting these events with our region, it seems of very poor credibility. Certainly, the city of Ossero established in an abundantly pre-Roman age by Greek colonizers, as it is widely confirmed by the abundant archeological finds. Probably this legend got even more vigor in the XVI century when digging in Ossero unearthed an antique Greek statue, a caryatid-a-cephalous, depicting, according to the discoverers, Medea. This statue was later in 1587, gifted to Cardinal Giovanni Grimani who brought it to Venice in 1593, for inclusion to his legate. Subsequently a head of plaster was inserted when the statue was restored, perfectly reproducing the head of a precedent Venetian caryatid. This statue is presently in the III hall of the Venetian Museum. Further studies carried out also, by Antonio Canova; consider it to be of Samothracean origin, Axiokersa, or rather Persephone, wife of Axiokersos (Ade). Axieros (Demetra), Axiokeros (Ade), and Axiokersa (Persephone) were the three ancient Greek divinities, worshiped as protectors of navigators, and seafarers. Considering that Ossero after the digging, and opening of its canal Euripo, become one of the most

important points for the transit of the antique ships on the eastern, and western routes. It is not too difficult to imagine that in Ossero may have been a temple to honor these deities' protectors of seafarers, and that this statue was an antique find of such a temple. Among other things, the assonance of the names Ossero and Cherso, with these divinities, bring to mind a very suggestive coincidence on the names of our islands.

To strengthen the theory of these important traffic routes through our islands, is the recent discovery (1996) on the bottom of the sea. Adjacent to the islet Big Oriule, in front of the town of Lussingrande, in the Quarnerolo (small Quarner), a bronze statue of Roman epoch, representing an athlete in the act of whipping his sweat: the *Apoxyomenos* today known as the *Lussino Athlete*. According to authoritative studies (professors Nenad Cambi of Spalato, and Vincenzo Saladino of Florence), the statue could be a copy of an original coined in the Hellenistic era around 300 B.C.. From carbon 14 analysis of some statue fragments it may have been copied around the first two centuries A.D. After the find there were additional searches surrounding the point of find, in the hope of finding eventual relics of ships, but in spite of very advanced technology instruments, nothing was found: is assumed, though, that the statue fell into the sea during a storm, or thrown overboard, to lessen the load, and avoid shipwreck.

3. Among the relicts found, is a beautiful golden coin, in possession of a fellow-countryman, that upon brief dating research, it may have been coined around 69 B.C.. On one side it shows a beautiful possibly female head profile surrounded by thick rich hairstyle, and the writings: C.M.ARI.C.F.CAPIT XXXII. On the other side it shows cattle (probably two cows) grazing with a herdsman, and on the upper edge the Roman numeral XXXII, on the lower edge the letters S.C.

4. Some clarification regarding the region named Dalmazia. The etymo *Delm-ates*, recorded for the first time around the middle of the II century B.C. It defined the people populating the Dinaric Alps, that on the fortress of *Delm-inium* (Duv-no, Duv-najnsko Pole), which is located eastward of Salona (Spalato) they established a defensive alliance against Rome. From this toward the middle of the I century A.D, arose the name Dalmazia, to designate the province of the seaboard strip having the northern borders in gulf of the Quarner Sea, and with the three principal islands of Veglia, Cherso, and Lussino, and the southern border the coastline strip of today's Montenero, and part of Albania.

The Dalmatian borders remained unchanged for more than 19 centuries until 1825, year on which the Augsburg of Vienna decided to administratively, and politically separate the three Quarner islands from Dalmazia by establishing the new northern border as passing between the islands of Veglia, and Arbe, and the islands of Cherso, Lussino, and that of Pago. In 1825, the Captaincy of Lussino was constituted as being part of the Istrian Mangraviato, establishing dependency for the three Quarner islands. This separation determined for exclusively political reasons, dictated by the will of the central government, to divide the southern regions already in an advanced Croatization stage, from the northern more hostile "Italian", and therefore avoid political contamination not appreciated in the Dalmatian possessions.

5. Matteo Giulio Bartoli – *Il Dalmatico* (original titled: *Das Dalmatische Sprachreste von Veglia bis Ragusa und ihre Stellung in der Appennino-Balkanischen Romània*. Alfred Holder- Wien – 1906) – Italian Encyclopedia Treccani Rome -2000.

6. Luigi Tomaz – "Ossero e Cherso nei secoli prima di Venezia". Edizioni Think Adv.
Luigi Tomaz – "In Adriatico nell'antichità e nell'alto medioevo". Edizioni Think Adv 2003.

7. Silvio Mitis – "Storia dell'isola di Cherso-Ossero dal 476 al 1409", Parenzo 1925.

8. From a 1271, document, the Venetian authorities deliberated that "*de scutifero quod sit de Sclavonia concessio comiti Chersi*".... This meant that Venice allowed the usage of "*linguam sclauam*", as it is also documented by a later document of 1312, that "*electus comes Chersi possit secum conducere et habere in suis famulis, quos tenetur habere, qui sciat linguam sclauam, non obstante sua commissione, que revocetur in tantum, cum commodo sine ipso facere non possit, eo quod homines de inde specialiter ille de extra ignorant linguam latinam*".

Further and deeper studies on these and other documents (such as the chronicles of Gianbattista Giustiniani of 1553) imply that the "*lingua sclaua*" was the Dalmatico, known language to the Venetians as the Slav language.

9. Regarding Cherso, and Ossero it may be of interest to note what the magistrate of Venice, Giambattista Giustiniani, sent to inspect the Dalmatian territories in 1553, for the purpose, very probable, to put under restrain the

local nobility, and to verify the real possibility of recruiting valid oarsmen for the Republic galleys also, in consideration of the worsening relations, and possible confrontation with the Turkish fleet (developed later in the historic battle of Lepanto). According to Giustiniani, there were 500 souls in Ossero, and 2000 in Cherso. “*La sono homeni da facto*” (there are men of action) (fit to row and fighting) 100, here 400, in the villas and islets 3,500 souls, “*et huomeni de facto 800*” (and men of action 800). The nobles families in Ossero are: *Drasa, Schia, Grabbia from Veggia* (Veglia), and there is no old people due to plague, and the unhealthy area. The families of Cherso are de Petris, Bacchina (most likely, Bocchina), Bruta, Gabich, Colombi, Donati, Moyse, Pecovich, and Profici. “*L’isola ... rebellava sempre che Zaratini loro capi s’allienavano della divozione della Republica*”. (The island...is always rebelling, that their Zaratini bosses were very pleased at the devotion shown to the Republic).

10. The information on the origin of the villages of Lussingrande and Lussinpiccolo are taken from “*Storia documentata dei Lussini*” by Dr. Matteo Nicolich, or rather, the author is referring to two different versions handed down by our forefathers, one referring to the arrival of eight families, and the other twelve, equally share by the two villages.

11. It is curious to observe that the town of Ciunschì retains the same name of the antique Dalmatic language spoken in Veglia, precisely called Ciunschì language (M. G. Bartoli – “il Dalmatico”).

II

THE HISTORY

The first inhabited settlements.

From records of the Catholic Church, it was determined that the first settlements sprang in the area of Neresine in the eleven hundred. In this period the island of Cherso, and Lussino were the destination of Benedictine friars' hermits, followers of Saint Romualdo of Ravenna (951-1027), called Camaldolesi.

Some of these friars following Saint Romualdo, who made at least two trips to Istria, and prefer the islands for better, meditate in isolation. They settled in the territory of the actual island of Lussino around the slope of Mount Ossero, which towers above the town of Neresine with its 589 meters. The friars built at least four hermit dwellings in the slopes of this mountain then called "*Sancti Nicolai Mons Garbus*", (Mount Garbo of Saint Nicholas). This is documented all on the *Annales Camaldulenses*. They lived a contemplative life in isolation, and fed on what the meager surrounding nature could offer; in effect, the ruins of these hermitages were found in the countryside of Neresine, and one in a pleasant locality on the slope of mount Ossero, called *Stagninna*. In addition, a little church situated between the hill of Halmaz and Mount Ossero, and from the examination of the church fragments is perceived an architectonic Romanic style typical of the period.¹

Presently the antique name of mount Garbo is recalled in a traditional saying in the local dialect: "*Garbin bardassa quel che'l trova el lassa*", to indicate that after all those very rumbling thunderstorms coming from *Garbin*" it leaves rapidly what it found (a clear sky). Nowadays being it in Italian, or Slav dialect of the town, the winds, and atmospheric disturbances (*neviere*) that comes from the mountain direction, or from North-West are called "*de Garbin*" or "*od Garbina*" (meaning from Garbin).

The name Monte Ossero (affectionately *Ossuo`rciza* in the town Slav dialect) is probably taken from the first Venetian chronicles (XVI century) that referenced the city of Ossero. Since 1945, it has been finally designated *Televrin* a completely new name. This reference cannot be found on any of the old chronicles, nor in the oral tradition handed down by our ancestors. This change was one of the first tasks, (of the Communist Regime, addressing ideology), toward the erosion of any reference to religious or suspected leftover nomenclature, not orthodox to Croatian Nationalism.²

At this beginning lived a very important figure in the history of Ossero: Saint Gaudenzio. Gaudenzio born in this city toward the end of the X century, he too becomes a Benedictine friar, and follower of Saint Romualdo. He lived for many years as a hermit. His dwelling was a grotto near the top of Monte Ossero. In few years, his saintly reputation spread beyond the Quarner region, and was elected bishop of Ossero (1030-1043). Thereafter, he died in the convent of Portonovo Del Conero (Ancona) in the year 1044.

Saint Gaudenzio is the Saint Patron of Ossero, and his remains is kept in the cathedral of this city.

The presence of hermit friars in the islands lasted less than a century, why the absence? For anagraphical reasons, beyond the first generation no new hermit friars arrived to replace them, and due to disfavor of this practice in the religious communities, slowly this way of life disappear or died out in the rest of Europe, therefore there are no traces left.

The “birth date” of Neresine.

Until approximately the middle of the XV century, Neresine did not exist: in that period, the lands in which the town was later built belonged in large part to the noble family Drasa of Ossero. The Drasa have a very important role in the settlement of Neresine, therefore we start from them.

The Ottoman Empire conquered Constantinople on May 23, 1453. Thereafter, in the XV century it undertook the invasion of the Balkans states with the final purpose of conquering, also the Kingdom of Hungary. The Papacy, and the most important European Kingdoms terrorized by this dramatic eventuality delegated the great Franciscan friar Giovanni da Capestrano to organize a crusade to stop the Turkish invasion. The friar together with the Hungarian military leader Giovanni Hunyadi traveled through cities, and castles gathering a sizeable army. The nobleman from Ossero, Francesco Drasa fervent follower of Giovanni da Capestrano, to whom he supplied economic aid for the erection of the Franciscan Convent in Rovigno, joined the friar, perhaps with some men, into the Christian armada.³

The Turks on their northward advance with a large army, and powerful fleet in 1546, went upward the river Danube and besieged the city of Belgrade at that time an important Christian bulwark.

The Christian army, even though inferior in forces, and equipment went directly toward the besieged city with the intent to liberate. The crucial battle took place under the walls, and on the river Danube in front of the city, from July the 14 to 22, 1456. The discrepancy between the Turkish fleet, consisting of numerous well-equipped war ships with powerful cannons, and the Christian consisting of fluvial barks, and barges was enormous. This notwithstanding, the friar against the opinion of the pontifical legate Cardinal Carvajal, and of the same Hunyadi on the evening of July 21, gave orders for the final assault. He stood on the top of a height well visible by his fighters in land, and river brandishing in one hand the crusaders standard, and on the other lifting a Crucifix toward the sky, incited his men with skyward invocations, and encouragements in the name of Jesus. The battle was bloody, and thanks to a genial strategic expedient, it turned favorable for the Christians. The Serbian soldiers with more expertise than the Turks of their own river, loaded some barges, and boats with stubble, wooden fagots, and setting them on fire directed them toward the Turkish fleet downriver burning them on impact. At the same time from the city walls, they threw against the besiegers burning wooden fagots impregnated with tar causing a general disruption of the Turkish army, which took off chased by the Christians who made a massacre. The battle ended at daytime on July 22, 1456, (recurrence day of the festivity of Saint Mary Magdalene), with a triumphant entrance of Giovanni da Capistrano in the freed Belgrade city.

Defeated the Turks, the Christian armada dissolved, and the survived returned to their homelands.

Right after, presumably between 1457, and 1460, Francesco Drasa, and his men built, in a high, and well visible spot on his lands, their church dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalene, as an act of gratitude toward the Saint, and in remembrance of the memorable battle, and victory upon the Turks, which indeed happen, the day of the Saint recurring festivity.

The families of the new arrivals, presumably crusade companions of Francesco, built their houses around the church giving life to the town of Neresine.

From that day, in remembrance of the big fires that caused the defeat of the Turks, and the liberation of Belgrade, the festivity of Saint Mary Magdalene is celebrated in Neresine, yearly with large bonfires of wheat straw, maize stalk, and stubble in the large yard in front of the church, and in what is now the town main square: the famous “*coleda*”, that where for more than 5 centuries, one of the most typical events of the local tradition, but unfortunately now not more in use (because unpleasant to the past regime, then suppressed).

Interestingly enough, this period coincide with the clearing of the fields from all the rubbish of the just finished harvest season (in Neresine, there is a purpose for everything worth doing). The first families that settled in Neresine according to local tradition were the Sigovich, the Zorovich, the Soccolich, the Ruconich, and the Marinzulich. The Sigovich, and Zorovich built their houses, and their *stuagne* (neighborhood) in the slopes of Monte Ossero, still today called *veli dnuor* (Large Yard). The Soccolich also, settled there well far from the shoreline in an area more northern later called Castellani countryside. The Ruconich somewhat further down in the countryside, and their *stuagne* was called Ruconic’evo (then Blasic’evo), and the Marizulich right below the church of Saint Mary Magdalene.

This traditional reconstruction appears very plausible, because, proven by age-old documents found in the various archives, (Ossero, Franciscan Convent of Neresine, and the attics of our ancestors).

Following from the above, we can say that the town of Neresine, the ways it has developed in the last five centuries, and how we find it today, started to exist between the XV and XVI century. It started on the slopes, precisely, of Monte Ossero, on a level, and more fertile ground of the island, around the property of the noble, and rich Drasa family from Ossero. In the midst of these properties raised, the “*Castello*” a large, and fortified square building employed as a farming residence, most probably, built by Francesco Drasa father of the more notorious Colane (old Venetian diminutive for Nicholas). Actually, in the girder of the lower doorway beside the Drasa emblem we find engraved the letters FD, and in another stone is written the year 1450.

Before this period, there are no documents, ruins or other proofs to indicate any significant number of dwellers. In last will and testament of Colane Drasa 1509, kept in the Convent of Neresine, whereas it is very detailed in the description of the properties, and territories, and even very precise in demanding “*ch’el corpo suo sia portato al monasterio suo per lui fatto in Neresine de’ frati osservanti et che li sia sepolido in la gesa de San Francesco in la cappella granda avanti lo altar granda*”, (that his body be brought to his convent, made for him in Neresine, and that he may be buried in the church of the observant friars of Saint Francis, in the large chapel in front of the main altar). There is not mentioned a town, nor a population of significant consistence, living in the neighborhood of the Convent of Neresine. In any case, altogether all the historical happenings that emerged from the eastern area of the Adriatic Sea shows that the birthing of the town started in the above-indicated era.⁴

The first development.

In few years, the town began to be developed, and grew thanks to the dense miscegenation among the people of Villa di Neresine d’Ossero (Ossero’s Villa of Neresine).

The canonical priest of Ossero become the souls caretaker of the new arrivals. He took over the new church, celebrated the religious functions, weddings, and funerals included, and whatever

else the growing new community needed. To this priest was also assigned the office of vital statistics.

The new established families came all from the eastern region of the Adriatic Sea, from Dalmazia, and presumably, from more continental territories, their mother language was of the Slavic stump, also a mixture of Slavic Idioms with the *Dalmatico*, a kind of “*lingua franca*” (common language) at that time spoken in the whole coastal area. Therefore, this new population demonstrated difficulties understanding the local residents. Linguistic problems arose especially from Ossero, where after the definitive passage of the region under the Venetian Republic administration (1409), the official administrative, and literary language become the Italian, in substitution of the pre-existing Latin. Due to the lack of a scholastic structure, and the illiterate population the canon priest took on the task of teaching reading, and writing the Italian language to the more gifted youths.

The successor of Francesco Drasa, his son Colane, was highly devoted to the Franciscan Minor friars and in 1505, ordained personally, and at his own expenses, the construction of a new and bigger Church in Neresine. The Church was dedicated to Saint Francis, and adjacent to it, the convent for the Franciscan friars who become permanent residents. This is well substantiated by some documents in the convent archive, and by the last will and testament of the same Colane, proven, also by his sepulcher in the same church in front of the Main Altar. The construction of the church of Saint Francis (consecrated in 1515), and the relative convent gave a noticeable impulse to the town development because, the initial resident friars become an important point of religious, and cultural reference for the growing population. The convent began earning various legacies, already on the same XVI century: holdings, sheep flocks, houses, etc. With a deed of March 25, 1535, Chiara Bocchina, Colane Drasa’s widow, donated the lands surrounding the convent known as *tesina*, and the woods toward *Rapoc’è* to the friars. Antonio Ragusin, a citizen of Lussingrande, donated to the friars through his testament, a *stanza*, a piece of land, named Garmosal, which is four miles from Ossero, with 83 animals. (Garmosal, at present Garmosaj, is the name in the ancient *Dalmatico* language, meaning forest, and spot grazing area).

Again, in 1590, Cristoforo Schia from Ossero installed a legate in favor of the religious. In XVII century the captain Francesco Drasa deed to the friars “*animali da pascolo 50 et li animali vivi da frutto posti nella mandria di Garmosal, con tutte le sue raggion, habentie et pertinentie, ombrie e bonazze spettanti a detti pascoli*”. (Grazing animals 50, and live breeding animals herding in Garmosal, with all its reasons, having, and pertinent, shades, and calm sea belong to said pastures). Many other donations enriched the convent patrimony; consequently, the friars needed people suitably prepared to manage their heritage. To this purpose the friars began gathering few town youths offering them room, board, and teaching: reading, writing, and mathematics, in exchange of service in the religious functions, in the farming of the fields, and gardens, the care of the animals, and at the end helping with the administering of their assets.

As in the previous case of the canon priest from Ossero, also in the teaching the friars used the Italian language. Because these same friars of the Franciscan Order of the Minor Observant coming from the Dalmatian Vicariate of Saint Girolamo, used the Italian as the teaching language in their schools, therefore these youths learned to read, and write in Italian.

This was the first step of integration for the growing population; therefore, to send one’s child to live with the friars was for long time one of the most aspired ambitions for the town prolific families. Lather, these youths become the first managers in town, convent, and many of them embraced the religious life in turn becoming Franciscan friars themselves, and residing in the same convent of Neresine. The first appearance of the names of Neresinotti as “bravari”

(herdsmen and farmers) is in some convent documents of the XVII century were, the Marinzulich, and Soccolich as the convent heritage managers. The friars trained the population, even, the most adjourned techniques for growing olives, and the production of oil building, adjacent to the convent, the first big olive press that remained in operation until 1950.

The population started to increase in the XVI and XVII century also, for the arrival of other families coming from various surrounding regions. There is a documented arrival of some families toward the end of the XVII century: the Zuclich who settled in Halmaz presumably coming from Croatia, the Ragusin, also in Halmaz coming from Lussingrande, and others.

Language and culture. The Dalmatico.

As noted the incoming dwellers of the growing town were from, very probably, the neighboring regions, and from the nearby islands, and Dalmazia that upon contact with the few resident-farming families, markedly in Tarsich, started to mix their idioms and cultural heritage. Here we want to underline that in the city of Ossero, the language spoken by the majority was the “*Dalmatico*” the old romance language spoken by the Liburnian descendants. Actually, in the old Slavic slang of the town handed down through the centuries, there are still words, and a strong forced accent on the diphthongs with the letter “U”, typical of the olden language. These characteristic diphthongs are present only, and just in the Neresine Slavic dialect: (*stuasa, comuòstre, duòlcic’, conuàl, buàncic’, fasuòl, fazuòl, tuòric’, vruàta, cimituòri, cuàlbin, druàgo, duàn, tovuàr, Buòh, ecc.*).⁵

Now, it could be useful to rerun the history of the antique language, which is also, the history of the people that spoke it.⁶

The Liburnians that settled in the coastal part of the eastern Istrian peninsula, on the Quarner islands, and the northern part of Dalmazia, constituted the first organized population that dwelled in the region; they certainly had their proper language, even though they had not yet elaborated any writing, analogically as other eastern or western European people of those days.

When the Romans during their expansion constituted the Empire, they conquered these territories, and brought along their spoken, and written language. They allowed the subjected population to appropriate themselves of the Latin Roman alphabet, and for the first time utilize the writing. The new languages born in this period in the various European regions are the result of the integration of the autochthon idioms with in a major or minor measure the Latin language. This gave origin to the languages so called Neolatin or romance, as the Spanish, French, Italian, Rumanian, Ladin, and exactly the Dalmatico.

We already know almost all on the beginnings, and evolution of these languages; they are the fundamental part of the culture, and literature of these people. The Dalmatico is the only exception; it has been slowly extinguished, and overcome by the Italian, and Venetian imposed by the Republic of Venice. After being the spoken language of the Illyrian coastal population, and their descendants for the whole of the Middle Ages until XVI – XVII century, one of the reasons for the disappearance was the lack of the written word. All writings, being literary or bureaucratic, were first written in Latin, and then after the XV century in Italian.

Among the Dalmatian scholars of importance, we may list the Raguseans, Stefano Grandi (+1683), Giorgio Baglivi (+1705), Ruggero Boscovich (1711 – 1787) and Ignazio De Giorgi (+1737) that left works in Italian and, Slav, but not in Dalmatico. Other scholars were the Spalatian Marco Marul (1450 – 1524) that wrote in Italian, and Slav, Annibale Lucia (+1556),

Gian Francesco Biondi (+1645), and Giovanni Lucio (+1684). Very important were also, Francesco Patrizio from Cherso (1529 – 1597), Marc'Antonio De Dominis from Arbe (+1674), Domenico Stratico from Zara (+ 1779), and Niccolo Tommaseo (1824 – 1874) from Sebenico, these last ones wrote only in Italian. Another element that contributed to the slow extinction of this language was the introduction after the X century of the writings in the Slav languages, spoken by the people coming from the more eastern regions invading for the first time the coastline after the VI century.

This first writing of the Slav languages invented by the Greek monk Cirillo (827 – 869), named *Glagolito* is derived from the Greek alphabet, it expanded to all Slav regions evangelized, exactly by Cirillo and his brother Metodio, and therefore, even if, in marginal measure in the coastal Dalmatian region. The alphabet grew subsequently in the eastern, and northern regions of Europe, (Russia, Bulgaria, Serbia, etc., and evolved into the present Cyrillic alphabet while Croatia, and more western Slav regions acquired the Latin alphabet. In the old Illyrian coastal region therefore grew in parallel two different written, and spoken languages, the Italian in the principal, and older cities, settled prevalently by descendant of Liburnian, and Illiric stock, and the Croat in the small towns of new constitution, and countryside, settled by Slav people.

Land people.

The XVI century saw established the first family nucleus in Neresine; they were farmers coming from the Illiric inland region, enticed by a political program of that time Republic of Venice. They were to increment the population of the Adriatic islands decimated by pestilence, for maintaining, even a minimal number of people, in the various territories semi-unsettled in the countryside. They were to increase the various productions, above all, agricultural, breeding of animals, still insufficient for the needs of the islands. The property owners, that is, the citizen and bishop of Ossevo favored the arrival of new Christian immigrants' fugitives from their original lands, following the Turkish invasion of the Balkan region.

The new arrivals must not have had too much familiarity with the Sea because, they settled in high grounds, and the farthest away from the sea as possible, afraid also, of pirates' raids, which were quite frequent in those days. That is, the oldest houses, probably the first built in the town are found in the Bardo heights. (This settlement was probably present before this period, so as the little church of Saint Mary Magdalene). Anyhow, the oldest houses of the village are those founded in places like *Veli Dvuòr*, *Pesc'ine*, *Stuàgne Casteluàgnevo* (as defined until the middle of the XIX century, later become *Stuàgne Bùbgnovo* or also *Dubcìnna*), *Stuàgne Rùcconic'evò*, *Halmàz*, etc. In the town Slav, dialect *stuagne* means "bunch of houses"; certainly, of Italian, derivation "stare", in the sense of being at "*abitare, stanziare*", and it has a more general meaning "settlement" (obviously like in the Dalmatico, the vowel "a" is transformed in the diphthong "ua"). In the Istro-Veneto, dialect of the town the word *stanza* or *stanzia* has the same meaning.

Neresine, from where the name comes from?

Regarding the name Neresine, many authors try one's hand at its interpretation or meaning.

Some theorize as deriving from the Croat “neres”, the male pig, therefore meaning, “Land for grazing pigs”, this hypothesis is of little credence. The first appearance of the name was as “Villa Neresine of Ossero” toward the end of the XV century. In those, and much older days in the archives of Ossero, and Cherso documentations is amply spoken of cattle breeding, and other territorial details, but is never mentioned pig farming or the likes of it. On the other hand the inaccessibility of the terrains with scattered thick woods would not have been suitable for raising pigs in the natural state. It should also, be said that *neres* is a dialectal term used only in certain parts of Slavonia, but is not found in the Serbo-Croatian not in other Slav languages.

Others in the intent of explaining the name more prosaically *Nerei sinus*, meaning “seno (inlet) di Nereo (of Nereus)” (the ancient Greek God of the Sea). Others again retain that the name derives from the words *neresi and neresium*, that in the Dalmatico, the old language spoken also in Ossero and Cherso, means, “land not cultivated”. Others further finally among whom the professor Branko Fucich in the book *Absirtides*, believe the name of the town derive from the Slav locution *nerezi*, which means, “place not cut”, “abandoned land”. In any case the last two interpretations one Neolatin and the other Slav which substantially coincide in the meaning seems to be the most accredited, and confirm from what is now known of the town origin.

For the curiosity of the reader one can remind the professor Fucich the name of the village Neresisc’è is on the island of Brazza in Dalmazia in which the Dalmatico was spoken for almost ten centuries, and a town called Neresi is in Macedonia.

The church and the convent of Saint Francis (of Assisi).

The construction of the church of Saint Francis, and the attached convent of the Franciscan Observant Minor friars of the Dalmatian Vicariate of Saint Girolamo started at the beginning of the 1500, on land used as vineyard, and gifted by the local citizen Domenico Sutcovich. The construction project by a friar architect, was erected by Colane Drasa, son of the defunct, Francesco from Ossero, at his expenses as amply documented in his testament counter signed by three lords from Ossero, and as reported on the tombstone of the same Colane Drasa, visible today in the front of the main altar of the church. (This tombstone hardly legible today, reads: “LVG[E]PAVPE[RA] CLARA / BOCHINA CHARO CONIUGI / COLANO DRASE / MAVSOLE / VM QUI TEMPLVM CENO / BIVNQ[VE] EREXIT / SIMA POSVIT / [X]IIK. J[V]NII /MDXIII”).

The noble Osserino, decided to erect the church in order to expiate his sins, as suffrage of his dead relatives, and as an advantage to the inhabitants of the Ossero Diocese, and of the whole island. When he died in 1513, the church was already finished, and it was later consecrated in 1515, as it is presently visible on a dedication plate in the same church.⁷

The church of Saint Francis, since its foundation, and until the middle of the XX century has always been the principal religious, and even social reference point in the life of the population. It was therefore, for almost five centuries the fulcrum around which the story of the town developed; it deserves then to be described in more detail. For this, we use the description made many years ago by Father Vittorio Meneghin.⁸

“The church is of modest dimensions, simple, but not lacking of a certain artistic elegance, unfortunately disfigured by an unhappy restoration, above all by the lengthening of the posterior part with the construction of the actual presbytery and choir, so that the antique presbytery appears to be an unaesthetic bottleneck. On the frontal base of the main altar is engraved the date

MDCCX. In that year or there about was also built the presbyter. Following the good Dalmatian-Istrian tradition, it is all masonry, excluding the posterior addition in regular stones by sight accurately chiseled. Originally, the facade surely had an arcade, because it is still visible, (small stone modillions that supported beams on which rested those of the portico roof). The portico was probably demolished when, very near the church facade, they built the present cemetery on convent land. The facade is very simple with only an arched doorway. On the center of the girder, in a round plate surrounded by a crown of bay leaf in it is etched the Drasa emblem, in the tympanum there is an orbicular window. The oblong windows on the left side are gothic, and those surviving on the right side are full arch.

Inside, there are scattered, here, and there, many tombstones, on one of which is a worn-out excellently sculptured seal with emblem, and inscription, many are marked with the initials S.F. (Saint Francis). These tombs were the property of the convent, on which burial was granted on request, because, since the church was built some deceased from Neresine were buried in it. Decorated with ornaments is the Holy Water Pile, even though, not very fine, are of renaissance style inspiration. The Lavabo (Sink) in the sacristy is of a frank and elegant Lombard style. In the sacristy windows, on the jamb is sculptured the coat of arms of the Venetian family Loredan. The **Pala** (altarpiece) of the main altar, in the upper part, depicts Saint Francis in the act of receiving the stigmata, in the lower Saint Bonaventure, and Saint Gaudenzio, opposite to them is Saint Nicholas, and Saint Clare. These last two were certainly included to honor Colane (Nicholas), and Chiara Bocchina (Clare his wife). It can be said of the altarpiece, to be the one requested by Colane in his testament.

In the Saint Anthony of Padua altar, right side chapel, it is visible a shoddy painting, but the image is much venerated, or at least it was, and also by the nearby villagers. The marble altar built around 1660, because, at one point in a testament of that year, it is written new. Opposite the chapel of Saint Anthony, is that of "Madonna delle Grazie" Our Lady of Grace, her image was badly superimposed on a painting of Girolamo di Santa Croce, who made many paintings for the churches of the Observant Minor in Istria, and Dalmazia. The beautiful tablet of the Madonna (cm55 X 40 approximate) it is believed was brought to Neresine from Bosnia, after the first Turkish invasion, it is work of a Madonero (painter of Madonna's) of the XV century, not insensitive to the winds of the time in which he worked. The Virgin is fielding in a golden background, half figure, holding the baby to her breast with the right hand, the left hand is very delicately holding a flower, a flowing cloak from the head almost covering the whole body, visibly showing the breast, and left forearm covered with a richly decorated dress. The image devoted, and extremely venerated is zealously guarded by the population.

The steeple is very beautiful, and made of chiseled live rock. The bell tower has one open space on the side of the road, and eight dual-openings with slim octagonal columns that smoothly soften the barrel on top surrounded by a balcony, and a quadrilateral spire. The steeple is by father Ludovico from Ossero, a Franciscan friar who began it in 1590, and finished in 1604. The architect friar was inspired by the various beautiful Romanic bell towers raised previously in the various Dalmatian cities, particularly to that of the Cathedral in Arbe.

In a straight line from the church facade, is the entrance to a small trilateral cloister sustained by pillars. There is the ever-present water well at the center. The ambient is very suggestive, having something oriental. The small lodge overhanging a side of the cloister, the small square windows of the convent, the simplicity, the decorous poverty of it all, expresses the typical form of the first convents of the Franciscan Observant Order".

The convent next to the church was finished in the following years, probably around the middle of the XVI century, certainly in 1578, was perfectly finished because on that date it hosted numerous friars from the Dalmatian Province of Saint Girolamo, assembled in Neresine for a Chapter reunion, and celebration.

The convent gained patrimony from various legacies. With deed of March 25, 1535, Chiara Bocchina, Colane Drasa widow, gifted the lands surrounding the convent, called Tesina (that which was the big old vineyard, and the pine woods toward Rapoc'e, where presently is the camping grounds.

Other members of the Drasa families of Ossero, and Neresine generously follow suit. In 1690, the captain Francesco Drasa deed to the friars "*animali da pascolo n° 50 et li animali vivi da frutto posti nella mandria di Garmosal con tutte le sue raggion, habentie et pertinentie, ombrie et bonazze spettanti a detti pascoli*". (Grazing animals 50, and live fruitful stock herding in Garmosal, with all its reasons, having, and pertinent, shades and calm sea belong to said pastures). In 1590, Cristoforo Schia of Ossero instituted a legacy in favor to the friars. In 1672, Margherita Marceovich gifted 25 grazing animals. On the archive of the convent in Neresine are various documents depicting the contrast between the friars, and the bishop of Ossero, Nicolo Drasich who issued an imposition in 1721. The imposition was to obtain a tide (the tenth (10%) value of the convent estate possessions. On the October 4, 1722, feast of Saint Francis the friars did a solemn act of resignation from all their assets. This act enabled them to observe more closely the Franciscan rule of poverty, which forbids owning property. The friars transferred the possession of all their property to four assumed procurators that managed the possessions and forwarded the profits to the religious; to these lastly fell the obligation to satisfy the imposition, and the bindings to which the properties were linked, prevalently, consisting of celebrating a determinate number of Holy Masses for the deceased.⁹

The building of the church steeple took from 1590 to 1604, as previously noted. There is no information on the first bells installed in the belfry; they were probably quite "ramshackle" because three new bells were ordered at the beginning of the XX century. The new bells were casted by a Venetian foundry utilizing also, the bronze from the old ones, and although silent, they are still there today.

A complicated story, the painting of The Madonna delle Grazie.

The Croatian friars in nationalistic flavor circulated the hypothesis that the beautiful tablet of the Madonna delle Grazie was brought to Neresine from Bosnia at the end of the XIX century by the first settlers fleeing from the Turkish invasion of the Balkans.¹⁰ Even the friar Fabianich hurriedly noted of "Greek brush" even if, studies more competent, and accurate describe it from a Madonero (a painter of Madonne) of the XV century, and of a trend securely not Oriental but, Lombard. The Bosnian origin of the tablet is strongly against the sequence of the historic events that engulfed the islands, and the region in those by-gone days. The Madonna delle Grazie chapel actually was already endowed until the beginning of the XIX century of a painting of certain artistic value depicting the Madonna and Child Jesus in her arms (attributed by father Vittorio Meneghin to Girolamo di Santa Croce, painter of the XVI century over which was posted that of the Madonna delle Grazie.

The new picture, therefore, has been placed on the present location in more recent times, presumably the beginning of the XIX century, consequently the hypothesis of its arrival from

Bosnia with the fleeting immigrants is at least out of date by two centuries. The historian Father Pietro Iachetti in his research of 1863, (from researches in the Vatican Archives by Father Flaminio Rocchi), says that “the picture was really in the personal residence chapel of the queen of France, Maria Antonietta, and that as a result of the French revolution was salvaged by one of her maid-servants, and shipped to the Imperial Court of Vienna together with other personal objects of the Queen”.

The “Franciscan Annals” (Vol. VI 1875), register that the emperor Francesco Giuseppe as soon as charged with the Augsburg Empire gifted to the church of Saint Francis of Neresine a relevant amount of money together with religious objects, most probably, among which, was also the painting of the Madonna delle Grazie. This version coincides more readily for historical epoch with the structural and architectural reliefs executed on the altar of the Madonna, and with the restructuring of the church in that period.

On the history of the Madonna painting there are more things to say. During the Second World War, with the declared intention, “*to be sent for restoration*”, the friars removed the painting. The operation carried out with a certain sense of secrecy. The faithful realizing promptly of the removal demanded an immediate explanation from the friars, which was very vague, and reticent. This happening stirred up, and mobilized the town population (now counting 2000) which put up manifestations to protest the unilateral decision by the friars; however the shipping of the venerable painting toward “restoration” was not revoked even with the decisive intervention by the political authorities. When after few months the painting returned to its church completely restored the faithful noted that it was substantially different from the original; unfortunately, being it for the concern arousing by the fearful war conditions, being for other motives, the protest slowly weaned away, and the “new painting” replaced the original. In fact, analyzing the old photographs of the painting in question, “before and after the restoration”, one may detect few differences, slight but significant, and not compatible with works of *only* restoration. The returned painting was similar to the one removed but not the same. There is to say that after many years came to light information issued by the Italian government offices in the first years of war. Dispositions on the transfer to Rome for safekeeping, from possible war damages, of paintings of great artistic value then present in the churches of Venezia Giulia (region). It may then be possible that our antique, and venerate painting of the Madonna delle Grazie has in some way follow this venue. Concerning the painting installed in 1942, after the *assumed* restoration it is possible to venture the hypothesis, or rather say, that the pre-existing one pre-assumedly painted by Giordano di Santa Croce in the XVI century over which in later times was installed the one eventually donated by the Emperor Francesco Giuseppe was brought back to life.

The controversy over the two paintings of Our Lady of Grace will be extremely difficult to be ever resolved. Because, in the summer of 2004, the friars once again removed without reasonable explanations the Madonna painting, and in this occasion after the bashful protests of the few faithful “remaining” it was said that “the removal was prompted because the ancient painting needed an additional restoration”. Finally, in 2006, the “restored” painting returned into its original place with the writing on the back for future knowledge, “*the painting has been previously restored in Venice in 1942*”. This assumption is quite arbitrary being for the painting that has remained intact and well preserved for five centuries certainly did not require an additional restoration after only sixty years from the previous one, being it because is quite different from the one that left for the 1942 restoration. Even the size of the present painting is meaningfully different from that registered then, that is 55 x 40 centimeters. In fact, the frame of

the painting that is part of the altarpiece in the Madonna chapel results perfectly exact to the dimensions previously reported, but it is noticeably larger than the present painting by at least 10 centimeters in height and 5 centimeters in width. At the end therefore, it was announced that the antique church, and convent would be definitely closed in the month of October 2006. The reason given for closing the church is “lack of faithful presence for its religious functions”. Considering that the town has another church with a Pastor, it is very probable that it will never be known whether the present painting is the original (XVI), or the one from the XIX century installed over it or a copy, this last version appears to be veritable. It would make no sense to leave in a closed, and unguarded church an antique painting of great value created in the XVI century.

Working in the countryside.

There is no documentation that may indicate, with any sense of precision, the formation of the first families or the development of the town. The fact is understandable: we are talking of poor people completely illiterate that ignored the local language spoken in Ossero, above all the writing that was in time past first the Latin, then Venetian from XVI century until 1945, the Italian. We can say that for all the XVI and XVII century the population was exclusively dedicated to the hard agricultural work principally to reclaiming, and fertilizing the land: by removing stones, and clearing the brush-land. Proof are the very numerous *megnizi* (mounds of stones) scattered all-over the land. The name *megnik* in the local Slav slang means, a pile of stones, and a word strangely similar to antique Celtic term *menhir*, again, a pile of stones, (the Liburnians were a Celtic stock) the never-ending *masiere* (*gromace*) dry walls that are used to delimit, and enclose the various properties.

Back to this period was the build-up of the typical *gorghi* or *tieghi*, from the Slav dialect *tiegh*, large plowing grounds for cultivating wheat, and other cereals. Alternatively, vineyards, drawn-out from the middle of the forest, prevalently in the valleys (*dolaz*), are fields tending toward the circular surrounded by high and robust *masiere* to impede the incursions of sheep. These fields are still very numerous, even though now untilled, in the southern part of the island of Cherso called Bora (*Bura*), name taken from the prevailing typical wind coming toward the town from that direction, *the bora proper*. With the terminology, *tesina* (probably an upshot of *tiegh*) were instead defined flat fertile fields turned into cultivation. The access to the *tieghi*, and other properties called *dielnize* (subdivisions), was through the *lese*: they are high wooden gates, of *juniper* (*smreca*), properly fasten to robust posts that functioned as jambs (*stosari*), having ingeniously made bolts (*veruse*, *saverusit*) from the same wood.

The first writings.

The first reliable, and documented information on the town of Neresine is from some manuscript held by the olden family's descendants prevalently holding last wills, and testaments; purchasing contracts, and land transfers, farming management, accounting, and purchasing of goods. The documentation goes back to the XVII century. In addition information from the tombs of XVIII century of some citizens, and families of the town present in the church of Saint Francis, and relative cloister.

For frankness of information it is worth reporting the inscriptions on the graves that witness for the first families of the town. They are six in total; the most ancient one is located in front of Saint Anthony altar it carry the inscription: “*SEPOLTURA DI NICOLO RUCONICH ET HEREDIBUS 1691*”. In front of the Madonna delle Grazie altar another one says: “*SEPULCRUM [...] RUCONICH 1700*” (the name is not legible due to stone erosion). Still in the church on the left side toward the main entrance is a non-dated grave with a Latin inscription certainly of the same period of Domenico Sigovich “*FUTURAM CARNIS RESURRECT” NEM / QUÆ IN NOVISSIMOEVENIENT DIE / SUB HOC LAPIDE JACENS / FIDE EXPECTAT ABHAC DIE / HERUS DOMINICUS SIGOVICH / CUM SUCCESSORIBUS SUIS*” (The future resurrection of the flesh / that will come on the very new day / laying under this stone / awaits with faith from today / the lord Domenico Sigovich / with his heirs). From the sailing ship engraved stone is evident that the defunct was a proprietor, or a Sea captain (from other documents in his descendant possession it may be established that he died in 1757). In the cloister in front of the small side door of the church the other three with the following inscriptions: “*FRANCESCO SOCCOLICH, ZUANE E GAUDENZIO FRATELLI ANNO 1753*”; “*ZUANE MARINZULICH PER SE E SUI EREDI ANNO 1788*”; *BARTOLAMIO RUCCOGNICH PER SE E SUI EREDI ANNO 1783*”. In the cloister by the cited graves is walled a large red marble tombstone that at one time covered a grave situated by the presbyter built by Francesco Dragosetich from Ossero, only for him and the religious as it is written in the Latin inscription. “*SISTE GRADUM, QUI PRÆTER ABIS / MIRARE SEPULCHRUM / HOC DRAGOSETICH CANDIDIT / ERE SUO / NOMINE FRANCISCUS, SED SOLIS / NOBILE TANTUM / RELIGIOSIS NEC NON SIBI / STRUXIT OPUS*”¹⁰

Many other are spread on the floor of the church with only the initials “SF” (Saint Francis), holding the remains of the first dwellers of Neresine.

A strong development of the town started around the year 1510, a register in the archives of the convent confirm this, it was used to record the Perpetual Holy Masses for the deceased requested by the faithful to the friars. In this register that started in 1513, and lasts until 1900, and beyond the first citizens of Neresine listed appeared exactly at the beginning of the XVIII century. Before then the registered names were all from Ossero – to start, by the same Colane Drasa (1513), and of his wife Chiara Bocchina (1535) – from Cherso, from Lussingrande, but never Neresinotti.

Going back to this volume named “Libro delle Messe” (Mass book), goes to say that the original copy written in Italian got lost most likely eliminated by the Croatian friars who got there toward the end of 1800. It is available, nevertheless, the Croatian translation carried out by a friar from Pago in the year 1896,– as by himself certified in his own hand on the same register - by order of the friar caretaker Francesco Smolje.

It is proper to say that, even beyond studying, the register resurfaces perplexities as to the completeness of the data in the translation. For example: the number of deceased people of the town in all of the XIX century, of which are available secure anagraphical (registry) data, in the book is mentioned no more than 10% of the actual deceased citizens. What are missing are prevalently names of Italian extraction, and knowing the great religiousness and devoted attachments of Neresinotti to the church of Saint Francis, and the conventual friars especially those dwelling on the Frati district the doubts on the correctness of the translation are more than righteous.

The town first church.

The Venetian legislation in the city of Ossero regulated the life, habits, and customs of Neresine; it was a part of the Republic of Venice until the end of May 1797, and diocese until 1828. The care of the souls, and general administration of the town was by a canon priest from Ossero, who reported to his own Bishop first, and to the Pastor after. The canon was also the public official and took care of the population anagraphical registration such as, births, weddings, and burial.

The church officiated was the expository of Santa Maria Maddalena (Mary Magdalene), the christenings, weddings, and funerals, beyond the normal religious rites until the construction, and inauguration at the end of XIX century, of the new Duomo (Cathedral) consecrated to the “Madonna della Salute” (Lady of Good Health) later elevated to Parish.

The church of Santa Maria Maddalena is certainly the first church of the town; its oldest mention goes back to 1534, date of the first census of all existing churches in the territory of the diocese of Ossero in which the church is described in details. From the census it is deducted that it was built some years earlier than when the census was taken, presumably in the second half of the XV century (between 1456 and 1465).

At least until the end of the XVII century, the dead of the town were prevalently buried in Ossero, and this procured a great inconvenience for the population. As previously noted the friars of the convent provided to alleviate this inconvenience by allowing burials of some families in the church, and attached cloister with an adequate recompense. Later on in XIX century, when a law forbade the burial of the deceased in any church they relinquished a piece of land adjacent to the church for giving burial to the town’s people. (Our present Cemetery)

The friars of Saint Francis.

The friars of the Franciscan Convent have always been present in town, generally two or more priests, and one or two brother friars. The friars took care of the faithful, prevalently for the religious, and social aspect, but were also self-sufficient, and took care of the convent, and their properties, vineyards, gardens, flocks, and pastures.

The friars since the first beginning managed the convent, and welcomed in their community some of the town’s young boys to whom they granted room, and board in exchange for help in the course of church, and convent daily activities lightening so the load, of the poor and prolific families, of a mouth to feed. The youths got also, a good education. They learned reading, and writing. The friars hence initiated the basis of the culture, and the civil progress of the town. To send one’s child to live with the friars was for the prolific families of Neresine for long time, one of the most aspired ambitions. Lather these youths become the first “*Bravari*” (head herdsmen and managers) for the convent and recognized bosses in town, and many of them embraced the religious life in turn becoming Franciscan friars themselves, and resided in the same convent of Neresine. Already in some documents of the XVII many of the resident friars were from Neresine, and after the XVIII century mostly Neresinotti.¹¹

Toward the beginning of the XIX century, due to scarcity of priests in the Diocese of Ossero and in the decision of transferring to Veglia the bishopric seat, the Austrian government authorities decided to transfer from Neresine the friars too, putting an end to the church, and convent activities. The citizens of Neresine rose up with great heath, by sending petitions repeatedly to the Vienna Cult Ministry, and directly to the Emperor, achieving at the end the undisturbed stay

of the religious in Neresine. In the first years of 1800, in a petition to the Emperor by the representatives of the people of Neresine, we read:

“... per la scarsezza di Religiosi (intesi come preti diocesani) in questo suburbio della città di Ossero nominato Neresine, necessitati sono stati li nostri antenati d'introdurre in esso suburbio un monastero di otto religiosi dell'Ordine de' Minori Osservanti di S. Francesco, per la coltura spirituale di questa popolazione. E scorgendo per questo popolo sempre più necessari qui li detti religiosi per l'adempimento de' Legati di Messe dai nostri antenati lasciati, ove nella loro chiesa soltanto in questo paese, due miglia distante dalla città stessa, tumulati vengono li nostri cadaveri; assistono questi alle sacramentali confessioni, all'infermi di un solo cappellano Curato che qui esiste tra le case disperse per le campagne, ed altri benefici spirituali che da essi riceviamo... Noi dunque Capi di questo popolo di Neresine d'Ossero, udite anche le fervorose istanze dello stesso, e noi tutti ben volentieri prostrati ai Piedi di sua Sacra Regia Apostolica Maestà, umilmente imploriamo la conferma qui de' stessi religiosi a tenore di prima.”

“...for the lack of religious (meaning Diocesan Priests) in this suburb of the city of Ossero named Neresine, our forefathers needed to introduce in this suburb a convent for eight friars of Saint Francis Minor Observant Order for the spiritual culture of this population. And realizing for this people ever more the need for these religious to carry out the legates for the Masses left behind by our ancestors, legates for only in their church, and in this town. Two miles from the city itself, we bury our dead. They assist us on the sacramental confessions, the infirm, we have only one chaplain Parish Priest, that here exists among the houses lost throughout the countryside, and other spiritual benefits that, from them we receive... We therefore, heads of these Neresine people of Ossero, hearers of the fervent petitions of the same, and we all willingly prostrated at Your Sacred Apostolic Majestic Kingdom feet we humbly implore the confirmation to a previous way of life for the same religious.”

The friars have always been in great communion with the town's people with whom they shared the hard life, the labors, and reciprocal interests. For example, the friars promoted the construction of their small harbor (Mandrachio) (mooring) the building of the first *frantoio* (olive press) for oil production. From document in the convent archives, it results that in 1772, it belonged to a Giovanni Petris from Ossero, and he paid the rights to the friars: from a stone plate in the external wall listing the year 1757, we should assume that on that date the whole structure might have been renovated, or maybe modernized.

The religious rites were celebrated in Latin according to the rite of the Roman Catholic Church as established by Saint Francis. Only, toward the end of the XIX century, following the Croatization policy of the Central Government of Vienna, was imposed on the population, and actively supported by Diocese of Veglia, which sent the Croat friars in town. On Sundays, and Holy days of obligation the Epistle, and Gospel were read in Croatian, and some prayers in “*schiavetto*” (an idiom between Latin and Croat), but never in Glagolito. On one unfortunate Sunday on September 1895, the Glagolito Mass was tried ending with the suspension of the service, because the people left the church, and had a subsequent aggressive confrontation with the celebrating friar.¹²

In the 1890's, for merely a political intent not openly confessed in the whole of Dalmazia blossomed a real battle in favor of replacing the Latin with the old Slavic language in the Liturgy. The intent was to extend the usage of Glagolito in all churches such as the friars Minor, where the Latin was used unceasingly since the beginning of Christianity. In Neresine this intent

did not bear fruits, because of a strong popular opposition, which culminated in at least three cases of aggression against the new friars.

The sermons in the first periods of the new convent were given in Venetian-Dalmatian or even Italian, also because, the friars belonging to the Dalmatian Province of Saint Gerolamo were of Italo-Veneta school, and were not familiar with the Slavic dialect of the town, which is very different from the Croat idiom. Afterwards the Neresine born resident friars whose frequent presence enlightened the faithful could deliver the sermons in the local Slavic dialect.

Neresine is enlarging.

From early 1600, the development of the town had a big increment in concomitance with the strong decline of Ossero, due to serious and persistent unhealthy environmental conditions, and aggravated by the last ferocious raid in 1606, by the Usocchi pirates’.

This period gave way to the actual beginning of a progressive abandonment of the city of Ossero by the established old landowners that moved with their families elsewhere, and at the same time started the acquisition of lands by the dwellers of Neresine. The unhealthy environmental condition of Ossero, that was the principal reason for the slow decline of the city, was caused by the improvident construction in the XV century, of salt-flats in the shoal zones adjacent to the southern external city walls. The salt-flats resulted unproductive for the continuous outpouring of fresh waters underground springs (still existent), which finally after a while were abandoned, but without providing any remedial reclamation or reconstruction of the areas. This zone become entrapped by stagnant waters; without redevelopment works it brought on the establishing of unhealthy infestations, and ending with the spread of malaria, becoming endemic, and a cause of large mortality for the inhabitants.

That period brought in Neresine, also a new wave of immigrants “a second wave settlers”, predominantly single males coming from Istria, Dalmazia, and from the coastal eastern regions of Italy, somewhat alphabetized, and in possession of a significant professional baggage. They were master bricklayers, woodworkers, carpenters, merchants, coopers, blacksmiths, tinsmiths, etc. The unavoidable mixing of these two generations in marriages of the last arrivals with the town’s women produced the current Neresinotto stock. The element most significant of this age is the population’s familiarity with the sea. Together with the growing building construction started the activity of boating construction (small boats called “*caici*”), indispensable boats for the transportation to, and from Bora (the shore of the island of Cherso facing the town), whose lands in grand part were already in possession of the citizens of Neresine. At the end of the XVII century, the population of Neresine reached 1000 inhabitants.

San Giacomo, the near village distant only two kilometers is also developing in this period. Its integral growth followed that of Neresine, of which from the beginning of the XIX century, it becomes hamlet in all effects.

The small village of Tarsich deserves a note apart; a cluster of houses clinging to some hillocks situated on the island of Lussino a few kilometers north of the hill Halmaz, and somewhat less than few kilometers from Ossero. The village of Tarsich is probably much more ancient than Neresine, and at least until the XVII century was one of the suburbs of the city of Ossero. Then many of the inhabitants of this village spilled in the nascent countryside of Neresine, contributing to its development, indeed, in contrast to the other villages on the islands from the 18th century onwards Tarsich was regarded as a part of Neresine, precisely because, of the

succeeding dense intertwining of marriages the inhabitants of the two villages were completely integrated.

Tarsich consisted of two distinct clusters of houses located at a certain distance from each other, and its inhabitants were devoted solely to agriculture, and cattle breeding referring to all their other needs, first in Ossero, and in the last two centuries to Neresine, to which they were connected by a narrow and impervious path. In a survey carried out around 1910, the village comprised 95 inhabitants subsequently, due to slow transfer of families to Ossero, and Neresine, the population has dropped considerably. After the passage of the islands under the Yugoslav sovereignty the inhabitants began to abandon the village undertaking the flight to Italy, and then in the rest of the world, as did the vast majority of the inhabitants of the islands; in fact after 1950, the village of Tarsich was completely abandoned. At the present stage, also due to acts of vandalism the houses are reduced to a sad accumulation of ruins.

Homes and neighborhoods.

Neresine, from the point of view of urban development since its origins, it grew randomly on a large territory. Consequently there were no streets, ways, or roads conventionally classifiable but, only pathways that stretched from house to house or hamlet-to-hamlet (*stuagne to stuagne*). Because of this the municipal administration of that period thought well to assign a number to each house starting from North to South: we find therefore, the number one on top of the Halmazh (Varhalzà) hill and number 180 at the extreme South in the zone of Suria toward Galboca. Afterward, following the incremental construction of new houses the numbering followed a casual, and progressive manner according to the date of fabrication. To facilitate the individualization of the various houses the town was divided in Contrade (districts) in line with the Venetian trend. We have thus, the Contrada Halmaz,¹³ comprising all the houses of Halmaz. The Contrada Frati, comprising all the houses north of the line that starts in Rapoc'e westward, including Parantuògnef and Garìniza. The Contrada Pozzo, is substantially the central part of the town within its midst the main square with the big water well (*Studenaz*). The Contrada Castellani located at the extreme West of the town on the slopes of the mount. (The actual *stuagni Bubgnovi, Ambrosic'evi* and possibly *Pesc'ine*). The name Castellani, almost certainly, is derived from *Castelluàgnevi* nickname of the Soccolich who become wealthy landowners. These Castelluàgnevi had acquired much of the Drasa properties including the "Castello" (from here the nickname). The Contrada Canal, is from Saint Mary Magdalene up to Saint Anthony chapel, and Stantinich. Contrada Bardo is the actual Podgora. The Contrada Biscupia includes all the remaining southern part of the town. Veli Dvuor (literally "great courtyard" has kept, even in the official papers the original name.¹⁴

By analyzing the distribution of settlements and the ownership of the land in the village, we have a configuration quite interesting. The part far away from the sea, scattered on the mountain slopes was the first to be colonized, as already noted, and it belonged to the families of "first generation". Again, they are the Soccolich, Sigovich and Zorovich (*Veli Dvuor*), Ruconich, Marinzulich, and, Zuclich (*Halmaz*). The remaining *stuagne* were settled by the "second generation of immigrants". In particular, the zone along the shore that extends from Lucizza, Piazza, up to Siertusef and more westerly up to the *stuagne* Gaetagnevo and Bruacovo, belonged to the Bracco families. The part of town from Rapoc'e toward northwest, up to the Frati belonged to the Matcovich. The zone of the town from Prantuognef and south belonged to the

Camalich. The whole part South of the town including Biscupia and Suria to Lecchich, Bonich, Zorovich, Succich, and Canalettich, to list only the more numerous families, the properties are intensely intertwined, however it is still possible to reconstruct the traces of the first subdivision through the genealogy of the descendants.

The nearest school is in Lussinpiccolo.

As Neresine developed, and grew, increased the requirements of knowledge, and aculturation of the population, but there were no schools in town. In Lussinpiccolo, at approximately eighteen kilometers away was the closest school, therefore not readily reachable (remember there was no modern transportation, only animal *horsepower*, and small boats (*caici*). The onerous duty to teach the youths was taken by the canon from Ossero, who was also the Pastor of Neresine, so many youngsters, presumably showing more interest, intellect, and audacity, learned to read, write, and mathematics, capacities needed in those distant times to manage any activities.

The language was Italian, also because the Croatian language at that time was still unknown, and the Slavic dialect spoken by the people then and even today is very different from the Croat. In addition the friars as already noted took the task of teaching the youngsters since older times, because they had the need to delegate to the town's people the burden of managing their properties: estate, animals, etc. The found documents reveal that their "bravari" (herdsman, farmers) of that period knew how to write in Italian, and be accountants.

Toward the first half of the nineteenth century, the better off families began to send their children to study in the higher schools of the neighboring more important towns: to Lussinpiccolo those who wanted to do the Masters Sea Captains, to Pisino or Parenzo for the agrarian studies, and Zara or Fiume for humanity studies. For the university studies the direction was Padova, and then Graz. The womenfolk were sent to study, and learn some manners from the nuns (*muneghe*) of the Benedictines religious order in Cherso.

Venezia, Austria, Italian Kingdom, and again Austria.

After the fall of Venice by the hands of Napoleon's French Revolution, and the treaty of Campoformio in 1797, Istria, Dalmazia, and the islands of Quarnero were transferred to Austria. Napoleon, in fact bartered these territories together with Venice, relinquishing them to Austria in exchange of Belgio, and Fiandre territories bordering France. Following the battle of Austerlitz in 1805, all the Austrian possessions on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, passed under the newly formed Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy. This period saw the construction by the French of the main road from Lussinpiccolo to Cherso. Finally, in 1815, following the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, and the Congress of Vienna the islands of the Quarnero as the whole Istria, and Dalmazia passed again under the Austrian domination. Initially there were few changes from the preceding Venetian administration: the laws and customs remained substantially the same. The administrative language, and in any case the official language remained the Italian as in all territory of Istria, Trieste, and Fiume inclusive, and in major part of Dalmazia.

We want to note for this purpose some historical-statistical data regarding our peoples involvement with the French. Between 1796, and 1814, in the Italian-Cisalpine Militia, of the then Napoleonic Italian Kingdom, and particularly in the composition of the armed forces of the Venetian provinces located on the right shore of the river Mincio including also, a regiment of

Dalmatian Infantry. They are recorded among officers and non-commissioned officers with the following surnames originating in our region: Lupi, Lecchi, Sigovich, Tomich, Catturich, Mattiassi, Boni, Bracco, Bussani, Cavedoni, Zanetti, German, Santolin, Niccolich, Milossevich, Zanelli, Zuliani, Zucchi, and some others.

Since the end of the XVIII century, Neresine become the most important and productive town of the northern part of the island of Lussino. All minor centers of the two islands such as San Giacomo, Puntacroce (that become a hamlets of Neresine), Tarsich, Belei, Ustrine, and the same Ossero, etc., including the islands of Unie, and Sansego. These towns depended on Neresine for the purchases of carpentry products, ironsmith, material, and clothing, the construction goods, wagons, barrels, small boats (12-16 feet), shoes, pails, gutters, agricultural implements, seeds, etc.

Artisanship became flourishing, and led to a significant improvement in the standard of living of the population. Also, the cultivation of olives felt a strong increment for the ever increase demand for oil which brought the construction of two more *frantoi* olive presses: one in Magaseni on the harbor pier on the Zorovich land (Sule), and one in Biscupia. In the Neresine territory there were 9398 olive trees, data from an agricultural census of 1828.

From the beginning of the nineteen century, the development of Neresine followed quite synchronously that of Lussinpiccolo, which become the largest, and richest center of the island due to that population characteristics, and maritime entrepreneurship. This period, in fact, saw the awesome development of the seafaring Lussignani with the construction of a noteworthy sailing fleet of small and large tonnage, and the establishment of naval shipyards (*squeri*). This stimulated the arrival in Lussinpiccolo of new generations: carpenters, and caulkers, from the Italian Adriatic shoreline, captains, and sailors from Dalmazia, and in addition, some Neresinotti went to work in Lussino as sailors, and in the shipyards as hands were they learned the trade, and learned the basis for the future development of Neresine.

Lussinpiccolo had six *squeri* shipyards by the middle of the nineteen-century, and the naval construction was proceeding at a rate of 20 ships per year, with some larger than 1000 tons.

Lussinpiccolo become the principal political, and administrative town of all the Quarnero Islands, or rather, Lussino, Cherso, Sansego, Unie, San Pietro dei Nembi, Ulbo, Selve. In Lussinpiccolo was the seat of the court, the land register, the maritime register, and all the other administrative entities.

The Scuola Nautica (Naval Academy) of Lussino, for the preparation of the Deep Sea Captains, was instituted in the early nineteen century, already mentioned; initially it was a private school. The Academy was founded, and managed by the two brothers Priests from Lussino, Don Giovanni, and Don Stefano Vidulich, afterwards in 1855, it become a Public Maritime School, one of the first in the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.

Of Lussinpiccolo, and Lussingrande, there are ample historiography documents; therefore, one may go there to sick deeper insights.

A little bit of well-being, but not for all.

Coming back to Neresine we must say that the strong development brought a consistent well-being to a part of the population, or rather, to those that for first learned how to read and write. They become the administrators and managers of the town activities; some become farmlands owners, others dedicated themselves to business, to artisanship, and into productive activities

general more profitable, while the remaining population persevered on the hard life of farming scarcely profitable. If we are to consider that the drinking water was available only from some springs, and rainwater collected into cisterns at most houses. That the drought in the summer time lasted, even, few months, and that many families were large (with more than 8-10 children) as the large majority it is understandable that the well-being of many was not too favorable. From the population registries of those days we see that infantile mortality was very high, beyond 40% of the dead involved children under the age of ten, and females dead from childbirth were many. In the year 1840, 67 people died, and 41 in August, for lack of a better explanation, they died of contagious gastric epidemic (probably cholera), compared to a medium yearly mortality of 10-13 individuals.

The majority of the population sanitary conditions in the second half of the nineteenth century remained somewhat precarious; being for the hard life of the field workers, forced to make a living from the barren stones of the island, or for the unhealthy conditions of some areas in Bora. That is, the southern part of the island of Cherso, where many dwellers from Neresine lived for the best part of the year, in the small farming houses, dedicating themselves with greater diligence, and efficiency in the rearing of sheep, and fieldwork. These areas with epicenter Puntacroce, were officially declared “malaria zones”¹⁵ by the local health authorities.

Toward the end of the century, the Austrian government forbade the rearing of goats, considering these animals harmful for the development of the vegetation in the islands. This unthinkable provision left the population without one of the principal most nutritive aliments: the good goat milk with which until then were nourished above all the children. The result was a large incidence of infantile rachitic becoming almost endemic. Among the many documents found in the attics by the descendants, is an interesting medical certificate of the district doctor, where it says that ascertained the precarious malnutrition of an entire family, with children afflicted by rachitic, in exception to the applicable laws, it allowed the family to keep a goat for health reasons.

The Sule, first big businesspersons of Neresine.

In those days there was no public infrastructures that could contribute to the development of the town, such as, schools, sanitary structures, banks, municipal offices, etc. Some citizens endowed with good schooling, and financial means came forward to provide for these lacking necessities. Among them, in first place are named Domenico Zorovich, and his son Domenico, a graduated “Merchant Marine Captain” from the “Nautica” of Lussino. His nickname was Sule (in the antique Dalmatic meaning *sensale* that is broker, traders of rich, and ancient family).

The Sule were the first businesspersons in town. They would buy from the local farmers any type of merchandise for then reselling it to the international market of those days. The first commercial activity they took was the intensive acquiring from any part of the island, the leaves of laurel (bay leaves), laurel berries, sage, and of its storage for later reselling them to the Austrian, and German industries. For this purpose, they built along the harbor of Neresine, various buildings for the storage *magaseni* (warehouses) of merchandize. (and from there comes the name “Magaseni” of the port itself). They also built the largest olive press of the town, the Frantoio for the olives (*torchio or tuoric*) that is, precisely, Magaseni.

Afterwards the Sule organized every kind of trade: buying, and reselling firewood (*the fassi*,) and other products of local production, such as, cheese, wool, olive oil, etc. and they were the first to

organize such tasks as wholesalers of goods and finished products needed for the activities of the country. The ever-increasing demand for firewood from the Venetian glass industries, and from the entire Venetia area, for the winter heating needs of domestic dwellings induced them to be the first in town to obtain on their own a small fleet of vessels for the transport of woods, and other merchandise arriving and leaving in Neresine.

However, the Sule, in addition to devote themselves to their own businesses, also financed entrepreneurial activities of the town: in substance, they provided loans to those wishing to make productive investments. On the contrary of what it is still insinuated, without a minimum documentation, the Sule leased their money at an equitable interest, in line with the then market demands, this is verifiable from the numerous accounting manuscripts found in the attics of their houses by the descendants. (Not for nothing, still today we say, “Austria was an organized country”!). This does not detract from the fact that with this activity, they made huge profits, more with the spirit of bankers than with that of benefactors.

First, they gave money to the traders in the town for the purchase of goods, numerous accounting documents analyzed detailed lists of lots of merchandise such as: *20 brazze de tela canavina, 6 rodoli de fogli de corame, 10 pacchi de fazzoletti, 20 berrette, 10 rodoli de corda de ½ oncia, 5 quarts de semenze, ecc.* (20 yards of canvas canavina, 6 rolls of dressed leather, 10 packs of handkerchiefs, 20 caps, 10 rolls of rope of ½ inch, 5 fourths of seeds, etc.)

Sule would pay in cash the goods purchased from the supplier at the end of every transaction. The debt with Domenico Zorovich was then detailed, and sometimes partially discounted with. For example: *due carri de legni o 4 giornate de sumiso* (two wagons of wood or four days of mule pack), *du giornate de trebit de dona* (two days of removing stones from the field by a woman), (trebit means, removing stones from yards or fields and piling them onto mounds *megnizi* to free and prepare the land for cultivation), to which was added the sum to be returned in due time.

Subsequently, the funding became far more substantial, and they were mainly used for buying new farmland, for the building of a house, or for the purchase of a vessel “*barca*”.

The mayor of the town Ossero-Neresine at the beginning of the XX century was just Domenico Zorovich (Sule).

Now, I would like to describe my paternal grandmother’s commandments, which she obsessively taught us: “*sparagno primo guadagno, bisogna far debito col Sule per comprar una nova diélniza, e appena pagado il debito, subito far altro*”. (The first gain is saving, one must be indebted to Sule to buy a piece of land, and as soon as paid, make readily another debt). My grandmother, although illiterate, got married at age fifteen, sent the much older husband to America (July 06, 1896) to earn more money (he worked at Sing-Sing, (Ossining) NY, drilling rocks, and dynamite expert, how? He left as a cow breeder), she was the first in town to put a Diesel Engine in her family vessel.¹⁶

Seafarers.

The Sule father (Domenico Zorovich) was also the one that open the way toward the Merchant Marine; to an expert man that he was could not escape paying attention to the enormous economical development that was breeding in Lussinpiccolo, due mainly to the vast spread of naval management, and to the expansion of the shipyard industry. He in fact, realizing the

profitability of the Lussignani naval organization, decided to enter into the business, and become a partner in the ownership of a Lussignani vessel. Realizing profitability with this activity in 1845, he had built the “Neresinotto” the first ship of Neresine, in the shipyard of Valon di Cherso, and equipped with sailors from Neresine. Seventeen years later in 1863, he had a larger ship built at a shipyard in Fiume, the “Lauro” (Laurel) of 450 gross tonnages; and finally, right after, he ordered another one, even bigger from the same shipyard, a three masts vessel of 850 gross tonnages, and christened “Elice”. (Probably in appreciation for “*Bay leaves, and firewood*” – that gave him much profit).

His vocation was more of a banker than that of ship-owner. He solicited, and convinced the captain of one of his vessels, a certain Camalich, who happen to be his best friend, to join in on his own by handing over the ship, and of course providing the lending money necessary. Since the naval armament of the town gave good results others also, began to engage in the new activity: in few years, Neresine had a significant fleet of vessels, while the Sule continued to prosper by providing credit to all potential ship-owners who needed.

Toward the end of XIX century, Neresine had 25 vessels, many more than Lussingrande (8) and Ossero (2).

What facilitated, and characterized the ship ownership of Neresinotti, *was the sharing ownership*; every ship was divided in 24 equal parts called *carats*, therefore many citizens become caratist (carat ship-owners). Multi family, and even various members of the same family, whether expert mariners or not, owned a certain amount of carats, sharing equally profits, and expenses, thus obtaining from this activity a lucrative income, and the most important source of livelihood for the participants. Some members were owners, and employee simultaneously.

The more successful who distinguished themselves in this business since the second half of the nineteenth century are; the various Camalich families (*Costantìgnevi, Eujèniovi, Antuòniovi, Andrèovi e Juric’evi*), the Matcovich families (*Zizzeric’evi, De Dolàz and Marchic’evi*), the Rucconich, Ghersan, Lecchich, as well as families from San Giacomo, the Sattalich, Zorich, and Knesich (Nesi) to cite only the most significant.

In the attached table “B” is the list of Neresine’ ships from the various historical periods of this seafaring existence.

The marine activity in few years transformed the Neresinotti, from farmers into seafarers, but the direction toward the seafaring life did not impede the Neresinotti to conserve, and cultivate their land properties; the women took care of the sheep for family needs, and the men did it between one boarding (tour of duty), and another. Only families with large properties continued, and incremented the agricultural activity, and animal breeding among these are noted; the Soccolich - *Casteluangnevi*, the Bracco - *Gaetagnevi*, the Maurovich of *Cluarich*, the Bracco-*Pussic’i*, the Zorovich-*Menesic’evi*, the Soccolich-*Rocchic’evi* and few more.

Stories of the Seas.

The maritime activity was mostly local sailing up and down the Adriatic Sea, and the entire Mediterranean Sea; the men visiting new places, and encountering new populations, and customs returned home with their experiences, and knowledge enriching the whole town.

Their chosen new profession, however forced them to endure long absences from home, and to compensate for this when the ships sailed in the proximity of the native islands, they chanced any possible time to visit home, but if not, at least passing nearby, in the vicinity, while sounding

with some signal to the native lands. The yearning for home was felt with even greater intensity in the advent of traditional holidays; Christmas, Easter, Carnival, August (the annual fair), Madonna Della Salute (Virgin of good Health) (Patron feast of the town). In those days, the port was full of ships “*barche*” there were also, some moored in Sonte, in Vier, in San Giacomo, and even in Caldonta. All try to re-enter to be with the family, above all the young ones missing their intended, so not to lose contact with their girls, and miss the great ball held on the evening of these festivities.

It trills me to recall the anecdote of the schooner Milan, owned by *paron de barca* (ship owner) Piero Zuclich: it was a well-equipped vessel, noted for its seaworthiness, and its speed (Liburnian seaworthiness). On one Christmas Eve in Fiume, the schooner was being unloaded, and the crew was planning to return to Neresine. Unfortunately during that day arose violent gale of bora, quite usual in winter therefore, it was deemed dangerous to go in the midst of the Quarner Sea with that weather but, on the other hand, to spend the holidays in Fiume, was rather sad. The *paron de barca* gathered the crew consisting of three young sailors, and himself, and announced: “*Chissà quanto dura sta bora, magari de sta stagion la xe bona de durar anche 4 – 5 giorni, mi passar Nadal fora de casa proprio non posso, scolté, mi ciogo el vapor e vado a casa, voi poi quando sbonazza venì sò con la barca, ma me racomando...*”. (who knows how long this bora is going to last, in this season it could last 4-5 days, and for me to spend Christmas away from home is too much, I really can't; listen, I take the steamer, and go home, and you then when the weather improves come down with the barca, but I recommend you...)

The boys then went along with the captain, and carrying his suitcase accompanied him to the liner. But when they returned on the schooner they got anxious, and started to think about the feast, the girls, the town, and in a moments time decided. “*Che bora o no bora che lori i vè, che no se pol star soli a Fiume con ste feste*” (what bora or not bora, we are going, we can't stay alone in Fiume during this holiday). Therefore, the *paron de barca* Zuclich, while his liner was passing close to shore by the area of Lubenizze, saw the “Milan” with full sails gaining on them, and then passing the liner traveling in a sea of foam toward Ossero. The crew tied down, and moored the schooner in Vier, and went to pick-up the *paron de barca* at the embarcadero of the liner in the city (Ossero), and together they walked home happy, and content...the *paron* a little less happy of his sailors, in truth because, of the danger his schooner just escaped.

The professional skills of the sailors from Neresine became proverbial in few years. In so many years of seafaring; first by sail, then by motor, there has never been a shipwreck or a failure of great importance, even if, in the spirit of competition masters were often induced, (usually owner's *paroni de barca*), to daring challenges at sea, to "be there first" or in time. (They usually carried merchandize and firewood to the same ports).

Another example is the venture of the “Mariza”, vessel of *paron de barca* Valentino Bracco (the same we will see further on bringing to safety an Austrian gun boat during the First World War). Leaving somewhat haphazardly from Zrqueniza under gale bora conditions *fortunal de bora* was caught by the gale in the center of the Morlacca channel. Not able to shelter in Segna, for the strong wind, that arises directly from that place, and having the tack at left (the mainsails, and the boom on the right), under Segna did an “about-turn against the wind, a turn of 360 degree. He passed the walls of the city on the right” with a maneuver of *poia la banda* (strambata) that could have broken the mast; not having other choices he decided to go through the very narrow, and very feared mouths, (so called the entrance to Segna harbor), between the island of Veglia and the islet of Prvic. He made it, although missing an arm, and maneuvered without a scratch to the open Quarnerolo Sea. This maneuver was considered impossible with

fortunal de bora. Not by chance, the place is called “the ships graveyard” for the very numerous shipwrecks that has happened there in similar circumstances.

For as much as there were no proper Neresinotti shipwrecks, there were some misfortunes at Sea. One such well documented misfortune in "papers" kept by the descendants happened on a *Pielago* (sailing-ship) called “Adriatico” on January 12, 1883. The Adriatico traveling south on the Adriatic Sea toward Trau, was caught by a gale storm while in charge was the ship-owner Giovanni Vescovich from Neresine, he was truck on the head by the boom of the main sail, and thrown into the sea by a gust of wind. The crew tried to save him from the stormy waters but, to no avail, he was probably unconscious from the blow. The desolated Neresinotti sailors, reaching with fatigue the port of Trau declared the accident to the Port Captain, who scripted the documentation of the tragedy, and took an inventory of the vessel in Italian. The widow with three small sons to provide for sent a supplication to Vienna for a pension, which was granted, and made it possible for her, together with the proceeds from the sale of the vessel, to provide for, and raise the boys.

Businesses increasingly flourishing.

This new maritime activity in Neresine, provided a strong impetus for the entire local economy. Now thanks to an ample market provided by the maritime transportation, the Neresinotti started the lumbering of small forests to produce marketable firewood for the Italian shores of the Adriatic Sea, (Venice, Chioggia, then also, the harbors of the Romagna region), and toward Dalmazia.

This lumbering of the woods contributed to the retrieval of new pasture grounds, (*novine*) for sheep breeding with a consequential notable increment of the production of cheese, wool, and meat. Some families reached to possess beyond 2000 sheep, and to produce cheese up to 150 kilos weekly, it all was exported, together with the wool, to the nearby centers, such as Basca in the island of Veglia, Lussinpiccolo, Zara, and the same Venice, as documented on accounting books. The business was so flourishing that the small steam liner “Francopan” would stop weekly in Neresine to pick up the various goods in transit, and to bring other merchandize in.

Already toward the beginning of the nineteen century, and coinciding with the growing demand for cheese, and timber, the need arose to further exploit the lands of Bora, by expanding pastures, and clearing the woods (*garjie*). In natural chain reaction, arose the need to build new farmhouses far from the town, and where the new fertilized land required attention; to reside there during the more productive season, and avoid daily commuting. This chain reaction development created in the midst of the forests various new hamlets *stuagni* (singular *stuan* or *stuagne*) or *stanze* (also *stanzie*), and some quite distant from each other reachable only, through very narrow paths. Among the most important we have; Verin, Lose, Matalda, Garmosai, Dracovaz, Gracisc’e, Parhavaz, Murtovník, and Peski. While some of these *stanze* included only four or five houses, the village of Puntacroce (which is on the island of Cherso) is an outcome from these various *stanze* put together, and in fact, this village language, culture, and tradition is Neresinotto (which is on the island of Lussino).¹⁷

Skilful sailors.

The Austrian government encouraged the maritime development, and stimulated by the political

activism of the people from Lussino (*Lussignani*), fabricated various port facilities in the region. The port of Neresine, the port of Rovensca (Lussingrande), the “*Garofulini*” (massive cubic structure of stone with a robust bollard at the center for tying-up ships in the islands natural ports, especially for shelter in bad weather). These *Garofulini* were built in: Vier, Caldonta, San Giacomo, Ustrine, San Martin of Cherso (actual Martinsciza), and other strategic natural shelters. A private shipyard for construction of large vessels was built in Neresine, but only the “*Maria Salute*” was built there. Eugenio Camalich (*Eujeniovi*) was the owner of the shipyard, and also of the new vessel.

At the onset of the First World War the Camalich were arrested, interned, and shipped to concentration camps, because Italians. This was the end of the shipyard, and businesses. After the end of the War, the shipyard laid wasted, possibly due to an unstable legacy of the War, and insufficient economic incentives, and given the great efficiency, and nearness of those in Lussinpiccolo which afforded greater flexibility in machinery, and finances.

Because of the maritime industrial developments, most of the men have now acquired new skills seamen, and tradesmen finding work on larger new ships, and many since interested as caratists, become part-owners, the ship wages were more lucrative, and brought prosperity for many. The farming activities started to feel the pinch of the diminishing work force. The landowners accordingly, resorted to hire labor from neighboring towns, such as Belei, Plat, Srem, Orlez, and from the islands of Veglia, Arbe, and Pago. Others came from Castua (*Castuàvzi*), from the area of Gorizia (*Gorìnzi*), and from Friuli, and Carnia (i *gromaciàri*). This brought strength to many communities, such as Puntacroce, and the *stanze* of Bora.

From Neresine to America.

The new large iron ships began to appear around the end of the eighteen hundred, equipped with steam propulsion machinery they attracted many sailors from Neresine. They found lucrative employment on great ocean liners of the Austro-American, and Austrian Lloyd the shipping companies of Trieste. Therefore, they learned, and discover more of the world around them, and further realized that in America, there was a great demand for very well paid labor. Many sailors choose then to jump ship, and start working in New York. Often remained in America for two or three years; accumulated a nice nest egg, and returned home, to build the new house, open a store, buy a “*vessel*”, or a new plot of land.

The majority of household heads had this experience, including my paternal grandfather in 1896, you can even say that it was customary to go to America, work for two or three years, and pay the debts made with Sule. Some single young people remained there permanently, others recalled the family, and others continued to go, and return home, this lasted until the U.S. immigration laws became more restrictive.

Based on mutual solidarity, and the nostalgic memories of the country, the Neresinotti formed a small community in New York City. In 1898, they founded a mutual aid society dedicated to St. Francis, called in the American-neresinotto jargon “*Susàida*” (a mispronunciation of the English word society), which provided financial assistance in case of illness or lack of work for the villagers in need. That society is still in existence today, and functions only, as a social clubs for Neresinotti, and descendants. Since 1971, the club celebrates the feast of Neresine patron saint “*Madonna della Salute*”, with Solemn Mass, and an evening dinner party with dancing, and they love singing the ancestral songs.

Giovanni Bracco, first “mayor” of Neresine.

In the mid-nineteenth century Neresine had reached 1000 inhabitants,¹⁸ and manifesting new social needs it was established to unify Ossero-Neresine, into a single municipality, St. Giacomo and Puntacroce inclusive, and with considerable autonomy for Neresine since the vast majority of the population resided in its territory.

The first mayor (*podestà*) who took to heart strongly the interests of Neresine was Giovanni Bracco. He was instrumental to promote the construction of the town hall (*Comun*); the elementary school, the construction of the Cathedral (*Duomo*), and the Post Office which was entrusted to his son Marco. A Customs Office (*finanza*) was opened in the village, and the “policeman” (*giandarme*) came, in ancient Neresinotto dialect: *giandarme* or *anduàrm* is the name borrowed from the earlier French administration period.

Giovanni Bracco (born 1817) was the first “boss” of the town, in this position he efficiently organized the community, and the development of Neresine, even with a strong antagonism toward Ossero. Now Ossero, although in advancing general decline, try to maintain the privileges of the “old dominant city,” tenaciously holding on the title for the City of Ossero, which being a minority, should have been subjected to Neresine.

In fact, the Neresinotti together with Sangiacomini now exceeded 1800 inhabitants, and possessed more than 75% territory of the entire municipality, as well as the entire fleet while the Osserini were reduced to little more than 300 inhabitants. In fact, the Neresinotti considered Giovanni Bracco the real mayor, although in reality he was the delegate of the mayor of Ossero for Neresine. (As the usual customs dictates, he was saddled with the nickname “Podestà” (mayor), which he held even though his son Gaetano succeeded him as the delegate for the municipal functions of Neresine.

The public school is established.

A very important factor for Neresine, and the greatest determinant for the strong development of the town was the establishment of a public school system, therefore, it is worth telling in more detail this part of our history.

In 1842, under the Austrian dominion, the “I. R. Italian Minor Elementary School” was established with compulsory attendance for all the village children from ages six up to the achievement of elementary proficiency, or up to 14 years of age, for the repeating students. At first the school was located in the house of Antonio Zorovich (Tonce) in Lucizza, and then in the new school building built by the city. In 1850, the school changed its name into “I. R. Trivial School”. In 1858, it was changed again (thank goodness!), and was re-named “I. R. Elementary Model School”, and finally in 1868, was re-named “Elementary School”.¹⁹

The government authorities enforced strictly the compulsory attendance, and imposed harsh sanctions on parents of defaulting children, with monetary fines for the wealthy, and for the less affluent the obligation of few free workdays for the City.

After the promulgation of the Austrian Constitution by the Central Government of Vienna in 1848, and the resulting “democratization” some laws considered excessively authoritarian were abolished. Unfortunately, by this time the diocese of Veglia took over the Religious jurisdiction

for the islands from Ossero, and Aquileia. Now someone with special interests, perhaps even political ones, "artfully" spread rumors that *females were no longer obliged to attend public schools*, therefore in Neresine, many daughters of the less acculturated families deserted the school, and were held at home to do more useful domestic, and rural work.

Initially the Italian school depended on the Lieutenancy of Trieste, and was manned by lay teachers until 1869. Now under the new rules it depended, in order of supremacy: a) the "Reverend Consistory Bishop of Veglia." b) the Pisino "I. R. Circular Captaincy," and c) the Cherso "I. R. Inspection District."

The "language" question.

The Veglia Bishop Consistory required that all documents relative to the school activity be sent written in the school language to them. However, they were not pleased that in fact, it was Italian, and in concomitance with the strengthening of the government Slavicanization enforcement undertaken by Vienna's Central Government, and in agreement with the I.R. Minister of Cult, and Public Instructions, on July 25, 1846, published a decree No. 1044/411. By a decree it ordered the lay teacher in Neresine to substitute teaching the Italian with the Croatian language; adding that, whenever the citizens wished that the Italian language be thought to their children, they would have to request an appropriate plea to the "Episcopal Reverend Consistory". To this the citizenship of Neresine rebelled resolutely by occupying forcefully the school, and providing a strong public order conflict with the government. Several municipal meetings were dedicated to this issue; those agitated debates are verifiable by the minutes of the City Council, and other contemporary accounts. The delegated ("mayor") of the town (remember the town was Ossero-Neresine with a mayor in Ossero, and a mayor delegate in Neresine), Giovanni Bracco, a representative for those who wanted the school to remain in Italian, advanced the strongest argument, by explaining the great, and rapid development of naval armament, which required knowledge of the Italian language, because all business, ship-owners, and stakeholders (*caratisti*) were Italians, and Italian was spoken everywhere in the Adriatic, and in much of the Mediterranean territories. Italian was the only language in the shipping world, and trade related to it, so essential to the ongoing commerce in Neresine.

After those agitated meetings, and based on the considerations exposed, a well-reasoned appeal was submitted to the Bishop's Consistory, with the signature of all "notables" town's folks. On October 3, 1846, the Consistory, following the reports submitted by concerned local political authorities who feared serious public disorders in town, issued another decree No. 1444/605. This new decree said: "Since the report of the first current No. 399, the annex, which we return, we issue that in the affiliate school of Neresine be imparted the education in the Croatian language, and Italian as a secondary language. Despite the decree, in Neresine the teaching continued only in Italian because, the teacher, besides being strongly supported by the population was not literate in the Croatian language. In January 23, 1847, the school received another decree from the Consistory, complaining that the school continued the teaching of Italian only, and reconfirming the injunction to introduce the Croatian language. However, nothing happened again, so much so that, with subsequent decrees of November 19, 1849, and April 30, 1851 it had to restate the previous injunctions. Of course, this remained a dead letter. Finally, given the limited success so far achieved by the peremptory commands, in 1858, the Consistory turned milder, and it was concluded that, along with the Croatian language, be continued in parallel the

teaching of Italian as a second language for Neresine. To placate all concerned the Ministry of Religion and Public Education in Vienna, conveyed a dispatch to the masters with strict recommendations that, “*veruna*” (not one) edition of Silvio Pellico’s book “My Prisons” may be used in school, as an exercise book to learn the Italian language.

The Consistory provisions for establishing the Croatian language school had still failed for some years to come, because the teacher as already said, did not know the Croatian. In the bilingual school the situation evolved rather patchy: two separate sections were instituted, one Croatian and one Italian, while religion was taught for four hours a week by the canon priest, and in the Croatian language for both sections, even though, the priest knew Italian.

In 1864 when an inspector from Cherso came to check on the schools - urged by the canon teacher of religion, he wrote a funny report where - he bitterly castigates the teacher for endless linguistic and grammatical errors committed as he groped to teach Croatian to the kids.

Following the new school law of 1868, the Veglia Bishop Consistory ceased to have direct interference in the Islands Schools.

With a provincial law of February 1869, the islands of the Quarnero came under the jurisdiction of the new school District Council of Lussinpiccolo. Which was then established in December of that year.

In 1888, Neresine received a second teacher, Mary Dibarbora, who took charge of the Italian section. The Local Council, by Act No. 69 of October 8, 1888, reported to the School District Board in Lussinpiccolo that, the students of that year: from ages six to twelve years, were in total 161 students, three in the Croatian section and 158 in the Italian. In 1890, the Italian section had 164 pupils and 19 for the Croatian section.

The separation of the public school of Neresine.

In 1895, after many political battles, we finally came to the separation of the public school of Neresine, with the establishment of two separate schools: one Italian with two teachers, and a Croatian with a new teacher, Franco Cattarinich from Basca (Veglia).

The authorities of the District Council, also decided that the lessons of the Croatian school should be held in the afternoon, taking advantage of the Italian school building, and in the same classroom. This decision seemed to the majority of the population as a further impediment to the smooth functioning of the Italian school, and again then arose a confrontation between the Italians, and the authorities preventing by force the entry of Croatian teacher Cattarinich, and his pupils in the school.

Following lengthy negotiations with the authorities themselves, they at last came to the decision to equip the Croatian school of a new, and separate school building, even with the economic contribution of municipal funds. It was chosen because, available, the house by the pier bank of Alexander Camalich. To adapt the house to the new requirements were necessary some works that required time to accomplish, so, as long as the new home was not ready, they had to find a temporary site. The District Council decided to assign to this end one classroom of the existing school. The City strongly opposed these decisions, and at the meeting of the Representatives of the April 26, 1898, issued a deliberation No. 568, which says -

“La Rappresentanza comunale, udite le esaurienti comunicazioni del sig. podestà Giacomo Salata, ne approva con lode il contegno energico tenuto di fronte agli atti dell’ autorità scolastica e politica nella questione del collocamento della scuola croata di Neresine, contro i

quali eleva solenne protesta; ringrazia l'Eccelsa Dieta che se ne occupò rilevando le ragioni del comune e l'inclita Giunta provinciale ed i Suoi delegati che prestano aiuto alla Deputazione comunale; approva i ricorsi prodotti all'Eccelsa Corte di Giustizia in affari amministrativi per tale collocamento, all'Eccelso I. R. Ministero del Culto e della Pubblica Istruzione contro lo scioglimento del Consiglio scolastico locale, illegale nelle forme e ingiustificato nella sostanza, e all'Eccelso I. R. Consiglio Scolastico Provinciale contro l'imposto risarcimento dell'indennizzo dell'alloggio al maestro della scuola croata suddetta; riconfermando i propri deliberati d.d. 28 maggio e 19 dicembre 1897, fa voti, che lasciato l'edificio scolastico comunale ad esclusivo uso della scuola italiana, siccome la necessità evidente e molteplici riguardi richiedono, sia trasportata con tutta sollecitudine la scuola croata nella casa Camalich, previ lavori d'adattamento più necessari, per li quali viene data facoltà alla Deputazione comunale di trattare col proprietario e di chiedere poi l'approvazione della Rappresentanza prima del contratto, ciò tutto affinché sia ripristinata presso ambedue le scuole l'istruzione intera e sia fatto cessare l'odierno stato di cose, dannose ad entrambe le scuole. Deplora che in onta alla precisa disposizione dell'articolo 1 della legge provinciale 11 febbraio 1873 n° 11 B.L .P. e alle sollecitazioni della podestaria, non siasi peranco ridata al comune quella ingerenza, che nell'amministrazione scolastica del suo circondario la legge gli accorda e per gli ingenti sacrifici fatti a vantaggio della pubblica istruzione gli compete; ed esprime la speranza che in futuro nelle questioni scolastiche si avrà maggiore riguardo della legale Rappresentanza della popolazione

Il sig. podestà viene incaricato di comunicare questi deliberati all'Eccelso I. R. Ministero del Culto e dell'Istruzione col tramite dell'Eccelso I. R. Consiglio Scolastico Provinciale e separatamente, anche alla Giunta Provinciale”.

"The Municipal Representatives, heard the exhausting communications of Mr. Mayor Giacomo Salata, approves with honors and endorses the forceful attitude taken in fronting the acts of the authorities in the matter of school policy and school placement of Croatian school of Neresine, against which he rises solemn protest; we thanks the Exalted Diet who worked on it by recognizing the needs of the municipality, and the provincial board and illustrious delegates serving assistance, and help to our municipal deputies; approves the appeals produced by Court of Justice in the administrative affairs for the placement, to the Most High I. R. Ministry of Religion, and Public Education against the dissolution of the local school board, illegal in the way, and unjustified in substance, and Most High I. R. Provincial School Board against the imposed damages of compensation to housing of the Croatian school teacher, reconfirming their deliberate dated May 28, and December 19, 1897, requests, that the local school building be left for the exclusive use of the Italian school, as a clear need, and multiple concerns, it is recommended that the transfer of the Croatian school in the home Camalich, subject to the most needed work of adaptation, as soon as possible, for which the municipal deputies are authorized with the option of dealing with the owner. The deputies should approve any contract so that everything is restored at both schools. The education process has been restored for the benefit of our children. Cease the present-day bickering, harmful to both schools. It regrets that despite the clear provision of Article 1 of the provincial law February 11, 1873 No. 11 BL. P. and the stresses of podestà, be not considered for remuneration to City Hall, that the administration of this school district, and the law grants him for the enormous sacrifices made on behalf's of public education as is his due, and expresses the hope that in future school issues you will have

more understanding and respect for the town government representing the population of Neresine.

Mr. Mayor is responsible for communicating these deliberates to the Most High I. R. Ministry of Education, and Worship through the Most High I. R. Provincial School Board, and separately also to the Provincial Board”.

Despite all the protests, even solemn, the political intention of the government to promote in all ways the Croatian school had the upper hand, with the decision to install the class of the Croatian municipal school building. The political commissar Osti, representative of the School District, accompanied by a platoon of police, asked the key to the mayor, and had the following response:

“Protesto ancora una volta nell’interesse morale-educativo di ambedue le scuole e non acconsento in nessun modo di cedere la stanza che si reclama. La chiave è qui, io non la cedo che con la forza”.

"I protest once more for the moral, and educational interests of both schools, and I do not agree in any way to give the room that you claim. The key is here, I will not relinquish it, but by force.

The political commissar had to resort to force, and the keys were delivered. At the end of the dispute, the Italian school resumed regular teaching activities in the original building, and the Croatian school in the new building by the port. After the passage of the islands to Yugoslavia, local authorities did install a plaque commemorating the former Croatian school building by the port, which still exists.

However, the teaching of religion continued still for some years to be taught in Croatian, also in the Italian school, because the monk teacher refused to use Italian in his classes, despite a special decree issued in 1897, from I. R. Ministry of Religion, and Public Education did establish that in the Italian school of Neresine of the new school District Council of Lussinpiccolo. Which was then established in December of the religious instruction should be in the language of the school. The Education Department repeatedly urged the monk teacher in that sense, but he, following the directives of the Bishop of Veglia Mahnich, refused to adhere to the injunctions of the local Authorities, and was expelled from the school.

Following this, the I. R. Provincial School Board awarded a teaching qualification for teachers of religion subsidiary Tonolli, and Malis. But the Bishop's reaction was swift, and was embodied with the excommunication of the two teachers, and provincial authorities who granted the authorization, prohibiting the clergy from having contact with the excommunicates. There could not be found in the archive of the school papers explaining how these events have evolved, but other documents found in the Vatican Archives shows that: the Pope Sarto, Pius X, intervened personally, and harshly against the bishop of Veglia to redeem, and among other issues, including that of the school of Neresine. Pius X subsequently lifted the excommunications, and removed bishop Mahnich from his duties, calling him to Rome "for other assignments."

On April 1, 1904, the National League opened the Italian Primary School in San Giacomo, and established the Neresine nursery school on the premises of the City Hall building, the *Comun*, on the ground floor, for children age three to six years old. How not to remember at this point the dear old teacher Maria (Zuclich), educator of children from the foundation of the country kindergarten until its closure in 1945. In a few years, the de facto, Neresine became bilingual country, and especially the younger generations began to speak indifferently, both the Italian, and the Slav dialect.²⁰

The new houses, the new Duomo (*Cathedral*), the new Cemetery: Neresine is building.

Going back to the nineteenth century, as the literacy of the population grew, gradually also increased the Standard of Living at least, for those families who first embraced some appropriate cultural tools. With that arose the need to build new houses, better suited to the new life styles. This fact started the race to acquire lands closest to the Sea, especially around what became the town's Main Square on which center was found a rich freshwater aquifer, that with the construction of a well, guaranteed the availability of fresh drinking water throughout the year.

The *Piazza* with a well surrounded by a strong circular low wall of protection, and surrounded by large trees *pocriva* (hackberry) - the oldest of them, very tall, was also a symbol of the town - became the center of social life, and assumed the name of Studènaz, i.e. freshly cool. Another aquifer was found in Biscopcia (vrucìch, "spring of water"), and another well was constructed.

In short, order the wealthier families abandoned their original homes, usually at the slopes of the mountain, to build new, and larger ones around the new town center. In the first half of the eighteenth century the first to move was the Zorovich (Sùievi), who left the original house in Veli Dvuor to build a new, and "modern" house in the north-east of the main square, readily followed by the Sigovich, they too from Veli Dvuor, that resettled on the west side of the main square, toward the mountain, then by the Soccolich (Castelluàgnevi) on the south side, and others followed. Mind you, those more modern meant also, no animal stables readily visible.

In this rush towards the socio-economic progress is inserted in 1878, the construction, in the most prestigious point of village *piazza*, the new cathedral, dedicated to Our Lady of Health for affinity, and custom of Neresinottis sailing ships berthing in Venice (alla contrada Salute), and in thankfulness of the standard of living achieved. The chronicles of that time tell us that the great altar piece was donated by the then Patriarch of Venice Trevisanato, and transported to Neresine with great pomp by the ship "Neresinotto" of Domenico Zorovich, who entered triumphantly into the port of Neresine, escorted by his two other vessels, the "Lauro" and "Elice." All dressed ships (bunting) for the party, among the exultant citizenry.

It is also said, that the pulpit of the church, built of wood finely carved with figures of religious reference, was built by the local artisan *marangon* "carpenter" Domenico Cavedoni, renowned for his expertise, and professionalism, and the jealousy by which he kept the secrets of his art. To carve the pulpit, and to create its harder works, he worked at night, and alone by the light of "potent" petrol lamps, because during the day he was to take care of his active laboratory with many apprentices (boys) who worked there. It is said that the night work for the church required just for the lighting, two five gallons cans of petrol.

By the early twentieth century, the new cemetery was built on the grounds of the old cemetery that was deeded to the Franciscan friars at the beginning of the nineteenth century, for burial of the villagers after the introduction of the Napoleonic law that forbade the burial of people in churches. Here again was some stark contrasts of political and nationalistic fervor with the friars themselves; on the language to be used for funeral services. A testimony to these contrasts is the mausoleum of Domenico Zorovich (Sule) located outside the consecrated cemetery grounds following the serious political conflict between the same Domenico Zorovich with the Croatian friars.

It is said, in fact, that since the introduction of the Croatian language instead of the Latin in some of the religious services, and prayers, Dominic did not set foot in church. He claimed for retention of the Latin so hard that, although Catholic, and faithful believer, in death bed refused

the assistance of the Croatian friars, because they would not pray in Latin, as documented in the obituary that was found among old papers, printed by the family after his death:-

“Splenda l’eterna pace all’anima di Domenico Zorovich da Neresine – Capitano Mercantile, che sul cadere del giorno 6 di gennaio 1910, a soli 67 anni, placidamente spirava – O Dio di pietà e misericordia, accogli pietoso l’anima del tuo servo Domenico, che cattolico per principi ed educazione, si allontanava dalla Tua Casa solo quando, contro ogni diritto di storia e di giustizia, s’introdusse la politica abolendo la lingua latina nelle sacre funzioni. Il suo vivo attaccamento alla lingua universale della Chiesa Cattolica gli sia messo fra le opere buone, assieme al vivo desiderio che avea, nei supremi istanti, di ricevere i conforti religiosi”.

"Shine eternal peace on the soul of Dominic Zorovich from Neresine - Mercantile Captain, who on the evening of January 6, 1910, just 67 years old, placidly expired - O God of mercy, and compassion, mercifully accept the soul of your servant Dominic, that Catholic by principles, and education, turn aside from Your House only when, against all rights of justice and history, politics was introduced, abolishing the Latin language in the sacred functions. His keen attachment to the universal language of the Catholic Church be it inserted among the good deeds together with his earnest desire, in the supreme moments, to receive the last rites".

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Domenico Zorovich was the only Neresinotto to be elected mayor of Ossero-Neresine before the autonomous municipality of Neresine was constituted in 1922.

Before and after the Great War.

The beginning of the twentieth century finds Neresine in its largest development: the race to the economic, and social progress is realized with the construction of new homes, enlargement, and modernization of old ones, but especially with the great expansion of the merchant marine. At the outbreak of World War, the fleet of Neresine had already exceeded 30 units. The interlude of World War I, unfortunately, led to a general crisis, and much misery. Many young people were sent to the front, mainly the Russian, and unfortunately, some never returned. Among the various papers found is the obituary, by the elementary school teacher from Neresine, Roberto Tonolli, to commemorate the former students of the Italian school, the war dead:

*“Anime pietose e credenti spargete fiori, lacrime, e preci espiatrici, sulle fosse ignorate e lontane dei miei discepoli della Scuola Popolare Italiana di Neresine, Isola di Lussino, che divelti quali tenere piante dal tremendo uragano della guerra mondiale, da questo mondo di miserie, salirono a Dio; **Gianni Zuclich** d’anni 27, morto a Vienna 1918. **Giuseppe German** d’anni 19, morto ad Insbruk 1915. **Venanzio Soccolich** d’anni 23, morto in mare 1918. **Martino Buccaran** d’anni 26, morto a Neresine 1919. **Antonio Sigovich** d’anni 28, morto a Sebenico 1919. **Romano Gercovich** d’anni 19, morto a Bressanone 1918. **Eugenio Bracco** d’anni 22, morto in Galizia 1914. **Antonio Santulin** d’anni 20, morto a Cornovitz 1917. **Giovanni Berichievich** d’anni 20, morto nei Carpazi 1917. **Gaudenzio Salata**, collega, d’anni 33, morto a Neresine 1919”.*

*"Souls of pious believers scatter flowers, tears, and expiatory prayers, on the ignored, and far away graves of my disciples from the Italian Popular School of Neresine, Island of Lussino, which uprooted like seedlings by the terrible hurricane of war, from this world of misery, ascended to God; **Gianni Zulich** 27 years, died in Vienna 1918. **Giuseppe German** of 19 years, died at Innsbruck 1915. **Venanzio Soccolich** 23 years, died at sea 1918. **Martino Buccaran** 26 years, died at Neresine 1919. **Antonio Sigovich** 28 years, died in Sebenico 1919. **Romano Gercovich** 19 years, died at Brixen 1918. **Eugenio Bracco** 22 years, died in 1914 Galicia. **Antonio Santulin** 20 years, died at Cornovitz 1917. **Giovanni Berichievich** 20 years, died in the Carpathians 1917. **Gaudenzio Salata**, colleague, aged 33, died at Neresine 1919".*

At war end, with the passage of the Quarnero islands, and Istria with Fiume to Italy, the entrepreneurial spirit of Neresinotti awoke more vigorously than before. The naval activity, and trade with Italy in the years since the end of World War 1 until the beginning of the second, experienced an extraordinary development, and involved almost the entire population; there were very few families not jointly interested in managing a ship such as ship owners or *caratisti*. With the introduction of the propulsion engine, which began around 1920, the business volume of the marine sector was very significant for the increased traffic intensity, and traveling speed no longer subjected to the whims of the wind.

The demand for timber from across the Venetian area became ever increasing, also for the increased regularity of deliveries, some Neresinotti owners opened sales offices in Venice, Fiume, and Spalato.

With the propulsion engine was born a new profession, "the mechanic", an expertise entirely new, and outside of the traditional trades of working villagers, but very important, because from this professional expertise depended more or less the *regular travel*, reason why the best mechanics became more and more popular, and better-reattributed. The boys of the town never failed to attend the docking maneuvers of ships arriving in port, arguing heatedly among themselves on the expertise of various seafaring captains on mooring the "motor vessels". You could hear "professional" assessments as: *"el se ga armisà in riva vecia con solo quattro colpi de avanti adagio e cinque de indrio meza ...e con la prova in fora"*, or *"per armisarse sotto la Comun el ga dà fondo davanti el garofulin, poi el se ga girà con tre de avanti adagio e quattro de indrio meza, e i ga butà le zime in tera senza la passara"*.

"He docked at the old pier, and with only, four shots forward slow, and five in reverse half speed,..and with the bow outwards, or "to moor by the Comun (city hall) he draped anchor by the garofulin (mooring bollard) then he turned with three forwards slow, and four reverse half speed, and they cast the lines to shore without using the rowboat".

The children of the town recognize each "motor vessel" by the engine noise, and when they passed the Cavanella (Ossero), and began traveling from Tiesni to Neresine, the children without even seeing the ship already preannounced; "This is the Due Fradei (The Two Brothers)", "This is the Calandic' (St Joseph)", "This is the Madonna of the Rosary". "This is the Tacito," and so on, and rarely missed.

The Bracco Family.

In the history of Neresine deserves a special mention the Bracco family (de Posta), (of the Post Office), it distinguished itself worldwide in the pharmaceutical industry. At the end of World

War I, after the passage of the islands under Italian sovereignty, Marco Bracco, graduated Deep Sea Captain at the Nautical School of Lussino, son of the "mayor" Giovanni of whom was spoken earlier, he returned home with his wife Antonia (Teta Anta) Camalich, and thirteen children, after enduring the war years, as prisoners in the Austrian concentration camp of Mitternabrern. The fourteenth son Eugenio died in the war in Galicia, in 1914. In addition, the eldest son Elio (1884) returned home with his wife Giovanna (Nina) Salata, and the young children Fulvio, and Tullio, they were at first, interned prisoners in the same camp, then in that of Feldbach.

Once in Neresine, Elio resumed the role of leader of the Italian community, and was appointed Government Commissioner in Lussino, and then under-prefect in Trieste where he moved with his wife Nina, and the children. In this period due to his knowledge of German and Russian languages, learned during his imprisonment, he was asked to join as a civilian the Inter-allied Commission for defining the borders between Italy, Austria, and Yugoslavia, and between Germany with Poland.

In 1927, Elio Bracco left public office, and moved to Milan. In June of that year, he founds a company, licensee of the German chemical and pharmaceutical group Merck. He started the Company with 17 employees, the factory increased, and he moved to a new, and larger facility, where in few years it reached over one hundred employees.

In the thirties, the company distinguished itself in the specialty medicine production. In 1934, his son Fulvio joined Elio Bracco. Born in 1909 in Neresine, Fulvio had majored in chemistry, and pharmacy. During his studies at the University of Pavia, he spent the summer vacations working at Merck in Darmstadt: first as worker, and supervisor, then desk employee in the research laboratory, and then in administrative, and commercial offices.

Overcome the very hard years of the Second World War, and the immediate after the war difficult period, Elio Bracco entrusted the management responsibility to his son Fulvio, and moved to Rome. In Rome, Elio with his civil service experience gave a strong and decisive contribution to the formation of the Associazione dei Profughi Giuliani & Dalmati, (*Giuliani & Dalmati Refugee Association*) of which became the first President. Elio always maintained strong ideal bond with his homeland. Only the war of 1940 prevented him from returning home, as soon as possible, as was his custom, to the beloved Neresine. He died in 1961, without ever seeing it again.

The same tenacious love was the feeling that bound Fulvio Bracco to Neresine, and it's Sea that finally took him back for the first time to Istria in 1970, for an encounter with his island, and his native Neresine soil. There are many initiatives which Fulvio Bracco will promote to keep alive the culture, history, and traditions of his homeland.

In the early fifties Fulvio Bracco has determined, and achieved a complete pharmaceutical production cycle - from research, the synthesis of raw materials, and production of medicinal products – this solidified with the construction of the industrial complex in Lambrate, which is still today the original Bracco site.

Contrast agents, and diagnostic imaging are the area chosen by Fulvio Bracco for the future development of the company. A good strategic decision that, will see, in fifty years the Bracco's in the forefront of a prestigious, and increasingly important industry.

In 1963, Dr. Fulvio Bracco is appointed by the Italian Government Cavaliere del Lavoro. (*Industrial Knight*)

In 1966 joined the company Diana Bracco, his daughter. She too graduated in chemistry at Pavia University, and she represents the family third generation.

Diana is the Director General of the Bracco Group since 1977, designs, and develops the company's internationalization which is becoming a larger multinational group, world leader in global solutions for diagnostic imaging. The Bracco Group is present in 115 countries, and employs about 3,500 workers worldwide, including over 600 in research activities which has a portfolio of 1,500 patents worldwide.

Research, and innovation are increasingly the focus of the Bracco development. Its international network of high-level research centers is today in Milan; Geneva, and Princeton, U.S.A., for research, and development of new products for the needs of sophisticated new diagnostic techniques, from X-rays, and CT scans, the MRI, and magnetic eco contrast.

In 1999, Diana Bracco becomes President, and CEO of Bracco. Fulvio Bracco is Honorary President.

In 2002, Diana Bracco is appointed by the Italian Government Cavaliere del Lavoro. (*Industrial Knight*), and in 2004, is conferred by the President of Italy the honor of “Knight of the Grand Cross.”

The fourth generation of the family makes its entry in 1996, with Fulvio Bracco Renoldi, grandson of Fulvio Bracco, who graduated in economics from Bocconi University of Milan, in December 2002, Chairman of Acist Medical Systems (Minneapolis, U.S.A.), Flagship Company of the group "Bracco" in the field of advanced contrast media injection.

Fulvio Bracco has recently died at 98 years of age, after a long and honored life's work dedicated to the development of the company, and always remembering with nostalgic regret, and contributions his beloved Neresine.

Neresine and Ossero split: one ancient rivalry.

From 1918 to 1922, the government of the country continued to be exercised according to the canons of the preceding Austro-Hungarian administration, pending the completion of the new Organizational scheme of the Italian administration.

This period brings high tensions with Ossero, because the provincial authorities, contrarily to the previous provisions, and agreement with the mayor of Neresine, they decided under strong pressure from very influential Osserini, mainly Dr. Dominic Stanich, former Dieta deputy, and mayor of Pola, and the Senator of the Kingdom, Francesco Salata, (Elio's Bracco brother in law), to create two separate municipalities, one in Ossero, including Ustrine, and Puntacroce, and one in Neresine, including only San Giacomo.

To this decision, the rebellion of the inhabitants of Neresine was strong, and unanimous, because the vast majority (over 80%) of the territories of the new town of Ossero was now owned by Neresinotti, and Sangiacomini.

At any rate, in 1922, was established for the first time the autonomous municipality of Neresine, and by plebiscite was elected a new mayor, Giuseppe Rucconich (*Osip Cotigar*).

The minutes of frantic municipal debates on the subject, also open to the entire population, point clearly out the nature of the problem. The new organizational scheme, provided the allocation to the municipality of Ossero of 8,172 hectares of land, while the only remaining 2,053 hectares to Neresine. The population of the new town of Ossero was of 606 inhabitants, of which 301 Ossero, 95 of Tarsich, 9 of Lose, and 201 Puntacroce. The population of the new town of Neresine was instead of 1,983 inhabitants, 1,704 of Neresine and 279 Sangiacomo. For municipal revenue due to direct taxes, Neresine, and Sangiacomo could count at that time, not

only on rural incomes, but also on 41 ships "vessels," and Ossero on only two (and even these, in partnership with Neresinotti).

The rebellion in essence consisted in the refusal of Neresinotti to pay their taxes to the town of Ossero without having a say, on either revenue or expenses.

The conflict between Neresine, and Ossero went on for a few years, so much so that even a party was born in Neresine by those who wanted to abolish completely the town of Neresine, and leave only Ossero, as in this hypothetical town the Neresinotti would still have the overwhelming majority of votes, and the decision-making power. The matter eventually was resolved with a compromise solution including the territory of Puntacroce to Neresine, and this also, because the few Osserini had neither arguments nor a relationship of sufficient force to counteract the interests of Neresinotti.

To be truthful, actually, even in the past the relationship between Ossero, and Neresine have not always been "idyllic". On one hand Osserini, aware of their cultural superiority, and civilization, and their managerial capability of the territory, gained in centuries of long, and glorious history, wanted to preserve the old dominance on the political, and administrative area, and so over the land of the rising Neresine. Neresinotti on the other hand, as far less educated, and more primitive, but very enterprising, and willing to sacrifice hard to improve their harsh living conditions, began at least since the late seventeenth century to acquire the campaigns, and the surrounding farmlands that once belonged to Osserini, bringing their country to a strong, and rapid development, both economic, and demographic.

It must be said, that as far back as the sixteenth century, the city of Ossero was subjected to severe trials, such as the spread of malaria, which became endemic; after the improvident construction on its doorstep of the large saline flats, which proved unproductive for the continuous overflow of spring water. Moreover, the persistence of incipient threats by the Usocchi pirates, then concretized in 1606, with one last ferocious raid on the city. These tragedies induced many of Ossero's wealthiest families to sell their properties and move elsewhere.

These adverse circumstances for Ossero favored in many ways the development of Neresine that rapidly increased its population up to 1500 by the end of the nineteenth century, while at the same time; the city of Ossero decreased from 500 to only 300 inhabitants. The Osserini have tried in every way to preserve the ancient hegemony on the island, or at least parts of the islands of Cherso, and Lussino surrounding the city, and its ancient relevance, but the growing evidence of economic resources, and demographic unbalance between the two towns, has led to an inevitable decline of Ossero.

The Osserini however, did not know how, nor been able to undertake worthwhile initiatives to counter the emerging economic supremacy of Neresinotti, due mainly to strong merchant marine growth of the town. However, they fought hard to keep at least their title "the City", where as Neresine was only a village, this lasted formally until the early twentieth century. Only once a Neresinotto, was elected mayor of Ossero in the early twentieth century, Domenico Zorovich (Sule)

The actions by the Osserini to fight the increasing dominance of Neresinotti, did not go beyond some outward forms of hostility, like stoning of the vessels as they passed the Cavanella, (*channel*), or cutting the ropes of the moored ships in the Vier, and other minor disturbances. Except however, towards the middle of the nineteenth century in a serious act of violence: the murder of the Neresinotto Biagio Rucconich on the Feast day of San Gaudenzio.

This happened on the evening of the feast, when the town was crowded with people, who flocked for the normally solemn occasion, also from neighboring towns. The Rucconich, a leading figure, because an administrator and manager of property groups for the convent of the Friars of Neresine, was thrown over from the tall ancient city walls onto the cliffs below by people which have remained unknown: probably envy, and economic interests weighted heavily in the grievous act. As an anecdote it should be added, that the victim's three sons, Giuseppe (Osip), Biagio (*Bluàs*) and Bortolo, together with relatives, and friends, on the same night descended into Ossero to in some way avenge the father's death, and rambling about the city streets vented their anger by defying the inhabitants, shouting insults, and breaking windows of the houses by throwing stones. Not obtaining significant satisfaction from the inhabitants hermetically locked in their houses, and not finding anything better as a sign of contempt, they plowed the main square with a plow found abandoned nearby, two of the brothers, noted for their physical strength, took the task of two bulls pulling the plow while the third guided the same. This is as much, as told by our grandmothers.

Building and cultural fervor.

In the years following the end of World War 1, with the occurrence of an increased population, and trade, also greatly increased is the availability of finances in the town coffers. This prompted the municipality to implement important public projects.

In addition to the completion of the present cemetery, this allowed the renovation of the Main Square by paving with large white smooth flagstone slobbs the whole area, and it included the road leading to the port, with gray flagstone slobbs of excellent quality from Albona. New fresh water mechanized well was excavated on the southwestern side of the square, which discontinued, and closed the old bucket well in the center. This new well was equipped with an original manual pump with a chain ribbon of cups, brought to Neresine by Giusto Camali, which made it much easier to get fresh water, by simply turning the large external wheel; the new pump structure was in turn surrounded by a strong, horseshoe shaped protecting low wall, which still exists.

Another project was the construction of the belt road around the city center called (*strada nova*) (new road), from San Antonio to Santa Maria Maddalena, through *conalinna* (natural canal conveying storm water runoff), and the construction of the San Antonio chapel accessible from the same new road. At Santa Maria Maddalena the new road continued to Saint Giacomo, passing through Potòcine, where another chapel was built to honor Santa Rita di Cascia.

These years saw the construction of the Bank building (Cassa Rural); the dredging, and renovation of the Magaseni port, the dredging of a channel in Tiesni, which allowed passage for larger vessels from Ossero to Neresine, and beyond, the paving of the four salisi (concrete pavements, steeper roads) which lead into the Piazza (main square). Paving the saliso from the main road leading down to the cemetery, and the San Francesco church, and convent. Moreover, the building of the carriage road from Magaseni (port) via Rapoc'e joining the main road, and the widening of other carriage roads.

The municipal Music Band is born, and it had had a good reputation for some years, even by outsiders. The majority of the band members was traveling seamen, and therefore, not always available. Lacking the necessary frequency of music practice the banda in the end was disbanded, just before the outbreak of World War II.

With an improved standard of living was significantly increased the momentum of higher education. The wealthy families sent their children, at least the more "inclined", to continue their studies "in larger towns," of course most went to study at the "Nautica" of Lussinpiccolo, and became Sea Captains, while others attended colleges, and universities in Zara, Fiume, and then continue their studies in Trieste, and Padova. The municipal library benefited from the cultural fervor and was frequented by many young people, especially females²⁰.

On the threshold of World War 2.

At the outbreak of World War 2, the town was at the peak of its development; Neresine had reached 2000 residents, San Giacomo had about 350, and Puntacroce had exceeded 200. In Neresine, alone, existed a kindergarten, a primary school, secondary vocational school, a pharmacy (Cicin), a doctor, and dentist (Dr. Marconi), a midwife (Morin), a bank (Cassa Rurale), a new postal, and telegraph office, a theater with stage, and bar (buffet), just used in theatrical performances, the same building was a movie house, a dance hall as needed, and a soccer field, and two bocce courts.

There were also the following public places:

- No 6 Grocers (*Canaletti, Rucconi, Sigovini, Gerconi, Alessandro Camalich, Zorini-Zorovich*).
- No 2 Bakeries (Menesini & Ollovini-Olovich) more confectionery (Ollovini-Olovich).
- No 2 Fruits and Vegetables Stores (Sigovini & Vescovi).
- No 2 Resale, Salt & Tobacco plus Stationary (Sigovini & Rucconi).
- No 1 Resale Newspapers and Stationary (Vescovi).
- No 2 Stores of clothing and material (Smundin & Buccaran).
- No 1 Tailor's shop for men (Cavedoni).
- No 3 Tailor's Shops for Women and General (Jacova Matteoni, Nina Palisca, Nina Bracco).
- No 2 Stores of Household Goods, (Vescovi & Cavedoni)
- No 3 Butcher shops (*Castellani Romano, Castellani Carlo, and Bracco Gaetano*)
- No 2 Shoemaker, and Shoe Stores (Pinesich & Sigovini-Sigovich) plus 4 to 5 individual Shoemakers
- No 1 Jewelry, and Watchmaker Store (Cremenich)
- No 3 Public Places: Trattoria Stella D'oro (Boni), Hotel Amicorum (Vodinelli), Trattoria-Caffé (Garbassi).
- No 2 Barbrer Shops (Berri & Mattiassich)
- No 3 Carpentry, and Furniture Makers (Lecchi-Lecchich, Cavedoni Giuseppe, and Cavedoni Celestino) plus other artisans/carpenters
- No 2 Hardware Stores (Cavedoni, and Lecchi-Lecchich)
- No 3 Ironsmith Shops (Morin, Linardich, and Marinzoli-Marinzulich)
- No 2 Vehicle Transport entities (Lupis, and Buccaran) Trucks and taxis Services
- No 1 "Gas Pump" Gas distributor
- No 3 Boat yards, and Construction (Socolich-Ciuciurich, Socolich-Scarbich, and Buccaran) Plus other minor artisans
- No 1 Barrel, Wheel, and Carts Maker (Cremenich)

Note: The surnames in the Italian form are as used at the time in question, which are still unchanged on the descendants.

At that time it was the shipping industry that brought more wealth to the town, it reached its peak, and many families were joint owners, as *caratisti* in the industry. In 1940, the ships of small and medium tonnage enrolled in the maritime department of Neresine had reached 36 units, over 6,000, tons total capacity.

Other ships of Neresinotti, but not registered in Neresine, were; Romilda, Mater Dolorosa, and the iron steamer of 2,000 tons of capacity Esperia. Eugene Matcovich (*Zizzeric'evi*) formed a considerable fleet of five large iron steamers, and moved its Main Office to Spalato first, and then London, after the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was established.

In 1939, the Camali family (*Costantignevi*) founded the shipyard of Neresine (the current boatyard).

The Second World War.

The Second World War interrupted the great social, and economic development that the town has achieved. All crews, and ships were "militarized" by the government transporting goods, and war materials for the Italian forces in the occupied territories; mainly toward Albania, and Greece. Some ships were also used for normal transport throughout the entire Mediterranean area. Unfortunately, during the war most of the Neresine fleet was destroyed with many casualties.²¹

After the armistice of September 8, 1943, Italy, in addition to total military, political, and moral break-up, was divided into two blocks, on one side the so-called "Badogliani," loyal to King Vittorio Emanuele III, and allied with former Anglo-Americans enemies, located mostly in central, and southern Italy. The other side was the former "fascists" now as the newly formed Italian Social Republic of Salò together with the German allies; the latter consisted mainly of northern Italy.

The geographical location of Neresine being northern Italy remained under the jurisdiction of the ISR Salò, and a general uncertainty began. The Germans occupied all territories of Venezia Giulia, as well as the Quarnero islands. The Germans conceded control of the less strategically locations, including Neresine, to the Italian allies of the X-MAS, probably because this body had been working in the territories of Venezia Giulia before September 8, while they settled in the towns regarded as strategically important as the two Lussini, Ossero, and Cherso.

Most of the town's men were "under arms" as soldiers in Italy, and deployed in various areas of the World War 2 conflict. After the "armistice," the survivors of the war, by any means tried to get home, more than less adventurously, and almost all succeeded.

Among the various old papers there is the story of Renato Zorovich (*Guavdich*) return from the war, well written, by an unknown reporter, which is a worthy example: -

“La Gaspizza Guavdic’eva era una vecchietta dolce e buona. Rimasta vedova viveva sola nella sua casa isolata, Sottomonte. Dei suoi undici figli, dieci scomparvero emigrati chissà dove nelle lontane Americhe. Le era rimasto il più piccolo, Renato. Era il suo “coccòlo”, l’unica sua fonte di vita e di speranza. Il 10 giugno 1940 anche Renato dovette partire per la guerra, così la Gaspizza rimase sola con la sua capra, un piccolo orto, una vecchia zappa e quattro pentolini con cui farsi da mangiare. La guerra finì e lei continuò ad attendere con ancora maggiore apprensione il ritorno del suo Renato.

Dopo tre anni di guerra e tre di prigionia, Renato arrivò avventurosamente a Trieste. Non c'erano mezzi di trasporto e comunicazioni per l'isola di Lussino. Era la fine del 1945. Tra i moli del porto di Trieste trovò una barca a motore di Dalmati che erano venuti in cerca di viveri, trovò anche il Gigi Sigovich, venuto pure lui alla ricerca di viveri. Insieme chiesero ai Dalmati un passaggio. Si imbarcarono, e dopo due giorni di navigazione furono sbarcati su una scogliera ad ovest dell'isola, dietro al Monte Ossero, nella deserta baia di Tomosina. Risalirono faticosamente il monte con sulle spalle il loro misero fagotto e si calarono su Neresine.

Renato apparve nel cortile della sua vecchia casa e vide sua madre, seduta sul muretto del cortile, che guardava il sottostante mare: un fagottello nero con un viso bianco ed il Rosario fra le dita. Renato rimase un po' a contemplarla, poi la chiamò affettuosamente: Gaspizza, cosa guardate? Lei rispose assorta: guardo il mare per vedere se arriva la barca del mio Renato. Poi voltandosi chiese: sei tu Bepi? Pensando fosse un vicino. A questo punto Renato le corse incontro e l'abbracciò piangendo. Lei lo strinse forte mormorando ripetutamente "mili muòi, mili muòi" (mio caro, mio caro)."

"The Gaspizza Guavdic'eva was a good and sweet old lady. Widowed, she lived alone in her isolated house, Sottomonte (Mountain slope). Of her eleven children, ten migrated, disappeared somewhere in the distant Americas. Only the youngest, and smallest, Renato was left. He was her "cuddly", her only source of life, and hope. On June 10, 1940, Renato also had to leave for the war, so Gaspizza was alone with her goat, a small vegetable garden, an old hoe, and four pots to cook with. The war ended, and she continued to await the return, with even more apprehension, of her Renato. After three years of war, and three of prison camps, adventurously Renato arrived in Trieste. There was no means of travel, and communications to the island of Lussino. It was the end of 1945. Between the piers in the port of Trieste he found a motorboat of Dalmatians who had come in search of food, he also found Gigi Sigovich, he too came in search of food. Together they asked the Dalmatians for a ride home. They boarded, and after two days of sailing they landed on a bluff at the west end of the island, behind Monte Ossero in the deserted bay of Tomosina. With difficulty, they climbed the mountain carrying a backpack on their wretched shoulders, and came slowly down the other side of the mountain into Neresine. Renato reached the courtyard of his old house, and saw his mother sitting on the low wall looking toward the sea: a black bundle with a white face, and rosary beads between her fingers. Renato stood a little to admire her, then called her affectionately "Gaspizza, what are you looking?" She absorbed replied: I look toward the sea to see if the boat of my Renato is coming. Then turning asked, "Bepi is that you?" Thinking it was a neighbor. At this point, Renato came running, and crying hugged her. She hugged him tightly muttering repeatedly "mili muoi, mili muoi" (my dearest, my dearest)".

The journeys in search of the flour.

After the occupation of the islands by the Germans, the population was left to themselves; the town lacked any kind of external sourcing to secure the basic foods. The items lacking first were the wheat flour for bread, and corn for polenta. The village men got busy, starting to break up the fallow land to increase crops, the other products although limited, did not create big problems: sugar, was replaced by honey, and dried figs, while meat, and fish as well as legumes, and vegetables were locally caught or grown. The real problem remained the bread. Those who did not own land, or who realized that from the arid island lands there was not much to expect,

devised other methods of procurement. Black market thought the Veneto, and Istria regions to buy from the local farmers, wheat, and other products bartering using the typical products of the Neresine: wool, olive oil, cheese, dried figs, sheepskins, brandy, and any marketable product in the fertile Venetian, and Istrian lands. The wheat was brought to the mills in close proximity to the production areas, and grounded, and bring home the precious flour.

The first who organized the supply of wheat flour with the exchange goods, were three town's family men, who used the "Piata", a flat-bottomed barge (hence the nickname, because the real name of the barge was "Stella"), normally used for sand dredging for building construction, from the bottom of the shallow bays of the island. The "Piata" was not seaworthy offshore, but chosen because it was the only boat of a certain size available, and it was motorized with a small single cylinder diesel engine. a "Satima with hot head" 1920's vintage with six light horsepower. The three departed, (*my father was the motorman*) somewhat blindly about the Veneto shore towns without a precise destination.

They crossed the Quarnero Sea by night, traveling at large distance from the shores of the Istrian peninsula, and Promontore for fear the Germans would take them as enemies pointing directly toward the Venetian lagoon, and then venturing into various channels into the countryside. They returned after ten days, with the boat loaded with flour "double zero" quality, never seen since the war began.

The success of this first expedition opened the way for many other similar trips. The men of Neresine organized themselves. One can say that many heads of families went through this dangerous experience, with small *caici* (*rowboats with sails*) of the town, which rarely exceeded five meters in length. For these trips, the heavier boats were chosen, and equipped with half decks, and a hatch to which was added wider hatches to enclose the whole boat.

With these small boats, and with only the help of a small sail, and oars, because very few had an engine, they bravely faced the crossing of the dangerous Quarnero Sea, always at night, some heading for the channel of the river Quieto in Istria, and then went upward into the countryside of the Buiese. Others went even farther to the lagoons of Grado, and Marano, in search of the precious grain. On the return trip, they usually stopped in Cittanova, where there was a mill where they could finally grind the wheat, and get the coveted flour. Each *caicio* brought home, from six to ten tons of flour.

The return journey was particularly risky because the boats were very loaded so to barely float (protrude from the sea not more than twelve to sixteen inches, and across the Quarnero Sea in those conditions was really a fearful endeavor. For the men of Neresine, all experienced sailors, the sea was not the main danger, despite the small size of the boats, but the fierce war that was engaged by the occupying German forces without respect of any civil rule. Unfortunately, two family fathers of Neresine, Antonio Berri, and Gaudenzio Bracco (Guavde Mercof), in their journey to search for food were brutally gunned down by the Germans or look alike, on the shoreline of Istria. This may have happened just to rob them of their wares, as told by some fishermen who witnessed the tragedy. Neither the bodies nor the boat was ever found. This tragedy shocked the people of Neresine, because the two fathers left their young wives, and numerous children without means of livelihood, and Gaudenzio's wife was expecting their third child.

Lussinpiccolo bombed.

In the period 1943-44, the city of Lussino was subject to repeated air raids aimed at destroying the shipyards, and repair shops. As a result, some families from Lussino took refuge in Neresine as displaced persons. The Straulino settled in the great Maurovich (Cimbalic'evi) house in Halmaz, and Tino (Augustine) Straulino relocated his inseparable boat "Lampuga" (Dolphinfish) in the small harbor of Ridimutàc. The "Lampuga" was a nice *caicio*, armed with a large sail, and jib "alla Lussignana" (*the Lussino way*), and he was often tacking in the Canal, driven by gusts of fresh maistro (mistral), typical summer wind of Neresine. (I remember being a kid, and walking on the shoreline to Ridimutàc, where normally I walked for play, and to catch the rock crabs (*garmai*), very abundant in that area, and more than ounce Tino, seeing the admiration I had for his beautiful caicio, would ask me with the famous phrase: "*ti vol vegnir con mi, che ti me aiutarà a tegnir el floco?*" that is (*you want to come with me, you will help me by holding the jib?*) Of course, I flew into the boat, and I was beside myself with joy)²². The Tino then become, as everyone now knows, one of the greatest sailors in the world; captain of the school ship "*Amerigo Vespucci*", and an admiral of the Italian postwar Navy. He, with the inseparable childhood companion Rode, wins the gold medal at the 1952 Olympic Games, in the sailing "star class", and became three time Word Champion, in the same category.

Other families, such as the Viotti (retired admiral from Genoa, who had chosen to live in Lussinpiccolo), the Favrini, and others, found accommodation in other homes in the town. Among the displaced was, also Professor Pierpaolo Luzzatto Fregiz family. Driven out by the Germans from his home in Zabodaski, seized for "strategic reasons", and assigned to the X-MAS Italian allied militiamen, he settled with his family in the house of "C'unsciza," close to the Friars. He masterfully told in his book "Letters from Zabodaski", his vicissitudes of this period in Neresine

Deserves a special mention, also the family of John Ragusin (Neresinotto), who returned from America with his wife and young daughter to retire in Lussinpiccolo, where he bought a beautiful house by the sea. He too fled to escape the bombing, as displaced to his birthplace in Neresine, Sottomonte. The Ragusins, and daughter Elsie (born in New York City), lived there a short time. Toward the end of June 1944, they were arrested by the Germans on charges of spying for the Americans by reporting at night with a lighted cigarette to the enemy bombers passing high above in the country sky. John was deported to the Buchenwald death camp, and ended up in the ovens, the daughter Elsie in Auschwitz, while his wife Domenica Soccolich was left unharmed!²³

The deportation to Germany of men from Neresine.

Other tragic events shook the town in the last years of war. Among these was the sinking of the motor ship "Redentore" (Redeemer), and the yacht Haiduk, moored in Sonte (across the channel), by British aircrafts, but especially a foray carried out in Neresine by a gang of Croatian Ustashe militiamen.

On August 15, 1944, came to town a team of Croatian Ustashe militia (allied with Germans), to "recruit" for the Germans, all men born between 1899 to 1926, and ship them to Germany as "Croatian" sailors, forced to embark on German ships on the Baltic Sea whose crews had been decimated by war. The Ustashe, and local Italian military (militia of the X-MAS) to collect the

men devised a stratagem, and guiltily indulged by the political authorities, post a ban on the walls of the town prominent places. The proclamation ordered all the men born between 1899-1926 to appear urgently by the *Comun* (city hall) for a bureaucratic control of their work status: even sent the city municipal agent to advise, house by house, all the men to appear in the *Comun*, even though it was the "*Feragosto*", August Fair a public holiday, and historically in Italy is a total vacation feast.

Not by chance, they selected a holiday for the ambushade, because that day, everyone was home. Once the men gathered in the lounge on the lower floor of the *Comun*, about 40 men, with, they seized them, and weapons in hand loaded them on a bus, and sent them via ferryboat to Susak (near Fiume, but in Croatian territory under the control of the Ustashe), as "Croatian" sailors, and then railroaded to Germany. They prevented any escape by threatening severe reprisals against their families back in Neresine. I can still see in front of my eyes that tragic day of departure, between the shouts, and the cries of wives and children of the deported prisoners. Some town's men however, were forewarned... by someone, and escaped by not showing up and hiding in the surrounding countryside. Of the more than 40 men seized, and deported, all adventurously returned home after the war except for, eighteen-year old Mario Zoroni (Zorovich), soon to graduate to Master Mariner, died in his sinking ship on which he was forcefully embarked. (By the way, among other things a diary of one of the deportees has been found, that of Commander John Zvelich. the diary carefully compiled, day by day, since that fateful August 15, in which, crop up even personal guilt and responsibility...) The Ustashe were Croatian militia, acting in a foreign territory, Italian, under control of the Italian X-MAS, the latter had no objection to their work. This seems even more serious when compared with the behavior of other militiamen from the same X-MAS stationed in our island. That to prevent the deportation of Italian citizens by the hands of foreign militias, confronted the Ustashe with a truck armed with a machine gun, forcing them to release the prisoners, and "change the atmosphere". That is to say, that it was the common opinion in the town, that those of the "black navy", as we called the X-MAS, were not only brave Italian soldiers fighting in good faith for what they considered their country²⁴.

1945: the occupation by Tito's partisans and the establishment of the new Yugoslav regime.

In early 1945 the military garrison of Neresine was held by militias belonging to the former "fascists" now as the newly formed Italian Social Republic of Salò, and German allies, namely the X-MAS, accommodated in two barracks, one in Marina (port area), in the former barracks of the Guardia di Finanza (Biasiol house), and one in the old police station in Santa Maria Maddalena. The garrison in the Navy barracks, was of local youth, with no clearly defined political ideologies, but volunteers in the belief that it was the safest way to avoid being sent to fight somewhere else, and then stay close to home, and have a better chance to save the skin. These, in fact, a few days before the occupation, when it became obvious the imminent, and inevitable outcome of the war, were in hiding, disappearing like snow in the sun. The other garrison at the "police station", all continental Italians (not from our region), not more than ten people, had set up a machine gun station on the plateau in front of the church of Saint Mary Magdalene with the intent to defend themselves, and resist possible invasion.

Towards the end of April 1945, the Quarnero islands were, in fact, invaded, and occupied by Tito's communist partisans.

In the occupation, and takeover day of Neresine, the partisans came from Ossero in large numbers, scattered around the countryside, heading for the "police station" where was housed the X-MAS garrison. The militiamen, on their part, considering the large number of partisans advancing left everything, and locked themselves in the barracks. The partisans, once surrounded the barracks, demanded the surrender, the answer from inside the building came as a burst of machine gun, which struck a partisan, wounding him seriously. The wounded partisan was rescued by a comrade, and taken into a nearby shack where he died in terrible pain shortly after. At this point, a young militiaman, named Sartori, perhaps panicked, climbed over the back window unarmed running through the gardens of neighboring houses to Biscupia (the harbor below). The partisans seeing him escaping shot, and killed him. He fell back in the yard below the barracks (by the house of Simeon Buccaran), located about fifty yards from the barracks. The other militants, after a brief, and useless shoot-out, eventually surrendered. They were then transferred to a nearby house with public sneers, and abuse by the partisans, and then in the evening they were transferred to Ossero, where that night they were shot behind the cemetery, and there buried in a common grave. For historical duty, it must be said, also that in Liski-Zabodaski(Lussino) was located another garrison of militiamen from the X-MAS, about 35 men. They controlled the stretch of Sea between the islands of Lussino and Sansego. The militiamen seeing the futility of a defense against the occupation of the island by Tito's partisans, surrendered voluntarily, and unarmed made prisoners. Around 35 Liski militants were the same day transferred to the school in Neresine, and poorly housed, they were transferred then elsewhere. These 35 militiamen from the X-MAS Liski at the end of the war were released, and returned home.

The war devastated, and unfortunately destroyed in a short time all that had been laboriously put together by Neresinotti in many years of hard work. After the Yugoslav Communist government occupation in 1945²⁵, the few surviving ships were seized, and nationalized without compensation.

From the historical point of view, we must say that, with the passage of the two islands under the Yugoslav government began the rapid, and irreversible decline of the town Neresine. The Tito's regime prohibited all activities resulting in free enterprise, and for the entrepreneurial spirit of Neresinotti, this was the greatest drama. It introduced, also a vicious discrimination against those (the majority) that were thought of "Italians feelings," fueled by a renewed nationalistic Croatian fanaticism of new arrivals, and (the minority) of Neresinotti of Croatian feelings. This began the infamous "Cubrilovich Plan" named after Tito's theorist of ethnic cleansing, and diligently put to practice by; the first with ideological awareness, and the second perhaps, unwitting stupidity, (*or unconsciousness*).

If we add to this the confiscations, and nationalization of church property,²⁶ and of any private property or property of any value, dislike, if not actual persecution, to the religion of their ancestors. The imposition of "voluntary" mandatory work (*radna snaga*), that sent to forced labor camps in Istria, and Yugoslavia (including the Samaz-Sarayevo highway) in particular citizens not considered loyal to the regime, and "Italian," and the practice of imprisonment, and torture by the political police toward the "suspicious people," we have a clear picture of the human tragedy that befell Neresine.

One of the first measures implemented by the regime was to award the title of "Enemy of the People" to the most affluent in town, ship-owners, and *caratisti*, two of which, after dilations by the Croatian neighbors, and even relatives... were arrested, and sent to die in the sinkholes (*foibe*) of Istria. Those who escaped by chance to end in the sinkholes were the first forced to

flee to Italy. The properties of the "enemies of the people" (rich houses well furnished, farmland, ships, the boatyard with a vessel under construction, and later named "Zora", etc.), were confiscated, and nationalized. That fierce persecution of "enemies of the people" did not aim merely political, but also the appropriation of their property for personal use of some, which became clear later: the town's fascist party secretary in office until the day before occupation, but penniless, was jailed, and after a short detention, and long, and fierce interrogation released.

The next step after these events consisted in the assignment of the "enemies of the people" properties to some local leaders of the Yugoslav "communist party" in town, furniture, and furnishings included. In this context, the home of shipowner Domenico Camali, assassinated in the *foibe*, was used as the police chief (*komandir*) residence in the town. The new owners regularized possession of the houses confiscated by formal acts of purchase from the State, and the sums paid was largely symbolic; (the experts estimate of the economic value of the property was made by local political authorities, and or by themselves).²⁷

Of course, every private business was eliminated; all shops were closed, and nationalized, as well as other public places. To give a semblance of legality to the nationalization, the value of the properties, with all their contents, inventory was valued at prices of 1939. Only 20% of the estimated value was repaid, or not even at all.

Garbassi Bar stayed open for a time, with only bar service. For the sale of food was opened the state-owned cooperative "*zadruga*" (i.e. for the neighbor, then, as in the form *sadruga* united, took on the more general meaning of the cooperative), the first in the big store (*household goods, fruits and vegetable store*) of the Vescovich, and later in those of the textile shop of Smundin.

The nursery school (kindergarten) terminated, and its premises used as restaurant-bar of public ownership under management of a "trusted" person. The shoemakers had to be members of the cooperative run by the party, and not different fate befell all the other activities of the town, including agricultural. All men (and many women), stuck in the initial period, had to go to work in the only surviving industry nationalized, the shipyard of Lussinpiccolo.

Among the many persecuted compatriots, and to better understand "the atmosphere" in the town after the occupation by Yugoslavia, particular importance is the imprisonment of Angelo Linardich. Angelo had immigrated to America in the '30s, when he was a boy, and when World War 2 broke out, he was drafted, like all other young Americans, in the United States Army where he participated with honor in the liberation of Europe. At the end of the conflict, he was in Germany with the U.S. military occupation forces. Like any Neresinotto, nostalgia for the homeland led him to seek a short leave to visit, after many years, brothers, aunts, relatives, and friends. The leave was granted, and on a beautiful day in late 1945, he came home in a brilliant American soldier uniform. The welcoming of the villagers was, to say the least triumphant: all into the Main Square, party, and grand ball in honor of the citizen returned. The thing was poorly digested by the town new bosses, especially one of his own age, who had become the "political commissar," because Angelo belonged to the family of "Italian feelings," and then he could not speak anything but Italian or English, so the festivity was seen as against Croats, a provocation. In fact, during the night the secret police came to arrest the poor veteran, bringing him in the infamous prison of the OZNA of Lussinpiccolo. The news among the general panic, spread quickly in the town, and immediately, with the "tom tom", by voice of mouth, clandestine among villagers, was related to the American authorities of Trieste. The American authorities immediately became involved with the Yugoslav government, resulting in the liberation of the poor Angelo, which, however was whisked back to Trieste, and beyond preventing him to return in Neresine and say goodbye to relatives and friends.

The exodus of the Neresinotti.

The history requires us to say, that the international peace treaty, signed also by the Yugoslav Government provided for the passage of Istria, and the Quarnero islands to Yugoslavia, also gave the residents the right to opt for the Italian or Yugoslav citizenship, and to leave freely, bringing with them only their transportable goods to Italy, or stay.

The vast majority of the population of Neresine opted for the Italian citizenship, and leave, but the local authorities systematically rejected the requests, fearing that the mass exodus would paralyze all activities, including the most necessary for the life of the few remaining. Then emerged a sense of independence, and a love of free enterprise that has always characterized the Neresinotti, so those who did not wish to accept the dictates of the regime, chose to escape illegally by any means: the crossing of the Adriatic Sea with small local boats, risky journeys through rural Istria, etc.

Within two or three years, most of the young men with working ability or otherwise, left the country forever, taking with them only the clothes on their backs, and leaving behind wives, children, and elderly parents, with no means of support, with the intention of recalling them as soon as possible. Only after 1950, the local authorities began to allow wives and children to join the fugitives as refugees, in many cases after holding them hostage for over 4 years. Before the closure of the borders between Italy, and Yugoslavia, some parents managed to send pre-teenage children to Italy (9 - 12 years old), taking advantage of the fact that they were allowed to go to Trieste on a school trip providing, they were not accompanied by close relatives. The kids, once reaching Italy, were welcomed by an organization of Giuliani, and Dalmati for assistance to its refugees. The organization born in Venice at Easter time in 1946, organized by many, and presided by Elio Bracco, and animated by the Neresinotto Franciscan friar, father Flaminio Rocchi, that provided suitability, and preparation forwarding them to Italian colleges, and let them continue their studies, and snatch them from a freedomless future.

To conclude a brief historical reconstruction we can say that the country of Neresine, from 2000 inhabitants in 1945, was downsized in 1956, to about 350 people, including the new immigrants arrived after 1945, replacing those that opted out or fled from the political, and ethnic cleansing carried out by the new regime. A censused accurate count in 2005, indicated that the remaining Neresinotti since 1945, having both parents or their descendants born in Neresine was less than 90. The same count made in August 2011, listed only 70.

To the expatriate or displaced exiled from ex Venezia Giulia, and Dalmazia, prior, or since 1951, and qualified as "displaced Julian-Dalmatians" by presenting appropriate documents; the Italian government gave the opportunity to re-opt for the Italian citizenship in Italy, and so re-becoming Italian citizens in all respects.

The Neresinotti settled; some in Trieste, some in Venezia, and surrounding area, some in Genova, these places were more congenial for the many professional seamen. Others, after a first stay in Italy, immigrated to the Americas, primarily in New York, sponsored by relatives, friends, and neighbors already there, while others choose other welcoming countries, namely Canada, Australia, and South Africa.

Everywhere in the world they went, they brought the "imprinting" the culture of Neresine, based on the desire to work, honesty, and the steady upward trend in economic, and social improvement. All starting with the clothes on their backs as personal patrimony; no language, no profession, no help, or government assistance or benefits, yet most have reached a position of social and economic high standards.

Concerning the thorny question for the Italian exiles recognition as Italian nationals by the Italian Government, especially those born since 1918, and therefore born in Italy, the historical accuracy impel us to provide an important clarification. Many of those who initially had opted for the Italian citizenship, and had their request denied by the Yugoslav authorities; (all those of Neresine), and could not escape to Italy within the first five or six years after the war - because too old, because not legitimately felt they could leave young children or elderly parents, and children too young or because - once they come of age, had arranged things better with those who remained, they left in later years and even continued to flee until the sixties.

For these the Italian Government had a cruel, and unjust policy, probably due to improvident evaluations of consultants "experts" of "our culture" that actually did not know from beans. In fact this option was not granted except in some cases "special" Italian citizenship. The helpless exiles of this period, qualified as stateless (*without a country*), after some years in Italian internment camps, Italians they were! Then they were forced to emigrate through the IRO (International Refugee Organization) to: Australia, Canada, and South Africa. The United States, if they had a specific sponsor request (*with a financial guarantee of work for two years*) by a United States citizen.

Now after more than 50 years since the tragic exodus, the Italian government "ironically," has decided to grant free Italian citizenship to "the remaining ones," born at that time in Italy, who now declare themselves an Italian minority in Croatia.

Stories of escape.

To stem the escapes flow, the Yugoslav government (*greatly assisted by local Croat neighbors, and relatives*) began a strict surveillance with police and Navy patrol boats constantly patrolling the western shores of the islands, and surrounding Sea. Nevertheless, hundreds of people managed to cross the Adriatic Sea with small local rowing, and motor boats. From the island of Sansego, in a few years more than 1,000 people escaped (from a total of about 1,800 inhabitants), entire families, and most with the small but sturdy fishing rowing boats, and some with motors, typical of that island.

In 1948, to discourage further attempts, the police machine-gunned, and killed two unarmed suspected fugitives from Sansego, exposing for a week the decomposing corpses as they fell. The captured boat was brought to Lussinpiccolo, and moored on the banks of the *port* in front of the pharmacy, **as a warning for all to see**. Relatives in vain swore that they were normal fishermen pursuing their job. The version of the relatives appeared to all the more credible. because, knowing the cunning, and seamanship skills of the Sansegotti, they would have never let themselves be caught on the run in broad daylight. In addition, in each escaped boat was never less than eight to ten people, to alternate the rowing with long oars (*vesli*), and ensure the continuous high speed for at least the first twenty miles of the crossing.

At the same time, a boat with four fugitives, including two Lussignani, disappeared into the Sea during another escape attempt. In 1998, a spear-fishing German tourist, found the boat weighted

with stones, at the bottom of the Sea near the coast with the human remains on board, (*five bodies, including the old owner who sold the boat, behind the mountain.*), he reported the discovery to the authorities. It was revealed then, they were the missing fugitives, also killed by the militia, with bullet holes obvious in their skulls. The fact was commemorated with an engraved memorial plate installed in the cemetery of San Martino, sponsored by the exiled Lussinpiccolo community.

Following the reported dramatic events, escapes became less frequent for a time. The Neresinotti working in the Lussino shipyard began to watch the movements of the police patrols, noting the times of departure, and return to port of the same, finding that they never went out with bad weather, and agitated Sea; these findings gave them green light for many escapes. For the subsequent escapes in fact, they choose mainly Saturdays in the winter, when the bora blows strong or threatening bad weather. Saturday was the best time, because until next Monday their absence at work would not be noted. In those days work leisure, and sickness was monitored, since all worked for some kind of organized governmental workforce.

Four Neresinotti departed from Biscupia with a five meters *caicio* at nine in the evening, with a strong bora, and crossed the channel in darkness with a little sail up to Majescuà, where they had previously hidden in the woods the great oars (*vesli*) and the hatches for closing the deck of the boat. With the boat so well equipped, they left definitely, coasting to Puntacroce (Suha Punta), then let go downwind into the open Sea, passing south of the island of San Piero de' Nemi, pointing directly toward Pesaro, Italy, where they arrived at four p.m. of the next day: undertaking of extraordinary skills, and seamanship, and conscious courage. They did the journey at an average speed of about five sea miles per hour.

Another daring escape in December of 1951, was of thirteen people, including two women, and a child of three, and a half years, with a large 10 meters boat seized with the crew by the fugitives for this purpose. The boat was normally utilized for freight and "passengers" transport between Neresine and Fiume under the "patronage" of local political authorities. The skipper was loyal to the regime, while the engineer was secretly an accomplice of the fugitives.

The flight was long studied and well organized: one morning a few of the fugitives embarked on "Menka" (this was the name of the boat) leaving for Fiume as ordinary passengers. As soon as the boat reached the north end of the island of Lussino, leaving behind, in the dark of winter mornings, Ossero, the engineer stopped the engine simulating an engine failure. When the skipper jumped into the engine space to see what had happened, and help the engineer to repair the fault, the others seized the boat, and announced they were planning to flee to Italy.

The skipper started cussing, and yelling, trying to prevent the seizure, but the fugitives threatened to tie him up, and close him in the hold, if he did not settle down, and they would have continued despite his protests. The skipper, seeing the bad situation, calmed down, and the others changed direction heading to Tomosina, in a deserted, and sheltered bay on the western shore of the island. Tomosina is below the slopes of Mount Ossero, just the opposite side of Neresine, where in the meantime the other fugitives were hiding in waiting until night for boarding. The flight ended happily in Pesaro on the next day. The poor skipper during the trip had time to reflect on the situation, and at the end decided to stay in Italy too.

Another flight in the history of Neresine is a boat of 50 tons called "Seca", previously named "Zora". However, the name was changed because of the aforementioned Decree of the local authorities, to eliminate any reference to religion or Italianism in the names of the boats. The boat was owned by brothers Zorovich (Ferdinandovi), a family of Neresine with "strong croats feelings." ²⁸ When ultimately the two brothers have realized what entails in the inevitable

membership of the Communist party of Tito they decided to escaped with their families. A third brother, the younger, had already noticed, fleeing to Italy with his wife, and three and a half years old son in 1951, with the hijacking of the above-mentioned "Menka", while two other brothers remained in Neresine, faithful to the party, and the regime. Since the two brothers, however, were compromised with the regime, to land in Italy at that time would have involved some risk for them. They then chose to land in Italy without seeking political asylum, but to eventually continue the journey with the same boat to the United States, where their older brother, a resident of Florida American citizen for many years, and very wealthy would have provided for their support.

The first stop was Ancona, where they asked to stay only for the period necessary to arrange the trip, and buy supplies needed. The younger brother, who ran away with the "Menka", was still in an Italian refugee camp, because it was difficult to immigrate to the United States through the IRO organization, because of the previous adherence to communism by the family. For this, he decided to join "illegally" the two brothers on their way to America. They were also joined by a master captain from Dalmazia, an experienced ocean-going captain useful for their trip that happen to be in the same refugee camp, with wife, and two sons as co-refugees with the younger brother.

They left from Ancona; they stopped at some ports of North Africa, and the Canary Islands, and then sailed the Atlantic toward Florida. Unfortunately, after few days travel beyond the Canary Islands the boat's engine, old and shabby, finally broke down forcing them to continue the journey by a mall, and old sail, which belonged to the old boat (*Redentore*) of younger brother father in law, sunk during the war. The trip lasted few months, but in the end, though very adventurously, they reached the coveted goal.²⁹ (Could not refrain: the three and half years old boy is presently a senior pilot of the New York City Harbor).

We shall also write the next, because emblematic, the event of another young villager named Benito Bracco, third cousin of one of those persecuted by the Austrian government during the First World War, because Italian, and son of Valentino (our uncle) mentioned elsewhere in this story. At that time, only nineteen, it was 1955, he had a beautiful row boat of 4 meters (small *caicio* open), baptized, so to say illegally, "Gypsy," with which he decided to flee to Italy.

His father had opted, like all others, for the Italian citizenry, but handicapped, without an arm, and older did not feel like venturing a clandestine escape. He confided, however, that while continuing to request the expatriation to Italy, eventually he would get it, which is what actually happened ... but in 1962, when he was already dead. The twenty-one year old brother, however, had been sentenced meanwhile to three years of hard prison, accused of planning with other peers, also condemned, an escape to Italy.³⁰

The youth prepared well his escape. The day chosen was a summer afternoon; equipped with food, drinking water, and a gun, probably to encourage, and defend himself, departed from the small port by the friar's convent behaving as usual when going fishing. Unlike usual, however, his sister accompanied him, and taking leave hugging, and crying. A maternal uncle, a leading member of the Croatian town party, present at the marina, spotted this commotion. The youth left the marina, however, raised up the sail, and headed toward Ossero, and Ustrine, where in a small bay he awaited for nightfall, then began the journey to Italy.

In the middle of the night, just left the coast of the Cherso Island by Unie saw the light beam of a patrol boat searching in the area, and immediately followed by two more patrol boats. Terrified by the eventuality of being discovered, he dropped the sail, took off the mast, and uncorked the bottom of the boat, which filled the boat to sea level, and he slid into the Sea, hoping not to be

seen. The patrol boats searched the area, beam on, without seeing him, and then took up positions in the stretch of Sea between the islands of Sracane (Canidole), and Unie. When they disappeared from view, he put back the cork, and recovered the boat emptying it with a bucket, retrieved the mast, and sail, and rowed rapidly to the nearby island of Unie, where he hid.

When morning came, the patrol boats returned to base, one to Lussinpiccolo, and the other two to Pola. Checking the condition of the boat, and equipment, he realized that the maneuver of sinking the boat, caused the loss of food supplies, and the needless gun, and had only saved a bottle of water, and a basket of eggs, enclosed in compartment under the aft bench.

Perhaps due to the recklessness of youth or perhaps the biggest boost of despair, however, he decided to continue the journey. He swallowed all the eggs from the basket, put on the oars, and started rowing towards Italy. He rowed desperately, and continuously throughout the day, until it was certain to be beyond the reach of the patrol, he then raised the sail, and continue the journey more relaxed until an Italian fishing trawler saw him, and pulled him on board, including boat. He remained on board with them for two days until the fishermen ended their fishing tour, and brought him to the port of Fano, gave him some money for initial expenses, but the Italian authorities detained him. In Italy lived two of his sisters' regular Italian citizens, one in Livorno and one in Genova, they granted for him, and gave him shelter. In Genoa, where he settled, he found work at a large engineering industry as a milling machinist. With the earnings, he rented a small apartment, and provided for his parents, and a sister left in Neresine, sending them clothing, and food.

When at last the mother, brother fresh from Tito's prisons and the sister were able to come regularly to Italy (*they were finally recognized as Italians, but Valentino (father) already deceased*), after a period of stay in the refugee camp, all were forced to immigrate to Australia, because rejected by the motherland! Yet, the young man was finally accepted as an Italian citizen in every respect, both "political" and civic in terms. Once in Australia among other things, he like his father, mentioned earlier (Mariza adventure), showed great seafaring skills and qualities of great temper, saved from drowning at the risk of his life, a family with small children, shipwrecked during a storm. This fact rewarded him with the Medal of Honor for civil merit from the Australian governor, during the annual celebration of the civilian heroes of that country.

Human destiny reserves often-incredible implications. Even in our case, another episode is a must story. One day, in front of the house where Australian Neresinotto lived, he witnessed a car accident, a collision between two automobiles. He hurried to rescue one driver, a young slightly bruised woman, and having witnessed the accident, made written testimony in favor of the girl, who in his opinion was right. The same evening came to his house the girl's father, to thank him for the help given to his daughter, and having read his name in the papers of the incident report, asked him about his origins, because that name sounded familiar.

They thus discovered that the girl's father was from the vicinity of Pola in Istria, and was the commander of a police patrol boat, sent in search of the fugitive, in the fateful night of daring escape, upon specific instructions from his maternal uncle. The Polesano, who later, also fled to freedom, told him that they had continued searching for him in vain for thirteen successive nights. He also said: I saw you in the water, but ignored my orders, and let you go.

The escapes retold here are those that have greater impact, and the best known, but countless other lesser known, or completely unknown, but no less adventurous, and daring have occurred in the first fifteen years of very hard postwar. All however, testify to the strong character of

Neresinotti, their attachment to freedom, and especially the dramatic refusal to go backward after the difficult path towards progress, and the free, and civilized life, made by their ancestors.

Now we are almost lost in history

We like to conclude this chapter with a beautiful poem, written by one of our compatriot, married to a Neresinotta, and forced, like many others, to immigrate to Canada. The poem, as devoid of literary merits, is full of sincere love for his native land, and is the one that best describes the fate of our people.

IDENTITY

However, what are we daddy?
In truth, I am not too sure
I thought I was Italian,
Instead, I fill more an Istrian

This question simple, and frank
Deserves an answer straight and clear
I wish so much to say it with all
My heart that with love... to my
Country I aspired

However, I cannot say that I am proud
When they treat me as a stranger...
In addition, indeed we cannot ignore,
That we are many with this sore!

We hold our lands in great esteem:
Istria, Pola, and Zara surrounded by the Sea,
Fiume, Cherso, and Lussino Quarneroli
Beautiful memories are bitter as well.

There is almost no one beside us
Remembering that of Italy, we were all one.
We left our motherland with insulting sorrow
However, we are honorably recognized
In today's world.

Nevertheless, what is most vividly hurting,
Is that we are ignored by misinformed Italians,
Who in finding our provenance automatically
think we are Croatians.

One time we were part of the Glory,
Now we are almost lost into history.
These hands are writing the truth,
Perhaps we are the last of the Mohicans!

It is for this my son that I remain silent
As you, I really do not understand this world.
Let me tell you though, the history of the
Fiumani, Zaratini, Istriani, Polesani, Chersini,
And Lussignani
That for one long time we were all Italiani...

As you can see, the History is very long,
And you realize what they took from us!
The great odyssey of us Juliani
Started early already, in the Italian Refugee
Camps.

Nevertheless, you my son, you are luckier,
There is no confusion where you are born.
You are Canadian, Italian, Australian, and
American,
However, if asked you say that your father
Was Fiumano, Istriano, Zaratino, Polesano,
Chersino, and Lussignano.

Boris del mar (Cimini)

NOTES

1. Recently in the village have been circulated voices, affirming that this church was the first church in Neresine, and that it was dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalene. The naming of the Saint to these ruins is probably a naive attempt to create some continuity between this church and the very first church in town, the actual Saint Mary Magdalene.

These rumors are clearly without merit, and because, despite extensive, and thorough research has not revealed any documentary evidence that could corroborate this hypothesis, and because at that time there was no housing development in the surrounding area, otherwise they would have found some traces. Among the other, between the building of these shrines, and the true birth of the country, it lapses about four centuries.

Another relevant observation comes from the study of the religious history of the Camaldolense monks of this medieval period. The Benedictines were loyal to the doctrine of the Church of Rome, and Saint Mary Magdalene was not included among the Order favored saints, therefore it is very unlikely that this church was dedicated just to this saint.

There may be a faint trace of the binding of this ancient church by the name of Saint Mary Magdalene. Some medieval documents show that in 1386, there was a clamorous dispute between the Bishop of Ossero, and Drasa a noble servant of the same city on his intent to renovate, and restore this church for worship, because it was in his properties. The Bishop, with all his strength opposed this project probably because, he sensed some form of heresy, because the Drasa descendants were suspected of being Templar's, and Saint Mary Magdalene was certainly one of the favorite saints of this chivalry, and religion Order. Not surprisingly, the first church of Neresine, built by Francesco Drasa towards the second half of the fifteenth century, was dedicated to this saint.

2. The name of the mountain, Ossero (affectionately Ossuòrciza in the Slavic dialect of the town) is probably derived from the early Venetian chronicles (sixteenth century) which referred to the city of Ossero. Since 1945, it was renamed Televrin, (which was previously *only* the highest point of the mountain) and not seen, ever, in the chronicles of the past, or from oral tradition passed down from ancestors. It was one of the first operations under the communist regime's ideological address, erasing any possible reference to the semblance of religious or suspicion legacy of non-orthodox Croatian nationalism. The new name Televrin, in fact, is not the name of the mountain overlooking the town, but the name of a well-defined site (*logo or miesto*) in the area of the mountain near the summit, like other neighboring sites of the same area as Svièti Micùla, Farbièzof, Pocivàliza, Varsàz and others. Other action in this direction was the imposition of changing the names of all existing vessels, both Italian, and Croatian names, with others, at the option of the owners, however, previously approved by the local political authorities. This was the means of appearing most "democratic" because the same for all, to eliminate substantially boats names like "Hvala Bogu", "Sveti Mikula", "San Francesco", "Cristina" etc. Even the name of the small island of Ilovik instead of San Pietro de 'Nembi, originates from these ideological intentions.

3. At this point it is useful to dwell on the life, and works of this important friar, later to become Saint, because he is somehow linked to the birth of Neresine. John was born in Capestrano, a town not far from L'Aquila (Italy), June 24, 1386. The father was a German nobleman who came from Germany, the mother was from Abruzzi, precisely, Capestrano, so the boy was called Giantudesco. In Perugia, he graduated with honors in law, and was immediately called to work in the Supreme Court of the Kingdom of Naples. Then he became a judge, and governor of Perugia. In 1416, Andrea Fortebraccio, nicknamed Braccio da Montone, soldier of fortune, a native of Perugia, in an attempt to create his lordship in Umbria, with his mercenaries occupied his city, taking Giantudesco prisoner. In captivity there he had a vision. S. Francis appeared to him, and urged him to become a friar of his order. After paying a high ransom, John gained freedom, and went immediately to the convent of Monteripido near Perugia, where on October 4, 1416; he put on the habit of the Friars Minor. It is not known where or how he completed his theological studies; however, he was a very serious student, because, since the beginning of his preaching, he showed great eloquence, and extensive knowledge of the Bible, the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, and works of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Pope Martin V appointed him Inquisitor of the Fraticelli, but Brother John also argued hard battles against Jews, and heretics especially the Hussites, i.e. the followers of Jan Hus. The Pope sent Giantudesco as his legate; in Austria,

Bavaria, and Poland. Kings, Princes, Orders General entrusted many tasks to the friar, and this commitments did not allow him to have a permanent residence. It was said, that his eloquence surpassed that of the greatest preachers, his contemporaries, his sermons attracted authentic crowds, that churches could not contain, therefore, he preached in the squares, and large open clearings. His writings make up more than 19 large volumes. He founded many Franciscan monasteries (including that of Rovigno in Istria), and disseminated many Monti di Pietà (pound shops), to protect the poor from the clutches of moneylenders usury.

He was a faithful friend and follower of Saint Bernardino of Siena, who he successfully defended from the charges of heresy, because he honored the name of Christ with the famous monogram JHS (Jesus Hominum Salvator). In 1452, King Frederick III of Germany, was in Rome to be crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. He asked the Pope Nicholas V to send Fra Giovanni to his states. The friar went there with some brothers, employed as clerks, and interpreters. He stayed there a year, but traveling a lot, and everywhere he was hailed as a great apostle of God. He went to Austria, Carinthia, Hungary, Transylvania, Poland, Moravia, Bohemia, etc. We have received the sermons he delivered in Vienna, Regensburg, Amber, Nuremberg, Bamberg, Wroclaw, Elford, Hall, Leipzig, and Bratislava.

Performed many miraculous cures, as, apparently, no other saint has ever made. There are notaries' acts attesting to his miracles. An authentic code stored in Paris, testifies 2000 cases of healings, all certified by witnesses as well.

When the Turkish army of the Ottoman Empire after the conquest of Constantinople (May 23, 1453), undertook the invasion of the Balkan States with the ultimate goal to conquer the kingdom of Hungary. The European rulers, terrified by this threat, decided to prepare a crusade to stop the Turkish invasion. This organization was entrusted to Giovanni da Capistrano, and the Hungarian commander John Hunyadi, who, went from city to city, and castles to recruit a sizable army composed almost entirely of fervent folks, but militarily uneducated.

The Turks in their advance toward the north, with a large army, and a powerful fleet, in 1456 sailed up the Danube, and laid siege to Belgrade, then a major Christian stronghold. The Christian army, while smaller in men, and equipment headed for the besieged city with the intent to liberate it. The crucial battle took place under the walls, and into the river Danube, opposite the city, on July 14 to 22, 1456, and ended in favor of the Christians, thanks to a providential ploy. That is, to fill barges, and boats of stubble, and fagots of wood, and then setting them on fire while floating them by the current towards the Turkish fleet moored in the river, on that impact the Turkish fleet caught fire, and the troops panicked, those surviving took off. At the same time, from the city walls, the Christians cast onto the assailants other burning fagots of wood impregnated with pitch, causing the disruption of the Turkish army, fleeing, burning, pursued by the Christians, who butchered them. The battle ended during the day of July 22, the feast day of Saint Mary Magdalene, with the triumphal entry of the friar John of Capestrano in the liberated city of Belgrado. In the following days, the surroundings of the city were strewn with the corpses of soldiers, and given the hot summer season, a severe outbreak of plague ensued. The surviving Christian fighters were not immune from it, and many got sick. The same John of Capestrano was infected, and his loyalists carried him ill to the convent of Uljak, which he had founded, near the city of Villach (now Villach in Austria) where he died a few months later (October 23, 1456), and where his remains are still preserved. The Hungarian Captain John Hunyadi was, also plagued by terrible disease, and died in that tragic circumstance...

4. Imamovich Enver, in his book "Neresine na otoku Losinju" (Neresine in the island of Lussino) of 1979, disserts at a long extent the arrival of the Croats in the Quarnero Islands, and in particular in Neresine, during the 51 years that the region was a member of the kingdom of Hungary, i.e. from 1358 to 1409. With the evident intent to establish the membership of the ethnic Croat population of town, thus anticipating by more than a century, the birth of Neresine. Apart from the fact that it is completely irrelevant, that the country's population, is mostly of Slavic origin, coming from Croatia, or Moravia, or from the Balkans, or from any other region of Eastern Europe. In the area around Neresine could not be found any traces of this kind of presence, however there were found abundant, and far more ancient, of the ancient Greeks, and Romans.

The islands, even during the formal membership to the Kingdom of Hungary, however, remained in fact with legal regulations, language, and traditions established in the previous period under the Republic of Venice. Probably the Hungarian-Croatian had neither means nor time nor interest to deal with the lesser, and arid islands except for the withdrawal of tributes by the Saracen Earl from Italy, and a faithful vassal of Ludovic, which in fief had given the islands, as compensation for rendered services. In fact, in the archives of Ossero were found various documents of this period written in Latin, concerning obligations, regulations, and agreements among the various communities of that time, belonging to the Earls of Cherso, and Ossero, but no documents were found written in Croatian or other Slavic languages for this period, nor any subsequent periods.

5. Even the verbs of the first declination have remained virtually unchanged, especially in the third person singular present tense. Some examples: baziluà (worries), blejuà (screaming), buliguà (run around, corresponding to the Istrian-Venetian dialect form buliga, wanders wearily), calafatuà (caulk), c'icua (is envious somewhat, that means "something too yearns but, not get it"), cantua (sings), crepuà (is daing), doperuà (uses), duruà (lasts), fermuà (holds), fisc'iuà (whistles), frajuà (wastes), lampuà (flashes), mankuà (is missing), navaieruà (storms around), parec'iuà (prepare), piasuà (like), pusuà (blows as in smoking), resentuà (rinse), risc'iuà (risks), sopresuà (pressing clothes), strusià (labors), tacuà (attaches), tocuà (touch), tornuà (comes back). Usua (use, used). Other dalmaticos words are: bambuk (cotton, wool), barsina (frost), bekuàr (butcher), buàrba (uncle), bus (small tree, bush), camisòt (skirt), comuòstre (fireplace chains), cuògul (rock), drakmuàr (grapping iron), fundàc'e (rinds of coffee), gustièrna (roof rain collection, closed cement underground tank), juàrbul (mast), marguàr (sheepfold for milking), marsuàn (heavy, cutting utensil-the shape of pingpong racket missing one third, the cutting edge), masaruòla (small barrel to hold drinking water), mazmalic' (goblin, gnome), nevjèra (storm), pàucina (spider web, spider), racnò (blanket), salbaùn (sand), smùj (drinking glass), strusiàt (fatiguing), tratùr (funnel), travièrsa (apron), ulita (tripe).

6. A monograph on the subject is, the "Dalmatico" by Matteo Giulio Bartoli, here quoted in the bibliography.

7. With regard to the date of posing the cornerstone for the Church of St. Francis and the adjoining convent of the Friars, for historical accuracy should be stated that, as is clear from the documents preserved in the Convent of the same Neresine. It was built on land near the sea turned into a vineyard, 28 steps long and 20 wide, donated to the Franciscan Friars by a Sutcovich Domenico, by Act of May 27, 1505. On October 23 the same year, Giovanni Contarini, Earl of Cherso, and Ossero, governor of the islands on behalf of the Republic of Venice, sitting "sub magna Chersi logia", ratified by the donation, and accepted as attorney for the friar Minor Observant, Colane Drasa from Ossero.

The next day Brother Francis Dragons (De Dragonibus), Vicar Provincial of the Observant of Dalmazia, Don Cipriano Colombis asked the priest, vicar of the bishop of Ossero ecclesiastical approval for the construction of the Church, and its convent. Colane Drasa, noble Osserino, had decided to erect in Neresine, in suffrage for his sins; for the souls of his deceased relatives, and for the benefit of the people in the Ossero diocese, and the whole island. From the above it is clear that the building cannot be started before October 1505, probably in 1506, since January 2, 1507 the Council of Cherso, and Ossero took into consideration the petition submitted by the friar Minor of Neresine, prayfully asking for a debt of forty Liras, to be used for the construction of the Convent. Colane Drasa died in 1513, when the church was already finished. The consecration of the church took place in 1515, as testified by a plaque, present in the same Church. The explanations given above become relevant if one considers that the current Friars Minor have decided to commemorate the 500 years since the founding of the Church, and Convent in August 2003, well in advance of the actual date for the historical event.

The search for a justification of the advance, leads us to state that probably would have been difficult to keep open the church, and convent for the actual historical date of i.e. 2005. Because, after the death of the resident friar, which took place some years ago, the burden of celebrating religious rites, even if only occasionally, and in major festivities was done by an elder brother of Veglia, which in addition to the hard work of religious duties, had to shoulder each time, an uneasy journey to, and from Neresine. Not long ago they sent another elder brother to Neresine, a resident friar, probably for temporary service, given the lack of personnel to suitably manage such a large complex. Another problem is the current low participation of the faithful at Sunday Masses, since the number has declined steadily for the progressive reduction, and natural extinction of the old inhabitants, and considering the present shortage of religious vocations in Croatia. Especially for the Franciscan Friars, the precarious reliability of the resident friar, the small number of faithful, especially in the Friars district, and considering there is already a pastor for the *Duomo* in town, overall it is feared that the final closure of the church, and convent is inevitable. So it maybe as well to "finish it off" while the structure is still "standing"

8. See Padre Vittorio Meneghin. - The convent of S. Francis Neresine. - From "Acts and memories of the Istrian Society for Archaeology and History of the Fatherland". Venice 1969, here in the bibliography.

9. From the documents it is noted that some income consisted of three installments of one hundred Liras that was collected from Gaudenzio Ballon, Nicolo Draganich and Giuseppe Chirincich; among the property, a house, and some land left by Margherita Leni, 456 sheep subdivided in the herds of Michal, Potok and Murtovník. The friars also, renounced to the rights on the press of Giovanni Petris, located in their "Mandrachchio" (little port), whose revenues were to be collected by the procurators of the convent and delivered to them.

In other writings, the properties are listed in more detail. Here is a list of some: "mezzo gorgo" named Pradicchia, given to the convent in 1682 by Stefano Ràcich, a small house in Halmaz, another small house gifted for the altars of St. Francis and S. Anthony from Antonia widowed Berichievich. Some forest garden, and a pasture from the area of Puntacroce donated by Antonio Dragan, another forest garden toward Bora, also called Pradicchia, donated by the Lenicich heirs, some gardens, and a lodge at Lussingrande, a piece of land in San Giacomo, and several bequests of animals, and some pastures purchased from the convent.

From the above it can be deducted that until the early eighteenth century, a large part of the estates around Neresine was still held by citizens of Ossero, Cherso, or at least not Neresinotti. From the same documents it appears instead that, the "bravari" (herdsmen) were from Neresine: Marinzulich to Garmosal, Soccolich, and Rucconich the others.

10. It appears entirely unfounded the hypothesis, supported by Donato Fabianich in his book "History of the Friars Minor in Dalmazia - Zadar 1864", and recently revived by some Croatian newspapers, according to which, the Drasa (which he has always wrongly called Drosa) would have slavized Dragosetich as their surname. In fact, the descendants of the family Drasa, of which there is ample historical documentation, at least until the nineteenth century, have maintained their surname. In the battle of Lepanto (1571), the sopracomito (commander) of the ninth Galea deployed on the front line of the left horn of the Christian fleet, that of Cherso and Ossero, called "St. Nicholas with the Crown", was Colane Drasa of Ossero, and probably grandson of Simon Drasa testamentary executor of our old Colane (the founder of the church and convent of the friars in Neresine), belonging to the same family. The sopracomito Colane Drasa distinguished himself in battle with great honor, earning solemn official accolades from the Republic of Venice. From other documents of the convent, it shows that in 1690, Captain Francesco Drasa, bequeathed to the friars: "animali da pascolo n° 50, et li animali vivi da frutto posti nella mandria di Garmosal con tutte le sue raggion, habentie et pertinentie, ombrie et bonazze, spettanti a detti pascoli." (Grazers No. 50, and the live breeding animals in the herd of Garmosal with all its reasons, having and pertinent, shades and calm sea belong to said pastures). Other documents from 1818, mention yet of the properties of Drasa di Ossero, Osserino, but the branch of the family was at that time already lapsed or transferred elsewhere. On the other hand, other ancient documents that, at the same time Drasa resided in Ossero the Dragosetich were also there. From anagraphical data of Neresine, going back from the beginning of 1800, it turns out that of Domenico Rucconich of Neresine married Maria Dragosetich, and will go to live in Ossero, then widowed, the Dragosetich remarried in 1824 (age 31) with Antonio Zorovich from Neresine, going to live in Neresine at the civic No. 99. From the reconstruction of the town to the urban planning, and identification of houses, (numbers of the houses at the time), belonged to the family of Antonio Zorovich Suievi (Sule), the richest family of Neresine, hence the Dragosetich most likely belonged to a wealthy family.

11. Among the old papers found, it was possible to rebuild some piece of personal history of their ancestors, including it's worth remembering that of Gilberto Rucconich, great grandson of the father superior of the convent of friars Antonio Rucconich (1721-1807?). Educated in the convent by his great-uncle, and being intellectually gifted, he became the general administrator of the estate of the convent. Gilberto Rucconich was for many years the manager of public administration in the town, he actuated in 1827 the first census of the "souls" (600 inhabitants), a survey of homes with a detailed list of the inhabitants and related data; in 1828 also made the agricultural census of the town with specific count of existing olive trees (9398).

12. The language Glagolito is VeterSlav, structurally organized by Greek monk Saint Cyril (827 - 869), who went with his brother Methodius to preach the gospel in Moravia, to bring assistance to the faithful Slavs, invented the alphabet, derived from the Greek, which is capable of making all the sounds of the Slavonic language. The clergy of the Moravian Slav received at that time the papal concession to use that language in the celebration of Holy Mass and in the religious ritual instead of Latin, as the people and the priests of the new recent Christianity, were too ignorant to use Latin in church services. The Glagolito priests during the Middle Ages were expelled from Moravia, some settled in Dalmazia, finding some support by the recent immigration of Slavs. In later centuries, despite the existence of valuable seminars and expert priests in Latin, which made it superfluous there and elsewhere for utilizing the old papal concession of the Glagolito. The Croatian clergy retained this language in opposition to the Latin, meaning the grant was still meaningful. The use of Glagolito in religious rites was needed to support and reinforce the political affiliation of entire ethnic Slav settlements, even if that language was not understood or known by the population. In the nineteenth century, the Glagolito had virtually disappeared everywhere except in the diocese of Veglia. Some priests and monks Slavs, in the wake of national struggles between Slavs and Italians started the second half of the nineteenth century, attempted, with the consent (or order) of the bishop of Veglia,

requiring the use of Glagolito also in the islands of Cherso and Lussino, without succeeding, for the tenacious opposition of the population.

13. The Halmaz Hill, located north of the town, almost to protect it from bora, in ancient times, at least until the eighteenth century was called Kalmaz, as written in old documents found, this name would almost certainly mean "place of peace" (in analogy to dolàz, "site down", ground subsidence, or Varsàz, place on the summit site, Studènaz, cool, plotàz, etc.), then the hard sound of Kalmaz has turned into the sweeter of Halmaz. For some authors the name derives from the ancient Illyrian roots helm (like Mount Chelm island of Cherso), which means high place; in fact this high hill, quite extended in the direction perpendicular to the Mount Ossero, and the sea is much narrower in the opposite direction, it has a particular configuration, by which the north slope, steep and rugged, is an effective barrier from strong Bora winds that lash the island in winter, while the southern slope, is larger and much less inclined, is well protected from the wind. During the winter the strong Bora, blowing at times with an intensity greater than 100 km per hour, the whole southern part of the hill and the surrounding countryside, up to Cuàlbin and a good part of Castello, remains in an amazing calm wind, and being exposed to the south is very sunny, so even during the coldest winter weather conditions Halmaz stays much milder and rarely reaches a low temperature below zero degrees centigrade. In fact, the very sweet climate has fostered from the earliest years of the founding of the town, the colonization of this hill. Even one of the first monasteries built by the Camaldolense monks, including a small church, dating from the eleventh century, is located in a quiet area close to the hill.

14. Information about various districts are drawn from documents, including original manuscripts, consisting of the death certificates of all deaths in Neresine from 1830 to 1860, carefully drawn, with all personal data, the number of district, and home of dwelling, and the cause of death. The certificates have been prepared for the official use of birth registration by Giovanni Ghersan, commissioned by the parish priest of Ossero (which functioned as a public official). The Ghersan was also the sacristan (sexton) of the rectory of Neresine, and was officially recognized in his functions by the government of Lussinpiccolo, and by them regularly paid. Certificates drawn up by him were signed not only by his name, even with the professional title "*Visitator de 'morti'*" (Visitor of the dead).

15. The unhealthy conditions of the countryside of Bora and Puntacroce were mainly due to malaria. This disease was caused by the intense construction of ponds, or ponds to collect rainwater to supply the needs of drinking water for the many sheep. Every single part of the countryside (logo or miesto), where the sheep were kept in the wild, had its own pond or small lake, with water persisting throughout the year, but during long periods of summer drought became stagnant, then ideal culture medium of the larvae of Anopheles mosquito, carrier of this disease.

16. This is the sailing vessel named Mariza of 120 tones capacity, then renamed in 1923 Absirtides, and supplied with an engine "Satima head warm," of ten horse power. The ship with the small motor that could do 3.5 knots, the new engine, which was very useful during the long summer doldrums in the Gulf of Venice, and docking maneuvers in ports, especially that of Venice. Before the event of the engine, docking maneuvers were done with the help of (*passera*) (usually a robust row boat *caicio* open, approximately four meters or so, equipped with robust oars), which was used to bring mooring rope (hawser) to the pier, but especially to tow the vessel into the port of landing. Particularly difficult was the landing in the port of Venice: to bring the ship up from the entrance Lido to the *bricole* (mooring) of Salute, or Zattere, (sections of Venice) usual place of berthing for Neresine boats. First, the wait for the right tide, then facilitated by the flowing tide, tow the vessel by two oarsmen, through the long path, and up to the berth. The *passera* was also used during the long summer doldrums, to tow the vessel toward sea stretches showing some form of wind.

17. Some of the countryside homes of Bora, have, probably a more ancient origin, because there are various ruins scattered about the countryside, some names of places, such as Stuàri Stuan (old Hamlet), Stagninna (big old Hamlet), Selo (town), and other similar, from documents of the sixteenth and seventeenth century found, that reference *stanze* (*farmhouse*) Garmosal, Potok, and Michal, Murtovník certainly confirm these settlements. The Bora *stuagni* or *stanze* above, are original or reconstruction of old houses, and of more recent constructions, as can be seen from the architectural style and their state of preservation.

18. From documents found in various archives, it appears that the increase in population has evolved as follows: In May 1827 the inhabitants of Neresine were 600, in 1850, 1000, in 1880, 1,047, in 1890, 1,180, in 1900, 1,308, in 1910, 1,665. In 1921 they made an accurate census, which shows that Neresine had 1704 inhabitants, Ossero 405, San Giacomo, and Puntacroce 279, and 201. Finally, in 1940 Neresine alone reached the 2000 inhabitants.

19. From the archives of the Elementary School of Neresine many other interesting facts have emerged:

School year 1900 to 1901. Teachers: Roberto Tonolli, and Maria Dibarbora. Pupils aged 6 to 12 years attending: 177, including 95 males, and 85 females. Students "required" aged 12 to 14 years: 39, including 21 males and 18 females. Grand Total 216. (The students "required" are those who had repeatedly failed to achieve the fifth grade license, and had reached the 14 year of age, therefore no longer required to attend the elementary school).

School year 1901 to 1902. Teachers: Tonolli, and Dibarbora. New pupils enrolled in first class: 37, 31 of which the Italian school, and six at the Croatian school. Pupils aged 6 to 12 years attending: 179, including 97 males and 82 females. Students "required" aged 12 to 14 years: 31, males and 17 females. Grand Total: 210.

School year 1902 to 1903. Teachers: Tonolli, and Dibarbora. New pupils enrolled in first class: 38, 31 of which the Italian school, and seven to the Croatian school. Pupils aged 6 to 12 years attending: 179, including 97 males, and 82 females. Students "required" aged 12 to 14 years: 37, including 19 males, and 18 females. Grand Total: 216.

School year 1903 to 1904. Teachers: Tonolli, and Dibarbora; teacher assistant Arturo Dorigatti. New pupils enrolled in first class: 42, 29 of which the Italian school to school, and 13 Croatian. Pupils aged 6 to 12 years attending: 154, including 81 males, and 73 females. Students "required" aged 12 to 14 years: 46, including 22 males, and 24 females. Grand Total: 200. After the elevation of the Patriarch Sarto of Venice, a great friend of Neresine, and some Neresinotti, to the papal throne as Pius X, the teaching staff of the Italian school, on behalf of the student body, sent a telegram of reverent greetings for the birthday of the new pope, he answered: *"Dirigenza Scuola Italiana – Neresine – Il Santo Padre, commosso per gli auguri espressigli, ringrazia e benedice con tutta l'effusione del cuore codesto corpo docente e tutti gli scolari."*

"Italian School Leadership - Neresine - the Holy Father, moved by your greetings, thanks you and bless you with all the outpouring of his heart, to this teacher body and all its students"

School year 1904 to 1905. Teachers: Tonolli, and Dibarbora; teacher assistant Arturo Dorigatti. New pupils enrolled in first class: 28, 21 of which the Italian school, and seven to the Croatian school. Three more students passed during the school year, from Croatian to the Italian school. Pupils aged 6 to 12 years attending: 146, including 73 males, and 73 females. Students "required" aged 12 to 14 years: 44, including 23 males, and 21 females. Grand Total: 190. The "National League" opens new school in San Giacomo easing the burden of Neresine by 36 pupils.

School year 1905 to 1906. Teachers: Tonolli, and Scoppinich, teacher assistant Pius Malis. New pupils enrolled in first class: 42, 31 of which the Italian school, and 11 at the Croatian school. Additional 22 students passed during the school year, from Croatian to the Italian school. Pupils aged 6 to 12 years attending: 157, including 82 males, and 75 females. Students "required" aged 12 to 14 years: 40, including 16 males, and 24 females. Grand Total: 197. The passage of some pupils from the Croatian school to the Italian was due to the disapproval of many families in the village, on the drastic measure of excommunication by the bishop of Veglia towards teachers of the Italian school, as already fully explained elsewhere.

School year 1906 to 1907. Teachers: Tonolli, and G. Rucconich, teacher assistant G. Salata. New pupils enrolled in first grade 35, with 29 of the Italian school, and 6 at the Croatian school. Pupils aged 6 to 12 years attending 166 including 79 males, and 87 females. Students "required" aged 12 to 14 years: 42, including 17 males, and 25 females. Grand Total: 208.

School year 1907 to 1908. Teachers: Tonolli, and T. Malis, teacher assistant G. Salata. New pupils enrolled in first class: 29, 18 to the Italian school, and 11 in the Croatia school. Pupils aged 6 to 12 years attending 153 including 76 males, and 77 females. Students "required" aged 12 to 14 years: 41, including 21 males, and 20 females. Grand Total: 194.

School year 1908 to 1909. Teachers: Tonolli, and T. Malis, Teacher assistant Edith Marotti. New pupils enrolled in first class: 31, 24 of the Italian school, and 7 to the Croatian school. Pupils aged 6 to 12 years attending 142 including 69 males, and 73 females. Students "required" aged 12 to 14 years: 44, including 23 males, and 21 females. Grand Total: 186.

School year 1909 to 1910. Teachers: Tonolli, and P. Lorenzoni, teacher assistant G. Rucconich. New pupils enrolled in first grade 40, 31 of which the Italian school, and nine the Croatian school. Pupils aged 6 to 12 years attending 146 including 67 males, and 79 females. Students "required" aged 12 to 14 years: 46, including 23 males, and 23 females. Grand Total: 192.

School year 1910 to 1911. Teachers: Tonolli, and P. Lorenzoni, Teacher assistant G. Rucconich. New pupils enrolled in first grade 40, 31 of which in the Italian school, and 9 in the Croatian school. Two more students passed during the school year, from Croatian to the Italian school. Pupils aged 6 to 12 years attending 151 including 69 males, and 82 females. Students "required" aged 12 to 14 years: 51, including 25 males, and 26 females. Grand Total: 203.

School year 1911 to 1912. Teachers: Tonolli, and P. Lorenzoni, teacher assistant G. Salata. New pupils enrolled in first class: 34, 25 of which in the Italian school, and 9 in the Croatian school. Pupils aged 6 to 12 years attending 151 including 65 males, and 86 females. Students "required" aged 12 to 14 years: 40, including 19 males, and 21 females. Grand Total: 191.

The School Board this year consisted of: Gaudenzio E. Marinzulich (Zanettic'evi), Dean of the Local School Council, Eliodoro (Elio) Bracco, School Referee. Roberto Tonolli from Aldeno (Trento), final teacher superior of the second category. Pia Lorenzoni from Rallo (Trento), final the teacher of the third category. Gaudenzio Salata from Ossero provisional enabled teacher assistant. About the school Neresine, it is worth noting that among the various "mistakes" committed by Imamovich Enver, in his book "Neresine na otoku Losinju", there is also one that concerns the school, which is an old, and beautiful group photograph representing all pupils of the elementary mixed school of Neresine, including the teacher who would not or could not teach the Croatian language, passed as a group photo of one Croatian school, which actually did not exist as such. He also elaborates on several pages, to list by name each boy on the photo, unaware that about 90% of those mentioned were inscribed in the Italian school, as the documents of the school's widely confirm. Another "inaccuracy" of the unaware Imamovich, is the part, but much more extended, in which he is pleased to write a string of rhymes and poetry thought to elementary school children in Croatia, passed for the village folk songs.

20. As part of the cultural ferment of Neresine in the twentieth century, it would be considered fair to remember Sigovich Luigi, better known as Gigi. Gigi was a person of great intelligence, but unfortunately at the age of three years was struck by a severe form of rickets (like other three of his siblings), and grew up deformed, shrunk in on itself, was just over one meter in height, while having great hands, and long-limbed. Since childhood, he lived as his other peers in perfect normality, regardless of his deformities. His great personality, his inexhaustible thirst for knowledge, his wisdom, and his innate sense of humor, even self-deprecating, he become a kind of "leader" among his spiritual companions. The youngest of many brothers, for family economic restrictions, could not attend other schools, in addition to the elementary of the town, where, however, he stood out for proficiency, and intelligence, in spite of that, thirsting for knowledge, he self acquired a considerable cultural baggage, much larger than what the elementary school was able to give. Also equipped with great modesty, he never flaunted his intellectual superiority to others; indeed, most likely he was not even fully aware, however, all aspired to his friendship, and was present in every socializing circumstance. The game of cards was the partner in most demand, in the game of morra, he was unbeatable, and in "sociality" was always the protagonist. By profession he was a shoemaker, his shoe shop was in stugne Sigovic'evo by the main Square, had become the town's cultural club, and while he continued to work on his bench, around him there were always three or four friends who came to discuss each topic, and to joke. His friends, when they had emotional problems, went to him for advice, consultation or just for comfort. One of the customs of the town was to engage for one or more days a shoemaker to repair all of the family's broken shoes accumulated. Also, he would manufacture needed new shoes for the family. The contract provided that the shoemaker performs his trade in the customer's home, where he went in the morning, armed with his own little table and rusak (backpack) containing all gadgets (tools) of the trade, the customer, for his part, over the price agreed, was to provide a lunch. Of course, Gigi was the most popular shoemaker. I remember as a child, when Gigi came to work at our home, for those days I forgot all the games, and friends, was all day beside him fascinated to hear him talk, and probably to bother him with my own questions too. Discussing important topics with Gigi, also entail philosophical or political themes, was an unforgettable experience, because his fervent dialectical rationality, the clever modular deep voice, fascinated and convinced everyone. Even some tourists, intellectually gifted, who come on holidays in the town (in the postwar years), having met him, were fascinated by his personality and became great friends. This memory of Gigi, as well as being a duty, it is certainly shared by all the villagers, anywhere in the world.

21. The seafarers of Neresine who lost their life with their ships to military action were: Giuseppe Carlini (Carlich) in Civitavecchia in an air raid, and the subsequent sinking of San Francesco, in which he was also part owner (1943); Fruttuoso Camalich, captain, and part owner, while 'sinking of his ship Nuovo Impero in Greece (1943), Andrea Olovich, during the sinking of a warship on which he embarked, leaving alone his young wife, newly married, awaiting his first child; Camalich Marino, commander, and owner of San Vincenzo, who was kidnapped, and murdered by Tito's communist partisans in Dalmazia (1944).

Other young Neresinotti who died fighting or war were: Antonio (Toni) Rocchi Master captain, an officer on the ship Cortelazzo, Marino Rocchi sailor, Marino Matteoni sailor, Luciano Talatin sailor, Lino Bracco sailor, Anthony Bonich sailor, Willy Sattalich Officer army (Russia), Mario Zorovich (Rossich) (Germany) to be Master captain on next graduation, Giuseppe Bracco (Jose Mercof) engineer, Antonio (Toni) Zuclich sailor, Giovanni Marinzulich (Joke Ambrosich) sailor Ugo Bracco, Mauritius (Izio) Marinzulich, Andrea Descovich, Andrea Maurovich of

Halmaz, Costante Maurovich of Pesc'ine (died in captivity in India), Giuseppe Zorovich (Brecich), Donato Matcovich, Pietro Soccolich (Castelanich), and Giuseppe Zorovich in the sinking of the ship "Maria Assunta" in Albania. In addition to the dead, many more were injured by the armed conflict, among them included: - Roberto Zanetti, captain of the Italian Army, distinguished himself with great honor in the tragic Russian campaign, whence he returned maimed of both legs, and decorated with a silver medal for military valor. Rino Camali (Rinetto), Journal of the Italian Navy, distinguished for the great courage, dedication and seamanship skill demonstrated during the sinking of the ship of which he was the commander. In the tragic event he was gravely injured with consequent loss of an arm, and a leg, he was decorated with the silver medal for bravery.

22. With regard to the sailing of Tino Straulino in Neresine, may be added another little curiosity. Immediately after the occupation of our islands by Tito's partisans, Tino, like many others, escaped with his boat "Lampuga" (Dolphinfish) to Italy, even his family had fled into exile in Italy, and at that time all were somehow settled in Venice, in a house at the Lido. I too fled to Venice, with my father, and we had found a cup of soup at the Foscarini refugee collection camp, and slept in a blanket over the ship hold plank of the "Uscocco", on the pleasure boat of the countryman Elio Bracco, moored at Zattere, but now completely ransacked, there was only a shabby demise. It was 1946. Every so often, I could see the "Lampuga" tack in the basin of St. Mark. I went to visit them occasionally, especially because there was also the elementary teacher Maria, and Lydia (sisters of Tino), to whom I was connected with a relationship of friendship during their displaced stay in Neresine. In one of those occasions, remembering the tacks in Neresine with Tino, he said to me. I am trying to get noticed in Neresine (at that time it was full of Tito's spies), as an aimless sailing enthusiast, and that his only interest was that of the sail, that is why he tried to get some town's boys in his boat, so he could have a witness on his apolitical attitude, especially because he knew that he had been registered in the "enemy of the people" list.

23. As part of the history of Neresine, deserves to be told, the odyssey of the family of Giovanni Ragusin, that even after recent extensive research, and with a decisive contribution from his daughter Elsie, was very clearly established. Giovanni Ragusin immigrated from Neresine like many other villagers, to the United States in the early twentieth century, bringing along his young wife. After the first residences in the city of New Orleans, and then to Chicago, where the first three children were born, John, Edward and Albert, eventually settled in New York where he found a good job. In that city in 1921 was born the youngest daughter Elsie. The family grew calm, and when his sons made themselves independent, and began to work, Giovanni Ragusin, and his wife, who meanwhile had set aside a lot of money, and never stopping dreaming with nostalgic regret his native country, thought of returning home. In 1938, he undertook the return journey, accompanied by his wife, and young daughter, Elsie, leaving in America the older sons, who preferred to remain in their country, where they were born, and where they all had a good job. Arrived in his native Neresine, Giovanni Ragusin, also, wanted to keep his American citizenship, bought a beautiful house by the sea in Lussinpiccolo, with an adjoining jetty, a mooring for his *caicio*, thinking of spending the last years of his life in that beautiful place. The house was located a short distance from the Cavanella Privlaka. Giovanni, and his family spent the years before World War II in the new house, making frequent hopping to Neresine where his old mother, sisters, and other relatives lived. Meanwhile, Elsie, who was a beautiful girl, fell in love, reciprocated, with the neresinotto Toni Rocchi young Master Captain: The engagement, and family trips to Neresine became more frequent. War broke out; Toni was called in the army, and became a captain of the Italian navy.

After the armistice of 8 September 1943, the Germans occupied Italy, including Venezia Giulia, and the Islands of Quarnero. In Neresine, a territorial control was entrusted to the fascist militia of X-MAS, while Ossero, and Lussino, and other centers of the islands, strategically more important, was kept by the Germans. In 1944 also, began the bombing Lussinpiccolo by Anglo-Americans aircrafts. The Ragusin, who had a house near a shipyard, decided to take refuge in Neresine as displaced people, as did other families of Lussino.

The German authorities, assigned also, to seek out Jews in the occupied territories, for deportation to Germany, sent directives to the military, and political authorities of various towns, regarding the denounces, and arrest of resident Jewish citizens. To facilitate the work of "uncovering" the Jews, the authorities sent a circular to the local, regional political leaders indicating that the surnames resembling to names of towns or cities were to indicate a clear sign of belonging to the Jewish race. Local politicians of Neresine, to demonstrate their "holy zeal" in front of local politicians (and probably out of envy, towards the economic well-being achieved by Ragusin), found no better than to denounce the Ragusin as Jewish, because, in their opinion, the name derived from the city of Ragusa. Following this complaint, Giovanni Ragusin, and Elsie his daughter were taken into police custody, and sent to Fiume. The wife Domenica Soccolich, who has one of the most common surnames in Neresine, was declared of the Aryan race,

and therefore she was not arrested. Relatives, friends, and neighbors rose up to local politicians asking for explanations of the arrest of the two, their reply was that Giovanni Ragusin was discovered signaling at night "with a cigarette!" to the Anglo-American aircrafts flying high over the skies of the country, therefore, he was considered a spy for the enemy. (Ironically, the lovely home of Ragusin in Lussinpiccolo, close to the shipyard, was bombed, and seriously damaged during a bombing raid on the city). The explanation of the politicians was obviously completely false, as the racist accusation of Judaism, as Ragusin were not Jews, and then the girl Elsie could not be an American spy, among other things, she did not even "smoke"! Ragusin the surname was quite common in our island, especially at Lussingrande, but also in Lussinpiccolo, and is one of the oldest in the island. This name appears in old documents on the archives of the Republic of Venice for the first time in the sixteenth century, which specifically cited two fishermen from Veneto: Botterini and Ragusin of Lussingrande, for having organized the first fishing of sardines with the system called "trawling with fires", and this was one of the interests of the "Serenissima". Another important historical mention of Ragusin is in the Palazzo Ducale in Venice. In a list of "THE THOUSAND" bravest fighters in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, that the thousands held by the "Serenissima" the most worthy to be remembered in the history of the Republic with honor: Ragusin Francis is mentioned, as an important member of the crew Venetian galley called "St. Nicholas with the Crown", belonging to the city of Ossero, and Cherso commanded by sopracomito Colane Drasa of Ossero. In the battle of Lepanto, the galley "San Nicolò with the Crown" was deployed in ninth place in the forefront of the left wing of the Christian fleet. It was considered one of the fastest of the Venetian fleet, for high efficiency, and strength of its oarsmen. It was one that particularly stood out for having first towed in the front line in front of the Turkish fleet, with the "earliest opportunity", one of the famous "galleys", which were decisive for the outcome of the battle, in favor of the Christian fleet.

However, Giovanni Ragusin, and daughter Elsie were concentrated in a harvest field in Fiume, where other Jews flocked "collected" in the city of Fiume, and the surrounding region. The two, along with others were then sent to prison Coroneo of Trieste, where they were permanently separated, Giovanni was sent to the extermination camp of Buchenwald, and Elsie in Auschwitz. Of Giovanni Ragusin was never heard of again, he was certainly finished, along with many others in the cremating ovens. Elsie was saved, probably because she was young, healthy, and strong, and because in the last months of the war was transferred to the women's forced labor camps of Ravensbrück, and finally, in the last days of the war, before the destruction of the field by the Germans, she was rendered to the Swedish soldiers operating under the aegis of the Red Cross.

Brought to Sweden, for poor Elsie has begun the rebirth, and the return to life, because she was received with great honor, and love by the Swedish authorities, and almost adopted, by an important, and wealthy family in Sweden. At the end of the tragic odyssey was finally able to return to America, reuniting with her brothers. The mother remained in Neresine, succeeded after the war to reach the U.S. and reunited with her children. The fiancé of Elsie, Toni Rocchi unfortunately had died in the war, and Elsie says, "She has never forgotten him".

24. Below is provided a list, although incomplete, of Neresinotti deported:

- Giovanni Zvelich, Master Captain and renowned master of merchant ships.
- Francesco Soccolich (Frane Bobaric'), Commander of Maritime merchant ships
- Antonio Zorovich (Toni Belcic'), Commander of merchant ships.
- Vittorio Zucchi (Ciarni Zuclich), Commander of merchant ships.
- Marino Succich (Pancrazio), Commander of merchant ships.
- Biagio Zorovich, motorman.
- Antonio Marinzulich (Toni Ambrosic'), sailor.
- Domenico Mascarin (Menigheto), sailor.
- Teo Zuclich, sailor.
- Bruno Soccolich, sailor.
- Oscar Piccini, electrician.
- Antonio Muscardin, farmer.
- Donato Boni, nineteen.
- Enrico Bracco (Rico), twenty.
- Gaudenzio Rocchi, twentyone.
- Gaudenzio Soccolich (Jacominin), twenty.
- Gaudenzio Soccolich (Dic'i Filicic'), eighteen.
- Mario Rocchi, twenty.
- Giuseppe Rocchi (Bepi), nineteen.
- Giorgio Sigovini (de caffè), eighteen.

- Giovanni Soccolich (Nino Bubgnic'), eighteen.
- Lino Bracco, eighteen.
- Giusto Bracco, eighteen.
- Bruno Bracco, eighteen.
- Giovanni Bracco (Nino della Virginia), eighteen.
- Vito Marinzulich, eighteen.
- Mario Zoroni (Zorovich-Rossich'), eighteen, student, lost at sea, in the sinking of a German Liner.
- Flavio Zorovich, eighteen.
- Mario Glavan, eighteen.
- Gino Soccolich (Franculin), twenty.
- Pastore ... (genero del Jivuancic'), twenty one.
- Giuseppe Marinzulich (Bepi Stolver), nineteen.
- Matteo Zanelli (of San Giacomo), sailor.
- Massalin ... (of San Giacomo), sailor.

25. Ships from Neresine which survived the war were only seven, including five seized, and nationalized by the Yugoslav Government, namely: Madonna del Rosario, Ricordo, Carmen, Daniele Manin, Eugenio; the Anita was sold in time in Trieste, while the Rita, remained in Italy, continued to sail in the Mediterranean until 1953, when it shipwrecked on the rocky coasts of Corsica, during a storm, causing the death of its commander, Giovanni Nesi of San Giacomo, and the engineer Giovanni Soccolich (Franculin) of Neresine.

26. Speaking of church property, the issue is the property of the convent of the friars, consisting of the oil press (the mill to grind the olives and producing oil) site in the harbor, the so-called "friar's forest" vineyard and pine forest facing the church. These lands were allocated by the state to the "Losinska plovidba" agency, which has built a camping ground. When after the Civil War of 1992, and the Yugoslav Constitution of the Independent State of Croatia, the state assets were privatized, the estranged land of the convent, and its camping ground have become the property of the private company "Losinska plovidba", where the former executives of the state owned agency have become in turn owners of the new privatized "Losinska Plovidba". In vain have the monks asked, and continue to demand the return of the confiscated land, under the new rule of law, it seems that the new owners of the goods have legal legitimacy to keep them. *Through the same mechanism* as "legal" the former Town Hall of the town, the building of the old elementary school, and the boatyard, have become private property. With regard to the press (Tuoric) of the friars, after the seizure, all the machinery was dismantled, and scattered around, and the building is used as a warehouse, or better a receptacle for all sorts of scrap lumber, and old, in fact, it has been used by private citizens, as their stock, without spending a single thought for the maintenance, and upkeep of the building. After many years of neglect, the roof collapsed, and also the middle floor, the door frames, and windows were ripped off what was the symbol of a culture, and a noble tradition of Neresine, and that for more than three hundred years has admirably resisted the bad weather, angry gusts of bora, and age, nothing has been worse than the neglect, and abandonment. About culture, it is fair to say that the neresinotto Aldo Sigovini, significantly affected by the great degradation of the friars *tudric*, has promoted its restoration, using the funding provided by an Act of the Veneto Region, of which he was also an official, the No. 15/94, which provides for the protection and enhancement of Venetian culture in Istria, and Dalmazia. The funding, provided to the City of Lussinpiccolo, the current owner of the building was partially used for the reconstruction of the roof covering with new tiles, the rest should be used, hopefully soon, together with a contribution by the municipality itself, for the completion of the restoration. Finally, it appears that recently (2006) the City has received further funding from the Veneto Region with the Regional Law, and has indicated its intention to implement, and restore the oil press, where possible, a small ethnographic museum, which focuses on traditional folk culture of Neresine, with the help, if it occurs, of the current inhabitants.

27. For historical remembrance and to honor our fellow countrymen who suffered prison, and more than the others have suffered violence and torture, it is due to remember: - Domenico Camali owner, and Gilberto Buccaran town clerk, arrested the day after the occupation, for delation by known persons, and soon after killed, probably in the Istrian sinkholes (*foibe*). Menesini Giovanni, mayor of Neresine, arrested along with the two earlier, but released to the (new mayor) President of Odbor Giovanni (Ivan) Zorovich (Scrivanelo) to turn-over, and relinquish all municipal accounting, and other administrative records, this was a benign pretext, he was detained for a few days in town, by doing so has lost his place in the liner bound for the Istrian sinkholes; thus Zorovich had saved his life, due to the delays he artificially procured. John Garbassi (Garbaz) arrested, and detained for some time for reasons

unknown. Silvestro (Silvio) Bracco (our father), arrested, and tortured for ten days, (vomited blood-heard the other prisoners vanishing) trying to get a forced confession to nonexistent skullduggery "political", which according to who-s-who of the odbor (board), he engaged during his trip to Trieste with a small boat, of seven meters, Rigel, his eventual release was again, earned by the new mayor (Zorovich). Giuseppe (Bepi) Rucconich, and Giovanni (Nino) Cicin detained for several months in jail without trial, upon delation by a neighbor, confidant of the political police for crimes unknown. Anna Bracco twenty-one, arrested, and tortured for more than ten days from the political police, for having chaperoned few ten years old children into Trieste (including her own 10 years old sister), entrusted to her by their parents so they could flee to Italy. Domenica Camali (widow of Pasquale Pasqualignevi), beaten and imprisoned for unknown reasons. Rucconich Bortolo, led to Volosca and jailed for 40 days without known reason. Renato Bracco, imprisoned. Marino Sigovich, jailed a few months for unknown reasons. Rino Bonich imprisoned for unknown reasons. Benjamin Soccolich (Begnomo Castelanich), imprisoned because of his father Piero, and Giuseppe (Bepic'iu), who fled with the Menka mentioned earlier in this story. Dolores (Dora) Castellani-Boni, mother-in-law (of the new mayor younger brother) jailed because of one of those who fled, along with his wife, and young three years old son with Menka. Nives Rocchi Piccini jailed because wife of one who fled with Menka. For the other jailed villagers see the note 30 below.

28. With regard to the vessel Zora, then renamed Seca, for historical truth seems right to provide further details. This issue of the boat under construction in the small shipyard, but already completed, confiscated, together with the shipyard itself, the owners Camali (Costantignevi), declared "enemies of the people." Shortly after the occupation, some of the brothers Zorovich (Ferdinandovi) (new mayor included), have become the new owners of the vessel, behind the formal (though not significant) acquisition by the state of Yugoslavia. *It appears that U.S.A. citizens could privately own the vessel (the American brother was the owner-he actually gifted Tito of a golden pen as a sign of Slavic loyalty).*

29. The story of this journey is told in a beautiful book, titled "My odyssey with the sea", written by the wife of the youngest of three brothers Zorovich fugitives, Nori Boni Zorovich, and recently published by Edizioni Segno - Tavagnacco (UD). The difficulty for the fugitives, however, did not end, in America, but rather arose anew, just for their political record, in fact, managed to stay in the U.S. only Zorovich brothers, by the payment of bail, legal appeals, and labor warranty, and maintenance by the American brother, who owned stone quarries, barges, and tugboats in Florida. The Dalmatian captain, who had left in the Italian refugee camp the wife, and children, was received in Cuba, where, unfortunately, made a tragic end, by committing suicide. Even for those who remained in America life was hard for over ten years, being denied citizenship, and other civil rights, and the constant nagging, and surveillance by the FBI. The younger brother, that had fled with his wife, and young son earlier with the boat Menka, story already told, after many years of hard, and poorly paid work in Florida, employed by his older brother company, and after many legal briefs, and long tribulations, eventually obtained U.S. citizenship. Broke away from his brother, moved to New York, helped by his wife's relatives, where he found work as a mechanic, and later on captain of a party yacht own by one of the largest tugboat company in the New York harbor (while in Florida, a daughter was born). In New York he eventually bought a big house (six apartments), and finally reached the economic well-being (American dream). The son, born in Neresine, completed a major course of study, becoming, as is traditional in Neresine, Master Captain, and finally the senior pilot of the fathers former employer company, for the New York Harbor. He also, founded a mooring company of boatmen, since, the new large ships, and liners have many propellers, tugboats, in most cases, are no longer necessary, therefore the need for boats man to bring the mooring lines to shore. On August 3, 2004, to Captain Simon Zorovich, belonging to the "American Harbor and Docking Pilots Association", was awarded by the Department of Homeland Security the "Public Certificate of Merit Award" for his actions towards the protection, and maritime safety for national defense, in connection with the terrorist attack on the "Twin Towers", and the "superlative support to Unites States Coast Guards in the Port of New York - New Jersey."

30. The harsh prison sentences of these Neresinotti, arrested in March 28, 1949, is fully part of Neresine's history. Not only because, in five hundred years of Neresine's existence such cruel events had never occurred, but also especially because, subsequent to a total absence of legally sustainable reasons. The sentences stated in the written condemnation statements issued by the court of Mali Losinj, and currently in the survivors' possession, they were found guilty of uttering "politically" hostile phrases, and plotting the escape to Italy. The evidence of these crimes were the denunciations of some complacent neighbors to the regime, and the testimonies extorted by terror from others, (since all identified). Not only this, but for historical accuracy we should also say, that the political leaders of Neresine explicitly manifested their satisfaction towards the sentences, so that one of them made his business to

go to Ossero on the day of departure when the prisoners were transported to prisons "re-education" on the mainland, to prevent relatives to say goodbye to their loved ones, who rushed to see them on the liner, during its regularly stop at the embarcadero in Ossero. The historic duty also requires us to remember the names of these unfortunates with their awarded sentences: Roberto (Bertino) Berri to five years of prison, Quirino Marinzulich (Chirin Ambrosic ') to 4 years and 4 months of prison, three years of prison for Latino Bracco, Domenico (Eto) Boni to 15 months of prison, the others, Giovanni (Nino) Soccolich (Bubgnic'), Igino (Gino) Lecchich, Narciso Vescovich, Antonio (Toni) Linardich, Lino Bracco and Simeon (Sime) Buccaran to sentences ranging from several months to one year of prison. Eto Boni, and Nino Soccolich (Bubgnic'), after serving their sentences, were sent to military duty for a further 2 years in a special department of "re-education" into the Yugoslav Army, where they suffered pain, more severe than in prison. Worth a special mention also, Giorgio Boni, of Dragosettich, a man proved to be a person of moral rectitude, married to a woman of Neresine, therefore, considered, in fact, to all intents a Neresinotto, while prosecuted elsewhere for the same reasons, was sentenced to 7 years of prison, the unfortunate victim convinced of his innocence appealed his case, and was awarded another 7 years of jail.

III

THE MORE RECENT HISTORY

On the early years of Yugoslav sovereignty over our islands, and in particular, on the life of the people of Neresine after 1945, enough has been said in the previous chapter, however, the mood of the population in the two islands, a very hard life in the early postwar years, is admirably described in the first part of the book "my odyssey with the sea", written by Nori Boni-Zorovich (see Bibliography).

The exodus of the population continued, however, as an inevitable trickle at least until late 1960, and the inhabitants left after this date, no more than about 300 people, are defined precisely as "the left ones", a term now generally used by the exiles to define our neighbors, in fact *remained*, however, *meaning only* those born in the village, and having both parents born in Neresine.

The "left ones" are a subject that should be deepened, because in time it has created some angry, and unwarranted contrasts. It should be clarified at the outset, that the "left ones" should be divided into two categories: those who have chosen to stay for obvious reasons of "patriotism" Croats, and those, who, although of "Italian sentiment", chose to remain, understandable for existential reasons. Among these explanations, we can mention the legitimate attachment to their land, where they lived for over four centuries, the common ancestors (same family split in the two loyalties), the inability of the old landlords families to even imagine to undertake, a relocation, somewhere else, another work, other than traditional farming, and sheep herding, as well as the physical impossibility for the elderly, single women or widows, to start a new life in strange places, and without the means of livelihood.

For the "left ones" deserves credit: for trying to preserve the identity, and traditions of the land, have kept alive to this day the local native, even if ancient Slavic dialect, the Istrian-Venetian dialect, and indeed for the maintenance of the Istrian-Venetian dialect, the credit goes *only* to the "left ones" for reasons *other than political ones*. Unfortunately, the ancient Slavic language spoken in Neresine, since the last decades of the last century, is rapidly dying out, replaced by the Serbian-Croatian language, that the younger generation now speak fluently, both at home, and among peers, mostly children of new immigrants, arrived in the islands after annexation to Yugoslavia. Contrary to the Slavic dialect, the Italian is not only, not lost, but rather has spread among the descendants of the families' "Croatian loyalists", and even among those families of the early post-war immigrants, especially in the most important places like Mali Losinj, Veli Losinj, and Cres.

The recovery begins with the sixties.

In the first twenty years of Yugoslav sovereignty over our islands, the living conditions of the population had remained almost unchanged, compared to those of the early postwar years, not lastly for international politics reasons of: the global economic crisis, deprivation of liberty, and civil rights, chronic shortages of basic necessities. The first faint signs of recovery began to emerge after 1960, when, after some relaxing policies from harsh restrictions, hitherto pursued by the Yugoslav Government, "the left ones" were able to move with greater ease, and travel to Italy to find the exiled relatives, and bring back to Neresine the basic necessities: such as

clothing, food, and cash. However, the most significant improvement was mainly caused by the return to visit, during the summer vacations, of many expatriates, and the arrival of tourists, especially Italians, Slavs, and Germans attracted by the pristine nature, and the beauty of our islands.

In subsequent years, seeing the good economic results from the emerging tourism, local authorities decided to focus more on the tourist development of the islands, organizing the reconstruction of old hotels, especially in Mali Losinj and Cigale, and also starting to build new ones. At this time, they improved the access to the islands with the construction of new road that from Cherso to Faresina/Porozina, this site on the north end of the island of Cres. Here, they improved the Ferry facilities, by building a new dock for a small ferry, from Rijeka and Porto Albona/Rabac. Cars brought tourists to the islands. Later it was also improved the mainland docking facility in Brestova, with the building of a new pier for the ferries thus reducing the path of the ferry to only a few miles. The welcoming requirements for the growing summer tourists masses, has also, forced to the construction of the aqueduct, able to distribute the formidable and inexhaustible source of drinking water from Lake Vrana, to all places of the islands of Cres and Losinj. Before the construction of the aqueduct, the water resources of the islands came solely from springs and rainwater collected in *cisterns*, which most houses have them, however, this water was barely just sufficient to meet the drinking needs of the thrifty locals.

In the new political atmosphere for promoting tourism, even, in subsequent years Neresine undertook major tourism initiatives, most relevant is the construction of the campground Rapoc'e, property of the convent, and friars, confiscated, and nationalized by the government for the good of the people: the "forest" by the sea shore, the great vineyard, the *tesina* (wide field), and the pine forest overlooking the church establishment. The campground was named after the beach on the south side of the "forest" of the friars, the traditional bathing spot for most Neresinotti, where many generations of children learned how to swim. The name of the beach itself derived from the large boulders that overlooks it: in the ancient Slavic language Rapoc'e the means (rock or boulder). Subsequently, various nationalized houses belonging to families of exiles, were granted to companies in Croatia and Slovenia, to be used as vacation homes for their employees. Among these, the big Bracco of "de posta" ("pharmaceuticals") house, in later years returned to their rightful owners, the hotel "Amicorum", two of the former Carabinieri barracks, the old elementary school, now unmanageable because too large for the few students left in Neresine, the great house of Zorovich (Sule) the Town Hall (the Comun), later renamed Televrin, arranged by the name of the new restaurant in the ex-local nursery school (kindergarten) at ground floor.

Eighties: the development of tourism.

Following the construction of the campsite and other tourist facilities, the 80 summer tourism grew considerably with the mass arrival of tourists: Italians, Germans and Austrians, as well as with the return of many compatriots living abroad.¹ In this period, by the imposition of the political regime of the time, the whole area of Buciagne (the land between the bay and beaches of Galboca, and the port of San Giacomo) was confiscated from its rightful owners, and was granted to companies in the Federated Republic of Slovenia, which they readily took over, and build many houses, and other tourist facilities for the use "said" social assistance for their employees, but in reality there was nothing resembling anything that is "social".

The land area, all legitimately owned by private citizens, was forcibly expropriated at a ridiculous price imposed by local authorities. For the town of Neresine this settlement did not bring any benefit, indeed many disadvantages: in addition to their legitimate owners forced expropriation of the more beautiful land - which currently produce vast profits for foreign citizens - the resort has increased the pollution of the sea, since it sewers downloads directly to the sea. Slovenians also, have never employed the local personnel, to build, to manage, nor bought goods, commodities of food locally, all came from Slovenia.

Currently, following the dismemberment of Yugoslavia in 1992, the establishment of Buciagne Tourism has become the private property of citizens of Slovenia. Quite similar is the site of Camp Lopari with the adjoining resort: the same procedures for expropriation of land, and little gain for the town of Neresine. Since tourism "of state" – i.e. the one related to camping, and that the establishment of Buciagne consists of ex-Yugoslav citizens visiting in the summer holidays, and benefit of the homes previously mentioned - the villagers have not benefit of any significant improvements, except those who found summer employment at these facilities. In this context, the entrepreneurial spirit of Neresinotti not completely dormant, even though quite desensitized by the local ex peoples officials, now part or even sole owners of many such expropriations, *awoke slowly*, prompting residents to organize in the direction of tourism, and to engage into the renovation of their homes, for tourists rental in the summer months. This solution proved very fruitful because, it was the one most appreciated by wealthy tourists, mostly families with children who appreciated very much the family type environment they offer, and the total freedom of access to every corner of beach, and transparently clean sea. This new type of tourism activity brought the much needed economic improvement to the locals because, the remuneration in valuable currencies, this time, managed to stay home for the use of those who worked for it.

The introduction of hunting: more harm than good.

Because of the good economic achievements with the summer tourists, local authorities have seen fit to organize other exciting tourist attractions for the winter months. Reaching the decision to make the countryside Bura (Bora was Italian) (the island of Cherso facing the Neresine), a large game reserve, to attract Italian hunters. These fields, mostly dense undergrowth of Mediterranean scrubs, pasture for sheep breeders of Neresine, and some land cultivated with cereals, and vineyards, but with limited game to satisfy the needs of hunters. So it was decided to bring the game needed from the mainland. The game (deer) was then released in selected areas a determined amount of heads, and pheasants, these animals, had never been present before in our islands. The pheasants, not finding a habitat congenial to them, after repeated entries into the territory with severe damage to crops, especially vineyards, gradually died out, the deer instead, much more robust, albeit laboriously reproduced, invading a larger territory (not planned) that extends at least from Verin, and Lose up to Puntacroce.

The deer, bigger, and stronger than sheep, and without constrains on their legs (spone) like sheep, they had no obstacles climbing over our *masiere* the dry stone walls of the land, and infiltrate, and wreak havoc on the private propertied, and of the few crops, vegetable gardens, fruit trees, etc.. Not infrequently, also in their wanderings in search of food, and water knocked down the fences, and trashed the *masiere*, often causing the loss of sheep. The already, asphyxiated farming area of Bura, a crisis in labor shortages, following the exodus of

Neresinotti, has received the final coup de grace, bringing the abandonment of farming, sheep farming, and the consequent production of 'ancient and precious cheese (our cheese was very unique due to the type of vegetation, Dalmatian sage, which grows wild, and loose everywhere, and bay, and other salty vegetation). During the periods of summer drought is not worth the trouble to bring drinking water to the sheep because, the deer lurking for refreshments would drink their fill to their detriment. In this regard comes to mind, with a bitter smile, the law enacted more than a hundred years ago by the Austro-Hungarian Government, which banned the breeding of goats in our islands, as harmful to the development of vegetation.

For the same hunting purpose, and in the same period, were introduced in the northern part of the island of Cherso, also the boars. The area for these animals proved very favorable for the large amount of acorns produced by the thick woods of oaks. This forage, was particularly agreeable, and in a few years resulted in an uncontrolled proliferation, favored by the impenetrable dense forests, which provided for them a safe haven. Currently wild boars have become a serious problem because, in search of new food, they are invading the island of Cherso, and are advancing into the island of Lussino, crossing, and even swimming across the sea, and so far, it has not been possible to develop a system, to at least, limit their proliferation.

After more than twenty years after the establishment of the hunting, and the introduction of deer on the island, unfortunately encroaching into competition with the traditional sheep farming, the results of this initiative can be defined as at least disastrous. Faced with very little economic success, and hunting, now completely sporadic, contributing very little to local people well-being, we can take into account significant environmental degradation, and a far more serious economic damage to farmers, and landowners of the country.

Another serious problem, very similar to that just described, is affecting the farmers, right in the area surrounding Neresine. Some goats, abandoned many years ago by the owners when they left the country forever, especially in the area of the village of Tarsic', have run wild, and have slowly multiplied, grouping in flocks of twenty or thirty, (was recently spotted a herd of 65 heads!). In their wanderings in search of food, are wandering around the countryside, capable of destroying all vegetation in their food chain. They have recently targeted the fertile fields of the area known as Halmaz Sa Capelizu, attacking the olive trees, the leaves are tasty. Large males stand on its hind legs to reach the branches of trees over two meters high, then lower them with strength, and allow the females to feed! This problem is very difficult to solve, because the goats, as a man approach, take refuge in the most inaccessible, and dense bush, which is yet impossible to catch.

Population from the mainland, and pensions from Italy.

Following the development of tourism, and to replace people who left the country with the exodus of the islands of Losinj, and Cres, in the last decades of the twentieth century, began to come a massively new populations from the mainland of Yugoslavia, mainly to Mali Losinj, where in a few years the number of inhabitants has reached, and surpassed the old one. Even in Neresine, they arrived, though more modestly, new residents, leading to a recovery of the town to over 300 residents, and currently, as a result, trough extinction, for unavoidable older age. The lack of new births, the population of the "left ones", and their descendants has been reduced to no more than 70 people (data of 2011), and therefore the natives have become a minority in their own town.

Another very important and historical event that cannot be understated, was the signing in November 1975, of the Treaty of Osimo between the Italian, and Yugoslav government, which granted the Italian social pension to all those who during the 'membership of the Venezia Giulia to Italy, had performed military service in the Italian armed forces, thus all the "left ones" male born before 1924, found themselves beneficiaries of an extraordinary lifetime benefit, well above the average wage of a local worker, as well as a large sum of arrears since 1945 (most of the time of 50 million lire apiece, all in equivalent dollars, paid by INPS!) (*Italian Social Security*). However, the constant flow of money arrived in the country with "Italian pensions", has helped to provide a major boost to the construction of new, and more modern houses, especially designed to give more, and more comfortable accommodations to the summer visitors. You can certainly say that, at present, thanks to tourism, the Italian pensions, and the corporatization of Neresinotti, between the "left ones" the town has regained a degree of, widespread prosperity.

The strange story of the nursing home.

Around the 70s came to Neresine a sansegotta (native of the Sansego island) nun, she befriended two elderly women living alone in Neresine: Nada and Stanka Bracco, who gave her lodging, in exchange for aid, and assistance. The two women each had their own house, one neighbor of the other. In addition, since, in town lived other elderly people, alone, and without assistance, the nun suggested to the two friends to connect the two houses so to give hospitality to all older people in the town that needed it, on payment of a straight reasonable sum.

Thus was born, voluntarily for the three women, the retirement home for elderly in Neresine. The sister called two other colleagues in the country belonging to the same religious order, organizing an efficient service for the elderly. After a few years, the two old friends Stanka, and Nada went to a better life, leaving their homes, and all their possessions to the nursing home, with the clear intention of ensuring future to other elders of the land a serene old age. Of course, the political regime in force at that time, the religious orders were not legally recognized, and could have no legal value, then the sisters deed the legacy to their personal name, as any regular private citizen.

With the subsequent sale of the properties of the two deceased: farmhouse in the countryside of Bura, Ograda, and, gardens in the village, the nuns bought another house nearby, belonging to Stefano Marinzulich, further expanding the structure. The nursing home, being formed by a group of old buildings, needed repairs, and maintenance, the sisters, with the only income of the hosted lives, could not afford. They then collected money from villagers living in Italy for major repairs such as roof, kitchen, etc... The activities of the nursing home has been going well for several years, boosting the great satisfaction of all, the elders of Neresine, and neighboring towns, then, the sister from Susak preferred to move her little native island, and start there a similar new activity in town.

The remained sisters, given the reduction of the number of guests, and potential, due to the slow extinction of the native population, in early 2000, they decided to close the nursing home, and selling houses as personal inheritance, returning the few remaining guests to their home, on the sly, and moving elsewhere. This fact, quite disconcerting for all Neresinotti, both resident in the country in every corner of the world, has resulted in the mobilization of all available resources to avert the closure of such an important social service. The Neresinotti residents in Italy have been mobilized by contacting the parent company of the nuns of Brescia, trying to seek repayment of

the facilities for the benefit of the town. However, the sisters have become unavailable even to their superiors. Then, to recover in some way the nursing home, was asked for help to the Italian Government. This is readily moved by instructing the console in Rijeka to buy from the nuns the houses, using funds already allocated for the benefit of the population belonging to the Italian minority in the island. The consul himself rushed into town to negotiate the purchase with the sisters, but they, having heard about this great initiative, left no obstacles to their ambitions, have rushed to sell all the houses to Belgians citizens, who were involved in the deal to exploit the structure for tourist use.

Things have gone this way. To conclude this sad affair, it is hoped that the local "Croats" bosses, you can convince the Belgian owners to sell the nursing home to the Italian Government, which had and has the intention to buy, and give the management to the organized association of the Italian minority of the island, and then restore an important social service to the town, and the other inhabitants of the island.

Birth of the Croatian Republic.

To return to the facts of a more general interest, we can say that events of great historical significance occurred in the last years of the last century, as the collapse of the communist regime of Tito, and the Yugoslav Civil War of 1992, led to the creation of the independent state, and the establishment of Croatia as a result of free elections, of a democratic government in the country.

One of the first initiatives taken by the new government was to proceed with the privatization of state property. In Neresine, these were primarily the properties of the church, the properties of the Italians, and those opting for so-called "enemies of the people" at the time confiscated, and nationalized, as well as all municipal property. So it became a private property the "shipyard," the campground built on the grounds of the friars convent, the camp Lopari, the former police station, the oldest, and largest elementary school in the country, the great house of Zorovich (Sule) (the last two owned by citizens of Slovenia), the Amicorum hotel², the town hall (the Comun), and other major structures.

With the establishment of the Republic of Croatia has also, started an arduous, and difficult path towards democratization. Many industrial or other entrepreneurial activities previously managed by the criteria of centralized state, went into a crisis. In our islands economic activities, based primarily on tourism, have suffered significant setbacks, indeed, with the abolition of the old laws preventing foreign investment, has begun a new phase of expansion. In Neresine, many of the exiles began to return to a more stable atmosphere, even during the "off season", to renovate the old houses, in some way preserved, many also to spend most of the year in Neresine. Some, to secure better opportunities in repurchased, properties have requested, and obtained Croatian citizenship without giving up the Italian or American. Tourists love the town, mostly Italians, and Germans, have also begun to buy the old empty houses, and build new ones, by enabling additional cash flow, and well-being throughout Neresine.

Following all this were created some important infrastructure, such as new roads, restaurants, shops, and other public services, and have been upgrading piers moorings for pleasure boats. As part of the growing development is the recent restructuring, and expansion of the former town hall (the Comun), transformed into a hotel of good standard called "Televrin", and named after the former tavern, ex kindergarten, ex ground floor of the building. The renovation of the old

building, built in the early twentieth century in perfect Austro-Hungarian Empire style, and recently purchased by a company formed for the purpose, between a Neresinotto, and a German citizen, was built respecting the original style of the building, even repairing, and restoring the functioning of the old clock "tower", with the two large dials set into the east, and west facades of the building, stopped for over 50 years, however, has stopped again in 2006, and this time perhaps forever (permanently). Recently a family in town has built a great construction center for the sale of materials, and accessories for construction, household goods, and hardware, along the road just outside the town, certainly one of the largest in the two islands. Finally, there is a new luxury hotel, the "Manora", owned by a family from Zagreb, and living in Mali Losinj.

Our hope for the future is that the incipient tourist speculation does not lead to overbuilding, and the destruction of the natural beauty of the place, as has already happened elsewhere. In this sense must still be acknowledged that the current policy of the local, and national government of Croatia is directing the development of tourism in our islands towards the preservation of valuable local features, and endless natural beauty of the area.

From where comes the charm of Neresine.

We have reviewed so far, briefly, the most salient facts of the historical evolution of the town over the past fifty years, but none of them probably helps explain the extraordinary attraction which the country has on those who have had intimate contact with it. For those who were born in the thirties, and earlier, and had the good fortune to spend a happy childhood, the irresistible appeal to their roots can appear natural,³ yet, have not proved unrelated to this fascination, even the descendants of second, and third generation - born away from home, and all, having a single parent or even a grandfather Neresinotto - and even those foreigners, mostly Italians, and Germans, who have come for tourism in the town, most have failed to detach, and even now feel a bit 'of belonging.

It is not easy to find the causes of this unusual affection. Will perhaps her starry nights, incredibly beautiful, which infuse a soul yearning sense of vastness, and peace? Or maybe the nights of full moon, when the moon has fun to fascinate the astonished spectators, bombarding myriads of silver rays through the reflection of the sea perfectly calm (as a sheet of oil)? Or at the breathtaking sunrise that can be seen from Mount Ossero? The unrestrained ability to roam freely in the wild, and beautiful countryside of the island? Or maybe the passing of wonderful days in some quiet bay of the canal, surrounded by a dense, and shady forest, and to sail, and dive into the clear shining sea? On the other hand, the cordial friendship which you create with the people, and the sensation of participating in their lives, and that of the town? It is probably the set of all of these suggestions, and more. In fact, many who have come to Neresine for tourism since the early '60s, and in the subsequent period, mostly Italians, have continued to return regularly every year, establishing a comfortable relationship of complicity and solidarity with the inhabitants, often resulted in sincere and lasting friendships.

For the Neresinotti around the world, the town, besides being always the benchmark of emotional memories of childhood, and the place to recover their cultural, and ethnic roots, has become, after the first openings of the Yugoslav government in the 80, the usual "meeting place". Each year during the summer months a large number of them return to Neresine (*like the sparrows*) from the most various parts of Italy, America, Canada, and Australia, to restore that lost contact with the villagers, to renew that sense of belonging, and restore, and revive the old

traditions. (*It really fills the souls to the brim*). As mentioned, the descendants of the second and third generation arrived in the town, perhaps in early childhood, although born elsewhere, especially now feel "of Neresine". The current momentum towards the upgrading of tourist facilities, and the modernization of the town, if one side has brought wealth, and progress, on the other side has resulted in a gradual fading of the typical village tradition. This is, indeed, almost inevitable since the arrival of new inhabitants from the outside, and the progressive, and inevitable reduction of the native population.

It is a great merit to the villagers aware of the most enterprising, and progressive loss of traditions, the effort to keep alive at least the folklore of the village, cultivating the old songs, and dances in costume with *mescic'* (the traditional bagpipe), and the parties like those of traditional Carnival, of first of May, and Saint Mary Magdalene. Their task is made more difficult by the refractoriness of the old traditions to new generations, and to the lack of even a modest organized association of Neresine (type "pro local"), possibly aided, and supported financially by the municipal authorities of Lussinpiccolo.⁴ The next chapter of this book is dedicated to the usages, and customs of Neresine, and also seeks to be a valuable contribution to their work, their commitment to ensure that our fulfilling traditions are not lost.

NOTES

1. Some of the exiles, after many years out returned with their families for definite re-settling in Neresine, among these deserves to be remembered Miro Maurovich, a person with a particular sensitivity, both human, and artistic. Miro, after years of residence in the United States, where he probably did not find fulfillments for his sensitive soul, returned with his family to his hometown, where he bought, and renovated an old house, and immersed himself and family into a pristine nature living, deriving from this the main means of livelihood. Miro Maurovich had shown extraordinary artistic talent as a child, but the particular circumstances of life did not allow him to cultivate them (at the age of nine years has been deprived of his father, who left for war, where he perished). In Neresine however, after his return, he finally had the opportunity to practice painting, his natural talent, producing a number of pictures of great quality, but unfortunately, his premature death ended the artistic development of our compatriot. After his death, people with sound cultural level, arrived in the country as a tourist, and recognizing the paintings good values, bought them up, dispersing in some way his works.
2. Amicorum is the name by which, even today, is called the great house, built in the early twentieth century by the family Marinzulich (Zaneticèvi) to be used as restaurant with accommodations, the house was then sold in 1918 to Jose Vodinelli arrived in town from Veglia and baptized by him with pompous name of Hotel Amicorum.
3. Referring to those Neresinotti, now scattered all over the world who have had the good fortune to spend a happy childhood, and youth in his native town, you can say that none of them has ever forgotten their origins, and the intensity of the wonderful feelings that the social, and the natural beauty of the country has given them. We would like to quote here a beautiful poem, written by a distant exile, one of our fellow compatriots, who fuse perfectly all these intense sensations.

I SASSI DEL MIO PAESE

I sassi jera i mii sassi, sognavo e tal
volta dispettavo, ^a ma i jera i mii sassi.
Le stradette storte e in su, ma tutte
de sassi, i sassi del mio paese.
El mar jera el mio mar,
el jera così amico, così bon e generoso,

Notti limpide e serene,
lampare che se speciava in mar,
attenti e validi pescatori sperando
nel loro mar.
L'estate calda, notti de stele,
le piu bele del mondo, jera le stele

el jera al mio mar.
Le barche,^b i cuori trepidanti,
le attese e le rinuncie, nel ben
e nel mal, jera le barche
del mio paese.

del mio paese.
l'Ave Maria, jera l'amicizia
e un saludo per tuti,
el pensiero lontan
jera l'Ave Maria del mio paese.^c

THE STONES OF MY COUNTRY

The rocks they were my stones, I was dreaming and sometimes I was teasing, but they were my stones.
The pathway narrow en upward, but all of rocks, the stones of my town.
The sea was my sea, it was so friendly, so good, and generous, and it was my sea.
The boats^b, the anxious hearths, the expectations, and renunciations, in the good, and in the bad, it was the boats of my town.
Clear, and serene were the nights, fishing lamps reflecting on the sea, attentive, and valorous fisherman hopeful of their own sea.
Hot summer, starry nights, the most beautiful in the world were the stars of my town.
The Hail Mary was a friend, and a greeting for all, and the faraway thoughts were the Hail Mary^c of my town.

a. The making of naughty boys. As part of the "spitefulness", one of the most popular was "throwing stones at each other", i.e. take a gang of kids throwing stones of various districts.

b. For boats are intended the traditional vessels of Neresine.

c. Refers to the daily ringing of the "Friars" bells, for a traditional "Ave Maria" from the first Morning, Noon, and Evening.

Giovanni (Nino) Galvani (ex Glavan) wrote this poem. He was a sailor from Neresine, grew up in a house on the slopes of Mount Ossero (Sottomonte), from which one can admire one of the most beautiful, and amazing scenery, that nature has to offer. The enchanted evenings, and nights of spring, crossed from the poignant song of nightingales, illuminated by a sky studded with glittering stars, and the soft lights of the town below, must have left a deep mark on his sensitive nature.

Nino Galvani was not a man of high culture, he only frequented the elementary school of Neresine, then, a veteran of World War 2, has participated in the Italian Navy as a seaman, having regard to the serious situation in his native country after the occupation by Yugoslavia, like so many others chose to flee to Italy, settling permanently in Genoa, where he married a Genoese, and formed his own family. As a professional sailor, like most of our compatriots, He sailed all his life in the great passenger liners such as refrigeration mechanic, while continuing to read, and study, building, self-taught, a good cultural background. Unfortunately could not enjoy the well-deserved retirement because, he died shortly after reaching this goal. He was also a very pleasant, and personable man. As he hid well his sensitivity the mild-mannered, and "refinement" of behavior from all of us, who knew him, it was a nice surprise to find his poems.

4. By suppression of the city hall of Neresine, more than 50 years ago, all the country villages around the island are part of the unique town, of Mali Losinj, where the mayor and the council are immigrants to the island, after the annexation to Yugoslavia or their descendants, who know neither the language nor the local traditions.

IV

CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS

The country of Neresine, as we have seen began (*came to life*) in late fifteenth, and early sixteenth century. Early settlers were mostly poor Slavs peasants, entire families, presumably fleeing the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans, arrived in search of peace, and prosperity. They were of the Christian religion, and of course brought with them their traditions, their language, and their customs. Certainly they could not read nor write, otherwise we would have a trace. The impact of the political, social, and cultural Venetian that prevailed in those days in the territory administered by the City of Ossero, and Cherso, might have been difficult, but was absorbed without traumatic consequences, both from community residents, as well as new arrived. The coexistence was characterized by tolerance, and mutual respect; there are no evident news of political or social conflict, for the first three centuries of existence. Residents, who continued to maintain the language, customs, and traditions of origin, while gradually absorbing the local ones, maintained life at home independently.

The arrival of new immigrants originating from Istria, Dalmazia and Italy on the XVII century did not cause relevant changes, because, the new arrivals were prevalently unmarried men, who lost no time marrying the local girls, thus forming new families, inserted entirely in the town traditions. The children, born from these new unions continued with the Slavic mother language, and the new arrivals, prevalently alphabetized, adopted the local dialect as the normal language, while still conserving their Italian language, and heritage, because it was the only written, and spoken official language of the whole territory, and the only way to acculturation.

The customs, and traditions that we may consider “typically Neresinotti” is what we are now going to narrate, they are the original result of this stratification. We have decided to start with the bells, which are a true, and proper “symbol” of our town, for then describe the principal traditions, secular, and religious, more or less according to the chronological sequence they occur during the year.

The bells.

The customs, and traditions of the village bells have played an important role, especially those in the church tower "of the Friars" because accompanied with their sound, sometimes happy sometimes sad, the lives of the people, and announced with sequences specific daily events. Their ringing extended far beyond the area of the town, reaching all the surrounding countryside, from Bora to Tarsic', to San Giacomo, and Ossero. The current bells, installed in 1930, were purchased with funds raised in Neresine, and among the villagers residing in America, commissioned to a foundry in Vittorio Veneto, Italy, to replace the old ones, small, and very out of tune.

New York Neresinotti paid for the large *grande* bell, of 508 kg, raising money through the "Susaida". It is dedicated to Mary Immaculate, and bears the words: "*Questo concerto di campane – La mirabile concordia del popolo di Neresine – unita ai fratelli lontani d'America – fece fondere – a perenne memoria del suo amore a S. Francesco e ai suoi figlioli – e alla gloria di Dio – nell'anno del Signore 1930*"; "*This bell concert - The marvelous harmony of the people*

of Neresine - combined with the distant brothers of America - melted them - a forever memorial of their love for Saint Francis and his children - and the glory of God - in the year of Lord 1930" (See how lovingly united we were then...even though, this was after the Italians were in concentration camps during the first world war – there were no prisons under Italy)Trans. Note.

The Medium *mezzana*, of 404 kg, dedicated to Saint Francis, bear the inscription: "*Proteggi o Padre S. Francesco, il popolo tuo devoto e benedici i suoi faticati sudori*".

"Protect dear Father Saint Francis, you devoted people, and bless their fateful labor". (Although physically *silent* since 2006, it is present in the hearts of YOUR people – may the mercy and, glory of God be resounding soon AGAIN) T.N.

The Small *piccola*, of 279 Kg, dedicated to Saint Anthony, bears the incision: "*Ti richiamo, sollecita il passo*".

"I am re- calling you, hurry your step" (Yes indeed, hurry, hurry, because we are tired) T.N.

The last bell were paid for by funds gather among the inhabitants of Neresine, in major way, by ship-owners, caratisti, and landowners.

Every day the bells spread their melody setting the working activities rhythm of the people, starting at dawn with the sound of Hail Mary, at noon the announced the rest for lunch, and in the evening toward sunset, again the Hail Mary for the homeward return. To the children it was thought how to make the Sign of the Cross every time the bells announced the Hail Mary. About the evening Hail Mary, the mothers, and grandmothers repeated to the children, as a warning, and recommendation, the ejaculation: "*Ave Maria o in casa o per la via*". That is "*Hail Mary in the house or in the way home*". (See in those days, we stood out all day, for work, for play, we were free then) T.N. The bell for the Hail Mary was the Medium.

During the funerals, the "friars bell" rang for the dead, (that is, the bell never swung, it was just the half movement of the *batocio* (clapper) not a harmonious sound) along the whole journey of the funerary procession, from the intersection of the main road and that to Halmaz until the Cemetery. With its sad stroke accompanied our fellow citizen in his last earthly journey, until burial.

The call for the religious services evolved in accordance to the following modality: the daily Mass, called the "Small Mass", was announced in the early morning with only one *suonata* (pealing)(ringing period) by the *Small* bell, so not to be confused with the Media Hail Mary; the Sunday Mass, and the other Holydays ("*Messa Granda*") High Mass of nine a.m., was announced with a First extended flock pealing of all three bells at eight thirty a.m., (half hour before Mass), then on the Second large flock pealing of all three bells, at a quarter hour to nine a.m., followed by the sound of only one bell , the *mezzana* (medium), to indicate precisely, the second calling, then at nine a.m. finally the last flock pealing of the three bells, followed by the sound of only the *piccola* (small).

The afternoon religious service, the "Vespero" was announced with only one flock pealing of all three bells.

In the days preceding the more important Holydays, such as: Christmas, Easter, Corpus Christi, Saint Anthony and Saint Francis, for announcing the arrival of these recurrences, was rang extensively the "*campanon*", as was called the rhythmic pealing of the three bells from the

Friars Church: we use to get into the bell tower, usually two or three persons, who interchanged, giving the long lasting concert “concerto”; we tied down opportunely the clappers of the three bells, and through adequate push-pulls, these were rang concurrently by an expert ringmaster.

It would come out as some kind of hammering gay melody, following a script never written, but, faithfully passed on from generation to generation. In the days of great festivity, the “*campanon*” was also rang in between the various religious services.

For the same recurrences the “*campanon*” was also rang with the two bells of the church of Saint Mary Magdalene, which was the parish church until the construction of Duomo (the Cathedral). Usually the ringmaster a *podgoràno* (from the *contrada* Bardo), would climb on the roof of the little church and holding in hand the two clappers, would exhibit in long stretches happy pealing, as was wanted by the old tradition.

In those days the two happy “*campanoni*” would peal and by the wind spread over the whole countryside, chasing each other, and overlap happily with the complicity of the wind generating on the population, a mood of joyous expectation for the vigil.

The bells of Saint Mary Magdalene, concurrently with the small one of the Duomo, where also rang to call the faithful to the religious services celebrated at the parish church.

Unfortunately, (*what a sad word—is being repeated constantly*) the “*campanon*” is no longer heard, for many years, being it the one from the Frati as well as Saint Mary Magdalene. The new enlightening regime established in 1945, (had pierced many hearths), would not allow acoustical exhibitions of religious sort, and by now, there is none that could or is able to render.

The passing to better life of anyone born in Neresine, wherever in the world it may happen, would and still is, announced by one of the Saint Mary Magdalene bells, with an extensively long sad pealing throughout the countryside, when it ends, you know, we are getting fewer.

This old tradition may too end soon, with the passing of the present ringer, already too old for this task. Even though, we still hope that a generous volunteer may take over this sad task.

Some years past, due to the drastic reduction of able bodies among the Neresinotti, it was almost impossible to find someone to ring the Hail Mary, therefore an electric mechanism was procured. Nevertheless, some time now, no one remembers to push the button for the Hail Mary, and it is feared that, with the closure of the church, and convent, not much of any religious sound will be perceived.

Finally, still talking about bells, we should mention the new “*artificial bells*” recently installed in the parish church *Duomo*, or rather the electronic sound of bells, installed by the Pastor, and (*what else*) paid for by the American Neresinotti. The sound (*noise*) is quite disturbing, rather than, reminding, the bells are out of sink, and the concert resembles a Bella Lagosi bedlam, which beyond afflicting the unfortunate hearers during the call to the religious services, is used daily at 6:30 a.m. even in the summer to play the hours, and half hours, plus the Hail Mary in the morning, noon, and evening. (Every day at noon, first are shut the twelve noon claps, and thereafter, the Hail Mary, even in full tourist season)

The women's apparel.

The women wore clothes typical of farmers in the Quarnero region, usually dark in color, very tight on the midriff, with a corset edged with colorful borders with floral motives, long skirts, and very wide, always accompanied by a “*traversa*”, i.e. an apron in front, which covered the

skirt from the waist down. The "handkerchief" on the head, colored for young women, and black for the elderly.

The holiday dress was the so-called "costume", (costume) the beautiful traditional dress of the women of Neresine, and their descendants. Which, scattered all over the world, are proudly safekeeping with jealous care from their mothers, and grandmothers. The costume consisted of a thin, finely embroidered white blouse, a short black velvet corset, hemmed at the edges, and sleeves with strips variously colored. The skirt was tight at the waist, and then very large, dark colored (blue, brown), studded with flowers. The waist strapped by a "traversa" of large precious cloth, also decorated with floral motifs, and often, in the case of wealthy families, studded with colored beads. In the head a beautiful colored silk handkerchief, and around the neck were never lack two, three or more rows of coral necklaces. The costume was until the late twentieth century the standard bride wedding dress, (our mother was one of the last bride in costume)the more richly adorned, as the bride's family was wealthy.

An old document describes the canonical costume of the women from Neresine consists of:

- Winter skirt: *sukgnizza* dark red, of substantially heavy wool.
- Normal skirt: *camisòt* dark blue, with posterior pleats, very tight (10 mm), handmade.
- Apron: *travièrsa*, of colored silk.
- Shirt: *cosùja* of white cotton, embroidered, and long sleeves.
- Corset: *vardacuòl* of black velvet, adorned at the neck with colored ribbon with floral motives.
- Jacket: *dolamiza* Black with collar, and sleeves edged with black ribbon.
- Shoulder shawl: *faziuòl* silk, colored, and trimmed with fringes.
- Head scarf: *faziuòl* simple black, for the very young also colored.
- Belt: *puàs*, wide black band of cloth, tight around the waist.
- Scarf: *parhàlo*, light black scarf, or colored, around the neck, under the corset *vardacuòl*.

Marriages.

Marriages were very important events and involved in some way much of the town (since we are mostly all interrelated). They were preceded by long engagements that ended with the ritual of *the visit*, to visit one by one, all the relatives, to greet, and present officially the chosen bride or groom. Since the round of visits, very formal, included all the relatives of the groom, and of the bride, and the fertility of families was remarkable, that the rounding from house to house often became for the engaged a real exhausting *tour de force* (*this included the receiving of wedding gifts*). The wedding festivities could last two or three days, depending on economic conditions of the groom's family, and they took place, more or less, with the ritual now described:

In the morning of the wedding day, the best man or men (witnesses) of the groom, and with some of his guests will go, and withdraw the bride (*neviesta*), and the guests of her family, in her house, and in procession would escort them into the church. In the church, the groom, and all his guests would be waiting, and together bride, and groom would go to the altar for the religious ceremony. (No wedding Mass)

Upon exiting the church the newly wed would be bombarded with candy (*bridal candies...white sugar coated almonds*), thrown by relatives, and friends, with great joy for the town kids, who fought between the legs of the attendants to get their fill.

Whereupon, arms in arms, the bride and the groom, with musicians in front, and procession following would go toward the house of the bride, where, prepared tables with a rich lunch was awaiting; usually the meal courses were prepared, and served by the women, notoriously expert in the traditional foods for the occasion.

Lunch finished, in the late afternoon, everyone would go to the house of the groom, all guests in procession, with music, and the newlywed in front. Upon reaching the house of the groom...big dismay! The door is locked, lights out, deathly silence! Then the groom best man would get closer to the door knocked few times: silence! Knocked few more times... and after a while from inside a voice was barely heard, it was the female voice of the mother in law (*secarva*), who said: "who is there" The best man would answer: "lady I am so, and so who is accompanying your son who is bringing to you the woman he has chosen to be his wife". From the inside, the voice would answer: "who is this woman, and how is she?" Moreover, here the best man would start to describe the qualities of the bride, and her family, prevalently stopping of the more feminine gifts of the girl... and often, with substantial drinking down the pipes, the description would become more malicious, with the joy full approval of all present. To this set up, beyond the guests, the whole neighborhood was there, and of course all the kids of the town. At the end of this charade, the inside voice would shoot some final questions, such as, "Can she cook?", "Can she milk the sheep?", "Can she make cheese?", "Does she know how to spin wool?", "Can she knit?" and so on. After the nth positive answer by the best man from the outside, finally the door would open wide allowing all to enter. Bride, groom, and guests would enjoy the prepared settings, tables prepared for the continuation of the feast, which went on for two days.

In the more recent times, when Neresine had a theater, and dance hall, after the dinner at the groom house, all would convert into the large dance hall, and dance until the wee hours of the morning. One particular custom was, the best man of the bride would accompany her to whomever she wished to dance with...*for the last time*. While the groom would need no help for choosing his *last partner*. The other particular custom is that both, Bride and Groom have only male witnesses (*there is no Maid of Honor...only Best Man, and no Ushers nor Bride Maids, or ring bearers*) the best man has it all.

Until the nineteenth century the musical accompaniment was composed by the sound of *mescic'*, the traditional bagpipes, while the women sang ancient wedding songs that are now unfortunately lost. Even the dances were held at the sound of *mescic'*, there are two or three dances, that currently the town's folklore group seeks to keep alive. Towards the end of the nineteenth century with the arrival of new musical instruments, *mescic'* fell into disuse, and was replaced in weddings, and dancing by the accordion (harmonica).

The funeral ceremonies.

When someone died, the main room of the house of the deceased was prepared as a funeral room, where the deceased body on a bed was exposed to the public. At the foot of the bed was a cup with holy water, and a special white flower called Cherubim that soaked in the cup was used to asperse the deceased. The whole town would come for the last visit, children included.

The practice was, first visit the deceased, praying, asperse the body *far pocropit* then offer condolences to the relatives. The body, in accordance with the laws of the time, (surely in the XVIII and XIX century) was kept in the house for two days before funeral, and burial.

The evening, for three consecutive evenings, after dinner, in the same house, the town's women would recite the *detva*, or rather the Rosary of the Dead. In antique times, the *detva* was recited or *sang* in the Slavic dialect of Neresine, and was continued in more recent times for the families of "Croatian loyalty". The Rosary was actually sung as today rap music, melodic, and strongly rhythmic, resembling some popular chants still in use in the Bulgarian-Moldovan farmlands.

In the prayer the role of the singing melodically (the music) took on as the principal function, so much, that the Croatian words of the prayer were already deformed, and crippled as a function of the rhythmical need of the song.

For us young ones, the recital of the *detva* had an irresistible charm. All knew perfectly the musical part, but the lyrics, for us children who did not understand any, did not matter at all, rather it was more mysterious. Unfortunately (again) even this beautiful tradition of the *detva* got lost, even because the few women left in town, are no longer remembering the old customs, therefore, keeping them alive.

The body was also watched (vigil) during the night by relatives, and friends. The landlords, to entertain the gathering would serve prosciutto, wine, brandy (grappa) dried figs, and sweets. The vigil was also a great occasion for socializing, during which one would hear the old town stories, amusing anecdotes, and other active amenities to lift up the sad spirit, resulting in a happy atmosphere. This tradition is still alive.

During the funeral, the women of the town would sing the traditional funeral songs, remembering the virtues of the deceased (as the old mourners) in the antique Slavic dialect, which would resound with forced head vocalizations, and with strong cadences, still found in certain Ukrainian and Bulgarian chants.

Unfortunately, also the traditional songs that were in use until the 30' es went lost.

The religious ceremony initially was officiated by the priest or canonic friar in the old church of Saint Mary Magdalene, for the contrada (neighborhoods) of Bardo, Biscopua, Canal and Pozzo, and in the church of the friars for those of the contrada Castellani, Halmaz and Frati. After the construction of the Duomo (cathedral), toward the end of XIX century, the church of Saint Mary Magdalene was closed, and all religious services were transferred to the Duomo. In all cases where the religious services were celebrated in the Duomo, the officiating priest, canon first, and rector later, after the parish was established in 1940, would accompany the coffin until reaching the Friars church where he would relinquish it to the resident Friars, who would receive it, bring it into their church, and here celebrate an ulterior, and solemn funerary rite. At the end of the ceremony, they would accompany the coffin to the burial in the cemetery, and give the last benediction to the deceased. This traditional custom, which was held unbroken even after the construction of the Duomo, was then abandoned in the first years after the Second World War.

Confirmation *Cresima*.

In Neresine, unlike elsewhere, the Confirmation (*Cresima*) was the most important religious ceremony for the boy's age of Adolescence, much more than, the First Communion, because the older tradition of the town had assigned a very important social value, and is very rooted in the common feelings of the people. Confirmation, in essence, became the crucial moment when the boys were morally entrusted to a new person, the godfather *santolo* for the girls *santola*, and from that moment on, he/she would be an important educational reference point for godson *fiozo* or *fioza*. The important role that traditionally the villagers gave to the godparents *santolo/santola*

strengthened also, by the consecration of a religious rite, involved the children families, and is a great honor of choosing the Godparent, which obviously should have: high moral qualities and, something that always helps, even a significant economic "status", qualities these not easily found in a single person, of a small, and poor town like Neresine. This would entail for a family a preliminary long workings, and negotiations of various nature with a vast outreach, that at the end would conclude with the choosing of the most adequate person. Even under formal appearances, the ritual of the ceremony established the event importance: before the religious rite true, and proper, the parents would "deliver" the boy/girl to the godparent, who took him under his protection, and accompanied him to church, where they participated in the religious ceremony true, and proper, ending with the "pastècula" from the Bishop. The word pastècula is the deformation of the Latin words "pax tecum" (i.e., peace be with you), that the Bishop pronounced the end of the rite, while giving a slap on the cheek of the boy/girl. The word pastècula had even joined the linguistic baggage of Neresine as a synonym for "slap" a frequent threat from mothers or grandmothers to misbehaving children "*se non ti starà bravo de darò una pastècula che te se girarà la testa*", *If you do not behave, I will give you a pastècula that will make your head spin*"

At the end of the religious ceremony, the godparent would take the godson home with him for a big celebratory dinner, with the mere presence of his family. During dinner, the godparent would deliver "officially" and formally, the "gift" to the godson *fiozo*, a traditional choice for the occasion, could formerly be a lamb, a sheep, a small piece of land, or other things of this kind, in more recent time's gift consisted mainly in a savings bank account with a small amount. The boy/girl remained in the company of the godparent, and his family for the entire day, and only in the evening was returned to the parents. The bond tied with the confirmation ceremony lasted a lifetime: the godfather for the boy actually became an important reference point, almost a family member. From then on godfather, and godson always addressed each other with such names, respectively, of *santolo* godfather, and *fiozo* godson. From this time on, it happens frequently where the godfather, has given important moral support to the godson, professional, and sometimes material for life.

There may be, but few, old Neresinotti that don't remember with affection their *santolo de Cresima*

The Carnival.

The Carnival has always been one of the feasts more expected, and felt in the town. In accordance with the Venetian custom, from where the feast initiated, the carnival period true, and proper would start at least fifteen days before the last day of Carnival with processions of masked people, which especially at night would go from house to house messing around, to play, to being recognized, and then, eat and drink until late.

The typical sweets for this feast, which all families provided for the offering to the *Maschere*, was *crostoli* (*galani* or *bugie* in Italian) bow ties. In the tradition of Neresine, choral singing was very appreciated, and loved, practiced at every occasion. Inevitably, even Carnival had its own typical songs: repertoire was constituted by a dozen tracks, among which we remember: "*Carneval no stà andar via*", "*Le galine tute mate*", "*Quando mio pare pestava mia mare*", "*Ki jé krif mojèmu slù*", "*Non go le chiave del porton*", "*La mula de Parenzo*".

The Carnival period would start right after Epiphany, and every Sunday afternoon and evening; there was the dance, to which all town youth participated.

In the last three days of Carnival, the town youth would form a masked band *banda mascherata*, with music in front wandering, from house to house, from *stuagne* to *stuagne*, performing in jokes, and carnival songs to bring gayety, and gather supplies of wine, sweets, sausages, and anything good that the landlords were willing to offer “willingly”, for later, *fraiar* all together in the main square on the last day of Carnival. *Fraiàr* or *fraiàt* meant eat, and drink disproportionately to be merry, eating everything that was collected, without thinking of tomorrow, in short, to carouse (*gozzovigliare*); a word deriving from the Dalmatico language *fraiar*, the old antique roman’s language spoken in the Quarner area for ten centuries.

The last day of Carnival (fat Tuesday), after lunch, all citizens would gather in the main square to celebrate, and greet the end of the feast. In the square was built a stage for the master of ceremony, and or the musicians, players of the traditional *mescic*’, that still today is replayed for the occasion. The center of the square was left vacant for dancing; the animators of the feast were the same masked band of the days earlier. On the sound of the *mescic*’ the dance started: the outpour of the whole traditional repertoire (*ràcich, pihat, ...*) involving in the dance all the town young ladies, mostly dressed in the traditional costume, and between drinking, and dancing, singing, and joking, we carried forward until late afternoon. Finally at the peak of the feast, the Carnival (a full size puppet of straw, all dressed up, with hat and all), would be brought out, and ignited in between singing, and dancing, and celebrating. At feast end everyone would return home, the children somewhat melancholically due to the end of a wonderful game, the young men, and women for dinner, and get ready to go dancing in the great dance hall until early morning.

In the first half of the XX century, until 1946, the grand evening dance of the last Sunday of Carnival was organized as the “veglione” (Grand Ball), with the election of King, and Queen of the feast. The King was the youth who has received the most “cotillions” pinned to his suit by the women, while the Queen would be the one who has received the most real postcards from the teenagers during the ball. The usage of postcards was due most likely from the problem of pinning anything on the women light dresses, without incurring into accidental, and fastidious punctures.

In the morning, especially the women, all to church, and receive the *ceneri* ashes a remainder of the fragility of life: the beginning of Lent.

It remains dramatically impressed in the memory of the villager the “veglione” of the last Sunday of Carnival of 1946, when in full Tito’s regime the frond of the youths elected Queen Italia (Itala Abate) and King Latino Bracco. Certainly, Itala was a very beautiful blond woman and so can be said of Latino in the male territory. However, the New authorities of Neresine took the matter as a real provocation, and open an inquiry on the affair, arresting, and heavily questioning under interrogation some of the youths, with the intent to discover, and punish the culprits.

That was the *last* “Veglione di Carnevale” in the history of Neresine, and the beginning of escape of many youths toward *LIBERTY*.

The Stargurizze

The *stargurizze* (a term denoting witches) was an antique feast for the children, which occurred on March 12, feast of Saint Gregory (*Sfijèti Garhür*), maybe originated in Friuli (Italy) where

nowadays is still celebrated with the same modality; this recurrence corresponded, roughly to the American Halloween. In the night of Saint Gregory, it was supposed the arrival of the *stargurizze* to tease the children: to exorcise the event, and keep them at bay from their houses, the children would have to gather some twigs, generally of *ruòsie*, (dry twigs from pruning the vineyards) and, to store them in strategic places around the house. The operation was probably started to induce the children to help the grownup to clean the vineyards, which were pruned in that season. When it got dark, the children would lock themselves in the house, and fearfully spy through the windows to watch the witches. To second these believes, and to stimulate their imagination, the bigger children (youths) would mask themselves as witches, and roam around the neighborhoods, shaking lamps (*feralici*), and making strange noises.

The Marcodlazi.

In the area of antique, and arcane town fables, manufactured to excite children fantasies, along with the *stargurizze* we have to include the *marcodlàzi*, the *mazmalic'i* and the *buàke*.

The *marcodlàzi* (singularly *marcodlàk*), are the persons that were born in the days of *tempora*, or rather, the Wednesday and Friday, even Saturday of the week preceding the equinoxes and solstices of the solar year. It was told that these people, completely normal during the year, in the night of the *tempora* would acquire magic powers, and would gather in Sovin, barren, and mysterious companion of Bora to challenge each other in terrible combats, becoming in animals more strange, and fierce; there where many who swore of having heard in the fateful nights terrible noises coming from Sovin. Another activity of these *marcodlàzi* was to take fantastic journeys, above all toward the mysterious Orient, naturally with the family boat *caìcio*. They were driving along, they said, thousands of miles in one night: *svàki màkaz jenù mìju* (each movement of the oar, a mile traveled). Then, the next morning, returned home tired, and exhausted.

Naturally the day after the children curiosity would bring them to inspect the boats of the supposed *marcodlàzi*, where (looks a bit!) regularly one could find traces of the nightly exploits, as coffee beans, worn strops from the fantastic rowing, and other irrefutable evidence of the long journey. It is still struck in my memory the story of an old man *marcodlàk*, my neighbor, that for us fascinated children he told the story of a trip to America (in that time the immigration to America was quite popular): He told us that he crossed the ocean in an egg shell (*còriza od juàia*), and to have fought all night against very big bears, crocodiles, and other ferocious animals, managing to defeat them all.

The mazmalic'i.

The grandmothers loved to tell the grandchildren the fantastic stories that had for protagonists the *mazmalic'i*. These where Leprechauns, gnomes, and elves, of ancient origin, probably Nordic, wearing a very showy red headgear. The name certainly derives from the Dalmatico *mamalic*.

The *buàke*.

The *buàke* were mysterious gosses or “babau” who would attend at particular sites, from which the children, and not only them, kept themselves carefully very far. It was, in essence, an entity designed to scare children, and it was evoked as a warning in case of tantrums, disobedience, or pranks. Even this word, like so many others of the ancient dialect of Neresine, comes from the Dalmatian Buak, testifying, in Neresine’s popular culture, a strong, and perhaps dominant, Liburnic legacy, that is, inherited from the ancient indigenous inhabitants of the Quarnero.

The characters described above were the usual protagonists of many stories that the great fabulist of Neresine, Barba Sime Gaetagnef (Simeone Sigovich), used to tell to the kids. The Barba (uncle) Sime, in fact, belonged to a wealthy farming family, the Gaetagnevi, who owned two sturdy oxen, and he was dedicated to plowing the fields. Since the Gaetagnevi, did this work also, for hire; it was not uncommon for the Barba Sime would go with his plow even outside of the town. Even as far as Puntacroce, the boys, who would follow him enticing him to tell his fascinating, and improbable stories, always followed him. If it were not for Barba Sime, and his stories, most of the boys would have been very careful not to follow the other plowmen in the hard work of the fields. Many times boys would drop the seeds on the plow tracks, to help farming.

The feast of conscripts.

The occasion was the traditional goodbyes (especially to the young women) by the young men who had to enter into the military service (la leva) (the removal), all men born during the same year when reaching the military service compulsory age, would enter only at this time. The festival took place in the days before departure, usually a Saturday, and Sunday. Although the circumstances were quite “lively”, the people saw it with particular affection, and understanding. The conscripts gathered in the main square, public places, and roamed in procession through the village singing traditional songs, especially suited for this event, as *Addio Neresine*, *Addio mia bella addio*, (Goodbye Neresine, Farewell My Lovely Farewell, etc.). In the late evening, they made the rounds of the houses of girls to which they had loving aspirations, endless serenades singing under the windows. The singing went on late into the night, and gradually, as the effect of libations became more evident, the repertoire of choirs tended more toward the pathetic.

At the end of the singing, the men would think of a gimmick, playful, and as surprising as possible, which generally consisted in: searching in the courtyards for pots of flowers belonging to village girls, and bring them to the main square, setting up a beautiful garden, then, would go, and physically remove a *caìcio* from its mooring, and bring that too, to the main square, the *caìcio* usually, belonged to the father of one of the most courted ladies, setting up such a fun staging, different each year. The intent was to surprise the whole town, and to consequently subliminally let it be known who is rooting for whom. The next day being Sunday, at the end of the High Mass of 10 a.m. the churchgoers (the church being the Duomo standing above the main square) would spill all into the square to witness it all, the setting, the staging, and whose hearths are pounding for whom.

A memorable prank by the conscripts in a certain year (many years ago), was to carry the *caìcio* on their back up to the “lake” (really a big pond) at the top of the hill of Bardo, where they docked it with all applicable rules.

The Holy Week.

In town, Holy Week was a much anticipated, and felt time of the year, especially from the boys, who were all altar boys. Those attending the Friars ward church of Saint Francis, not only to serve Mass, but to spend most of the day between church, sacristy, convent, harbor, and surroundings: these places was for them a great field of play. During Holy Week, there was a lot to do: build the Holy Sepulcher, with a black cloth covering the crucifix of the church, all statues, except the Way of the Cross, and take out the old wooden instrument, the *screbetuàina* (or facetiously *grabusàlo* from *grabusàt*, carding wool, by association between hollow sounds produced by this operation, and the equally sombre, instrument). It was, in fact, a large wooden instrument shaped like a caisson, made of a sturdy frame, and many strips of hard flexible wood, made to rub into a large toothed pin (gear), placed in rotation by two handles, producing a loud, and deep rasping noise. The *screbetuàina* was used to call the faithful to religious services, instead of bells, which were silenced (no bells, organ nor any other instrument was heard during Holy Week). The call activity was carried out by the boys, who went around the neighborhood, carrying on their shoulder the bulky instrument, and stop at strategic spots in the three districts: Halmaz, the junction to the main road crossing the intersection, and stuaagne Catùricevo, and main road with the driveway leading to the church, called in the jargon *Tabèlina*. At each stop dealing out a long "scraping" from the *screbetuàina* and following with a below shouting in unison, respectively: "*parvi put na ofizi* in the first point, *drughi put na ofizi* in the second and *sadgni put na ofizit* in the third (i.e. first, second and last call for the religious function), with great pride and satisfaction for having accomplished the important task. Since 1918, with the passage of the islands "in Italy", the call in the Slavic dialect was abolished, remained the only "scratching".

With much intent we used to prepare for It was the conclusion of the Holy Week services, it was the end of the liturgy narrating with psalms, sung in church, the trial, and martyrdom of Jesus Christ. The ceremony took place in the evening, no lights in the dark church, but only a particularly large candelabrum, placed before the altar, consisting of an isosceles triangle with the apex pointing upwards, the sides contained fifteen candles placed there and lit by the altar boys, during the ceremony. All village children attended the ceremony bearing wooden noisemakers (*screbetuàinize*) or any other gadget that could make noise.

The ceremony was subdivided in, as many parts as there were candles to be extinguished and slowly went on with the monotonous singing of the men's choir at both sides of the main altar. At the end of the first part, the first candle was extinguished, and so on. The extinguished procedure deserves a better description: at the end of each psalm, an altar boy very slowly, and solemn step equipped with a bamboo stick ending with a funnel type metal hood, he would slowly reach the candle, and with a downward, and upward motion would put out the candle. From the children crowd (just about all children from five to sixteen years of age) in a very silent church they would very gently murmur an ooh! The singing would resume.

Gradually as the candles were extinguished, the church would get darker, and darker, and the (children) tension would increase. At the extinguishing of the last candle, which represented the Death of Jesus on the Cross, in the rite, the church completely dark, the tension at the highest, it would unleash the "*Barabàna*": every one tried to make as much noise as possible, then the church doors would open wide, and all would spill outside while continuously making a racket

for quite a while. The joy, and the amusement of these moments are emotions indelibly imprinted in all Neresinotti who had the fortune to participate in these traditional events when young.

Since in Neresine there were two churches equally important, the ceremony would be repeated in both, at offset times, so this would double the children's happiness.

The most felt event during Holy Week was the Good Friday Procession, or rather, the processions, since two churches, two processions, the other one at the Duomo was on Holy Saturday, to accommodate all villagers. The Good Friday at the Franciscan church was the classical Holy Week ritual, while the Holy Saturday at the Duomo was the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; this last one is unique among the villages of the two islands.

The procession "*dei frati*" was taking place in the evening after supper: the cortege would leave the church, proceed up the main road of the town until reaching the crossroad to Halmaz, upward toward Halmaz, for then descend at the *Catùricevi* crossroad, and returning down to the church.

Along the route on both sides of the road, the neighbors of each section would place balls of ashes imbued with kerosene, six to nine feet apart; at the passing of the procession the balls would be lit in order to light the way of the procession during the dark night. From the windows of the houses adjacent to the road, was displayed the most rich tablecloths, carpets, and lamps.

The procession would proceed slowly with the maximum solemnity, accompanied by liturgical chants for the occasion. The priests' vestments were those of the great feasts. Every so often the procession would stop, the chants suspended, and resounding in the night, grew a long, and clashing sound of the: *grrr-grrr-grrr-grrr...!*

The priest would bless the section of the district traveled, and then would proceed forward to the next stop, with relative *grabusàlo*, and so on for four or five times until the return into the church.

The awesomeness of that ceremony was immense: the light in the wind from the balls of burning ashes, the houses all well adorned, and light up, and the echo from the mountain returning the sounds in the night, made the evening memorable.

The evening after, Holy Saturday, the procession was repeated with the same intensity starting from the parish *Il Duomo*, this time though with "*bells ringing*" to celebrate the Resurrection.

The route was again in the evening, lit with the same balls of burning ashes, placed on both sides of the road, and would evolve by crossing the main square, and upward toward the church of Saint Mary Magdalene, then down on the main road toward the chapel of Saint Anthony, continuing until reaching the Bonicevi (the present bus line stop), for then descend along the concrete road *saliso* into the main square again the up through the stairway back into the church.

The gardens, and the houses along the route were decorated with lights, and flowers, and at the windows again, the beautiful tablecloths, and carpets. Particularly suggestive was the decorations of Saint Mary Magdalene, and the chapel of Saint Anthony, decorated with burning balls, and flowers. Versus the Good Friday by the Fiars, this procession would assume an aspect even more solemn, and suggestive, be it for the richness of the sacred vestments of the officiants and the priest who carried the monstrance with the Holy Eucharist, including the six bearers of the canopy, also, each participant carry a lighted candle, usually the one received during the feast of Candelora.

The scenographic impact of the nightly procession, lighted by the fluctuating alight balls, by the decorated houses with lights, and drapes, and the lighted candles carried was an extraordinary beauty of awesomeness.

Easter then, was celebrated with a definitive loosening of the bells, that were rang in unison at length, and long pealing sounds of *campanon*, be it them from the St. Francis Church or Saint Mary Magdalene.

For the Easter celebration every family would prepare the *pinze*, a sweet bread of antique Venetian origin, (in the Venetian region it is still called so today), it is similar to Panettone without candies or dried fruits, for children delight was also prepared colored eggs. For lunch on Easter Sunday, invariably every family eat (*a month or less old*) lamb.

The May.

With the name "Maggio" (May), (*Majo e Muàj*) was, and still is called the feast that is celebrated on the first Sunday of May. It is the feast of Juvenility, of spring, and of Love, and it is singularly celebrated only in Neresine: in no other town of the islands or nearby the moment is felt with the same intensity, and participation. The origins of this festivity is probably tied to an antique tradition of Central Italy, (Tuscany, Umbria, and Marche), where is celebrated in many towns, and with the same modality, that is, bringing the May into the Main square (a tree decorated with colored handkerchiefs) dancing, and singing around it to celebrate Youth, and Love.

To be true, lately upon deeper research, and historical reconstructions we can believe that the May feast was brought to Neresine between the XVII and the beginning of the XIX century, by immigrants from the island of Veglia (next-door) (Burburan, Cremenich, and Ghersan, Linardich, Petrinich, Zusich and others). In Veglia (as in Arbe), this feast was celebrated in antiquity, and here without any doubt introduced by some families of Florentine merchants who settled in the city, between XV and XVI century, as it is referred by ancient chronicles. Then with the massive Exodus of the island people in the XIX century, for the known political reasons, in Veglia this feast has been neglected.

The May in Neresine is anyhow a feast of long tradition, handed down from our ancestors, and as indicated it is still celebrated. For the occasion, the young men in "great secrecy" used to (and still do) go in the surrounding woods and chop down a great oak tree (*dubàz*) purposely called "The May"; during the night with great labor would bring it into the main Square, and tie to the well in the middle of the square, they would decorate it with colored silky head scarf's from the ladies traditional costumes. The day of the feast, the young men, and women would gather in the square, and dance at the music of the traditional bagpipe, the already noted *mescic*. The women dressed in the traditional rich festive costume, and the young men in the best holiday suits: the men still in the military service or just released from it would come dressed in uniform (*monture*) well washed and pressed to better impress the women. Later on in the beginning of the XX century, the May decorations with the silk head of shoulder scarf was discontinued, and substituted by decorating with flowers the whole square around the May Tree.

The high percent of the damaged silky head or shoulder scarf's eventually gave way to the less expensive flowers, and with a more surprising event. The youth then would go at night withdrawing the pots of flowers (intentionally left out for the occasion) of the most admired, and beautiful girls, especially the ones that had already some intended suitors, and bring the flowers to the square, setting up a beautiful flowering garden around the May. Ultimately, the young men would go to one of the harbors, and pick up the (*caìcio*) of the family of the most courted girl, and bring it to the May, many large objects would find their way to the square, sometimes even an outhouse. These events were evidently copied from the feast of the conscripts previously

described. The following morning (Sunday) after all the Masses, the whole town would gather to watch the spectacle, and again, who is watching who, whose intentions are being displayed, and so on. Of course, the women would recognize their own flowers at all, and acting somewhat disconcerted, then the gents would rush to recognize their own doings, and offer themselves to help return the flowerings... at the end of the feast, to wherever they took it from, and doing so, openly demonstrate their courting intentions. The feast would end with a dance until late night at the sound of the *mesic* around the May tree, more recently the Accordion replaced the *mesic*.

In times past, when the town started to develop, and show signs of civilization, also started to take hold signs of independence among the various district by having the “*Maggio*” in their own, Podgora, and in Dubcinna, beyond the main square one, (among the Friars, and Piazza there was no particular antagonism) T.N. *Interesting, these two ultimately ended being the better off districts.* In any case, the feast of Maggio was for many youth generations, especially in times when female modesty left very little room for promiscuity among the sexes, a useful shortcut therefore, as “May” allowed to declare ones intentions or make new amorous acquaintances.

Why not remember then the passages by which the Poliziano (1454 - 1494) sang (and immortalizes) the feast of “*Calendimaggio*”? *”ben venga maggio / e’l gonfalon selvaggio* / Ben venga primavera / che vuol l’uom s’innamori; / e voi, donzelle, a schiera / con li vostri amadori, / che di rose e di fiori / vi fate belle il maggio, ...*

*Banner of the woods, or rather branch of May (note of Attilio Momigliano)

“*May Day*”? *”Well come May / and wild * banner / Well come springtime / that wants men to fall in love / and you, maidens in a row / with yours lovers, / that with roses and flowers / you make yourselves beautiful the May,....*

The feast of St. Anthony of Padua.

The feast of Saint Anthony of Padua, falls on June 13, it was announced already in the preceding days by extended sounds of *campanon*. It was an event very felt. It was celebrated in the Franciscan church with a Solemn Mass “*in terza*” or rather, officiated by three priests dressed with the High Holiday vestments, the church would be engulfed with many flowers, the typical seasonal lilies (*of Saint Anthony*) The Saint statue, removed from its niche, and exposed on a proper stand by the side balustrade of the main altar.

During the ceremony was also imparted the Solemn Benediction to the children of the town, for the Saint was their protector. The Benediction ceremony was much hoped for, it also had an aspect very impressing, and moving, for the long line of mothers with the children in their arms, dressed with the best suits, that slowly alternated to the altar to receive the Benediction from the officiating priest.

Until 1940, we used also to have a procession carrying the Saint around the Frati district, the same as during Good Fridays. After the outbreak of war the procession was limited to the cloister of the convent, before it became permanently eliminated.

To prepare oneself worthily for the event, for the thirteen preceding evenings before the feast, the faithful would pray the Rosary in front of the Saint Anthony chapel, located on the main road near the square, and after the Rosary, the faithful, prevalently young, would entertain by singing religious songs, which on the clear evenings in June took a fascinating content. To say it all, the evening Rosaries had a sustained success, also, because for the youth of Neresine it represented a

choice opportunity to be in company of the young girls, for whom it was a convenient religious occasion to be allowed out after dinner alone.

In the period between the two World Wars, in the feast day, from Cherso would come vendors selling cherries, and from Lussinpiccolo mister Sicher, and son with an ice cream van selling ice creams for the great joy of all the children.

The procession of Corpus Domini (Christi).

The Corpus Domini was, again, one of the most important holidays in town, not for religious reasons but, because on this day took place the largest, and most solemn of all the processions, which involved all citizens on its preparation. The route was the same as that of Holy Saturday, but took place during the day. Along the route, they built temporary altars, as stops for special services during the procession, the officiating priest recited some prayers, and gave the blessing. The church of Saint Mary Magdalene, and the Chapel of St. Anthony were decorated with flowers, and garlands, on the windows of all the houses along the route was displayed the most beautiful rugs, and tablecloths. (There was no use for carpeting nor floor centerpieces, our houses had no heat/AC, the ground floors were tiled, no basements, and upper floors were of wooden planks, no closed ceilings, attics were for storing dried goods).

The young girls, wearing the white dress from First Holy Communion, would walk in front of the officiating priest carrying the monstrance with the Holy Host, and with overhead a canapé carried by six men, strewing flowers of broom on the road. The same girls, the day before were gathering flowers of broom in the surrounding fields, filling up their wicker baskets, properly lined with white veil. The six ranking persons carrying the canapé were also, dressed with special sacred vestments. and for this privilege they defray with a congruous annual economic contribution.

The pilgrimage (excursion) of Saint Anna.

On July 26, the Feast day of St. Anna, was dedicated to the traditional annual pilgrimage on Mt. Ossero, on its summit is an ancient chapel dedicated to St. Nicola, and S. Anna. The small size chapel, is built of massive stone blocks exposed, thoroughly hammered. It was rebuilt several times because, of its location, is subjected to lightning damages, the first building is probably the work of the Benedictine Camaldolense hermits in the Mountain, already present in the eleventh century. Ancient records show that the monks called the mountain as Mount Garbo of Saint Nicolas.

More than a pilgrimage, the recurrence was considered in town, as the largest annual excursion to the mountain. It started very early, at two or three in the morning when it was still dark, and peregrinating along the rugged trails, the walk lasted, according to the vigor of the participants, from two to three hours. Along the climb up, the various groups would join each other's forming long processions. and because, it was a cheerful, and pleasant opportunity to meet together, especially the young, sang traditional songs, jokes, and we enjoyed every trip as a respectable summer excursion. Naturally there was always, some who endured the trip bear footed, and with great devotion, especially to keep a promised vow. (*requesting an intercession by the Saints for a*

grace/favor it was customary to exchange the request with a vow of certain physical or moral action).

In the proximity of the chapel, by a slight dip in the ground, was a small long, and narrow pond, called lake Farbièzof, full of clear transparent clean fresh water. It was covered by a thick pine forest, everyone stopped here for a restoring rest, drinking the fresh water, and eye washing, the tradition sustained that the water had special medical powers benefitting the eyes.

The arrival at the peak coincided with the growing lights shining in the sky of dawn. From up there one can therefore, witness the rising sun, a spectacle of unbelievable beauty: the clear summer day, without any breeze, offered marvelous scenery. The surrounding islands, Sansego, Canidole, Unie, Levrera, and up to the islet of Galiola, they mirrored with thousand colors on the vast stretch of calm sea. The contour of the two islands of Lussino, and Cherso from on high with was visible with great clarity, with countless headlands, and inlets: south, Lussinpiccolo, Lussingrande, under, the town of Neresine, Ossero, and San Giacomo, and the houses of Bora and, Puntacroce. It is a breathless vision, even today, to go on top of the mountain at sunrise, means to witness an unchanged spectacle offered by God creation.

Anyhow, when reaching the Saint Nicolas chapel, the priest, Pastor or Friar that always accompanied the pilgrims, would pull up the sacred vestments, and celebrate the holy Mass. Inside was only room for about fifteen people, therefore most were outside in silence participating in the ceremony, silenced by the striking beauty of the first sunrays illuminating the area in that magic moment, and the sacredness of the rite.

After Mass all would gather in their original groups to enjoy breakfast together brought up from home, and you guessed right, sing again the traditional songs. *T.N. No wonder the name sake of the island is the nightingale.*

One of the trills most liked by the young men, even though blamable (reproachable), was to roll down the western slope of the mountain, which is very short, and steep, big boulders, and watch them make a clear path through the trees on its way down. At the end, the game would change into a challenge of who is going to roll the largest boulder, and the more distant trajectory down the slope. This too was an interesting spectacle to watch because; the boulders would jump at times even 100 meters to everyone's amusement.

Another proper execution was to visit the grotto of Saint Gaudenzio, this is a natural grotto about 200-300 meters below from the chapel of Saint Nicolas, and reachable trough a very rugged trail, from rock to rock, walking, jumping, and claiming, where tradition dictated that the Saint spent a part of his life as a hermit. The grotto is constituted by two ample ,and clean spaces; the smaller space that has a whole in the middle, was thought to have been the kitchen, and the other, the sleeping quarter. At one time in the kitchen, was a robust wooden beam resting on two stones, that we assume was a bench the Saint used to sit on to rest or prepare the food.

The return home was usually around noon, tired and happy, ready for a swim.

The bonfires of Saint Mary Magdalene.

To celebrate the successful conclusion of wheat harvest, July 22, the feast day of St. Mary Magdalene, we went into the fields to gather stubble (*starnisc'e*), and pile in heap in the center of the field, and then burn them in the evening, making bonfires at night (the *coleda*). The focal point of the whole party was on the lawn in front of the church of S. Mary Magdalene, where during the day the youth of Neresine accumulated large amounts of stubble, gathered in nearby

fields. In the evening, when darkness fell, the heap was set on fire, developing into a great *colèda*. Of course, the town's young men, and women would gathered around the fire to stoke it, and run through it as a lighting, joking cheerfully until late. On that night Neresine assume an aspect very evocative: the many fires burning here and there, and on the high plateau the great *colèda* S. Mary Magdalene that illuminated the mountain, and all around, made the evening memorable

According to tradition, the feast has its origin from the memorable battle to save Belgrade. The battle was on July 14 to 22, 1456, the Christian army of the kingdom of Hungary guided by the soldier of fortune Hunyadi and the friar Giovanni da Capestrano on one side and, on the other the Turks that besieged the city of Belgrade. During the last days of the battle, the Christian soldiers filled the Danube barges and boats of stubble and fagots of wood, then setting them on fire, while, floating on the current downstream towards the Turkish fleet moored in the river, on that impact the Turkish fleet caught fire. At the same time, from the walls of the city were thrown onto the assailants other burning fagots of wood impregnated with pitch, causing the disruption of the Turkish army, which took a ruinous flight. The battle ended on daytime of July 22, the recurrence feast of Saint Mary Magdalene, with the victory of the Christian army, and the triumphal entrance into the freed Belgrade of Friar Giovanni da Capestrano (now Saint).

Defeated the Turks, the Christian army dissolved and the survivors returned to their own lands. Among the Christian fighters was a group led by a nobleman from Ossero, Francesco Drasa, who returned to his island with some of his men, we do not know whether, volunteers or recruited by him before leaving for Belgrade, however, with the few men brought with him, in memory of the fateful battle, he ventured into building, in his lands of the church of Saint Mary Magdalene, as an act of gratitude to the Saint, on the very day of her anniversary, July 22. The veterans of the battle settled with their families around the church, also giving rise to the birth of Neresine.

According to tradition in memory of that event, and those bonfires, since then, every year at the anniversary, Neresine celebrates with the night of great bonfire (*coleda*). Not surprisingly, also in the old church is still preserved, and venerated, an ancient picture, showing precisely St. John of Capistrano. Over the centuries the festival was established in the tradition of the town, perhaps as a pretext to lead young people to clean the land, where already was planted, to prepare it for the next, hoeing or plowing, seeding.

NOTE: Currently a large plaque installed in plain view inside the church of S. Mary Magdalene, during its last renovation (1982), attests to the year 1534 as one of its construction. This date is completely arbitrary, but is actually the date of an ancient document from the Diocese of Ossero, where for the first time a census was taken and the description of the churches of the whole Diocese. This document is also described our church of St. Mary Magdalene, which shows that its construction dates back at least sixty years before this census. Probably the casual renovator has exchanged this date with the foundation of the church. Other historical investigations lead us to find, with good approximation, the date of construction of this church between the years 1456-1465.

August.

Under the name of "August" were called the three-days show of the annual market fair of Neresine, which took place precisely in the first three days of this month. On this occasion came

vendors from all parts, selling all kinds of merchandise in their stalls, arranged in beautiful order in the square, and along the road that leads from the square to Marina (harbor). The first day was reserved for Sansegotti. Neresine had a special relationship with Sansego. In years of "business" trade, had created a deep sense of friendship, and solidarity among many families of Neresine, and the small nearby island. Neresinotti bought mainly grapes from Sansego to make wine, while in Neresine Sansegotti bought everything they needed: oil, cheese, clothing, textiles, seeds, etc.

In the days of the fair came to Neresine the inhabitants of neighboring towns, from the islands of Sansego (Susak), Unie and Canidole (Sracàne), and the towns of Ossero, Ustrine, Belèi, Saint Martin of Cherso (Martinsciza), San Giacomo, Ciunschi, Puntacroce. In those days were also organized traditional games, including the donkey race, tug of war, the greasy pole, the search for a ring in a bowl of flour, to be collected by mouth with hands tied behind the back, sack races, and others. The greasy pole, not only was the highlight of the games, but was made in an original way. Having, in fact, the Neresinotti great familiarity with the sea, the game took place precisely over the water. A long wooden pole column (old mast) was tied in a horizontal position protruding over the sea from the pier, under the *Comun*, or in front of *tuoric'*, (the current tourist office). At the end of this post, usually a mast about 10-15 meters long, well-polished and varnished and at one end were attached three red flags, spaced about two feet from each other: the first, second and third prize.

The pole was well greased with animal grease (*luòì*), to make it very slippery (later was used mineral grease), whereupon the game was to walk bare footed over the pole and capture the three flags. Of course, the oscillation of the flexible pole under the weight of the participant and its greasy slipperiness made it very difficult to reach even near the flags, all male children participated but, most fell into the sea after the first few steps, between the laughter, and shouts of encouragement, and amusement of those present. As the efforts continued, the balancing quality of the competitors improved, and the reduced sleepiness of the pole, the distance covered along the pole increased, the youths would retry many times. Finally after numerous attempts some would reach the flags one by one, between the festive enthusiasm, and applause of the onlookers, crowded along the banks of the harbor.

There were also, competitions such as: running, swimming, swimming underwater (*gnorìt*), the race to dive from the masts of ships in port, but the most anticipated competitions were the annual rowing boats, and sailing boats regattas. The rowing regatta was the more excitant because, it took place among the faster district boats *caici*, driven by strong, and experienced rowers from among the inhabitants of these districts. The crew consisted of four rowers plus a coxswain. The rowers choose their oars, after careful selection among those in the district, the results were the lighter, and more efficient oar. The training preparation of the crews, lasted few days (everyone had a job in those days), and was watched attentively by the whole district. In the race participated three or four boats: one for the Frati, one for Piazza, one for Biscopua, and one with prevalently participation from Sottomonte (*Podgora*). The day before the race the boats were pull on shore to dry, and make them lighter just hours before the race the hull was anointed with tallow to make them more slippery in the water (someone dared secret formulas of mixtures of various fats), the distance was a nautical mile, usually from Scoìch. the promontory of Bora across the Port and the entrance of the harbor Magaseni. The race was watched from around the town, who by boat, others by land, the banks were overflowing with screaming fans. Then, after the race, and for the next day, those who had not won had to endure the ridicule of the winners, who were usually those of the district Friars, because they had the heavier, and fastest boat (the

"Slava" of Zimich) *stronger oarsmen (the Slava was a Norwegian lifeboat re-converted for local fishing).*

The preparation, and conduct of the sailboats regatta was similar, although, in this instance, the material was more technical, and therefore more restricted to the "experts" and the one involved. The path in this case was much longer, usually 7-8 miles: from the port, a direct shot to Caldonta, the first mark, then up to close tacking to Pod Arzi (the mouth of Tiesni before Ossero), where in front of the house of Bortulignevi was the second buoy, and then returned to Porto with the wind from the back. Again, each district had to choose the faster boat, and better man at the helm, and the selection lasted almost all year round: the sea in front of Neresine, the Canal, was a regatta's course going on every Sunday for all good seasons. For youth *bordesar* (tacking) was the most fun, especially when the girls went to swim in Rapoc'e, Lucizza or on the piers of the harbor: to get one or two on board was the most coveted, and prestigious achievement the kids could aspire. Sailing was for the Neresinotti, similar to riding the bicycle, whether one had one or not, no one forgets how to ride, sailing is the same. Again, whether for fishing, working, transporting to, and from Bora, in season going to milk the sheep in Bora or just for pleasure, there was always, someone sailing the *Canal*. *And if someone was stuck in Bora without a boat, or had an emergency there, (remember the cell phones came way much too late), he/she would light a fire by the shore, and soon after, you would see a sailboat going in that direction.*

The feast of St. Francis.

The feast of St. Francis, in whose honor was dedicated the church ,and the convent of the Friars, it was also one of Neresine's most important, because until the construction of the Cathedral (*Duomo*), dedicated to Our Lady of Health, which also became the patron saint of the town, the patron saint of Neresine was precisely S. Francis of Assisi. The festivities took place on October 4, in the same manner as already described for Saint Anthony, by displaying the Saint statue from the area by the high altar facing the congregation, (in advance brought down from the other niche above the altar). The solemn procession in the district of the Friars, and the exiting "campanon". The rite included High Holy Masses in the morning, and vespers in the afternoon, lots of singing, and uplifting. Due to the long history of the friars of Saint Francis, and the proximity of the cemetery to the church, was a good opportunity for many out of towners to join in, and pay a visit to the deceased relatives.

Our Lady of Health.

Since the late nineteenth century, when the cathedral was built, it was dedicated, to Our Lady of Health, who, also, become the patron Saint of Neresine. Given the scarcity of Neresinotti currently residing in Neresine, this festival, which falls on November 21, has lost some of its former importance, because it was tied to a certain attraction to Venice, to the sea life, navigation, and Neresine naval armament. The feast, however, continues to be celebrated with great solemnity in all the world cities in which Neresinotti are settled. Genoa, and especially in Venice, where there is also the great annual gathering, with a convivial lunch of Neresinotti, and descendants from all over of Italy. In New York too, since 1971, where between natives, and

descendants from Neresine are over two thousand people, seventeen people started this celebration, and conserve a large reproduction of the painting behind the High Altar of the *Duomo* in Neresine, this painting is zealously preserved, and displayed during Mass. The Neresinotti choir used to sing the “Missa “ Te Deum Laudamus” in two voices” by Lorenzo Perosi, and “Missa de Angelis” when short of singers. The celebration is attended also, by many natives from the two islands. The evening dining, and dancing celebration is held in a major catering establishment, with raffles, and sometime artistic display of Neresinotti’s artisan arts, and crafts. No feast is finished until all singing is done, and there is a lot of it. The friction among the two ethnic lovers, Italian, and Croat, if any, is only personal, we all sing together, and to keep the young one happy, we throw in some English.

The pressing of the olives.

In Neresine, from the earliest times, the population devoted particular attention to the cultivation of olive trees, from which is extracted the good virgin olive oil, considered one of the most valuable assets for a family. The months of late September through November were dedicated to collecting, and pressing of the olives. The event was very important, not only from an economic standpoint, but also because at that time the town changed a bit the "way of life". The crushing operations were conducted in the three mills of the town, around the clock, three shifts per day, and lasted several weeks. The crusher (or *Torcio tuòric*) was equipped with various machines, and equipment for the processing of raw materials, and was managed by a Proto (*Pruoto*) (mill head), while the duty of the olives owners was to provide the wood needed to heat water for oil production, and labor: usually, to drive the large stone mill to crush the olives, and the press screw for squeezing the crushed row material, it needed six to eight people. The unit of measure for this activity was the *mijuàda*, corresponding to four hundred kilos, i.e. the quantity of olives needed for a complete cycle of grinding, and pressing.

At the grinding, in which participated the whole family owning a batch of olives (labor was, in fact, recruited at home or among their relatives), took place in the light of oil lamps, and the fire that crackled in the fireplace, under an enormous copper cauldron of hot water. Around the fireplace, on low benches (*buàncic’i*), grandparents, and children were sitting, it was a nice opportunity to be together, a memorable moment of sociality in which one told old stories of the town, curious anecdotes, and ridiculous, in which the elderly grasps the opportunity to convey to young people with the ancient stories, and traditions. The women brought food to the workers: there was always bread, and cheese, ham, wine, dried figs, brandy, and other delicacies.

The most striking moment was represented by squeezing the hand press. After filling their baskets with the olive paste obtained by grinding, and stacked them on the press, it began to tighten the large screw plate that crushed the baskets. At first the screw, driven by the foreman, went down with relative ease, then, when the screwing got harder, all intervened with, two men pulling ropes a large beam (*aspùn*) that served as a handle to the screw itself. Each turn with the beam resulted in about 100-110 degrees of the screw. The pulling of the beam was cadenced by an old song: “*longaaa eeee secondaaa, brazia guanta curaiooo, forza tira de braviiii, tutti decordiini, tomba le viteee, pronta le aspeee, zo daghe denovooo, zo, zo, zo che la basaaaa*”; “*basa*” “*long the firsttt anddd the seconddd, arms take holddd corrageee, power pull the goodonesss, all togrtherrr, turn your bodyssss, ready the rodssss, down do it againnn, down, down, down make it kisssss*. Kiss (i.e. kiss) meant that the beam had reached the limit, going up

against the vertical post of a winch, which would later be used for the same purpose. After the first operation the beam is brought back to the starting point: this caused the emission of a loud noise, that the tooth (bulk of steel) emitted through the holes on the commitment of the screw plate: *gdan, gdan, gdan , gdan*, and began again with the next pull. As the pressure of the screw increased, the voices increased in volume and became more frantic. Eventually, when the pressure of the screw became too much for the ropes, they continued to pull with the winch. They inserted two rods (*aspe*) of rugged wood in the holes of the vertical post that served as a winch, the pulling rope was passed around the beam to the post-winch and four men began to spin it, even in this case, to standardize the efforts and cadenced step, the "gyrators" would help themselves by a rap song composed of dry words of encouragement, rhythmically repeated. While tightening the press proceeded, the foreman, with a huge ladle and long wooded handle, withdrew the boiling water from the cauldron and wetted the stack of bags to facilitate the oil separation from it which together with the hot water would flowing in a large vat placed in a special hole beside the press. As the oil in the vat, lighter than water, is stratified at the surface of the mixture, the level would gradually rise, and the Proto would discharge from a bottom tap some of the water, by keeping the surface at a manageable level for him, to skim the surface with another ladle and a segmented (bent) scooping board to facilitate the collection with the ladle. The last layer, which collected the heaviest part of the oil emulsified with water, the *murca* (other word dalmatic which means sludge), was decanted into separate containers for a subsequent decantation. The oil at the mill was stored in portable wooden or steel containers. It was too precious for storage in glass containers, too dangerous. At home the oil was stored in *càmenize*, containers of hard stone of rectangular shape, made by chiseling a large mass of stone properly squared. The *càmenize* had variable dimensions according to the needs of families, ranging from about 50 to over 200 liters, and each house had one or two. For the payment to the mills, the Proto would keep a percentage of the oil produced. The whole process required two pressings. The first was just described and the second began: at the end of the first, after some pause for collecting the dripping oil, the press would be unscrewed and retrieved from the *Sporte* (round doughnut shape containers, (bags) made of rope, which contained the crushed olives, now become circular plates) these *sporte* (about twelve) were then removed and loosened up by casting them to the ground many times to loosen the crushed material. One by one then would be relocated on the press and saturate thoroughly with boiling water to extract more oil, upon the stocking of all twelve, the press plate would be lowered again, and re-press the bundle all over again, as described above for the first pressing.

Saint Nicholas, the children's feast.

Recite a nursery rhyme: "*San Nicolò de Bari, la festa dei scolari, se i scolari non fa festa un pugno sula testa, se i scolari i xe boni, San Nicolò ghe portarà i bomboni*". "St. Nicholas de Bari, the feast of schoolchildren, if the schoolchildren do not celebrate, a fist on the head, if the schoolchildren are good, St. Nicholas will bring goodies "bonbons". St. Nicholas, December 6th, the feast was the most anticipated by children because, it was the saint who brought them gifts, as they do in other parts of the western world for Christmas, and Baby Jesus, Santa Claus, Saint Lucia, the Epiphany, or the Anglo-Saxon Santa Claus, the name always comes from St. Nicholas (Nicklaus Sanctus). In Neresine Saint Nicolas never came alone, but was always accompanied by

the Krampus, a cute little devil that too brought gifts, but for the children who had been a bit 'naughty: onion, and coal. According to the popular imagination of the town, in fact, it was unconceivable that the Saint who loved children so much, could also, bring negative gifts. To this provided the Krampus, who was then also evoked in other circumstances, as a warning from mothers, and grandmothers to the 'naughty children. Krampus has probably of Austrian or German origin, or at least Central Europe.

The town children, as all their peers across the world, on that fateful night were spasmodic awaiting the arrival of St. Nicholas, because, of course, he came down from Mount Ossero, and the small ones never tired of spying from the window, the dark night, the mountain, hoping to see a little light, someone invariably swore they had seen.

The Christmas season.

The period between Christmas-New Year was a time of extraordinary activity, both for teenagers, and small children. The women were engaged in the preparation of the many delicacies: dried raisins made to dry in the attic, crunchy glazed almonds, dried figs, the *pandefighi* (*smocvègnazi*), and those made with dry figs (*carcgne*) milled, and mixed with a little brandy, and wild fennel seeds, and those made with very tasty *polussic'i*, sweet figs (*belizze*) dried in the open sun, split into two, and then pressed into special wooden bowls *ciàssize*. The children were in frenetic activity: it was necessary, for example, go in the countryside to collect the moss for preparing the Nativity scene, that every house had one (the decoration of the Christmas tree was introduced only very recently). The older boys of the Friars neighborhood prepared the Nativity scene in their church. In the chapel of St. Anthony, was built with boards a platform stage as big as the whole area of the chapel, and for days they worked in its construction: it was necessary to create the sky, place lights, built caves, place the moss, put in clear view of the palace Herod, and the city of Bethlehem, properly settle the shepherds, and sheep in short had to invent every year a new script. The shepherds, animals, and the characters were (20-30 cm) tall, and were very old, carefully preserved by generations of friars.

Also at the *Duomo* they built a beautiful Nativity scene. In time past they used to install a big grotto made of papier-mâché with all characters of the Nativity on the altar of the Sacred Family, while, in the more recent times, they installed a beautiful Nativity scene, similar to the one by the friars; since the end of the war, however, this tradition at the *Duomo* has totally ceased until 2005, when the Nativity scene has reappeared again, after so many years of absence.

Another exercise much loved by the altar boys was "going to incense" (*Bless the houses, by visits and leaving some incense in a dish*): it was, according to ancient tradition, to accompany the friar to bless all the houses of Neresine, in the days before Christmas. The friar, dressed in the vestments of light (white coat and stole), accompanied by one or two altar boys, also dressed with the ritual habit, equipped with censer (*cadìlo*) and sprinkler, going from house to house to bring blessing, and Christmas greetings. When entering the house, the friar exchanged the customary pleasantries with the locals, then after the unfolding of circumstance, gave his blessing with holy water to the Nativity, which was large or small, everyone was prepared. Then put a little of incense in the censer (thurible), where an altar boy had bothered to poke the *bronze* (coals), would incense *cadit* the whole house, flooding the typical good smell (*cadit*, meant to spread the incense smoke). Along the path of going from house to house, the *bronze* (charcoal in

the censer) would consume, so that the altar boys would ask the hosts for fresh ones, which they extracted from their stoves *spàher* or *fogoler* (*ug'gnisce*) fire place, crackling merrily for the occasion and the season. Eventually, the friar gave a spoonful of incense in a dish, specially prepared by the hosts, who meanwhile had filled a plate of *fritole* (fritters) to offer. For boys this was the most awaited moment, as they tried to mask their greed with barely concealed attitude of timid reluctance. The kids, thanks to this tradition, had become real experts on *fritole*: now they knew where and who did the best *fritole*, and as visiting all the houses of the town required a certain time, two three days, there used to be frequent fights, to grab the *stuagni* more generous. Since the friars are vowed to poverty, this occasion would also be a chance to donate food, and or clothing to the friars, therefore a third order Franciscan man (layperson) would accompany the group and collect any gift.

Children of various *stuagni* (districts), in the evening after dinner, in the days before Christmas, went "to *agnoleti*", i.e., grouped themselves in a procession, and with a lamp on hand (*feralic*) went in front of the closed doors of the neighboring houses just to sing the nursery rhyme *agnoleti*: "*Agnoleti a uno a uno, la Madona de San Bruno, de San Bruno in compagnia, a rosario bon Maria. Agnoleti a dò a dò, la Madona de San Nicolò, de San Nicolò in compagnia, a rosario bon Maria. Agnoleti a tre a tre, la Madona dei San Tre Re, dei San Tre Re in compagnia, a rosario bon Maria. Agnoleti a quattro a quattro, la Madona de san Marco....* And so on saying *zinqe a zinqe, sei a sei, sette a sette ..., otto, nove, diese...*". At the end of the exhibition, the children would ask: "*Amate la canzone?*" If the answer from inside was affirmative, they would say, "*tanti ciodi gavé sulla porta, tanti angeli che ve porta*", then they would be asked to enter and were offered, candy, caramelized almonds, nougat candy and, other Christmas delicacies. Sometimes the neighbors would banter, and give a negative response, then the rhyme went: "*Tanti ciodi gavè sulla porta tanti diavoli che ve porta, tanti travi gavè in cantina, tanti diavoli che ve strassina*" The joy and emotion that provided the preparation, and participation to this exhibition was immense, and can be really understood only by the ones fortunate enough to have done this.

The day of Christmas Eve (in our dialect called *nanabàdgni*) was dedicate for transferring traditions, that is: it was dedicated to teach the descendants, sons, nephews, and even fiozi (Godsons), the art, somewhat arcane to do "*crisat*", or rather, to obtain extraordinary happenings with magic words, and mysterious signs of the Cross, because only on this day such powers could be imparted to others. In this occasion was thought how to destroy with the sign of the Cross made with an ax *manera*, a *sion* or *siun* waterspout, (this was very needed for the sailors) or else how to cure distortions, again with mysterious concoctions, and manipulations, and similar things.

The traditional dinner dish for Christmas Eve was dried codfish with polenta (dry codfish was then wetted for the softening, the word stockfish was not used yet) it very similar to *baccala alla vicentina*. The Christmas Day dish was instead *càrpize* (literally, little rags) or *macaroni* or rather, *lasagne* (that is, macheroni freshly homemade, with *svazèto*, meat gravy, and turkey meat, chicken, fowl or lamb stew: served with roasted potatoes and or sauerkrauts. The traditional dessert was *fritole*, fritters, of which we spoke a while back: the fritters were made of a mixture similar to pancakes, precooked flour, raisins, apple chunks (small), lemon or orange grinds, grappa, and other family (secret ingredients) fried on olive oil (almost deep fried – unknown then) in a spoon size, that became somewhat of a ball, quite like *profiterole* but better.

During this meal, for the joy of the children, and some grown up, we burned some of the incense left by the friar when he came to bless the house a few days earlier, on a dish with live charcoal.

The burning of the incense was considered like a rite, the fine smell flooded the whole house, and gave a purifying feeling, and good omen for the wellbeing of the whole family, it would complete the blessing circle from the friar. God was very present, and visible in most of our lives. The evening of the last day of the year was dedicated to the great dancing in the movie house: the “*Veglione*” see how tradition was important, we did not have New Year’s Eve, we had the evening of the Last Day. The Veglione had the same outpouring as the Carnevale, election of King, and Queen with postcards, and cotillions.

The morning of the day of First of the Year, the children would equip themselves with the biggest quince apple they could find (*cugna*) they would put through a small branch of rosemary (*rusmarin*), and went around the neighborhood, and houses of relatives, and friends to wish them the best for a Happy New Year, in exchange receiving a coin, which was tucked in the quince. Then, after the “*Messa Grande*” in the *Duomo* would go down in the *main square*, that day more crowded than ever, walking from huddle to huddle to wish everyone “*bon prinzipio*” good beginning to the presents, again making visible the quince; the men would exchange the greeting, with the usual phrase “*grazie, da bimmo i clètu*”, thanks, may we do it again next year, then they would also insert a coin in the quince. The children would return home in time for lunch proudly showing their bounty.

The kitchen Neresinotta.

The first settlers of Neresine, over five centuries ago, had to adapt, and certainly did so, willingly to the raw materials found there, continuing, and developing the existing environment. The base Neresinotti’s alimentation, came from grains, vegetables, lamb, and pork (family raised), cheese, fish, wine, and seasoning, and olive oil abundantly produced.

We have collected below a brief description of main dishes, which can be likened to those of the Venetian cuisine.

- *Brodo di carne*: **Beef broth**, in all its variations: of sheep, *castradina*, (castrated ram), chicken, etc.), prevalently prepared with homemade fresh pasta, and with rice, and pasta.

- *Lasagne (càrpize)*: of soft grain, homemade with the *vaiàlo* rolling pin, seasoned with *svazèto*, beef gravy, a more refined variance was, *macaroni*, or rather; small squares of pasta rolled in the shape of a tube like the traditional Italian macheroni, and seasoned the same way.

- *Polenta*: in its many variations, with beef gravy, or fish, prepared in as many ways, olive oil seasoned with anchovies, etc.

Another typical dish, was the *scròb*, semi fluid polenta cooked in the broth of residue from ham (prosciutto bones), and added some salted pork ribs (salted, and dry-that is the way one could store any beef, without refrigeration). The name *scròb* is probably English, where still today is in use a similar polenta, typical sailors meal.

- *Gnocchi di patate*: potato blintz, rolled into an oval shape, sometime filled, seasoned with *svazèto*, sometimes with *brudèto*. (My mother would prepare for me stuffed with marmalade).

- *Brudèto*: fish gravy, similar to the brodetto from Romagna, and Venice, used to season polenta, pasta, lasagne, and gnocchi. The best fish for this gravy, in order of delicacy, is: very sweet squids (*lig’ne*), the *scarpèna* similar to redbfish, a fish akin of *scarpòch*, and *bisibàba*, *còcot* sea robin, *ragno* weever, also the (*gruh*) gonger is very appreciated.

For the *brudèto de calimari* it was very important the cleaning process, so not to ruin, or rather, to conserve attentively the precious *petùje*, these were gelatinous, and transparent vesicles located inside the squid, toward it’s end, because these, added to the brodetto while cooking,

would transform it into delicate, and exquisite condiment. One of the recommendations from my grandmother was: *Dio guardi (Buoh ciùvaj) far el brudèto de calimari senza le petùje!* God forbid, making the brudetto of squids without the *petùje!* (*chest...ties!*)

- ***Calamari con la bruòscva*** (*squids with cabbage*): this dish is one of the most typical and delicious, worthy of making a good impression in the best regional Italian cuisine, and more. even in this case "Buoh ciùvaj without petùje".

- ***Bùsara***: is a typical brudetto somewhat more liquid from rock crabs (*garmài*), shrimps of shell fish, usually with boiled rice or polenta.

- ***Agnello arrosto*** (roast lamb): typical, and delicious dish of lamb stew, cooked in a slow fire for many hours. The lamb much sought-after is from the mountain, that is grown in the arid grasslands of Mount Ossero. because, rich of aromatic herbs, and the salt brought by the strong winter winds, Bora. Much sought-after was also the lamb from Tarstenik, small island off Puntacroce, rich with aromatic herbs and intrinsic sea salt.

- ***Capuzzi garbi***: sauerkrauts, cabbage marinated in salt, and vinegar, with *sausage (calbassizza, pig sausage)* or other salted or smoked pork meat.

- ***Minestre di legumi***: Vegetable soups: among these we must remember the *pasta and fasioi, (beans)* enriched perhaps with a sausage or a piece of ham or porcine (*prascèvina*), and the various soups of chickpeas, fava beans, lentils, and grass pea (*zìzeriza*).

- ***Risi e bisì, risi na cumpìru***: rice, and peas, rice, and potatoes. There's a nice anecdote about this soup dish that was considered poor, and of low value. In times of increased production activities, and export of timber for firewood, two young Neresinotti had gone to work in a day by day situation, to load timber on a ship of Romagnoli (*Italians from Romagna*) in *Draga* (a place in Bora, the island of Cres) across the *canal* sea from Neresine. In the contract of employment was included the noon meal on board the ship, while at night they would return home with their *caicio*. The two young men while working made friends with the crew of the ship, and so in the evening were invited to stay for dinner, and spend some time in their company. They asked what was for dinner, and having heard that there was "soup Romagnola", decided to stay, saying to one another, "*rather than return home and eat those blasted (pròchieti) (cursed) rice with potatoes, for once (cambiamo magnemo) we change, we will eat soup the way they eat in Romagna*". But this eventually turned out to be nothing more than the usual detested *rice with potato!*

- ***La carne***: the beef, extensive use was made of salted, and smoked pork beef, which was preserved in the wood vats (Tignes), sort of small tanks shaped like a truncated cone, (half a barrel). The finest pieces were of course the hams, processed in the Dalmatian way, and loin (*luòmbul*), salted, and smoked pork tenderloin, a kind of cup. Worthy of mention are the *ciriève*: tripe, salted, and smoked, obtained from the small intestine of the pig, which we ate roasted over charcoal on the *Fogoler (fire place)* in the winter (very similar taste of roasted beacon).

- ***Piatti tipici invernali***: *typical winter dishes*, in the winter time we frequently ate *bruòscva* (cabbage), and *blitva* Swiss Chard), and also polenta with cuttlefish brudèto (*sepa* or *sippa*) or octopus (*folpo* or *cobuòdniza*), salted, and dried in the sun, then wet for some time to soften them, before cooking. About *cobuòdniza*, the dialectal term is used in everyday parlance to define a person soaking wet like (*bagnado come una cobuòdniza*, or you are wet like a *cobuòdniza*, or even in Slavic dialect, *mòkar kako cobuòdniza*), from the custom of soaking for some time dried fish or beef before cooking. ***Piatti tipici estivi***: typical summer dishes: a dish that is often eaten in the evening during the summer were, the cool boiled potatoes with raw radicchio, all mixed together, and seasoned with oil, and vinegar, along with fried or grilled fish,

or even with the salted sardines (anchovies), the fish most commonly used in this dish were the delicious *maride* or *mènule* of Rìduja, (similar to whiting), perhaps unique in the world with that flavor. (Riduja is an area, land/sea in Bora, in front of the town of Neresine). Even jokingly we call them luganighe (sausages) Lussignane. (Like Tilapia, is the poor man Lobster).

- Sauce: every family in the summer preparing the concentrated tomato sauce needed to meet the needs of the home cooking. We gathered the ripe tomatoes, squeezing it with cheese cloth to retain the skins and seeds, the liquid mixed with the pulp, is then appropriately salted, and spread in the sun over a *dasc'ìzze trays* (rectangular tray containers made of wood board, about forty inches long, sixteen inches wide and about one and one quarter inches high), it then dries in the sun, stirring occasionally to mix as it solidifies. At the end the sauce, a thick paste of dark red color, was collected for storage in *bozòni*, glass jars with airtight glass stoppers. In the dog days of August the low walls of the courtyards of the village houses were full of *dasc'ìzze* tomato sauce in the sun, and the kids running in their games up and down the district, could not contain themselves passing by without picking a finger worth of sauce and sucking the delicious cream sauce, followed by shouts and insults of the landlady.

- **Funghi:** mushrooms, mushrooms which grow wild, and they are plentiful, strangely were not considered edible, but, there are numerous highly prized varieties, as: *marzuoli*, abundant in the winter, the roosters, and nails, though less valuable the *prataiol*, the drum sticks, and the doves. There are no *porcini* mushrooms, even if the *porcinelli*, are very abundant.

- **Desserts:** Among the sweets, there are some which we have already observed, how *fritole* during Christmas, the *crostoli* carnival, and *pinze*, for Easter. In earlier times, to give color to the *pinze*, and a particular pleasant taste, *saffruàn* was added (saffron) which was locally cultivated in gardens, also, typical of Neresine, this custom has been lost. Apple strudel (mainly quince) was prepared in all seasons, the *kugluf*, and pancakes (a kind of pancake) stuffed with a mixture of *ricotta*, cocoa, and sugar or jam, possibly even this homemade from quince. Among the desserts are also *kifeli*, a type of finger fritters (elongated like a finger) made with a mixture of sugar, flour, and potatoes, tapered at the ends, and variously curved and, fried in oil; (their origin is probably Austrian or Polish), however, in southern Italy they have exactly the same shapes, called *Taralli* not sweet, and baked like bread sticks.

Another dessert, of more recent introduction, but it has become traditional in the late nineteenth century, was "the fava beans of the dead", probably introduced from Trieste, and Istria, but in fact inevitable in the period of the celebrations for *All Souls Day*, and the patron of Our Lady of Health, November 21. They are colorful pastry made of almond paste in the form of large fava beans, of which every family could not do without during the fall holidays. They are still quite popular in the Italian northern Adriatic.

- **Ulita nadegnene** (tripe filled, inflated): Ancient and primitive dish, it was the large Pig or Sheep intestine filled with a sweet dough of flour, and eggs, similar to that of the fritters, containing raisins, pine nuts, and almonds. It becomes like a large sausage, which is cooked for a time in a large pot, and then it can be eaten in delicious warm slices, or stored, and eaten over time, cut into slices, and roasted over charcoal or heated in other ways and, even fried.

- **Guòrcule:** guòrcule were the large black olives (their name means "bitter") that were baked in special pans and sprinkled with plenty of sugar.

The bread.

From the earliest origins of Neresine the bread was homemade, and each house or group of houses, had its own oven. In earlier times, the oven was constructed of sturdy brick exterior to

the house, in a corner of the courtyard, and was shaped like a small tower with an opening at chest level, a sloping roof of tiles, and was completed with a high chimney out in the front. The old furnace had the appearance of a church in miniature, with the chimney top that looked like a bell tower. An ancient proverb, in the Slavic dialect of the Neresine, to indicate very primitive behavior, said: "*chi ni nìcad zriècvu vèdel, i na pec'è se clagna*" "*who never seen a church, he bowes in front of an oven*". Then, with the construction of new houses the ovens were moved within the same house, kitchen, or barrack. The bread was usually made once a week. Was mixed in special trays (*copànize*) or in *smur* (large round-bottomed rectangular trough, made by chiseling a big trunk), and packaged in the form of *struzze* or *colùbe* (large loaf), with freshly milled flour (milled in the barrack between one stationary and one rotating stone) obtained from wheat grown locally in *gorghi* (tièsi) of the countryside. The fresh bread was shared within a group of families, so that everyone had fresh bread weekly. The rest of the bread would be sliced, and relocated into the oven for a further period. This bread was toasted *passamète* kept, and eaten for three or four weeks, the cycle needed for all in the group to have completed their share. This cycle allowed all in the group to have enough fresh, and dry bread every week.

The *passamète* were consumed as dry toast in the morning coffee, mid-morning snack (*jùsina*) with cheese, in the fields during the day, because it was more suitable to be carried in the *rùssak* (*rucksack*) together with other goods, and tools (*spone, sfilazzi, òbruci, òglavize, etc...*), and the inevitable *botiunìch* of beverage (*bevuànda*) wine with water. The glass container (flask) was covered with *tarnèla*, that is, covered by a dense network of strands of tarred rope, which provided a thermal insulation and protection against breaking. The handle was made from the same strong woven strands for easier transportation.

The *botiunìch*, and its bigger counterpart *botiùn* were the sailors characteristic containers for a supply of wine or wine, and water, pure water was avoided for health reason, in closed containers during the summer heat could breed bacteria, so was always mixed with wine or even vinegar, very thirst quenching.

The *passamète* were also used to make breakfast with "*sòppiza*", i.e. to be drenched (dipped) in a half glass of wine enriched with sugar, and eaten with good light sheep cheese, (a very energetic pick-up snack) cow cheese was a rarity, sometimes was mixed into the sheep milk for cheese. Breeding cows required much maintenance and forage, not readily available in town.

As for making bread or polenta, was needed first to mill the grains into flour, therefore, each *stuàgne* had at least a pair of *sàrne* (pronounced with an "s" sweet like rose), that is the grinders or mills. The *sarne* were made of a sturdy wooden frame, constructed on two levels: the upper layer, at man waist level, was fitted with two pairs of large round stones, a diameter of about 60 cm each, placed one over the other. The lower stone was fixed with in the middle a pin of hard wood, tapered (conical shape), with an adjustable height by an ingenious system of wedges mounted on the lower layer, while the upper one, with a hole in the center, of about 10 - 12 cm in diameter, rested on the pin of the lower stone by means of a lower cross-bearing hard wood, so as to be able to rotate without friction. At a point in the perimeter of the upper stone was a steel bushing to which was attached a long wooden rod terminating in the center of the stone but, five to six feet above, acting as a fulcrum. The grinding of grain or maize was done by rotating the upper stone with one hand, while pouring a fist full of grain on the center hole the flour would spill at the edges of the stones, and its size depended on the space between the two stones. Many afternoon have I spent grinding for the dinner polenta, children upon reaching a feasible height, would grind too, I started at ten. Usually the plant *sarne* were constituted by two sets of grinders: one for the bread flour and the other for that of maize (or *farmenton / farmentun*) to make

polenta.

On Monday morning, the day we usually made bread, the whole countryside was flooded with a characteristic sweet smell of fresh bread. But in addition to bread, there were other baked goods. The already mentioned *pinze*; *pan de Milan*; a kind of braided sweet bread, same ingredients was of the *pinze*; the *scagnàta*, which was a bun of sweet *pùpiza*, sort of braided loaf, both made with the same mixture of *pan de Milan*; the *paprègnak*, delicious bread, and honey mixed with water (usually water used to wash the frames of the hives after the extraction of honey); bread mixed with bits of dried figs and *lòiniza*, i.e. bread kneaded with fat (*luòi*) pork and even lamb.

The figs.

How not to mention at this point the fig trees! The mild maritime climate of the islands, and the long dry summer created ideal conditions for spontaneous growth of fig trees. In town, in fact, there were everywhere: in gardens, the vineyards, in the grazing grounds, even in *megnìzi*, and did not require any special care, except for the collection of ripe fruit. Basically there were four qualities of figs: the *carcgne*, the *belizze*, *petruòfque* and the *ciarnìqve*. The *carcgne* were (and are) yellow-green figs with red paste, sweet, and good, were more popular because the quality let itself to be easily dried in the sun on the appropriate *baraz*, which is, a big wooden horizontal frame, on which mats of thin cane are spread (or the *stùrize*, *stùrich*), particularly suitable for the drying of figs. I had a *baraz* also, equipped with a sturdy waterproof canvas cover, shaped like a sloping roof, which was removed in the morning to let the sun irradiate freely the figs to be dried, while in the evening, at sunset, the canvas was reinstalled to prevent the entry of moist night air. The canvas of the *baraz* was also, used in case of rain, nay, a threat of rain was enough to start a cycle of events: because, the women would run home for cover, the *baraz* with absolute priority, then was the retrieving of the goat, usually grazing in the neighborhood, and bringing the animal into the shelter *cotàz* (shelter house), and finally bring inside, in the *baraca*, or otherwise in a dry place, enough dried branches, and firewood needed to cook supper, and warm the house.

The usual activities of all children in Neresine, during the drying of figs, was to wedge oneself under the *baraz*, raise his finger, and lick the sweet drops of honey, honey-like liquid that flowed from each fig. In this operation the kids inevitably ended with, his head touching the dripping from the *stùrich*, consequently this season had more sticky hair for the accidental contact with sugary liquid. The figs, once dried, were kept in large wooden boxes (*scrigne*), squashing the fig on its axis, first a layer of bay leaves, then a layer of dried figs, then another layer of leaves, and another layer figs and so on until the box was filled. The whole was then pressed with heavy stones and left to mature for winter: during this period, the sugar in the figs would come through the surface and, lucked like covered with a layer of white sugar, so they seem floured. In winter they were the sweeteners good for every occasion. In the morning, at breakfast, were used in the cafe au lait (with milk) (coffee of course, barley), instead of sugar, a piece of fig, and a spoonful of coffee. On cold winter mornings, the men used to warm up with a sip (a snap of grappa (*rachia*) served with three or four dried figs. When leaving for lumbering or working in the fields, the daily provision was always a hand full of figs in the *rùssak*, along with a snack of dried bread, cheese, and *bevuànda*. In these months, the kids had always dried figs in their pockets, often secretly stolen from the family box, that was kept in the attic, and the trousers pockets were always stiffened by a layer of sugar forming on the inside. For variation, and use of

the lesser fig quality, we did the *pandefighi (smoqvègnazi)* (fig bread), the figs were grinded on the meat grinder machine and kneaded with brandy, and wild fennel seeds, then pasted together in a conical shape. After curing in the attic, laid atop a fig leaf, these were also, eaten in the winter, cut into slices, however, were a delicacy, especially on cold chilly days of stormy *Bora* weather, perhaps accompanied with grappa snaps.

The *belizze* figs were yellow, yellow flesh, very sweet. Like *carcgne*, also *belizze* were dried in the *baraz*, in this case, however, cut in half, and open to prevent any fermentation, given their high sugar content. Even with this quality of figs, which were called dry *polussic'i* (twins), were prepared as *pandefighi*: the *polussic'i* were stacked, and pressed in special large wooden bowls called *ciàssize*, slightly moistened with grape juice, and brandy, and flavored with wild fennel seeds, and other ingredients, then after the usual aging in the attic were ready to be eaten in slices. These were the most delicious, and sought *pandefighi*, but the children were given sparingly, because they were reserved for special occasions such as Christmas, New Year, and other important family occasions, not excluded, bartering for other goods. They looked like *panforte* from *Siena*, but much more testier!

The *petruòfque* were large brown figs, with red flesh, very delicious: they were large, and eaten only as fresh fruits, both in June, and, in September.

The *ciarnìqve*, however, were figs, dark brown, and smaller size, they were also very sweet, and eaten only fresh. These two latter qualities were less cultivated figs because they were not suitable for long storage, in that economy, if it could not be preserved, it had little value, all that was produced had to be produced for food or commerce.

The wine.

Deserves a few words the wine *Neresinotto*, not because it was of excellent quality, but because in the ancient times each family made their own wine at home, to cater to the needs of the family. The soils of the island were, and are particularly suitable for the cultivation of the vine. Even before it was to become *Neresine*, the land located between the center of *Neresine*, and *Halmaz*, at the current northern outskirts of the village, and the sea were mainly cultivated as vineyards. The new inhabitants actively continued its cultivation, to produce the wine needed to cover their own needs, but not having much experience with it, nor selecting the most suitable vines, and indeed, to produce some variety, used the greatest possible variety of plants in the same vineyards. The end result was a wine a bit sour, low alcohol content, in any way good enough to meet the modest need of the population.

From the late nineteenth century, but especially in the first half of the twentieth, the *Neresinotti* began to integrate the grapes of their vineyards with the one bought from the nearby small island of *Sansego*, where it was produced in large quantities, and at a higher level, bringing thus an improvement to the quality of wine produced. After harvesting, the grapes were subjected to the process of crushing (*mastit*) in a particular truncated pyramid shaped container called *vàrgna*, placed over a large vat. In the *vàrgna*, which was stoked with grapes, the grapes were crushed by a barefooted person (possibly a young man, for it took hours of stomping) *mastit*. As each session was completed, what did not pass through the slots of the *vàrgna*, was dumped into the vat by lifting the bottom of the *vàrgna* itself, and equipped with a trap door. In the vat the must was left to ferment for several days, and then poured into special barrels or *carateli (caratièl)*. The remaining grape stems and skins were then further squeezed in a vine press (*tuòrcul*), thus

obtaining the *tuorculis*, a little murky light wine suitable for drinking with water (*bevuànde*), a mixture of water, and wine drinkable during the hot summer days. In many cases the skins, instead of being squeezed, were separated from the stems, and, distilled in special stills (*lambik*), to obtain a good grappa (*rakija*), that pending on the maker skill, at times very exquisite brandy, often with alcohol content over 50%..

The nicknames.

Among the traditions typically Neresinotte, should certainly be mentioned the family nicknames, or individual applied to all the inhabitants of Neresine. This costume also responded to a genuine need, that of being able to identify people in a way that was more precise than using their normal surnames. Since, in fact, that Neresine had evolved over the centuries from a few family strains, no intermarrying within neighboring towns, all inhabitants were to share the few available surnames, about a dozen, and as tradition dictated that mainly the descendants carry the names of ancestors, which did not differ from the common John, Francis, Dominic, Anthony, Joseph, etc., has occurred so often that many people were carrying the same first and last name.

The first nicknames made reference to the last name of the generational founder, as: *Pierovi* from Peter, *Blasicevi* from Blaise, *Marchicevi* from Mark, *Antuognovi* from Anthony, *Rocchic'evi* from Rocco, *Rocconi* again from Rocco, *Costantignevi* from Costante, *Eujeniov* from Eugene, and so on. With the increase of the population, and ulterior proliferation, always of the same first names it become necessary to have other references more specific, as *Zizzeric'evi* which comes from *zizzeriza* (chicory, grass pea), *Bòbari* from *bob* (fava bean), *Barbarosovi* from red beard, *Patacuògnovi* from *patacùn* (an antique coin from the French domination), etc.

In many instances, since, 1920, the nicknames had become for all purposes into real surnames. The principal surnames of Neresine are listed in appendix "A" at the end of the book.

THE SOCIAL LIFE

A homogeneous community.

Neresine has always had a very homogeneous community, without significant social diversification, whether of wealth or professional formation, nor, on the other hand, could arise diversification of ethnic or linguistic order, all descended from the few original families, intermarrying each other for centuries. In the community, there is no pre-established social pattern, based on ancient customs, and traditions, but rather a free behavior, marked by the personality of the individual, and social well-defined rules. The real points of reference were the work of social life, private property, and the strong trend towards economic development, and social progress. The community was set on the extended family, and the whole family live together all their people intrinsically.

Each household was centered on the figure of the patriarch head of the family, usually the older man, grandfather or father, who had all the family property, and had authority over all components. As the woman was formally a subordinate role to men, as indeed in all traditional communities, however, emerged in families, regardless of gender, the strongest personality, who assumed leadership over the other members. How can a Neresinotto not to remember a grandmother or great grandmother very independent, and authoritative, and often promoter or source of the family fortune? Essential, moreover, was the role of women, including with respect to the policy of Croatization promoted in the late nineteenth century by the Austrian government, and continued by the monks of the convent of St. Francis. Adhering to this policy by those families who have been "Croatized". In fact, women have often been decisive protagonists, both because, much more subject to religious devotion, and to the influence of the friars, both for reasons of greater force, and personal character: there is indeed clear that, some families of Italian origin, have become "Croatian" choice of "virago" head of household.

However, the activities assigned to women, education of children, work in the countryside, represented focus, which held the family life, and community. Women were also the important historical memory of the town, as custodians of all traditions, like rituals, ballads, and songs that were performed during the ceremonies, and celebrations more important. It is a heritage handed down through the centuries only orally, since until the late nineteenth century, there were very few women that could read, and write for this unfortunately, much of this valuable cultural heritage, especially the ancient songs, and dances, went hopelessly lost.¹

The work.

The work was considered the most qualifying characteristic of manhood. The competition in the job was a daily challenge that beset humanity. Consequently, one of the most reprehensible defects in the mentality of Neresine was represented by *trisc'enìa*, i.e. laziness: to say you are *trisc'eni* was a grave insult to someone (an old peasant proverb says: *trisc'enìa nai hùja malatia*, i.e. laziness is the worst disease). The spirit of competition by which we lived the work was the daily challenge that beset humankind. Enough, for example, that a job of hoeing of the fields was performed by three or four persons together, because, this created competition: never failed that

someone would how more land, and leave behind the other. The same thing happened when cutting firewood, or to *càstrit* / *castruzar*, carrying weights, or any other activities that involved physical force, personal expertise, and desire to work. The operation referred to *càstrit*, was to clean the newly felled trees from the leaves, and smaller twigs, and then cutting them into pieces of standard length (one meter), the so-called *fassi*.² The tool used to make *càstrit* was the *marsan* (marsuàn, word purely dalmatic), a kind of sickle-shaped semi-circular, with only a very sharp edges on the side of the diameter; is carried hung on a hook (*cuca*) inserted in the pants belt (*tarchìa*), positioned in the middle of the back. There was no man who would go without his personal *marsan*, of which each was particularly jealous. To borrow someone's *marsan* would therefore represent a grave indelicacy: the answer would certainly be a refusal!

The "performance" made in various specialties were in fact a source of great pride, and personal prestige. Even now, when we remember the old men jump out, phrases like: "*el iera 'ssai forte, me ricordo che una volta el ga portà una braga de quattro sacchi de farina de Magaseni fino al magasin dei Menisicevi in piazza*" (he was very strong, I remember once he carried a sling of four sacks of flour from the harbour warehouse to the Menesic'evi store"), or "*el iera bon de far càstrit quattro cavai de fassi in una ora*" (he was able to cut and clean in one hour four horse loads of *fassi*, or even: "*ara, che per bordesar, con qualunque tempo, nessun iera bon de starghe drio*" (see, for tacking, in any weather condition, no one was able to keep up with him). This we have all heard countless of times: "*con la fossina come el Mirco no iera nissun, se i tornava de pescar che no i gaveva ciapà gnente, lu el cioleva la batela e in un per de giri fino Rapoc'e el iera bon de ciapar un per de branzini*" with the harpoon was nobody as good as Mirco, when returning from fishing without taking fish, he took the batela in a couple of laps until Rapoc'e, was able to take a couple of Branzini).

This mentality has meant that over time people were identified for the various jobs that they could do better than others could. It happened so that, for the same work the whole town would resort to the same people. Besides the traditional artisans (blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, etc.) who were normally professional, also, others become specialists: there was one that was special for *grafts* of the vine, and other fruit trees, one that killed, and butchered pigs, there was the woman who knew how to cut the *Rosaz* goats (this was a particular disease in the eyes of goats *cataract*), and one that could *crisàt* (the previously mentioned treatment of sprains and other ailments of the joints with manipulations, and mysterious signs of the cross), there were women who knew all the medicinal herbs, the ones who knew all the rules of "peasant etiquette" and were responsible for the organization of traditional festivals, primarily those of marriage, and those who knew all the empirical treatment for diseases. This led the villagers to live in an even more cohesive, helping each other, sharing duties, and obligations. These intense social relationships, and this collaboration, oddly enough, have continued with the same intensity, even after the rise of the bitter political divisions mentioned in another part of the book.

Transport by sea, *caici* and *batele*.

The most important and widely used means of transport in the village was a small boat, called *caicio* (*caich*), commonly used name in the coastal area of the eastern Adriatic and Greece, as far as Turkey, to define this type of boat. The *caicio* from Neresine was, and is a robust wooden boat of square stern, quite wide, varying in length from 4.5 up to 6 meters, and more, mainly equipped with a half deck, i.e. a deck that covers the front half of the *caicio*. *It is particularly suitable for*

sailing. The *caìci* were also used to carry to, and from the island sheep, and even donkeys, and mules. Their hull, in fact, lends itself easily to pick up the sheep on the deck, and then lower them under it during the navigation, which was especially useful when, with more intense wind the sailing boat tilted to one side under the thrust of the sailing. The *caìci* more small (below about 4.5 meters in length) that are open, i.e. Without the deck, were called (*passere*) rowboats. The *passera* was a *tender boat* used to carry people to, and from ship to shore, or mooring lines to shore. In addition to *caìci*, we must remember also, *batele* very handy, lightweight flat bottom boats, suitable for sailing, and rowing.

The *batele*, variable length about four meters, and no deck, were used mainly for fishing and in shallow waters, it was derived, in all likelihood, from similar Venetian boats from the lagoon, with the same name. Due to the impervious nature of the islands of Quarnero, and the consequent difficulty of building roads, the boat was the main means of transport, particularly for the inhabitants of Neresine, and San Giacomo; almost every family had one of their own. Because, in fact, many of the lands of the south island of Cres, called Bora, had become their property. It was necessary, to own a boat to cross the strip of sea that divides the two islands, the Canal (*Conuàl*), with a path from one to three-four miles, according to the landing coves. The enclosed sea, and relative small waves of the *Canal*, because it is protected on three sides, and the characteristics of good wind area, have facilitated the spread of sail as a means of propulsion, and all the inhabitants had become expert users.

For the intensive use of the boats aroused (incurred) the need for safe mooring places. The Neresinotti then constructed small dry stone landing piers all over the island, many where temporary moorings (daily), and others more permanently become *marinas*, and docks for mooring a bit everywhere. In town were built three small ports: the Friars, Biscupia, and for the inhabitants of Halmàz, to Ridimutàc, the name means "laughing mud," (it was a beautiful cove dominated by tall forest, in part sandy bottom, and mud, which flowed from an underground source of fresh water). In these ports, each boat had its own individual mooring, with a regular fixed dead man, and buoy. The moorings were passed, as private property, from generation to generation within the same families. In addition to the marinas in the areas, they built docks, and moorings for safe landing at *Bora*, from *Pod Bruàide* (Bay south of Osor), *Podolzi*, *Mociuàvni* (Sonte Bay), *Sonte*, *Scoic* ', *Stenizze*, *Pinzìnic'a mul*, *Draga*, *Riduje*, *Sesnúa*, *Maiescúa*, (with an adjacent barrack, refuge from the rain, and in case of *neviera* (storms)), *Caldonta*, *Martinsc'iza*, *Galbòciza*, *Biela Vala*, up to *Puntacroce*, and beyond. Sangiacomini also gave their contribution to the construction, of several piers for boats, thus we have ports of *San Giacomo*, *Lanèna*, and piers in *Buciàgne*, *Veli Buòk*, *Lucizza*, etc.

Ground Transport: donkeys, mules, wagons with steers.

Donkey (*tovuàr*), and mule made all land transport, and it should be noted that in the Italian dialect of the area the mule was called *cavalò* (*cuógn*) in Slavic (more precisely horse). All equipment for transportation was locally built, consequently, as a function of this type of carrier. The main one was the saddle or *cròsgna*: the load may be firewood, twigs, sheep, lambs, and every other type of merchandise, solid or liquid, and seated a man on his back. In addition, containers *cuònche* or *conche*, with the bottom opening to discharge their contents into the ground, carefully shaped to fit the anatomy of the animal: they were used for transporting bulk material such as manure, stones, sand, clay, lime, etc. For the transport of liquids, especially

wine, and water were used *batalúghe*, small wooden barrels elliptical in cross section, about 20 or 30-liter capacity, suitable enough to be loaded on the donkey or mule. For the liquid was also used *ludro* or *mièh*, goatskin leather made from goat or sheep. The *ludro* was one of the traditional containers for the transport of the harvested grapes.

The pack animals were intensively used for the transport of timber, from the cutting place to the sea, where it was embarked on cargo ships of Neresine. This activity is called *sumisár* or *gonit* Slavic dialect. The firewood was called the *fassi*, i.e. parts of branches cut to standard length of about a meter, and a diameter of 3 to 5 to 6 centimeters, while larger ones were called (*murèli*)².

The timber, waiting to be boarded, was then stacked in a previously prepared clearing by the sea. The places chosen for loading were not always suitable for mooring vessels, if ever, because of shallow or rocky shoreline was particularly dangerous. These places are inaccessible to large vessels; they were called *ghet* (*ghetto*, enclosed, inaccessible). A special technique was devised to load the timber from these places: the ship would be securely moored by anchors on the sea bed, and ropes to shore, but away from the shore, sometimes even more than 20-30 meters; to reach the shore was used a barge bridge, i.e. Long, and thick planks of wood, long about 10 to 12 meters, width is about 40 cm, and thick 5 to 6 centimeters.

When the distance from shore exceeded the length of the plank (bridge), then was used a barge bridge (with one or two *caici* who served as pylons). The *fassi* were stacked on a *smurìch*, and directly weighed on shore by way of a *dezimàl* (large scale), then brought on workers shoulder on board, usually by the same ship's crew. The walking was fast on highly flexible bridge, which demanded great balance. The unit of measure for each of *smurìch* of *fassi* was the *miera* (measure), or about 100 pounds. Two people simultaneously, one on behalf of the owner of the timber, and one on behalf of the ship did the accounting of the loaded timber. Each *miera* was listed by a vertical bar on a special notebook, every four vertical bars they struck a fifth across the four, and yelled "*bar*" so each group of bars correspond to five mieras at the end of loading, these *mieras where totaled*, and revealed the quantity of timber on board. Among the old papers found, there are receipts of lumber shipments for over 3000 mieras of *fassi*!

Another important means of transportation was the *carro coi manzi* (ox-cart). The chariot of Neresine was the four wheels type, very long and narrow purposely for the roads *clanzì* (*singular clanâz*), the typical narrow country roads bordered on both sides by *masiere*, and along the narrow and rugged forests trails along the island. It was very heavy, and sturdy built with large wooden beams, and high sidewalls, formed by bars of juniper wood, designed to contain the most bulky loads. The wagon was used for long distance transport, especially of timber from the cutting woods area to the shoreline for loading on vessels, its capacity that could exceed even 10 tons. In long periods of summer drought, the wagon was used to bring drinking water to the sheep in the different grazing locations in Bora. Drawing water from the wells in Ossero, and even from Neresine, with destinations exceeding 15 km sometimes.

In earlier times the wagon was the only means of land transport, large consignments of goods between towns of the islands was not uncommon, the travel to Cherso, over 50 kilometers north, and Lussinpiccolo 20 kilometers south. Only families of large landowners, that is, the only ones that were able to maintain two strong steers (oxen) necessary for hauling. In Neresine, there were only three or four wagons, which covered the needs for large transport, the families who owned their oxen, and wagons, were Gaetagnevi (Bracco), the Castelluàgnevi (Soccolich-Castellani), the Maurovich de Cluarich, and Menesic'evi (Menesini-Zorovich).

Among the means of transport, we should also remember the *civiére*. It was a stretcher of juniper wood, shaped to be carried by two people, one in front and another behind, which were utilized

to carry by hand heavy loads over short distances. The *copàniza* was a large wood container of rectangular-shape, constructed with wooden boards, having, as the *civiéra*, four handles (front and back) for transporting people. The *copànize* were also utilized for making bread, such as cupboards, and for washing, and cleaning a dead pig, a process used to remove the pig's bristle, and hair. The already-mentioned *smurìch* (in Italian *conca*), as *smur*, also already mentioned, was a lightweight container, rectangular with rounded bottom, made by hollowing half a tree trunk, suitable to be carried on the shoulders of men or women on the head. (When in the late nineteenth century, the Croats friars had abolished the Latin, and Italian in some religious ceremonies, the people of Neresine who objected went to Ossero to have the children baptized in Latin or Italian, the women carry their infants on the *smurìch* balanced over their head). Other traditional containers were *cossìc'i* and the *cofe*. The first were of the sturdy wicker baskets, hand made locally, with a rigid wooden ash handle (*proveslò*), suitably shaped, and of various sizes, the larger ones were used for the collection of olives, grapes during the harvest, for the collection of figs, while the smaller ones were used for all other possible uses. An ancient proverb much used says: “*ne hfalise cossìc'e da ima novo proveslic'e*” (do not decant the basket if the handle is new), to say that, it is not enough to replace a small part of an old part to make it new. The *cofe* (baskets) were rather large wicker baskets, lighter than *cossìc'i*, oval, also equipped with a sturdy handle, and two wicker top covers, hinged on the cross handle. The *cofe* were generally used for storage of bread or other foods that require some ventilation.

Fishing.

A sea rich of excellent fish, which was one of the main source of food, at least since the late eighteenth century onwards, it was an important means of livelihood for the population, especially in times of drought, and food shortages. However, contrary to the inhabitants of the towns of Ossero, Lussingrande, and Cherso, where the fisherman occupation was quite widespread, in Neresine we never had a real professional fisherman. This is probably due to the fact that the great abundance of fish, and the ease of access to it allowed everyone to provide readily for themselves, and relatives in the neighborhood, not only that, but certainly, also the commercial maritime activity in which the town was always intensely dedicated, had directed people to become sailors, a much better remunerated profession than a fisherman. So much so that in the popular prejudices of the village, the fisherman *de mestier* (by profession) had become synonymous with lazy person (*trisc'eni*), loafers, and men with little, desire to work.

In winter the prevailing fishing was the squid (*lig'ne*.) and *cuttlefish* (*Sippe*), generally performed by teenagers, which provided for the needs of family, and neighborhood. There is an old adage in Slavic dialect, which by the way of fishing for squid says: “*februàj sippe na cruàj, muàrc'a od avuànza, avrila preco rila, maja na capitul*” i.e.: *February the cuttlefish near land, March there is leftover, April until nausea, and May it is all over*. There is an anecdote that tell the story of the milking women. In spring, during the sheep-milking season, there were women, five or six, who went to milk the sheep in the countryside around the bay of Sonte, across the sea facing the town. They were well organized, and used a big *batela*, (*that of Iviza*), rowing every day they went up, and down the channel for milking at sunrise, and sunset. Arrive at the pier (*mulìch*) of Sonte, moored the *batela*, and each went to their own sheep, *radunar* (*vagnát*), and milk (*mlièst*) the sheep, then would return with the “*latte*” containers over their head full of milk toward the boat. The first one to return, while waiting the others, would go walking along the shore, and by

hand would pick up cuttlefish on the shallow waters where the mollusk gather in groups to reproduce themselves, bringing home the milk and enough cuttlefish for supper for every one of the milking women in the group.

The *cuttlefish*, and *octopus (cobuòdnize)* were also caught with big pots (*varse*) made from wicker strands, fishing was a secondary incidence, as people would go up, and down the channel toward Bora for work, they would drop the traps here, and there on the sea floor, and then on the return trip, would pick-them up, filled with shellfish, with the use of a *dracmaric* (*grapple*). As there was no refrigeration in those days, or a market where to sell (these things happen at the end of the day). It was customary therefore; to clean them hurriedly, and salt them somewhat, for preserving them until time permitting, they would be sun dried in the open (*octopus and cuttlefish*) were so preserved for the cold winter months, providing substantial proteins, and tasty meals. During the cuttlefish, fishing season many piers in the various ports of Neresine were all blackened by the ink of the cuttlefish summarized cleaning. Another typical spring fishing was the *granzi*, crabs, delicious *granzievole*, which was mainly fished in the Bay of Ossero (deeper sea): there was such an abundance that fishermen were struggling to sell, even though, most we sold was already cooked (to prevent decomposition), I remember cooking them on a fifty five gallon petroleum drum which was normally used to tint the fishing nets.

The amazing part of this whole story or stories, is that everyday life was an opportunity to be useful, hardly any activity has a single purpose, as it was done with the ashes from the bread baking furnaces, that were saved for softening the spring water used to do the seasonal laundry, and then yet to be used on good Friday for lighting the way of the processions, the salting of fish, the making of brooms or ropes during bad weather days, every endeavor, had its purpose and it's day, and so the following: during the summer when the longer days allowed more time for work, the evening dropping of the nets, provided sailing to, and from these set-up net locations (after work) on the way, or bobbing way home we fished for *mackerels*, we dragged a line or two (*Panola*) with a white piece of material for bite, after the first *mackerel* we used part of its shining belly, and come home with four, seven, a dozen fish, fresh for dinner.

A widely practiced fishing, because, sporty, and even funny, was that of *luminar* (*svetìt*) on a beautiful clear, and calm moonless night fishing with a lamp of about 2000 candles power, and harpoon. The lamp was *pétromas* oil (so named for the trademark of the tool). This was possible all year round, the *pétromas* was in the outmost front of the caicio or batela, the person would be right behind, and able to row, and observe the bottom of the sea, paddling silently scoured the seabed along the coast three or four meters deep. They would harpoon all the big fish they saw, (the fish dazzled by the sudden, and intense light). This fishery was very successful because the choice big fish was valuable, *orate* bream (*podlànize*), sea bass, *scarpène* (capons), fruànculi (bream S. Andrea), lace (Sharpsnout bream), serghi (bream real), I harpooned (croakers) Dental (snappers), etc..

In earlier times, before the new technologies, the boys went luminaries fishing from the ground walking on the rocks (*cràjen muòra*), using as light source a branch of juniper (*smreca*) burning, and sabra, i.e. a kind of saber on the tip of a hook. When they saw, in small pools of water between the rocks, the gray mullet (*c'ifli*), they would swap the water with the sword, and retrieve it simultaneously, in whose hook they would catch the fish. Then, with the event of new technologies, a “carbide”, and the sabra with a small, and very sharp spear replaced the branch of juniper burning lamp, and along with mullet, they catch the delicious local *garmaì* (stone crabs), and some nice octopus, which was also hunting for crabs among the rocks.

Fishing with *ságoniza*, an interesting, and original fishing done in good season, (pronounced with an "s" sweet rose). It is started early in the morning with two or three boats, and a dozen men. First (by experience) is chosen a suitable bay, preferably sandy, then at 300 or 400 meters off the bay, is laid a rope to the bottom of the sea, the rope is about 500 meters long, appropriately weighted so to reach the bottom, attached to it where twisted every 5 or 6 meters, groups of dried leaves, corn cobs, with the intention of scaring the fish. In the same rope were tied every 30 or 40 meters of heaving lines whose ends are fixed to floating buoys.

In the shallows near the shore, in an appropriately chosen place, a large net was laid down flat on the bottom floor. From the shore then, men began to pull the rope from one end with the intention being to scare the fish within the enclosure toward the shore. From a boat the skipper watching the operation would control the by voice the men on shore pulling. When the men on the ground encounter heavy resistance, it denoted that the rope was caught on some rock or other obstructions, here then came into action the heaving lines and the buoys. From the boat, the skipper would find the buoy near the intrusion, by lifting the buoy, and freeing the main rope, therefore continuing the enclosure, this could happen few times. The operation lasted several hours before all buoys were collected, therefore the main rope had been shortened to reach the bottom laying net. At this time, three men on the boats while slowly collecting, and connecting with the men on the shore to form a big bag, and drag all its content to shore would lift the outer edges of the net. This type of fishing required strong and at least a dozen men but if planned knowingly of the fish in the area, would bring from 50 to even 1000 kilos of choice fish. In my days, this would happen two to five times a year, and mostly in summer.

Back at the harbor was the task of sorting, and dividing the catch. It was a real ceremony attended by every boy in town, and not only them. In the docking area of the main boat (skipper) all the fish would be distributed in a circle format in accordance to a predetermined count of parts, one for each person, boat, equipment, and so on. All men would stand around facing the catch, then the ritual of *bim, boom, bam* throwing numbers with his fingers, then counted: the first statement took the pile of previously defined richer fish, and the others followed in order of counts extractions.

In winter, many fish move within the shallow bays of the canal for breeding. The more experienced fishing enthusiasts followed these migrations, and then at the right time drop their nets to close the fish within the bay *serajo* (*Seraglio*), i.e. trap the fish, usually sea bream, and volpina or muiéle (mullet). Many times the *serajo* yielded many tons of fish, but the problem was how to dispose of it, given that the town could not buy that much, marketing to the outside world required fast transportation ice, and facilities, all not available in town. Many of the town's people were self-sufficient concerning fishing. The solution then was to keep the fish trapped in the same area for several weeks. The fishermen let the villagers come with their boats into the *serajo* to catch with harpoons what they needed; a lump sum payment was required, until all the fish was finally disposed of.

Another type of fairly important fishing, and widely practiced, was the *trata* (*tratta*), that is, fishing for sardines, anchovies (*incio*), and mackerel, which was generally done in spring, and late summer, at night, possibly moonless, with lights to attract, and surface nets. The pilchard fishery in the sea surrounding the islands, is of ancient origin and has been regulated by specific provisions since the seventeenth century, which are the "*poste*" the locations where to fish, the criteria for allocation to the various fishermen of the "*post*" themselves, and the tribute that each holder of a "*post*" was to pay as a right of exploitation. The "*poste*" were allocated each year by the draw, in old times the sorting was done on the feast of St. Mark (April 25).³

Before the petromas was introduced, i.e. the lights to attract the fishes was large fires, obtained by burning juniper branches on a special frame of iron, inserted on the bow of the boat. Neresine fishermen practiced this type of fishing, casual, off the Bay of Ossero, recruiting staff with the same criteria as those already described for fishing with *ságoniza*.⁴

Sardines and anchovies were very popular, for it was the custom in all families to preserve them in brine. Generally preserved in wooden containers, such as tubs or barrels, within which the sardine were layered in sequence to a layer of salt until filling the container. Then they were pressed down with a big stone, and left to marinate for several months, and then, finally the delicious salted anchovies or sardines were ready to eat, usually seasoned with oil, and vinegar, and accompanied with *passaméte* (oven toasted bread), and a good glass of wine.

Among the most common types of fishing must also be remembered that with nets. The trammel (tramac'iuàne), narrow bottom nets for fishing *tarjize* (red mullet), *scarpéne* (capons), *scarpoci* (scorpion fish), *bisibabe*, *sanpieri*, *granzi*, *cuttlefish* and all other types of fish from the bottom, it is generally used for catching fish for family use. The *postizze*, however, were wider nets, and better suited to catch pelagic fish such as mackerel, *suvri*, *bobe* and *muòdraszi*, these nets required a more demanding, and professional approach, and used by the few semi-professional fishermen. Finally, the type of fishing practiced by almost all the village boys was the one with the *togna* (line), and *palangar*, which still gave good results with little effort. The most common prey were *cagni*, the *àrboni* (*àrbunic'i*) (*pagari*), the *fruànculi* (bream), shots, *chinesic'I*, and *pièrghe*. The *cagni* were so widespread, and easy to catch with the line, this fishery was simply called "going for *cagni*." Unfortunately, these fish in the waters of Neresine, for reasons unknown, they are now extinct.

The breeding of sheep.

When it comes to animal breeding in Neresine, you must speak sheep (*òfze*) first. Since the beginning of the town, raising sheep was the main, and more important activity of the population, the source of the basic means of livelihood such as meat, cheese, and wool. Each family had at least the number of sheep needed for its own needs. This required of course that the family owned a plot of pastureland simply because the sheep were bred in the wild, kept in rural areas of Mediterranean maquis, previously cleared, and adapted for grazing, known as *logo* or *miesto*.

The *logo* or *miesti* where sheep lived independently throughout the year, were all identified by their specific name, and accurately were enclosed by *masiere* or *gromace*, high dry stonewalls, in some cases up to, and beyond two meters. To avoid that the sheep jumped over the *masiere*, and to facilitate their capture, the two legs on one side of the animal were tied together by a braided rope *sbalza* or *spona* of about 20 - 25 cm in length. When a sheep was particularly restive (usually a "capopecora"), (*boss sheep*) it was resorted to cross-tied them. I.e. a front leg on one side, and the back of the other side, if this was not enough, they resorted to tying with two crossed *spona* as long as the sheep "*salvadiga*" (*wild*) learned to behave. We tried to select for breeding, and milking the sheep more docile (*crotke*), in order to have fewer problems for the management of herds, and daily milking. The sheep were divided into two categories: those that were to bred lambs, and then held for milking, where called *Bree* when they were pregnant, and *malsizze* when it gave milk, and the sterile or unfit for milking where called *jállove*. They usually kept ewes, and rams *jállove* (*pruàs*, *pruàsi* plural) in separate *loghi* (*places*).

Since spring, is the ideal season for lambing, and next milking, and, for richer grass, and better weather conditions, the breeding season was programmed to optimally match the various events. When the rams, in the calculated period, were introduced in the places where the sheep were fertile, there was a problem with the rams *spona* (normally wilder, and curtailed in movements to "walk") had difficulty doing "their duty". Therefore, a new restriction was devised called the *clatò*. This was an ash wood (Jessen) gadget about 30 - 40 cm long suitably bent to a "u", so that it can be tied to the leg of mutton. This prevented the animal to run fast, and jump the masiere, but was left free to perform the basic movements for reproduction. Again, depending on the docility, and strength of the ram, there were used in one or more *clatò*: it was not unusual to hear at certain times the typical sound of sloshing wood against the rocks, coming from the countryside.

The season of milking, and cheese making was from April to June, and beyond. Milking was usually done by women, called *sàlarize*, and was carried out twice a day, morning, and evening. The women went into the *logo* where the sheep were kept, and from one end usually the highest, would begin to gather (*vag'nát*) the sheep with shouts, and cries (*na, na, male na ...*), (*go, go, little one, go*) pushing them down, where there was the *margarìch*, a kind of fold long, and narrow, often covered with a tile roof to shelter from any rain. When sheep were all entered the *margarìch*, women began to milk them one by one, sitting in a quaint, and rudimentary three-legged stool (*stuòlcich*).

To make about two pounds of cheese per day is needed from 12 to 14 sheep. The cheese was made in the morning, returning from milking: the milk from the night before, and that just squeezed would be poured into a big pot, added the rennet (*sèrisc'e*), and then put the pot on the fire of *Fogoler* (*ug'gnìsce 'e*) (fireplace) placed on *trepie* (tripod), and awaiting the hardening of the mass of milk, the rennet was then broken with a special spoon (*clatacìc'*), made from a branch of juniper, at one extremity was left four or five stumps of the smaller branches, a sort of ladle blender. When the mass was completely shattered, the woman with her hands began to slowly pick up the pieces, and knead squeezing to remove the liquid. Maintaining the fire, the temperature of the mixture was maintained at around 35 to 40° degrees.

The pressing operation lasted about an hour, then the cheese was put into a *setizza* (pronounced with a soft "s"), a wooden form (like a small vat with removable ends) that was then stored, with a heavy stone on top, to continue pressing. The serum (residual liquid), the *presc'nizza*, was filtered with a white cloth in which it formed the exquisite *ricotta* (*puina* or *scutta*), while the last waste liquid, the *usámniza*, was used for feeding the pigs. After some days the cheese was removed from the form, and ripened in special *staluásize* (grids of wood), in a well-ventilated place, often in the chimney of *Fogoler* (fireplace), where it also received a light, and pleasant smoke. In older houses, and even in some of those in the farm houses of Bora, kitchens were built according to the production, and maturation of cheese, and ham, which had a great *Fogoler* in the middle, and high ceiling of the room was dome-shaped (truncated pyramid) from which centrally branched off the chimney; essentially the entire ceiling of the kitchen served as a large hood, which is crossed by beams of wood or iron horizontal, on which the gratings were fixed for the seasoning, and smoke cheese, and ham. (The large kitchen in the farmhouse of my grandfather's Garmosaj, with *staluáse* ceiling full of fragrant cheeses, and hams, and sausages hanging from the beams to form *ciriève* cheerful, and tasty festoons, is an indelible record in my memory). Returning to the cheese, when it was removed from the *setizza*, had scraps along the circumference of the cylindrical shape of two round bases. These were called *ubreszi* cut scraps (trimmings), and were the most sought-after delicacy for children at home. That the cheese was a

kindness indescribable, inimitable flavor (quite similar to string cheese) unfortunately they lost perhaps forever. (The special flavor, and taste depended from the fat of the milk, and the herbs from the grazing fields, where Dalmatian sage grows rampant, bay leaves, and other wild berries).

Such as cheese, ricotta was also produced in large quantities, but very little was produced as is. It was, in fact, subjected to a further processing, i.e. a vigorous churning (*tàppat*) in special implements, a kind of long tube made of wooden staves (*tàppalo*), such as the *setizza*, and there, through the perforated cover, and a particular plunger was vigorously churned, further separating the serous fluid (*usàmniza*), obtaining as a final product the wonderful butter, which was largely sold out of the town, especially in Lussino. In addition to the butter, ricotta was used to make *butiro*, i.e. the curds were cooked in a large pot, so as to evaporate the water contained in them, and then the residual grease was collected liquefied, stored in large *bozòni* (glass jars) with a grounded glass stopper sealed hermetically. This semi-liquid butter was consumed during the winter in place of real butter. In pots where the curds are cooked, there remained a residue called *usfirzi* dry grainy, even this very pleasant, and prey to the greed of children at home; the *usfirzi* had some resemblance, in looks, and flavor, the pork cracklings, precisely the dry residues, the dissolution of animal fat.

Another great resource from sheeps was wool (*vàlna*). After shearing, the wool was washed, carded (and *grabunàt grabusàt*, i.e. operations of carding, and coarse and fine carding), and spun (*Priest*) with fast manually cranked spinners (*mulinièr*): The finished product was a fine wool tread (*utac*), a bit rough but great for making blankets, socks, sweaters, and caps. Wool was also used for good mattresses, and pillows that was widely traded outside the town. Some families, as far back as the seventeenth century, had a loom for the weaving of wool, called in the Italian dialect of the town *telér*, and in the Slavonic *càlize*, or more playfully *crosgne*, with it producing valuable blankets (*racnò*), and a beautiful woolen fabric, which was also sold or barded in the other towns of the islands.

The pig, and the house goat.

In addition to sheep, almost every family raised a pig (*prassàz*) for meat, and fine hams, and at least one goat (*cosà*) for milk because; sheep milk was used solely for the production of cheese. Unlike the sheep, the goat was bred solely for production of milk to feed the family, and was kept as a pet, housed in *cotàz* (small enclosure with an attached house) near the house, it was fed mainly by the young leaves of trees, as *ciarnica* (helix), *planica* (arbutus), *drièn*, cabbage leaves, and in summer was taken in the meadows, and gardens to graze, tied with a chain so that it could not escape, and do "damage" to the neighbors gardens. To limit the goat movements was used an *obruch*, a collar of ash suitably bent to "u" with an ingenious wooden bolt. The women had the burden of going two or three times a week in the country for a "*briènze*", i.e. to gather a large bunch of leafy branches from trees tops with young leaves, to feed the house goat. In the evening it was customary to meet the returning women from the fields carrying a huge bunch of these branches on their heads, with the interposed *coluàch* (a special donut padded cloth to be placed on the head), the branches once leafless, were used on the home fireplace or brick oven. Since the goats were kept in *cotàz* close to home, and almost every family had one, to have good milk supply, it was necessary to guarantee the annual reproduction of these animals. However, because families could not maintain for this purpose throughout the year a male goat (*parch*),

some citizens had organized a robust sample of male goat, able to cover basic reproductive goats across the town. Usually in the town were two or three ram goats, so to take advantage of their "performance", it was necessary to bring the house goat into the goat corral in which the male was kept in the appropriately scheduled time of the year. This was usually in the evening: the goats were conducted in the precincts of the ram goat, usually five or six at a time, where they spent the night; reproductive performance were then paid to the owner of *parch* according to a previously agreed price. Unfortunately, the ram goats in this period also gave off an unbearable and distinctive stench, it was probably well with the goats, and therefore useful to stimulate their reproductive instinct, but tainted the air for several tens of meters around, making the stay very unpleasant for humans in the vicinity of the corral. It is easy to imagine that the morbid curiosity of the children to watch these randevouis of the animals at its height in this particular period: it was not unusual, in fact, to meet some of them in the evening, despite the intense stench, while wandering near the harem cautious caprino.⁵

About goats, must also be said that for some years in the late nineteenth, and early twentieth century, the Austrian government, with the intent to preserve the vegetation of the islands, forbade the breeding. The law, completely pointless, because it ignored the vital needs of the population, caused malnutrition health problems for many children in town. Following this "banning" of goats, some families in town then started breeding cows (*crave*), just to obtain the necessary milk for all the inhabitants of Neresine. Again, the organizers for the breeding of these animals were the usual families of large landowners, i.e. Gaetagnevi (Bracco), the Castelluàgnevi (Soccolich-Castellani), the Menesic'evi (Zorovich-Menesini), and the Cravic'i (Bracco), who had the economic means to set up the stables required for this type of activity. The same families, in addition to cows, bred steers (oxen) necessary for driving the wagons, but mostly for the plowing of large fields (*tièsi*) in town, and in the surrounding countryside

A nickname for those who break the rules.

The rules of civil coexistence, and social relations in the country were formed spontaneously, and independently. Their transgression was a cause, however unfortunate for the "guilty" of a stigma, even ironic, which resulted in a permanent nickname, the more mocking, the more reprehensible the breach was so applied..., and nicknames were applied to unsuspecting descendants!

An alleged violation of social rules (in which envy was probably a big part) was when a young man in town, handsome but poor, had the good fortune to marry a rich heir. Regardless of whether this was due to love or mere economic opportunity, it was said maliciously, and it still said today: "*da se jé osenìl na praszà*" "namely that it is "married on the pig," meaning the fat in a broad sense, and derogatory, and if the bride was a little less beautiful, more so the irony, was heavy, and came out subtly in all circumstances. The penalty imposed by the community for the "violation", was to the "guilty" the loss of the right to retain for himself, and descendants the family nickname (which everyone regarded as the surname): it would then be imposed on him the nickname of his wife family, and later inherited inevitably by his children. There are many instances of this in Neresine, and there has been no exception to the rule!

In earlier times the irony on marriages of or supposed convenience, including those of young widows, were escalated in showy acoustical demonstrations, even at night. Young people, "*friends*" of the bridegroom, were, in fact, "*to make rovàt (or rut)*" around his house, they played

the big bull's horns as a sign of derision, it ceased only when the victim invited them into the house, and offered them food, and drink. There were also cases in which, the betrothed were very touchy, and outraged by the mocking, and reacted very violently, causing serious, and lasting conflicts between families. Following these facts, and the elevation of the cultural conditions, social, and civil population, this reprehensible practice was thankfully abandoned.

Moral (and transgressions) sexual.

Upon a formal moral rigidity dictated by religious teachings, to which the entire population made reference, in relations between the two sexes were frequent transgressions of the "rules", perhaps for the promiscuity of the sexes that would thrust itself especially during the activities in the countryside, where men, and women worked together usually in remote places, and away from the town. In large families, even young, and unmarried women could be sent to work "for the day" in the landowners fields, for seasonal activities such as threshing of grain, the harvest, picking olives, cleaning of stones from fields (*trebit*). The girls were also taken in by large landowners, such as full-time workers in the country homes of Bora (farms), to make cheese, care for pets, and for all other activities of agricultural work. In all these circumstances, it was not uncommon that many of them became pregnant without being married.

However, the grounds of a pregnancy outside of marriage could also be different. Because, in fact, the influence of family on the marital choices of their children was important, and often marriages were arranged, disregarding the feelings of those concerned, it often happened that the girl became pregnant to force the family to accept the shotgun unwelcome wedding, as indeed happened in other communities of the time. When a girl became pregnant as a result of relationships with married men, or when the shotgun wedding was not feasible, however, the girl's family arranged to build a small house near the family home, consisting of two rooms, one ground floor, and one on the first floor, where the unfortunate son would live with (i.e. mongrel *mulcich*): many of these houses still exist in town, witness of the ancient custom. Of course, nobody knew the father's name officially, but everyone knew of who the *mulcich* was the son. The girl's family often forced the father to provide financial support for the maintenance of the girl, and his child, and sometimes for the construction of the house. It should also be stressed, as found in the population data of the eighteenth, and nineteenth century, that among the many infants born dead, a significant proportion of infants had unknown father ...

Sexual transgression in the community of the area, however, has always been significantly practiced, even among regularly married people without ever bringing these events to a relevant significance: unlike the professional ability, physical strength, the desire to work, and to respect private property, individual behavior regarding sexual activities have never been among the main interest of the community in Neresine.

The sense of private property.

The privately owned property, probably because acquired with great sacrifice, and effort, had become one of the most important values for the population of Neresine. Precisely for this reason, its violation would have resulted in exclusion from social life, and the subsequent imposition of the mark of dishonor in the form of a nickname in reference to the transgression

done, and also, imposed on the descendants. Nevertheless, in fact, it is not known of any theft in town, especially of a sheep, which was considered one of the most valuable assets for the family. Just because they are so important, the sheep were carefully marked for their recognition. There were two types of markings, one for the distance sighting, consisting of a visible stain on the fleece, a red, or blue, or green, or black, and another more detailed: the *beléh*, sometimes also integrated with the *sièh*.⁶ *Beléh* was the branding that each owner had for his sheep, it was to jag (cut and pierced) ears in a personalized, and unique manner. The *beléh* of each owner was also filed in the *Comun* (City Hall) in the form of bay leaf reproducing the mark of the ears. The *sieh* was another firebrand that was on the muzzle of the sheep, usually in the shape of crossed lines, otherwise placed, or a particular geometric shapes or letters of the alphabet like a family crest. On Sunday morning, after the 10 o'clock High Mass, in the main village square where the men gathered to talk business, share the latest news, and chat after a hard week of work. They would also bring the lost sheep that were found during the week, so that the owner through the *beléh* could recognize them, and take them back. In the case of a sheep devoid of *beléh*, if everyone in the square had examined without recognizing it, then it became founders keepers, and only after the formal approval of the mayor. So much for "roses" (as they say in the country), but not everything was "smooth as silk." The concept of private property was so ingrained that the idea of dividing the assets so hard won, even among children, was not readily accepted, and was the source of bitter conflict, in families. Consequently, in hereditary succession, in effort to keep, and preserve the largest property possible, it was necessary to allocate the bulk of the family assets to the firstborn male child, as indeed it happened in the world of Western culture of those days.

Some of the contrasts between brothers were sensational. Moreover, preferably male children were often very numerous in families, because they constitute the real wealth, understood as cost of labor, (not surprisingly families with many sons are those who first became wealthy).⁷ But this discrepancy in the management of the estate, rather than dampen the spirit of Neresinotti, has greatly stimulated the development of the town. The great self-esteem, a sense of independence, and the desire of working people, has resulted, in fact, a certain rebellion against the privileges of the firstborn, pushing the other members of the family to life choices, and work activities other than the conventional one; so the new jobs were created, primarily trade, and crafts, and then also the naval armament or any maritime activity in general, which led to even greater wealth, and prosperity than was done until then with only the land property.

NOTES

1. The ancient folk songs have unfortunately been lost forever, and also the typical Slavic dialect spoken in Neresine is being lost, in fact, new generations of Neresinotti, at least most of those born in Neresine after 1970, do not know it. For the next generation we shall bring back some useful nursery rhymes, usually taught to children... as a testimony of the ancient language. The following was used to teach children the names of the days of the week: - *"Ponedìèi jè pàrvi duàn – Vutòri Svièti Abruàm – A vaf srièdu Svièta Stela – A'f cetàrti se ne dèla – Vaf pièti Buòsia mùka – Vaf sebòte se ne kùha – V'nedèju tànana i pòkle sfi nànana."* "(Monday the first day - Tuesday St. Abraham - Wednesday Saint Star - Thursday we don't work - on Friday is the passion of God (Jesus) - Saturday no one cook - on Sundays dance, and merry, then all to bed)". This other one was taught to ironize the preachers of doom: *"Prisàl jè tovuàr, jè rècal da jè 'na velika stvuàr... – prislà jè slùka, jè reclà da jè silna mùka – prislà jè vràna, jè reclà da jè velika ràna – prisàl jè vuòl, jè rècal da jè velika buòl, – prisàl jè mis, jè rècal da to jè svè nis"*.

- (then came the donkey and said, it was a great thing ... - the woodcock came, and said it was a great torment - came the crow, and said, there was a big hit – then the ox came, and said, that there is a big pain – then came the mice, and said, all is nice, and there was nothing).

2. *Fassi*, the term denotes firewood for heating homes (*spàher* was the stove brand name, but to all it was the stove) and cooking food in fireplace (*fogoler*). This name derives from the ancient custom of packing the firewood into bundles, consisting of standard length branches of about four feet and ranging from 2 to 6 inches in thickness weighing about 20 to 30 kg, and sold by number. The ligation of the *fassi* required some special dexterity for which certain women were particularly capable, therefore employable, therefore breadwinners; they were called *ligadurizze* (*fasteners*), and hired daily as needed by the firewood owners. With the strong development of the naval fleet of Neresine increased the demand for firewood from abroad (Venice, Chioggia, Trieste, the coastal area of the Veneto and Romagna, etc.), Consequently the timber production increased in a relevant way, resulting in disuse of the *fassi* packaging, however, this name remained with the generic meaning of firewood, and/or fresh and green branches for animal forage, because its packaging was easier to carry than other formats.

3 *Sardelle*, Fishing for anchovies, and sardines with toll nets in a method called "*tratta*"

(Various menagerie sections) according to Dr. Matthew Niccolich, author in 1871 of "documented history of Lussini". This method was introduced in the islands in 1640, by Botterini, and Ragusin, two fishermen from Lussingrande, in fact, documents found in Ossero archives explains that the Count, and Captain of Cherso, and Ossero, Lawrence Barbaro governor of the islands for Venice, in a report dated July 9, 1749, listed the various activities of strategic interest for the "Dominant", even twenty "*tratte*" for fishing sardines.

Since, fishing for sardines brought large amount of fish, and the various fishing territories were not equally prolific, it became necessary to regulate the fishing in these territories identified as "posts". The regulation was well disciplined and controlled by municipal authorities responsible for the area.

4) Because someone might be interested, you can see a document found on the identification of "posts" in the Bay of Ossero, their regulation, and the allocation to the various fishermen of Neresine, and Ossero in 1940.

POSTS LIST FOR FISHING SARDINES (Including directions, and distances necessary to drop the nets)

N°	Name of Post	Direction	steps	Assignee
1	Tonera	Muro S. Caterina	29	Manini (Rucconich-Zimic')
2	Radiboi di dentro	Dentro Radiboi rovescia	30	Berna
3	Presa	Puntal di maistro	28	Moro
4	Abisso grosso	Puntal di maistro	50	Mauro
5	Puntal de maistro	Chiesa S. Piero	40	Zoroni
6	Valle grande		35	Bonifacio Gaudenzio
7	Bocic'	Gromaciza	28	Vodari Gasparo
8	Barsian	Puntal de maistro	35	Ballancin
9	Abisso		40	Boni Francesco (Frane Bonich)
10	Palandara Boch	Campanil de Ossero	20	Vodari Zacaria
11	Arno Prepovet de siroco		50	Zulini Stefano
12	Canon	Puntal tonera ponente	35	Salata Francesco
13	Artina	Bocic'	28	Bracco Antonio (Merco)
14	Radiboi di mezzo		35	Rucconi Giuseppe
15	Mezzo bocic'	Feralic'	35	Boni Antonio fu Giovanni (postoluar)
16	Arno Boch	Tanchi	35	Zullini Domenico
17	Balligo	Bora Vier	35	Burburan Antonio figlio
18	Feral		100	Bracco Domenico
19	Puntal de Masova	Calchiera zoccolo	35	Maver Domenico
20	Cancelleria de maistro	Breca	22	Muscardin
21	Valle Piccola		35	Travas Giovanni
22	Santa Caterina	Punta Levrera di bora	35	Salata Roberto
23	Dente	Chiesa di S. Pietro	35	Ballon Gaudenzio
24	Arno Prepovet		50	Stepich
25	Colcich	Punta abisso	45	Rucconi Antonio

26	Puttina		40	Boni Antonio fu Domenico
27	Gerisella		40	Ballon Marco
28	Gromaciza	Mezzo Bochic'	25	Burburan Antonio padre
29	Drio Puntal de maistro	Feral	40	Maver Giuseppe
30	Cancelleria de siroco	Arno Prepovet	22	Sidrovich Giovanni
31	Tonera colcic'		35	Burburan Antonio
32	Puntal de tonera	Feral	40	Rucconich Giovanni
33	Zarnoviza		35	Sidrovich Stefano
34	Ialbriciza	Artina	28	Strogna Gaudenzio
35	Lastra Boch	Abisso	80	Burburan Stefano
36	Isola	Visochi	35	Croce
37	Colonetta	Seca Boch	45	Vescovich
38	Priat grande		35	Bracco Domenico
39	Mezza gerisella		40	Strogna
40	Radiboi roverso		35	Maver

5. The goat is always considered a sympathetic animal, somewhat bizarre, for its unpredictable, and a bit hasty character, therefore, it was taken as a reference point in many proverbs and sayings, like: "*cosà ne more bravarà naucit'*" (what can the goat teach a bravaro), to stigmatize the behavior of inexperienced people who claim to teach the experts; "*clàvarna càco cosà*" crazy like a goat), "*quando la capra monta scagno, la spuza e la fa dano*" (when the goat mount a stool it smells, and causes damage) to indicate coarse, and clumsy behavior of alleged "new arrivals or new rich", and many more.

6. *Beléh* also deserves attention because for many Neresinotti this ancient practice could be interesting. The *beléh* was a special set of custom signs, and were realized affecting the ears of sheep. Each incision had its own specific name, and to better remember the family *beléh* the type, and positions of the various recordings of the ears were declaimed like a nursery rhyme that all family members had to remember, kids included. The engraving on the edge of the ear in the shape of the small recess (removal of a piece of cartilage in order to leave a void in a rectangular shape) were called *bote*, then there could be: *bota suad* (incision behind), or *dvie bote suad* (two incisions behind), or even *bota sprièd* (incision forward), etc., (*sprièd* and *suad* means forward and back). Two incisions of the same type as the previous one, opposed on the transversal axis at the center of the ear (anterior and the other posterior, were called *cris uho*. The incision like above, but done on the outer tip of the ear was *sòpaj*. The removal of the tip of the ear with a straight cut was called *karno*. The removal of the tip of the ear with an obliquely cut was *maciùho*. The incision of the ear tip in the form of three or more teeth was called *pirunic'i*. The removal of only half of the tip of the ear, with the missing part rearward facing was called *suad però* however, and obviously the one with the missing part to the forward facing was *sprièd però* though. A round hole in the ear was *scùja*. For example, a complete *beléh* could be "*dièsno suad però and cris uho, lièvo dvie bote suad and sòpaj*". (*Dièsno* and *lièvo* stands for right ear, and left ear). Another was "*dièsno scùja, and maciùho, lièvo karno, and bota sprièd*, another could be: *dièsno pirunic'I*, and *jena bota sprièd, lièvo sprièd però and cris uho*, and so on. The infinite combination of various signs among them defined, and differentiated the *belèsi* (plural of *beléh*) of each family.

7. In the old families the labor was essential for all work activities, whether these were in agriculture, or in the sea. To meet these needs, the central government in Vienna allowed that a family member could do military service for the other brothers, so they could stay home in order to fulfill business needs. However, the family member chosen was to remain in service for a total time of the additional other brothers, that is, if the service imposed for each soldier three years, and the victim had three brothers, he would have to serve nine years. In the attic, among old papers, was found on discharge papers (*Farewell*) of *margarst* Soccolich Michael (author's note: one my great-grandfathers), dismissed in Pola December 31, 1877 after 11 years and 8 months of military service.

VI

THE POLITICAL QUESTION

It all starts with the Austrian annexation.

In Neresine has never been any "political question" up to about 1850, the origin of the inhabitants, on the other hand, was quite homogeneous until the nineteenth century. Neresinotti never "mixed" with the inhabitants of neighboring towns, not even those of Ossero, less than four kilometers away or San Giacomo just two kilometers away (hence the surnames of Neresine are not found in these towns or vice versa). You can certainly say that Neresinotti are all related to each other, if one goes back to the second generation of ancestors, there is no family in town that does not have at least one ancestor Soccolich, Bracco, Rucconich, Marinzulich o Zorovich, to name only the most popular surnames, therefore, the way of life, thinking, feelings were the same for all. The cultural uniformity arose from common points of reference, and well-rooted social, religious, and political, this homogeneity has remained consistent for centuries, following in parallel the development, and evolution of the town from its inception through the first half of the nineteenth century.

In Neresine, the first political problems began to arise after the annexation of Istria, and Dalmazia by Austria, after the fall of Napoleon, but especially after the outbreak of Italian revolutionary independence movements, (and other parts of Europe) in the first half of 1800. In this period the central government of Vienna began to fear the spread of the legitimate national aspirations of the various subjected peoples, especially fearing the extension of irredentism in Italian territorial possessions, where the Italian language, and prevailing culture was Italian as in the territories of Trento, Trieste, Istria, and Dalmazia. In these regions, then began an intense policy of deitalianization, with the intensification of police controls, and strong political restrictions, and discrimination against people, to which was added, in areas of lower Italian cultural prevalence, even a strong policy of Slovenisation, based on the ancient teaching of the Romans "divide et impera", and on the supposed easier subjugation of Slavic peoples, less acculturated, and less contaminated with "germs" of the French Revolution.

Drastic measures in Istria, and Dalmazia.

The first drastic action given by this policy direction was the decision of the Government of Vienna, taken in 1825, administratively, and politically to separate the three islands of Quarnero from Dalmazia, which was already at an advanced stage Slovenisation, also for natural reasons, and territorial ethnicity, by passing the new northern boundary of Dalmazia between the islands of Veglia (Krk), and that of Arbe (Rab), and the islands of Cherso, and Lussino between the island of Pag. Simultaneously, in 1825 was formed the Captaincy of Lussino which joined the Mangraviato of Istria, from which depended the three main islands of Quarnero: Veglia, Cherso, and Lussino. This separation was dictated by the will of the government of Habsburg: croatize the stubbornly "Italian" Dalmatian possessions. Not by chance was chosen as the focus of this policy the most Italian of the three islands, namely that of Veglia, where was also established the new bishopry for the region, removed from Ossero, with the clergy pertaining to it assuming the

role of a bridgehead for deitalianization of the region by introducing the ancient religious rites in the Old Slavonic language, the "Glagolito", and removing the Latin.

To better understand these events, it is useful to report the data on the population of the island of Veglia taken from a census conducted in the early nineteenth century: the entire island population 11,500, including 3,393 in the capital city, including 3,215 Italian speaking only Italians, 100 of Serb Croatian speaking including Italian and 78 foreign (Slovenia, Fiume, Italians, Austrians, and others). The Croatian-Serbs were virtually all members of the clergy, and employees of the Bishop's seat. A subsequent survey in December 1900 gave the following result: residents of the city of Veglia 1,598, of which 1,450 Italians, 132 Croatian-Serbs and 31 foreigners. In the census of 1925, i.e. after the passage of the island under the sovereignty of the newly formed Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the inhabitants turned out 3,600 including 1,200 in the town of Veglia. As you can see these political changes have resulted in the exodus from the island's most ancient inhabitants, a dramatic, if you put in the account the number of new immigrants from the Slavic regions of the hinterland. In essence, in the hundred years of Austrian rule, the inhabitants of the island of Veglia decreased by more than one third, while in other islands of the Quarnero Bay, and surrounding areas, the population continued to grow regularly: the first great exodus, and political ethnic cleansing of the Quarnero region.

The December 1 of 1866, should be considered as the official date for the beginning of Dalmazia Slovenisation, when the Imperial Royal Government of Vienna issued the decree, which ordered the replacement of the Italian language in all public administrations, a legacy of more than four centuries of Venetian administration, with the Serbo-Croat. The decree provided that no State official should be hired unless he can demonstrate in front of a committee, that he knows, besides Italian the Serbian-Croatian language. This important policy shift was considered as the consequence of the disastrous defeat of the Italian fleet at the Battle of Lissa (July 20, 1866).

The first alleged presence of Croatian population in Neresine has begun to materialize, not coincidentally, during this period, despite the total absence of Croatian culture in town. The Croatian language was completely unknown from the same population as it spoke a language predominantly Slavic, this did not contain significant elements of language similar to the Serb-Croatian, from the personal names of the inhabitants. The first operational Istrian territory, and therefore also in newly annexed islands of Quarnero, the new policy was the closure of the Italian schools, and the establishment of Croatian schools wherever possible (in Neresine this attempt, as we have seen, created serious problems, and disorders), and the promotion, and support, including financial, of Slavic nationalism, Slovenian in Trieste, and Croatian in the rest of the region.

In Neresine the Slovenisation policy was promoted by the Franciscan Catholic clergy dependent on the new Diocese of Veglia, by the Franciscan friars of the convent of San Francesco, gradually replaced by other more ideologically oriented, with the task of awakening, or even create from scratch in the country, Croatian nationalist sentiments, but also instill in the population feelings against Italians. The friars, who were also "Franciscans", they simply bring in a few prayers in their church, and to promote Croatian nationalism, in view of the fact that the local native language was of Slavic origin. The political problems were furthermore accentuated around 1870, when, after the end of the Italian wars of independence, the Austrians were driven out from Italy, that was unified under the Savoyard monarchy, who incorporated also Rome, and the States of the Church.

To give greater authority to the new anti-Italian policy, the government of Vienna also availed itself of the scions of the imperial family in the various domains. On the reforestation of Monte

Ossero, which was part of the reforestation program of the Quarnero's islands, promoted by the representative of the populations with the Government of Vienna, an "Italian" native from Lussino, the Prince Rudolf of Hapsburg was sent in 1887, to Neresine, heir to the Austrian imperial throne. He stayed in Neresine a few days, and took the opportunity to get 'democratically' up, and down the mountain with the commandeered workers, and the opportunity for Croatian nationalist propaganda. An old man among the staunchest "Croatian" from Neresine was always explaining to us kids in the neighborhood, as how he become a "Croatian" telling us this anecdote: "I was part of teams of peasants recruited for the reforestation of the mount, with us there was the Prince Rudolf from the imperial house of Austria, as I guided through the rough paths all of a sudden I shouted: "attento un serpente!" (careful a snake!) Then he said to me, "Talk in your mother tongue! This is called *gad* not *serpente* ", and then explain to me why I have to talk in Croatian, and blah... blah ... blah ..." From that day I became a Croat, and to commemorate the event I carved with a diamond that name, and date in the window of the kitchen ", which he regularly took pleasure in showing us.

This shows very well what the instruments of political propaganda, and anti-Italian were, and the ground on which they could take root

The commitment of nationalistic friars.

As in the main centers of the islands of Cherso, and Lussino, i.e. Cherso, Lussinpiccolo, Lussingrande, and in the same Ossero, this policy had not borne fruit, because there were no vehicles suitable for the purpose, since the population of these towns had become native Italian speakers, in Neresine the population was still largely Slavic-speaking, we wanted to bring up the whole story. As already mentioned, one of the tools used was sending in the Franciscan friars committed to spreading the Croatian nationalism. The culmination of this policy was reached in 1894, when in Neresine arrived as a guardian Father Francis Smolje. The Smolje, impregnated more with nationalistic fanaticism than charitable Franciscan, began an intensive political indoctrination by relying on women's religiosity, and abolishing the Latin, and Italian in religious ceremonies, such as baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and introducing in their place the Croatian language.

The most significant incident occurred Sunday, September 22, 1895, when this Smolje friar began to celebrate without notice, the 10 o'clock Great Mass in the Cathedral in the language VeterSlav called "Glagolito" rather than in Latin, and this even in spite of the then recent papal provisions prohibited in the territories of Dalmazia, the celebration of Mass in languages other than Latin, (apparently the problem was already risen dramatically elsewhere). The reaction of the population was just as sensational: they abandoned the church, and the faithful gathered in the main square talking excitedly about the incident. When the friar left the church to return to the convent, in crossing the square was surrounded by these: a violent argument ensued which culminated in the passage to "assault" against the monk. The police opened an investigation into the incident that led to the complaint, and sentenced to various punishments, by the political authorities, 22 people, and subsequently sentenced interposed they appeal, and were acquitted. The sensational news of the event made the rounds of the islands, and caused quite a stir in the rest of the region, the news of these events is told in details in documents found. The attempt to hold mass in Glagolito was not repeated, by Smolje nor his successor.

Father Smolje staid in Neresine for three years, until 1897, then certainly his political activism was used elsewhere, probably in the more important centers. In the archives of the convent was found a directive from father Smolje written in 1897, before leaving the town addressed to his successors, containing strong nationalist accents, and recommendations for the continuation of Croatization policy. This fact is rather curious, because according to the Franciscan rule of the monks, the friar would not have been authorized to issue directives of any kind, and because he wrote them in perfect Italian. He was well aware that the friars, still belonging to the Venetian-Dalmatian St. Jerome province, all certainly knew well only Italian, as it was the only language taught in their schools.¹

However, the situation had become unsustainable for those who would not accept the change of religious language in the liturgy, especially because the Croatian language was unknown to the population of Neresine, no less than Slovenian, Bulgarian, and Russian, and also because in countries such as the two most important Lussini, Cherso, and Ossero, the Latin continued to be the only language of the Church, as indeed it was throughout the Catholic Christendom. The ship-owners Constantine (Costante) Camalich, and Domenico Zorovich (Sule) seconded by other villagers, forwarded a long series of complaints, and petitions, to the Central Government in Vienna with the intention to end the abusive actions of nationalism by the friars, without obtaining neither results nor any answer; on the other hand, this action resulted from policy choices of their own government in Vienna, attended to and stimulated by the diocese of Veglia. It has been found in the Vatican Archives two of these complaints-relations, coming from the Royal Imperial Ministry of Worship in Vienna, showing:

Sunday, December 23, 1895, the friar chaplain promised the baptism in Latin for the daughter of Giovanni Zuclich (grandson of one of the funeral later described), but when he learned that the name chosen for the infant was the Vittoria, Romana, (Victoria, Roman) he changed the language to Croatian. The family then withdrew the infant leaving the friar by himself, and proceeded to have the infant baptized in Ossero.²

Marcella Cavedoni was born In December 1897. It was not possible to bring her to Ossero for the baptism because she was sick. The friar Louis Volarich, the successor of Smolje, was invited to baptize the baby at home, but he refused to administer the sacrament in Latin, and he also refused to give some Holy Water to the mother, so she can baptize the baby herself. The child died without baptism.

The funeral case of Giovanni Zuclich was quite dramatic, a merchant, who in his last will, and testament expressly asked for his funeral to be in the Latin language. Since the friar refused to celebrate the Latin rite, despite the insistent demands of family, and relatives, for the first time in Neresine the funeral of a citizen was a civil ceremony without the priest but with the participation of all villagers. This fact is mentioned in the inscription carved on the stone tablet in the family tomb readable today, which says: "*Alla onorata memoria di Giovanni Zuclich negoziante, morto addi 21 ... (mese non leggibile) 1899, marito fedele e padre amoroso, patriota, estremo difensore della liturgia latina come ebbe a dimostrarlo i suoi imponenti funerali civili. Il figlio Giovanni in segno d'affetto pose.*" "To the honored memory of John Zuclich merchant, dead on 21 ... (month unreadable) 1899, a faithful husband, and loving father, patriot, defender of

the Latin liturgy as demonstrated by his imposing civil funeral. His son Giovanni in a sign of affection laid this stone."³

Another sensational case, which was also reported on some local newspapers, was what the funeral of Antonio Sigovich, 94 years old patriarch, and of his wife Nicolina Zorovich who died the same day on November 25, 1906. Antonio also had requested in his will to have his funeral rite in Latin. In this case, the friar, while assenting to celebrate the funeral according to the last wishes of the deceased, along the path towards the cemetery, without notice intoned the "De Profundis" in Croatian. At this point, they stopped carrying the two coffins, laid them on the ground, and began a bitter debate with the friar, which eventually ended with him being chased badly from the procession thus causing the interruption of the ceremony. After the first moments of the participant's consternation, a certain Zuclich, stocky, and robust, with two palings, and a bit of twine made an improvised cross, he went to the front of the funeral, and with stentorian words said: "*Jà sen pop, svi sa mannu!*" (I am the priest, all behind me!), the words become famous and proverbial in villager slang. Of course, this episode earned Zuclich the nickname "Popich" (little priest, for his short stature). The sad ceremony, however, continued under the guidance of the improvised priest, with the participation of the whole town, but without going through the Church.⁴

Until 1978, the tomb of Sigovich show the following inscription engraved on the tombstone of white stone surmounted by a the cross: "*Un requiem pio visitatore, sulla tomba dei coniugi venerandi Antonio e Nicolina Sigovich, L'uno di 94 anni l'altra di anni 84, che dopo 64 anni di coniugal sodalizio, nella notte dal 24 al 25 novembre 1906, muniti dei conforti religiosi, si addormentarono in Dio. In vita ossequienti agli ordini del Sommo Pontefice, essendo loro negate le esequie in lingua latina, s'ebbero entrambi, tra il generale compianto, funerali privati. I figli addolorati questo ricordo posero*". "A requiem pious visitor, the tomb of the venerable spouses Antonio and Nicolina Sigovich, one of the 94 years' the other 84 years old, who after 64 years of coniugal association on the night November 24 to 25, 1906, equipped with the religious comfort of the family, fell asleep in God. In life obedient to the orders of the Supreme Pontiff, the Latin funeral being denied to them, both preferred a private civil funeral amidst the general mourning of the villagers. The painful sons laid this memorial." (The tomb was restored in 1978, and the plaque was incorporated in the new structure, the inscription, however, was transcribed, and preserved by descendants).

All these events depicts a good understanding of the unique feelings of the majority of the population. The most spontaneous example of this mentality is the same Zuclich-Popich, while knowing well the Italian language, used the Slavic dialect of Neresine when at the head of the procession, engaging in the first person against the adoption of the Croatian language imposed by the friars.⁵ The great rebellion of the population of the Neresine against the arrogant imposition "from above" of the unknown Croatian language in religious rites. In fact, it was due most likely more to the sense of independence, and attachment to traditions that to a nationalistic sentiment of order filoitagliano, these feelings took hold later, just as a reaction to poorly tolerated impositions from the outside.⁶

Even in San Giacomo filocroata policy imposed by the Diocesan curia of Veglia triggered strong reactions in the population: the old *paron de barca* (shipowner) Giovanni Zorich requested in his testamentary disposition the Latin rite for his funeral, stating explicitly that if the priest opposed he was to be buried with a civilians funeral, so it actually happen at his death in 1898. The

inscription on his tomb bore the following inscription: *"incorruptible patriot, and extreme defender of the Latin liturgy, as it had to prove with its imposing civil funerals."*

In the Vatican archives is a document "exposed" from May 15, 1902, signed by all 53 heads of households of the village of San Giacomo, which stated Easter Day of that year the Bishop's curia from Veglia attempted to introduce in the liturgy the poleoslavic language Glagolito. "The mute faithful deserted the church, and would not return to church until that decision is abrogated". At the conclusion of the document is noted that "this supplication is hand signed by all heads of family of San Giacomo, no one excluded", (26 of the 53 signature were made with a cross).

In the following years, until the end of World War I, of course, the friars went on, more or less intensely with the spread of Croatian nationalism, encouraged in this, if not controlled by the Austrian government, and the diocesan curia of Veglia. The introduction of the Croatian language in religious rites in Neresine, after was however slowed following a specific imposition to the Bishop of Veglia by Pope Leo XIII, on penalty of suspension "a divinis" for the breaching religious. The imposition of the Pope was gained following a specific request of the Patriarch of Venice, Sarto (the future St. Pius X). Sarto in turn was contacted by a committee of Neresinotti, led by the Italian elementary school teacher, Roberto Tonolli, by Domenico Zorovich (Sule), and again by the shipowner Camalich Costante, who travel for the purpose, first to Venice, and then with a letter of recommendation from the Patriarch himself, to the Pope in Rome. What with so many complaints, and petitions in Vienna Costante Camalich, and Domenico Zorovich were not able to obtain, was then obtained for the personal interest of the Patriarch Sarto (who for particular vicissitudes in Venice, had also become a friend of the same Costante Camalich).

Afterwards, on June 17, 1905, by order of the new Pope, Pio X, the Cardinal Vatican State Secretary sent an ulterior harsh letter to the archbishop of Zara, and the two provincials of the Franciscan Friars Minor of Dalmazia, and ordered the cessation of the introduction of the Croatian language in the liturgy, enjoining religious "to keep jealously in all their functions, especially in the celebration of Mass, the Latin language."⁷

A few years later, when the bishop of Veglia, Mahnich inflicted the excommunication to the faculty of the Italian School of Neresine, as recounted many pages ago, Pope Pius X ousted from office the bishop, calling him to Rome for "other duties". Unfortunately, it took just a few years of nationalistic political activism to destroy forever the harmony that had lasted for centuries in Neresine. In this era was born in fact, the inexplicable divide between "alleged Italians", and "alleged Croats", which eventually led to so much hatred, and grief, without reasonable grounds of common interest peace was never was able to prevail.

Croatian nationalism, and economic inequalities.

The nationalist Croatian proselytizing took root only in a minority of the population, as is amply demonstrated by the fact that the vast majority of families sent their children to study in the Italian primary school, and not in Croat, although the authorities encouraged, and facilitated in every way this last option, and not missing them by intimidation, and hostility toward those who chose the Italian education.⁸

In fairness it should be added that this orientation of the family also stemmed from the fact that the official language, administrative, bureaucratic, and cultural remained Italian, despite the political intentions of the Central Government, and on the other hand could not be otherwise, whereas in the richest, and most important centers, such as the two Lussini, and Cherso, the only language spoken, and written had become Italian. To be more precise, the language was typical of the Venetian islands, and Istrian dialect, still normally spoken, and taught in the family as a first language to children, the surviving inhabitants of the old "Italian", and by the late twentieth century, strangely even those belonging to the families' of Croatia feelings ". (This fact is probably due to the intention, more or less conscious, attempt to increment the cultural division existing between the local population, and new immigrants, some of which are of other religions, and different ethnic origins).

To help interpret truly the history of the Neresine, it must also be said that the families who supported Croatian nationalism were the poorer ones, or better, you can certainly say that no wealthy family, and active in the development of the town has ever adhered to this policy. A significant factor that led to the "Croatization" the most disadvantaged families was certainly a degree of social inequality: where the rich got richer by exploiting the weakness of the poorest, the choice of "croatizzarsi" became for them a form of social revenge. Moreover, since there were inequalities often within the same family, there were some sensational cases in which a brother was a convinced "Croatian", and the other brother (always the richest, often the eldest son) convinced "Italian." In essence, the division between "Italian", and "Croatian", perhaps unwittingly, has represented the old conflict between rich, and poor, of which the policy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire took advantage to the limit.

Of course to any action there is reaction, and the more virulent is the action becomes all the more virulent the reaction: while establishing the Croatian nationalism was born as strong Italian nationalism, to manifest even in irredentism, something quite unusual in a country which continued to be native speakers of a Slavic language.

To better understand the complex evolution of this political-historical period, it is worthwhile knowing the linguistic situation of a typical "Italian" affluent family of Neresine:-

- Great-grandfather Soccolich, born in 1845, a large landowner, educated at an agricultural Italian high school in Pisino, native Slav mother tongue (the term "Slav" is used to mean the Slavic dialect of Neresine, very different from the Croatian language, not known by my grandfather).
- Grandma Bracco, a rich family, Slavic-speaking, illiterate, understood Italian but spoke very haltingly.
- Seven children, three females, and four males. Two females educated by the nuns of Cherso.
- Of the four sons, the eldest son has studied the Italian school of Agriculture in Pisino, like his father, the second son has graduated from Captain Long Course in Lussinpiccolo, but died young, at twenty, and the third graduated from the economics high school of Trieste.
- The eldest son became head of household, married Soccolich other Slavic-speaking, illiterate, understood Italian, but spoke it with difficulty.

Their many children attended the Italian elementary schools of Neresine; some of the daughters were well educated in the schools of the College of the nuns of Cherso. At home, despite their grandmother, and mother spoke only Slavic dialect, the children were obliged to speak Italian. Because, two aunts who lived in the house provided the education of the grandchildren, it created

a very curious situation: the children turned to Mom, and Grandma in Italian, and they answered in Slavic dialect.⁹ The example has been shown, because, more or less, the same situation is reproduced even in other "rich" families from Neresine.⁹

The First World War: the Italians difficult position.

The political conflict escalated at the outbreak of World War I, when Italy declared war on Austria in 1915. The police asked citizens of Neresine holding a "leadership" position in the Croatian party, and that obviously knew very well the town, to compile a black list containing the names of neighbors who considered themselves at risk of treason in favor of Italy. Some villagers at the end of the war later found the list, which was filled with zeal worthy of a better cause, in the Franciscan convent of Neresine, by an act of forced entry into the convent, with further an attack on the friars. The list contained the names of hundreds of people; too many even for the Austrian authorities, for all to be deported to concentration camps set up for the purpose.

The practical result of this delation was the removal of persons "supposed Italian" from public office: it was the case of the neresinotto Soccolich Rodolfo (T.N. my great uncle, to whom it is said, I physically resemble), director of the postal service in Lussinpiccolo, who was dismissed, although his brother Carlo was in the Austrian front line Army fighting in the war against Italy. In addition the listed citizens whose normal work was to go to Bora by caicio to care for the animals, and farms as usual, had first report to the town's police, and inform them of the trip, because they could not leave the town without permission. Some families, totaling 58 persons, men, women, and children, were even interned in concentration camps in Austria, where one person died from the hardship.¹⁰ Still, Costante Camalich, and Domenico Maver of Neresine, and Ossero were speciously accused, and imprisoned in Pola for making actions favorable to Italy. In particular, Camalich Costante was accused of supplying with his Vessel fuel to the Italian submarines, and to transship in Italian ships the young conscripts who wanted to serve in the Italian Army fighting against Austria.¹¹

Costante succeeded, although with great difficulty, to prove his innocence, but was interned with his family, and small children in the concentration camp of Mitternbrabern. Elio Bracco also was arrested, and tried for alleged collaboration with Italy: he was sentenced to harsh jail served in the jails of Graz. No citizen of Neresine, Croatian or Italian that he was, was sent on the Italian front (except my grandfather Romano) all went to the Russian front. A neresinotto even deserted in Italy, a Zuclich nicknamed Raicevich for his Herculean strength, and size, then the name of a famous wrestler from Trieste.

However, since "Austria was an orderly country," the sailors who had a qualification of some importance, even if "Italians" were enlisted in the Navy.

An emblematic case was that of my uncle Valentino Bracco, coasting captain graduated from the Maritime Government of Lussinpiccolo, which was embarked on a gunboat in Pola, and assigned to the ammunition store room (Santa Barbara) to lift the load of grenades for the bow gun: as "Italian" could not be employed on tasks of greater responsibility! In the early days of the war, the gunboat was sent to bombard the undefended Italian port of Porto Corsini (Ravenna). The Italians had prepared in secret, however, the new defense systems for the ports of Romagna: they were the so-called armored trains, i.e. wagon trains with mounted guns, able to move quickly along the coast. The gunboat went undisturbed in the narrow harbor of Porto Corsini, and began shooting at the local harbor, and the surrounding stores, but soon came the armored train, which

in turn began to shell the ship: in a few minutes, the bridge was hit putting out of action the on-board instruments, the commander, and officers... Valentino realized that the ship was hit ran up on deck, sizing the situation, ran to the emergency steering area at stern, and began to maneuver the ship giving orders to the engine room. In the process of turning the gunboat to escape from the port, he was forced to divert toward the armored train: this maneuver saved the ship, as the boat got closer to the train; the guns could no longer aim to the vital points. The guns aim could not be lowered enough being on a wagon. During these operations a cannon shot took away his left arm, without hesitation he cut off a section of his shirt with his pocketknife, and made a tourniquet to prevent bleeding to death. He then continued to maneuver the gunboat with the emergency steering set up with the remaining hand, as he knew how, experienced sea captain that he actually was, until they were safely out of port with the rest of the crew. Upon returning to Pola was taken to hospital where he was cured.

His accomplishment was greatly appreciated by the military, and political authorities: the imperial princesses came from Vienna to visit the wounded arm amputee, the arm was symbolically buried in the mausoleum of the heroes of Vienna, and the princesses wanted to know his young wife, and gave her a gift of some personal jewelry of considerable value. Nevertheless, when it came to a decoration, political problems arose because Valentino was also an activist of the Italian party of Neresine, also the Admiralty in Pola was in some embarrassment in recognizing, as a brave, a sea captain, assigned at menial jobs in the ship's ammunition store. However, since the Austria was "an orderly country," our Valentine was finally officially awarded the silver medal of the Admiralty in Pola, and the gold cross for bravery, in recognition of emperor's personal Francis Joseph. An old photograph, unfortunately slightly marred by time, show my uncle in the Austrian sailor uniform, less left hand, but with the gold cross, and silver medal pinned to his chest, bearing witness to the feat accomplished.

The fascist policy of Italianization.

At the end of the war, the islands of Cherso, and Lussino passed under Italy. The enthusiastic rejoicing of the majority of Neresine was manifested by a large gathering in the village square, where at the climax of the event, the citizen Elio Bracco, a recognized leader, and veteran of the Italian party from the war years spent in prison (while the family was in an Austrian concentration camp), stood on the square well, made a memorable speech recalling the recent persecution of the "supposed Italian victims," and concluded with the remained famous sentence: "*la miglior vendetta è il perdono* " "***the best revenge is forgiveness,***" probably also in accord with the policy position taken by Senator of the Kingdom of Italy for the reconquered lands, Francesco Salata, Osserino, and brother in law of the same Bracco.¹²

Activities in Neresine under Italian sovereignty began to grow consistently, ship traffic to Venice, Chioggia, Istria, to the Adriatic, and even to the entire Mediterranean resumed vigorously. A new era of prosperity began, and until 1945, the Croatian nationalism was not heard of again. Indeed the "Croatian", being citizens of Neresine like everyone else, all related to each other, resumed their usual activities in the country as if nothing had ever happened.

In the early years of the many Italian families, perhaps in reaction to the persecution suffered by the "Croatian" villagers during the war, or perhaps nationalistic political reaction, were quick to ask the Pola court (seat of the province) to change the surname by adopting nicknames as new names; some Soccolich became Castellani, from Castelluàgnevi; others Soccolich became

Rocchi from Rocchic'evi; some Zorovich became Menesini from Menesic'evi; some Marinzulich became Zanetti, from Zanettic'evi. This first wave of change of name was the result of free choice for families, and not to be confused with the one that occurred several years later, by imposition of the Fascist regime.

On the other side, four citizens of Neresine, (a Camalich, a Zulich a Lecchich, and Bracco) among the most ardent Croatian nationalists of the country, and heavily involved in the compilation of the aforementioned list of proscription, they preferred to emigrate to the newly formed United Yugoslavia rather than become Italian, and perhaps for fear of retaliation. It also happened that the island of Veglia went to Yugoslavia where most of the families' feelings Italians, migrated to the territories under Italy. At that time, in fact, have come to Neresine also some families from the neighboring islands, (Rumen, Vodinelli, and Udina).

The majority of "Italian" families embraced fascism willingly as they would have welcomed any scheme or ideology from Italy. There were some, however, cases of political fanaticism with discrimination perpetrated by locals against the "Croats" who had taken an active part in the previous persecution, especially to the compilers of the famous list of proscription

When the Fascist regime decided to build a strong policy of Italianization in the lands now become Venezia Giulia, the Italianization of the family surnames was one of the steps that the authorities of Neresine waged with greater diligence. It should not be said that this stemmed from a provision of State law, as fascist, but by political directives of the regime, despite what Neresine, as probably elsewhere, the Italian version of surnames was in fact imposed by local authorities, of course members of the Fascist Party, with threats, and intimidation. However, remember that some Neresinotti, of the "Italian feelings", but with substantial civil awareness, and probably able to cope with the abuses of the zealous officials, rejected the change of surname.

The great exodus after the Second World War.

The outbreak of the Second World War found the country in its greatest development: the contribution of naval armaments, and the consequent expansion of trade, Neresine could now be considered a rich town. Soon the war destroyed everything that was built over many years of work, above all the naval fleet. After the armistice of Italy on September 8, 1943, the "Croatian" in town began to organize, view to assume positions of power after the occupation of the islands by the Yugoslav army, establishing contacts with the communist partisans of Tito. The occupation took place in the spring of 1945. The "Croatian" Neresinotti enthusiastically joined the new scheme, without considering the merits of what ideology was imposed; any ideology on the other hand would have been well received, if it were Croatian, as it had happened years before with the "Italian" Neresinotti for the fascist ideology. The first action of the "Croatian" from Neresine was the compilation, and delivery of a new police policy, the proscription list, containing the names of virtually all "Italians" in Neresine. Then the list was revised after wormed suggestions from the older, and wiser generation, well aware of putting at risk the lives of even close relatives. The immediate result of this was the imprisonment of the most prominent in the Italian party; the Istrian foibe was reserved for two of these.

The Croatian party leaders were quick to join the Communist Party, nor indeed could aspire to positions of power without this membership. Among the directives that the new regime sought to put into practice were those contained in the infamous "Plan Cubrilovich" of ethnic cleansing

prepared by Tito's Minister of this nome.¹³ The situation was aggravated by the fact that unfortunately the Neresine "Croatian " bosses of not more than fifteen persons¹⁴ had neither experience nor cultural knowledge sufficient to assess the merits of what was commanded them to do (*no one had a schooling higher than the fifth elementary grade*). The massive exodus, which has been widely already discussed, was the consequence of this situation. Between 1946, and 1956, most of the "Italians" left the town forever: the first contingent until 1951, leaving secretly, those fugitives with small boats across the Adriatic Sea, and adventurously through rural Istrian country, the last contingent left legitimately, after four to five years of as many request denials "*your mother language is not Italian*" then finally accepted as "*opting for Italian citizenship*", and release to depart with only limited baggage's. Even many "Croatsians", when finally they realized what the new regime was; had abolished free enterprise, private property no religion, and unable to opt (choose) because they had already openly declared themselves Croats, decided however shamefully, to run away to Italy hence able to emigrating to America, Australia, Canada or South Africa, (some of these remained in Italy, and later acquired the Italian citizenship!). To close the argument of the ugly political question in Neresine, the subject matter discussed of this chapter, we must affirm that in the past it was mainly due, as it still is, to Croatian nationalism, in fact, Italian nationalism, as well, and by documents found in the history of Neresine, it was founded as a reaction to the Croatian one, imposed from outside. It cannot be understated, however, that the main promoter, and inciter of Croatian nationalism has always been the clergy of the Catholic Church, and especially the friars of the Franciscan convent. However, it should also be noted that the strong contrasted division of Neresine between "alleged Italian" and "presumed Croats," is what has developed in the late nineteenth century, after more than three centuries of peaceful coexistence only so radically in Neresine. In the other towns of the islands, as Ossero, the two Lussini, and in other small towns *did not arise any* political division, the vast majority of the population staid united in the traditional sentiments handed down by their ancestors. Perhaps only in Cherso occurred something similar, but quite marginal: there is no coincidence that the two towns in which assets, were the important settlements of the convents of friars, whose fundamental role in the promotion of Croatian nationalism cannot be understated. Some recent event seems to reflect the environment of those years, and confirm the strong political commitment of the clergy. At the funeral of an elderly "Italian" fellow villager, very religious, and native Italian which occurred in 1990. The family came from Italy for the sad occasion, and funeral, after the church Croatian language ceremony, the family asked the priest, (native of Susak, and perfectly speaking the Italian language), to say a prayer in Italian before burial in the cemetery of Neresine, thinking that the deceased would have appreciated, but the request was flatly rejected. The relatives, and friends then spontaneously recited prayers of circumstance in the Italian language. Evidently, the nationalist side, and the behavior of the clergy in Neresine has remained unchanged since the far end of the nineteenth century.

NOTES

1. This is the full main story of Father Smolje directive on this topic:

"Tutte le funzioni in Chiesa si fanno in croato, dal Bogosluzibenik oppure dallo schiavetto, escluso la Messa in latino e la Processione del Cordone, ch'è un miscuglio di latino e croato. I Vesperi, il Mattutino dei morti e l'assoluzione dei cadaveri, la sequentia Dies Irae, l'epistola e l'evangelo tutto in croato. Perché poi si cantino i

Vespero in croato, la ragione è questa: perché il Vespero si canta per la popolazione, e in luogo del Rosario; nelle maggiori solennità si fa col Vespero. L'esposizione del S.S. Sacramento è pure in croato. [...] Il Mattutino dei morti in croato, perché prima della mia venuta soltanto i salmi si cantavano in latino e tutto il resto in croato. Il che era ridicolo, due lingue in un medesimo canto. I superiori quindi procurino di attenersi a quei usi che trovano e continuo: perché qui si dovette molto combattere, a loro sarà facile quando diranno: come ho trovato non voglio mutare e non posso; se avete qualche motivo, dovete a bel principio ricorrere a chi s'aspettava, e così eviteranno dispiaceri a se e ai loro successori: i primi hanno combattuto per i posteri. Si deve avere anche questo di mira che nella Cappellania si fa pure in croato, e quindi facendo in latino in convento sarebbe antagonismo in questi tempi dolorosi tra partito e partito: dakle slosno (perciò d'accordo). E poi in Convento comandiamo noi e non i partiti".

"All the functions in the Church are in Croatian, from the Bogosluzibenik or Slavish, excluding the Latin Mass, and the Procession of the Cordon, which is a mixture of Latin, and Croatian. The Vespers, Matins, and the absolution of the dead corpses, sequentia the Dies Irae, the epistle, and gospel all in Croatian. Why then sing the Vespers in Croatian, the reason is this: why we sing Vespers for the population, and in lieu of the Rosary, in the most solemn we do with Vespers. The exposure of the Blessed Sacrament is also in Croatian. [...] The Matins of the dead in Croatian, because before I came only the psalms were sung in Latin, and everything in Croatian. Which was ridiculous, two languages in the same chant. The superiors then take care to adhere to those uses, and make sure they continue: because here we had to fight a lot, it will be easier for them to say, as I found I do not want change, and I cannot, if you have any reason, you need afore hand resort to whom it pertains, and so avoid sorrows for themselves, and their successors: the first had fought for those coming after.

One must also have this aim that the Chaplaincy is made well in Croatian, and then to do in Latin in the convent it would be antagonism in these painful times between party, and party: dakle slosno(therefore we agreed). And then in Convent we are in control, and not the parties."

2. The event was a pretty funny following: in 1918, when the islands came under Italian sovereignty, the already twenty-three years old Vittoria Romana was re-baptized to dispel any doubts as to the good order of baptism, that at the first time given was in great dispute. A story similar to this baptism had some clamor outside the islands boundaries. In the archives was found a copy of the Zara newspaper "Il DALMATA" "The Dalmatian", N ° 20 of March 9, 1895, which contains the following article: "UN FRATE MODELLO – Cappellano della borgata di Neresine (Ossero) è un certo padre Smolje, energumeno croato di prima forza. Giorni fa egli rifiutò il battesimo ad un bambino, poiché il padre richiedeva che la cerimonia si facesse in latino, non comprendendo un acca di croato. Se non si fosse interposto il Podestà coll'intervento presso il decano di Ossero, quel povero bimbo sarebbe tuttora senza battesimo."

"- A MODEL FRIAR - Chaplain of the village of Neresine (Ossero) is a father Smolje, Croatian energumen of brute force. Days ago, he refused baptism to a child because the father demanded that the ceremony was done in Latin, not understanding zilch of Croatian. If it were not for the Mayor who intervned with the cannon of Ossero, the poor boy would be still anabaptized".

3. Of the deeds of Volarich was written at length in the province newspapers. In the "DALMATA" of Zara on May 21, 1902, appears the following article (in these pages we always quote the "DALMATA" because the archives of this newspaper in Zara are open to the public, and only here we found these pages, the old time chronicles do not interest us): - "NERESINE AND CROATIAN PRIESTS. Anyone who follows with loving interest the unfolding stirred life in the province, would have noticed how the charming village of Neresine is one of the more troubled by the political propaganda of Croatian priests, and how it has struggled for three decades with faith, and perseverance, and so far always win, against their attempts. They began by the worthy predecessors of the current bishop of Veglia, Mahnich, which sent among those great people some most worthy ministers of God. We shall list among others the Chirincich (the latter also sentenced to two years in prison for falsifying accounts some receipts to the detriment of his creditor), the Trinajatic, the Smolje, the Maricich, haters, even now far from Neresine, of is known as Italian, and therefore model priests. Monsignor Mahnich, just to follow the footsteps of his predecessors, gifted to this good people, in the person of Louis Volarich, passionate dreamer holy Croatia, who made them of raw, and cooked, and the provincial press had repeatedly dealt with him. I will tell you of his last act of intolerance, which also honors his holy superior, the Bishop Mahnich. Moreover, the act is this: A landowner of Neresine, Gaetano Bracco, wanted to donate to the church in his native village an altar (author's note: the altar of the Holy Family in the Cathedral). In 1899, he ran all the necessary paperwork with the bishop's curia, and asked for assurance that the altar would be blessed in Latin. The bishop Mahnich did not answer satisfactorily, but promised that the altar would be blessed in Latin, adding that the consecration or blessing of altars, and churches can only be

done in Latin! On 28 March, the work of the altar, truly wonderful, were completed, and in the evening, the Bracco asked Reverend Volarich to fix the date for the altar blessing. Moreover, said hoping in Latin. The young priest turned red as a cooked lobster, and protested that he will never use the Latin for blessing the altar: if Bracco is not satisfied, he has recourse within the peremptory period of fifteen days. It was the thanks of the Croatian clergy for the commendable action, because pitiful. The Bracco protested with all energy against the *ukase* (blind-extremist) not with the bishop, from whom he would never get an answer, but from another person who may call the bishop to remind him of his duties, and keeping his promised words. "From this and the other events described, that probably was the straw that broke the camel back, arose a delegation of Neresinotti, first to Venice by Patriarch Sarto, and then to Rome by the Pope, already told in these pages. However, as already said, the new Pope Pius X later dismissed the bishop Mahnich, and recalled to Rome "to other assignments," where he remained until his death.

4. The funeral of Antonio Sigovich and his wife caused a stir outside Neresine so much that few regional newspapers wrote about it. The newspaper "IL DALMATA" of Zara gave it a great weight to the fact, publicly denouncing the conduct of the friar, Father Superior of the Franciscan convent of Neresine, born Father Luciano Lettich. In the Archives of Zara was found a copy of "The Dalmatian" No. 99, December 15, 1906 Zara, in which is published a clumsy letter of justification by the Lettich, that historic duty is reported as follows: "*Venni accusato in alcuni giornali di non aver voluto accettare in chiesa le salme dei Sigovich, e venni adombrato perciò come Zorovich, quindi le esequie riguardavano due persone*).

Non che io non voleva, ma non poteva accettare un cadavere, accompagnato senza croce e senza prete, e ciò in forza alle leggi canoniche, e, dopo la tumulazione, feci il funerale in latino (sic), come desiderava la famiglia.

Io in questa ques politicante.(il plurale viene usato perché nella stessa notte morì il vecchio Antonio Sigovich e sua moglie Nicolina tione non ci entro per nulla, perché chiaramente dissi agli eredi Sigovich: "io farò il funerale in latino. Ma se voi volete fare il funerale, o meglio accompagnare i cadaveri senza prete e croce, io non li posso accettare in chiesa, perché ciò è contrario alle leggi canoniche". Ed essi se ne persuasero ed andarono in santa pace. Ora perché ricolpano me, che feci come doveva fare, mentre lo stesso feci il funerale in latino?

Io sono tutt'altro che politicante, anzi procuro di accontentare tutti, essendo neutrale in tali questioni, tanto è vero che io sono in paese in buona armonia con tutti i neresinotti, e lo prova questo fatto.

Dopo sette anni il Ministero del Culto ed Istruzione restaurava questo rudimentale campanile, unico capolavoro in tutte le isole del Quarnero (sic). Espressi il desiderio alla popolazione di fare un nuovo concerto di tre campane nuove, essendo le attuali stonanti. Tutti si sono persuasi, e già i Neresinotti di qui ed i dimoranti in America, concorrono alla spesa, sicché una spesa di 3000 corone sarà coperta dai soli Neresinotti. Se io dunque fossi un politicante partigiano, mai potrei ottenere simili risultati, perché la maggioranza della popolazione è di sentimenti italiani.(detto da lui c'è da crederci). Neresine di Lussino – P. Luciano Lettich Guardianio".

"I was accused in some newspapers that I did not want to accept the bodies of Sigoviches into the church, and I was overshadowed as a politician. (The plural is used because in the very same night old Antonio Sigovich, and his wife Nicolina Zorovich died, then the funeral referred to two people). Not that I did not want, but could not accept a body accompanied with no cross, and no priest, and that under canon law, and after the burial, I did the funeral in Latin (sic), as the family desired. I in this issue have nothing to do, because clearly I said to the heirs Sigovich, "I will do the funeral in Latin. Nevertheless, if you want to do the funeral, or rather accompany the bodies without a priest, and Cross-, I cannot accept them in church, because this is contrary to canon law. "And they were persuaded, and left in holy peace. Now why they are blaming me, which I did as I, while anyhow I did the funeral in Latin? I am anything but politician, indeed try to please everyone, being neutral in these matters, so much so that I am in the town in harmony with all neresinotti, and it proves this fact. After seven years, the Ministry of Education, and Worship restored this rudimentary tower, unique masterpiece in all the islands of Quarnero (sic). I expressed the desire of people to make a new concert of three new bells, since the current are out of tune. All were convinced, and already the Neresinotti of residents here, and in America are contributing to the expense of 3000 crowns will be covered only by Neresinotti. Therefore, if I were a partisan politician, I could have never achieved similar results, because the majority of the population is of Italian feelings. (Said by him, is believable). Neresine of Lussino - P. Luciano Lettich Guardianio".

The letter above unfortunately makes us understand the bad faith of Father Lettich, in fact, it was he who, in contravention of the provisions of the Ministry of Religion of Vienna, issued specifically for the school of Neresine, clung to teach religion classes to elementary school Italian students in the Croatian language, but the Italian he knew very well, as evidenced by his letter, so much so that the year after the issue resulted in the excommunication of the faculty, and the provincial education authorities, as is well explained elsewhere. Among other things, the initiative to

replace the bells out of tune was promoted by the population well before his arrival in Neresine, and happily ended only 24 years later, in 1930.

5. In the main towns on the island of Lussino, namely Lussinpiccolo, and Lussingrande, the policy of Croatization had begun a little before, and was poorly tolerated the imposition from above of people chosen by the government authorities for the main civil offices, especially was disliked by the population the imposition of foreigner pastor, and prelates by diocesan authorities. In Lussingrande happened events that are worth telling, reporting as it is, the passage that narrates these events, taken from the book *“Storia documentata dei Lussini* of Dr. Matteo Nicolich, contemporary with the events, and therefore a reliable witness, because in site: - *“Dopo la morte del benemerito vecchio Parroco, accaduta nell’anno 1845 la popolazione di quella città aveva divisato di dargli a degno successore il Rev. Don Antonio Ragusin, che godeva nel paese la pubblica stima. Vi fu però chi, secondato dall’intrigo di qualche influente funzionario, non si peritò di sfidare l’opinione pubblica, ed a proporre a Parroco Don Stefano Antoncich che, sebbene patriota, viveva però da molti anni lontano dalla patria e reggeva la parrocchia di Buje. La fama non gli suonava favorevole, e perciò si ebbe aperta opposizione per parte del popolo, mentre lo sostenevano i pochi suoi amici o parenti, e tutti i pubblici impiegati. Nel maggio 1845, convocata l’adunanza popolare per l’elezione del Parroco, il solo proposto Don Stefano Antoncich fu assolutamente scartato con tre quarti de’ voti del popolo, ed acclamarono a loro pastore il prediletto loro Ragusin. L’espressione di un tale pubblico voto avrebbe dovuto rendere oculati tanto il Governo, quanto l’Ordinario Vescovile; ma questi incaponiti a sostenere il loro candidato, anzi che aprire nuovo concorso, come era loro dovere, a dispetto dei voti contrari del popolo, lo insediarono qual capo della Parrocchia. La popolazione si lagnò amaramente di tale insolente dispotico atto, ma ne’ tempi che correvano ha dovuto pure accomodarsi alla volontà degli stranieri, e tenersi a suo dispetto l’inviso parroco. L’inaspettata pubblicazione della Costituzione a Vienna nel 1848 diede coraggio ai cittadini di Lussingrande di sollevarsi dal molesto incubo del Parroco Antoncich, e perciò nel giorno 25 marzo 1848, ordita bene la trama della vendetta, una gran folla di popolo dopo la Messa solenne, si soffermava nel piazzale della chiesa parrocchiale per udire alcuni proclami governativi, o piuttosto per mettere in esecuzione il fatto progetto. Infatti, tra le acclamazioni all’Imperatore ed alla Costituzione proclamata, si alzò il grido che invitava a deporre il Parroco, ed a questo segno convenuto, rientra in chiesa la folla, e conducendosi seco il Rev. Don Antonio Ragusin, che tutti desideravano a proprio Parroco, si dirige all’uffizio Comunale. La si alzano nuovi rumori, che reclamano l’immediata dimissione dell’Antoncich, e la sostituzione in suo luogo del Ragusin. L’autorità locale restò perplessa e titubante, ma alla fine dovette cedere alle esigenze del furente popolo, e si trovò indotta ad estendere un protocollo, che firmato dalla moltitudine raccolta sulla piazza e nella casa comunale, stabiliva le dimissioni del Parroco, il quale visto il brutto tiro, pensò bene di sottrarsi colla fuga, e salvarsi a Lussinpiccolo.”*

"After the death of the worthy old Pastor, happened in the year 1845, the population of that city had devised to give him a worthy successor to the Rev. Don Antonio Ragusin, who enjoyed the public esteem in the town. However, someone seconded by intrigue of some influential officials, did not hesitate to defy public opinion, and proposed for Pastor Don Stefano Antoncich who, although patriot, had lived for many years far from home, and held the parish of Buje. The fame did not sound favorable, and therefore there was open opposition by the people, while was supported by the few friends or relatives, and all public employees. In May 1845, convened the meeting of the people for the election of the new Pastor, the only proposed candidate Don Stefano Antoncich was totally rejected by three quarters of votes of the people, and they hailed their favorite pastor Ragusin. The expression of such a public vote should have made aware as much the government as the make judicious both the Government, as the Bishop Ordinary: but these stubbornly continued to support their candidate, instead of opening a new competition, as it was their duty. In disdain to the contrary popular vote of the people, they installed him as the rector of the parish. The population bitterly complained of such an insolent despotic act, but in those days, it had to settle to the will of the foreigners, and keep in spite the unpopular Pastor. The unexpected publication of the Constitution in Vienna in 1848, gave courage to the citizens of Lussingrande to uplift themselves from the modest nightmare of the Pastor Antoncich, so therefore on the day 25 of March, 1848, being plotted well the trauma of revenge, a large mass of citizens after the Solemn Holy Mass remained milling around on the square of the Parish Church to listen to some government proclamations or rather to execute the de-facto project. In fact, among the acclamations to the Emperor and the proclaimed Constitution got up the cry inviting the citizens to depose the Pastor, and at this convened signal the mass of people re-enter the Church bringing along the Rev. Don Antonio Ragusin, that desired to be their Pastor, they re-directed to the City Hall. There arouse new rumors that demanded the dismissal of Antoncich, and the substitution in his place of the Ragusin. The local authority remained perplexed and hesitant but at the end had to give in to the needs of the furious citizenship, and found itself induced to extend a protocol, that signed by the

multitude gather in the square and at City Hall, established the resignation of the Pastor, who seen the bad situation thought wisely to flee to Lussinpiccolo."

From other found documents "*Rassegna Storica del Risorgimento Italiano*" Vol. 18" Historical Overview of the Italian Risorgimento" Vol 18, shows that the main organizer of the riots of March 1848, was the lawyer Antonio Maria Budini (Budinich), which was subsequently arrested, along with Captains Pietro Maria Ragusin, Augustino Petrina, Antonio Giacomo Bussani, and to "Shipowners" Biagio Giadgrossi, Simeone Letti (Lettich), Pietro, and Antonio Ragusin. The prisoners were then subjected to a criminal trial, the first in Rovigno, and then in Klagenfurt, and sentenced to terms ranging from 6 months to three years. Together with the not liked Pastor Antoncich, during the riots was also chased from Lussingrande the Austrian medical doctor Klausberg.

6. A document has been found structured as follows.

Title page:

I MUNICIPI
di
OSSERO, CHERSO, LUSSINPICCOLO
alla
SACRA CONGRAGAZIONE DEI RITI
di
R O M A
contro
IL SINODO DIOCESANO DI VEGLIA
per
la latinità delle chiese
nell'antica diocesi di OSSERO

Second page:

DALLA DEPUTAZIONE COMUNALE
di **Ossero** 28 aprile 1902
il podestà:
Domenico A. Zorovich
I consiglieri comunali
Giacomo Salata – Giovanni Linardich – Giovanni Gercovich – Matteo Faresich

DALLA DEPUTAZIONE COMUNALE
di **Cherso** 29 aprile 1902
il podestà:
Dott. Giuseppe Petris
I consiglieri comunali
Cap. Francesco Colombis – Antonio De Petris – Cap. Antonio D. Petranich

DALLA DEPUTAZIONE COMUNALE
di **Lussinpiccolo** 30 aprile 1902
il podestà:
Giovanni S. Vidulich
I consiglieri comunali
Michele I. Hrellich – Battista Premuda – Simon Cattarinich
Giuseppe Bonetti – Alessandro Nicolich – Giovanni M. Martinolich

Title page:

The MUNICIPALITIES
of
OSSERO, CHERSO, and LUSSINPICCOLO
to the
SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES

of
R O M A
Against
THE DIOCESAN SYNOD OF VEGLIA
for
the Latin churches
in the ancient diocese of OSSERO

Second Page:

OF THE MUNICIPAL DEPUTATION
Of **Ossero** April 28, 1902
the mayor:
Domenico A. Zorovich
The councilors
Giacomo Salata – Giovanni Linardich - Giovanni Gercovich - Matteo Faresich

OF THE MUNICIPALDEPUTATION
Of **Cherso** April 29, 1902
the mayor:
Dr. Giuseppe Petris
The councilors
Cap Francesco Colombis - Antonio De Petris - Cap Antonio D. Petranich

OF THE MUNICIPALDEPUTATION
Of **Lussinpiccolo** April 30, 1902
the mayor:
Giovanni S. Vidulich
The councilors
Michele I. Hrellich - Battista Premuda - Simon Cattarinich
Giuseppe Bonetti - Alessandro Nicolich - Giovanni M. Martinolich

The text contains a strong protest against the abolition of Latin in the liturgy, imposed by the Diocese of Veglia, and the introduction in its place, of the Serbian-Croatian language, and of the poleoslavic language "Glagolito". The three municipalities of the cities on the islands of Cherso, and Lussino solemnly demand the restoration of Latin in the liturgy of the Church, mater that was actually achieved.

7. In the letter, among other things it is said: "Instead of attending with the spirit of St. Francis to the true wellbeing of the souls, stay away from harmful works of taking parts, and to bring everywhere the calm, and the word of love, and peace, the Friars Minor of the two provinces join the agitators, to force the Holy See, to further concessions regarding the privilege of Glagolito.

Even recently, despite the warnings sent to those religious at the Holy See, by means of P. V. R., But to keep away from such regrettable dealings, despite the Latin language in S. Liturgy be always jealously preserved in the Order, and the churches kept by the Friars Minor in Dalmazia, The Most Rev Provincial. Minister of the Friars Minor in Dalmazia, the Most Rev Provincial. Minister of the Friars Minor of Spalato Rev. Pietro Perkovich and Rev. Vicar Provincial of Zara, Rev. Bonaventura Skunka, by the Archbishop of Zara, have sent to the Holy See a Memoir signed among others by them, in opposition to the decrees issued on this matter by the Congregation of Rites. What hurts the most is the initiative of the aforementioned Religious, and other, as has been reported to the Holy See, and made public by the Croatian newspapers, almost to rekindle the passions more. Now His Holiness wants absolutely that this disorder, always serious, but very serious for today, and for the circumstances that accompany it, and for people committing it, has to cease definitely, and as soon as possible." (From the archives of the convent of the Friars of Neresine - historical research by Vittorio Meneghin).

8. From the census of population taken by the Austrian government at the end of 1910, is that in the town of Neresine reside 1665 inhabitants, of which 1290 Italian and 375 Croatian. In the next census of the end of 1921, the inhabitants were 1704, of which 1648 Italians and 56 Croatians.

9. The stubborn, and deeply rooted political division established between "alleged Italian", and "alleged Croats", had a friendly "nemesis" in the same family: - One of the two aunts (author's note: it was my mother's aunt) who cared for the education of nephews, and nieces, required them to speak only in Italian, became enamored of the elementary Croatian school teacher of Neresine, and was just as intensely reciprocated. The teacher was indeed a handsome man, very sweet distinct, and well educated, they married despite strong opposition from her family, but she never lost her strong determination, and never spoke in Croatian with her husband, he willingly went along with it, because he spoke perfectly Italian. When in 1918, the islands came under Italian sovereignty, the teacher had to return to his native Basca (Veglia, Croatia) which, remained under the sovereignty of the newly formed Kingdom of Yugoslavia, because in Italy he could not practice his profession as a teacher. His wife, more than ever in love with her husband followed him, despite her "fanatical" Italian nationalism. The two later settled in Susak (Fiume), and they lived happily until old age, and in good harmony. To the children she taught Italian, and stubbornly continued throughout her life to speak at home in her "mother tongue". They were a very religious family, and often recited the rosary at home, the husband usually began the first part of the Hail Mary in Croatian, and she always punctiliously ended the second part in Italian, and this until older age. (Also from here, it is visible how the political beliefs may fluctuate from one versant to another, according to the personal interests of the people).

10. An old document was found with a partial list of some "Italian" from Neresine arrested and deported to concentration camps in Austria, for the curiosity of readers we report:

- Rodolfo Biasiol, stonemason, born in 1876, arrested in 1916, and deported with his family to Raschalà.
- Bracco Giovanna, born in 1889, arrested in 1916 and deported to Mitternbrabern.
- Bracco Marco, Postal Service Master, born in 1853, arrested in 1916, and deported with family (wife and 13 children), first to Mitternbrabern, and then to Feldbach.
- Buccaran Gilberto, clerk, born in 1891, arrested in 1916, and deported to Mitternbrabern.
- Buccaran Pietro, shoemaker, born in 1895, arrested in 1916, and deported to Raschalà.
- Camalich Costante, Maritime Captain, and ship owner, born in 1858, arrested in 1916, and deported with the family to Mitternbrabern.
- Camalich Eugenio, Maritime Captain, and ship owner, born in 1870, arrested in 1916, and deported with the family, wife, and 6 children to Raschalà.
- Camalich Maria, born in 1888, arrested in 1916, and deported with the family to Raschalà.
- Garbaz Antonio, shoemaker, born in 1859, arrested in 1916, and deported with the family to Mitternbrabern.
- Gercovich Gaudenzio, landowner, born in 1867, arrested in 1916, and deported with the family to Raschalà.
- Matcovich Nicolò (Zizzerich), Maritime Captain, and ship owner, born in 1854, arrested in 1916 and deported with the family to Raschalà.
- Matcovich Maria, born in 1854, arrested in 1916, and deported with the family to Raschalà.
- Bracco Elio, born in 1884, arrested in 1915, jailed in Graz, and after two years of prison, interned, and reunited with the family in Mitternbrabern
- Salata Giovanna, (wife of Elio Bracco imprisoned), born in 1889, arrested in 1916, and deported with two small children to Mitternbrabern.
- Sigovich Francesco, Maritime Captain, and ship owner, born in 1858, arrested in 1916, and deported with the family to Raschalà.
- Zorovich Eugenia, born in 1883, arrested in 1916, and deported to Mitternbrabern.
- Matcovich Giuseppe (de Dolaz), Maritime Captain, and ship owner, arrested in 1916, and deported with family, wife, and four small sons to Raschalà.
- Polonio Prospero, carpenter born in Ossero in 1882, arrested in 1916, and deported with family to Raschalà.
- Salata Giacomo, shopkeeper born in Ossero in 1871, arrested in 1915, and deported with family to Raschalà.
- Salata Giovanni, student, born in Ossero in 1900, arrested 1916, and deported to Raschalà.
- Salata Mario, born in Ossero in 1882, arrested in 1916, deported with family to Raschalà.
- Maria Bracco widow of Gaudenzio Salata.

Another old document provides a framework with photographs of 27 other adults Neresinotti deported, with the only indication of the surname, and initial of the name (10 Matcovich, 1 Bracco, 12 Camalich, and 4 Sigovich).

11. In regard to Costantino Camalich, one must add that he in his usual trip to Venice actually had known Nazario Sauro, a patriot, and had patriotic relationships with him. During his detention in the prisons of Pola, Nazario Sauro was captured, and arrested after stranding his submarine in the shallows of the reef Galiola, and brought to the same prison. During the Trial of Nazario Sauro, Costantino was led into the courtroom for a comparison of recognition: Costantino denied he had ever seen Sauro before.

12. Among the old papers was found the record of this event, carefully compiled from a fledgling reporter, who wrote, "A few days after the occupation of the island of Lussino on November 4, 1918 by Italy, the interned families returned home from the Austrian concentration camps. The first Sunday after his return, Elio Bracco attend the Sunday High Mass in the Cathedral as everyone else per local custom, at Mass end, Elio comes down into the square full of people to greet the Neresinotti with a handshake, without distinction with all, Italian or Croatian sympathizers, then he stood on top of the well, and gave a speech:, "Dear fellow citizens, you have done evil to the many interned families of Neresine, mine included, we have endured oppression, sufferings, and humiliations, ashamed by this fact. "On the other hand has added Elio Bracco," I hope the Lord forgive you all, provided you repent of the sins done to your neighbor. We for our part, we tell you that the best revenge is forgiveness. "Big applause from all those of Italians sentiments, while the Croats took to their hills one by one toward home."

13. For the knowledge of this plan, please refer to the specific historical documents, now available on the web.

14. With the consolidation of Tito's Communist regime, in Neresine was immediately established the "Narodni Odbor" (People's Committee), which assumed the administrative, and political control of the town. Members of the first Odbor were, as a title of honor will be remembered by Enver Imamovich in his book "Nerezine na otoku Losinju ", the drugovi (comrades): Ivan Zorovich (Scrivanèlo), Guavde Sokolich (C'uc'uric '), Ivan Rukonich (Zimic '), Ivan Sattalich, Dinko Rukonich (Limbèrtic'), Dragon Sokolich (C'uc'uric 'de Suria), Guavde Sokolich (Divi Tovuar) and Kirin Sokolich (Bobar). (The author added the nicknames by which they were known).

VII

ETHNICAL ASPECTS

Neresine: a mixture of races.

In recent years, has been much talked, and written, and continues to be so, the ethnicity of Neresine population, often with ultimate goals already foreshadowed. Apart from the fact that it now makes much sense to speak of ethnicity, especially in light of the growing integration between the various people of Europe, and elsewhere, it is worth spending some time on the "ethnic question" of Neresine, if nothing else because it continues to be the center of debate, and controversy. If the adjective "ethnic" is intended in respect to any race, just a people, of the same racial group, but more particularly social aggregate characterized by the same culture, and language "(Garzanti), then it is very difficult to define membership "racial" population of Neresine, even if it is a fact that the first families that founded the village came from regions located at the east of the Adriatic Sea, and were certainly Illyrian, and Slavic. In this connection it is necessary to clarify that once the whole region, roughly identified with the territory of former Yugoslavia, was inhabited by the Illyrians, and was therefore called Illyria, while the eastern coastal region of Istria, (Albona, and Fianona) the islands of Quarnero, and the coastal area between Segna, and Zara, was inhabited by Liburnians. An Illyrian tribe that was especially familiar with the sea. Because the Slave peoples have begun to invade the territory of Illyricum on about the V - VI century AD, and Liburnian region, particularly that of the Quarnero islands, some centuries later, it can be said that the peoples who inhabited these territories later, were certainly the descendants of the racial mixture that had been created between Slavs and Illyrians. The early inhabitants of Neresine belonged mainly to this strain.

Some indications from the analysis of surname.

Because there is no document that can locate, even approximately, more specific origins, we can obtain some information groped etymological analysis of surnames. The first names appearing in the village are Soccolich, Rucconich, Sigovich, Zorovich, and Marinzulich. There are also traces in even older documents of the name Berichievich, almost certainly from Ossero. The surname Soccolich is still quite common in today Ukraine, Moldova, and in the marginal extent in Bosnia. With this, one might consider that the Soccolich came from the southern Balkan area, and nothing more; to confuse things a little, moreover, could be the fact that, in a restricted area of Northern Friuli, has spread the name Soccolis, from this place area came many of the ancient *gromaciàri*, i.e. workers who came to the islands centuries ago to build the infinite *masiere*, i.e. the dry walls which are scattered throughout the countryside. Of Rucconich, and Marinzulich surnames there is not traces, a very tenuous etymological similarity could indicate its origin from the more northern territories, as Istria, and Croatia. The surnames Sigovich, and Zorovich however, for the same reasons as above, may come from the southernmost area, such as Serbia, and Montenero

The quick analysis suggests, in essence, that the first families were originating from different regions, mainly inhabited by Slavs, but of a different ethnic origin. The people that arrived in town later, in the seventeenth, and eighteenth century have introduced new surnames, which is in

the following list, for convenience of analysis, already divided into the northern Slavs, Southern Slavs, surnames of Italian or Italo-Dalmatian, and surnames of uncertain origin.

Slavs Surnames from north:

Zulich, Baicich (from Veglia), Cremenich (came from Veglia in the mid XVII century), Dundich, Garbaz (came from Castua around the 1780), Grubesich, Hroncich, Linardich (came from Veglia in XIX century), Maurovich (originally from Bersez arrived in town around 1750), Olovich (native of Fianona came to Neresine around 1760), Pinesich (came from Veglia in the XIX century), Stefich, Succich. If we add the village of San Giacomo, we may add Sattalich, Harabaja e Knesich.

Slavs Surnames from south:

Zorovich, Descovich, Lechich, Gercovich, Matcovich, Vitcovich.

Italian or Italo-Dalmatian origin surnames:

Bonich, Bracco, Buccaran, Burburan (coming from Veglia), Canaletich, Carlich, Cavedoni, Francin, Mascarin, Massalin, Mattiassich, Ragusin, Santolin, Smundin e Talatin (coming from Cherso). Here also if we include San Giacomo unusual *enclave* of Venetian origin, we may add: Anelli, Lolia, Massalin (from Neresine), Zanelli, and Zorich (surname popular in Romagna). We did not consider the "ch" ending, because it was found that in the past centuries that ending was added, and removed many times in accordance whether the anagraphical registration was done by Italians or Slavs, especially in Dalmazia. We can only add, that the surnames Boni, and Zori are presently very popular in Emilia Romagna and Carli in the coastal area of the Ferrara province, both in Italy.

Surnames of unknown origin (but more likely Dalmatian - romance):

Camalich (already present in the city of Cherso in XV century), German (native of Arbe came to Neresine around in 1760), Ghersan, Glavan, Lazzarich, Vescovich (Etymologically Italian, coming almost certainly from Veglia).

Note: The well-defined origin of some names was derived from certain anagraphical data, found among old papers.

As shown in this attempt at classification, the only conclusion one can draw is that the people, who come to town in this second phase, came from disparate regions. From the point of view of "race", therefore, the Neresine population cannot be attributed to a specific ethnic belonging, because it represents a good product mix over time by free interweaving unions, and marriages within the town.

Linguistic and Cultural Aspects

If one considers the term "ethnicity" in the sense of "social aggregate characterized by the same culture, and language", it should first be said that the mother language common to the entire population of Neresine was, from the beginning to at least half of the nineteenth century, the Slavic dialect of Neresine, a language of Slavic stock.

Nevertheless, wanting to find a belonging, or at least a resemblance of the language spoken in Neresine with other Slavic languages ethnically homogeneous, we enter into a real quagmire. The language of Neresine, in fact, although many words in common with the Serbian-Croatian language, that they are also in common with other Slavic languages, contains in large extent, many words and grammatical forms (i.e. plurals, and declinations of verbs) of the ancient romance language, the "Dalmatico", as well as the Slovenian, Italian and Venetian dialect, and even the Russian language. Not by chance, in fact, for the new Croatian immigrants arrived in Neresine after the Second World War, the Slavic dialect of Neresine has been incomprehensible, and for the Neresinotti of the past, and for those who have emigrated from the country in the early years of the last war, the Croatian language has remained virtually unknown.

With regard to the Slavic spoken in Neresine, may be worth noting that when in the fifteenth, and sixteenth century, the town began to exist, in the main centers of the Quarnero islands, as Ossero, Cherso, and Veglia, the language spoken by the majority of the population, and especially by the dominant noble families, was the Dalmatico, spoken at that time even in major cities, and islands of Dalmazia, up to Ragusa (Dubrovnik), and beyond. Since many of the early inhabitants were from the same regions, they certainly had some familiarity with this old idiom. After the sixteenth century, with the consolidation of the administration throughout the Venetian Dalmatia region, the Dalmatian has been superimposed by the Venetian, and Italian, and slowly disappear forever. In Neresine, however, with the arrival of new residents from other regions, such as Croatia, Bosnia, Dalmazia, Istria, and Slovenia, the ancient language has been gradual, and slow to changes, incorporating the spoken words, and grammatical structures of the new arrivals, mainly Slavs, evolving in the current dialect, which has retained many words, and also the grammatical structure of the ancient Dalmatian language.

One can certainly say that the Slavic spoken in Neresine, remained virtually unchanged for two centuries, contains the last large remnant of the Dalmatian, now gone forever. In fact, the diphthongs "ua", "uo", typical of the Dalmatian, are preserved only in the old Neresinotto idiom, and there are not present in any other Slavic dialect spoken in other town, and islands. In conclusion, it may be said that from a linguistic point of view, the population of Neresine cannot be ethnically assimilated as ethnic Croatian, nor Slovenian, nor Russian or other defined Slavic ethnic groups.

Also from the purely cultural aspect, the path was the same as that of the language. The first inhabitants of the town, from the beginning, they had to make contact with the language, and culture of the population already there, therefore with the old Dalmatian-Roman culture-derived, enriched by the contribution of the rich Venice, one of the major cradles of culture, and humanities of European Renaissance. In the area it was represented by the Osserini, owners of much of the territory, and operators of the island on their own, and for the Republic of Venice. The newcomers found themselves therefore to gradually learn, the Italian language, the only official language, spoken, and written, that with the subsequent rapid development of Neresine, has also become an indispensable tool, for those who aspired to improve their economic, and social wellbeing. In essence, the inhabitants of Neresine have gradually become bilingual, or even to assume, from the late nineteenth century, with Italian mainly as the mother tongue. Along with the language, the new populations have gradually assimilated the habits, and customs found in place, the religious, and ethical conduct, rules of civil life, and the kitchen: the way of life has thus assumed a new identity, distinct, and particular, as derived from the Istrian-Venetian or very close to it.

Note: It is helpful in this regard to browse the beautiful book where are gather the themes presented in the competition: "I NOSTRI VECI NE CONTA ... I NOSTRI NONNI CI RACCONTANO ... , OUR ELDERS HAVE TOLD US ... and published in the spring of 2003 by "Mailing List Histria" (a forum for discussions).The book collects issues, interviews, stories, and ethnographic research, developed by the pupils of primary, and high schools of Italian Hrvatini (Koper), and Izola in Slovenia, and Buie, Rovinj, Umag, Pula, Gallesano, and Rijeka in Croatia that participated in the competition. The papers published are about a hundred, some even written in the Istrian-Venetian dialect, and are interviews of grandparents by their grandchildren, where the "*elders*" tell stories of their childhood, and their youth. In the accounts are described habits, and customs, cuisine, traditional festivals, the lifestyle of the population of a time, in cities of the interviewing youngsters, in essence Istria, from Koper to Pula to Rijeka. Well, all that flows from the stories of the boys, for the most part coincides with the habits, and customs, and way of living of the population of Neresine. Considering entirely innocent, and free of any manipulation of the things told by the boys, we could say that the population of Neresine, understood as social aggregate characterized by a common language, and culture, can be assimilated ethnic Istrian, something that every Neresinotto, being still in Neresine or in other parts of the world knows, and has always known. On the other side of the Quarnero islands from 1825 until today, politically, and administratively was part of the region of Istria, which were aggregated by an imperious act of the Austrian Government, detaching them from Dalmazia, to which it belonged for more than 19 centuries. As confirmation of the above, we can also certainly say that compared to people in the neighboring territories of the eastern (former Yugoslavia), as the current Dalmazia, and even more than those of the territories east of the mountains Velebiti, cultural affinity, ethical, and language are far more subtle than those in Istria.

APPENDIX A

NICKNAMES OF NERESINE

To mitigate the coldness of a list of nicknames, they are divided into zones (*stuagni*) (*Venetian Contrada*), and districts of the town. There is also given the original family names with the assigned nicknames. (Obviously the mocking nicknames or content are omitted)

CONTRADA HALMAZ

Mihovilich (Soccolich).
Muharich (Burburan).
Bambuzin (Soccolich), *Divi Tovuàr*.
Stepancic'evi, Stepancich (Zulich).
Chimbalich (Maurovich).
Zivio (Marussich).

CONTRADA FRATI (Na smòraz)

Stuagne Caturicevo
Caturic'evi, Caturich (Zorovich).
Perignevi (Zulich). *Raicevich, Pipeta*.
Fusic'evi, Fusich (Marinzulich).

From the main road toward the lands, Convent, woods of the Friars

- Popignevi (Zulich).
De Dolaz (Matcovich).
Arsamin (Soccolich).
C'unsciazi (German).
S'duolciza (Gercovich).
Crulich (Matcovich-Bracco).
Zizeric'evi (Matcovich).
Barnic'evi (Lupich). *Barne Carantuan*.
Zimich (Rucconich).
Buarovi (Matcovich). Marchic'evi, Poloviza, Guarda suso.

From Blasic'evi to Gariniza

Blasic'evi (Rucconich).
Iviza (Matcovich).
Tomovi (Rucconich).
Rochic'evi (Rucconich - Soccolich from the branch Bobaric'evi, then changed into Rocchi). the nickname comes from the female branch Rucconich.
Mumovi, Mumof (Canalettich).
Fticiar (Santulin).
Checovi (Zorovich).

Veli Ciovic then becomes also Mali Ciovic from branch Perignevi (Zuclich).
De Gariniza (Soccolich).

Between main road and Gariniza

Cazzarina (Bortolo Rucconich).

Cechic'evi, Cechich (Rucconich).

Cravic'i (Bracco).

Barbarossovi (Bracco).

Suievi, Sule (Zorovich).

Popic'evi, Popich (Zuclich).

Limbertich (Rucconich).

Scrivanelovi, Scrivanelo (Zuclich - Zorovich). the nickname comes from the female branch Zuclich.

Menisic'evi (Zorovich then changed to Menesini).

Gaetagnevi (Bracco - Sigovich).

Scarbich (Soccolich).

Mountain zone toward North-West (ancient contrada Castellani)

Ambrosic'evi (Marinzulich).

Franculignevi, Franculin (Soccolich).

Blesovi, Blesa (Soccolich).

Mucivugnevi (Bracco).

Turovi, Ture (Matcovich).

Bubnovi, Bubagn (Soccolich).

Pierovi (Rucconich).

Postolic'evi (Soccolich).

Palientari (Soccolich). *Simoviza*.

Pesc'ine

Bobaric'evi, Bobar (Soccolich).

Domiuani (Vodarich).

Jedrovi (Soccolich).

ANCIENT COTRADA CANAL

Stantinich

Felicic'i (Soccolich from branch Bubnovi).

Cindrigh (Soccolich).

Crecovi (Canaletich). *Malvati*.

Crivorilliza (Canaletich).

Cetarich (Zorovich).

San Antonio

Miersani (Camalich). Is the nickname of all Camalich of Neresine, from the place of origin of the ancestors, Merag or Smergo.

Antuoniovio (Camalich).

Costantignevevi (Camalich). *Oc'ialin*.
Vuoltich (Bonich).

PIAZZA (Ancient district Pozzo)

Piazza

De Posta (Bracco).
Cotigar, Cotigarca (Rucconich branch Tomovi - Soccolich from branch Bubgnovi-Casteluagnevi the nickname comes from the female branch Soccolich).
Euieniovi (Camalich).
Bentivoio (Zucclich then changed to Zucchi).
Sindiovi, Sindia (Lecchich).
De Appalto (Sigovich then changed to Sigovini).
Casteluagnevi, Casteluan (Soccolich from branch Bubgnovi, then changed to Castellani).
Fundac'ar (Zorovich from branch Menesic'evi, then changed to Menesini).
Dusich (Cortese).
Chioma (Ghersincich).
Antigoviza (Amicorum).
Sartovize (Vodinelli – Rumen, Amicorum).
Pinciun (Soccolich).

Center-friars shore side and area Prantuognef

Franic'evi (Zuclich).
Arnestovize (Bracco).
Pussic'i (Bracco).
Belcic'evi, Belcich (Succich - Zorovich).
- Bobaric'evi (Soccolich).

Marina

C'iuc'urich (Soccolich from branch Bobaric'evi).
Mercovi (Bracco).
Palincura - *Antuoncich* - *Ivuancich* (Rucconich branch Tomovi).
Coslic'i (Soccolich).
- Mic'elovi (Lazzarich)

Lucizza

Salbunatic'i (Carlich).
Sabaiovi (Carlich).
Baibovi.
Sburcic'i.
Popova.
Fuantivi, (Zorovich). *Martignevi*.
C'uok (Marinzulich).

Square Area South Side Toward Biscupia.

Battistich (Marinzulich).

Brudetovi (Marinzulich).
Zvazet (Marinzulich).
Capusina (Zuclich).
Bebembu.
Berasovi (Bracco).
Jacominin *Guavde* (Soccolich).
Rossich (Zorovich).
Andreic'evi (Rucconich branch Tomovi).
Pras'cevina (Rucconich).
Pataconiovi (Rucconich).

Square area west side toward S. Mary Magdalene.

Cosserich (Mattiasich).
Sluadi (Bracco).
Murca (Bracco).
Cuaticini.
Bortulignevi.
Planic'evi.
Pancrazi, (Succich).
Covaciovi (Linardich).
Bosello (Succich).
Parongrassovi (Lecchich).
Zanetovi (Marinzulich then changed to Zanetti).
Cucurizi (Zorovich).
Brecich (Zorovich).
Zinquin (Zorovich).
Gasparincic'i (Zuclich).
Bissiga (Lazarich).
Lissovize.
Pignatiza.
Colonich (Zorovich).
Tipitin (Vitcovich).

CONTRADA BISCUPIA.

Snasich (Marinzulich).
Ciarni o Ciarni Zuclich (Zuclich then changed to Zucchi).
Cuatini (Zorovich).
Rocofcic'i (Succich).
Stuarca (Canalettich).
Rossovi (Succich).
Pizzicuc'ia (Succich).
Bepic'evi (Canalettich).
Juric'evi (Camalich).
Dumesovi, Dumesich (Lecchich).

Ferdinandovi, (Zorovich). *Petroi*.
Funfir (Canalettich).
Menesina, (Rucconich). *Rocof*.
Panc'iovi, Panc'ia (Lecchich).
Ziezi (Lecchich).
Vucovi (Zorovich).
Gorinca (Rucconich).
Spaletic'evi (Lecchich).

CONTRADA BARDO (Sottomonte or Podgora)

Castelanic'evi (Soccolich).
Zovanin (Zorovich).
Salvestrovi (Soccolich).
Guavdic'evi (Zorovich).
Gustignevi (Ragusin).
Baric'evi (Zorovich - Buarovi).
Copuniera (Marinzulich).
Spadovi (Sigovich of Veli Dvuor).
Jerman Ftich (German of Veli Dvuor).
Mesez (Rucconich).

NOTE:

- The nicknames written in italics are those assigned for further distinction, for some families or individuals.

APPENDIX B

MARITIME COMMERCIAL SHIPPING EXISTING IN NERESINE AROUND 1920

1	Absirto	20	Primo
2	Alba	21	Quattro fratelli
3	Anita	22	Redentore
4	Buon Padre	23	San Antonio
5	Due Fratelli	24	Sabadino
6	Fabiola	25	Santa Filomena
7	Galiola	26	San Giacomo
8	Glorioso	27	San Giovanni
9	Maria Assunta	28	San Giuseppe
10	Maria Eugenia	29	San Giusto
11	Maria G.	30	Slavian
12	Maria Salute	31	Sloboda
13	Mariza, from 1923 renamed Absirtides	32	San Marco
14	Milan	33	Santa Maria
15	M. V. Costante	34	San Nicolò
16	Oblak	35	San Rocco
17	Oriente	36	San Simone
18	Orifiamma	37	Torino
19	Pachet		

MARITIME COMMERCIAL SHIPPING EXISTING IN NERESINE IN THE 1920-1930 PERIOD

N°	NAME OF SHIP	TYPE	TONN. Lg Ton	YEAR BUILT	ENG, HP	OWNERS & PARTNERS
1	Adua	Goletta	250	1907	80	Lecchich Costante, Zorovich Giovanni, others
2	Anita	Goletta	160	1883	50	Rucconich Domenico, Biagio & Giuseppe
3	Ave Maria	Goletta	200	1893	80	Sattalich Matteo and others.
4	Buon Padre	Goletta	40	1897	8	Socolich Antonio (Postolich).
5	Carmen	Goletta	160	1933	60	Camalich Alessandro.
6	Daniele Manin	Goletta	120	1909	80	Rucconich Giuseppe & Castellani Antonia.
7	Desto	Trabaccolo	80		24	Zorich Giacomo & Vittorio.
8	Due Fratelli	Goletta	160	1887	58	Camali Eugenio.
9	Euripo	Goletta	150		30	Succich Pangrazio.
10	Excelsior	Trabaccolo	130		24	Bracco Attilio, Gaudenzio Socolich.
11	Fabiola	Goletta	200		30	Rocchi Antonio, Rocco, others
12	Madonna del Rosario	Goletta	240	1920	80	Ghersan Andrea, Matcovich Domenico.
13	Maria Assunta	Goletta	140	1900	30	Zorich Matteo & Giovanni..
14	Maria G	Goletta	180	1880	30	Rucconich Antonio and others
15	Maria Grazia	Goletta	300	1920	100	Nesi Matteo and others
16	Maria Salute	Goletta	250	1914	50	Camali Eugenio & Sons.
17	Mariza	Goletta	120		30	Sattalich Giovanni, others
18	Milan	Goletta	120		24	Sattalich Matteo.
19	Neresinotto	Trabaccolo	150		30	Zorovich Antonio.
20	Nicolina Madre	Goletta	300	1921	120	Matcovich Nicolina, Bracco Stanislao, others

21	Nuovo Impero	Goletta	200	1905	75	Camalich Frutto, Andrea & Matcovich Domenico
22	Nuovo Oriente	Goletta	200	1910	50	Lecchich Giovanni (Parongrasso).
23	Primo	Goletta	220	1881	60	Nesi.& Annelich.
24	Redentore	Cutter	40	1884	12	Boni Domenico.
25	Ricordo	Trabaccolo	140	1881	30	Gerconi Giuseppe and others.
26	Risveglio	Goletta	200	1909	50	Camali Antonio & Nicolò.
27	Rita	Goletta	420	1919	150	Camali Domenico, Menesini Giovanni, others
28	Salvatore	Trabaccolo	160	1912	30	Zorich Giovanni.
29	San Giuseppe	Goletta	120	1906	24	Marchi (Matcovich Giuseppe).
30	San Antonio	Trabaccolo	100	1889	30	Anelich Giovanni, Soccolich Giovanni, others.
31	Sirio	Goletta	160		30	Matcovich Vito.
32	San Nicolò	Goletta	140	1901	24	Camali Andrea & Albino.
33	San Vincenzo	Goletta	160	1900	24	Camalich Costante.
34	Stella Diana	Goletta	160	1920	30	Matteoni Domenico, Bracco Silvio, others
35	Tacito	Trabaccolo	160	1881	50	Camali Giusto.
36	Torino	Trabaccolo	150		30	Zucclich Giovanni.
37	Stella	Trabaccolo	150		30	Canalettich & Bracco.
38	Venezia	Trabaccolo				Zorovich (Ferdinandovi).

MARITIME COMMERCIAL SHIPPING EXISTING IN NERESINE IN THE 1930 - 1945 PERIOD

N°	NAME OF SHIP	TYPE	TONN. Lg Ton	YEAR BUILT	ENG HP	OWNERS & PARTNERS
1	Adua	Goletta	250	1907	80	Lecchich Costante, Zorovich Giovanni, others
2	Anita	Goletta	160	1883	50	Rucconich Domenico, Biagio & Giuseppe
3	Ave Maria	Goletta	200	1893	80	Sattalich Matteo and others
4	Buon Padre	Goletta	40	1897	8	Soccolich Antonio (Postolich).
5	Carmen	Goletta	160	1933	60	Camalich Alessandro.
6	Daniele Manin	Goletta	120	1909	80	Rucconich Giuseppe & Castellani Antonia.
7	Due Fratelli	Goletta	200	1887	58	Camali Eugenio
8	Eugenio	Goletta	240	1914	50	Camali Andrea.
9	Eugenio C.	Goletta	450	1943		Camali Eugenio, new vessel in mounting
10	Euripo	Goletta	150		24	Succich Pangrazio.
11	Madonna del Rosario	Goletta	240	1920	80	Ghersan Andrea, Matcovich Domenico.
12	Maria Assunta	Goletta	140	1900	30	Zorich Matteo & Giovanni.
13	Maria Camali	Goletta	300	1939	150	Camali Eugenio, Giusto & Giovanni..
14	Maria G	Goletta	180	1880	30	Camali Eugenio and others.
15	Maria Grazia	Goletta	300	1920	100	Nesi Matteo and others.
16	Maria Salute	Goletta	180	1914	50	Camali Eugenio & Domenico
17	Nicolina Madre	Goletta	300	1921	120	Matcovich Nicolina, Bracco Stanislao, othersi
18	Nuovo Impero	Goletta	200	1905	75	Camalich Frutto, Andrea & Matcovich Domenico
19	Nuovo Oriente	Goletta	200	1910	50	Lecchich Giovanni (Parongrasso).
20	Nuovo San Giuseppe	Goletta	260	1943		Matcovich Giuseppe new vessel.
21	Orion	Goletta	160		30	Otoli Gaudenzio, Camali Eugenio
22	Primo	Goletta	220		60	Nesi & Annelich.

23	Redentore	Cutter	40	1884	12	Boni Domenico.
24	Ricordo	Trabaccolo	140	1881	30	Gerconi Giuseppe and others
25	Risveglio	Goletta	200	1909	50	Camali Antonio & Nicolò.
26	Rita	Goletta	400	1919	150	Camali Domenico, Menesini Giovanni, others
27	Salvatore	Trabaccolo	150	1912	30	Zorich Giovanni.
28	San Giuseppe	Goletta	120	1906	24	Marchi (Matcovich) Giuseppe.
29	San Antonio	Trabaccolo	120	1889	30	Anelich Giovanni, Soccolich Giovanni, others
30	San Francesco	Goletta	200	1921	120	Matteoni Domenico. Carli Giuseppe, Bracco.
31	San Nicolò	Goletta	140	1901	24	Camali Andrea & Albino.
32	San Vincenzo	Goletta	120	1900	18	Camalich Costante.
33	Sirio	Goletta	160		30	Bracco Attilio & Soccolich Gaudenzio
33	Stella	Trabaccolo	120		30	Canalettich & Bracco
34	Stella Diana	Goletta	160	1920	30	Matteoni Domenico, Bracco Sivio e Romano.
35	Tacito	Trabaccolo	160	1881	50	Camali Giusto.
36	New Vessel	Goletta	50	1945		Camali Eugenio, confiscated and renamed Zora.

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