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ORIGINS OF THE TOPONYM

There are differing opinions about the origins of the toponym “Bresso”.

“Brixium” appears to derive from the Celtic word “brig”, which stands for hill or rock. This leads the mind’s eye to see Bresso, at the dawn of its origins, as a little group of huts standing on slightly elevated ground.

Another opinion traces the toponym to “Bresse”, a region in western France and the homeland of the Gauls, who may well have imposed this name on the territory they had conquered.

Yet a further idea attributes the toponym to a person of Germanic origin, Berizzo, who was a landowner. It is possible that, as often happened in ancient times, the name of a person was used to denote a place.

THE CELTS

In the IV century a.C., the Gaul Insubres, a Celtic population who came from the north-western regions of Europe, emigrated southwards, crossed the Alps and settled in the Po River Plain where, guided by their chieftain Belloveso, they clashed with the Etruscan army on the banks of the Ticino River and inflicted them with a resounding defeat.

The Insubres then mixed with the primitive inhabitants who had populated the region for centuries, they too were of Celtic origin, ascribable to what is commonly known as the “Golasecca Civilisation”.

The Insubres’ settlements rose in strategic spots along the communication routes, important roads, navigable waterways.

The first nucleus of Bresso was composed of a small group of huts standing on slightly elevated ground, surrounded by fertile fields and washed by the waters of the Seveso River.

The Seveso River owes its name to the Celtic word “Se-usus”, meaning “use of water”. The Seveso, in fact, was widely used by the early inhabitants for irrigation, fishing and transport.

Following the completion of Roman colonisation during the II century b.C., in 49 Julius Caesar extended Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of the Cisalpine Gaul.

“Midland”, once a Celtic village, became “Mediolanum”, the Roman city.

The lack of archaeological findings makes it difficult to reconstruct the Roman “Brixium”.

The fifth milestone of today’s Valassina road stands near the Madonna del Pilastello church, so it is plausible that in the vicinity there was once a “mansio” (post station for merchants, soldiers and travellers).



MOSAIC ON THE FACADE OF THE ORATORY OF THE MADONNA DEL PILASTRELLO CHURCH.

CHRISTIANITY

The spreading of **Christianity** in the rural areas was considerably slow, as can be deduced from the lack of findings prior to the V century. The presence of **St. Ambrose** – bishop of Milan – gave rise to several Christian communities. Churches were built outside the city's walls so as to involve the population of the "contado" (administrative territory of Mediaeval Italy) in the liturgical life of the parish.

THE LONGOBARDS

In 568, the entire region north of the River Po was occupied by the **Longobards**, who were to remain there for more than two hundred years.

The rural areas continued to develop to the detriment of the cities, and the territory was partitioned into "fare".

THE "PIEVE"

After the Longobard domination, **Charlamagne** was the next to rule the area, giving rise to the "pieve" or "plebs", meaning the Christian communities that took shape around a rural parish system. The "pieve" consisted of a main church and other religious buildings spread across the territory.

Between the IX and X centuries, At least ten of these "pieve" were to be found in the Martesana contado.

The rural territory, according to the Franco-Longobard legislation, was divided into "fondi" which, in turn, were split up into "mansi" and assigned to the "coloni" (serfs).

The "Brixium" of Mediaeval times can be imagined as a small group of stone and wood cottages surrounded by fields and land belonging to one or more religious orders.

THE AGE OF THE COMMUNES

In the late 1700's, Francesco Frisi, abbot of the Cathedral of Monza, reconstructed the history of Monza and its cathedral, and declared that in 1189 "Brixium" was the property of St. John's Basilica; hence, within the territory of "Brixium", there was land acquired and administered by St. John's of Monza as an ecclesiastic benefit.

During this period, the **communes** (city-states) gained strength in stark contrast with the authority of the emperor **Frederick I "Redbeard"**. Many of the Lombard communes imposed taxes, exercised market rights, administered justice, and controlled the communication routes.

The clash between Milan and the emperor led to the siege of the city and its capitulation in 1158.

Four years later, Milan was again forced to surrender, and suffered much destruction with sacking and plundering.

The city proved capable of winning back its economic hegemony within the space of just a few years and placed itself at the head of the Lombard League, which finally defeated Frederick I "Redbeard" at the **Battle of Legnano** (1176).

The **Peace of Constance** (1183) ratified the emperor's renouncement of the Lombard communes and recognised Milan as an economic power.

The boroughs of the Martesana were administered by the commune of Milan. In 1189, the year cited by Frisi, the **Third Crusade** commenced. The curia of Monza was obliged to renounce the income and tithe that came from its various properties. The following year, the emperor died, and Monza and its domains were drawn into the orbit of Milan. Brixium shared the same fate, becoming irreversibly bound to the city.

UNDER THE VISCONTI AND THE SFORZA

In his “Liber Notitiae Sanctorum Mediolani” in 1290, Goffredo da Bussero recontracted the inventory of the ecclesiastic institutions of Milan and states: “in plebe Bruzzano, loco Brixio, ecclesia Sancti Nazari”: at the end of 1200’s, Bresso was a rural village of a certain degree of importance.

The **pieve di Bruzzano** comprised the churches of Affori, Bruzzano, Brusuglio, “Cassinis Massatti” (perhaps the Mojazza nearby the Santa Maria alla Fontana church), Cormano, Dergano, Niguarda, Precotto, Pratocentenaro, Pubiga (unidentified location), Greco and Segnano.

In 1398, seven of the churches became parishes and had their own resident priest. Brixium was one of them, and the presence of a priest there is confirmed by a parchment dated **1484** - the most ancient document preserved in the parish archives today.

In this parchment, mention is made of **Simon de’ Gatti**, the first known parish priest of Bresso, and his successor, Giacomo de’ Gatti.

The church of **Santi Nazaro e Celso** cannot differ much from the building described by the archbishopric’s delegate, Francesco Cermenate, in 1567: “a single aisle, without chapels, a gabled facade in ‘vista’ brick, with an **adjacent** campanile, ossuary and parish house.”

The campanile collapsed and was destroyed in the late 1500’s, and was rebuilt in then modified in recent times.



THE PARISH CHURCH OF SS. NAZARO E CELSO

XIV-century Brixium was a small town, surrounded by fields dotted with farmsteads, patches of woodland, and numerous windmills drawing on the area’s water resources.

The main northward routes were the two roads that started from the “Porta Comacina” (one of the gates of Milan) and stretched as far as Como and the Brianza district.

The western route, known as “Strada di Como”, touched Dergano, Affori and Bruzzano, winding its way along the Seveso River until reaching the lake.

Stretching eastwards was the “Strada di Decio” (or Desio), which passed by Niguarda, Bresso, Cusano, Fesio and the upper part of the Brianza district. Since it ended in the the Asso valley, the road later came to be known as “Vallassina”, then “**Valassina**”.

East of the Valassina was the “Strada di Monza”, which started at Porta Nuova (another of the gates of Milan) between Via Manzoni and Via Cavour, and passed through Precotto, Bichocca, Cinisello and Sesto to arrive in Monza.

The original nucleus of Bresso took shape around today’s Via Manzoni, Via Cavour and Via Centurelli.

The main roads are still marked by milestones that were placed as beacons for travellers, and which devoted inhabitants of the area often embellished with religious images to call wayfarers to a moment of prayer.

At the fifth milestone of the Valassina (in the territory of Bresso, about seven km. from the centre of Milan), stands a small triangular-shaped votive aedicule, surmounted by a Cross and consisting of the milestone itself and a niche containing a painting of the “Beata Vergine delle Grazie” (Holy Virgin of Grace). This eventually became encompassed into a single-aisled Oratory.



ORATORY OF THE “BEATA VERGINE DELLE GRAZIE” KNOWN AS “IL PILASTRELLO”

Devotion to the Virgin of the “Pilastrello” grew over time, and many cases of answered prayers have been reported.

On September 15th, 1470, **Galeazzo Maria Sforza** issued an edict that was to radically change the layout and the economy of Bresso’s farmlands. The edict stated that “*per ogni 100 pertiche si debeno piantare cinque de moroni, avendosene li vermeni fano la seta ad nutrire, pascere et vivere delle foglie de moroni*” (for every 100 “pertica” [about 650,000 square meters], 5 mulberry trees must be planted to sustain silkworms).

The farmlands became populated by rows of **mulberry** trees, and such is the importance that this plant has held in the economy of Bresso that it still figures today in the town’s coat-of-arms.



THE COAT-OF ARMS OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF BRESSO

Bresso became the feud of the Counts **Patellani**, an ancient family of Roman descent, who settled in Milan during the XVI century. The crown surmounting today’s coat-of-arms refers to the feud.

Villa Patellani, the family’s summer residence, is a typical Lombard villa of the 1700’s. It is the reconstruction of a previous building of the 1500’s, no trace of which remains. Villa Patellani was bought in 1939 by Commendatore Rivolta, and its name was changed to Villa Rivolta.



VILLA RIVOLTA (FORMER VILLA PATELLANI)

THE SPANIARDS

The Spanish dominion over the Duchy of Milan lasted from 1535 to 1714.

In 1588, Don Andrea Cusano founded a School of Sacred Doctrine, which marked the birth of the very first school in Bresso for the teaching and training of children.

The period of peace that followed the seizure of power by the Spaniards was interrupted in 1610 by the outbreak of the war for control of Valtellina and Monferrato. From then on, for the next one hundred years, Lombardy was tormented by strife and raids. The plague – which first appeared in Italy in 1347 and returned repeatedly over the next centuries – struck Bresso in 1630. The last epidemic, before the disease disappeared, occurred in 1656.

The church of Bresso acquired importance in the late 1600's.

A report dated 1688, during the pastoral visit of Cardinal Visconti, reads: “the spacious and elegant church is dedicated to the Saints Nazarius and Celsus (Martyrs) and measure 36 cubits [15 meters] in length and 26 cubits (about 10 meters) in width. The nave is covered by a wood floor, once the choir. There are two altars: the main one with gilt wooden tabernacle containing the Holy Sacraments; and another dedicated to the Holy Virgin and situated beside the Gospel”).



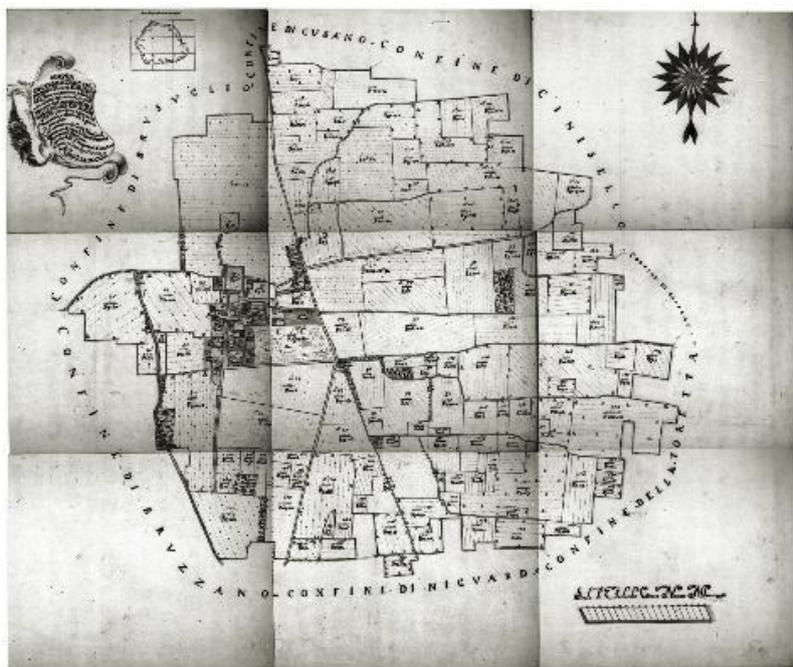
THE CHURCH SS. NAZARO E CELSO

THE AUSTRIANS

The **War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714)** saw France and Spain waging war against Austria, and ended with the election of Charles VI of Hapsburg as emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Vienna took rule of the Spanish territories in Italy, giving way to 147 years of Austrian domination of Milan.

Bresso was effected by the passage of soldiers during the **War of Polish Succession**, which broke out in 1733. Upon the death of Charles VI in 1736, and after various ups and downs, the **Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748)** gave Maria Theresa the title of empress, and a period of reform and prosperity began throughout Lombardy.

The oldest toponymic document of the Municipality of Bresso dates back to this period: the map of the territory drawn for the land-register census of 1721.



MAP OF THE TERRITORY FOR THE LAND-REGISTER CENSUS OF 1721

Bresso was a small town standing on today's Via Manzoni, Via Cavour and Via Centurelli, bordered to the north by Via Corridoni, to the east by the Valassina, to the south by Via Madonnina, and to the west by fields adjacent to the Seveso River.

The Church of SS. Nazaro e Celso, the Oratory of the Madonna del Pilastrello, Villa Patellani and Villa Perini were shown on the map.

The empress Maria Theresa introduced the taxation and administrative reform: all tax-payers were to take part in administration of the Commune – there were about twenty tax-payers in Bresso.

The tax-payers, who met in a "General Convocation" (a sort of Council), elected the Deputation (today's "Giunta" or "municipal government) which, in turn, appointed the Mayor, in charge of current affairs and the police.

It is impossible to reconstruct exactly when Bresso became an autonomous Commune. The town was a feud of the Patellani family during the 1500's, then, for a brief period (1717-1721), it was assigned to the noble family Perini, then returned to the Patellani until the reform came into force.

In 1931, when reconstructing the town's history, the authorities wrote: "Si ignora da qual comune dipendesse Bresso anticamente; è certo che nel 1797 si reggeva da sé." ("It is unknown as to what Commune Bresso belonged in ancient times; it is certain that in 1797 it was self-governed.")

THE EARLY 1800's

On May 15th, 1796, **Napoleon Bonaparte** triumphantly entered the city of Milan after having defeated the Austrians at Lodi. The Cispadana Republic was established, only to become Cisalpina the following year with Milan as its capital.

In 1805, Napoleon was crowned King of Italy, and the republic was transformed into the Kingdom of Italy.

Bresso, with its one thousand inhabitants, was encompassed by the Commune of Bruzzano together with Brusuglio and Cormano.

The battle of Waterloo eliminated Napoleon and the Kingdom of Italy from history. The Austrians returned to Milan, and annexed Lombardy to the Hapsburg Empire.

In 1815, the **Lombard Veneto Kingdom** was established and its divided into nine provinces, meaning those still existing today excepting Varese, Lodi and Lecco. The old municipal borders were reinstated, and Bresso once again became an autonomous commune.

In the census of 1841, Bresso proved to have 1,448 residents divided into two separate settlements: the first, called "Coo de Bress" was a group of farmsteads along today's Via Manzoni and Via Madonnina; the second, known as "Bressino", stood on the Via Valassina at the crossroad with Via Isimbardi.

The parish was the heart of the town's cultural life. The "Liber Chronicus" reports that round about 1814 the facade of the Church of SS. Nazaro e Celso was modified.

Between 1833 and 1835, the left transept was extended, and in 1855 the organ was installed and the choir-box was built walnut seats.

In 1857, count Luigi Patellani financed the construction of a chapel and a main altar for the Church of SS. Nazaro e Celso, as well as an altar for the Oratory of the Madonna del Pilastrello.

In the Municipality's register of professions, farmers were the main category, although bricklayers, carpenters, porters and labourers were appearing. These were the first signs of industrialisation, which was to become increasingly important in the years to come.

Silk-making was the key figure in the Lombard manufacturing world, and enjoyed an exceptional development.

The writer **Alexander Manzoni** visited Bresso frequently: from his summer residence in Brusuglio, by crossing the bridge over the river Seveso and following what was to become the Via Manzoni, he would visit Villa Patellani, where he would have conversations, teach the children Catechism, and play the piano.

THE KINGDOM OF ITALY

On March 4th, 1861, the Subalpine Parliament solemnly proclaimed the **Unity of Italy**. The Italian government adopted a rigid scheme of centralisation hinged on the figure of the Prefect.

In 1861, Bresso had 1,496 inhabitants. The mayor was Castriziano Bianchi and he chaired a municipal council formed of fifteen members.

In 1869, Bresso joined Affori, as did Bruzzano and Dergano.

Bresso returned to its status of an autonomous municipality by royal decree in 1884, and has remained thus ever since.

The first mayor of the new municipality was Andrea Strada, and the Town Hall was based in the building in Via Manzoni 39.

Bresso was still a small agricultural town, with farmsteads and courtyards.

Agriculture was the principal means of subsistence for the inhabitants of Bresso, and silk-growing was a flourishing activity at the end of the 19th century.

During the 1890's, the church was extended to meet the growing population of Bresso (2,039 inhabitants in the census of 1901).

In 1874, the top of the campanile was replaced by a pyramid surmounted by a cross, and three bells were installed.

In 1878, the Milan – Seregno – Carate tramline was opened.

In 1889, Luigi Strada built the new Town Hall, junior school and nursery school in the street today known as Via Centurelli.

The municipality was transferred to Via Roma in 1931. The freed space in the building it previously occupied in Via Centurelli was given over to classrooms for the growing population and to medical consulting rooms.

THE LATE 1800's

Towards the end of the 1800's, the industrialisation process in what was to be known as the Italian industrial revolution was notable above all in the Brianza district, where the most developed sector was textiles. Steel and metal-working took root at Sesto San Giovanni.

Bresso remained a rural town, and was only partially touched by the industrial transformation of the Milan hinterland.



FARM WORKERS OF BRESSO

Most of the town was made up of farmsteads that were mainly in the Via Manzoni, the church street (today Via Roma), the church alley, Via Centurelli, and a few farmsteads towards Bressin and Il Castello, near to what is today the top of Via Lurani and towards the Via per Sesto ("Cassinetta").

The old Valassina (now Via Vittorio Veneto) was given a gravel coating.

The first industry to be set up in the commune of Bresso was a silk factory, whose raw material was supplied by a local silkworm production. A silk mill dating back to the 1830's was taken over in 1880 by Giuseppe Conti. The output of silk fell during World War I and, as a result of the pitiless competition of the cotton mills, jobs waned, and the silk mill finally closed down in 1920.

THE XX CENTURY

In 1895, the first section of the Italian Socialist Party was inaugurated in Bresso.

In 1908, some friends of the parish of the Church of SS. Nazaro e Celso set up the Circolo Cattolico “Alessandro Manzoni” (Alexander Manzoni Catholic Association), a non-profit concern that fostered artistic and cultural events, sport, tourism and recreation activities.

That was also the year in which electricity reached Bresso. The company Meana signed a contract with the municipality to supply electricity for public lighting.

In 1909, the Cooperativa Edificatrice e di Consumo “Aurora” (a Socialist-inspired construction and utility consortium) was founded.

Following the law granting men’s suffrage and the fervid activities of the cooperative, in 1914 the first Socialist mayor was elected – Pietro Comi – who held this post until 1924.

In 1915, the Cooperativa Bressese Case Popolari (council housing cooperative) was established.

WORLD WAR I

On May 24, 1915, Italy declared war on Austria and Germany.

Six hundred of Bresso’s citizens were called up, their years of birth ranging from 1874 to 1900.



PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF WORLD WAR I SOLDIERS FROM BRESSO

In 1924, to commemorate the soldiers from Bresso who were killed in World War I, a monument was erected in front of the municipal building in Via Vittorio Veneto (now Via Centurelli) and Viale delle Rimembranze (memorial avenue) was inaugurated.

The last session of the Municipal Council to be held before the rise of the Fascist regime is dated May 22, 1926. From then on, for the entire twenty-year regime, Bresso fell under an authority or a prefect's commissary appointed by the regime.

THE FASCIST REGIME AND THE RESISTANCE

Bresso's first Post Office came into operation in 1939.

In 1940, Italy entered World War II, and Bresso began mourning her fallen. The town was bombed and evacuated citizens took refuge in the homes of friends and relatives in the Brianza and Varese districts.

The year 1943 saw the downfall of Fascism: right up until the armistice, Milan was carpet-bombed by the Anglo-American forces to accelerate Italy's surrender.

German occupation and the civil war started on September 8th. An arm of the CLN - Comitato Nazionale di Liberazione (National Liberation Committee) took shape in Bresso, and its members were later responsible for governing the town in the wake of liberation.

Bresso suffered its first bombing in the early Spring of 1944. On April 30th, American planes dropped bombs on the **Breda-Campovolo** airfield and all the hangars were razed to the ground.



THE BRESSO AIRFIELD: BZ308 FOUR-ENGINE PLANE

Seven of Bresso's partisans were killed during the Resistance.

In the Spring of 1946, the popular referendum ratified Italy's status of a Republic and the municipal elections.

Of Bresso's 2,552 voters, 1,967 voted for the Republic (77.10%) and 454 for the Monarch (17.179%).

These were years of political fervor in Bresso. In the wake of the dictatorship, there was a season of zealous participation in the town's public life: the citizens of Bresso took part in meetings, assemblies and debates, and the rivalry between De Gasperi's Christian Democratic Party and Togliatti's Communist Party became very stiff indeed.

THE 1950's and 1960's

In 1951, Bresso had 4,575 inhabitants. In 1954, the country's economic recovery was well under way and by 1956 had decidedly taken the upper hand.

The gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 38%, salaries grew by 80%, and migration intensified. Bresso shared the destiny of all the other towns in Northern Italy. During the 1950's, the first factories were set up: mechanical, metal and chemical (plastic, pharmaceutical and cosmetic) industries and printing works. This switch-over accounts for the giddy rise in the number of Bresso's inhabitants: 4,575 in 1951, 11,655 in 1961, 31,515 in 1971.

This was an outright demographic boom, and earned Bresso the title of the most densely-populated residential area in Italy.

Huge urban settlements came into being, reducing the farmlands. The silkworm cultivation that supported the silk mills disappeared, the town's entire arrangement was disrupted, and virtually all the courtyards and farmsteads were destroyed.

The demographic boom accentuated the urban decay of the hinterland, and speculation played its ruthless role in a territory devoid of any kind of town planning.

Some important medium-sized industries were set up, such as Angeletti-Ciucano (now Alcan), Retam, Parizzi, Tramontana, Cino del Duca, Zambon and Lipsa Lancome, as well as numerous small manufacturing and craftsmen's concerns that became the mainstay of Bresso's economic life.

In the history of the Bresso's economy, credit must be given to the activities of Iso S.p.A. Automotoveicoli, which was founded by Renzo Rivolta and born of the transformation of Isothermos (factory producing electric refrigerators and radiators) into an automotive industry.

Starting from 1952, the history of Iso was studded with successes: the legendary "Isetta", the "Iso Diva" and the "Iso Grifo". The "Isetta" (nicknamed "Ovetto volante" or "flying egg"), little appreciated by Italians because of its expensiveness, enjoyed a resounding success abroad, in France, Spain and above all in Great Britain and in Germany, where it was produced by BMW (over 160,000 units of the the German "Isetta" were produced up to 1962).

The Iso plants can still be seen from Via Vittorio Veneto, recalling the era when Bresso, small though it be, made a significant contribution to the technological innovation, the history of design and the economic development of the hinterland.



THE ISO FACTORY



ISETTA IN PARIS



ISO DIVA

The trolleybus line connecting Bresso directly to the centre of Milan facilitated the settlement of a considerable number of newly-formed families, which was further encouraged by council housing schemes, the cooperative system, and subsidised housing for workers.

BRESSO BECOMES A CITY

Bresso was growing and, in doing so, demanded schools, social and health services, churches, transport systems, and security structures.

In addition to the old school in Via Centurelli – which came to be used as a middle school – new school complexes were built in Via Lurani (1958), Via Villoresi (1963), Via Don Sturzo (1966) and Via Bologna (1969).



INAUGURATION OF THE SCHOOL IN VIA LURANI (1958)

In 1957, the Metanodotti Milanese (natural-gas pipeline of Milan) began the distribution of natural gas in Bresso. The facade of the parish church was completed in 1954, and on December 8th that year the statue of the “Castela” was moved to the bottom of Via Roma, in the square that was to take the name of Piazza dell’Immacolata.

The line of the no. 83 trolleybus took up service in Bresso in 1960.

Construction of the Chiesa della Madonna della Misericordia (Church of Our Lady of Mercy) started in 1963; In 1964, the boys’ oratory was inaugurated in Via Galliano. The Chiesa di San Carlo (St. Charles’ Church) was inaugurated in 1971.

The year 1973 saw the institution of a Carabinieri station in Via del Mulino.

By 1977, Bresso had a population of 34,590 people, that is, 10,173 inhabitants per square meter – the densely-inhabited area in Italy.

THE NEW URBAN AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The General Town-Planning Scheme was adopted in 1971 by the Municipal Council and finally approved by the Lombardy Regional Government in 1974.

These years saw the closing down of factories such as Isorivolta, Pernotti, Retam, Tramontana, GBF, Officina Alfieri, the magnificent La Magna.

The job shortage hit Bresso, whose economy was not supported by a sufficient social/urban padding to withstand the new needs.

This gave rise, slowly but surely, to a decrease in the population.

The advent of the media and the large-scale retail trade made a huge impact on the commercial businesses, which were already afflicted by the general economic slump.

There was a growth in bank counters, insurance agencies and real-estate agencies – the activities typical of aging residential communities.

In the past few years, there has been a pressing need to harmonise the exploitation of Bresso's resources and potential (the "Parco Nord" large park/reserve, the artisan manufacturers, the small and medium enterprises, the Research Centre) with acceptable development processes taking place in the vast territory surrounding the town.



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE "PARCO NORD"

The town-planning criteria recently approved by the Lombardy Regional Government have the following objectives: maintaining very high living standards in the urban areas; seeking a balance between the different forms of distribution so as to ensure a free and fair competition; the creation of an orderly sustainable development.

RECENT HISTORY

In 2000, the “Castela d’Oro” Order of Civil Merit was instituted in homage to the statue of the Madonna Immacolata (Immaculate Virgin), considered the “Monument of Bresso” by the town’s the citizens, and called, in fact, Castela.

To quote the sculptor, Francesco Lesma (from A. Radaelli, F. Zinni “La Castela”, Comune di Bresso, 2003):
"La Castela fu scolpita da mani ignote in pietra arenaria intorno alla prima metà del XVII secolo. ... I "vecchi" la chiamavano Madonna della Neve e la consideravano una protezione contro le avversità atmosferiche e le carestie. ... L'etimologia della parola "Castela" deriva da "castellana", termine usato anticamente per identificare la signora, o patrona, di un determinato luogo e, casualmente, le origini della statua coincidono con uno dei periodi peggiori della storia di Bresso dal punto di vista ambientale. ... In origine questo monumento era collocato di fronte alla chiesa dei Santi Nazaro e Celso, ma nel 1954, in occasione del centesimo anniversario della proclamazione del Dogma dell'Immacolata concezione, l'Amministrazione Comunale decise di dedicare alla Beata Vergine la nascente piazza che oggi si chiama piazza Immacolata e, di conseguenza, di cambiare l'ubicazione della statua. ..." (“La Castela was hewn from sandstone by an unknown hand sometime during the first half of the 1600’s... The people called it Our Lady of the Snow and regarded it as a protection against weather disasters and famine... The word ‘Castela’ derives from ‘castellana’, which in ancient times meant the lady of the manor, and, as it happens, the birth of the statue coincides with one of the Bresso’s worst periods in environmental terms... This monument originally stood opposite the Church of SS. Nazaro e Celso, but in 1954, on the 100th anniversary of the proclamation of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the Municipal Council decided to dedicate the newly-built square to the Holy Virgin, meaning the square today known as Piazza Immacolata, and to move the statue there...”).



THE STATUE OF THE “MADONNA IMMACOLATA” (IMMACULATE VIRGIN”)
IN ITS ORIGINAL POSITION

In 2001, the population of Bresso was 27,037 inhabitants.

Cabling of the town was completed in 2002: 27 km of optic fibre were laid throughout the town, and Bresso could boast being the very first town in Italy to be full cabled.

Il 15 agosto muore Paolo Foglia nell’eroico tentativo di salvare tre persone dalle acque del Ticino: gli verrà conferita la benemerenza “Castela d’Oro” e gli verrà intitolata la Piscina Comunale.

On August 15th, 2002, Paolo Foglia died in a heroic attempt to save three people from drowning in the Ticino River. He was conferred the “Castela d’Oro” Order of Civil Merit and the municipal swimming-pool complex was given his name. In November 2003, the President of the Republic, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, conferred Paolo Foglia with the Medal of Honour for Civil Merit.

On December 8th 2003, the statue of the Madonna Immacolata was moved to the homonymous square following a careful restoration by the Bressese artist, Francesco Lesma.



THE STATUE OF THE “MADONNA IMMACOLATA” (IMMACULATE VIRGIN) AFTER ITS RESTORATION

On December 30th, 2003, President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi named Febo Conti Grand Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic for his artistic efforts mainly for children.

In 2004, Bresso citizen Ivano Brugnetti won the Gold Medal for the 20km race at the Olympic Games in Athens (Greece).

In the Spring of 2004, President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi landed at Bresso Airfield to take part in the sixtieth anniversary of the 1944 Workers' Strike at Sesto San Giovanni.

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