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SAVONA, A PROVINCIAL CAPITAL:
FROM AUGUSTUS UNTIL THE 2014 REFORM

Introduction: Savona is indefensible. - In the last few years, whenever someone discussed about the abolition or integration of the Provinces (or, more precisely, about the Provincial Councils), Savona used to have an embarrassing frequency between the more indefensible. Any criterion was assumed *a priori* Savona always comes among the condemned Province: by extension, by demography of the sole capital, for overall demographics, for history or economic or prestige or other peculiarities, and so on.

In particular, Savona was cited as a deplorable example in the newspapers of major metropolises in the Northwest (which, as is well known, directly govern many local newspapers throughout Italy, even in Liguria itself). The recurring question was: “how is it that Savona is a provincial capital?”

Often, that question becomes an accusation for any proponent of Italian “New Regions”¹: with a kind of clumsy syllogism, we could summarize: “If even Savona is a provincial capital, then why not even ***”, to be completed at will, with any urban center with more inhabitants of our small coastal town (60,595 in 2014). As we shall see, Savona was elevated to the rank of 1927, which among other things avoids journalists from facing spinous comparisons with the era of Remo Gaspari (creation of Molise Region, erections of Isernia and Pordenone) or denigrating newborns Provinces whose “kingmakers” are not only still alive, but at the apex of their power.

I would like to present this brief contribution as a “tile” of a collective “mosaic”, trying to figure out how Savona has come to the rank of capital. With the conviction that some elements of *longue durée* - according to Fernand Braudel’s words – from ancient times, can illuminate our current understanding.

“A Tale of Two Town”: *Between the Alps, the Apennines and the Mediterranean.* Without ending in the more bias version of geographic determinism, we can not avoid noting some elements that characterize these places in the *longue durée*, beyond the ephemeral events that are like the foam of the long waves of the sea.

In the northernmost gulf of the Mediterranean Sea, there are only two passages to handle the traffic to the Po Valley and Central Europe: in the low pass between the Alps and the Apennines (called Altare’s Bocchetta or even Colle di Cadibona: 459 meters above the Sea level) or near the Giovi Pass (472 meters), just 40 km away, to the west of Mount Beigua. The other places are clearly disadvantaged: the good havens are between high mountains peaking over the sea (Portofino, Portovenere, Noli, Levanto, Porto Maurizio) and the rare plain places are not connected to good pass (Albenga, Ceriale, Ventimiglia). According to a scheme² drawn up by Tiziano Mannoni in 2007, the Ligurian passes would be seventeen, but taking into account even of simple mule tracks, absolutely not easy to cross. Among these seventeen passes, at least five are concentrated around the two main Genoese streams, Bisagno and Polcevera.

¹ Anthology of the arguments and even of the particular phraseology of these subjects in Castelnovi (2012).

² Mannoni (2007, p. 9). The combination of the Ligurian and the Ligurian ports has been studied several times by Massimo Quaini, since 1971. Ground communications between individual Ligurian communities were strongly impeded by the morphological structure of the territory: in 1806 the Marzari-Pencati recorded at least 40 promontories “invalicabili” (Quaini, 1972, p. 341).

No wonder: from the earliest time these two places (Bocchetta and Giovi) have been inhabited by primitive human societies, who took advantage of the position to exchange goods and ideas, both with other Mediterranean peoples and continental hinterland.

According to the definition formulated by SOIUSA (*Suddivisione Orografica Internazionale Unificata del Sistema Alpino*: also known as *International Standardized Mountain Subdivision of the Alps*) in 2009, The Alps begin exactly from Savona (and Monte Carlo). This definition breaks the apparent homogeneity of the current Liguria Region, in two distinctly distinct geological and pedological aspects: an “Alpine Liguria” from Savona to the border – characterized, *inter alia*, by a greater amplitude of the mountainous area, with much more marked and abundant peaks – and an “Apennine Liguria” from Genoa to Tuscany (seamlessly at least to the Arno Valley, which perhaps contributes to explaining the success of the Genoese family Cybo ruling Massa in the Middle Ages). At a metaphorical level, it is not entirely incorrect to say that Genoese and Savonese belong to two different worlds in perpetual motion of confrontation and encounter: at least in the sense of tectonic plaques.

Two destroyed cities: Genoa by Mago Barca (205 B. C.) and Savona by Andrea Doria (1528 AD). – In collective memory, there are two dates at the two worst contrasts between Savona and Genoa: between the Punic wars and the late Middle Ages. Here, I will not deepen the etymologies of ancient toponymy. There was an ancient population known to the Romans as *Sabates*, who had *Vada Sabatia* among its main cities *Savo* (*Savo*, *Savonis*, of the second declination), reported, even with a mistake of location far from the sea, on the *Peutingerman Tabula*. *Sabates* were allies (or, perhaps, rulers) of other peoples who inhabited the coasts of the Alpes-Maritimes: in particular the *Inguani* (with their capital, *Alba Inguanorum* now Albenga) and the *Intemelii* (with their capital, *Alba Intemeliarum*, then **Bintimiliarum*, now Ventimiglia).

The *Ligures* have always inspired strong fear among the Romans, who are always in difficult to fight in the mountains (and in the sea). But while the *Genuates* remained faithful to Rome during the Punic wars, the *Sabatii* along with other Ponente tribes allied themselves with the Hannibal Barca army and the fleet of Hasdrubal Barca, and in 218 BC they won in the battle of Trebbia, alongside the war elephants. A Carthaginian general, Mago Barca (the third son of Hamilcar Barca), in 205 BC raided and rushed to the ground the urban building of Genoa and deposited the booty precisely in the city that had helped him, Savona.

But then, as everyone knows, the Romans won the war (defeating Zama, in 202, also a significant military contingent of *Sabates*) and supported their *Genuates* allies at the expense of their enemies. In creating the administrative subdivision, the Romans chose the *Genuates* port as the capital, both because it is faithful and because it is easier to reach (both from the sea and from the mainland, through the expansion of the *Via Aurelia* from Rome to Pisa to the new regional capital Genoa). In the words of Pliny, then pass in proverb, *Regio IX* went from the river Varo to the river Magra; that means, from Mentone to Luni. And to the north, up to the river Po in the stretch between *Augusta Taurinorum*/Turin (excluding) and *Derthona*/Tortona (excluding *Placentia*/Piacenza): “*patet ora Liguria inter amnes Varum et Macram XXXI Milia passuum. Haec regio ex descriptione Augusti nona est.*” (Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, book III, chapter 49, edited about seventy years later). In the maritime route of Antonine Itinerary, in IV or V century, only three sites receive the definition of “portus” and are *Portus Delphini*/Portofino, Genoa and *Vada Sabatia* (Vado, not Savona).

Around 920, the Ligurian and Piedmont territories were divided by Berengario the First (King of Italy and, later, Holy Roman Emperor) in three “Marks” crossing the mountains: the “Marca Arduinica” at the far west (the present provinces of Imperia, Cuneo and Turin), the “Marca Obertenga” to the east (from Genoa to the Magra river at the Tuscan border, and to the north to the Po with Bobbio and Ottone to Parma) and “Marca Aleramica”, with Savona, Acqui and Casale beyond the Bocchetta pass.

The commercial revolution of the Middle Ages described by Roberto Sabatino Lopez allows many port cities to grow simultaneously: near to Savona, the very small town of Noli stands at the Marinara Republic and gets a bishop’s seat. But its development is blocked by the adversary orographic conformation (whose

paradigmatic asperity is also remembered by Dante: *Purgatory*, IV, 25). In contrast, Savona along with Vado becomes one of the largest Mediterranean ports in the 14th century. The Savonese founded a “Libero Comune” (Free City) after having purchased in 1191 the rights to urban property from the last heirs of the Del Carretto marquess family.

In all the medieval nautical ports and charts, Savona is highlighted with red ink and the flag (red with silver pole) as one of the largest ports in the Mediterranean: equal, by rank and capacity, to the Genoese port. We can read that Savona “has a large chain port, made by force” (ie: artificial). The portolans describe the Savona’s *Darsena* (Dockyard) and the excellent food, including wine; as well as the possibility of being a “*caricatore*” (charger) for goods from the fairs of a larger “Piedmont” (Chieri, Piacenza) and even of the Flanders.

In the fifteenth century, Savona is a remarkable port of worldwide rank and hosts a flourishing economy comparable to that of other Maritime Republics. Suffice it to think that Michele Da Cuneo, Savonese merchant and Columbus travel companion, in 1494 would prefer the gains he made from cabotage (principally: sugar trading) rather than the uncertain results of Atlantic shipping. Between 1471 and 1513, the wealthy and powerful family of the Della Rovere of Savonese expresses two popes, particularly known for territorial investments and buildings: Francesco Della Rovere (Sixtus IV, born in Celle Ligure) and his nephew Giuliano (Julius II, born in Albisola).

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Savona (or rather, some local patrician families) sat on several occasions against the Genoese “Prince”, Andrea Doria: first supporting the Fieschi conspiracy, and then allying with the French. For a personal revenge, or perhaps for a purposeful calculation to annihilate the economic competition, in 1528 Andrea Doria disposed that the patrician towers of Savona and the defensive walls had risen to the ground and that, using the rubble, the harbor was completely buried (following the example of his ancestor, Oberto Doria, who buried the Pisa harbor in 1290, after the battle of Meloria). The episode, in metaphorical form, is recalled by a beautiful fresco made in 1533 in Doria Palace by Perin del Vaga: *Fighting between Gods and Giants* (also known as *Zeus Lightning Titans*, or *Gigantomachy*): Jupiter’s face obviously resembles Andrea Doria, who strikes his enemies falling to the ground. Without the harbor, Savona’s population declined by 60% in a few decades.³

The news about the buried port is not immediately referred to by all modern portolans and nautical charts, which often uncritically repeat previous information, such as Girolamo Azurri or Bartolomeo Crescenzi. Meanwhile, Genoa goes to “El Siglo de los Génoveses” as a world metropolis (ally of catholic empire of Spain), and her rank - equal to Rome - is depicted in the maps of the time.

Urbanly destroyed and economically ruined, Savona does not refuse to support any enemy of Genoa and in particular the Savoy dynasty, supporting every kind of conspiracies; or even the claims of the king of Spain in 1637 or the bombardment of Louis XIV’s fleet in 1684.

Savona as an intermediary capital. – Both before and after the Dorian reform, in the Republic of Genoa there was only one capital city, Genoa, which directly administered every single territory; and the territories were not grouped around peripheral capitals that could either oppose Genoa or, worse, become a hegemonic guide for a revolt. So in general, the Genoese Senate spoke directly with the small community of Alassio or Stella, without there being an intermediate level in Savona.

The Savonese territory was a “*Podesteria*” (ruled by a “*Podestà*”, sent from the capital Genoa, as a chief magistrate, without an election by savonese), without preeminence over the other subdivisions in the Ponente. The latest scholars speak of a colonial attitude by the Genoese Senate to the Ligurian territories. At the end of the eighteenth century there were twelve roads in the republican territory, but only one was “*carrettabile*”, really useful for wagons with wooden wheels (Quaini, 1981, pp. 181-191), the one that linked the Genoese

³ See the dramatic comparison between the economic and social conditions of Savona in 1476 and in 1536 by Varaldo (1985): the collapse of the port ruins textile fabrications due to lack of raw materials (occupying 40% of the workforce).

monopoly of the port shores with the Novi terminal in the Po Valley, crossing the Bocchetta Pass. All the other were simple mule trackers, suitable for retail and cost-free (Redoano, 1989, p. 19), but an obstacle to any mass operation, commercial or even military.

At the end of the 18th century, this situation was overturned by the rationalization of public affairs according to the theories of the Enlightenment and exemplified by the practice of French revolutionaries in the neighboring transalpine territory. In 1797, the independent “democratic” Ligurian Republic, inspired by Jacobin, was already subdivided into fifteen Departments, one of which, called “Letimbro” according to the new “Parisian fashion” (preferring names derived from rivers and mountains), had its own Savona’s capital. But all the power still emanated from the capital Genoa: Department number 1, called “Center”, to underline its hierarchical predominance.

The new “Ligurian Republic” (since the name no longer “Genovese”), while inevitably acknowledging the hegemony of the huge and rich dominant Capital, however, provided for a structured administrative redistribution according to the French model with a three level of hierarchy: Jurisdictions (15 to 20), Cantons (150 to 200) and Municipalities. In 1799, a total reorganization of the same territory increased the (renamed) twenty-five *Circonscrizioni*: one of which, with its capital, Savona, got the name “District of Colombo”. The subsequent reordering of 1803 compiles the *Circonscrizioni* (and *Capoluoghi*), reducing the number from 20 to 6: now that of Savona encompasses the Finalese (called “*Arene Candide*”, meaning “White Sands” from an archaeological site). But the deeper revolution would take place in 1805, when Napoleon aggregates the Ligurian territory directly to the metropolitan empire with capital Paris. With a short stretch of pen, Genoa (which had been an independent capital⁴ for at least seven centuries!) was degraded to a departmental office of the same rank as Chiavari, Nice, or precisely Savona, the capital of the department now renamed “Montenotte”(in honor of the first battle won by the young artillery colonel).

It is said that the new capitals should be accessible by “a day on horseback” from all over the territory: an experiential and non-abstract measure, considering mountains and rivers to cross. The criterion did not only serve to encourage the comfort of the *nouveau citoyen*, who could go to protest the cadastre or testify in court, but above all because the horse-riding police (ussars and dragons) could quickly quell any attempt at reactionary insurrection.

In the field of infrastructure of the road network, a series of “revolutionary” interventions (Giontoni, 2007, p. 328) began between 1806 and 1813, resulting in an increase in the supply of work for indigenous people. For *l'Empereur* the priority was to ensure logistics between Paris and Naples (at least) without being dependent on the blockage of British fleets (so different from the *ci-devant* Maritime Republic).

After the king of Savoy received as a lovely gift from the plenipotentiaries of the Vienna Congress the territory of the pre-existing Republic (in contravention of the same criteria of Restoration, which in theory would have to bring all the States of Europe back to the *statu quo ante*), the work ceased in all the yards that were not explicitly useful for Piedmont military control: only those on the Giovi road between Genoa and Alexandria continued (ended in 1821) because judged useful to send soldiers to suppress any insurrections, as would be the case in 1849. Or those for the coastal road to the east, useful for military logistics between Turin and the new military port of La Spezia (concluded in 1825), but without expansion to the “dangerous” Tuscan border (in opposition to the Napoleonic approach which tended to unify the space beyond borders). But the Napoleonic experience had thrown the seed of a new “modern” awareness: in the future, it would not have been easier to maintain peripheral cities that, like Savona, have resumed the taste of international connections at capital level.⁵

⁴ On the resentment that struck the former capitals of the pre-existing peninsular states (Turin, but also Parma, Modena, Bologna, Milan, Naples, Venice and even Rome): Meriggi, 1996, p. 21.

⁵ Assereto, 1994, p. 166: «To the humiliation of the ancient Dominant was to counter the satisfaction and almost the rematch of the suburban cities, especially those who, like Chiavari and Savona, had received dignity as departmental headquarters and could therefore confront Genoa on a level of almost parity», at least theoretical (without prejudice to the disparity in demographic and economic terms).

Between 1814 and 1847 there were numerous attempts to reorder the Kingdom of Sardinia's "*Dominio di Terraferma*" (meaning "continental possession"): Paola Sereno analyzes at least six «with an almost obsessive attention to the provincial rather than the communal [...] more political than functional [...] aimed at control»: Sereno, 1999, p. 5). A constant element seems to have been to try to minimize the role of Genoa, which as an "alternative capital" put Turin in the shadows both for the historical role and for the economic prospects in the present and in the future. This Piedmontese approach offered, at least in theory, the opportunity to redeem the "other" Ligurian cities, suffocated by Genoa's egocentrism: or at least according to the writings of Giorgio Gallesio (finalese) or G.B. Spotorno (albissolese) from 1814.

In 1815 three Divisions: Genoa, Savona and Sarzana. The ancient Republic suddenly ceases to be autonomous: «from a real State to a mere statistic» (Castelnovi, 2009, p. 77). Shortly thereafter, in 1818, two Divisions (Nice and Genoa), with Savona downgraded to the simple capital of "Mandamento". With the "*Regie Patenti*" (royal Letters Patent) of October 30, 1847, the sovereign had the erection of Savona to the rank of chief of division, like Nice and Genoa: even though it was part of the "Duchy of Genoa", which, however, existed only at the theoretical level.

In those years, the hostility between Ponente and Genoa is also confirmed by electoral choices. The colleges of the Tigullio and Spezzino elect with a certain degree of "catapulted" candidates from the old capital, while the colleges of Savona and Imperia prefer to entrust candidates from Piedmont: Cavour, Baudi of Vesme, Thaon de Revel, Solaro, Ricotti (Assereto, 1994, p. 215, see also footnote 31, p. 175).

Finally, in 1859, Prime Minister Urbano Rattazzi wanted to aggregate the territory of the *Oltregiogo* (literally "Beyond the Mountains") to his own electoral constituency in Alexandria, taking advantage of the absence of parliamentary controls given by the contingent war situation: so, without a vote of assembly or referendum consultation, Rattazzi disposed of an administrative reorganization that meant reducing the Ligurian territory to a thin strip of coast with only two capitals, both maritime: Genoa and Porto Maurizio.

Giovanni Assereto, a savonese historian, comments with these words the subtraction of the *Oltregiogo*: «so that Liguria flattened definitively towards the sea, in today's configuration: in spite of the cities of the Ponente, who would have always sought to this day Sub-region Liguria-Piedmont, administratively and economically autonomous compared to Genoa» (Assereto, 1994, p. 183). Coupled by this new regional conformation to the gigantic and too close former capital, Savona's aspirations seem to have come to a dead end in 1859.

The twentieth century of Savona: a "long century". By paraphrasing the well-known title of Eric Hobsbawm, one may say that Savona has known an era of early industrialization since the end of the nineteenth century: so much so that we could talk about a "long twentieth century" between the Unity of Italy, and today.

Between 1859 and 1927, there seems to be nothing to do with Savonese ambitions. But we can seize the seeds of a long preparatory work, played mainly by a prominent figure: Paolo Boselli, Senator from Savona and several times minister, «authoritative parliamentary and tenacious advocate of industrial interests in Liguria» (Doria, 2007, p. 223; see also Veneruso, 1996).

In 1927, Savona was proclaimed "Capital of Province" by Mussolini. It was not a sudden dictator's inspiration. It was the crowning of a long preparation, carried out by an entire city and its economic élite, led by a prominent historical figure: the only Savonese who has ever held the post of President of the Council of Ministers (he resigned after Caporetto, in 1917, having always shared the approach of General Cadorna).

In January 1888, shortly before becoming Minister of Public Education, Boselli founded the "*Società Savonese di Storia Patria*" (Savonese Society for Homeland History): just in time for the celebrations of Columbus Discoveries in 1892. Among the collaborators, important names such as Assereto, Astengo, Varaldo, Gandoglia, Bruno, Barrili, Poggi. In those years Genoa emerged as a merchant port, but also for human flows - both to African colonies (Assab and Abyssinia, involving names such as Rubattino, Saponese, Issel Genoese) and the "colonies of emigrants" in the Americas, forming imposing communities in New York, Uruguay and Argentina. The port of Savona also grew in the same period, helping to dispose of freight

traffic at least in part. Senator Boselli represented the support of the Savonese to the colonial policy brought forward by the “Sinistra Storica” (Liberal Historical Left) and in particular by Francesco Crispi (Meriggi, 1996, p. 76), focusing on important industrial investments in the area.

In 1923 La Spezia, with its strategic military port, became provincial capital: in 1927, the same goal was achieved (thanks to the long work of Boselli and his *entourage*) for Savona, with all that it has in terms of employment, public buildings and peripheral offices of the Public Administration, infrastructure and induced economy. The presence in an urban center of all these structures created numerous opportunities for work at the expense of other surrounding cities, increasing urbanization and obviously the abandonment of the countryside. This was evident especially in Liguria, where the phenomenon - well-known even before the 1970s, albeit rarely contrasted - was exacerbated by the presence of precarious logistics. In a sense it was also a matter of countering the tendency towards emigration (especially towards the Americas) and to attract internal immigration (from the countryside and from the south).

A provincial symbol. - In 1927, obtained the erection at the provincial capital, Savona must choose a symbol and a motto. The symbols (as reminds us of a long list of geographic studies from Gottmann to Dematteis) have an important role in the identity definition. In the case of Savona, the dispute over Columbus origin, played directly or through Cogoletto, seems to be very relevant; designed to counteract the thesis of genovesity. The origins of this belief were the studies of Giulio Salinero (1602), the poems of Chiabrera (very famous in the beginning of the 17th Century⁶), then resumed by many (from Tiraboschi in 1794, from Galeani Napione in 1808, from Irving in 1828 but all refused by the abbot Spotorno, though native of Albisola, in 1818). They were the years of colonial euphoria: in the west, Oneglia and Porto Maurizio have been merged under the new exciting name of “*Imperia*”, which in truth means its etymology from the *Impero* stream torrent and not from the colonial destinies of the Fourth Shore.

As a symbol they chose the Columbus Caravel, to support the somewhat cramped thesis of a savonese origin of the famous explorer. The so-called “natural” anti-heraldic choice for the coloration maybe look very modern for the time.

The motto in turn is born under the sign of the challenge: “*par paribus*”, “equal among peers” means (or rather: it means) that finally Savona will be not inferior to Genoa (and Imperia and La Spezia), as if, this were the only important thing.

The lack of an effective symbol is a symptom of an intrinsic weakness that induces to ask how it is possible that a city without a significant economy, without a significant history, without a demographic dimension or an eminent position could have been elevated to the rank of provincial capital. The problem is interesting because, in its gray “*mediocritas*”, Savona has for decades constituted the classic example invoked by any other city: since it seemed to have no peculiarities other than being (according to the official denomination) “the Chinotto Town”. In 2004, the municipal councilor for tourism and production, along with the Slow Food association, wanted to formalize the world’s role of Savona as the City of Chinotto, with reference to the scented and corroborating Chinese plant which, from the 16th century, provides here the best fruits. It was an ephemeral soap⁷ bubble, both for the reactions of many other carbonated beverage producers and

⁶ «Non perché umile in solitario lido // ti cingono, Savona, anguste mura, // fia però, che di te memoria oscura // fama divulgbi, o se ne spenga il grido; [...] // E qual sentier su per l'Olimpo ardente // al tuo Colombo mai fama rinchiude?» (Chiabrera, 1605, p. 13, meaning: “Oh Savona, it will not happen that Fama tells you of dark memories, or mutes the declamation, just because narrow walls enclose you on a humble and lonely shore [...] There is perhaps a path to the Olympus, that Fama does not open to your son Columbus?”). In the following verses, Chiabrera also celebrates the two popes of Savona («i tuoi Pastor del Vatican»: your shepherds in the Vatican).

⁷ Even soap, at least in theory, would be an original Savonese commodity, at least according to the easy etymology in the French *savon* (from which the English *soap*): the famous Marseille soap would only be a late imitation of «saponi alla maniera di Genova» (Ciciliot, 2001, p. 47), that means, generally “Ligurian”. The Savona/*savon* assonance never fails to be captured by French visitors, such as the Chabrol in 1807: the presence of aromatic plants, flowers and oil could (in theory, at least) make Savona similar to Grasse, famous for Provençal perfumes. Today – if the symbols help shape the geographic identity – the huge smokestacks of Italsider, painted in

because it was an elite but weak presence (few small and small intermediary producers on the spot). If I mention this story here, it is because I find it useful to highlight - in contrast - the absence of a real driving resource, as Fiat could have been in Turin or Ilva in Taranto⁸. Certainly, the Savona and Vado complex offers a port that competes (rather than synergy) with Genova and Voltri: both to steal freight traffic (starting from the established Fiat preference since Alberto Teardo's era) and to subdue passenger traffic, with Costa Cruises who prefer to disembark tourists in Savona despite having direct management of the Aquarium of Genoa.

Towards the inevitable merger. - Between 2008 and 2011, the issue of the abolition of the Provinces has affected public opinion. In any case, any criterion had been chosen, both by population, by capital and by extension, the result would always be to include the Province of Savona among those to be abolished.

In 2011, even a series of corrections were proposed (including the rescue of provinces to the foreign border, such as Sondrio and Imperia), but also with those Savona remained among the provinces to abolish. Genoa obviously maintains a level - albeit under the new definition of "Metropolitan City" - because her size (and for the civil port); La Spezia with its military port is saved because - as said by the newspapers - "it does not confine itself with other provinces in the Region": as if there were no examples of *exclaves* or whether Emilia and Tuscany were foreign States.

Since 2014, however, there is no more talk of abolition but of "unions". The hierarchical level continues to exist, even if elected only by elected politicians (no longer by the sovereign people). As it turns out, Savona and Imperia will rule in the *condominium*, sharing office locations and delivering services. Judging by the newspapers, today almost no one in Savona seems to be agitated for the abolition of the Province (especially in comparison with other situations, much tighter). Partially because it is a perceived step as inevitable; partially because, in the end, it is known that most offices and functions will continue⁹. In conclusion, «Liguria would remain a fragmented region, a "non-region" torn by belligerents "*campanilismi*", the most unpardonable of which is perhaps that of its metropolis» (Assereto, 1994, p. 215).

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white and red (the colors of the medieval Savonese coat of arms) are well visible from the freeway and suggest other odors to memory.

⁸ In Savona, steel mills had lost importance already in the mid-1950s, in conjunction with the collapse of State orders also because of the absence of wars (colonial or otherwise): "between 1953 and 1955 were dismissed more than one third of the 3,500 workers of the Ilva Industries in Savona" (Doria, 2007, p. 276).

⁹ With the words of a successful song: «As in Province // that seems all over, then it starts again» («*come in Provincia // che sembra tutto finito, poi ricomincia*»: Lorenzo Cherubini, *Sabato*, 2014).

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