
REVIEW ARTICLES

Medieval Economic History Problems: Research on the Subalpine Region in the Last Decade

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In October 1968 the XXXIII Congress of the Società storica Subalpina was held at Alessandria on the subject *Popolo e stato in Italia nell'età di Federico Barbarossa*. This was an important date in the development of medieval studies in Piedmont, and a number of very fruitful interdisciplinary relationships had already been incorporated into the research in progress,¹ although the conference illustrated that economic history still played a very small role. But the well established European tradition which runs back to the German *Kulturgeschichte* and French and German historiography of the post-war period was beginning to have a major and important expansion,² although as yet it had not produced any ripples in the Subalpine region. The Italian translation in 1966 of Georges Duby's wide and controversial general history of the medieval rural economy³ had an immediate effect both with the general public and amongst scholars who were keen to adopt a new approach to the study of those centuries which were known

¹ *Popolo e Stato in Italia nell'età di Federico Barbarossa: Alessandria e la Lega Lombarda* (Papers and discussions at the XXXIIIth Subalpine Historical Congress, Alessandria 6th-9th October 1968), Turin 1970. The themes were generally political, but the exceptions included G. AIRALDI, *Alessandrini sulla via del mare* (pp. 423-440) and the two papers which touched on problems of material culture, D. GRIBAUDI, *L'agro alessandrino nella storia*, pp. 81-95 and G. P. VIGLIANO, *Borghi nuovi medievali in Piemonte* (pp. 81-127).

² See G. TABACCO, *Uomini e terra nell'alto medioevo*, in *Agricoltura e mondo rurale in occidente nell'alto medioevo* (XIIIth Study Week at the Italian Centre for the Study of the High Middle Ages, Spoleto 22nd-28th April 1965), Spoleto 1966, pp. 21-34.

³ G. DUBY, *L'economia rurale nell'Europa medievale*, Bari 1966.

best in terms of *histoire événementielle*. It provided an immediate encouragement for researchers and students at the University of Turin to embark on and publish a series of "field" studies. In this research, the central focus was the rural economy, the conditions of the peasantry and the forms of seigneurial power to which they were subject. But it was only with some difficulty that medieval studies in Piedmont were able to extract themselves from the traditional concern with diplomatic and political history, after an untimely death interrupted the work initiated by Maria Clotilde Daviso di Charvensod, a scholar who had been greatly influenced by the methods and interests of the *Annales* and who published a number of important studies — the majority of which have been developed further since her death — based on cadastral and toll records.⁴

From the late '60s the Piedmont region has been the subject of a number of detailed studies which have made an important contribution to our knowledge of agrarian history. While the large number of published documents belonging to the religious corporations in the *Biblioteca storica subalpina* have meant — as we shall see — that work can be carried out on the Xth to XIIIth centuries, the large number of quantitative sources, such as cadastral surveys, accounts of the Savoyard castellans, and toll books,⁵ have had the effect of concentrating research on the XIIIth century and later. It is no accident that the only general study of the agrarian history of central-northern Piedmont, by Claudio Rotelli, runs from 1250 to 1450.⁶ This volume appeared in 1973, and was widely welcomed⁷ for the considerable number of research projects which it suggested, in addition to being equipped with extensive tables of data drawn from a range of different sources. The study also suggested a number of persuasive preliminary conclusions on the concentration of landownership, the backwardness of cereal production in respect to viticulture and grazing, the progressive demographic decline, the crisis of the early XVth century, and on the fluctuating and uneven develop-

⁴ M. C. DAVISO DI CHARVENSD, *I più antichi catasti del comune di Chieri* (1253), in "Bollettino Storico-Bibliografico Subalpino", 39 (1937), pp. 66-102; Id., *Coltivazione e reddito della vigna a Rivoli nel secolo XIV* in "Bollettino" cit., 49 (1950), pp. 145-57 (reprinted in *Storia dell'economia italiana*, I: VIIth-XVIIth centuries, ed. C. M. CIPOLLA, Turin 1959, pp. 97-106). Two important studies were also published posthumously: *I catasti di un comune agricolo piemontese del XIII secolo*, in "Bollettino" cit., 54 (1956), pp. 41-74, and *I pedaggi delle Alpi occidentali nel medioevo*, Turin 1961 (Miscellanea di storia italiana, 4th s., 5). About years of research preceding the last decade see A. M. NADA PATRONE, *Recenti studi sulla storia economica subalpina nel basso medioevo*, in "Bollettino" cit., 62 (1964), pp. 147-160.

⁵ A useful guide to medieval economic history sources has become available for scholars in recent years: R. H. BAUTIER & J. SORNAY, *Les Sources de l'histoire économique et sociale du Moyen Âge: Provence, Comtat Venaissin, Dauphiné, états de la maison de Savoie*, 3 Vols, Paris 1968-76.

⁶ C. ROTELLI, *Una campagna medievale. Storia agraria del Piemonte tra il 1250 e il 1450*, Turin 1973.

ment of the prices of cereals and wines throughout the whole period. Rotelli's suggestions on population problems proved more debatable, however, in particular his statements on the mobility of the rural settlements and the abandoned villages. His views on the types and diffusion of farming organizations and institutions, and those on the extent of the open-field system were also contested. This is not the context in which to discuss the problems of interpretation and construction of data,⁸ so we would simply note that Rotelli's study is a weighty collection of provisional results carried out by a single researcher rather than a team. But the interesting and sound views and research hypotheses which were advanced by the book were not left in limbo, because at the time that it was published a whole range of studies and projects on individual issues and regions was under way, which was to provide the ground-plan for a new and more ambitious over-view of the rural economic history of Piedmont. Monographs by the same Rotelli⁹ and by Rinaldo Comba¹⁰ had already provided important information on agriculture in the Chierese region and on the relationship between cultivated and uncultivated land, as well as reclamation in the densely wooded region of southern Piedmont. Both studies were based on the use of refined methodological techniques, and drew on two types of sources: communal cadastral surveys and the statutes of the lesser rural communities. At the same time studies were also being undertaken on the development of landownership, on the forms of agriculture and production in the Pinerolo region, the Tortona region, and on the lands around Turin and Moncalieri, and new studies on the development of viticulture were also begun.¹¹

⁷ See especially G. G. MERLO, *La campagna del Piemonte centro-settentrionale tra il XIII e il XV secolo*, in "Quaderni Storici", 27 (1974), pp. 905-913 & R. COMBA, *Su una campagna medievale: il Piemonte fra XIII e XV secolo*, in "Rivista Storica Italiana", 87 (1975), pp. 736-748.

⁸ R. COMBA, *op. cit.* pp. 738-45.

⁹ C. ROTELLI, *L'economia agraria di Chieri attraverso i catasti dei secoli XIV-XVI*, Milan 1967.

¹⁰ R. COMBA, *Testimonianze sull'uso dell'incolto sul dissodamento e sul popolamento nel Piemonte meridionale*, in "Bollettino" cit., 68 (1970), pp. 415-454.

¹¹ G. G. MERLO, *Unità fondiaria e forme di coltivazione nella pianura pinerolese all'inizio del XIV secolo*, in "Bollettino" cit., 72 (1974), pp. 109-146; M. C. GIULIANI, *Città e campagna nel Tortonese*, in "Rivista di Storia, arte archeologia per le provincie di Alessandria e Asti", 80-81 (1971-2), pp. 113-138; A. M. PASCALE, *Fisionomia territoriale e popolazione del comune di Torino sulla base del catasto del 1349*, in "Bollettino" cit., 72 (1974), pp. 199-258; M. CASTORINA BATTAGLIA, *Il Registro delle sorti del comune di Moncalieri nel 1278*, in "Annali dell'Accademia di Agricoltura di Torino", 118 (1975-6), pp. 1-38. On viticulture see C. FRANZERO, *Spese e profitti di una vigna a conduzione diretta a Busca nell'anno 1385*, in "Bollettino" cit., 72 (1974), pp. 316-326. More closely related to the personal research interests of the authors, although no less valid historically, are the studies by R. RATTI, *La Vigna e il Vino in alcuni statuti (e bandi campestri) di comuni dell'Albese*, in "Annali dell'Accademia di Agricoltura di Torino", 112 (1969-70),

Monographs on the structure and development of courtly and seigneurial estates have also provided some very interesting insights into the history of agriculture, the organization of the countryside, and on social stratification and local institutions. Particular mention should be made of studies by Hannelore Groneuer on Caresana and Emilia Balda on Quarto d'Asti.¹² These studies begin with the earliest materials which have survived and examine the structure and management of the *curtes* in the high Middle Ages, the period for which there are no quantitative series on production, prices, or consumption that can easily be used. The monographs contain very valuable information, from a comparative point of view, on the fragmentation of holdings, on the *dominicium-massaricum* relationship, on the types of crops produced, and in some cases also on the legal and social status of the cultivators. They throw considerable light on the administration of the great landed estates and on their function in the economic and political development of pre-capitalist Europe. But the type of method and analysis used to illustrate the developments and structural changes which were occurring in individual *curtes* require some modification before they can be applied to the great estates in view of the great dispersion of their properties. Their structures can only be recreated by means of group studies which can tackle such problems as the total distribution of the estate units, the estate management policies produced by the great proprietors to keep their scattered holdings together, to cultivate them and introduce changes in production or new forms of management. Such problems are easily tackled only for the studies carried out on the estates of the great religious houses, as their cartularies provide the richest sources for both quality and quantity. As for the great lay estates, it is certainly true that the documents — amongst which simple donations form the majority — lend themselves best to reconstructing the topography of the properties, rather than the ways in which they were run, although it is also true that the principal research interest has been the political role of the seigneur and the reconstruction of areas of hegemony, for which the simple presence of the seigneur is often sufficient evidence. A number of studies with varying degrees of economic emphasis have also been carried out on the ecclesiastical and lay

pp. 137-160 and G. DONNA D'OLDENICO, *Vitibus spanis et altinis. In margine alla civiltà dello Spanna da Gattinara a Lessona*, in "Boll. stor. vercellese", 5-6 (1975), pp. 121-9.

¹² H. GRONEUER, *Caresana. Eine oberitalienische Grundherrschaft im Mittelalter* (1987-1261), Stuttgart 1970 (Forschungen zur Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, 15). E. BALDA, *Una corte rurale nel territorio di Asti nel medioevo: Quarto d'Asti e l'amministrazione del Capitolo canonico*, in "Boll. stor. Subalpino", 70 (1972), pp. 5-122. There is a mass of descriptive material and source data, together with some rapid evaluations in G. SERGI, *Movimento signorile e affermazione ecclesiastica nel contesto distrettuale di Pombia e Novara fra X e XI secolo*, in "Studi Medievali", s. 3, 16 (1975), pp. 196-206.

estates in the regions of Asti, Turin, Cuneo and Monferrato,¹³ while publications of documents have provided the basis for further studies in these areas as well as for the regions of Vercelli and Val d'Aosta.¹⁴

So far there have been no extensive studies of economy or social stratification of the urban centres, although there have been a number of valuable pieces of research in this area. But the rather limited scale of the principal Piedmontese communes together with the restricted development of manufacturing industry should not deter others from continuing the research undertaken by Anna Maria Pascale on Turin¹⁵ and by Mara Castorina Battaglia and Irma Naso on the bourgeois family, with particular attention

¹³ On the ecclesiastical estates see: R. RIPANTI, *Domino fondiario e poteri banali del capitolo di Casale Monferrato nell'età comunale*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 68 (1970), pp. 109-156; E. CONTERNO, *Frazionamento di possessi e valori di terre nel XIII secolo: gli acquisti della certosa di Casotto*, in "Bollettino" cit., 68 (1970), pp. 377-414; R. AMEDEO, *Gli sviluppi terrieri della certosa di Casotto dalle origini a tutto il secolo XIII*, in "Bollettino della Società per gli studi storici archeologici ed artistici della provincia di Cuneo", 67 (2° sem. 1972), pp. 47-68; L. DE ANGELIS, *Note sulla proprietà agraria nel Tortonese (sec. XI-XIII): i beni del capitolo della cattedrale di Tortona*, in "Libri e documenti", 2 (1975), pp. 6-22; A. A. SETTIA, *Santa Maria di Vezzolano. Una fondazione signorile nell'età della riforma ecclesiastica*, Torino 1975 (Biblioteca storica subalpina, 198), pp. 151-192; L. CASTO, *Il fondamento patrimoniale della potenza vescovile di Asti*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 73 (1975), pp. 5-58 e 74 (1976), pp. 27-66. The literature on the lay estates is thinner, from an economic history perspective. For a discussion of the topography of the great properties, see G. SERGI, *Una grande circoscrizione del regno italico: la marca arduinica di Torino*, in "Studi Medievali", 3s., 12 (1971), pp. 698-712. There is some discussion of the economic basis of power in a study which is otherwise concerned mainly with seigneurial revenues: G. MORELLO, *Dal "custos castri Plociasci" alla consorteria signorile di Piovasasco e Scalenghe (secoli XI-XIII)*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 71 (1973), pp. 5-88. The economic interests of the seigneurial families and of a commune which behaved in a seigneurial manner in its surrounding *contado* are fully discussed in a sample area study by D. GIANNONI, *Castelli e signorie in Val Tiglione nel processo di trasformazione politica del territorio medievale di Asti*, in "Bollettino" cit., pp. 423-447. On the later Middle Ages, there is an interesting study of the economic contribution of the Teutonic nobility: R. BORDONE, *Un'attiva minoranza etnica nell'alto medioevo: gli Alamanni del comitato di Asti*, in "Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken", 54 (1974), pp. 37-56.

¹⁴ From the cartularies of religious houses, I would mention in particular the introductions to two volumes which contain suggestions for research into agrarian history and the development of the management of the estates: *Cartario della certosa di Losa e Monte Benedetto dal 1189 al 1252*, ed. M. BOSCO, Turin 1974 (Bibl. Stor. Subalpina 195), and *L'Abbazia di S. Genuario di Lucedio e le sue pergamene*, ed. P. CANGIAN, Turin 1975 (Bibl. Stor. Subalpina 193). There are a few collections of documents on lay landowners which would make a study of their estates feasible — they include *Testaments et Codicilles des Seigneurs de Vallaise*, ed. O. ZANOLLI, in "Archivum Augustanum", III (1969), and *Les testaments des seigneurs de Cballant* ed. O. ZANOLLI, Aosta 1974 (Bibl. dell'Archivum Augustanum, 3).

¹⁵ PASCALE, *op. cit.* above, n. 10.

to the medical profession.¹⁶ There are also a number of excellent studies of social stratification in certain communes, although these are not accompanied by any analysis of economic structures, which have thrown light on the relationship between society and its institutions, as well as describing the events which the communes lived through in this period. There are studies of this type on Vercelli, Alessandria, Cuneo and Biella.¹⁷ The communes of Bra and Racconigi have also been studied in detail to explore the relationship between rural seigneurial class and the medium and smaller communes, and suggests that these increasingly took on a formal institutional status.¹⁸ So far, however, conditions of life in these communities have been studied less, although there are excellent source materials available.¹⁹

Continuing research on cadastral materials has made it possible for our knowledge of the economic activities of the town dwellers to be considerably widened. The picture which seems at present to be emerging is that the urban ruling classes were largely landed rentiers, although it will require research on hitherto unstudied areas such as Asti²⁰ before this can be fully generalized and more information can be provided on banking activities. The results of a research project which has recently been undertaken should prove particularly interesting and original — it is based on a systematic study of cadastral records and of the contemporary *Ordinati* of the communal authorities. These should provide extensive information on

¹⁶ M. CASTORINA BATTAGLIA, *Ricerche per un'indagine socio-economica sui medici e chirurghi al servizio dei conti di Savoia dal 1300 al 1440*, in "Atti e memorie dell'accademia italiana di storia della farmacia", published in "La farmacia nuova", XXX (1974), pp. 1-26; *Id.*, *Una famiglia borghese del XIV secolo: gli Albini di Moncalieri*, in "Minerva medica", 66 (1975), p. 14; I. NASO, *I medici del comune di Moncalieri nel XIV e nel XV secolo*, in "Minerva medica", 66 (1975), pp. 4342-4352; M. CASTORINA BATTAGLIA, *Medici e chirurghi alla corte di Savoia*, in "Minerva medica", 66 (1975), pp. 1-59.

¹⁷ C. D. FONSECA, *Ricerche sulla famiglia Bicchieri e la società vercellese dei secoli XII e XIII*, Milano 1968 (Contributi dell'Istituto di storia medievale dell'Università cattolica, 1); G. PISTARINO, *Alessandria nel mondo dei comuni*, in "Studi medievali", 3^a serie, 11 (1970), pp. 1-101; P. CAMILLA, *Cuneo 1198-1382*, Cuneo 1970; N. IRIKO, *Il problema della presenza signorile nei primordi del comune di Biella*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 69 (1971), pp. 449-504.

¹⁸ A. MARCIA, *Domini de Brayda, homines de Brayda. Attività signorile e affermazione comunale alla confluenza di Tanaro e Stura*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 71 (1973), pp. 89-146; A. BIANCHI, *Il funzionamento del comune di Bra nella transizione dalla dominazione astigiana a quella viscontea*, in "Bollettino" cit., 72 (1974), pp. 147-198; P. PEZZANO, *Istituzioni e ceti sociali in una comunità rurale: Racconigi nel XII e nel XIII secolo*, in "Bollettino" cit., 74 (1976), pp. 619-691.

¹⁹ See G. AIRALDI, *Vita medievale in un comune rustico dell'alto Monferrato*, in "Nuova Rivista Storica", 56 (1972), pp. 1-52. There are also a number of suggestions in the works cited in n. 25.

²⁰ D. SACCO NEBIOLO, *Note e documenti sulla famiglia astigiana dei Lorenzi*, in "Riv. Stor. Arte Archeologia Prov. Alessandria e Asti", 85, 1976, pp. 129-170. Studies on the communes of the Asti region by R. Bordone, A. M. Cotto and E. Artifoni are near completion.

the communes' food supply policies and regulations, their ability to intervene in the surrounding countryside, their fiscal policies and the economic objectives of various political and military decisions.²¹

Piedmont's geographical position lies behind the tradition of research on trade and communications. This is a tradition which has already produced a number of outstanding scholars, amongst whom we should mention M. Clotilde Daviso and Yves Renouard.²² But it is some years now since research of this sort has been undertaken, and this is mainly due to the pressing need to explore the new sources and bring to light more documentary material. The transcription and publication of the account-books of the castellans, for example, of which Bautier and Sornay have provided a very useful guide recently, provides very valuable information on both the history of agriculture and of trade.²³ The study of communications has also received fresh impetus, as has interest in trade and markets from the research on the toll system, and this has been mainly concerned with mapping the toll-points, which were only inaccurately and randomly known from earlier studies.²⁴ In these studies,

²¹ A number of the undergraduate degree theses at the Medieval Section of the History Institute in the University of Turin Faculty of Letters and Philosophy are in this field.

²² DAVISO DI CHARVENSOD, *I Pedaggi*, cit. n. 4 above; Y. RENOARD, *Les voies de communications entre la France et le Piémont au moyen âge*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 61 (1963), pp. 233-56. The economic and financial position of the communes is discussed in relation to commercial problems by A. M. PATRONE, *Le casane astigiane in Savoia*, Turin 1959 (Misc. Stor. Italiana, 4th s., 4).

²³ For BAUTIER, SORNAY, *op. cit.*, see n. 5. See also R. COMBA, *La storia economica e sociale della Provincia Granda nell'età medievale e i conti delle castellanie tuttora esistenti*, in "Bollettino della società per gli studi storici, archeologici ed artistici della provincia di Cuneo", 64 (1° sem. 1971), pp. 79-82; *Id.*, *Due resoconti inediti della castellania di Cuneo (1388-1409)*, in "Bollettino... di Cuneo" cit., 67 (2° sem. 1972), pp. 19-56; P. PEZZANO, *Il conto della castellania di S. Albano di Stura (1388-1392)*, in "Bollettino... di Cuneo" cit., 67 (2° sem. 1972), pp. 57-80; I. NASO, *I conti della castellania di Sommariva Perno (1314-1328)*, in "Bollettino... di Cuneo" cit., 75 (2° sem. 1976), pp. 5-46.

²⁴ G. SERGI, *Valichi alpini minori e poteri signorili: l'esempio del Piemonte meridionale nei secoli XIII-XV*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 74 (1976), pp. 67-76; R. COMBA, *Commercio e vie di comunicazione del Piemonte sud-occidentale nel basso medioevo. I: Le strade alpine tra le valli Po e Vermentagna e la loro utilizzazione nei secoli XIII-XV*, in "Bollettino" cit., 74 (1976), pp. 77-144. The methodological premisses of the research in progress are discussed in R. COMBA and G. SERGI, *Piemonte meridionale e viabilità alpina: note sugli scambi commerciali con la Provenza dal XIII al XV secolo*, paper given at the XXIII^e Congrès de la Fédération historique de Provence held at Gap and Embrun in October 1975; the proceedings will shortly be published in "Provence historique". See also, for various aspects of trade and commerce, M. T. FERRER I MALLOL, *Mercanti italiani nelle terre catalane: gli Alessandrini (1934-1408)*, in "Rivista di storia arte archeologia per le province di Alessandria e Asti", LXXVI (1966), pp. 5-44 and LXXVI (1967), pp. 265-268; G. SERGI, *Domus Montis Cenisii. Lo sviluppo di un ente ospedaliero in una competizione di poteri*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 70 (1972), pp. 435-488; G. AIRALDI, *Questioni sui diritti di pedaggio a Rivalta Bormida*, in "Rivista di storia arte archeologia per le province di Alessandria e Asti", 83-84 (1974-75), pp. 91-102.

particular emphasis is placed on those routes which had a general European significance and on the attempts by the seigneurial class to draw maximum political and economic advantages from their control over passes and roadways, as well as from the protection extended to the hostels and monasteries along the way, from the taxes which they levied and the tolls which they imposed.

In concluding this rapid review we should also mention the way in which interest in the history of settlements, in historical geography, and in the history of town development have grown of late, even if these themes of social and economic history still await full development in the future. But interdisciplinary studies on the Piedmontese region have given the greatest contribution to the history of "material culture".²⁵ The study of

R. BORDONE, *Una valle di transito nel gioco politico dell'età sveva. Le trasformazioni del potere e dell'insediamento nel comitato di Serralunga*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 73 (1975), pp. 109-180; L. BALLETO, *Astigiani, Alessandrini e Monferrini a Caffa sulla fine del sec. XIII*, in "Rivista di storia arte e archeologia per le province di Alessandria e Asti", 85 (1976), pp. 171-184.

²⁵ On the relationship between the physiognomy of the rural territory, on natural factors and human intervention see: R. COMBA, *La dinamica dell'insediamento umano nel Cuneese (secoli X-XIII)*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 71 (1973), pp. 511-612; A. A. SETTIA, *Villam circa castrum restringere: migrazioni e accentramento di abitati sulla collina torinese nel basso medioevo*, in "Quaderni storici", VIII (1973), pp. 905-942; Id., *Insediamenti abbandonati sulla collina torinese*, in "Archeologia medievale", II (1975), pp. 257-328; T. BERTAMINI, *Storia delle alluvioni nell'Ossola*, in "Oscellana", 5 (1975), pp. 145-163, 201-223; R. BORDONE, *Paesaggio, possesso e incastellamento nel territorio di Asti fra il X e XI secolo*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 74 (1976), pp. 457-526; A. A. SETTIA, *Incastellamento e decastellamento nell'Italia padana fra X e XI secolo*, in "Bollettino" cit., 74 (1976), pp. 5-26; A. ROCCATAGLIATA, *Variazioni climatiche, pestilenze e vita sociale nel territorio alessandrino nei secoli XIII-XVII*, in "Rivista di storia arte archeologia per le province di Alessandria e Asti", 85 (1976), pp. 185-216. On the type and structure of the fortresses G. DEAMBROGIO, *Il recetto medievale*, in "Bollettino storico per la provincia di Novara", 68 (1972), 2° fasc., pp. 66-76; M. VIGLINO DAVICO, *Ricetti piemontesi: Candelo*, in "Studi piemontesi", 4 (1975), pp. 281-295; A. A. SETTIA, *Fortificazioni collettive nei villaggi medievali dell'alta Italia: ricetti, ville forti, recinti*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 74 (1976), pp. 527-618. On rural housing V. COMOLI MANDRACCI, *Le antiche case valsesiane*, Varallo 1967; R. COMBA, *Due cascine del Cuneese nella prospettiva di una storia della casa rurale*, in "Boll. stor. bibl. subalpino", 73 (1975), pp. 211-268. There are also a large number of studies which deal with the problem of the development of the medieval towns, which, on account of the type of sources which they employ, also provide valuable information on aspects of daily life: C. BERTOLOTTO, *Ricerche sull'urbanistica di Cuneo nel medioevo*, in "Bollettino della Società per gli studi storici archeologici e artistici della provincia di Cuneo", 62 (2° sem. 1971), pp. 65-84; V. COMOLI MANDRACCI, *Studi di storia dell'urbanistica in Piemonte: Asti*, in "Studi piemontesi", I (1972), pp. 57-72; Id., *Studi di storia dell'urbanistica in Piemonte: Cavale*, in "Studi piemontesi", 2 (1973), pp. 68-67; C. DEBIAGGI, *Origine e sviluppo dell'urbanistica di Varallo Sesia fino al secolo XV*, in "Bollettino storico per la provincia di Novara", 65 (1974), fasc. 2°, pp. 145-154; P. TAFEL, *Strutture urbane e vita quotidiana in Ivrea nel secolo XIV*, in "Nuova rivista storica", 58 (1974), pp. 361-378; F. PANERO, *Gli statuti urbanistici medievali di Alba*, in "Bollettino della Società per gli studi storici archeologici e artistici della provincia di Cuneo", 72 (1° sem. 1975),

fortifications, of peasant dwellings, of the relationship between the centres of habitation and their surrounding countryside, and of population changes has, thanks to the stimuli from the VI^e Section of the *École Pratique des Hautes Études* in Paris and to the models established in the major regional studies elsewhere,²⁶ been fully established in an effective research operation which involves scholars working all over Europe, and which, without neglecting the specificity of local situation, relies for its justification on the comparative method.

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pp. 5-74; Id., *Un momento della pianificazione territoriale del comune di Alba nel XIII secolo: la genesi e l'assetto distrettuale della villa nuova di Cherasco*, in "Bollettino... di Cuneo" cit., 74 (1^o sem. 1976), pp. 5-32; G. GULLINO, *Cenni sull'insediamento umano nel braidese e note di urbanistica medievale desunte dagli statuti comunali di Bra*, in "Bollettino... di Cuneo", 72 (1^o sem. 1975), pp. 75-97; Id., *La formazione territoriale e urbanistica del comune di Savigliano (sec. XII-XIV)*, in "Bollettino... di Cuneo" cit., 74 (1^o sem. 1976), pp. 33-47; M. LUPO, *Le mura di Moncalieri dal XII al XVI secolo*, in "Bollettino del Centro studi storici archeologici e artistici del territorio di Moncalieri", I (1976), pp. 119-166.

²⁶ One should not fail to acknowledge the huge stimulus for research on historical settlements which came from the publication of *Villages désertés et histoire économique* Paris 1965 (Les hommes et la terre, 11). Attention should also be drawn to G. FOURNIER, *Le peuplement rural en Basse Auvergne durant le haut moyen âge*, Paris 1962; P. TOUBERT, *Les structures du Latium médiéval. Le Latium méridional et la Sabine du IX^e à la fin du XIII^e siècle*, Rome 1973. The themes and methods of *Siedlungsgeschichte* were also introduced into Italy in the important article by G. TABACCO, *Problemi di insediamento e di popolamento nell'alto medioevo*, in "Rivista Storica Italiana", 79 (1967), pp. 67-110. On the research at present being conducted on various aspects of material culture see: M. MONTANARI, *Bagni di Lucca: la cultura materiale in Italia*, in "Quaderni medievali", 2 (Dec. 1976), pp. 244-246.

