The vine is a Mediterranean plan, cultivated in the Po Valley since prehistoric times, as can be seen from numerous archaeo-
logical findings; however, it was only during the Middle Ages that vine-growing assumed a greater importance with the diffusion of Christianity, the theological-liturgical contents of which contributed to an enormous expansion of cultivated areas. The most recent historical research confirms this reality, permitting a development study, also with respect to the Lombardy region. Upon the depression of the first centuries of the Middle Ages, a first significant recovery in vine-growing took place in the Carolingian Age, to be continued even after the year One Thousand, primarily testified by the funds of the great monastic communities such as the Benedictines of S. Giulia of Brescia. However, it was during the XII and XIII centuries that vine-growing made an exceptional expansion, favoured by the development of the urban society and the introduction of new vines which radically modified the picture of European ampelography. The different varieties of vines, reported in sources, were distinguished for the first time and called by names (schiava, nostrano, groppello, luglienga, vernaccia, moscatello, etc.), selected vines were planted, and the consumer taste changed, becoming more refined. On this basis, the cultivation and wine-making techniques partially changed, adequately experimented during the Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries until new development during the Modern era.

Diffused almost everywhere in Lombardy during Middle Ages, the vine was especially cultivated in the Pre-Alpine hill area, pedologically and climatically suitable for grape maturing: areas which have been occupied by important vineyards already from the VIII and IX centuries. Recently, historiography has made enormous progress on these subjects even if a few areas - including the Milanese area - are still to be studied.