

# THE TUSCAN CELEBRATION AT SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL SEPTEMBER 24–25, 2011

BY FRANCESCO CARLONI DE QUERQUI

ON AUGUST 12, 2011, I RECEIVED AN EMAIL FROM MADAME NATHALIE PALLAS, IN CHARGE OF THE PRESS CONTACTS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE FRENCH TOWN OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL. SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL IS A TOWN OF 20,000 INHABITANTS, A FEW MILES FROM LYON, FRANCE, WHERE THE GUADAGNI FAMILY, IN FRENCH CALLED GADAGNE, OWNED THE CASTLE OF BEAUREGARD, FOR OVER A CENTURY, FROM 1526 TO 1661.

THE EMAIL SAID:

“GOOD MORNING MR. CARLONI,

MONSIEUR EDOUARD LEJEUNE KINDLY GAVE US YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS.

THE TOWNS OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL AND BRIGNAIS ARE ORGANIZING A TUSCAN CELEBRATION IN HONOR OF THEIR TWIN CITIES IN TUSCANY: PONTASSIEVE AND PONSACCO, NEXT SEPTEMBER 24 AND 25.

A DELEGATION OF THE CITY OF PONTASSIEVE WILL BE ATTENDING IT.

AS YOU ARE A DESCENDANT OF THE GADAGNE FAMILY, WE WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOU WITH US ON THIS OCCASION.

YOU WILL FIND HERE ENCLOSED AN INVITATION AND THE PROGRAM OF THE WEEK-END.

DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT US SO WE CAN PLAN ACCOMMODATIONS FOR YOUR LODGING.

YOURS SINCERELY,

NATHALIE PALLAS

RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONTACTS WITH THE PRESS”

I WAS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED AND DELIGHTED BY THE INVITATION. MONSIEUR EDOUARD LEJEUNE IS A FAMOUS GUADAGNI HISTORIAN. HE WROTE THE BOOK “LA SAGA LYONNAISE DES GADAGNE” (“THE LYONS SAGA OF THE GADAGNE”), PRINTED IN MARCH 2004. IT IMMEDIATELY BECAME A BEST-SELLER. I WAS HIS GUEST IN LYON TWICE, FROM SEPT 26 TO OCTOBER 1, 2005, TOGETHER WITH MY COUSIN FROM DENVER, CARLO GUADAGNI, AND AGAIN IN THE SPRING OF 2007, TOGETHER WITH MY COUSIN FROM MONTREAL CANADA, MICHAEL COOPER GUADAGNI. HE WAS A PERFECT HOST AND SHOWED US AROUND MANY GUADAGNI EX CASTLES AND PROPERTIES IN LYON AND AVIGNON, AND INTRODUCED US TO SEVERAL INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES. ONE OF THESE WAS MONSIEUR ROLAND CRIMIER, MAYOR OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL, WHO THREW A GREAT PARTY FOR CARLO AND ME AT THE CITY HALL OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL, FOLLOWED BY A SUCCULENT LUNCH AT AN ELEGANT RESTAURANT, ON SEPT 28, 2005.

I TALKED ABOUT THE INVITATION TO MY COUSIN VIERI GUADAGNI, IN WHOSE COMPANY I WORK. HE IMMEDIATELY AND ENTHUSIASTICALLY AGREED TO SEND ME TO SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL. MY 29 YEARS OLD DAUGHTER BEATRICE ASKED IF SHE COULD COME WITH ME. I WAS VERY PLEASED ABOUT IT, FOR TWO REASONS: FIRST, I COULD SPEND SOME QUALITY TIME WITH MY DAUGHTER, AND SECOND, THAT, THROUGH HER, THE NEXT GENERATION OF THE GUADAGNI FAMILY COULD SEE AND LEARN ABOUT OUR BEAUTIFUL FRENCH PAST. FROM FLORENCE, ITALY, MY BROTHER BERNARDO AND HIS WIFE CARLA, ALSO VOLUNTEERED TO COME TO THE "FETE TOSCANE" ("TUSCAN CELEBRATION"). AGAIN I WAS VERY PLEASED, FOR THE SAME REASONS. FURTHERMORE, I HAD NOT SEEN MY BROTHER AND MY SISTER-IN-LAW FOR A LONG TIME. SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL WAS GIVING US A BEAUTIFUL OCCASION TO SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN.

I WROTE NATHALIE PALLAS THAT SHE HAD INVITED ONE GUADAGNI TO THE CELEBRATION IN SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL, AND FOUR WERE COMING! WEREN'T WE TOO MANY? THE MAYOR ANSWERED BY GRACIOUSLY INVITING US ALL. WE WERE ALL VERY GRATEFUL AND EXCITED AND PREPARED FOR THE TRIP.



THE SKOOGS: MILES AND BEATRICE IN THE BACK, ISABELLA AND EMILIA UPFRONT.

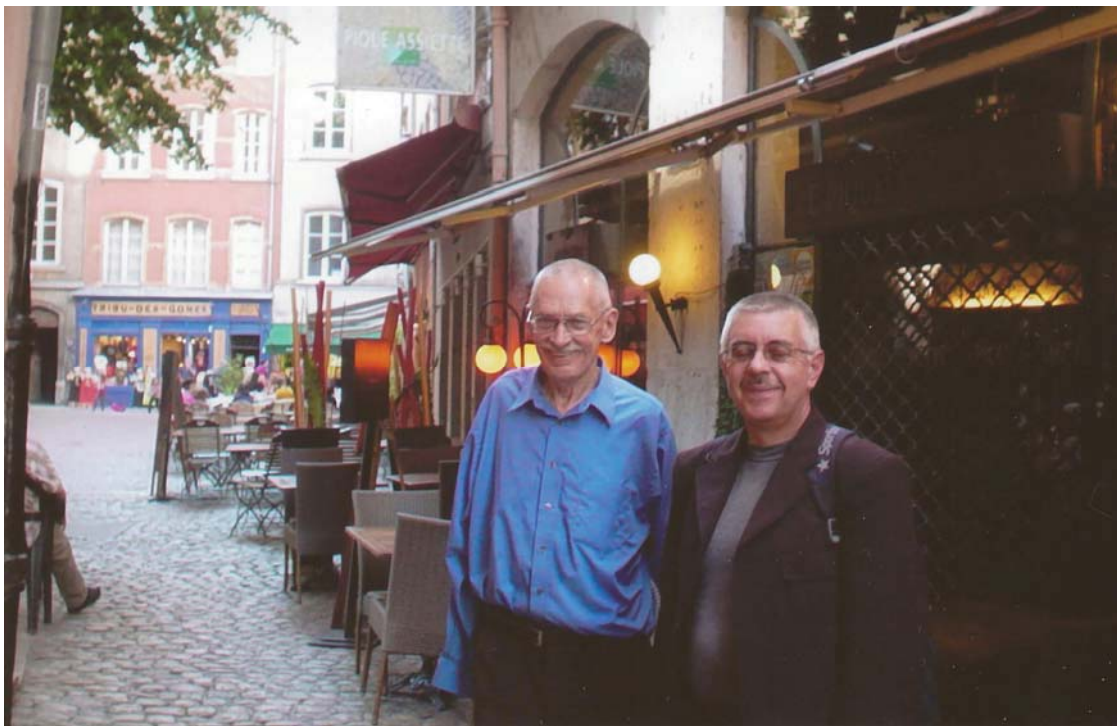
ON THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 22, 2011, AT 6:05 PM OUR LUFTHANSA AIRPLANE LEFT DENVER FOR FRANKFURT. BEATRICE AND I HAD GOTTEN SEATS NEXT TO EACH OTHER, AND LIKewise FOR THE WHOLE TRIP. BEATRICE'S HUSBAND, MILES SKOOGS, DROVE US TO THE AIRPORT. THEIR TWO YOUNG DAUGHTERS, ISABELLA, 4,

NAMED AFTER HER GUADAGNI GREAT-GRANDMOTHER, WHO DIED A YEAR AGO AT 96 YEARS OLD, AND EMILIA, 2, CAME TO SEE US OFF ALSO. EMILIA STARTED SOBBING. SHE WANTED TO GO WITH HER MOM. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME MOTHER AND DAUGHTERS WERE PARTING. HOWEVER THERE WERE HUGS AND KISSES, PROMISES OF BEING GOOD DURING MOMMY'S ABSENCE, AND WE WERE OFF.

AFTER A NIGHT IN THE PLANE, WE LANDED IN FRANKFURT, GERMANY AT 11:35 AM ON SEPTEMBER 23. MANY THINGS WERE NEW FOR BEATRICE: FLYING ON LUFTHANSA, LANDING IN A GERMAN AIRPORT, WITH MESSAGES IN GERMAN THROUGH THE LOUDSPEAKERS AND ON SIGNS. WE QUICKLY MOVED TO THE DEPARTURE FOR LYON TERMINAL, GRABBED A CAPPUCCINO AT THE AUTOMATIC DISPENSER AND GOT ON THE PLANE.

ON OUR WAY TO LYON, AS WE HAD THE WINDOW SEAT, I SHOWED BEATRICE THE BEAUTIFUL FRENCH GREEN COUNTRYSIDE, WITH PATCHES OF DARKER GREEN FOR WOODS, RED SPOTS FOR ROOFS, TALL SLENDER CHURCH STEEPLES, CUTTING THE HORIZON. QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE EASTERN COLORADO ENDLESS, MAJESTIC, FLAT, BROWN PLAINS WITH SINGLE FARMHOUSES THIRTY OR FORTY KILOMETERS APART, INHABITED ONLY BY HERDS OF COWS, WILD ANTELOPES AND COYOTES.

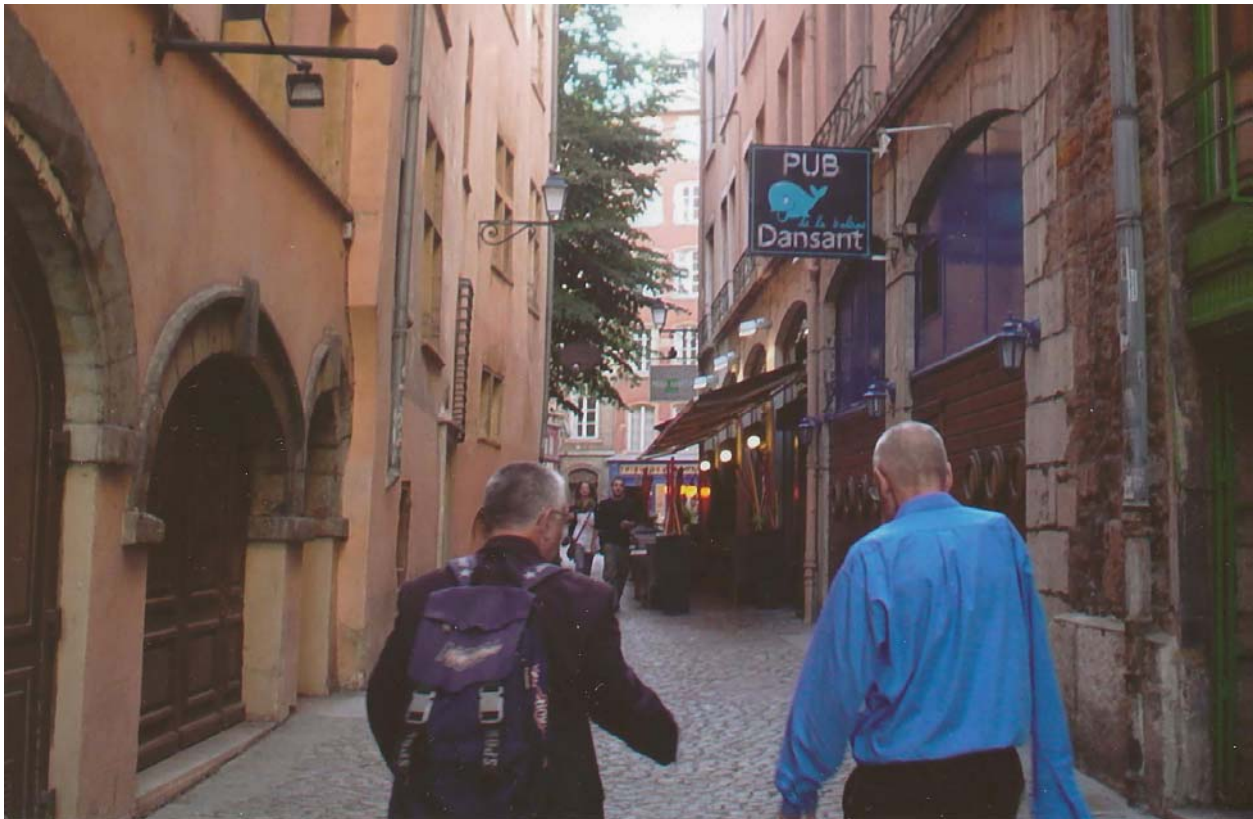
AFTER ONE HOUR AND FIFTEEN MINUTES WE LANDED AT THE SAINT-EXUPERY AIRPORT OF LYON. WE FOUND OUR SUITCASES AND HEADED TOWARDS THE EXIT. MADAME MARIE MICHAUD WAS THERE WITH A SIGN SAYING "SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL" IN HER HANDS. SHE WAS NICE AND YOUNG AND SMILING, I PRESUME CLOSE TO BEATRICE'S AGE, AND THE TWO IMMEDIATELY BONDED TOGETHER, STARTED TALKING ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN AND PRESCHOOL. THE WEATHER WAS SUNNY AND BEAUTIFUL AND LYON WAS SMILING AT US. FOR BEATRICE THOSE WERE THE FIRST MOMENTS OF HER LIFE ON FRENCH SOIL. SHE WAS HAPPY AND EXCITED.



FRANCESCO (LEFT) AND MICHEL MONNET IN OLD LYON

MARIE MICHAUD TOOK US TO THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL WHERE MONSIEUR MICHEL MONNET WAS PRINCIPAL. I NOTICED HOW MARIE MICHAUD PARKED HER CAR. IN AMERICA WE HAVE PLENTY OF ROOM TO PARK OUR CARS. MARIE'S CAR WAS ONE MILLIMETER FROM A TREE ON ONE SIDE AND HALF A MILLIMETER FROM THE CURB ON THE OTHER. I ADMIRER HER. I WOULD NOT HAVE EVEN TRIED.

WE MET MICHEL MONNET. HE WAS EXTREMELY BUSY BUT AT THE SAME TIME VERY NICE AND OUTGOING. BEATRICE IS AN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN PARKER, COLORADO. SO SHE WAS VERY INTERESTED IN SEEING A FRENCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. MONSIEUR MONNET WAS EXTREMELY NICE. HE TOOK US ALL OVER THE SCHOOL, OR HAD A FELLOW TEACHER DO IT, SHOWING US EVERYTHING, ALL THE DIFFERENT GRADES AND THEIR CLASSROOMS. HE ALSO PREPARED TWO LARGE CUPS OF COFFEE FOR US, WHICH WE REALLY ENJOYED, AFTER OUR NIGHT IN THE PLANE.



MICHEL MONNET AND FRANCESCO WALKING THROUGH OLD LYON TO THE GUADAGNI MUSEUM (PICTURE TAKEN BY BEATRICE) (NOTICE THAT IN ALL THE PICTURES TAKEN ON THE FIRST DAY FRANCESCO AND BEATRICE ARE STILL IN THEIR TRAVELING OUTFIT BECAUSE THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH TIME TO GO TO SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL, CHANGE AND RETURN TO LYON)

THEN IT WAS FIVE O' CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON AND WE HAD AN APPOINTMENT WITH MARIA-ANNE PRIVAT-SAVIGNY, DIRECTOR OF THE GADAGNE MUSEUMS OF LYON. MONSIEUR MONNET TOLD US HE LEFT HIS CAR AT HOME IN SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL, AND CAME TO WORK IN LYON BY SUBWAY AND WALKING. BECAUSE OF TRAFFIC

CONGESTION, HE SAID IT TOOK HIM THE SAME TIME EITHER WAY, AND SUBWAY AND WALKING WERE LESS EXPENSIVE AND HEALTHIER THAN SPENDING HOURS STUCK IN THE TRAFFIC JAM. SO WE WENT TO THE GADAGNE MUSEUMS, IN OLD LYON, BY SUBWAY AND WALKING. WE ENJOYED IT. IN DENVER THERE ARE NO SUBWAYS, SO IT WAS FUN AND INTERESTING TO EXPLORE THOSE OF LYON. PEOPLE TALKED WITH US IN THE SUBWAYS. BEATRICE WAS VERY FAVORABLY IMPRESSED THAT THE FRENCH WERE SO OPEN AND FRIENDLY, MORE THAN THE AMERICANS. WE ALSO ENJOYED WALKING AFTER BEING STUCK SO MANY HOURS ON A TIGHT AIRPLANE SEAT. ON OUR WAY TO OLD LYON, MICHEL MONNET SHOWED US PLACE BELLECOUR (“BELLECOUR SQUARE”) WITH THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF KING LOUIS XIV IN THE CENTER. IT IS THE SECOND LARGEST SQUARE IN EUROPE, AFTER MOSCOW’S RED SQUARE. IT WAS BEAUTIFUL.



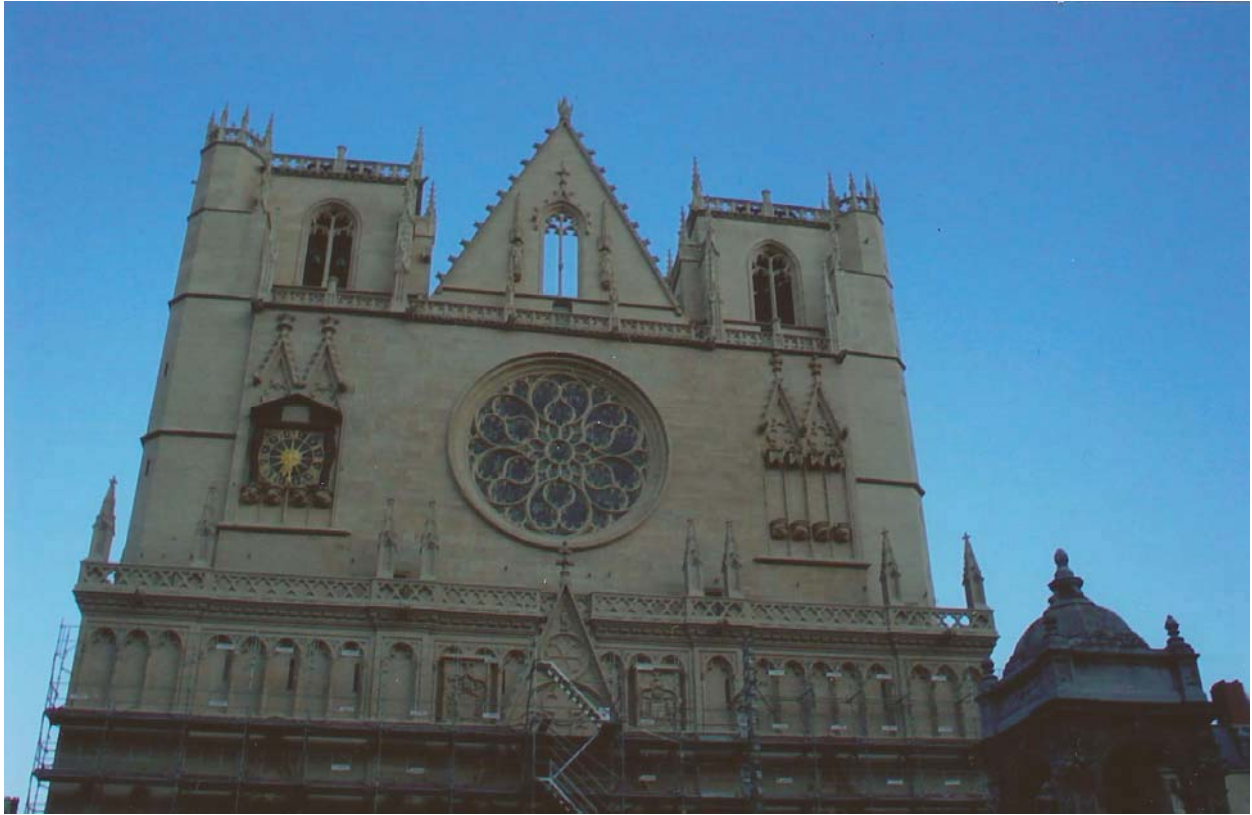
PLACE BELLECOUR



SAONE RIVER. ON THE RIGHT IS THE WESTERN SIDE WITH THE RENAISSANCE BUILDINGS OF OLD LYON (YOU CAN SEE THE BELL TOWERS OF THE SAINT JOHN CATHEDRAL), ON THE LEFT IS THE EASTERN SIDE WITH THE 19TH CENTURY BUILDINGS.

BEATRICE WAS IMPRESSED BY THE BEAUTY OF THE SAONE RIVER, ITS NARROW BANKS FULL OF BOATS AND PEOPLE, ITS LONG ELEGANT BRIDGES, THE RENAISSANCE BUILDINGS ON THE WESTERN SIDE, AND THE NINETEENTH CENTURY HOUSES ON THE EASTERN SIDE, WITH THE CROIX ROUSSE HILL FULL OF BUILDINGS GLEAMING IN THE GOLDEN LIGHT OF THE EVENING SUN. SHE TOOK MANY PICTURES. MONSIEUR MONNET TOLD US A LOT OF INTERESTING DETAILS ABOUT THE STREETS WE WERE CROSSING ON OUR WAY TO THE MUSEUMS. WE ALSO ENTERED FOR A MOMENT IN SAINT JEAN CATHEDRAL WHOSE BEAUTY STRIKES ME EVERY TIME I SEE

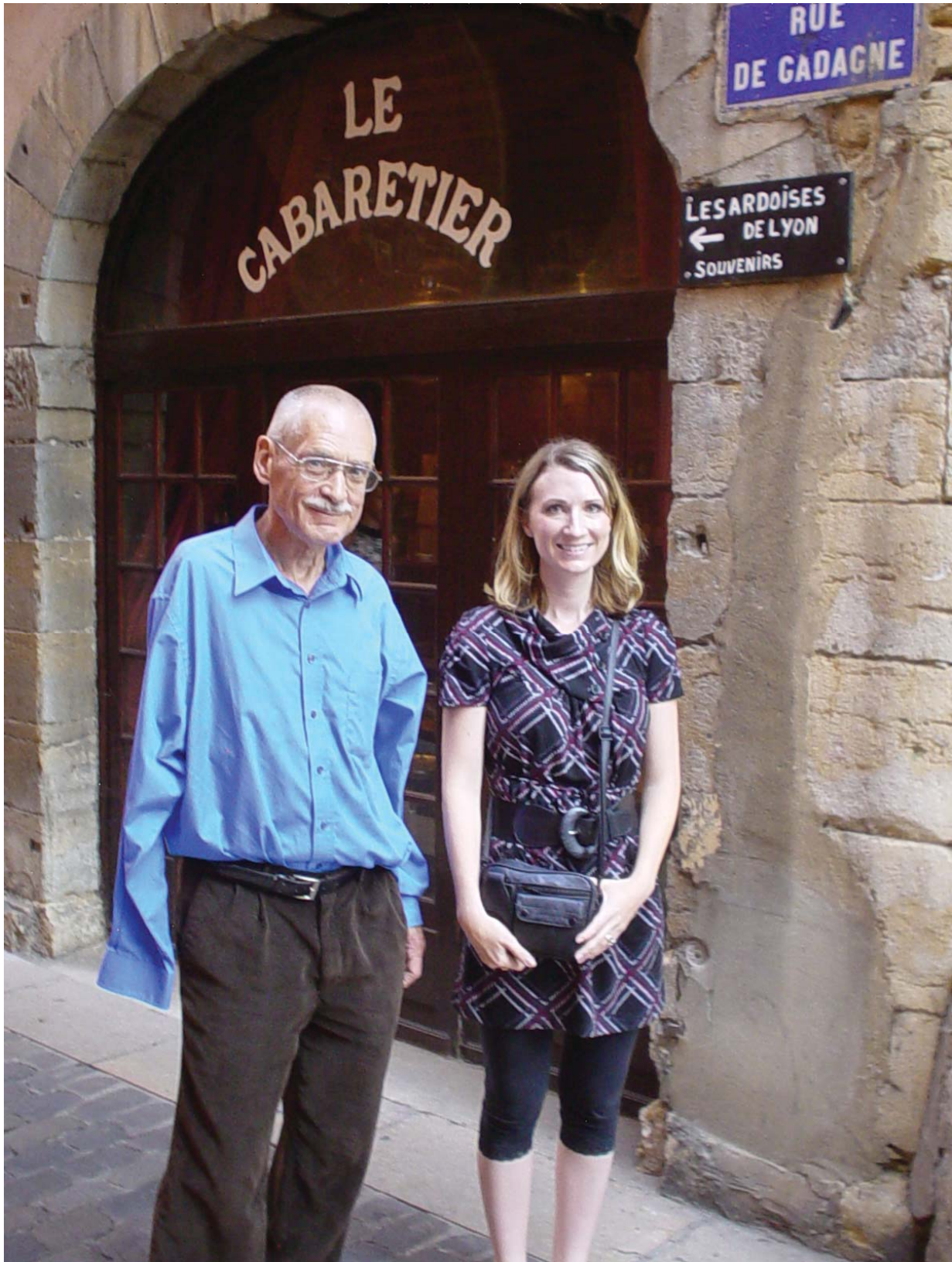
IT. BEATRICE ALSO WAS IMPRESSED BY EVERYTHING IN THE CATHEDRAL, THE HIGH CEILINGS THAT SEEM TO TOUCH THE SKY, THOSE NEVER ENDING BEAUTIFUL GOTHIC WINDOWS THAT RUN AFTER THE INFINITE, THE SEMI-DARK GOLDEN LIGHT THAT PENETRATES FROM ON HIGH AND ALL THE ORNATE CHAPELS AND ALTARS INSIDE.



FAÇADE OF THE SAINT JOHN CATHEDRAL OF LYON (SAINT JEAN IN FRENCH)



A street of Old Lyon. Old Lyon has only 3 important parallel streets going North South, one of which for a while is called Rue de Gadagne (Guadagni Street). Several short narrow streets connect them from East to West.



FRANCESCO AND BEATRICE IN RUE DE GADAGNE





ANOTHER VIEW OF THE RUE DE GADAGNE CORNER.

WE ARRIVED AT THE GUADAGNI MUSEUM, IN RUE DE GADAGNE (GUADAGNI STREET). I TOLD BEATRICE HOW THE GUADAGNI PALACE, NOW GUADAGNI MUSEUM, USED TO BE SO LARGE IT BLOCKED THE CIRCULATION BETWEEN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN LYON, SO EVENTUALLY THEY DUG A STREET IN THE CENTER OF IT AND CALLED IT RUE DE GADAGNE. HOW THE PALACE LEANS AGAINST FOURVIERE HILL AND SO WHEN WE GET ON THE SIXTH FLOOR, INSTEAD OF WALKING ON THE ROOF WE EXIT IN THE BACK YARD, ON TOP OF THE ATTACHED HILL. MADAME PRIVAT-SAVIGNY MET US AND GENTLY WALKED US OVER A GOOD PART OF THE MUSEUM, SHOWING US MANY INTERESTING THINGS. I HAD READ QUITE A FEW NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ON HER, ON HOW SHE HAS A NEW APPROACH TO THE HISTORY MUSEUM, WANTING TO MAKE IT A FUN MUSEUM FOR EVERYBODY, CHILDREN INCLUDED, AND NOT JUST INTERESTING FOR HISTORY LOVERS. I TOLD HER HOW MUCH I ADMIRER HER FOR IT AND SHE SEEMED PLEASED AND SMILED. CARLO AND I WERE ALSO FRIENDS OF SIMONE BLAZY, THE PRECEDING DIRECTOR, RESPONSIBLE FOR SEVERAL YEARS OF RENOVATING AND RESTRUCTURING THE OLD GUADAGNI PALACE, WHICH AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY HAD BECOME AN APARTMENT BUILDING WITH OVER 100 APARTMENTS INTO IT.



FRANCESCO IN FRONT OF THE GADAGNE MUSEUMS (THERE ARE THREE OF THEM, ALL JOINED TOGETHER) MAIN ENTRANCE. ON THE LEFT YOU SEE A STAIRCASE AND A BUILDING IN THE BACK. BOTH THAT BUILDING AND THE GUADAGNI PALACE MUSEUMS HAVE THEIR BACK LEANING AGAINST THE SAME HILL, CALLED FOURVIERE HILL. THINK HOW DEEP IS THE GUADAGNI PALACE. MOREOVER, AS WE STATED ABOVE, RUE DE GADAGNE, ON WHICH THE ENTRY OF THE MUSEUM IS, WAS DUG IN THE 17TH CENTURY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GUADAGNI PALACE, AS A SHORTCUT FOR PEOPLE TO GO THROUGH THE IMMENSE PALACE INSTEAD OF WALKING ALL AROUND IT. SO THE PALACE WAS REALLY TWICE AS LARGE AS YOU CAN SEE IN THE PICTURE, FROM THE DOOR OF THE MUSEUM TO THE INVISIBLE HILL BEHIND THE BUILDING ON THE LEFT.



FRANCESCO AND BEATRICE IN FRONT OF THE SAME DOOR.



MAIN INSIDE COURTYARD OF THE GUADAGNI MUSEUM. THE TALL TOWER ON THE LEFT CONTAINS THE WINDING STAIRCASE CONNECTING ALL THE FLOORS. IT QUICKLY BECAME AN ARCHITECTURAL MODEL AND WAS NICKNAMED “LA TOUR GADAGNE” (“THE GUADAGNI TOWER”). MANY TOWERS IN LYON AND THE SURROUNDING TOWNS HAVE IMITATED IT AND ARE ALSO CALLED “TOUR GADAGNE”, BECAUSE THEY ARE SIMILAR TO IT, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE NEVER BELONGED TO THE GUADAGNI FAMILY.



A DIFFERENT VIEW OF THE COURTYARD OF THE GUADAGNI PALACE.



VIEW OF THE BACK INSIDE WALL OF THE GUADAGNI PALACE LEANING AGAINST FOURVIERE HILL. YOU CAN SEE THE TOP OF LARGE AND LONG IRON POLES, DUG IN THE WALL TO STRENGTHEN IT. IN THE WINTER AND THE SPRING, THE MELTING OF THE SNOW ON TOP OF FOURVIERE HILL AND THE ABUNDANT RAINS SATURATE THE GROUND OF THE HILL WITH WATER, MAKING IT SWELL. IF THE WALLS LEANING AGAINST IT WERE NOT EXTRA-STRONG, THE BASE OF THE HILL WOULD BREAK THROUGH THEM AND BURY THE PALACE AND A LARGE PART OF OLD LYON UNDER TONS OF DIRT.



FIREPLACE IN THE GUADAGNI MUSEUM WITH THE BOURBON KINGS FAMILY CREST (FLEURDELYS).



MADAME PRIVAT-SAVIGNY, DIRECTOR OF THE GUADAGNI MUSEUMS, BETWEEN BEATRICE AND FRANCESCO.



Bankrupts cage. The cage on the left was normally attached to the outside wall of a building of an important square of Lyon. During the Renaissance period, merchants and bankers who had gone bankrupt were closed in it. Passers-by could make fun of them, or yell at them, if they had lost their money because of their bankruptcy, or throw garbage at them.



HOLE WITH FOUNTAIN IN THE BACK WALL OF THE TOP OF THE GUADAGNI MUSEUM, WHICH SHOWS HOW DEEP IS THE WALL, WITH A NATURAL SPRING FLOWING WATER FROM THE SIDE OF FOURVIERE HILL.





*“GRASSY BACKYARD”* ON THE TOP FLOOR OF THE GUADAGNI MUSEUM. FOURVIERE HILL IS A LITTLE BIT HIGHER THAN THE MUSEUM AND YOU CAN SEE THE TOP OF A YELLOW HOUSE IN THE BACK ON THE LEFT, BUILT ON THE UPGOING SLOPE OF THE HILL. ALL THE OTHER BUILDINGS ARE PART OF THE GUADAGNI PALACE.



WALL ON THE BACK OF THE MUSEUM'S TOP FLOOR, FENCING THE "GRASSY BACKYARD" AND HOLDING BACK THE LAST MOUNTING PART OF FOURVIERE HILL. THE HOUSE ON THE TOP LEFT IS STILL PART OF THE MUSEUM.



Another view of the fencing back wall of the Museum with houses attached to it.



NARROW STEEP STAIRCASE LEADING FROM THE "GRASSY BACKYARD" TOP OF THE MUSEUM DOWN TO GUADAGNI STREET. ALL THE BUILDINGS IN THE PICTURE BELONG TO THE MUSEUM. THE IMMENSE GUADAGNI PALACE USED TO INCLUDE A LARGE PART OF LYON. LET US REMEMBER THAT IN THE 16TH CENTURY THE GUADAGNI WERE NOT ONLY THE RICHEST FAMILY OF LYON AND OF FRANCE, BUT ALSO OF ALL OF EUROPE.

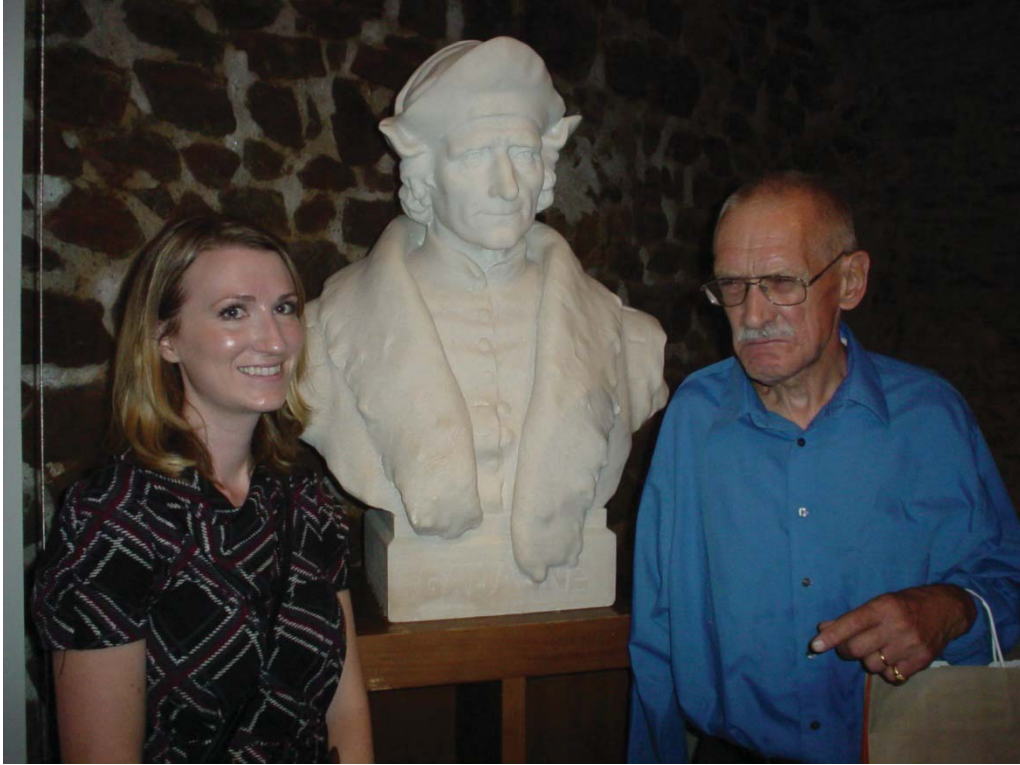


ANOTHER VIEW OF THE GUADAGNI COURTYARD WITH THE GUADAGNI TOWER ON THE CENTER LEFT.



IMITATION OF THE GUADAGNI TOWER IN THE RESTAURANT “LA TOUR ROSE” (THE PINK TOWER) IN LYON. CARLO, I AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES ATE IN THAT RESTAURANT DURING OUR TRIP TO LYON IN 2005. U.S. PRESIDENT AND MRS. CLINTON ALSO ATE THERE DURING AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO LYON.

I TOLD BEATRICE HOW THEY WERE BUYING ALSO THE HOUSES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF RUE GADAGNE, TO ANNEX THEM TO THE MUSEUM AND TRY TO RESTORE IT TO THE SIZE IT HAD WHEN IT WAS OWNED BY THE GUADAGNI FAMILY. WE FOUND A NICE BUST OF OUR ANCESTOR THOMAS DE GADAGNE AND MADAME PRIVAT-SAVIGNY TOOK A PICTURE OF BEATRICE AND ME ON BOTH SIDES OF HIM. I TRIED TO MAKE A FACIAL EXPRESSION LIKE THE ONE OF THE STATUE, BUT I THINK I EXAGGERATED IT. BEATRICE WAS AMAZED BY HOW LARGE THE MUSEUM WAS. IT SEEMED LIKE WE WERE NEVER GOING TO GET TO THE END OF IT. SHE ADMIRER ALL OF IT AND TOOK MANY PICTURES.



BUST OF THOMAS DE GADAGNE IN THE MUSEUM. FRANCESCO IS TRYING VERY UNSUCCESSFULLY TO IMITATE HIS EXPRESSION.



INSIDE ROOM OF THE GUADAGNI MUSEUM WITH PAINTINGS.

AFTER THE MUSEM WE WENT TO THE RESTAURANT OF LYON'S SOCCER STADIUM, CALLED BRASSERIE BOCUSE L'ARGENSON. THIS YEAR THE LYON SOCCER TEAM IS THE BEST IN FRANCE WHICH MAKES THE INHABITANTS OF LYON VERY HAPPY. OUTSIDE IT WAS GETTING DARK. IN THE RESTAURANT WE MET MADAME MONNET, MICHEL'S WIFE, CHRISTIAN DARNE, DEPUTY OF THE CITY OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL FOR THE SPORTS, AND THE DELEGATION FROM THE TOWN OF PONTASSIEVE IN ITALY, WHERE THE GUADAGNI OWNED THE VILLA OF MASSETO FOR NINE CENTURIES: THE PRESIDENT OF PONTASSIEVE'S CITY COUNCIL, ANGIOLO GHIARINI, AND PONTASSIEVE'S TOWN COUNCILOR, GIULIANO COCO. CHRISTIAN WAS TALL AND SLENDER AND HAD THE TYPICAL FRENCH HUMOUR WHICH I GREW UP LOVING IN THE FRENCH SCHOOLS I ATTENDED AS A CHILD AND WAS SO HAPPY TO FIND AGAIN. ANGIOLO AND GIULIANO WERE HAPPY, OUTGOING AND FRIENDLY. THE FOOD WAS GOOD AND SO WAS THE WINE. BEATRICE HAD THE SHOULDER OF THE LAMB, WHICH SHE LOVED. I WAS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED BECAUSE BEATRICE DOES NOT CARE MUCH FOR MEAT NORMALLY. AT THE BEGINNING BEATRICE'S FRENCH WAS SLOW AND A LITTLE HESITANT, BECAUSE SHE HAD TO THINK ABOUT THE WORDS BEFORE SAYING THEM, BUT THEN IT QUICKLY BECAME FLUENT. FRENCH IS MY MOTHER LANGUAGE. IF YOU REMEMBER, WHEN WE WERE CHILDREN, ISABELLA SPOKE ONLY FRENCH AT HOME, AND OUR GOVERNESS WAS FRENCH, AND WE WENT TO FRENCH SCHOOLS, SO I WAS PERFECTLY HAPPY TO BE FINALLY "AT HOME".



HAVING AN EXCELLENT DINNER AND A GOOD TIME AT THE BRASSERIE BOCUSE L'ARGENSON RESTAURANT IN LYON. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: BEATRICE, FRANCESCO, CHRISTIAN DARNE, GIULIANO COCO, ANGIOLO GHIARINI, EDOUARD LEJEUNE, MADAME JOLY-GREGOIRE.

THERE WERE ALSO MADAME JOLY GREGOIRE AND HISTORIAN EDOUARD LEJEUNE. A FEW MONTHS AGO, MY SISTER ELEONORA, WHO LIVES IN LECCE, SOUTHERN ITALY, WAS ORGANIZING THE PILGRIMAGE TO MADRID FOR THE WORLD YOUTH DAY OF AUGUST 15TH, 2011, FOR A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM HER TOWN. SHE PLANNED ON RENTING A BUS AND GOING TO SPAIN THROUGH SOUTHERN FRANCE. SHE THOUGHT ABOUT STOPPING AT SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL AND SPENDING THE NIGHT AND THE FOLLOWING DAY THERE WITH HER BUSLOAD OF YOUNG PEOPLE. I GAVE HER THE ADDRESS OF EDOUARD LEJEUNE AND MADAME JOLY-GREGOIRE AND SHE CONTACTED THEM ABOUT IT. THEY WERE BOTH VERY NICE AND DID THEIR BEST TO ACCOMMODATE HER AND HER GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE EVEN THOUGH EVENTUALLY IT DID NOT WORK OUT. I THANKED THEM WARMLY FOR THEIR KIND EFFORTS.

I WAS ALSO VERY HAPPY TO SEE EDOUARD AGAIN. HE TOLD ME SOMETHING VERY NICE: "THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR INCLUDING ME IN THE LIST OF PEOPLE GETTING UPDATES ON THE GUADAGNI FAMILY HISTORY, AND IT IS INTERESTING THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO FIND IMPORTANT NEW INFORMATION ON THE RICH GUADAGNI HISTORY THAT IS NOT YET LISTED IN HISTORIAN PASSERINI'S BOOK OR IN ANY OTHER PUBLISHED BOOK ON THE HISTORY OF THE GUADAGNI." IT WAS SO NICE FOR HIM TO STATE THAT I WAS TREADING UNCHARTED TERRITORY AND ADDING TO THE KNOWN HISTORY OF THE FAMILY. A GREAT MERIT OF THIS GOES TO THE NEAPOLITAN HISTORIAN AURORA DELMONACO, WHOM I MET BY EMAIL A FEW MONTHS AGO, AND FROM WHOM I OBTAINED FASCINATING NEW INFORMATION ON THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF GREAT-GRANDFATHER GUADAGNO GUADAGNI IN THE BATTLE OF VOLTURNO, 10/1/1860, AND IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF HIS SISTER EMMA WITH THE DUKE OF PARMA. SHE ALSO FOUND INFORMATION ON THE ENGLISH ANCESTORS OF GUADAGNO GUADAGNI AND HIS CHILDREN.

THE DINNER WENT VERY WELL. THEN BEATRICE AND I WERE TAKEN BY CAR TO LE CLOS SAINT-GENOIS, OUR LODGINGS IN SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL. THE SAME DISTANCE, LYON-SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL, THAT TAKES ONE HOUR BY DAY, ONLY TAKES TEN MINUTES BY NIGHT, WHEN THERE IS NO TRAFFIC. LE CLOS IS A VERY LARGE OLD HOUSE, FENCED BY A HIGH STONE WALL. INSIDE IT IS MORE LIKE A FRENCH "CHATEAU" (ENGLISH "MANSION") WITH VERY HIGH DECORATED CEILINGS AND LARGE TALL WINDOWS. I HAD A VERY NICE BIG ROOM ON THE GROUND FLOOR, BEATRICE HAD A COZY BIG ROOM WITH A SLANTED CEILING, ON THE THIRD FLOOR. A LARGE, SQUEAKY CENTRAL WOODEN STAIRCASE LED TO ALL THE FLOORS. THERE WERE FOUR STUFFED ANIMALS LOOKING AT YOU IN THE MAIN ENTRANCE HALL. MY BROTHER BERNARDO AND HIS WIFE CARLA HAD GOTTEN THERE BY CAR FROM FLORENCE A LITTLE WHILE BEFORE, TOO LATE TO MEET US AT THE RESTAURANT. MADAME DESCAMPS, OWNER OF LE CLOS, TOLD ME THEY WERE SLEEPING ON THE SECOND FLOOR, IN THE LEFT SIDE OF THE HOUSE.

MY ROOM HAD A LARGE BOOKCASE FULL OF INTERESTING BOOKS. MANY WERE ON IMPORTANT ARTISTS. I SAW A DIRECTORY OF THE FRENCH NOBILITY. I OPENED IT WITH CURIOSITY. I WAS PLEASED TO SEE MY FRENCH GRANDMOTHER'S FAMILY, WHOSE LAST NAME, QUERQUI, I ADDED TO MINE, LISTED IN IT. I HAD A VERY GOOD NIGHT SLEEP. LE CLOS WAS LOCATED IN THE CENTER OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL, BUT IT WAS SURROUNDED BY A PARK, WITH THE ENTRANCE IN A NARROW QUIET STREET, SO IT WAS VERY SILENT. AT SEVEN IN THE MORNING I WENT UP THE WOODEN STAIRCASE TO WAKE UP BEATRICE. I GOT TO HER DOOR AND KNOCKED GENTLY. "BEATRICE, IT IS DAD", I SAID. "COME IN" SHE ANSWERED.

I ENTERED HER ROOM. THE MORNING LIGHT WAS FILTERING THROUGH THE CURTAINS OF THE SMALL WINDOW. BEATRICE WAS ALREADY UP. "HOW DID YOU SLEEP?" I ASKED. "VERY WELL, DAD," SHE ANSWERED SMILING. "GOOD," I SAID. "GET READY NOW, WE WILL BE HAVING BREAKFAST DOWNSTAIRS AT EIGHT! I WILL SEE HOW UNCLE BERNARDO AND AUNT CARLA ARE DOING..." AND I STARTED GOING DOWNSTAIRS.



I ARRIVED IN FRONT OF THEIR DOOR AND KNOCKED. CARLA OPENED. SHE WAS ALL DRESSED UP AND READY TO GO AND WE HUGGED. I HAD NOT SEEN HER FOR MANY YEARS BUT SHE HAD NOT CHANGED AT ALL. BERNARDO WAVED FROM THE BATHROOM DOOR. HE WAS BARE-CHESTED AND HIS CHIN FULL OF SHAVING CREAM. I SMILED BACK AMUSED. "SEE YOU DOWNSTAIRS, I SAID, IN THE DINING ROOM, SECOND ROOM FROM THE ENTRANCE HALL..." THEY SEEMED TO HAVE HAD A GOOD NIGHT SLEEP!



BERNARDO, CARLA, FRANCESCO AND BEATRICE, IN THE PARK OF LE CLOS SAINT-GENOIS, IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE. FRANCESCO SLEPT IN THE ROOM ON THE RIGHT ON THE FIRST FLOOR, BEATRICE ON THE THIRD FLOOR, ABOVE HER DAD, BERNARDO AND CARLA IN THE BACK OF THE HOUSE, ON THE SECOND FLOOR ON THE LEFT.



FRANCESCO, CARLA AND BERNARDO HAVING BREAKFAST IN LE CLOS' DINING ROOM. BEATRICE WAS TAKING THE PICTURE.

WE ALL MET A LITTLE BIT LATER IN THE BIG DINING ROOM WHERE WE HAD BREAKFAST. THERE WAS A LARGE WINDOW WITH CURTAINS OPENING ON THE GREEN SUNLIT PARK. THE LARGE TABLE WAS SET FOR FOUR. EACH PLACE HAD A GLASS OF ORANGE JUICE, A NATURAL YOGURT, WITH THE SOUR YOGURT TASTE, BUT YOU COULD ADD JAM OR SUGAR TO IT, AND A LARGE CROISSANT, A SMALL PLATE AND A LARGE CUP. THERE WAS A LARGE PITCHER OF BLACK COFFEE ON THE TABLE, A CONTAINER OF CUBES OF WHITE AND BROWN SUGAR, A SMALL PITCHER OF MILK AND A BASKET WITH SOME FRESH "BAGUETTES" (LONG HARD CRUST THIN FRENCH BREAD) IN IT. THERE WAS ALSO A CONTAINER WITH GREEN GRAPES, ON THE CORNER OF THE TABLE. IT WAS A TYPICAL FRENCH CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST. I LOVED IT.

I WAS HAPPY TO SEE THE COFFEE. IN DENVER I DRINK COFFEE ALL DAY LONG AND I MISSED IT. I POURED MYSELF A LARGE CUP. AT THAT MOMENT, WITH A BIG SMILE, ENTERED MONSIEUR DESCAMPS, THE OWNER OF THE PLACE. HE WAS VERY TALL, SLIM, YOUNG LOOKING AND LAID-BACK. HE GREETED US IN ENGLISH AND I TOLD HIM THAT BOTH MY BROTHER BERNARDO AND I HAD THE FRENCH HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA. "OH...INTERNATIONAL ELEGANCE," HE SAID. HE SAT AT OUR TABLE AND ASKED US QUESTIONS. THE FRENCH GADAGNE HAD LIVED IN SAINT-

GENIS-LAVAL AND LYON FIVE CENTURIES AGO. HOW DID WE FIND OUT WE WERE RELATED TO THEM AFTER SO MUCH TIME? I ANSWERED THAT OUR FAMILY TREE COVERS TEN CENTURIES WITH NO INTERRUPTIONS, LISTING ALL THE FAMILY MEMBERS FOR A THOUSAND YEARS AND IT HAD BEEN VERY EASY TO FIND THAT OUT. BY THE WAY WE ALL DESCENDED DIRECTLY FROM IACOPO GUADAGNI (1497-1569), BROTHER OF THOMAS II DE GADAGNE (1495-1550), THE ONE WHO BOUGHT THE GUADAGNI PALACE OF LYON AND THE CASTLE OF BEAUREGARD IN SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL AND WHOSE STATUE IS IN THE MUSEE' GADAGNE. HE WAS AMAZED THAT WE COULD GO BACK SO LONG IN OUR FAMILY HISTORY.

THE OUTSIDE PARK BELL FROM THE STREET RANG. THEY WERE COMING TO PICK US UP. THE FIRST DAY OF FESTIVITIES WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN.

MADAME BRIGITTE FERRERO, SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL CITY ASSISTANT DEPUTY, WAS WAITING FOR US IN RUE DE LA FRATERNITE' (THE STREET WHERE LE CLOS WAS) IN HER VAN, SO SHE COULD TAKE THE FOUR OF US COMFORTABLY. THE FIRST DAY OF FESTIVITIES WAS DEDICATED TO THE TWIN CITIES OF BRIGNAIS, FRANCE, AND PONSACCO, ITALY. NONE OF THEM HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE GUADAGNI FAMILY, THEY JUST HAPPENED TO BE LINKED TO THE FESTIVITIES OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL AND PONTASSIEVE, WHICH WERE SUPPOSED TO BE ON THAT SAME EVENING AND THE FOLLOWING DAY. WE FOUND OUT THAT THE TOWN OF BRIGNAIS (12,000 INHABITANTS) WAS BORDERING SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL (20,000 INHABITANTS). THEY WERE TWO NICE FRENCH COUNTRY TOWNS, WITH NO BIG APARTMENT BUILDINGS, BUT LITTLE ONE OR TWO STORY HOUSES, WITH WALL FENCED QUAIN YARDS AROUND THEM, AND SMALL STORES AND CAFES, AND HIGH STEEPLE COUNTRY CHURCHES, HALF-ASLEEP IN THE EARLY SATURDAY MORNING HOURS.

WE QUICKLY ARRIVED IN THE CITY HALL SQUARE OF BRIGNAIS. IT WAS CROWDED. THE DELEGATION OF PONSACCO WAS A LOT LARGER THAN THE ONE OF PONTASSIEVE. I THINK THERE WERE OVER TWO HUNDRED PEOPLE FROM PONSACCO, ALL LODGED IN THE HOUSES OF THE INHABITANTS OF BRIGNAIS. I FOUND IN INTERNET THAT PONSACCO IS LOCATED IN TUSCANY, LIKE PONTASSIEVE, IT IS NEAR PONTEDERA AND HAS 15,511 INHABITANTS. ABOUT 50 PEOPLE OF THE DELEGATION WERE "BERSAGLIERI" IN THEIR MILITARY UNIFORM. THE BERSAGLIERI ARE AN ITALIAN ARMY DIVISION, WHICH WEAR LONG ROOSTER FEATHERS ON THEIR HELMETS, AND GOES AROUND RUNNING INSTEAD OF MARCHING. AS I LIKE RUNNING, WHEN I WAS A KID, I WANTED TO BECOME A "BERSAGLIERE". THERE WERE ALSO TWO "BERSAGLIERE GIRLS" IN SHORT SKIRTS, CARRYING THE ITALIAN FLAG. IT WAS MOSTLY A BERSAGLIERE BAND, AND THEY ALL HAD THEIR TRUMPETS OR OTHER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS. THE CAPTAIN WAS A HANDSOME GIANT, VERY SERIOUS WHILE ON DUTY, SMILING AND GOOD-NATURED WHILE OFF DUTY. AS SOON AS HE SAW ME, HE CAME AND HUGGED ME MURMURING "CORAGGIO!" WHICH MEANS "BE BRAVE!" I THINK HE THOUGHT I WAS A WORLD WAR II VETERAN, MAYBE FROM STALINGRAD OR EL ALAMEIN.



FRANCESCO, GIULIANO COCO AND SOME "BERSAGLIERI" IN THE CITY HALL SQUARE OF BRIGNAIS.



THE CAPTAIN OF THE BERSAGLIERI HUGS FRANCESCO AND TELLS HIM "CORAGGIO!". BEATRICE SMILING ON THE LEFT.



CARLA, BERNARDO, CHRISTIAN DARNE, THE MAYOR OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL MONSIEUR ROLAND CRIMIER, FRANCESCO AND BEATRICE POSE IN THE CITY HALL SQUARE OF BRIGNAIS.



BETTER PICTURE OF THE ABOVE SIX SMILING AT US.



ANGIOLO GHIARINI (REPRESENTATIVE OF PONTASSIEVE), CARLA, BERNARDO, FRANCESCO, BEATRICE AND GIULIANO COCO (REPRESENTATIVE OF PONTASSIEVE, THE TOWN WHERE MASSETO IS AND WHERE THE GUADAGNI FAMILY ORIGINATED) POSE IN FRONT OF BRIGNAIS' WAR MEMORIAL WITH THE ITALIAN FLAG ON THE LEFT AND THE FRENCH FLAG ON THE RIGHT.

ALL AROUND THE BERSAGLIERI DETACHMENT THERE WERE LOTS OF PEOPLE AND YOU COULD HEAR ALMOST MORE ITALIAN THAN FRENCH SPOKEN. THERE WERE THE MAYORS OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL, MONSIEUR ROLAND CRIMIER, OF BRIGNAIS AND OF PONSACCO. I THINK ANGIOLO GHIARINI WAS REPLACING THE MAYOR OF PONTASSIEVE. ANGIOLO AND GIULIANO WAVED AT US HAPPILY AS SOON AS THEY SAW US. ALL FOUR OF US CARLONI WERE INTRODUCED TO THE AUTHORITIES AND INVITED TO STAND NEXT TO THEM. THE DAY STARTED WITH AN OFFICIAL CEREMONY IN FRONT OF THE WAR MEMORIAL OF THE TOWN. THE MAYORS HAD THEIR SPEECHES AND AN ITALO-FRENCH LADY TRANSLATED THEM. THE CAPTAIN OF THE BERSAGLIERI MADE THE BEST SPEECH IN MY OPINION. HE REMINDED EVERYBODY HOW UNHAPPILY THERE HAD BEEN SAD MOMENTS BETWEEN ITALY AND FRANCE (HE DID NOT SPECIFY IT BUT I PRESUME HE WAS THINKING ABOUT WHEN, IN 1940, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HITLER'S VICTORIES IN NORTHERN FRANCE, MUSSOLINI, WHO HAD REMAINED NEUTRAL UNTIL THEN, SUDDENLY DECLARED WAR ON FRANCE AND ATTACKED THEM FROM THE SOUTH. THE FRENCH CALLED IT "THE STABBING IN THE BACK". THEY WERE ABLE TO REPEL THE ITALIAN ATTACK BUT IT WAS HARD TO FORGET.) NOW HOWEVER, THE CAPTAIN CONTINUED, IN A UNITED EUROPE, WE WERE STRENGTHENING THE BONDS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, ALSO

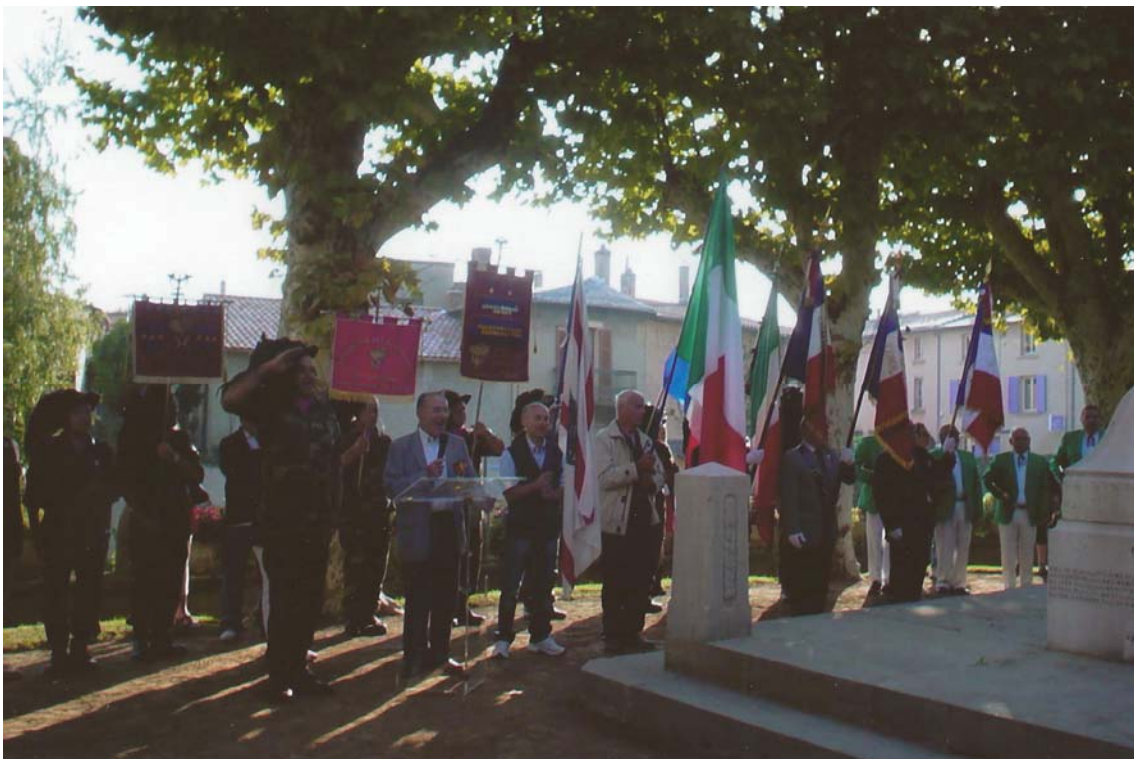
THROUGH THE TWIN CITIES FROM BOTH COUNTRIES. THEN THE BERSAGLIERI PLAYED THE FRENCH AND THE ITALIAN NATIONAL HYMNS. THEY OBEYED THE CAPTAIN'S COMMANDS LIKE A SINGLE MAN, VERY WELL TRAINED. THEN, FOLLOWING HIS ORDERS, THE BERSAGLIERI UNIT STARTED RUNNING AROUND THE MAIN STREETS OF THE TOWN WITH THE FLAGS, CARRIED BY THE TWO GIRLS, WAVING IN THE WIND.



WAR MEMORIAL OF BRIGNAIS: THE INSCRIPTION SAYS: "TO THE INHABITANTS OF BRIGNAIS FALLEN WITH HONOR 1914-1918 (WORLD WAR I)



OTHER PICTURE OF THE CAPTAIN OF THE BERSAGLIERI AND FRANCESCO. ITALIAN FLAG IN THE BACK.



EVERYBODY STANDING IN FRONT OF THE BRIGNAIS' WAR MEMORIAL WITH ITALIAN AND FRENCH FLAGS. CAPTAIN OF THE BERSAGLIERI SALUTES.





BERSAGLIERI SQUADRON STARTS RUNNING IN THE MAIN STREET OF BRIGNAIS.



BERSAGLIERI TRUMPETEERS BLOW THEIR TRUMPETS

WE THOUGHT WE COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE RELAXED MOMENT AND GO TO A NEARBY PHARMACY TO BUY SOME TOILETRIES ARTICLES. WE HAD JUST LEFT THE GROUP FOR A FEW YARDS WHEN MONSIEUR AND MADAME MONNET CAME RUNNING AFTER US OFFERING THEIR HELP IN ANYTHING WE NEEDED, WHICH WAS VERY NICE.

MONSIEUR MONNET TOOK US TO A 2,000 YEAR OLD STONE BRIDGE, WHICH DATED FROM THE ROMAN EMPIRE TIMES. IT WAS STILL STURDY AND STRONG, BUT IT WAS NARROW, OBVIOUSLY NOT MADE FOR BIG TRUCKS, AND I WAS SURPRISED THEY WOULD STILL ALLOW CARS TO USE IT INSTEAD OF KEEPING IT CLOSED AS AN ANTIQUE OBJECT. I PRESUME THAT IF YOU CLOSE EVERYTHING THAT IS VERY ANCIENT IN EUROPE, YOU WOULD CLOSE HALF OF EUROPE. MICHEL (MONSIEUR MONNET) TOOK A PICTURE OF BEATRICE AND ME ON IT.



BEATRICE AND FRANCESCO STANDING ON THE 2,000 YEARS OLD ROMAN STONE BRIDGE IN BRIGNAIS

AT NOON THERE WAS A MEETING IN THE MAIN SQUARE AGAIN, WITH AN ITALIAN MARKET, ORGANIZED IN A LARGE NEARBY BUILDING, INCLUDING ITALIAN PAINTINGS, ARTIFACTS AND FOOD PRODUCTS, LIKE SALAMI, PASTA, ETC. AN ITALIAN SCULPTOR WAS MODELING STATUES OF PLUMP NAKED WOMEN WITH VERY LONG HAIR COVERING THEM. I THINK THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO SYMBOLIZE SOMETHING. RED AND WHITE WINE AND SNACKS WERE OFFERED TO EVERYBODY. THE FOUR OF US SAT ON A NEARBY BENCH AND CHATTED. THE WEATHER WAS GORGEOUS, PERFECT TEMPERATURE TO STAY OUTSIDE. I WAS INTRODUCED TO NATHALIE PALLAS. I WAS REALLY HAPPY TO MEET HER,

BECAUSE WE HAD EMAILED BACK AND FORTH WITH EACH OTHER FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE TRIP, AND FOR ME SHE WAS ONLY A VERY GENTLE AND EFFICIENT CORRESPONDENT. IN REAL LIFE I FOUND HER YOUNG, CHARMING, AND OUTGOING, AND I WAS SO PLEASED TO MEET HER PERSONALLY!



BRIGNAIS: BEATRICE, FRANCESCO AND BERNARDO, IN THE PARK NEXT TO THE ITALIAN MARKET – PHOTO TAKEN BY M. CHRISTIAN DARNE



BRIGNAIS: BEATRICE, FRANCESCO, BERNARDO AND CARLA, SAME AS ABOVE.

THEN WE HAD LUNCH AT THE RESTAURANT "LE VIEUX PONT" (THE OLD BRIDGE). AN ART GALLERY WITH LIVE ARTISTS PAINTING ON CANVAS WAS NEXT DOOR. WHILE WAITING FOR ALL THE GROUP OF THE AUTHORITIES TO ARRIVE, BEATRICE AND I STROLLED IN THE ART GALLERY AND I ENDED UP BUYING A LITTLE PAINTING. THEN WE HAD LUNCH. WE WERE ABOUT THIRTY PEOPLE AND IT LASTED QUITE A WHILE. BERNARDO AND CARLA WERE SITTING IN FRONT OF BEATRICE AND ME SO WE SPENT SOME GOOD TIME TALKING.

AFTER LUNCH A BUS TOOK ALL OF US TO VISIT OLD LYON. MICHEL HAD ALREADY TAKEN BEATRICE AND ME THROUGH IT THE DAY BEFORE BUT IT HAD BEEN A QUICK VISIT BECAUSE OUR MAIN GOAL WAS THE MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE GUADAGNI MUSEUM AND THE VISIT OF THE SAME. I FORGOT TO MENTION THAT THE GUADAGNI MUSEUM IN REALITY INCLUDES THREE MUSEUMS THAT IS WHY IT IS CALLED MUSEES (PLURAL) GADAGNE: 1) THE GUADAGNI PALACE ITSELF CALLED "EDIFICE GADAGNE" WHICH INCLUDES THE RENAISSANCE AND 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY PALACE WITH ALL ITS ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS, 2) MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF LYON, INCLUDING 80,000 ARTIFACTS, DATING FROM THE FIRST CENTURY BEFORE CHRIST TO THE 21ST CENTURY AFTER (IT IS THE SECOND LARGEST HISTORY MUSEUM IN FRANCE, AFTER THE ONE IN PARIS) AND 3) PUPPETS OF THE WORLD MUSEUM, UNIQUE OF THE KIND IN FRANCE, WITH OVER 2,000 PUPPETS AND 1,000 ACCESSORIES LIKE MANUSCRIPTS ABOUT THEM, POSTERS, ACCESSORIES AND PROGRAMS.

THE BUS UNLOADED US AT THE ENTRANCE OF OLD LYON AND WE CONTINUED ON FOOT, AS WE HAD DONE WITH MICHEL MONNET THE DAY BEFORE. OUR GUIDE WAS MADAME MICHELLE VOLLE. I IMMEDIATELY BECAME FASCINATED BY HER ENTHUSIASM, HER LOVE FOR HISTORY, HER ENDURANCE. THAT SAME MORNING SHE HAD FALLEN TWICE, HURTING HER LEG, ONCE A FEW YARDS FROM ME, ENTERING THE "LE VIEUX PONT" RESTAURANT. WE HAD TO PICK HER UP, FOR A FEW SECONDS IT SEEMED SHE COULD NOT STAND BY HERSELF. DURING THE LONG LUNCH, SHE WAS SITTING TWO CHAIRS FROM ME, TALKED VERY LITTLE AND HAD AN INDIFFERENT OR SLIGHTLY SAD EXPRESSION ON HER FACE. DURING THE BUS TRIP, SHE MUST HAVE BEEN SITTING IN THE BACK, BECAUSE I DO NOT REMEMBER HER.

AND THEN WE DESCENDED IN VIEUX LYON. SHE GOT AHEAD OF US ALL. SHE STARTED MOVING SO FAST I HAD A HARD TIME FOLLOWING HER. HER EYES WERE GLITTERING, HER MOUTH WAS EXPLAINING NON STOP, HER HANDS WERE SHOWING THE DETAILS OF THE MONUMENTS SHE WAS TALKING ABOUT, HER FEET WERE CARRYING HER RIGHT AND LEFT, BACK AND FORTH, WHEREVER THERE WAS SOMETHING INTERESTING TO SHOW, OF WHICH SHE ALWAYS KNEW WAY MORE THAN SHE HAD THE TIME TO TELL. JOKINGLY I TOLD HER: " I AM GOING TO ATTACH A LEASH ON YOU, LIKE A LITTLE DOG, SO I DO NOT LOSE YOU ALL THE TIME." THE STREETS OF OLD LYON ARE NARROW AND CROWDED, FULL OF PEOPLE TALKING, STOPPING, SALUTING EACH OTHER, LIGHTING CIGARETTES, TAKING PICTURES, READING TOURIST GUIDES, I HAD TO PUSH AND ELBOW MYSELF THROUGH ALL THESE PEOPLE JUST TO KEEP PACE WITH MICHELLE, ON HER WEAK LEGS BUT WITH AN EVER BURNING FIRE IN HER HEART. I LEARNED SO MUCH AND I ENJOYED EVERY SECOND OF IT. MICHELLE VOLLE WILL ALWAYS REMAIN IN MY HEART. BEATRICE SUGGESTED MICHEL MONNET TAKE A PICTURE OF ME AND MICHELLE. MICHELLE WAS SO TOUCHED SHE WAS ALMOST CRYING.



BEATRICE, FRANCESCO AND OUR “FANTASTIC GUIDE” MICHELLE VOLLE IN ONE OF THE “MAIN” STREETS OF OLD LYON.



Side of the Cathedral of Saint John on the left, with older ruins of where it was in the Early Middle Ages in the forefront. Fourviere Hill in the back, against which the Guadagni Palace and other ancient houses of Lyon lean. Basilica of Our Lady of Fourviere on top of the hill. It is the highest building of Lyon. It was built in 1870 after prayers to Our Lady diverted a victorious German Army from attacking Lyon.



ANOTHER EARLY MIDDLE AGE RUIN OF THE ANCIENT CATHEDRAL OF LYON.



FRANCESCO IN A SIDE STREET OF OLD LYON. THE STAIS LEAD UP TO FOURVIERE HILL.

I LEARNED MANY THINGS ON LYON, BUT I WILL RECALL SIX FASCINATING DETAILS. I THINK THE FIRST ONE AND THE SIXTH WERE ALSO SHOWN US FROM MICHEL MONNET THE DAY BEFORE. IN THE MIDDLE-AGES MOST PEOPLE DID NOT KNOW HOW TO READ. GUTENBERG HAD NOT INVENTED THE PRINTING MACHINE YET, SO THE BOOKS WERE FEW, ALL HANDWRITTEN OR HAND COPIED AND HARD TO FIND. SO THE STREETS OF OLD LYON, HIGH ON THE STREET CORNERS, DID NOT HAVE THEIR NAME WRITTEN, BUT A SCULPTURE, ATTACHED TO THE WALL, REPRESENTING THE NAME OF THE STREET. FOR EXAMPLE, RUE SAINT JEAN (ST JOHN STREET) HAD A SCULPTURE OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST (OR THE EVANGELIST, I FORGOT WHICH), "RUE DU BOEUF" (STREET OF THE BEEF) HAD THE STATUE OF A BULL, ETC. THE STATUES WERE MORE OR LESS THREE FEET TALL SO EASY TO SEE EVEN FROM A DISTANCE.



STATUE OF A BULL, INDICATING THE NAME "RUE DU BOEUF" (STREET OF THE BEEF)



SECOND DETAIL: THE BEAUTIFUL CATHEDRAL OF LYON HAD STATUES OF FACES OF THE SAINTS SCULPTED ON THE FAÇADE. WHEN THE PROTESTANTS CONQUERED LYON, DURING THE RELIGION WARS, IN 1562, THEIR TROOPS CLIMBED ON LADDERS AND DESTROYED ALL THE SCULPTED SAINT FACES THEY COULD. EVEN NOW, WE CAN SEE HOW HIGH THOSE LADDERS COULD REACH, BECAUSE THE HIGHER SCULPTED SAINT FACES ARE STILL INTACT. I HAD FRENCH ANCESTORS ON BOTH SIDES. IN THE EARLY 1600S, CLAUDE DE GADAGNE, WITH THE KING'S TROOPS, WAS BESIEGING THE PROTESTANT STRONGHOLD OF LA ROCHELLE, IN WESTERN FRANCE, WHILE MY PROTESTANT QUERQUI ANCESTORS WERE ON TOP OF THE WALLS, DEFENDING IT.

THIRD DETAIL: THE "TRABOULES": IN OLD LYON, OWNERS OF A HOUSE HAD TO PAY A TAX IN PROPORTION OF THE WIDTH OF THE FAÇADE ON THE CITY STREET. TO SAVE ON TAX MONEY, FOUR OR FIVE, OR EVEN MORE, FAMILIES WOULD BUY A NARROW FAÇADE OF MAYBE TWO WINDOWS AND A DOOR, THEN GO UP FOUR OR FIVE STORIES HIGH, AND THEN BUILD A VERY DEEP HOUSE WITH INSIDE APARTMENTS THAT HAD NO OPENINGS ON THE STREET. SEVERAL INSIDE COURTYARDS WERE BUILT, ON WHICH THE APARTMENT WINDOWS WERE OPENED. THESE APARTMENTS WERE CONNECTED WITH EACH OTHER AND THE FRONT STREET AND THE BACK STREET BY NARROW LONG, OFTEN DARK, HALLS, OFTEN GOING UP AND DOWN STAIRCASES, TO CONNECT THE UPPER FLOORS TO THE LOWER FLOORS, CALLED "TRABOULES". THE TRABOULES ARE A CHARACTERISTIC OF LYON. THEY ARE FASCINATING, BECAUSE THEY GO ON FOREVER, UNTIL, ALL OF A SUDDEN, YOU FIND YOURSELF IN AN IMPORTANT SQUARE OR ON THE BANKS OF THE SAONE RIVER. DURING WORLD WAR TWO, WHEN LYON WAS OCCUPIED BY THE GERMAN TROOPS, THE TRABOULES HELPED THE FRENCH RESISTANTS. THEY COULD POP OUT OF A TRABOULE BY SURPRISE, KILL A FEW GERMAN SOLDIERS, AND THEN DISAPPEAR IN ANOTHER TRABOULE.



INSIDE COURTYARD OF A HOUSE IN OLD LYON. THE COVERED PASSAGE ON HIGH MIGHT BE CONNECTING TWO HOUSES.



“TRABOULE” INNER DARK HALL CONNECTING TWO INNER COURTYARDS AND DIFFERENT APARTMENTS.



INNER COURTYARD WITH THE ELEVATED "TRABOULE" IN THE CENTER, CONNECTING TWO UPPER LEVEL APARTMENTS WITH EACH OTHER AND THE REST OF THE LONG, MANYSTORIES NARROW BUILDING.

FOURTH DETAIL: THE “FENETRES A’MENEUX” (WINDOWS WITH STONE TRANSOMS OR MULLIONS). THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION CALLS THEM “MULLIONS” (VERTICAL), “TRANSOMS“(HORIZONTAL). THEY ARE REALLY A STONE CROSS DIVIDING THE WINDOWS IN FOUR SQUARES OR RECTANGLES. IN THE OLDEN DAYS THEY DID NOT KNOW HOW TO MAKE LARGE WINDOW GLASS PANELS, SO THEY DIVIDED THE WINDOW IN FOUR PARTS AND MADE FOUR SMALL WINDOW GLASS PANELS. THE ANTIQUITY OF A WINDOW IN LYON CAN BE RECOGNIZED BY THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF THE “MENEUX” .

FIFTH DETAIL: “ATTACK AND DEFENSE WINDING STAIRCASES”. IT SEEMS THAT IN THE OLDEN DAYS BEING LEFT-HANDED WAS STRONGLY DISCOURAGED. SO EVERYBODY WAS ENCOURAGED TO BE RIGHT-HANDED. IN COMBAT, YOU WOULD HOLD YOUR SWORD OR DAGGER OR SPEAR IN YOUR RIGHT HAND. “ATTACKER” WAS USUALLY CONSIDERED SOMEBODY COMING UP THE STAIRS OF A HOUSE FROM THE STREET, TO HARM OR OVERPOWER THE HOUSE INHABITANT AND LOOT THE HOUSE, “DEFENDER” WAS THE HOUSE INHABITANT COMING DOWN THE STAIRS TO BLOCK THE ATTACKER. THE STAIRS WERE USUALLY WINDING OR SPIRAL STAIRCASES, LOCATED IN A ROUND NARROW TOWER AT THE CORNER OF THE BUILDING, CONNECTING ALL THE FLOORS. A “DEFENSE STAIRCASE” WAS ONE WHERE THE SPIRAL WAS TURNING RIGHT. THE UPCOMING ATTACKER HAD THE ROTATING CENTRAL WALL OF THE SPIRAL BLOCKING HIS RIGHT ARMED HAND, LEAVING PLENTY OF ROOM FOR THE DESCENDING DEFENDER TO STRIKE HIM EASILY ON HIS WIDE OPEN UNPROTECTED LEFT SIDE. THE “ATTACK STAIRCASE” WAS ONE SPIRALING LEFT FOR THE SAME REASON IN FAVOR OF THE UPCOMING ATTACKER.



“Defense staircase”. It might become an attack staircase if it turns to the left, after the door.



ANOTHER "DEFENSE STAIRCASE".

SIXTH DETAIL: A STONE PLATE ON THE WALL OF A CHAPEL IN THE CATHEDRAL OF LYON, REMEMBERING THE WEDDING OF HENRY IV OF BOURBON, KING OF FRANCE, WITH MARIA DE' MEDICI, IN 1600, IN THAT CHAPEL. HENRY IV WAS THE FIRST BOURBON KING OF FRANCE. FROM HIM AND HIS WIFE MARIA DE' MEDICI ORIGINATE ALL THE BOURBON KINGS OF FRANCE, SPAIN AND NAPLES, AND THE DUKES OF PARMA. AS MARIA DE' MEDICI WAS A COUSIN OF THE GUADAGNI, ALL THESE KINGS WERE ALSO COUSINS OF THE GUADAGNI.

AT THE END OF THE VISIT OF OLD LYON WE WERE ALL TAKEN BACK TO OUR LODGINGS TO REST A MOMENT BEFORE THE BIG DINNER AND PARTY IN THE LARGE HALL OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL.

AT 8:00 O' CLOCK IN THE EVENING, MADAME BRIGITTE FERRERO KINDLY CAME AND PICKED US UP AND TOOK US TO THE "SALLE D'ASSEMBLEE' (ASSEMBLY HALL), ON THE EDGE OF THE TOWN. THE NIGHT WAS DARK AND COOL. AT THE DOOR OF THE ASSEMBLY HALL FOUR YOUNG WOMEN, IN VENETIAN CARNIVAL MASKS AND COSTUMES GREETED US. WE TOOK SOME PICTURES WITH THEM. THEN, MICHELLE VOLLE, WEARING A GORGEOUS 16TH CENTURY VENETIAN COSTUME APPEARED. IT SEEMED TAKEN FROM A PAINTING OF TITIAN OR VERONESE. I LATER FOUND OUT SHE HAD MADE IT HERSELF. HOW MUCH WORK AND PREPARATION FOR THESE "TUSCAN FEASTS" AS THIS WEEK-END WAS CALLED AT SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL! I WAS AMAZED AND TOUCHED!



MICHELLE VOLLE IN HER VENETIAN COSTUME AT THE SATURDAY NIGHT PARTY WITH CARLA, BERNARDO, FRANCESCO AND BEATRICE.



VENETIAN CARNIVAL MASKS AND COSTUMES RIGHT AND LEFT, CARLA, BERNARDO, FRANCESCO, MICHELLE VOLLE, THE MAYOR OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL AND BEATRICE IN THE CENTER.

WE SAT DOWN AT A LONG TABLE. BERNARDO AND CARLA, MADAME MONNET AND MICHELLE VOLLE SAT ON ONE SIDE, MONSIEUR MONNET, BEATRICE AND I ON THE OTHER. MORE PEOPLE JOINED US ON EITHER SIDE OF THE LONG TABLE. A LARGE EMPTY DANCING SPACE TOOK MOST OF THE CENTER OF THE HALL, WHILE A LONG PODIUM FOR SPEAKERS OR ORCHESTRA WAS ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE. THE WHOLE ROOM WAS BRIGHTLY LIT.

I HAD AN EMPTY CHAIR ON MY LEFT. EDOUARD LEJEUNE CAME AND SAT NEXT TO ME. "WHAT A PRIVILEGE, I THOUGHT, TO SPEND THE WHOLE EVENING SITTING NEXT TO THE AUTHOR OF A BEST SELLER AND FAMOUS LECTURER AND, ON TOP OF THAT, THE TOPIC OF HIS BOOK AND HIS SUCCESSFUL LECTURES BEING THE HISTORY OF MY MOTHER'S FAMILY!!!" WE CHATTED HAPPILY. THE FOOD, EXCELLENT AS ALWAYS, WAS SERVED. THE AUTHORITIES CAME AND STOOD ON THE PODIUM. THE PROGRAM BEGAN.

THERE WERE SPEECHES FROM THE MAYOR OF ST-GENIS-LAVAL, THE CAPTAIN OF THE BERSAGLIERI, THE MAYOR OF PONSACCO AND OTHERS. AT A CERTAIN POINT, MONSIEUR ROLAND CRIMIER (THE MAYOR OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL) ASKED ME TO STAND UP AND INTRODUCE THE GUADAGNI DELEGATION. I INTRODUCED BERNARDO, CARLA, BEATRICE AND MYSELF AND EVERYBODY CLAPPED THEIR HANDS. THEN, MONSIEUR CRIMIER ASKED THE GUADAGNI LADIES, CARLA AND BEATRICE, TO COME FORWARD TO THE PODIUM. EACH ONE WAS GIVEN A BEAUTIFUL FLOWER PLANT. LATER ON, AT THE END OF THE EVENING, MONSIEUR CRIMIER SAT NEXT TO US AND CHATTED WITH US. I WAS VERY TOUCHED BY HIS SPECIAL ATTENTION.



EDOUARD LEJEUNE, AUTHOR OF THE BEST-SELLER "THE LYON SAGA OF THE GADAGNE" IS DRINKING A GLASS OF WINE AT THE PARTY.



THE CAPTAIN OF THE BERSAGLIERI, MOVING HIS HAND LIKE A REAL ITALIAN, IS GIVING A SPEECH AT THE PARTY, STANDING ON THE PODIUM. MEMBERS OF THE BERSAGLIERI MUSICAL BVAND ARE STANDING BEHIND HIM.





BERNARDO AND CARLA WITH ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL PLANTS GIVEN TO THE "GUADAGNI LADIES".

THEN MICHELLE VOLLE STOOD IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM AND RECITED A POEM SHE HAD WRITTEN ON GALILEO GALILEI'S LOVE FOR HIS MISTRESS, MOTHER OF HIS CHILDREN, AND WHOM HE EVENTUALLY MARRIED ON HIS DEATHBED. SHE ALSO RECITED OTHER POEMS OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ON THE TOPIC OF LOVE, WHICH HAD INSPIRED HER. AGAIN I ADMIRER HER LOVE FOR HISTORY AND HER WORK OF PREPARATION FOR THE WEEK-END. WHEN SHE CAME BACK TO THE TABLE, I ASKED HER WHEN AND HOW HER LOVE AND ENTHUSIASM FOR HISTORY STARTED. "MY FATHER LOVED HISTORY, SHE ANSWERED, AND HE WOULD TELL US STORIES ABOUT IT WHEN WE WERE CHILDREN..." "I DID THE SAME WITH MY CHILDREN", I THOUGHT.

THE BERSAGLIERI BAND CAME UP ON THE PODIUM AND SPENT THE REST OF THE NIGHT PLAYING ITALIAN SONGS AND DANCING MUSIC. AT FIRST ONE OR TWO COUPLES STARTED DANCING, THEN QUICKLY THE FLOOR WAS FULL. AT A CERTAIN MOMENT THEY STARTED PLAYING TWIST DANCING MUSIC. I FIRST LEARNED HOW TO DANCE THE TWIST ON MY SEVENTEENTH BIRTHDAY IN TEL AVIV, ISRAEL, IN 1962. MY FATHER WAS ITALIAN EMBASSY COUNSELOR THERE. VANNI REVEDIN, UNCLE OF VIERI, CARLO AND TECLA GUADAGNI OF DENVER, WAS THE AMBASSADOR. IN TEL AVIV I ATTENDED THE FRENCH CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL RUN BY THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS OF ST. JOHN DE LA SALLE. AN ISRAELI SCHOOLMATE, CALLED BETTY, WHOM I HAD INVITED TO MY BIRTHDAY PARTY, TAUGHT ME HOW TO DANCE THE TWIST. "YOU MOVE YOUR HANDS AS IF YOU WERE RUBBING A TOWEL AROUND YOUR HIPS..." SHE SAID. NOW I WAS SIXTY-SIX. I COULD NOT RESIST. I JOINED THE DANCING FLOOR. I WENT WILD. I UNLEASHED ALL MY ENERGY IN THE CRAZIEST MOVES. AN ONLOOKER STOOD IN FRONT OF ME FILMING ME ALL THE TIME. HE PROBABLY DID NOT WANT TO MISS THIS CRAZY OLD GUADAGNI OFFSHOOT, WITH A WRINKLED FACE AND

WHITE MUSTACHE, TRYING TO DANCE LIKE A TEEN-AGER! FINALLY THE MUSIC STOPPED AND I SAT DOWN. BEATRICE TOLD ME I STOLE THE SHOW. I REALLY HAD A GOOD TIME AND FELT YOUNG AND DASHING.



FRANCESCO DANCING THE TWIST.



SAME AS ABOVE.

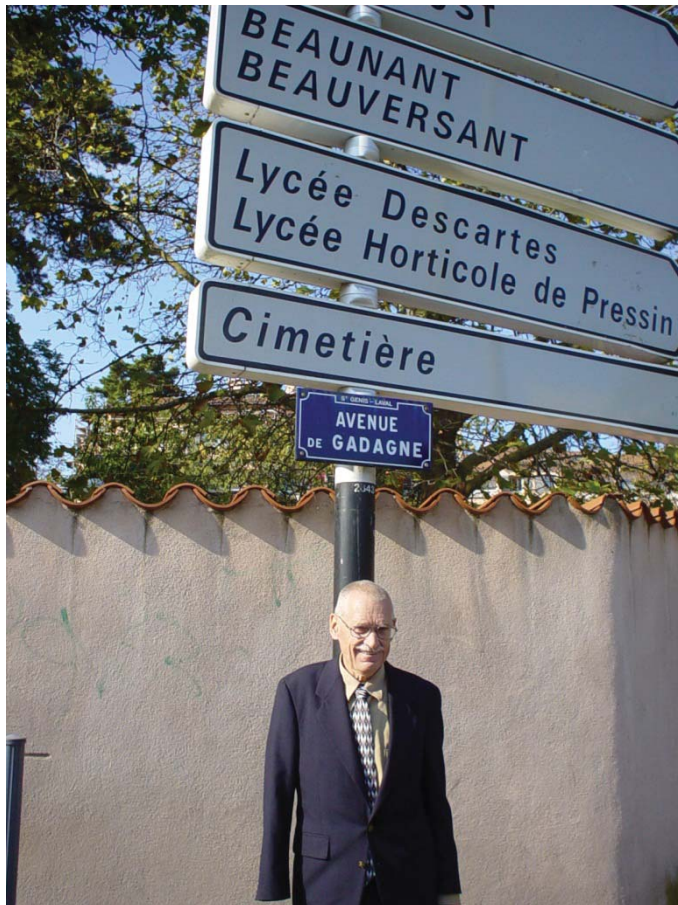
AT MIDNIGHT MADAME FERRERO TOOK US HOME. IT HAD BEEN A LONG, INTERESTING DAY. I WENT TO SLEEP TIRED AND HAPPY. NEXT MORNING, WE HAD OUR USUAL NOURISHING BREAKFAST IN THE BIG DINING ROOM AND MONSIEUR DESCAMPS JOINED US FOR A CUP OF COFFEE. OUTSIDE IT WAS SUNNY AND COOL. WE WALKED TO THE NEARBY CHURCH FOR SUNDAY MASS. AS A KID, I ALWAYS WENT TO MASS IN FRENCH. I HAD NOT BEEN TO ONE IN 48 YEARS! IT WAS NICE TO BE BACK "HOME". I HAD FORGOTTEN THAT OFTEN FRENCH CHURCHES DO NOT HAVE PEWS BUT ONLY CHAIRS. WHEN I WAS A TEEN-AGER IN BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, AT THE CONSECRATION YOU WOULD TURN THE CHAIRS AROUND AND USE THEM AS KNEELERS. WHEN THE WHOLE CHURCH ASSEMBLY TURNED THE CHAIRS AT THE SAME TIME IT WAS RATHER NOISY AND IT WOULD WAKE YOU UP IF YOU HAD FALLEN ASLEEP DURING THE OFFERTORY. IN SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL INSTEAD YOU DID NOT TURN THE CHAIRS AROUND OR USE THEM AS KNEELERS DURING THE CONSECRATION. YOU WOULD JUST STAND UP INSTEAD OF SITTING DOWN. THE SINGING DURING THE MASS WAS VERY NICE, THE PRIEST'S HOMILY WAS INTERESTING.

AT THE END OF THE MASS, WE WALKED BACK TOWARDS LE CLOS. I WAS EXPECTING THE VISIT OF A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE, HENRI GUIGNARD. WHEN CARLO GUADAGNI AND I VISITED LYON IN 2005, EDOUARD LEJEUNE INTRODUCED US TO A FRIEND OF HIS, HENRI GUIGNARD, WHO LIVED IN BOUTHEON, IN GUILLAUME DE GADAGNE STREET. THE TOWN OF BOUTHEON IS LOCATED A FEW MILES WEST OF LYON, NEXT TO THE LOIRE RIVER. THERE IS A BEAUTIFUL GUADAGNI CASTLE, VERY WELL KEPT, WHICH THE MAYOR OF BOUTHEON, MONSIEUR JEAN-CLAUDE SHALK, TRANSFORMED INTO ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT HISTORICAL AND GEOLOGICAL MUSEUMS OF THE REGION. THE CASTLE USED TO BELONG TO THE BOURBON FAMILY, BEFORE THEY BECAME KINGS OF FRANCE, SPAIN AND OTHER COUNTRIES. GUILLAUME DE GADAGNE BOUGHT IT IN THE 16TH CENTURY AND TRANSFORMED IT FROM A MIDDLE-AGE FORTRESS INTO A RENAISSANCE PALACE. THE GADAGNE OWNED IT FOR THREE CENTURIES. BEFORE THEM IT ALSO USED TO BELONG TO THE LAFAYETTE FAMILY, ANCESTORS OF THE YOUNG MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, WHO HELPED GEORGE WASHINGTON FIGHT THE BRITISH.

CARLO AND I BECAME FRIENDS WITH HENRI, WHO SPOKE PERFECT ENGLISH AND ACCOMPANIED US DURING OUR THREE DAY VISIT TO LYON. HENRI REMAINED IN EMAIL TOUCH WITH ME AND OFTEN SENT US BEAUTIFUL AND VERY INTERESTING INFORMATION WITH PICTURES ON ANYTHING RELATED TO THE GUADAGNI FAMILY HAPPENING IN BOUTHEON OR LYON. MOST OF IT CAN BE FOUND IN THE GUADAGNI FAMILY WEBSITE.

WHEN WE ARRIVED TO LE CLOS WE FOUND OUT HENRI AND HIS DAUGHTER ADRIENNE WERE ALREADY THERE, SITTING IN THE SUNNY LAWN. HENRI INTRODUCED ME TO ADRIENNE, WHOM I HAD NEVER MET BEFORE, AND I INTRODUCED HIM TO BEATRICE, BERNARDO AND CARLA. I WAS AMAZED AT HOW WELL ADRIENNE SPOKE ITALIAN AND ENGLISH. SHE TOLD ME SHE ALSO SPEAKS FLUENT GERMAN AND IS LEARNING HUNGARIAN. BERNARDO AND CARLA HAD TO LEAVE TO RETURN TO FLORENCE, ITALY IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON. CARLA WAS A TEACHER IN FLORENCE AND SHE HAD TO TEACH THE FOLLOWING DAY. SO WE DECIDED TO GO FOR A QUICK VISIT TO THE RUINS OF THE GUADAGNI CASTLE OF BEAUREGARD IN THE CENTER OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL. ON OUR ARRIVAL THERE WE SAW WITH JOY THAT MICHEL MONNET AND HIS WIFE WERE WAITING FOR US TO SHOW US AROUND. I WAS REALLY TOUCHED BY THEIR KINDNESS AND THOUGHTFULNESS. THE EVENING BEFORE, AT DINNER, I HAD TOLD BERNARDO, WHO COULD NOT REMAIN FOR THE PLANNED SUNDAY AFTERNOON VISIT OF BEAUREGARD, THAT WE WOULD QUICKLY SEE IT IN THE MORNING BEFORE THE MANIFESTATION BEGAN AT NOON. THE CASTLE OF BEAUREGARD HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE FAVORITE CASTLE OF THE FRENCH GUADAGNI. IT WAS MADE AFTER THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE GUADAGNI

VILLA OF MASSETO, IN PONTASSIEVE, NEAR FLORENCE, WHICH HAS BELONGED TO THE FAMILY FOR OVER NINE CENTURIES. IN BEAUREGARD, THE GUADAGNI HOSTED THEIR COUSIN THE QUEEN OF FRANCE, CATHERINE DE' MEDICI, WITH HER SONS, AND THE FUTURE KING OF FRANCE, HENRI IV OF BOURBON. QUEEN CATHERINE AND HER RELATIVES PREFERRED TO SPEND THE NIGHT IN THE CASTLE OF BEAUREGARD, RATHER THAN IN THEIR OWN PALACE OF LYON. AS SOON AS HE HEARD ME SAY THIS TO MY BROTHER, MICHEL KINDLY DECIDED TO SURPRISE US BY BEING IN BEAUREGARD ON SUNDAY MORNING WITH THE KEYS OF THE CASTLE. AND WE WERE SO HAPPY HE WAS THERE WITH HIS CHARMING WIFE!



Francesco in front of the Avenue de Gadagne ("Guadagni Avenue") in Saint-Genis-Laval. While Guadagni Street in Lyon was built in the center of the Guadagni Palace in the mid-1600s, Guadagni Avenue was built in Saint-Genis-Laval only a few years ago. The beginning of the building of it was inaugurated by Uncle Vieri, his second wife Giuliana, and Uncle Adriano Guadagni, in the middle of the 1990s. It was finished in 2001. Unhappily the formal ceremony of inauguration of it was 5 days after "9/11" and Francesco, who had been invited to preside it, as the representative of the Guadagni Family, could not get there in time because the U.S. airports were closed after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Avenue de Gadagne runs close to the Guadagni castle of Beauregard and is one of the main streets of Saint-Genis-Laval, connecting it with Lyon.

BEAUREGARD HAD FALLEN IN A STATE OF RUIN AND DISREPAIR IN THE 20TH CENTURY WHEN ITS LAST OWNER HAD DECIDED TO LIVE IN THE NEARBY FARMHOUSE AND ABANDON THE CASTLE TO THE RIGIDITY OF THE WINTER WEATHER. ONE DAY PART OF THE UNKEPT ROOF HAD FALLEN, AND WINTER SNOW AND RAIN HAD SLOWLY BUT STEADILY STARTED TO DESTROY THE CASTLE. A FEW YEARS AGO, I THINK AROUND 1995, THE CITY OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL BOUGHT THE CASTLE FROM THE LAST OWNER AND STARTED TO TRY AND REPAIR IT. THE 10 ACRE PARK WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A CITY PARK AND PLAYGROUND BUT THE CASTLE WAS A DANGEROUS AREA TO ENTER BECAUSE STONES COULD AND WOULD FALL FROM ITS CRUMBLING WALLS. SO THE CASTLE WAS FENCED WITH METAL WIRE AND NOBODY COULD GET INTO THE GATE EXCEPT WITH THE APPROPRIATE KEY. I HAD SEEN IT THREE OTHER TIMES, IN 1995, 2005 AND 2007, AND I NOTICED WITH JOY THAT, UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF MAYOR CRIMIER, MANY PARTS OF THE CASTLE WERE BEING RESTORED AND THE CRUMBLING PARTS WERE BEING STRENGTHENED. NOW,

WITH MICHEL'S KEY, WE COULD ENTER THE CASTLE AND THE "ORANGERIE" WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT HIM. PLUS, MICHEL TOLD US A LOT OF INTERESTING HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT IT.



PARK OF THE GUADAGNI CASTLE OF BEAUREGARD. THE PARK OF BEAUREGARD (10 ACRES) IS DIVIDED IN DIFFERENT LEVELS (SUSPENDED GARDENS) CONNECTED BY STONE DOUBLE STAIRCASES, WITH GROTTOS CONTAINING STATUES OR FRUIT PLANTS, SIMILAR TO THE ONES OF THE BOBOLI GARDENS IN FLORENCE. EACH LEVEL HAS FOUNTAINS AND MANY OLD TREES. IN THE PICTURE YOU CAN SEE CARLA, BERNARDO, FRANCESCO, BEATRICE, MADAME MONNET, MICHEL MONNET AND HENRI GUIGNARD. ADRIENNE TOOK THE PICTURE.



STONE FOUNTAIN IN ONE OF THE GROTTOS REPRESENTING THREE FAT NAKED WOMEN. WHEN THE FOUNTAIN WAS ACTIVE, THE WATER CAME OUT OF THE BREASTS AND THE BELLY BUTTON OF THE STATUES. IT SEEMS HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO MICHEL MONNET, THAT THESE STATUES WERE ADDED A FEW YEARS AFTER THE GUADAGNI SOLD IT THE NEXT OWNER.



SAME GROTTOS AND PARK LEVEL OF THE TWO ABOVE PICTURES. IT SHOWS YOU HOW HUGE WAS THE PARK OF THE GUADAGNI'S FAVORITE CASTLE.











FRANCESCO, GIULIANO COCO, ANGIOLO GHIARINI, MONSIEUR AND MADAME MICHEL MONNET AND FRIENDS VISIT THE PARK AND THE REMAINS OF THE GUADAGNI CASTLE OF BEAUREGARD. THE FIRST PICTURE SHOWS THE ENTRANCE OF THE PARK.

AFTER THE VISIT, WE WALKED BACK TO THE CENTER OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL FOR THE MANIFESTATION, WHICH INCLUDED THE VISIT OF OLD SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL AND AVENUE CLEMENCEAU. WE HAD A VERY GOOD MEAL AT THE RESTAURANT MITHAN AND THEN WE SAID GOOD-BYE TO BERNARDO AND CARLA, THANKING THEM FOR HAVING JOINED US IN SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL. WE HAD NOT SEEN THEM FOR A LONG TIME, AS WE LIVE IN AMERICA AND THEY LIVE IN ITALY, AND IT HAD BEEN SO NICE TO SPEND SOME TIME TOGETHER IN FRIENDLY SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL AND LYON.



THE CAPTAIN OF THE BERSAGLIERI, CARLA, FRANCESCO, BERNARDO AND BEATRICE IN THE CENTER OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL- PHOTO TAKEN BY M. CHRISTIAN DARNE



AT THE RESTAURANT AMPHYTRION, MONSIEUR MICHEL MONNET, MADAME MONNET, BEATRICE, FRANCESCO AND GIULIANO COCO – PHOTO TAKEN BY M. CHISTIAN DARNE

THEN BEATRICE WENT BACK TO LE CLOS FOR A QUICK AFTERNOON NAP. GHIARINI, COCO, MONNET, OTHER FRIENDS AND I WENT BACK TO BEAUREGARD. MICHEL EXPLAINED US EVERYTHING IN DETAIL AND IT WAS FASCINATING. A LADY OF THE GROUP ASKED ME: "HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE BACK IN A CASTLE THAT USED TO BELONG TO YOUR FAMILY FIVE CENTURIES AGO?" I ANSWERED: "IT FEELS NICE TO BE BACK HOME". THE LADY LIKED THE ANSWER. THEN, WE WENT FOR A WALK ON THE PLATEAU OF HAUTE BAROLLES AND WE SAW THE BEAUTIFUL PANORAMA OF THE SURROUNDING HILLS IN THE WARM EARLY FALL AFTERNOON LIGHT.

FOR DINNER, WE WENT TO A TYPICAL RESTAURANT OF OLD LYON, CALLED "L'AMPHITRYON". THE FOOD WAS DELICIOUS AND SO WAS THE ATMOSPHERE. THEN WE ALL PARTED. WE SALUTED CHRISTIAN DARNE, ANGIOLO GHIARINI AND GIULIANO COCO, PROMISING WE WOULD SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN SOON AND KEEP IN TOUCH. MICHEL TOOK US BACK HOME, TELLING US A TAXI WOULD PICK US UP THE FOLLOWING MORNING AT 8:00. WE THANKED HIM AND HIS WIFE FOR EVERYTHING. THEY HAD REALLY CONTRIBUTED TO MAKE OUR WEEK-END IN LYON AND SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL FANTASTIC.

AFTER A GOOD NIGHT SLEEP AND A HEALTHY BREAKFAST AT LE CLOS, WE SALUTED OUR KIND HOSTS, JUMPED ON THE TAXI AND HEADED TOWARDS THE AIRPORT. WE GOT STUCK IN A BIG TRAFFIC JAM AND FOR AWHILE WE DID NOT MOVE AT ALL. I UNDERSTOOD WHY MICHEL PREFERS TO GO TO WORK BY SUBWAY AND WALKING. HOWEVER OUR TAXI DRIVER, WHOM WE FOUND OUT WAS CALLED GUILLAUME, CALLED ITS MAIN OFFICE, GOT DIRECTIONS ON A NEW POSSIBLE ROUTE, MADE A U-TURN AND AFTER A FEW MINUTES GOT ON AN EMPTY HIGHWAY WHERE HE COULD

SPEED FULL GAS TOWARDS THE SAINT-EXUPERY AIRPORT. WE ARRIVED THERE EARLY AND HAD THE TIME TO BUY SOME SOUVENIRS FOR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS IN DENVER.

OUR LUFTHANSA TRIP TO FRANKFURT-DENVER WAS PLEASANT AND RELAXING. WE WATCHED SOME MOVIES, TOOK A NAP, TALKED ABOUT THE BEAUTIFUL TRIP AND STAY WE HAD AT SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL AND LYON AND HOW EVERYBODY HAD BEEN KIND AND NICE WITH US. WE ARRIVED IN DENVER ON TIME AND MILES WITH LITTLE ISABELLA AND EMILIA WAS THERE WAITING FOR US WITH A BROAD SMILE. AND THAT WAS THE HAPPY ENDING OF A VERY BEAUTIFUL WEEK-END.

BEFORE CLOSING THIS REPORT ON OUR WONDERFUL TRIP TO SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL AND LYON, I WILL ADD TWO IMPORTANT OBSERVATIONS MADE BY BEATRICE. DURING OUR MEAL AT ONE OF THE RESTAURANTS, BEATRICE GOT UP FOR A QUICK TRIP TO THE RESTROOM. AS SHE WAS ENTERING THE TOILET, SHE HEARD A LADY OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE WHISPER TO ONE OF THE WAITRESSES: "SHE IS A GUADAGNI, OF THE GADAGNE FAMILY..." SHE DID NOT THINK MUCH OF IT, BUT WHEN SHE LEFT THE BATHROOM, SHE SAW THE WHOLE KITCHEN AND SERVING STAFF WAITING FOR HER, SILENTLY STARING AT HER WITH CURIOSITY. SHE HAD TO SAY "PARDON... (EXCUSE ME IN FRENCH), PARDON..." TO BE ABLE TO GO THROUGH AND GET BACK TO HER SEAT IN THE DINING ROOM.

THE OTHER THING OBSERVED BY BEATRICE WAS THAT SOMETIMES, WHEN THERE WERE MEETINGS, SHE WOULD NOTICE SOMEBODY SHE DID NOT KNOW, STANDING VERY CLOSE BEHIND HER OR AT HER SIDE, WITH A BIG SMILE, LOOKING AT ANOTHER PERSON, NOT FAR AWAY, WHO WAS TAKING HIS OR HER PICTURE. SHE REALIZED THAT ALL THESE PEOPLE WANTED TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED STANDING OR SITTING NEXT TO A GUADAGNI. AND I NOTICED THE SAME THING HAPPENING TO ME A FEW TIMES.

THESE THINGS SHOW US HOW IMPORTANT THE GUADAGNI ARE STILL FOR THE PEOPLE OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL AND LYON. AND THIS ENDEARS THEM SO MUCH TO ME. THE PEOPLE OF SAINT-GENIS-LAVAL AND LYON WILL ALWAYS HAVE A VERY SPECIAL PLACE IN MY HEART. IN CASE THEY NEED ME, I WILL ALWAYS TRY TO BE THERE TO THE BEST OF MY CAPACITY.

SINCERELY YOURS,

FRANCESCO CARLONI DE QUERQUI GUADAGNI