

Zeitschrift: Histoire des Alpes = Storia delle Alpi = Geschichte der Alpen
Herausgeber: Association Internationale pour l'Histoire des Alpes
Band: 29 (2024)

Rubrik: English Summaries

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English Summaries

Mauro Cortelazzo, Local Markets and Supraregional Distribution of Soapstone Handworks of the Aosta Valley: between Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages

The production of vases, pots, and millstones out of soapstone in the Aosta Valley provides interesting evidence for a microhistory of craftsmanship. Located on the edge of settlement areas, which over time grew into a prestigious and high-profile commercial activity, these were rural production districts, which operated what today would be described as niche manufacturing. Their products travelled hundreds of kilometres to be sold on a wide range of markets or regional fairs. Given a highly articulated commercial distribution, it is not easy to identify which and how many figures played a role from the moment these products were crafted to the moment they were used. Still, no doubt their presence created an intense network of brokering and interchange.

Nadia Botalla Buscaglia, On the Trade of Soapstone Millstones in the Middle Ages. Notes towards Retracing Trade Routes and Settlement Dynamics in the West Biellese Region

Without claiming to be exhaustive, this contribution aims to present some reflections around the trade of soapstone millstones or grindstones in the Aosta Valley. More particularly, the paper will refer to the settlement dynamics of a territory situated between the two areas of Canavese and Biellese. In mediaeval times, these dynamics seemed to attract a certain political and economic interest at least partly justified by the demands for control over the circulation of such goods.

Alberto Lovatto, Alessandro Zolt, «Nessuna nazione può vantarlo migliore». The International Trade Network of Valsesia's Jew's Harp Manufacturing

Because of its uniqueness, the history of Jew's harp production in Valsesia is highly significant both in anthropological terms – especially because of its ethnomusicological and organological aspects – and in historical terms, because of the activities connected to manufacturing and trading of its products. This relevance becomes all the more obvious if we consider its ancient origins (latter half of the 15th century), the vast spread of its export network, which reached as far as the Americas, and finally the number of manufactured products, which at the peak of activity of the smithies easily exceeded a million of instruments a year. Our research could not have done without local archival sources, both public – notably the State Archive of Varallo Valsesia – and private, such as correspondence in the possession of descendants of the protagonists involved.

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Niccolò Caramel, Books and Prints Across the Alps. The Commercial Circuits of the Tesini Pedlars (17th–19th Century)

Between the 17th and the 19th century, a few small communities of the Tesino valley, in the Trentino Alps, created one of the most dynamic and influential networks of itinerant book and print sellers on the continent by exploiting the variety of opportunities offered by European trade infrastructure and transportation available across the Alps. Based particularly on notarial documentation, the article focuses on the supralocal and international sales circuits promoted by travelling salesmen with their trades, on the growing importance the Tesino valley within the international print market, and on the role played by the many actors involved in the publishing market, especially by commercial agents and the Remondini printers from Bassano.

Enrico Rizzi, Towards a Mapping of Livestock Fairs in the Walser Alps: Middle Ages to Early Modern Age

The introduction of livestock fairs towards the end of the Middle Ages was a fundamental stage in the economic history of the Alps. As a result, livestock improved and new breeds spread that were increasingly suited to the alpine climate. This paper focuses on fairs attended by the Walser at high altitudes as well as in the Central Alps. Held on religious holidays or during the descent from the mountain pastures, they were an opportunity for trade between villagers from distant valleys, connected by a network of “minor” alpine passes. The Macugnaga fair – held for centuries in mid-August near the village church at the foot of Monte Rosa – is emblematic of a high-mountain livestock fair. Cattle breeders from the Valais arrived there through the Monte Moro Pass. Its his-

tory is intertwined with that of climate change (the “Little Ice Age”): crossing the pass, in fact, was often hindered by the advance of glaciers.

Roberto Fantoni, Trade Flows of the Fairs of Riva and Varallo (Valsesia) between the 16th and the 17th Century

Records on fairs are preserved in two villages of the Sesia Valley. One is Riva, located at the foot of Monte Rosa and along the main road axis that went beyond the borders of the valley through the Valdobbia Pass. The second is Varallo, the main town at the valley bottom. A wealth of documents, comprising contracts drawn up by Varallo notaries during the trade fairs, help us define in great detail the type, volume and commercial routes of the two fairs between the 16th and the 17th century. Riva remained the site of commercial exchanges volumetrically limited to single heads of cattle and with a catchment area of the contractors extending to the Aosta valley at most. On the contrary, in the same period, the autumn fairs of Varallo recorded a significantly greater commercial volume and a much larger catchment area of the contractors.

Alessandro Celi, Managing an Alpine Market in the Modern Age. The Case of Aosta

The organisation of markets in Aosta from the 16th to the 18th century is described using the documentation of the Regional Historical Archive, Aosta, more particularly the *Fonds Ville*. This contained, among other things, the minutes of the City Council and the urban regulations approved by the Savoy sovereigns. An analysis of these documents, complemented by information available on the location of the markets in the city, helps us reconstruct the events related to the city trade. At the beginning of the 16th century, city trade was characterised by a favourable attitude towards the presence of foreign merchants in the city. From the 17th century, on the other hand, foreign merchants came to be regarded with increasing hostility, both for economic and for confessional reasons.

Mirella Montanari, Markets and Money Market at Gozzano and on the Southern Shores of Lake Orta in the Late Middle Ages

Based on the ongoing analysis of an unpublished notary source (preserved in the State Archives, Novara), the paper presents some initial considerations on the relationship between markets and credit activities in the form of land-guaranteed loans. By analysing the Register of *imbreviaturae* (i.e., notarial acts *en minute*) of notary Bernardo Mughetti (Gozzano, 1472–1484) – which certify the sale and purchase of real estate and land, money loans based on land or property as collateral, tenancy, exchange of land, last wills and testaments, dona-

tions, arbitrations, agistments and dowry settlements – our ultimate aim is to outline an economic and social profile of the prince-bishopric of Novara of the Lake Orta Riviera in the 15th century.

Marie-Claude Schöpfer, Kaspar Stockalper vom Thurm: Great Entrepreneur at the Simplon Pass

Kaspar Stockalper vom Thurm (1609–1691) launched his entrepreneurial career by organising the escort of the Princess of Carignan to Domodossola in 1634. Benefiting from the geopolitical and the national economic situations, Stockalper began to dominate economic life along the Simplon Pass route. As a successful exponent of Alpine entrepreneurship, he promoted a massive increase in transit trade from his residence in the little town of Brig, at the foot of the Pass. This, after a prolonged downturn phase, not only injected fresh energy to the Pass but also helped revitalise the economy as a whole. Stockalper proved to be particularly innovative with his comprehensive exploitation of the pass route on both sides of the border, to the benefit of his entrepreneurship. By setting up a network of connections to the neighbouring Val d'Ossola he gave a properly targeted boost to the flow of goods. These bustling activities transformed the Simplon into an important European trade route, whose centrepiece led from Brig to Domodossola and played the key role in Stockalper's business model.

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Giovanna Tonelli, Across the Alps, to the Heart of the Continent. Forwarders Operating in Milan in the Early 17th Century

The essay focuses on those forwarders who – in Milan in the first half of the 17th century – ensured the placement of Lombard products on the international market as well as the supply of foreign goods to Spanish Lombardy and to any States that ordered their supplies from Milan. We have retraced the activity of forwarding agents, examined these companies' business relations with their homelands, and highlighted how the path of upward mobility of some families entailed investing in works of art (palaces, chapels, paintings, valuable objects) that we can still enjoy today when we wander around the centre of cities where they operated, and visit churches and museums.

Maria Anna Bertolino, An Approach to Alpine Food Heritage Based on Two Food Crops in the District of Entremont (Canton of Valais)

This paper reflects on the preservation, revival and safeguard of two crops (red berries and cereals for baking), with their related social and cultural practices and know-how, in the mountainous region of the Entremont. The research was conducted in 2021 and 2022 at the *Centre régional d'études des populations*

alpines (CREPA) in Sembrancher (Switzerland), also funded by *Living ICH. Cross-border governance instruments for the safeguarding and valorization of the Living Intangible Heritage* (under the Interreg Italy-Switzerland 2014–2020 programme). Sidelined by hay meadows, the two crops have left little trace today. Yet, the cultural, social and economic values of red berries and cereals seem to be worth reconsidering, especially since food is being reassessed as intangible cultural heritage.

Matteo Di Tullio, Mining in Val di Scalve. Institutions and Economic Practices in a Valley of the Bergamo District in the Early Modern Period

The aim of this article is to contribute to the history of iron and steel production in the Alps by analysing the local mining practices in a valley of the Bergamo district in the early modern period. We first reconstruct the peculiar institutional forms, the fiscal and jurisdictional privileges and the economic context of the Val di Scalve. Then, an analysis of local statutes and notarial deeds helps us shed light on the multilayered networks of relations, the plurality of actors and the range of diverse professions involved in the exploitation of the rich iron mines. The article presents some of the initial findings of a broader research programme designed to study the relationship between iron mining and manufacturing activities and the various local economic and ecological needs.

