

# 4 *The sixth generation*

**The Gavazzis of this generation have reached the level of financial prosperity. We are now in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Little is known about our protagonists, except that they are now related not only to the most prominent families of Canzo, but also to those of the whole surrounding area.**

As we saw in chapter III, the brothers Angelo Andrea (b. 1661) and Carlo Antonio (b. 1657) married the daughters of silk merchants and spinning mill owners.

Carlo Antonio's mother in law was from the Pellizzoni family.

We do not know much about Angelo Andrea, except that he was born on May 8, 1661, in Canzo, where he died on August 7, 1727, and that around 1685-86 he married the daughter of Antonio Morelli, from a family that owned houses, land and a silk mill in Caslino.

The Morelli family, however (referred to now and again as Morello) owned land and property in Canzo as well, and were among the leading property owners in Canzo during the reign of Maria Teresa, along with the Counts of Meda and the aristocratic family of Tentorio.

Some of the Morelli properties in Canzo were included in Lucia Morelli's dowry on her wedding with Andrea Gavazzi.

One particular detail, which may seem curious today, reveals the high social standing of Lucia Gavazzi Morelli. After her death in Canzo on August 9, 1738, her funeral was concelebrated by as many as 22 priests; this custom signified the high position in society of the deceased, whose family paid the priests to perform the funeral service.

## **THE MORELLI FAMILY OF CASLINO AND THE GAVAZZIS**

The Morelli family had become wealthy thanks to the production of coal, which they sold in the markets of Milan.

In the year 1852 Carlo Annoni, in his historic records entitled *Il paese di Caslino, nel Piano d'Erba*, writes: «The family of Antonio Morelli, by way of example, through this trade eventually owned between forty and fifty thousand poles of land. The family set up a company in Milan with a well-respected name, and after adding a silk manufacturing business to this, their wealth amounted to over a million, in those days an extremely substantial amount.

This family died out towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century».

In 1716, the brother of Lucia Morelli Gavazzi, Giuseppe Antonio, built a spinning mill in Caslino, which was later turned into a silk-processing mill. This mill, writes the same



The Morelli house, which later belonged to the Castelletti family and then the Pecori family, in Caslino d'Erba (from Pier Fausto Bagatti Valsecchi, Anna Maria Cito Filomarino and Francesco Suss, *Ville della Brianza*, 1980).

Annoni, «was reputed in its day to be one of the finest in existence, both for the symmetry of the factory building and for the convenience of its access to running water.

Many visitors used to come to admire it».

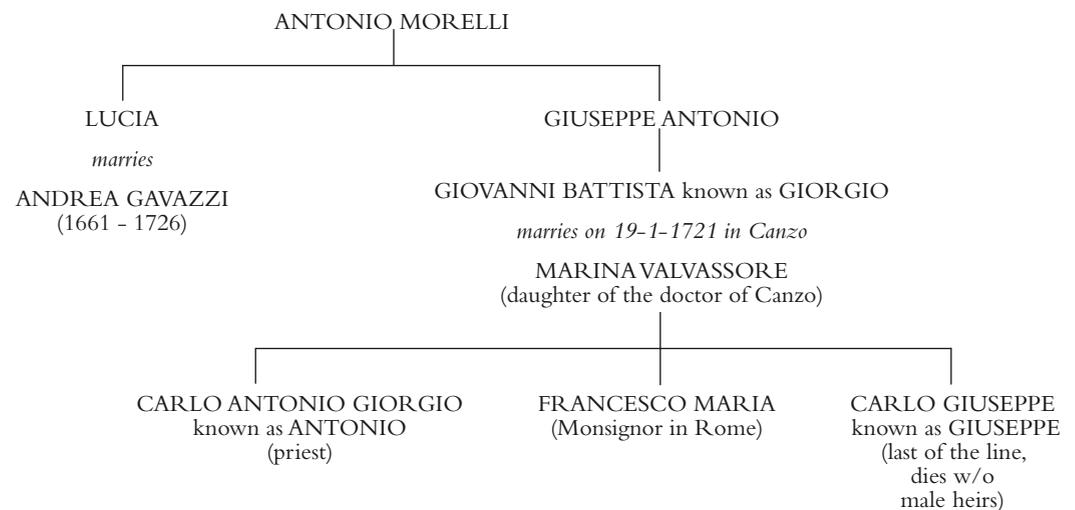
In 1760, a grandnephew of Lucia, Carlo Morelli, established a company producing silk ribbons manufactured on multiple looms in Caslino, with an exclusive government contract and subsidies<sup>1</sup>.

Another grandnephew, Carlo's brother, Francesco Maria Morelli, was ordained a priest, and later became a Monsignor, living in Rome, while another member of the family, Silio Morelli, became a Bishop<sup>2</sup>.

In Caslino, the Morellis lived in a beautiful house that was later passed down through the female side of the family to the families of Bonfiglio, Castelletti and Pecori. Today, the house is the property of the Caslino Town Council.

The Caslino Parsonage is another of the old Morelli houses.

*Family tree of the Morelli family of Caslino*



<sup>1</sup> Milan State Archives, Commerce *P.A. Prov. Gen.* 3.

<sup>2</sup> As writes Canon Meroni in his publication *La Pieve d'Incino o Mandamento di Erba*, Volume 1, page 42.

## THE PELLIZZONI FAMILY OF CANZO AND THE GAVAZZIS

In the novel by Giovanni Biffi, *Ghita of Carrobbio* (1863), alongside Gavazzo, presumed progenitor of the family, are two other «soldiers of fortune» from the Pelliccione family of Canzo, Domenico and Giorgio Pelliccione.

Pelliccione was the ancient form of the surname Pellizzoni.

In his historic novel, Biffi writes: «The Pellicciones belonged to a very distinguished family of Canzo, forefathers of extremely courageous soldiers of fortune, receiving not a little praise in the various chronicles of Lombardy in that period, and which family died out towards the end of the last century.»

In the course of the centuries, several marriages united the families of Gavazzi and Pellizzoni<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, Carlo Verza, the paternal great-grandfather of Luigia Verza (wife of Giuseppe Antonio Gavazzi of Valmadrera) had married in 1718 a certain Anna Maria Pellizzoni, whose family owned ten of the existing fourteen silk mills in Canzo.

The Pellizzoni family was of Guelph origin and appears in the 1385 decree of pardon, by which Gian Galeazzo Visconti, lord of Milan, pardoned the Guelph families of Brianza that had sided against him, in support of the Count of Savoy.

The most outstanding figure of this family was without doubt Nicolò Pellizzoni, or Pellizzone, a Canzo-born man of arms, who became one of the most valorous captains of Giangiacomo Medici of Marignano, the famous and bloodthirsty Medeghino, brother of Pope Pius IV and maternal uncle of Saint Carlo Borromeo.

The *Carpani Code, the 15<sup>th</sup> Century Armorial of the noble families of the city and ancient Diocese of Como*, published in Lugano in 1973, shows the Pellizzoni coat of arms on page 82, which is described as follows: «Light blue, with natural vairskin, surmounted by a silver sword trimmed with gold, the point raised, and supported by two rampant lions in gold». The «vair», a small squirrel with a grey, back and white underbelly, may perhaps be a reference to the ancient trade of the original Pellizzonis, which is believed to have been that of leather-tanning, while the sword undoubtedly refers to the military vocation of the various members of the family.

The small villa of the Pellizzoni family in Canzo stood (and still stands today) in the parish church square. It is recorded in the book *Ville della Brianza*<sup>4</sup>, although not as the property of the Pellizzonis, whereas this is clearly stated in the documents of the Teresian Land Registers. In the book, the description of this house bears the vague heading of «Baroque Building».

<sup>3</sup> In 1585 Oliviero (3<sup>rd</sup> gen.), son of Pietro Gavazzi, married Lucia, the daughter of Cristoforo Pellizzoni; in 1677 Carlo Antonio Gavazzi (6<sup>th</sup> gen.) married Beatrice de Bernardi, whose mother was a Pellizzoni; in 1716, Caterina Gavazzi (7<sup>th</sup> gen.), daughter of the above-mentioned Carlo Antonio and Beatrice de Bernardi, married her cousin Francesco Maria Pellizzoni; in 1757, Maria Caterina Gavazzi (8<sup>th</sup> gen.), daughter of Giovanni Battista I and Giovanna Maria Bianchi, married Giovanni Antonio Pellizzoni; in 1822 Giuseppe Casimiro Gavazzi (9<sup>th</sup> gen.), son of Miro and Anna Maria Sormani, married Carolina Pellizzoni.

<sup>4</sup> Pier Fausto Bagatti Valsecchi, Anna Maria Cito Filomarino, Francesco Suss, *Ville della Brianza*, Edizioni SISAR, Milan, 1980.

