

Rethinking social and economic changes in the 10th-12th centuries: new approaches to aristocracy and local power in central-northern Italy

by Maria Elena Cortese

The essay offers an overview of the most recent and innovative research on the history of the aristocracy and the development of local powers in the Kingdom of Italy between the 10th and 12th centuries. Particular attention is devoted to the relationship between aristocracies and public power, the importance of the distribution of fiscal assets, family structures, the different modes and intensities of affirmation of territorial lordships, and, finally, a critical analysis of the most recent hypotheses on the role of lordship in stimulating economic growth in the central centuries of the Middle Ages.

Il saggio propone una panoramica delle più recenti e innovative acquisizioni della ricerca sulla storia dell'aristocrazia del regno italico e lo sviluppo di poteri locali tra X e XII secolo. Particolare attenzione è dedicata al rapporto tra aristocrazie e potere pubblico, all'importanza della distribuzione dei beni fiscali, alle strutture familiari, alle differenti modalità e intensità di affermazione delle signorie territoriali e infine a un'analisi critica delle ipotesi più attuali sul ruolo svolto dai prelievi signorili nell'incentivare la crescita economica nei secoli centrali del Medioevo.

Middle Ages, 10th-12th centuries, Italy, aristocracy, fisc, public powers, families, territorial lordship, economy, economic growth, seigneurial levy, castles.

Medioevo, secoli X-XII, Italia, aristocrazia, fisco, poteri pubblici, famiglie, signoria territoriale, economia, crescita economica, prelievo signorile, castelli.

Maria Elena Cortese, Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna, Italy, mariaelena.cortese@unibo.it, 0000-0002-8908-6896

Referee List (DOI 10.36253/fup_referee_list)

FUP Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (DOI 10.36253/fup_best_practice)

Maria Elena Cortese, *Rethinking social and economic changes in the 10th-12th centuries: new approaches to aristocracy and local power in central-northern Italy*, © Author(s), CC BY 4.0, DOI 10.36253/979-12-215-1076-8.13, in Alberto Cotza, Giuseppe Petralia (edited by), *In Search of the High Middle Ages. Change and Continuity in 11th-12th-century Italy*, pp. 221-239, 2026, published by Firenze University Press, ISBN 979-12-215-1076-8, DOI 10.36253/979-12-215-1076-8

1. *Aristocracies and public powers*

The structure of aristocratic society and the forms of local power are unavoidable themes in a volume that aims to examine both the continuities and the changes that occurred during the central centuries of the Middle Ages. This is all the more pertinent given that, – after a lively season of research on the aristocracies of the Kingdom of Italy beginning in the 1970s, followed by a certain standstill around the year 2000 – this prolific field of investigation has, in recent years, witnessed an increase in case studies and, above all, the emergence of new interpretative paradigms that are reshaping the way we view this period.¹

The first issue to be addressed is the profile of the 10th-century Italian high aristocracy. According to the traditional perspective, a new group of marquisal and comital families emerged after the disappearance of the so-called *Reichsadel*. From the outset, this group appears to have differed visibly from the Carolingian aristocracy in terms of family structures, landholdings, and, above all, its relationship with public authority. That is to say, it would have been characterised, already between the 10th and 11th centuries, by a precise physiognomy: a marked tendency towards the dynastisation of titles, privatisation of assets linked to the original offices, cohesion around patrilineal axes, localisation in relatively circumscribed and clearly defined areas, and the development of seigneurial powers.²

However, it should be first of all pointed out that at least some kin groups already prominent in the Carolingian period enjoyed continuity. Moreover, during the struggles for the crown in the first decades of the 10th century, many protagonists were eliminated or excluded from power as a result of their political defeats, rather than because of their ‘structural inability’ to reshape spaces and practices of action.³ Indeed – in contrast to the traditional view, which emphasised the aristocracy’s antagonistic attitude towards central power – an important aspect emerges from the most up-to-date studies: the persistence of a public framework within which the aristocracy operated, relating both to the sovereigns’ ability to redefine the institutional circumscriptions of the kingdom and to their influence in concretely shaping the

¹ This article was developed as part of the collective research project PRIN 2022HFMCCY *The Age of the Knights. Knightly Pre-eminence, Local Societies and Powers: New Perspectives on the Italian Countryside (11th-13th Century)*, coordinated by Sandro Carocci and Maria Elena Cortese: <https://sites.google.com/view/theageofknights/home-page>. For a guide to the historiography on Italian aristocracies up to the early 2000s, see Collavini, “Vito Fumagalli.” For more recent studies, refer to the following notes. For a comparative approach between the Kingdom of Italy and other European regions, see Cortese, “Aristocrazie e incastellamento.”

² Fasoli, *I re d'Italia*; Fumagalli, *Il Regno italico*; Fumagalli *Terra e società*; Violante, “Alcune caratteristiche;” Nobili, Sergi, “Le marche,” *Formazione e strutture*; Sergi, *I confini*; Cammarosano, *Nobili e re*.

³ Bougard, *Le royame*, 248.

composition of the ruling elite.⁴ Research has so far focused mainly on Hugh of Provence's reign, during which a considerable redefinition of aristocratic hierarchies took place – primarily through the promotion of *homines novi*, i.e. middle-ranking aristocrats who had previously built up substantial landed bases and later gave rise to lineages with very long histories.⁵ In my view, however, another significant turning point that deserves careful reconsideration is the redefinition of the Italian aristocracy undertaken by Otto I after his accession to the kingdom. Although this process was certainly partial – some kin groups underwent a significant downsizing, but never retained biological and power continuity – the new ruler's action appears effective as a whole and was coordinated with a renewed assertion of control over fiscal assets.⁶

As far as this last aspect is concerned, the new approaches emerging from a recent branch of studies – devoted specifically to the fiscal patrimony in medieval Italy – have led to a radical reassessment.⁷ Indeed, the idea of a substantial transfer of public property to the aristocracies is no longer accepted, and still less the notion of its privatisation by the end of the 10th century (even if the tendency of the *potentes* to appropriate it in order to consolidate the basis of their eminence is obviously to be regarded as 'physiological'). On the contrary, it can now be stated that large landed estates belonging to the fisc – and probably entire districts, some of them rich in important raw materials and productive activities, such as mining in Tuscany and the Alps or salt production in coastal areas – remained under royal control for a long time. This explains why the sovereigns, and some high officials who inherited public powers were able to limit the growing prominence of the aristocracies by distributing and recovering these huge resources.⁸ Perhaps the most emblematic example of these dynamics is a double dowry arranged in 937, on the occasion of the betrothal of Hugh of Provence and his son Lothair to Bertha of Swabia and her daughter Adelaide respectively. In practice, the king entrusted several major imperial abbeys and a large part of the fiscal estates in the Po Valley and in Tuscany – which remained under royal control in the

⁴ See the pioneering studies of Rosenwein, "The Family Politics," and Rosenwein, "Friends and Family," and the more recent works by Bougard, "Du centre," Collavini, "Mutazione," and Tomei, "Spazi politici."

⁵ Bougard, "Entre Gandolfingi," 21-2; Cortese, *L'aristocrazia*, 136-9; Tomei, "Chiese," Vignodelli, *Il Filo a piombo*; Vignodelli, "La competizione."

⁶ For the Veneto: Castagnetti, "Le due famiglie;" Castagnetti, "Le famiglie comitali;" Castagnetti, "La titolarità." For Lombardy: Fumagalli, "I cosiddetti;" Pauler, "I conti;" Provero, "Spazi politici." For Piacenza: Bougard, "Entre Gandolfingi." For Emilia: Fumagalli, "Origini." For the Exarchate: Manarini, *I due volti*, 86-8; Cortese, "Sui sentieri." For the March of Tuscany: Cortese, *L'aristocrazia*, 132-5, Collavini, *Honorabilis*.

⁷ I refer to the PRIN 2017 research project *Fiscus. Fiscal Estate in Medieval Italy: Continuity and Change (9th-12th centuries)*, <https://www.sismed.eu/it/progetti-di-ricerca/fiscal-estate/> and the related database <https://fiscus.unibo.it/en/>.

⁸ Loré, Le Jan, et Bühner-Thierry, *Acquérir, prélever*; Collavini, et al., *Beni del fisco regio*; Bougard, et Loré, *Biens publics*; Collavini, Tomei, "Beni fiscali;" Collavini, Tomei, "Tra le città;" Lazzari, "Dotari;" Lazzari et al., "Beni e diritti;" Tomei, "Il sale;" Vignodelli, "Berta e Adelaide."

Ottonian period (and later, in Tuscany, under the authority of the marquises).⁹ It is also noteworthy that Otto I – despite the fact that the *Privilegium* theoretically restored the pope's rights over the Exarchate – assigned the *districtus* of Ravenna and the *comitatus* of Comacchio to Queen Adelaide, thereby excluding both the Roman pontiff and the archbishop of Ravenna, and bringing an area of great strategic and economic importance back under imperial control.¹⁰ Moreover, the policy of withdrawal and reorganisation of ecclesiastical property pursued by Otto III in the Italic kingdom from at least 997 onwards is becoming increasingly clear in the most recent research: the emperor's action thus appears less and less as the ideal dream of *renovatio imperii* and more and more as a decidedly concrete project.¹¹

Thus, the aristocracy in the 10th century – and well into the 11th – was by no means autonomous from public authority, since it needed to gravitate towards the courts in order to obtain lands, wealth, and power from them. The persistence of a 'centripetal' political action, in fact, largely depended on the circulation of fiscal assets, which rested primarily on revocable concessions and was thus subject to constant negotiation within the circle of those closest to the rulers.¹² This dynamic management of public assets meant that the concessions, even when granted by means of *diplomata*, did not ensure definitive possession: they could be reassigned to others and then returned, or even shared between different beneficiaries. This gave rise to fierce competition and, therefore, first, the need to secure confirmation of these assets through the issuing of a royal precept each time the sovereign changed; and second, a succession of disputes and judicial proceedings.¹³

Similarly, offices and the titles associated with them were not controlled continuously through transmissions from father to son, but were often held alternately and in competition with others very close to royal power. Only a few family groups succeeded in making their titles hereditary early on and converting at least some of the fiscal assets associated with the original public office into private property. For example, in Tuscany, offices appear to have been distributed among a large number of families and individuals in the middle of the 11th century, many of whom cannot be traced back to kin groups with a recognisable genealogical continuity.¹⁴

This new way of observing aristocratic behaviour and attitudes ultimately disrupts the prosopographical reconstructions of traditional historiography, which were rigidly conceived in dynastic terms and characterised by conventional family names constructed *a posteriori*. Emphasis is instead placed on

⁹ Bougard, "Les biens;" Vignodelli, "Berta e Adelaide."

¹⁰ Cortese, "Sui sentieri."

¹¹ See *Poteri, patrimoni, scritture* (in particular the essays by Cortese, Isabella, and Vignodelli).

¹² See note 8.

¹³ Lazzari, "Sugli usi;" Collavini, "Mutazione;" Cortese, "Tra Ravenna."

¹⁴ Several case studies in: Collavini, "Mutazione;" Cortese, *Signori*, 32-5; Tomei, "Famiglia, potere;" Tomei, "Adriatico Tirreno."

power networks, horizontal connections between kinship groups, and proximity to the kings. In this sense, current research marks a shift in perspective and invites us to consider the aristocracy, for most of the 11th century, not so much as a collection of cohesive and well-defined families, but as “a set of individuals who shared a social status and a network of relationships centered on the court, which allowed them to access positions and fiscal resources renegotiated in an assembly context”.¹⁵

Over the last two decades, there has also emerged an awareness that it is fruitful not to limit analysis to the high aristocracy alone. Attention has therefore been directed – in this period especially in Tuscany – to the broader level of the intermediate aristocracy, which becomes visible in Italian sources from the second half of the 10th century onwards.¹⁶ Despite variations in landed wealth among the kin groups, this was a clearly identifiable milieu, defined by shared forms of behaviour, family structures, spheres of political action, and, above all, close ties to public power.¹⁷ Furthermore, the case of Lucca – thanks to the abundance of surviving sources – has made it possible to evaluate certain turning points: in particular, the importance of entry into royal vassalage during the reign of Louis II, and the formation of marquisal vassalage, which benefited greatly from distribution of fiscal lands with the marquises Adalbertingi. For this social level too, the crucial conjuncture of the reign of Hugh of Provence is confirmed, while the crystallisation of the group can be identified in the Ottonian age, when the phase of enrichment and consolidation of the middle aristocracy reached its peak and it assumed a stable physiognomy that remained substantially unchanged until the final decades of the 11th century.¹⁸

While the picture is now fairly comprehensive for Tuscany, we can discern parallels in other regions of the kingdom, even reinterpreting cases that have already been studied in the past. For example, in the Milan area – where no comital or marquisal lineages had become consolidated – public powers lay in the hands of the very powerful archbishops. These figures, who came from the local aristocracy but were often elected with the decisive support of the royal power, maintained relations with some of the largest families of the Italian kingdom and took part in the redistribution of its resources.¹⁹ The families of the middle urban and rural aristocracy – the well-known *capitanei* – received from the archbishops lands and incomes, including tithes, scattered throughout various parts of the diocese.²⁰ They therefore possessed a ‘multi-zonal’ patrimonial structure, operated in a framework centred on the city, and

¹⁵ Collavini, “Mutazione,” 356.

¹⁶ For a classification of aristocratic levels, see Collavini, “Spazi;” Cortese, *Signori*.

¹⁷ Cortese, *Signori*; Cortese, *L'aristocrazia*; Delumeau, *Arezzo*; Tomei, *Milites elegantes*.

¹⁸ Tomei, *Milites elegantes*.

¹⁹ Del Tredici, “Castelli,” in particular for the families *de Intimiano*, *de Besate*, and *de Arsago*.

²⁰ Violante, *La società*; Keller, *Signori e vassalli*.

formed an elite “fully embedded in the hierarchies of the Italian kingdom”.²¹ Another clear example is the well-known case of the *da Bariano/da Maleo* in the Cremona area: an important kin group that, until the mid-11th century, had a multifocal structure, was active in urban contexts, and participated in the distribution of fiscal resources.²²

The consonances between the models developed for the middle Tuscan aristocracy and those of aristocratic society in areas formally outside the kingdom are also significant. I refer first of all to the Roman “old aristocracy”, that is, the dominant families in the city and territory between the 8th and the first part of the 11th century. Here too we find a clearly identifiable group, which produced the pontiffs themselves, had an assembly-based structure, and revolved around the Lateran Palace, from which emanated the principle offices, both secular and ecclesiastical. The landed wealth of this group was founded not so much on allodial properties as on emphyteutic concessions of land belonging to the urban churches, which in turn had received substantial donations of fiscal estates from the popes.²³ If we then turn Ravenna, the similarities are again striking. In the 10th century the Ravenna aristocracy gravitated around the archbishops – the holders of large amounts of former fiscal land – and based its power mainly on emphyteutic leases of land scattered across the Exarchate, which were granted by archbishops and urban churches. This situation seems to have taken shape in the third quarter of the 8th century – unfortunately the least documented period for Ravenna – when the region became independent of the Byzantine Empire and, at the same time, was not incorporated into the Frankish kingdom, but formally attributed to the Church of Rome. It is therefore plausible that the archbishops and the Exarchal aristocracy – which produced the archbishop as *primus inter pares* – shared the vast resources once administered by the Byzantine officials, chiefly through internal competition.²⁴

The recurring ‘attraction to the centre’ also prompts a reconsideration of the supposed early propensity to sever ties with the cities. It should be borne in mind, in fact, that the chronology varied considerably according to place and family. In Tuscany, for example, the trend towards ruralisation began in a few cases as early as the end of the 9th century, but the process continued over the following two centuries, and only from the late 11th century onwards can we consider the counts to have been firmly entrenched in the countryside.²⁵ In Piedmont, the shift from the rural district of Auriate to the *comitatus* of Turin enabled the Arduinici to construct an ambitious sphere of power, whose political and administrative focus remained the city until Adelaide’s death in

²¹ Del Tredici, “Castelli,” 13; see also the PhD thesis of Berardinello, “I capitanei.”

²² See the analysis by Violante, “Una famiglia” and the new interpretation by Tomei, “Ritorno.”

²³ Wickham, “Iuris cui existens;” Wickham, *Roma*.

²⁴ Cortese, “Patrimonio fiscale.”

²⁵ For Tuscany, see the considerations already expressed in Cortese, *L'aristocrazia*, 142-5. On this topic, see also Sergi, *I confini*, part II, chapter 5, and Provero, “Terre e case.”

1091.²⁶ In the area between Piedmont and Lombardy, the counts of Pombia – despite their incipient subdivision into three branches – continued to play an active role in urban life until the first half of the 12th century, placing members of their family on episcopal thrones in territories where they held extensive possessions and seigniorial rights.²⁷ In the March of Verona, the counts' public functions persisted for a long time, as did their presence in the cities as participants in judicial sessions until the first decades of the 12th century.²⁸ In eastern Lombardy, it was only after the crisis following the destruction of the imperial palace in Pavia that the Giselbertini counts abandoned their multizonal structure and concentrated their political interests in the territory of Bergamo; the same chronology can be observed for the *da Bariano/da Maleo*.²⁹ Finally, with regard to the middle aristocracy, studies on the March of Tuscya reveal the persistence of the situation crystallised in the previous century. This group continued to orbit around the traditional higher powers and – with only a few exceptions – to operate mainly within the cities, although it appears to have been increasingly interested in consolidating its landed holdings in the countryside. In fact, as already mentioned, until the crisis of the March in the final decades of the 11th century, the marquises retained the authority to revoke and to grant concessions of fiscal lands and offices.³⁰

2. Family structures

What has been said so far is further illuminated by the studies on family structures, which in recent decades have profoundly renewed basic concepts and methodologies. In the Italian historiography over the past century – beginning with the reconstruction presented by Cinzio Violante at an important conference held in Paris in 1974 – the idea has taken hold that in the Kingdom of Italy, unlike in the rest of post-Carolingian Europe, an early structuring into lineages, already clearly organised according to male privilege, occurred as early as the mid-9th century.³¹ However, several studies from the 1990s observed that most kinship groups maintained a relatively open and fluid structure. Particular emphasis was placed on the fact that the Italian genealogies reveal the absence of systematic forms of single-branch privilege and, more generally, the rarity of practices that deviated from the rule of egalitarian division among sons.³² In the new millennium, a distinctly fresh approach to the organisation, identity, and representation of aristocratic kinship has

²⁶ Sergi, *I confini*, part I, chapters 4 and 5.

²⁷ Andenna, "I conti," 58-61.

²⁸ Castagnetti, "La feudalizzazione," 731-2.

²⁹ Menant, *I Giselbertini*; Tomei, *Ritorno*.

³⁰ Cortese, *Signori*; Cortese, *L'aristocrazia*; Delumeau, *Arezzo*; Tomei, *Milites elegantes*.

³¹ For the traditional approach see Violante, "Alcune caratteristiche;" Violante, "Le strutture."

³² Tabacco, "Regno, impero;" Carocci, "Genealogie."

taken hold in Italian historiography.³³ Subsequent research has confirmed that such kinship groups cannot be understood through the models of the late medieval nobility, but rather appear as broad and flexible networks, not yet rigidly organised around vertical and agnatic ties: indeed, they often associated apparently unconnected groups and individuals who shared a presence in the public sphere and participation in the distribution of fiscal resources. If we turn to the intermediate level of the aristocracy, such practices become particularly evident. Once again, Tuscany offers a clear picture: before the 12th century, the horizontal expansion of genealogical trees is striking, and no limits seem to have been placed on this proliferation. Consequently, a dense network of patrimonial entanglements connected groups and individuals who apparently had no blood ties, yet were closely linked, probably through shared interests in the possession of clusters of fiscal assets.³⁴

Finally, onomastics also constitutes a litmus test for the fluidity of family structures. In Tuscany, for example, it was for a long time based on stocks of names that were anything but coherent. Furthermore, the adoption of toponymic surname became widespread at the end of the 11th century, whereas previously they were found only in few cases.³⁵ In northern Italy, among comital families, surnames appeared only when the lineages split into branches and each branch controlled only a portion of the original patrimony. This, however, occurs only in the late 11th century and, in some cases, not until the 12th century.³⁶ Even for the intermediate aristocracy, the idea of a clearly defined onomastic system as early as the end of the 10th century should be reconsidered, particularly in relation to the adoption of toponymic designations derived from castles – a phenomenon often linked to the earlier development of lordship compared to Tuscany.³⁷ Indeed, the sources present a highly varied picture, as fluctuations in the toponymic designations associated with different members of the same kin group were frequent, making it impossible to identify an unambiguous surname for the family.³⁸

Within this framework, the role of women and female relations – long underestimated by traditional historiography – emerges as particularly significant, both in the division and transmission of wealth and prestige and in the formation of alliances within circles close to public power. Among the middle Tuscan aristocracy, for instance, endogamous marriages were a crucial instrument for structuring political networks, transmitting wealth and status, and consolidating the sense of being to an elite group. For a long time, substantial family wealth was in fact granted to women through the *morgincap* and their

³³ Bougard, “Les Supponides;” Lazzari, “La rappresentazione;” Lazzari, “Una mamma.”

³⁴ Cortese, “Signori;” Cortese, “L’aristocrazia;” Cortese, “*Potens*;” Delumeau, “Arezzo;” Tomei, *Milites elegantes*.

³⁵ Collavini, “I cognomi;” Cortese, “Signori;” Tomei, *Milites elegantes*.

³⁶ Menant, “Les modes.”

³⁷ Menant, “Les modes;” Collavini, “I cognomi.”

³⁸ Guglielmotti, “I signori;” Tomei, “Ritorno,” and Tomei, “Famiglia.”

access to portions of both paternal and maternal patrimony. The middle aristocracy, moreover, appears to have been more conservative in these practices than the comital group: female agency, therefore, does not seem to have completely declined until at least the first half of the 12th century.³⁹

3. *Seigneurial powers*

To summarise what has been said so far: the 11th century is now generally interpreted as a phase in which aristocratic structures established in the previous century persisted in many respects, owing to the enduring influence of late Carolingian institutions. The moment of transformation – namely, the modes and timing of the development of autonomous seigneurial powers – has also been the subject of extensive study. It is therefore not my intention, nor would it be possible, to offer an exhaustive review of the historiography.⁴⁰ I will limit myself to noting that, in recent decades, research has produced a broadly shared understanding of this issue. In general, seigneurial rights did not fully develop as private powers between the 10th and 11th centuries, but later: that is, once traditional public powers had entered into a definitive crisis. Undoubtedly, therefore, in today's prevailing perspectives, the spotlight falls on the decades around the turn of the 1100s as a period of rapid political, social, and economic transformation across central and northern Italy.⁴¹ These conclusions clearly introduce a different chronology both with respect to the 'mutationist paradigm' of French historiography – which located around the year 1000 a marked rise in violence and the disintegration of public institutions of Carolingian origin – and with respect to the Italian historiography of the last century, which regarded territorial lordships as already widespread and consolidated over large areas of the Kingdom of Italy by the early decades of the 11th century.

However, we must be careful not to fall into the trap of flattening such broad and complex phenomena. In my view, it remains fruitful to attend to the nuances of the picture and to resist proposing an overly comprehensive and unarticulated model. The reconfiguration of local power, in fact, did not occur uniformly, and even its outcomes – the emergence of a well-defined and widespread territorial lordship – varied considerably. Firstly, two large areas of northern Italy stand out for the absence of significant territorial lordly powers: the principality of Trento and especially the patriarchate of Aquileia, where a strong continuity with Carolingian institutional and social structures can still be discerned.⁴² In Tuscany and Umbria, moreover, there were consid-

³⁹ See note 33 and Faini, "Aspetti for the middle aristocracy."

⁴⁰ See the overviews in Carocci, "Signoria rurale;" Carocci, "Signori e signorie;" Provero, *L'Italia dei poteri*.

⁴¹ The overall picture of this change is outlined in Fiore, *Il mutamento*.

⁴² *Il Patriarcato*; Fiore, *Il mutamento*, 23, 272; Castagnetti, "Le comunità;" Castagnetti, *Il comitato trentino*; Castagnetti, "Da Verona."

erable differences in the strength and diffusion of territorial lordships, which were particularly weak in the areas surrounding cities such as Pisa, Lucca, and Perugia. In these areas, forms of dominion appear increasingly to have been based on land concessions and on the control of peasant families bound by a heavy form of dependence that combined territorial and personal lordship (*homines, manentes, coloni*, etc.).⁴³ A similar situation can be observed in Romagna: a limited development of jurisdictional prerogatives among the comital lineages, a substantial absence of references to seigneurial levies, and a marked weight of personal dependence.⁴⁴ In Latium, across the vast area of the Agro Romano – an area as large as the entire *contadi* of some towns in Tuscany and the Po Valley – the development of seigneurial powers and the construction of castles did not occur until the end of the 12th century and beyond.⁴⁵ Finally, another extensive area, the territory of Milan, has come to light only recently. Here – contrary to a historiographical tradition “inclined to emphasise the lordly profile of the Milanese aristocracy” and to regard the *capitanei* “as holders of strong rural lordships” – seigneurial rights are scarcely documented, and it is difficult to identify lordships extending far beyond the original castle of origin, even in the more peripheral parts of the *contado*, whether among comital families, or within the group of *capitanei*.⁴⁶ More generally, however, it is important to emphasise – even in those areas where the seigneurial character of the aristocracy appears more evident – that the territorial dimension of lordship was not always fully developed. For instance, doubts arise when sources merely report that the owners of a castle were able to impose certain tributes on all those who sought refuge there.

In a close connection with the observations just made, I would like to conclude my essay by dwelling a little longer on the relationship between the development of territorial lordship and the rate of economic growth – a topic that has been examined in Italian historiography only over the past decade or so.

4. *Territorial lordship and economic growth*

It is generally accepted that, at least until the second half of the 11th century, the economic pressure exerted by landowners on their dependents remained relatively weak. Indeed, the aristocracies sustained themselves primarily through the direct management of landed estates and a relatively loose levy, mainly based on the collection of rents and tithes.⁴⁷ The exercise of sei-

⁴³ Collavini, “I signori;” Cortese, *Signori*; Cortese, *L’aristocrazia*; Tiberini, *Le signorie*; Tomei, *Milites elegantes*; Wickham, “La signoria.”

⁴⁴ Pallotti, *Castelli*.

⁴⁵ Wickham, “La mutacìon” and Wickham, “The origins.”

⁴⁶ Del Tredici, “Castelli,” 41, with references to recent historiography, in particular the studies of A. Rapetti, P. Grillo, and S. Bernardinello.

⁴⁷ Carocci, “Signoria rurale, prelievo;” Carocci, Collavini, “Il costo.”

gneurial rights, by contrast, represented a means of extracting a greater share of the surplus produced by peasants and of securing sufficient revenues to uphold the aristocratic status of kinship groups. As is well known, Duby had already emphasised the positive role of lordship in the expansion of the European economy, arguing that the new levies compelled peasants to increase production while providing the aristocracy and its entourages with the resources needed to stimulate demand for goods.⁴⁸ In the last decade, however, the crucial role of seigneurial pressure on peasants as one of the main drivers of economic growth has been reconsidered for Italy, with a substantially revised chronology – shifted forward by about a century in connection with the *mutamento signorile*. When the old public powers that had sustained the traditional redistribution system were severely weakened, the mechanism designed to ensure wealth and social prestige for a court-centred aristocracy collapsed. Consequently, landlords were compelled to exploit local resources in new ways in order to intensify the extraction of agricultural surplus. Recently scholarship has therefore emphasised, on the one hand, the rapid and irreversible privatisation of major landholdings and fiscal resources;⁴⁹ and, on the other, it has been observed that, from an economic point of view, it was not so much the imposition of new levies on dependent peasants that increased the mass of seigneurial revenue, but rather the extension of certain fees to the entire rural population, including allodiers who were previously exempt (of which there were many in Italy).⁵⁰ French historiography, for its part, has recently argued that the introduction of new seigneurial levies arose from the need to compensate for the loss of control over tithes, beginning around 1070, under the pressure of the Reform movement.⁵¹

It cannot be denied, however, that it is very difficult to quantify the weight of territorialised seigneurial levies through written sources and somehow ‘measure’ seigneurial economic pressure. Yet very few detailed studies have attempted a quantitative analysis based on data from written sources. Thus, a proper history of the seigneurial economy and the relative weight of the different forms of levy remains to be written, as does an analysis of the levy’s ability to adapt to peasant productivity.⁵² This is why hypotheses on the economic aspects of ‘seigneurial change’ have sought support in archaeological data. In particular, the relationship between the development of rural lordships and the transformations observed in castles has been examined. This is, firstly, because the level of investment in castle structures offers an indication of the economic resources available to the lords; and secondly, because it was

⁴⁸ Duby, *Le origini*.

⁴⁹ Collavini, “Mutazione.”

⁵⁰ Wickham, *L’asino*, cap. VI.

⁵¹ Overview in Mazel, “La réforme;” this idea is taken up for Italy in Fiore, “Building.”

⁵² See as general references the volumes *Pour une anthropologie* and *Calculs et rationalité*. Specific studies for Tuscany: Casini, “Le entrate;” Collavini, “Le basi;” Cortese, “I destini;” Tabarrini, “When did clerics.”

precisely around castles that the new system of levies was organised – one that assumed, or at least sought to assume, a territorial character. Scholars have therefore focused on the changes that marked the transition from an initial generation of modest castles – built mainly of wood and other perishable materials – to fortifications where stone construction became widespread, residential areas for the lords were established, and traces of more prestigious goods can be discerned.

These aspects have been emphasised especially for Tuscany, the most extensively studied of the Italian regions. They have been interpreted as signs of seigneurial mutation, namely the movement of many aristocratic families from the city to the countryside and the development of stronger local ties, which increased their ability to exploit the productive surplus between the late 11th and early 12th centuries.⁵³ In several recent overviews, moreover, the impact of new forms of levy that stimulated peasant productivity has been identified as an important factor in the economic development of central and northern Italy, a process made most tangible in the changing material structure of castles.⁵⁴

The argument is indeed fascinating. However, I believe that the connection established between rapid political/institutional developments and economic transformations reflected in the material structures of castles has perhaps been too simplistic. This is based on data that is not yet solid enough. Firstly, if we review the results of the archaeological excavations comprehensively, it becomes clear that the material data relating to the castles is inconclusive. The chronologies in the excavation reports are often vague, failing to distinguishing between the beginning and the end of the 12th century, and sometimes fluctuate considerably.⁵⁵ Above all, in most cases, these developments cannot be dated with certainty to any period earlier than the last decades of the 12th century.⁵⁶ The alignment between economic growth and the evolution of castle structures – as well as the development of new exchange circuits between the countryside and the city – thus seem to characterise the phase that Sandro Carocci proposed calling ‘third *incastellamento*’ rather than ‘sec-

⁵³ The rupture occurring in the decades between the late 11th century and early the 12th centuries has been particularly emphasised by Bianchi, Collavini, “Risorse,” Bianchi, “Archeologia della signoria,” Fiore, *Il mutamento*, 63 and ff., Fiore, “Building.”

⁵⁴ Carocci, “I tanti incastellamenti,” Carocci, “Nobiltà e pietrificazione,” Del Tredici, “Castelli,” Wickham, *L’asino*, chapter 6.

⁵⁵ A collective research, coordinated by Giovanna Bianchi, is addressing this issue: *The Times of Castles. Multidisciplinary Researches for a New Chronology of the Building Sites of Incastellamento (11th-12th centuries)*.

⁵⁶ This can be deduced, for example, from a review of the numerous castle excavation reports published in *Archeologia medievale*. Prevalent datings to the 12th century and beyond can be found in *Costruire lo sviluppo; L’incastellamento* (particularly the papers by Benente, Saggiaro and Varanini, Mancassola); *Mondi rurali; Il paesaggio pietrificato* (particularly the papers by Cantini and Cagnana). The initial results of the research *The Times of Castles*, mentioned in the previous note, are also showing that the 12th-century building phases in the castles are neither clearly visible nor monumental (Workshop held in Siena, 6-7 novembre 2025).

ond'.⁵⁷ In other words, many castles underwent a further evolution, marked by an effort to reshape settlements by selecting and expanding certain sites, accompanied by a wave of new foundations of large castles based on urban architectural models.⁵⁸ In short, the times do not coincide, and the transformation of ancient 'light' castles into more imposing, complex structures does not appear to be attributable to the phase known as *mutamento signorile*, with which there is a gap of at least three generations.

Secondly, the full development of stone architecture in castles by the beginning of the 12th century would not be consistent with the gradual growth of the regional economy in central and northern Italy, as detailed in recent studies. In fact, it is only after the mid-1100s, and often in the first half of the 13th century, that a new general economic complexity in the countryside becomes clearly perceptible. This can be estimated through a wide set of indicators, such as monetary circulation, elite consumption, production and trade of pottery, the presence of machinery and production facilities, and peasant material culture.⁵⁹

Thirdly, it should be noted that the hypothesis of an increase in territorially-based seigniorial levies as a crucial growth factor for the economy does not fit well with certain areas that experienced early development in Italy, such as those around Pisa and Milan. As already mentioned, much of the Pisan territory, for example, lacked territorial lordships altogether, while those of the Milanese *contado* were unusually few (and weak) ones.⁶⁰

More generally, I believe caution is required when connecting changes that could swiftly alter existing structures (over a period of a few decades) to the rate of economic change, which, during this period, would instead require a longer accumulation period before becoming effectively perceptible (over a period of several generations). As a first step, it seems essential to me to try to date the changes in the castles' structural and economic characteristics more precisely: should they be attributed to the end of the 11th century or the beginning of the 12th century, or rather to the middle of the 12th century, or even the beginning of the 13th century? These data could, of course, significantly affect some of the reconstructions proposed so far. It is equally important to identify and map the areas where such changes did not occur at all. For example, this issue has recently been raised for the Milan area, where written sources – though abundant – provide little evidence of monumental transformations in castles built during the previous period (unfortunately, archaeological data for this area remain scarce).⁶¹

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I believe that we should evaluate the economic weight of territorial lordships, which scholars have focused on

⁵⁷ Carocci, "Nobiltà," 94-5.

⁵⁸ Cortese, "Castrum."

⁵⁹ Wickham, *L'asino*, chapter VI.

⁶⁰ See note 46.

⁶¹ Del Tredici, "Castelli."

because they are more evident in our sources, in relation to the ‘extensive’ impact of numerous and pervasive, yet understudied, forms of domination within castle and village communities.⁶² I am referring to the pressure exerted on peasant production by local elites, particularly those who had transformed themselves in the context of the *mutamento signorile* by acquiring military status. This social group is much more visible in sources from the mid-12th century onwards, and was numerous, complex, and at the heart of social, economic, and political relationships – relationships that were highly significant yet remain little investigated. Still, we gain the impression that, in many places, it was precisely through knightly domination over villages that the most effective and cohesive forms of control and the most systematic levying of dues from peasants emerged.⁶³ In this regard, attention has been recently drawn to the countryside surrounding Milan, one of the areas experiencing the most tumultuous economic development in the 12th century.⁶⁴

Research on this social stratum, however, remains largely to be undertaken. The domination exercised by knights over the peasantry in the very countryside where they lived remains a vast and largely neglected issue in Italian and European historiography.⁶⁵ Yet a thorough investigation is necessary to achieve an accurate assessment of the forms of power and the relationships that actually ran through the countryside. This holds true both on the social side and on the economic one.⁶⁶

To conclude, I borrow the title of a book published a few years ago: the question of economic growth in the central centuries of the Middle Ages is undoubtedly “a historical theme that has not yet been exhausted”.⁶⁷ And it seems to me that one particularly open question concerns precisely the role of lordship as a driver of economic growth itself. Of course, I am unable at present to offer an answer to such a complex problem, but I am convinced that it would be extremely fruitful for future research to pursue this line of enquiry.

⁶² For the concept of the pervasiveness of lordship, see Carocci, “The Pervasiveness” and the paper by Carocci in this volume.

⁶³ For many villages in southern Italy, see Carocci, *Signorie*. Similar prerogatives also appear in studies of central Italy, such as possession of a certain number of peasant families bound by a specific, heavy form of dependence that combined territorial and personal lordship: *homines, manentes*, etc.

⁶⁴ Del Tredici, “Castelli” and Wickham, *L’asino*, 687–8.

⁶⁵ There has been very little research conducted in Italy, so our knowledge is based on rare case studies and observations scattered across essays that focus more generally on lordship and rural society. A preliminary overview of southern Italy can be found in Carocci, *Signorie*; one of *milites* and *masnadieri* in central and northern Italy in Cortese, “Rural Milites” and Cortese, “Le frange.”

⁶⁶ This is the aim of the PRIN 2022 research project *The Age of the Knights*: see note 1.

⁶⁷ *La crescita economica*.

Works cited

- Andenna, Giancarlo. "I conti di Biandrate e le città della Lombardia occidentale (secoli XI e XII)." In *Formazione e strutture dei ceti dominanti nel medioevo. Marchesi, conti e visconti nel Regno italico*, 57-84. Roma: ISIME, 1996.
- Augenti, Andrea, e Paola Galetti, a cura di. *L'incastellamento: storia e archeologia. A 40 anni da Les structures di Pierre Toubert*. Spoleto: CISAM, 2018.
- Bernardinello, Stefano. *I capitanei e la città. Rapporti sociali e azione politica dell'aristocrazia a Milano nelle sperimentazioni del potere urbano (metà XI secolo-1185)*. Tesi di dottorato di ricerca, XXXI ciclo. Università di Firenze, 2018.
- Bianchi, Giovanna. "Archeologia della signoria di castello (X-XIII secolo)." *Archeologia medievale*, numero speciale, [41] (2014): 157-72.
- Bianchi, Giovanna, e Simone Maria Collavini. "Risorse e competizione per le risorse nella Toscana dell'XI secolo." In *Acquérir, prélever, contrôler: les ressources en compétition (400-1100)*, a cura di Vito Loré, Régine Le Jan, e Geneviève Bühner-Thierry, 171-88. Turnhout: Brepols, 2017.
- Bougard, François. "Les biens et les revenus publics dans le royaume d'Italie (jusqu'au milieu du X^e siècle)." In *Biens publics, biens du roi. Les bases économiques des pouvoirs royaux dans le haut Moyen Âge*, a cura di François Bougard, e Vito Loré, 79-120. Turnhout: Brepols, 2019.
- Bougard, François. "Du centre à la périphérie: le 'ventre mou' du royaume d'Italie de la mort de Louis II à l'avènement d'Otton I^{er}." In *Urban Identities in Northern Italy, 800-1100 ca.*, a cura di Maria Cristina La Rocca, e Piero Majocchi, 15-31. Turnhout: Brepols, 2019.
- Bougard, François. "Entre Gandolfingi et Obertenghi: les comtes de Plaisance aux X^e et XI^e siècles." *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome - Moyen Âge* 101 (1989): 11-66.
- Bougard, François. *Le royaume d'Italie de Louis II à Otton I^{er} (840-968). Histoire politique*. Leipzig: Eudora Verlag, 2022.
- Bougard, François, et Vito Loré, éd. par. *Biens publics, biens du roi. Les bases économiques des pouvoirs royaux dans le haut Moyen Âge*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2019.
- Bougard, François. "Les Supponides: échec à la reine." In *Les élites au haut Moyen Âge: crises et renouvellements*, a cura di François Bougard, Laurent Feller, e Régine Le Jan, 381-401. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006.
- Bourin, Monique, et Pascual Martínez Sopena, éd. par. *Pour une anthropologie du prélèvement seigneurial dans les campagnes médiévales (XI^e-XIV^e siècles). Réalités et représentations paysannes*. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2004.
- Cammarosano, Paolo. *Nobili e re. L'Italia politica dell'alto medioevo*. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1998.
- Cammarosano, Paolo. *Il Patriarcato di Aquileia: uno stato nell'Europa medievale*. Udine: Camassima, 1999.
- Cantini, Federico, a cura di. *Costruire lo sviluppo. La crescita di città e campagna tra espansione urbana e nuove fondazioni (XII-prima metà XIII secolo)*. Firenze: All'Insegna del Giglio, 2019.
- Carocci, Sandro. "Genealogie nobiliari e storia demografica. Aspetti e problemi (Italia centro-settentrionale, XI-XIII secolo)." In *Demografia e società nell'Italia medievale*, a cura di Rinaldo Comba, e Irma Naso, 87-105. Cuneo: Società per gli Studi Storici di Cuneo, 1994.
- Carocci, Sandro. "Nobiltà e pietrificazione della ricchezza fra città e campagna (Italia, 1000-1280)." In *Construir para perdurar. Riqueza petrificada e identidad social. Siglos XI-XIV*, 81-142. Pamplona: Gobierno de Navarra, 2022.
- Carocci, Sandro. "The Pervasiveness of Lordship (Italy, 1050-1500)." *Past & Present* 256 (2022): 3-47.
- Carocci, Sandro. "Signoria rurale e mutazione feudale. Una discussione." *Storica* 8 (1997): 49-91.
- Carocci, Sandro. "Signoria rurale, prelievo signorile e società contadina (sec. XI-XIII): la ricerca italiana." In *Pour une anthropologie du prélèvement seigneurial dans les campagnes médiévales. Réalités et représentations paysannes*, éd. par Monique Bourin, et Pascual Martínez Sopena, 63-82. Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2004.
- Carocci, Sandro. "Signori e signorie." In *Storia d'Europa e del Mediterraneo*, vol. 8, *Il Medioevo (secoli V-XV)*. Popoli, poteri, dinamiche, a cura di Sandro Carocci, 409-44. Roma: Salerno Editrice, 2006.
- Carocci, Sandro. *Signorie di Mezzogiorno. Società rurali, poteri aristocratici e monarchia (XI-I-XIII secolo)*. Roma: Viella, 2014.

- Carocci, Sandro. "I tanti incastellamenti italiani." In *L'incastellamento: storia e archeologia*, 513-38.
- Carocci Sandro, e Simone M. Collavini. "Il costo degli statì. Politica e prelievo nell'Occidente medievale (VI-XIV secolo)." *Storica* 18 (2012): 7-48.
- Casini, Tommaso. "Le entrate e le risorse materiali dei conti Guidi negli anni '20 del secolo XIII: una stima complessiva." *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome - Moyen Âge* [Online] 132 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.4000/mefrm.6617>.
- Castagnetti, Andrea. "Da Verona a Ravenna per Vicenza, Padova, Trento e Ferrara." In *La vasallità maggiore del Regno Italico. I 'capitanei' nei secoli XI-XII*, a cura di Andrea Castagnetti, 345-491. Roma: Viella, 2001.
- Castagnetti, Andrea. *Il comitato trentino, la 'marca' e il governo vescovile dai re italici agli imperatori sassoni*. Verona: Libreria Universitaria Editrice, 1998.
- Castagnetti, Andrea. "Le comunità della regione gardense fra potere centrale, governi cittadini e autonomie nel medioevo (secoli VIII-XIV)." In *Un lago, una civiltà: il Garda*, a cura di Giorgio Borelli, I, 31-114. Verona, 1983.
- Castagnetti, Andrea. "Le due famiglie comitali veronesi: i San Bonifacio e i Gandolfingi-di Palazzo (secoli X-inizio XIII)." In *Studi sul medioevo veneto*, a cura di Giorgio Cracco, Andrea Castagnetti, e Silvana Collodo, 43-93. Torino: Giappichelli, 1981.
- Castagnetti, Andrea. "Le famiglie comitali della Marca Veronese (secoli X-XIII)." In *Formazione e strutture dei ceti dominanti nel Medioevo: marchesi conti e visconti nel Regno Italico (secc. IX-XII)*, 85-111. Roma: ISIME, 1996.
- Castagnetti, Andrea. "La feudalizzazione degli uffici pubblici." In *Il feudalesimo nell'alto Medioevo*, 723-819. Spoleto: CISAM, 2000.
- Castagnetti, Andrea. "La titolarità del comitato di Verona per il conte Egelrico (955-961) e l'incipiente dinastizzazione dell'ufficio da un documento del Mille." *Studi storici Luigi Simeoni* 8 (2003): 16-41.
- Collavini, Simone Maria, "Le basi e materiali della signoria guidinga (1075 c. - 1230 c.)." In *La lunga storia di una stirpe comitale: i conti Guidi tra Romagna e Toscana*, a cura di Federico Canaccini, 315-48. Firenze: Olschki, 2009.
- Collavini, Simone Maria. "I cognomi degli italiani nel Medioevo: un bilancio storiografico." In *L'Italia dei cognomi. L'antroponomia italiana nel quadro mediterraneo*, a cura di Andrea Addobbati, Roberto Bizzocchi, e Gregorio Salinero, 59-74. Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2012.
- Collavini, Simone Maria. *Honorabilis domus et spetiosissimus comitatus. Gli Aldobrandeschi da "conti" a "principi territoriali" (secoli IX-XIII)*. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 1998.
- Collavini, Simone Maria. "Mutazione signorile e trasformazioni economiche. Considerazioni a partire dal destino dei beni fiscali in Toscana." *Reti Medievali Rivista* 24, no. 1 (2023): 349-70.
- Collavini, Simone Maria. "Vito Fumagalli e le aristocrazie del regno italico." In *Il Medioevo di Vito Fumagalli*, a cura di Bruno Andreolli, Paola Galetti, Tiziana Lazzari, e Massimo Montanari, 265-88. Spoleto: CISAM, 2010.
- Collavini, Simone Maria. "I signori rurali in Italia centrale (secoli XII- metà XIV): profilo sociale e forme di interazione." *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome - Moyen Âge* 123 (2011): 301-18.
- Collavini, Simone Maria, e Paolo Tomei. "Fra le città. Sulle "fasce di eccezzuazione" nella Toscana alto e pieno-medievale (secoli VII-XIII)." In *Costruire gli spazi dell'aggregazione. Le dinamiche del confronto dall'antichità al medioevo*, a cura di Fabio Fabiani, Stefano Genovesi, e Francesco Gizzani Marcía, 217-40. Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2023.
- Collavini, Simone Maria, Vito Loré, Tiziana Lazzari, e Massimo Vallerani, a cura di. *Beni del fisco regio nell'Italia medievale: continuità e cambiamenti (secoli IX-XII)*, forthcoming.
- Cortese, Maria Elena. *L'aristocrazia toscana. Sette secoli (VI-XII)*. Spoleto: CISAM, 2017.
- Cortese, Maria Elena. "Aristocrazie e incastellamento. Il regno italico nel contesto europeo." In *Profili del secolo XI*, 183-211. Spoleto: CISAM, 2025.
- Cortese, Maria Elena. "Castrà e terre nuove. Strategie signorili e cittadine per la fondazione di nuovi insediamenti in toscana (metà XII-fine XIII sec.)." In *Le Terre Nuove*, a cura di David Friedman, e Paolo Pirillo, 283-318. Firenze: Olschki, 2004.
- Cortese, Maria Elena. "I destini di un gruppo dominante: la media aristocrazia del territorio fiorentino tra XII e XIII secolo." In *La mobilità sociale nel Medioevo italiano. 4. Cambiamento economico e dinamiche sociali (secoli XI-XV)*, a cura di Simone Maria Collavini, e Giuseppe Petralia, 27-64. Roma: Viella, 2019.

- Cortese, Maria Elena. "Le frange inferiori della cavalleria nelle campagne toscane: scutiferi e masnaderii tra inquadramento signorile e mobilità sociale (secc. XII-XIII)." *Archivio storico italiano* 179, no. 1 (2021): 3-41.
- Cortese, Maria Elena. "Patrimonio fiscale e struttura sociale a Ravenna (secc. IX-X)." In *I beni del fisco regio nell'Italia medievale: continuità e cambiamenti (secoli IX-XII)*, a cura di Simone Maria Collavini, Tiziana Lazzari, Vito Loré, e Massimo Vallerani, forthcoming.
- Cortese, Maria Elena. "Potens ac nobilis matrona. Gisla figlia di Rodolfo (Firenze, secolo XI)." In *Ritratti di donne: una Storia di esperienze. Saggi per Paola Guglielmotti*, raccolti da Tiziana Lazzari, e Isabella Lazzarini, 89-108. Genova: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 2024.
- Cortese, Maria Elena. "Rural Milites in Central and Northern Italy between Local Elites and Aristocracy (1100-1300)." In *Social Mobility in Medieval Italy (1100-1500)*, a cura di Sandro Carocci, e Isabella Lazzarini, 335-52. Roma, Viella, 2018.
- Cortese, Maria Elena. *Signori, castelli, città. L'aristocrazia del territorio fiorentino tra X e XII secolo*. Firenze: Olschki, 2007.
- Cortese, Maria Elena. "Sui sentieri del sale. Proprietà, risorse e circuiti economici tra Comacchio e Ravenna (secoli IX-X)." *Reti Medievali Rivista* 23, no. 1 (2022): 81-119.
- Cortese, Maria Elena. "Tra Ravenna e il Delta: patrimoni, risorse e poteri (secoli IX-XI)." *Studi di storia medioevale e di diplomatica*, n.s. 8 (2024): 387-406.
- Del Tredici, Federico. "Castelli, chiese, mutazione signorile e crescita economica. Milano e il suo territorio nei secoli XI-XII." *Reti Medievali Rivista* 25, no. 1 (2024): 7-54.
- Delumeau, Jean Pierre. *Arezzo. Espace et sociétés, 715-1230*. Roma: École française de Rome, 1996.
- Duby, Georges. *Le origini dell'economia europea. Guerrieri e contadini nel Medioevo*. Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2004.
- Faini, Enrico. "Aspetti delle relazioni familiari nel Fiorentino: il mutamento tra i secoli XI e XIII." *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen-Âge* 121, no. 1 (2009): 137-57.
- Fasoli, Gina. *I re d'Italia (888-962)*. Firenze: Sansoni, 1949.
- Feller, Laurent, éd. par. *Calculs et rationalités dans la seigneurie médiévale. Les conversions des redevances entre XI^e et XV^e siècles*. Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2009.
- Fiore, Alessio. "Building the 'Feudal Revolution'. Power, Buildings, Economic Resources, and Aristocratic Identities in Central and Northern Italy (c. 950 - c. 1150)." In *After the Feudal Revolution Power, Local Societies, and Change from the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries*, a cura di Christoph Haack, Annette Grabowsky, and Steffen Patzold, forthcoming.
- Fiore, Alessio. *Il mutamento signorile. Aspetti di potere e comunicazione politica nelle campagne dell'Italia centro-settentrionale (1080-1130 c.)*. Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2017.
- Franceschi, Franco, a cura di. *La crescita economica dell'Occidente medievale: un tema storico non ancora esaurito*. Roma: Viella 2017.
- Fumagalli, Vito. "I cosiddetti 'conti di Lecco' e l'aristocrazia del regno italico tra IX e X secolo." In *Formazione e strutture dei ceti dominanti nel Medioevo. Marchesi, conti e visconti nel Regno Italico (secoli IX-XII)*, 113-24. Roma: ISIME, 1996.
- Fumagalli, Vito. *Le origini di una grande dinastia feudale. Adalberto-Atto di Canossa*. Tübingen: De Gruyter 1971.
- Fumagalli, Vito. *Il Regno italico*. Torino: UTET, 1978.
- Fumagalli, Vito. *Terra e società nell'Italia Padana. I secoli IX e X*. Torino: Einaudi, 1976.
- Giovannini, Fabio, e Alessandra Molinari. *Il paesaggio pietrificato. La storia sociale dell'Europa tra X e XII secolo attraverso l'archeologia del costruito. Archeologia dell'Architettura* 26 (2021).
- Guglielmotti, Paola. *I signori di Morozzo nei secoli X-XIV un percorso politico del Piemonte meridionale*. Biblioteca della Società Storica Subalpina, 206. Torino: Deputazione subalpina di storia patria, 1990.
- Isabella, Giovanni, e Corinna Mezzetti, a cura di. "Poteri, patrimoni, scritture. L'abbazia di Pomposa tra Esarcato e Regno (secoli IX-XI). Una introduzione." *Studi di storia medioevale e di diplomatica* 8 (2024): 241-7.
- Keller, Hagen. *Signori e vassalli nell'Italia delle città. Secoli IX-XII*. Torino: Utet, 1995.
- Lazzari, Tiziana. "Dotari e beni fiscali." *Reti Medievali Rivista* 13, no. 2 (2012): 123-39.
- Lazzari, Tiziana. "Una mamma carolingia e una moglie supponide: percorsi femminili di legittimazione e potere nel regno italico." In *C'era una volta un re...*. *Aspetti e momenti della regalità*, a cura di Giovanni Isabella, 41-57. Bologna: Università di Bologna, 2005.

- Lazzari, Tiziana. "La rappresentazione dei legami di parentela e il ruolo delle donne nell'alta aristocrazia del regno italico (secc. IX-X): l'esempio di Berta di Toscana." In *Agire da donna. Modelli e pratiche di rappresentazione nell'alto medioevo europeo (secoli VI-X)*, a cura di Maria Cristina La Rocca, 129-49. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007.
- Lazzari, Tiziana. "Sugli usi speciali dei beni pubblici: i dotari delle regine e i patrimoni dei monasteri." In *Biens publics, biens du roi. Les bases économiques des pouvoirs royaux dans le haut Moyen Âge*, éd. par François Bougard, et Vito Loré, 443-52. Turnhout: Brepols, 2019.
- Lazzari, Tiziana, et alii. "Beni e diritti del fisco regio nell'Italia medievale: una ricerca interdisciplinare." *Studi di storia medioevale e di diplomatica* 6 (2022): 359-77.
- Lazzari, Tiziana, e Lorenzo Tabarrini, a cura di. "Dinamiche economiche e fisco regio. Strategie gestionali e circuiti redistributivi fra IX e XIII secolo." *Reti Medievali Rivista* 24, no. 1 (2023), 235-435.
- Loré, Vito, Régine Le Jan, et Geneviève Bührer-Thierry, éd. par. *Acquérir, prélever, contrôler: les ressources en compétition (400-1100)*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2017.
- Manarini, Edoardo. *I due volti del potere. Una parentela atipica di ufficiali e signori nel regno italico*. Milano: Ledizioni, 2019.
- Mazel, Florian. "La réforme grégorienne: un nouvel ordre social et seigneurial (milieu-XI^e-XIII^e siècle)." In *Nouvelle histoire du Moyen Âge*, éd. par Florian Mazel, 291-320. Paris: Seuil, 2021.
- Menant, François. "I Giselbertini, conti della contea di Bergamo e conti palatini." In Menant, François. *Lombardia feudale: studi sull'aristocrazia padana nei secoli X-XIII*, 39-129. Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1992.
- Menant, François. "Les modes de dénomination de l'aristocratie italienne aux XI^e et XII^e siècles: premières réflexions à partir d'exemples lombards." *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen-Âge* 107, no. 2 (1995): 535-55.
- Molinari, Alessandra, a cura di. "Mondi rurali d'Italia: insediamenti, struttura sociale, economia. Secoli X-XIII." *Archeologia medievale* 37 (2010), 11-287.
- Nobili, Mario, e Giuseppe Sergi. "Le Marche del Regno Italico: un programma di ricerca." *Nuova rivista storica*, 65 (1981): 399-405.
- Pallotti, Riccardo. *Castelli e poteri signorili nella Romagna settentrionale (secoli XI-XII)*. Cesena: Il Ponte Vecchio, 2018.
- Pauler, Roland. "I conti di Lomello." In *Formazione e strutture dei ceti dominanti nel medioevo*, 187-99. Roma: ISIME, 1988.
- Provero, Luigi. *L'Italia dei poteri locali. Secoli X-XII*. Roma: Carocci, 1998.
- Provero, Luigi. "Gli spazi politici dell'aristocrazia nella Lombardia carolingia e postcarolingia (secoli IX-X)." In *Un ponte tra il Mediterraneo e il Nord Europa: la Lombardia nel primo millennio*, a cura di Giuliana Albini, e Laura Mecella, 233-47. Milano: Milano University Press, 2021.
- Provero, Luigi. "Terre e case dell'aristocrazia: distribuzione sul territorio e usi sociali (secoli VIII-XI)." In *Città e campagna nei secoli altomedievali*, 843-61. Spoleto: CISAM, 2009.
- Rosenwein, Barbara. "The Family Politics of Berengar I (888-924)." *Speculum. A Journal of Medieval Studies* 71 (1996): 247-89.
- Rosenwein, Barbara. "Friends and Family, Politics and Privilege in the Kingship of Berengar I." In *Portraits of Medieval and Renaissance Living: Essays in Memory of David Herlihy*, ed. by Samuel K. Cohn Jr., and Steven A. Epstein, 91-106. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1996.
- Sergi, Giuseppe. *I confini del potere. Marche e signorie fra due regni medievali*. Torino: Einaudi, 1995.
- Tabacco, Giovanni. "Regno, impero, aristocrazie nell'Italia postcarolingia." In Giovanni Tabacco, *Sperimentazioni del potere nell'alto medioevo*, 95-118. Torino: Einaudi, 1993.
- Tabarrini, Lorenzo. "When did clerics start investing? Abbot Uberto and the economics of the monastery of S. Michele di Passignano (c. 1190 - c. 1210)." *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia* 2 (2018): 399-434.
- Tiberini, Sandro. *Le signorie nell'Umbria settentrionale. Perugia e Gubbio, secc. XI-XIII*. Roma: Ministero dei Beni Culturali, 1999.
- Tomei, Paolo. "Adriatico Tirreno. Sui rapporti fra i marchesi di Tuscia, Pomposa e l'area deltizia (secoli IX-XI)." *Studi di storia medioevale e di diplomatica* n.s. 8 (2024): 357-82. <https://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/SSMD/article/view/23210>
- Tomei, Paolo. "Chiese, vassalli, concubine. Su un inedito placito lucchese dell'anno 900." *Mé-*

- langes de l'École française de Rome - Moyen Âge* [Online] 126, no. 2 (2014). <https://journals.openedition.org/mefrm/2037>
- Tomei, Paolo. "Famiglia, potere e mutamento: una società per domus." In *Eliten und Reformen. Kirchenreform, Réforme grégorienne, Riforme ecclesiastiche*, hrsg. von Alessio Fiore, Thomas Kohl, und Tristan Martine. Berlin: De Gruyter, forthcoming.
- Tomei, Paolo. *Milites elegantes. Le strutture aristocratiche nel territorio lucchese (800-1100 c.)*. Reti Medievali E-Book, 34. Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2019.
- Tomei, Paolo. "Ritorno a Maleo. Forme della parentela e caratteri dell'azione aristocratica nella Lombardia tra X e XI secolo." *Studi di storia medioevale e di diplomatica* 7 (2023): 53-78. <https://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/SSMD/article/view/20272>
- Tomei, Paolo. "Il sale e la seta. Sulle risorse pubbliche nel Tirreno settentrionale (secoli V-XI)." In *La transizione dall'antichità al medioevo nel Mediterraneo centro-orientale*, a cura di Giovanni Salmeri, e Paolo Tomei, 21-38. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2020.
- Tomei, Paolo. "Spazi politici e strutture parentali nella galassia carolingia. Gli Adalberti fra Baviera, Toscana e Provenza." *Archivio storico italiano* 181, no. 4 (2023): 685-727.
- Vignodelli, Giacomo. "Berta e Adelaide: la politica di consolidamento del potere regio di Ugo di Arles." *Reti Medievali Rivista* 13, no. 2 (2012): 247-94.
- Vignodelli, Giacomo. "La competizione per i beni fiscali: Ugo di Arles e le aristocrazie del regno italico (926-945)." In *Acquérir, prélever, contrôler: les ressources en compétition (400-1100)*, éd. par Vito Loré, Régine Le Jan, et Geneviève Bührer-Thierry, 151-69. Turnhout: Brepols, 2017.
- Vignodelli, Giacomo. *Il filo a piombo. Il Perpendicularum di Attone di Vercelli e la storia politica del regno italico*. Spoleto: CISAM, 2011.
- Violante, Cinzio. "Alcune caratteristiche delle strutture familiari in Lombardia, Emilia e Toscana durante i secoli IX-XII." In *Famiglia e parentela nell'Italia medievale*, a cura di Georges Duby, e Jacques Le Goff, 19-82. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1977.
- Violante, Cinzio. "Le strutture familiari, parentali e consortili delle aristocrazie in Toscana durante i secoli X-XII." In *I ceti dirigenti in Toscana nell'età precomunale*, 1-57. Pisa: Pacini 1981.
- Violante, Cinzio. "Una famiglia feudale della 'Langobardia' tra X e XI secolo: i 'da Bariano'/'da Maleo'." *Archivio storico lodigiano* 22 (1974): 5-128.
- Wickham, Chris. *Lasino e il battello. Ripensare l'economia del Mediterraneo medievale, 950-1180*. Roma: Viella, 2024.
- Wickham, Chris. "Iuris cui existens." *Archivio della società romana di storia patria* 131 (2008): 5-38.
- Wickham, Chris. "La mutación feudal en Italia." In *Los orígenes del feudalismo en el mundo mediterráneo*, ed. por Antonio Malpica Cuello, Tomás Quesada, y Pierre Toubert, 31-45. Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1994.
- Wickham, Chris. "The origins of the signoria in central Lazio, 900-1100." In *Uomini, paesaggi, storie. Studi di storia medievale per Giovanni Cherubini*, a cura di Duccio Balestracci, et al., 481-94. Siena: SeB, 2012.
- Wickham, Chris. *Roma medievale. Crisi e stabilità di una città. 950-1150*. Roma: Viella, 2013.
- Wickham, Chris. "La signoria rurale in Toscana." In *Strutture e trasformazioni della signoria rurale nei secoli X-XIII*, a cura di Gerhard Dilcher, e Cinzio Violante, 343-409. Bologna: il Mulino, 1996.

Maria Elena Cortese
 Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna
 mariaelena.cortese@unibo.it
 ORCID: 0000-0002-8908-6896