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AUGUSTUS'S TERRITORIAL REFORM, RESPECTFUL OF ETHNICAL GROUPS.

REFLEXIONS ABOUT THE PRESENT ABOLITION OF THE MONZA AND BRIANZA PROVINCE

About Augustus's partition of Italy. – The administrative re-order of our Peninsula in 11 regions was, no doubt, one among the main succeedings reached by Octavianus Augustus during his Empire (29 B.C.-14 C.E.) (Bonora Mazzoli, 2008, p.5).

The principal source to know the organization of the partition and the limits of single regions is *Naturalis Historia* by Plinius senior, a real encyclopedia. He states, before beginning his analytic description:

“I will review the territory and towns of Italy. My premise is, that I will recognize the authority of the godlike (divus) Augustus, and his division of Italy in 11 Regions, following the coastline. As for relations among towns, near to each other,...in my rather short speech I shall list them by the alphabetical order due to Augustus himself, noting the single colonies, like he did”(Nicolet 1991,pp.173-176; Frascchetti 1998, p.95; Bonora Mazzoli 2008, p.5).

Augustus's Italy contained perhaps 300 between *municipia* and *coloniae Romanae*, and all these cantons had full autonomy. Each of them had its political Constitution, which couldn't be changed, and had to observe the general laws approved in the capital city. But the Roman government had neither its own re-

*Ringrazio il collega ed amico, Professor Giulio Bianchi, che, coniugando le sue profonde conoscenze geografiche con l'ottima familiarità della lingua inglese, parlata e scritta, è artefice di questa traduzione.

Il brillante curriculum del Professore merita di spendere qualche parola.

Giulio Bianchi (Pavia,1943), si laureò in Lettere con lode a Pavia nel 1965, seguendo quattro corsi annuali di Geografia, di cui due fuori facoltà (Geografia politica e Geografia economica, Geografia.fisica). Relatore della tesi fu il Professor Mario Ortolani. È socio della Società Geografica Italiana dal 1965, della Società di Studi Geografici dal 1970, dell'Associazione Italiana Insegnanti di Geografia dal 1972. Presiedette la sezione provinciale di quest'ultima dal 1977 al 1993. Nel 1966, al Magistero di Roma e nel 1969, alla Facoltà di Lettere di Pavia, conseguì per due volte l'idoneità al posto di assistente di ruolo, senza poi essere chiamato da alcuna Università. Abilitato in Italiano, Latino, Storia e Geografia ed in Geografia generale ed economica, risultò vincitore di concorso sia per l'una, sia per l'altra cattedra ed insegnò Italiano e Storia dal 1967 al 1974 e Geografia dal 1974 al 1998. Fu più volte commissario o presidente agli esami di maturità o di abilitazione all'insegnamento, nonché assistente volontario, cultore della materia o incaricato d'esercitazioni presso l'Università di Pavia e l'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, producendo un certo numero di articoli e recensioni.

presentatives, nor superintendents in them, and so less relied upon police and military praesidia. Local traditions could flower free and spontaneous¹.

Why did Augustus think to part Italy in Regions? What was the aim he wanted to attribute to this? The scholars' opinions are clearly divided. Some of them think, that Regions were used to permit some special activities, such as administration of public lands and of imperial demesne, or to receive some taxes, or as military districts. But the witnesses quoted to support these opinions go back to later ages, nor are definitive in a careful analysis. During the Roman empire some measures involved several Regions, but there is no evidence that single Regions had been used to execute functions of central Administration.

Other scholars (Tibiletti 1965, pp.42-43; Laffi 2007, p.104), following Mommsen, think that such Regions had purely statistical aims (Mommsen 1852, pp.198-190; Id., 1898, pp.95-109). Probably, in each Region were included several cantons. It stands clear, now, that every Italian town and its territory belonged to a Region. Regarding also *coloniae Latinae*, the cantons of Italy were more than 400. So, the survey of Italy resulted both global and articulate.

Possibly, we can relate Augustus's initiative to a political-propagandistic design, in the effort to present Italy in its unity by this *descriptio totius Italiae*, in which for the first time the former Gallia Cisalpina was included. The Regions had substantially an ethnical base, so that the role of single, ancient peoples was recognized; they had created, together with Rome, the actual Italy. This, in effect, was a tribute to what today is called regionalism.

However, the Augustan government of Italy didn't diminish the wide urban autonomies, which went back to republican age. The organs of central administration didn't interfere in the internal affairs of towns, unless situations of need and danger. Since the Regions had not the aim to perform administrative functions, the central government couldn't, even through them, plan a control of the activities of the related communities.

This weak co-ordination between centre and periphery on one side permitted to most solid and active towns to keep their institutions alive, on the other side didn't support the effort to build in Italy a unitarian national conscience. Roman Italy remained an Italy of small motherlands, which were able to preserve strong traditions of freedom: an Italy of "passionate towns" (Tibiletti 1978, p.119), according to the icastic expression of that scholar, in which local interests brought, not seldom, to spirit of emulation, rivalry and contest. In the recent history of our land, too, we may often meet such features, as heritage of an ancient past.

¹These, signed by Roman numbers, were: I, Latium et Campania; II, Apulia, Calabria, Hirpini, Salentini; III, Lucania et Bruttium, IV, Samnium, Sabini, Marsi, Vestini, Paeligni, Marrucini, Frentani; V, Picenum; VI, Umbria et Ager Gallicus; VII, Etruria; VIII, Aemilia; IX, Liguria; X, Venetia et Histria, Carni; XI, Transpadana (Bonora Mazzoli and Dolci, 2012, pp.11-60).

Brianza in Augustan time –. The territory of nowadays Brianza belonged to the Regio XI-Transpadana (fig.1), and, after the war between Antony and Octavianus – in which the latter won, and became the first Emperor, receiving the title of Augustus – enjoyed a long period of smoothness, the Pax Augusta or Pax Romana, and of prosperity, like all the future Lombardy.

According to the witness of Plinius senior and to epigraphs, the present Brianza was included in the coloniae, later municipia, of Mediolanum (Milan) and Novum Comum (Como). Already in those times, many were the towns and villages in it, with dense population and intensive cultures.

When Milan became important, a thick net of roads grew in Brianza, linking the rural villages north of the city with its traffic knot.

The main ones went from Novum Comum and Bergomum (Bèrgamo) to Milan. The latter passed through Modicia (Monza) and its Colonia (Cologno Monzese), going farther to the Venetia.

From the main Mediolanum-N.Comum road, many secondary roads started, today lost in their track, except the one which linked Milan and Modicia through Sextum (Sesto San Giovanni), all included in the urban territory of Milan. It still exists. In Modicia that road gave place to two branches. One was bound to North, the other to East, going on to Leucum (Lecco) and to the northern Europe, and followed the track of a very ancient passage of peoples, goods and cultures, active since Etruscan times, and met the Flumen Frigidum (present Lambro).

This river was an obstacle for both soldiers and goods, bound – through the Valtellina – to the heart of European continent. To pass this stream, then much larger and richer than today, the Romans built in Modicia in 1st century C.E. the future Ponte d'Arena, replaced in 1842 by the new Ponte dei Leoni.

The building of the first bridge enhanced rapidly military and commercial transports. In effect, it was a very large manufact with 8 arches, about 70 m long and 4.5 m wide.

When the river is drained, one can still see the basement of the Roman bridge, rising from the bottom of its bed. Other crossings on Lambro river, beyond Monza, were built further in Triuggio (whose name comes from Traductus, a passage) and in Agliate and Romanò, near Inverigo (Como). Local traffics of country products were probably run also along minor roads.

Not far from Modicia stood the best known market town in the area, Vicus Mercati (Vimercate), of Roman origin. In this small town, a Roman bridge across Mòlgora creek still stands. It was built in the first century C.E. It looks alike to Modicia one, both in decharge windows and in foundation piles. (Màspero 2013, pp.21-22; www.circolosardegna.brianzaest.it).

Very little was, on the contrary, the imprinting left by Augustus on Italian agriculture. He tried, rather, to spread a “farmer’s ideology”, wanting to restore the values, typical of the middle property, directly tilled. His programme met Vergilius’s thought (www.ips.it)³.

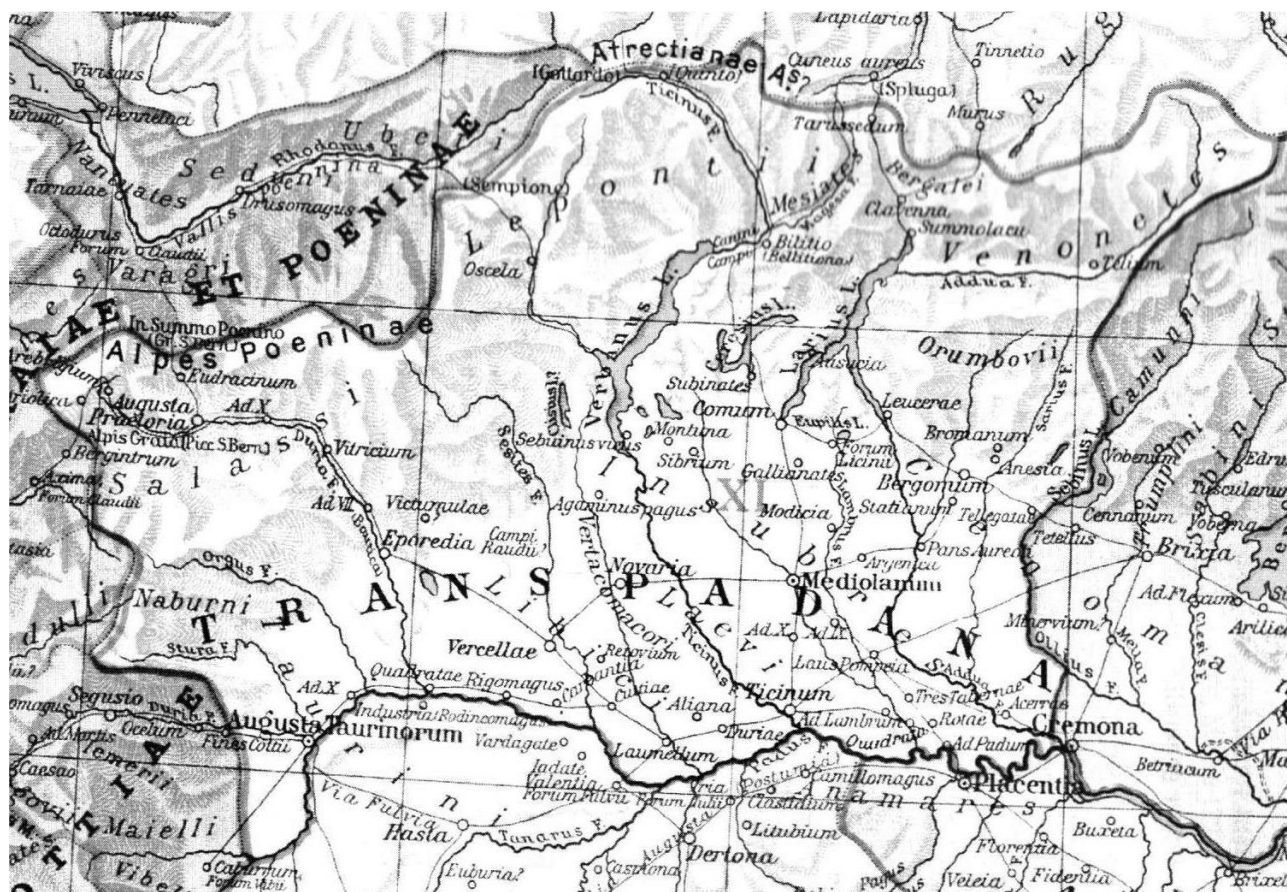


Fig. 1 – Regio XI-Transpadana. Fonte: Bonora Mazzoli e Dolci (2008, p. 61)

Birth of the province of Monza and Brianza –. This province was instituted, after many trials, with Law 11/6/2004, n.146,art.1, and became operative with Law 9/12/2009, coming into effect on the next 18/12, after the election of its first Provincial Council, held on June 6th and 7th, 2009. This date ended a long way to autonomy, begun first by politicians, then supported and carried on by civil society, and finally fulfilled again by policy⁴.

In a first time, the Commons, formerly included in Milan Province, and then in the new one, were 50: Agrate Brianza, Aicùrzio, Albiate, Arcore, Barlassina, Bellusco, Bernarèggio, Besana in Brianza, Biasso-

²On the main tracts of Roman agriculture, see Marcone, 1997, *passim*.

³For a complete tale about the birth of the Province of Monza and Brianza, see Losa, 1999, *passim*.

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no, Bovisio-Masciago, Briosco, Brughèrio, Burago di Mòlgora, Camparada, Carate Brianza, Carnate, Cavenago di Brianza, Ceriano Laghetto, Cesano Maderno, Cogliate, Concorezzo, Correzzana, Dèzio, Giussano, Lazzate, Lesmo, Limbiate, Lissone, Machèrio, Meda, Mezzago, Misinto, Monza, Muggiò, Nova Milanese, Ornago, Renate, Ronco Briantino, Seregno, Sèveso, Sovico, Sulbiate, Triuggio, Usmate-Velate, Varedo, Vedano al Lambro, Veduggio con Colzano, Verano Brianza, Villasanta, Vimercate. Then, according to Law 183/2009, and art. 133, 1st comma, of Constitution, 5 more Commons were added: Busnago, Caponago, Cornate d'Adda, Lentate sul Sèveso and Roncello, so that in the new Province they reached the number of 55(it.wikipedia.org; fig. 2).

A pact for Republic –. The attention devoted in 2013, by both mass media and institutions, to the proposed rescaling of the whole administrative partition, forwarded by Italian Geographical Society, starting from the so-called “Progetto 80” (Renzoni 2012 passim), and carried on in a workshop of 8/3 of the same year, resulted, in many ways, surprising (Redaction of MET, 8/3/2013; Redaction of *Gazzetta della Spezia*, 9/3/2013; Moffa, 25/7/2013).

This proposal of 1997, due to the foretold Society, descended from the results of a project of National Research Council, based on the studies of the architect Franco Archibugi, and named Quadroter, variant A. It's worth while spending many a word about this research.



Fig. 2 – La Provincia di Monza e della Brianza e i suoi comuni Fonte: Camera di Commercio, Industria, Agricoltura e Artigianato di Monza

It proposed 37 urban-metropolitan eco-systems, among which (what mainly interests us) the Milanese eco-system, or Greater Milan: the most typical case, in Italy, of the policy aiming to contain and reverse the trend to the “concentric” expansion of a metropolitan area.

Within the Northern eco-system, or “City of the Lakes”, it pointed in Brianza a “free area” to be organized and planned as a hilly “territorial unity of environmental and historic-cultural recover (UTRAS)”. In effect, this area already stood as a divide and protection between the above eco-system and the Milanese one, even if, by now, heavily compromised by a diffuse conurbation.

So Brianza was becoming a strategic area in many a way. A severe policy about its development and a strict classement in the “free areas”, to be protected then from further settings, both residential and productive, and its perimetry as an area to plan as a whole sub-system of environmental recover, regarding to landscape and functions, would have been the tools for an effectual application of the general strategy to divide the territory north of Milan in two “urban operative systems”: the one surely looking to Milan and the one to be “de-polarized” regarding Milan, and on the contrary, to be polarized in an autonomous way towards its own urban centers (Varese, Como, Lecco, Bergamo). Brianza stayed “on horseback” between the two mentioned eco-systems. (Archibugi, 1999, pp.21-22; pp.35-37; p. 93; pp.95-96).

The idea sponsored by Italian Geographical Society was to re-articulate the territorial organization of the whole country, letting the Provinces reach a regional dimension, so that they could contain the resources, needed to realize connections, fit for the European urban net. Then, 36 regional platforms were proposed.

To the new entry of those 36 regions, it looked like to follow, in perspective, an evolution of the political-institutional scenario, in which the central State power would become stronger, but even more the roles of the towns and of their majors, decisive actors for formation, and then for working, of the new Regions. To find the urban poles (district towns), a good starting point would be represented by the towns of more than 90.000 inhabitants, which are, moreover, the reference of a Labour Local System⁵. According to the last criterium, Monza, however it exceeds the foretold demographic threshold, has been excluded from the list of the urban poles, because it already gravitates towards Milan, regarding its SLL. (S.G.I.-CAIRE Urbanistica 2014, pp.5-6 e p.9).

At the beginning of 2013, Italian Geographical Society re-opened the discussion about the territorial re-order of the country, bringing newly to attention the former contribution. Moving from consolidate studies about urban frame, that scheme proposed only one level of administrative units: the “area va-

⁴The local labour systems (SLL) insist on a territorial griddle whose borders, independently from administrative articulation of the territory, are defined by using the fluxes of the home-work displacements (commuter movements), surveyed in connection with general censuses of people and dwellings (www.istat.it).

sta”(wide area), instead of Regions and Provinces, though well aware of the larger institutional and legislative complexity of this proposal.

On this subject, I like to remind a definition by Gaetano Salvemini, who, since 1949, with his classical sarcastic tone, defined the Region “an empty vase with a small plate bearing the writing “region”, “a kind of ideal world, in which everyone transferred all the wonders he didn’t find in the province, without ever define those wonders, nor show that they would be a delight in a Region, without being it in a province”(Salvemini, 1949, p.134). And the well-known geographer C.Muscarà, in a work of 1968, stated that the regions of Italy in those years were an “empty shell on the identity plan”, owing to the lack of a popular regional conscience (Salvatori e Conti 2013, p.4). These words have been re-taken many times by many others, among whom, first of all, the journalist S.Rizzo (Rizzo, 24/7/2013, p. 5).

The delimitation of the “urban systems” in Italy was chosen as the base method for the new territorial partition. Without forsaking the former design, partly corresponding to the attraction areas of towns, nor entering the Commons level, the proposal tried to make the administrative partition rational, in the areas of all Italy where main local and medium-ray, social and productive relations are found, on which it looked alike to build a new asset of services to families and enterprises.(S.G.I., 2013, pp.9-10). These items soon appeared also in TV. On March 28, 2014, during a number of the RAI-3 programme *Agorà* (in which representatives of policy and civil society meet), the president of Italian Geographical Society, Sergio Conti, full-time professor at Turin University, was interviewed to discuss the new territorial reform. Face a maxi-screen, showing two partitions of Italy, the one in force, and the one proposed, he maintained the union of some existing Provinces, and the partition of some Regions. The Italian Regions, considered “empty shells” by Conti too, should, in his opinion, pass from the number of 20 to 31; he gave some examples for this. According to Archibugi’s study, urban eco-systems should show an urban core of high-level services, around which should be some small towns in a gravitational space. Prof. Conti assumes that the idea is provoking.

On April 7th, 2014, was approved the law 56/2014 (Legge Delrio), bearing a simple reform on this matter. It relies on some basic principles, so as to leave only two pillars: Regions and Commons, as local institutions with direct election; to create Città metropolitane, proposed more than 20 years ago (Mistri, 2013, p.11; Tortorella and Allulli, 2014, p.7); to give the Majors responsibilities going beyond their belfries.

The towns of Italy are its marrow, Carlo Cattaneo said (Cattaneo 2012, *passim*). The policy done by the Commons has more strength with this law, and in the same time, it relies on more transparency, efficiency and report to the citizens of politicians’ work. It’s in local communities that civic sense grows, and the sense of national unity is breded, it’s in towns that rights become real, and duties are put to the test. The glance of this reform on Italian differences shows them as open realities, in dialogue. In

the spirit of the Delrio law, there is a deep trust in the capability of local communities to think themselves in a united land, who knows how to go beyond the difficulties with cohesion between its internal groups, who knows how to look beyond specific interests, to embrace collective ones. The Commons which shall work together in metropolitan towns, in reformed Provinces or in unions of Commons shall be able to think themselves as actors of the wide area to which they belong.

The approval of the law has signed a first step in the new design of institutional architecture of the republic, in which the governance of local autonomies is a main feature, with the same dignity of other institutions.

A new pact for Republic is taking form, in full harmony with the Constitution, towards a co-operative, non-competitive autonomism. This way intends to bring both State and local agencies to modernity, to avoid double acts when main functions are carried on, and to give administrations good government tools, with the hope to strengthen that relation between citizens and politicians, weakened by years of missing reforms, together with economic and social decline.

The primary object of the re-order is to give more efficiency and transparency in the asset and working of local autonomies, so that responsibilities of each administration be clear and recognizable, and that each may fulfil in the best way the tasks entrusted to it by Constitution and law (Vandelli, 2014, pp.5-6).

On January 1st, 2015, the Provinces of 13 major Cities in Italy, including Milan, have been entitled Metropolitan cities, inheriting patrimony, staff and functions of the former provinces. The change is purely nominal; none of the projects for the reform, involving also territorial changes, has been realized; the efforts of geographers and urbanists seem put aside...(www.cittametropolitana.mi.it).

The surpassing of Provinces results, above all, from their transformation in second-level organs, specifically devoted to co-ordination and support to Commons' activities, with abolition of Provincial elections, from the 2014 round on. The functions of the old Provinces are attributed partly to the new "wide areas agencies", partly to the Regions, with endowment of resources and staff.

Waiting for the cancellation of the Provinces from the Constitution by the Parliament, the new councils are composed directly by majors and counsellors of all the Commons concerned.

The Italian Geographical Society now supports a further proposal of constitutional law, forwarded by a group of M.P. of Democratic Party, called "Review of Title V, part II, of the Constitution. Neo-regionalism and territorial re-order of the State".

The case of the Monza and Brianza province —. Gaetano Salvemini, in 1949, wrote without hypocrisy, as usual for him: "A commonplace, often repeated like an undoubtable truth, is that the Italian province is an "artificial" creation. Artificial? If artificial means something which has been created, right or wrong, by men's will, untied by every tradition, would be artificial the regions made arbitrarily in Rome by so-

me hundreds of very ignorant people, designed as deputates by a few dozens of swindlers, who prepared, in the camorra-like directions of parties, lists of candidates to be swallowed in block by the electors. Artificial was the bureaucratic unity, imposed to Italy in 1859-60, that is, the franco-savoyard cancer(...). Almost all the Italian provinces existed before 1860, when nobody spoke either of national unity, or of bureaucratic centralism. Many provinces correspond to *civitates* of the Roman world. Florence, Lucca, Pisa, Siena, Arezzo: Roman towns(...), whose provincial borders are today almost the ones you may find in high-middle-ages documents...Provinces are unefficient (different from artificial), because in(...)pre-unitarian regimes the accentrated bureaucracies had spoilt their administrators of every function and authority. The bureaucracy of unitarian regime had left to them not else than build some roads, take care of mad people, and few other functions permitted by law (Salvemini, 1949, pp.135-136).

Evidently, the Delrio law doesn't abolish the Provinces yet; for this a Constitution reform will be needed. But the above mentioned law, art.1, commas 5 and 51, clearly defines "transitory" its disposals; so, the hypothesis of their suppression is not so strange...(Pompella, May 16, 2014).

On Sunday, Oct.12, 2014, the first President and Council of the second-level organ, replacing the traditional province, have been chosen. Pietro Luigi Ponti, mayor of Cesano Maderno, has been declared President of the province of Monza and Brianza (!) with 51.850 ...votes (www.provincia.mb.it). About Brianza, he defined it like a "Milanese compound", complicated by a sullen and little collaborative attitude on the part of the Province of Milan (Ponti, 2014, p.73 e p.74).

In advance of a few days previous to the call to poll, on October 3rd, 2014, a new, big palace for the seat of Province has been inaugurated, on the ashes of former barracks "November 4th", costed say 24 millions euros. A real investment of importance, which, however, Mr.Renzi's slogan "sprovincializziamoci" (let's come out of the Province) risks to make vain (www.ilsole24ore.com).

All was ready. Keys in hand. It's a pity, anyhow, that nobody knows yet what to put inside, and that the danger to create an empty box is above. A real paradox!

Dario Allevi, former president of Milan province, declared: "Owing to the decisions taken in Rome, the inauguration might seem out of time. On the contrary, I think that this palace will become a reference point for all Brianza.(Bazoli and Rosa, 2014, p.8). We could hope this at least! Surely, relations between Milan and Monza have never been good.

The history of the Province of Monza and Brianza is recent, but its project comes from afar, and tells of a territory that always felt the link with the near metropolis as too tight a noose.

The race begun in 1978, during a meeting at Monza Royal Villa including the then senator Vittorino Colombo. It took 12 years, however, to transform an idea in a design of law, and later, in two.

Practically, we may state that the reclamation for a Province of Monza and Brianza is an old issue, and not a contemporary one.

The relation with the historical institutions of Milan has always been, in fact, a whole of autonomy/conflict/co-operation. With all the weight that religiousness represented in past centuries, we admire, for instance, that Monza localism expressed itself also in religious autonomy, crying “Either Romans, or Lutherans”. The invective has had a historical following. The Monzese have remained of Roman rite, but have become, like all the Brianza citizens, a little Lutherans too, if we remember the ethic of labour which is typical of them. (Sangalli, 2007, p.9; Guerriero, 2014, p.21).

Then, the leading of the important match, involving Monza Park and Royal Villa, was added. Milan never concealed some distance from the problems of its “country cousins” and, after having become com-proprietor of the Villa in April 1996, has shown even disgust for the continuous requests and stings arriving from the Monza town hall.

On the contrary, every visitor could observe some years ago that Piermarini’s complex and the enclosed park, the largest in Europe, drawn by Canonica, were completely abandoned and needed specific care. Yet, to begin to reconstitute some dignity to the green lung, one had to wait for the extra-ordinary helps of the Region Lombardy in 1995, granted only after a fight about Monza Autodrome, menaced to be closed. In the same way, the former Savoy royal house has lost pieces of building materials; so Monza and Milan have gone on, to close the leaks, then opening every day. At the moment of dividing the bill, however, Milan kept the strings of its purse well closed, and only after long requests it quitted the managing expenses for Park and Royal Villa (Corcella, Dec. 30, 1999).

Notwithstanding a strong demographic grow and a good endowment of services, in the eighties of last century Monza was under the “shadow effect” caused by the proximity of Milan, preventing from classify it as an autonomous middle town. Its role, more or less, was the one of an urban satellite pole, used only partially and discontinuously by services users, who often preferred to choose directly Milan (Mairardi, 1985, p.22).

If it’s true that, in a context of speedy globalization, every little or middle-little territory is the carrier of a social and economic culture, which inter-connects continuously with the one of neighbour areas, and in latest times, also with far geographical cultures, made nearer by the progress of communications, so today, no doubt, face the rapid change of events, and obsolescence of beliefs, there is more and more the need to discover peculiarities and values of one’s own environment. Only this awareness, together with will of dialogue with the remainder of system, permits to achieve social and economic more advanced balances. The alternative is bewilderment, which brings vertigo to those who are suspended in mid-air and cannot find a rock on which to base their existence.

Indeed, for a lot of time to Monza wasn't even recognized the status of a town endowed with its own autonomous statute. Though it was, regarding economy and demography, an urban centre, acknowledged since the Middle Ages, it also for all the modern age was a part of the Duchy of Milan, in peer condition to every other small town. However, in fact, especially if considered with surrounding territories, it could be an "almost-town", to use a fine definition by Giorgio Chittolini (Chittolini, 1990, p.10). Though it had no reference administrative area, it showed a series of characters which made it a substantial town. The complexity of its government, itself, sends back to urban characters and tells of a peculiar social stratification of this "Milanese periphery" (Grassi et al., 1990, pp.286-293).

At the half of 18th century, the community of Monza was administrated by three *procuratori reggenti* (regent procurators), to whom belonged "the administration of public estate of the Common, and the survey over justice in single Departments" (*ibidem*, p.24). Their nomination was renewed every six months, guaranteeing, therefore, a notable change of government men, "though one of them was always confirmed as senior member every semester" (*ibidem*, p.291) to assure some continuity. The nominations were a task of the *Consiglio di provvisione* (Providing council), who had to propose a list of candidates, among whom two *reggenti* still in charge, one to be confirmed for next semester, and other four, chosen amid the members of the general council, two of whom were elected *reggenti* of first nomination. This afterwards was ratified by the local feudatory.

It was dealt with a real form of political co-operation, which brought the élites of the town to collaborate with each other, aiming to find a difficult balance between political renovation and continuity of government. In this sense we can understand a very peculiar institution of Monza, the "cercamacchie" (spot seekers), that is 6 officers, having the task to control the financial and administrative activity of the government men, to certify their honesty. The *cercamacchie* impersonated a link between representers and represented (*ibidem*, p.289).

Since it wasn't formally an autonomous town, in the modern age Monza was attributed to a feudatory. An important moment of its history then is the feudation of "Monza and his court", according the official act, in the year 1648, to the Durini family. They bought the feud from the former feudatories, counts De Leyva, often absent and not linked to the local life of the town. The Durini, certainly the most influent family of Monza in that time, were among the main landlords of Brianza and among the greatest lenders to the Crown (*ibidem*, p.287).

The political character of Monza and its territory, therefore, is clear from ancient times. On the economic slope, even more: it's a rich centre of commerce and consumers, seat of a market, more and more important during modern age, able to work on a regional scale.

This was determined by the presence and development of various social classes in town. Notables, small landlords and traders were able to resist the economic invadence of Milanese élites, who had ac-

quired a lot of lands in the Duchy.(Zaninelli, 1969, p.60). This social group, very dynamic and fighting, tried – and managed – in the most difficult moments of modern age, above all during the 17th century, to constitute a relation of strength against the countryside nearby. Several times, for instance, it avoided encampment of troops, on the pretext that “commerce” would go to ruin.

Even from the farthest era, therefore, the Monzese territory was bound to look for defence by itself. Social stratification, that took form day by day, was the result of a very large laboriousness, which appeared principally in economy.

The enterprising spirit, itself, became one of the main cultural features of that *milieu*, that were: the taste for running new ways towards production, the one to try to go out of the narrows of subsistence, without expecting helps from anyone, the daily practice *ante litteram* of that “federalism as quarter’s coordination”, described by Thomas Jefferson in relation to societies very different from this.

Just in this context originated also the practice of inclusion, which gave the territory always new economic experiences and productive knowledge. A cultural blend, this, added to what was accepted by those who didn’t exitate to go around the world, looking for unexplored commercial ways, and came back, rich in new experiences to apply in their own home(Càfaro, 2013, pp.39-41; Allevi, 2014, pp.18-19).

From the awareness that local history is not only a look to the past, going to exhaust itself in erudite chronicles; from the love to the wide heritage of knowledge left by our forerunners, takes its starting point a passionate work by the Monza citizen Paolo Cadorin, publisher, researcher and collector, who is proposing, since many years, to a large public, forgotten texts and new studies, in the furrow of local identity of Monza and Brianza.

His anastatic reprint of the chapter, devoted to the reference points of peculiarities of the town, within the work by Giuseppe Riva, entitled “The art of hat and cap in Monza and Milan in the centuries XVI-XVIII”, 1909, besides representing another fundamental stage of the “*Heimatkunde*” of the town, expresses the noblest celebration and the most solemn confirmation of an identity, able to create beauties like its “Duomo” (main church) and its Treasure, or the Royal Villa, but also the first “Manufacturers Association” and the first “Chamber of Labour” in Italy, regarding their foundation year, a recognizable and recognized sign of the will and steadiness of this people.(Riva, 2009, *passim*).

In a specific way, the sixth chapter of that work, called “Appendice: I privilegi della terra di Monza e la sua separazione dalla città e dal Ducato di Milano”(Appendix: The privileges of the town of Monza and its separation from the city and Duchy of Milan)”, is newly proposed, so as to salute and remember, somehow, the institution of the new Province, because the author begins like this: “Among the most jealous rights, defended with iron toughness from Monza community against the constituted powers and the corporations of the neighbour Milan, surely the autonomy from the Duchy has the first pla-

ce...The disputes about the contested right are repeated for a long series of years, being by themselves a great part of Monza municipal history from the XV to the XVIII century, because, however ready and awake was the alert of Monza governors, to save the endangered guaranties, so much hard were the adversaries' efforts about the hated privilege".(Riva, 2009, p.221).

Prof. Fabrizio Bartaletti states that "since 1968...18 new Provinces have been created (inItaly) little by little, of which 15 from 1992 on, with decisions taken from time to time, outside of any project. Such Provinces, from the oldest (Pordenone) to the last ones (Monza-Brianza, Fermo, and Barletta-Andria-Trani) have indeed a certain geographic homogeneity, often also an economic one, and sometimes a historic justification, like the new Sardinian provinces, or Lodi; but it is also true that some of them –like Prato and Monza – practically have no territory, and like Trieste, they remind the town-states of Hamburg, Bremen and Berlin; on the contrary, others seem cutout more to escape the feared Metropolitan areas, than other causes (B-A-T, Monza itself). This should also lead to re-think of Metropolitan area as an administrative agency" (Bartaletti, 2013, p.74). In a personal e-mail, directed, on request, to whom is writing, he considered Monza's province almost without territory, because, out of 110 Italian provinces, Monza with 405 sq.kms is at third last place, surpassed by Gorizia, 466, and followed by Prato, 366, and Trieste, 212. But, while for Gorizia and Trieste the extremely reduced dimensions are explained with the result of World War II, Prato and even more Monza-Brianza are in fact parts of two metropolitan areas (Florence and Milan, respectively), understood in scientific sense, rather than based on the fantastic principles contained in the law about "metropolitan cities". So, their tiny territory should have suggested to create no new institutions. On the contrary, both have been realized..., being a nonsense, because out of a project defining principles and criteria valid to design new provinces, moreover in densely populated areas with metropolitan characters (Bartaletti, e-mail, Feb. 6th, 2015).

On my part, I am, on the contrary, persuaded that the province of Monza and Brianza is worthy to exist, not only for the characters of laboriousness and spirit of enterprise, already mentioned, but above all on the base of those images which, in the course of time, have made of Brianza a myth, an Arcadia at Milan's gates, famed for delightful hills, for gentry villas, "the garden of Lombardy", a garden of which, in earnest, few traces remain, though sometimes of great meaning (Pecchiai, s.d., f. 40, *passim*; Linati, 1931, pp.67-71; Ingegnoli, Langé and Süss, 1987, *passim*; Losa, 2005, pp.14-20; Fumagalli, 2006, pp.80-83; Pellissetti, 2008, vol.III, pp. 300-355; Selvafolta, 2008, vol.III, pp.357-429).

Such a Brianza was visited and made immortal also by some foreign Grand Tour visitors, first of all Henry-Marie Beyle "Stendhal", who left in his "Diary of a Brianza travel" an idyllic description of the territory (Stendhal, 2009, pp.15-33).

The axe of the spending review has fallen on the Provinces, while life-long earnings (for their staff) have not been abolished yet – and this should have been the first thing (Bianco, Nico, Ruffini and Usai, 2012, *passim*).

Some voices contrary to the abolition of provinces are heard, for instance the one of Giuseppe De Rita, former president of CNEL (National council for economy and labour), now president of CENSIS (Center for studies on social investments). In his opinion, in fact, the Province represents the wide area, an intermediate government area between Region, too distant from the needs of single territories, and Common, symbol of fragmentary character.

There are, then, two fundamental reasons why Italian territory should neither be governed by the national or regional net, nor by molecule-like Commons. One might decide to unite some Commons, to promote metropolitan areas, but, in fact, the need for a wide area government is real. Not by chance, Province is the reference for all economic operators: industrial, commercial, syndical. All have a provincial association. Why? Not because there is the Prefetto (representing the central government in a province) - he doesn't deal directly with the interests of such groups – but because the wide area dimension is real. Let's look at the SSL (local labour systems), that are home-work, school-workcommuters' fluxes: 75% of them are included in a single Province.

Abolishing the Province, the link territory-institutions would fade. I don't speak about economic system, structured on a provincial base, but of the whole social representation. The wide area is useful both for technical organization and defence of territory and for social dialectic, because it is the place where the various souls of social net meet: volunteers, workers, work givers.

One says, that the costs of policy must be reduced. Then, what is the most useless and undefended agency? The Province. Well, what is the cost of policy for Provinces? They are one of the cheapest institutions. The problem is not there.

If provinces, which were 59 in 1861, have raised to nowadays 110, this demonstrates that a need to affirmation of identity, in a democratic dimension, has always been shown. The existence of a Province is tied to strong reasons, of identity and territory, social and economic together.

Without Provinces, two powers remain on the territory, those of Regions and Commons. Regional power, as for co-ordination of economic and social managing, doesn't exist, because Regions, in fact, manage only health. It's enough to look at the balance of any Region. If a Region is not a small one, it is an agency having no idea of its deepest territory. However, largest regions govern their territory neither under an economic, nor a social profile.

On the other side, there are the Commons, ascending, in 2015, to as many as 8047. To commit to them the management would mean total fragmentation. Then, the distinction between regional macro-policy and micro-policy requests an intermediate element of social reference and of dialectics between social

forces. If this is not wanted, because a Province president is a part of the “caste” and uses a blue car, then let’s go to that direction, but we shall hear, in a few years, that this is a non-governed territory and Country (De Rita, 2014, pp.111-117; Allevi, 2014, p.7).

Luigi Losa writes sadly, with a style sometimes whipping: “A curtain has dropped on Provinces, say on the Monza and Brianza province. In an ineluctable way, with no jumping, as if it was dealt with a flat-encephalogram subject, henceforth without hope, to which only the plug-out was expected, not knowing even how painful, since everybody...had stopped worrying. This happened at the eve of an election run, which was to...give to Monza and Brianza citizens the faculty to choose directly President and Council of the Province, and therefore to express also a judgement on the first 5 years of working of the agency, that the territory...had long pursued, expected, invoked...then obtained after 25 years, in 2004; notice, well before and in many ways notwithstanding policy, even if there had been 5 more years of Milanese “tutorship” before the final liberation and total autonomy, at intermediate “institutional structure” level (being still that, at Constitution level).

The greatest joke, for Monza and Brianza province, is surely to have “danced only one season”, having no other faculties and opportunities. Closing has come, at least as to real representation of citizens, while they cannot object, discuss, except. It’s worth while reminding that there is a precedent cancellation of an intermediate form, anyhow, of decentrated government of Monza and Brianza; that was the Circondario, for whose main town...services such as under-prefecture, law court, lands register and financial offices were foreseen. It was fascism to cancel in 1927 the Circondari *tout court*” (Losa, 2014, pp.9-10).

The Province of Monza and Brianza has been unfortunate, because, after a very long battle, has been approved just when the wind has begun to blow against intermediate agencies, considered useless sources of waste. In 2008, that is a year before the elections for council of Monza and Brianza, the campaigns for the cancellation of provinces were very intense. Signatures were being gathered to a design of law (on this subject), announcing days of national mobilization. The newspaper *Libero* published in its first page a coupon, to be cut out and sent, to sustain this cause. According to the organizers, in few months 30.000 adhesions were gathered, while the inquiries on the waste by *Corriere della Sera* strengthened the idea that the Province was more a money-eater machine, than an agency, foreseen by Constitution. Then it became natural for almost all political forces to include in their electoral programmes, as a fundametal point, the reduction of expenses by abolition of Provinces (Guerriero, 2014, p.28).

The result of 5 years, dangerously lived, was a Province without a soul. One could have availed of the opportunity to grow, around the new-born institution, a project for Brianza, able to re-launch what has been, in bygone days, a happy island, first pleasant holiday resort, then industrial locomotive of the Country.

At bottom, like observed above, the founders of the Province wanted it just to defend the “primacy” of Brianza from the feared deadly embrace of Milan, casting anchor to the possibility to manage on the territory the resources otherwise sucked by the metropolis. The order word then was: development; this is very different from the present scenario of crisis. So, the new-born Province, since it opened its eyes, has felt constricted by only one urgency: to defend itself from the attacks of those who wanted it dead.

Conclusion –. At the end of my speech, I like to borrow the effectual and sad words of Maurizio Laini...secretary of CGIL (so-called Italian general labour confederation) for Monza and Brianza: “First – in history – there was the Province of Milan, and within it the third Common of Lombardy as to population: Monza. Then a growing feeling, mixed with important resistances, of territorial revenge: autonomy, Province! Then, the Province of Monza and Brianza: institutional acknowledgement of a complex territory, having surely its own sense. But, alas, a Province born under the wrong star, which lasted not more than a council appointment. Without even the time to understand what the institution Province means; to find out its powers, its new opportunities...”(Laini, 2014, p. 91).

A Province, born too late, Gigi Ponti underlines (Ponti, 2014, p.73), arisen just when the rationalization of Provinces, the strong diminution of their number, and the alike number of their functions, were being studied.

It’s necessary, at this point, to look upon today and tomorrow, concentrating, in particular, on Brianza terms, which lift questions, reservations and, above all, fears, risks and worrying.

It shouldn’t be allowed, in the opinion of the majority of citizens on this territory, to sponge out the cultural identity, which distinguishes since centuries Monza and Brianza from Milan, but one should safeguard and rather exalt it in all its aspects, environmental, human and economic, recovering a folklore, sometimes forgotten and assimilated by the “infinite city”(Bonomi, 2004, pp.18-22), following the respect of ethnical values, preserved in his Regions by Augustus himself.

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