

INTRANET/ INTERNET PROJECT FOR THE SURVIVAL OF “CIMBRI”

(1-Italy) We define Cimbri a population of German origin which occupied a mountain territory in the north of Italy around the XII century. Owing to the last linguistic studies they are considered a colony coming from the south of Bavarian, who occupied some regions of the actual provinces of Trento, Vicenza and Verona. There are other theories about their origins: the most famous one upholds that they came from Denmark around the Second Century b. Ch. but this seems to be a legend.

(2 – Veneto) One centre was in the north of Verona and this territory was defined XIII Comuni Veronesi, an other in the north of Vicenza: VII Comuni Vicentini and the third settling down was around the village of Luserna. These populations had particular contract with the local power, they were organised in a sort of republic with autonomous laws and customs.

Today there are survived three linguistic island of this vast zone: Giazza, a village in the XIII Comuni Veronesi, Mezzaselva di Roana in the VII Comuni Vicentini, and Luserna. They are considered ‘island’ because the neighbour inhabitants use an other dialect, with romance origin, and furthermore they are divided not only between themselves but also from their native land. This division has caused a peculiar development of their language, the so called TAUC, because it hasn’t been influenced by the standard rules of German.

From a linguistic point of view this language can be considered an old Bavarian-Tyrolese dialect, who goes back to the XI century. It should have been spoken in the south of Bavarian and in the Italian territories has conserved old syntactic structures, phonetic elements and lexicon. In the three linguistic islands it differentiates slightly.

Nowadays this language is spoken by the most people only in Luserna, which is a little village of about 350 persons, where in the pubs, in the shops everyone uses this dialect and it is also taught in the nursery school. In Luserna the Tauc has been influenced by the direct contact with the near Tyrolo and by the people who know and speak German.

(3 – XIII Comuni Veronesi) The situation was different in the VII Comuni Vicentini and in the XIII Comuni Veronesi, where the absence of contacts caused a conservation of an older stadium of the language. The cimbric of the VII Comuni Vicentini could be considered the oldest one.

Owing to historic causes, first of all the World Wars, that were fought even in these territories and as a consequence the emigration of people in search of a job, this old language is no more spoken in the VII Comuni Veronesi. Only few people remember it, but they don't use it usually.

(4 – Ljetzan) In the XIII Comuni Veronesi the situation is a bit different. Giazza-Ljetzan is a little village (of about 120 inhabitants), where more than 30 persons still use the Tauc Gareida, (das deutsche Gereide). They are middle-aged persons and “cimbro” is their mother-tongue.

The geographic location of the village can be considered a cause of the survival of this old Germanic dialect. Giazza has been built at the confluence of two valleys and only around the 1950 a new road has pull it up from the isolation and has caused at the same time the slowly use of the Romance dialect spoken in the surroundings.

(5 – Giazza) New economic interests have caused also a progressive migration of many people from the mountain towards the near city of Verona. In fact more than 100 people who live in Verona or in the surroundings speak the cimbric language. This language has been taught since last year in the primary school, during a course in the afternoon, but no one child speak it in the family. The children learnt this language through simple comics, which are collected in a handbook, and it has been utilised also a CD-rom, composed by cimbric texts, exercises, simple phrases in Italian and in Tauc, and a data-base vocabulary of about 4000 words.

(6 – Museum) The cultural centre of Giazza is the Museo dei Cimbri, which can be considered the reference-point of activities for the survival of cimbric language and culture. The Museum is supported by the Curatorium Cimbricum Veronense, an Association that has been defending for 25 years this culture through publications, international congress, film-festivals and other activities.

(7 – Nature) The cimbric culture can be considered very simple and functional. These people lived in small villages, closed to nature, their houses were built with stones and in particular the roofs were made up by flags. They worked even little stones and the “colonnette” are an examples of their sculptures. These populations were very religious and the images of Saints were carved out of the stone. These images were often painted even on the front of houses as a request of protection.

(8 – Culture) From an economic point of view these people were shepherds, woodsmen and tried to earn their living from the earth. When they arrived these territories were covered by wood and they utilise it for warming the houses, for building furniture and

they drew from it the coal, that was useful for cooking. An other activity typical of these population was the production of the lime and in particular of the caustic lime, which was necessary for the building of houses.

In mountain the winter was very cold and the summer not particular warm. These temperatures allowed them to produce ice and to sell it during the warm season. The ice was preserved in circular stone-constructions, placed near puddles, that were full of water and frozen in winter.

They didn't use money and usually changed their products with other coming from the plain like salt, tobacco, oil, coffee, sugar.... They cultivated cereals, bred cattle and drew from them milk, cheese, butter, wool, leather...

All these activities allowed them to earn their living in mountain. They hadn't frequent contacts with people of the city of Verona and that's why they preserved a particular way of living, a language, that is the mirror of a culture, which doesn't want to be stifled by the global levelling.

(9 – Project) This intranet/internet project **Lessini@ Tzimbar earde** (that means Tzimbar land) has been financed by the European Union and will be supported by the Comunità Montana della Lessinia, an organ that represents and protects the mountain territories. This project should connect the most important localities (8 cultural units) in Lessinia.

(10 – scheme)The centre will be the Museo Etnografico dei Cimbri, where will be placed the server.

Each cultural unit will have a multimedia centre, where people can through this net connect themselves. In fact the communications and changes among the localities are often difficult owing to the geographic conformation of the Lessinia mountains.

The green lines represent the connection that can unify simultaneously 4 cultural units with the Museo. These 8 cultural units will have a internet connection, too, which is marked by the red lines.

(11 – region) With this project the 8 localities, which are Erbezzo, Boscho Chiesanuova, Cerro, Velo Veronese, Roveré Veronese, Badia Calavena, S. Mauro di Saline, Giazza, will be able to communicate in real time through:

- written texts,
- transmissions of images, MULTIMEDIA
- sounds transmissions,
- video transmissions.

These transmissions can be specific of each zone but have to deal in general with cimbric culture: customs, traditions, habits, history, sports, activities...

The server, that is placed in Giazza:

- guarantees that this system will be utilised only for the aims of the project: the survival, the defence and the spreading of the cimbric language and culture. This connection can involve even scholastic activities.
- Co-ordinates the connections among the cultural units and agrees upon the diffusion modality of the multimedia news in Lessinia (intranet) and on internet.
- Co-ordinates the diffusion of spectacles or events (even simultaneously), which are considered important for the spreading of the cimbric culture and in general of the traditions of this mountain area (Lessinia).
- Co-ordinates multimedia sound-video communications, which can have place regularity and can realize news about Lessinia.

- Co-ordinates video-conferences with a six-monthly program about interesting topics.

(12 – logo) **Lessini@ Tzimbar earde** will be our symbol: it's a typical stone-roof of our mountains, which represents the cimbric culture. Through a modern system as intranet / internet connection we'll try to keep alive our ancient culture and to project it in the future for next generations.

Our web-side will be: www.cimbri.it, at the moment it is www.diens.de/Zimberland It is divided into the 3 linguistic islands. For each one you can find informations, e-mails addresses, news and also the mailing list.