

Zeitschrift: Itinera : Beiheft zur Schweizerischen Zeitschrift für Geschichte = supplément de la Revue suisse d'histoire = supplemento della Rivista storica svizzera

Herausgeber: Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Geschichte

Band: 24 (2002)

Rubrik: English summaries

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English summaries*

Othmar Pickl:

The organization of trade in the Habsburgian eastern Alps during the late middle ages and the early modern period

Drawing on extended research in letters of merchants, account books and toll registers, the chapter reviews the main routes of both east-west and north-south long-distance trade in the wider context of the eastern Alps during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Besides a discussion of volumes and goods transported, it provides a wealth of information on trade techniques (such as packaging, weight measures, credit practices) and transport costs.

Danubian trade served mainly to link Swabia and Nuremberg with Austria and Hungary. It nevertheless related to the Alpine area in two ways. First, as the economic position of Venice underwent a decisive decline in the late sixteenth century, imports of spices increasingly originated from the Dutch entrepôt and reached Austria by way of Nuremberg and the Danube, rather than via the passes of the Alps, which increasingly specialized on the imports of mass goods. Second, the Danube and its southern tributaries were of major importance in provisioning the Alps with grain from lower Austria and Hungary, a fact of particular importance for the development of the mining districts of Tyrol located close to the Inn river that was used as a waterway at this time.

The major trans-Alpine routes in the eastern Alps were the Tauern route across the Radstädter-Tauern, the Semmering and the route connecting north-eastern Italy with western Hungary via Ljubljana and Ptuj. Located at the foot of the Alps, Ptuj emerged as a major trading center at the crossroad of different trade routes. It mediated large flows of cattle exports from Hungary into northern Italy. Complementary trade flows, which were in part handled by merchants of Ptuj themselves, consisted mostly of textiles from southern Germany and northern Italy. Burghers of Ptuj, therefore, constituted a wealthy merchant community whose members can be retrieved in a number of major trading centers, such as Nuremberg. At the same time, a considerable number of Italian merchants, particularly from the area of Bergamo, resided in Ptuj. Serious disruptions — such as the increase of taxes in the Habsburgian territories and wars with the Ottoman empire — led to a displacement of Hungarian cattle exports to a southern route through present-day Bosnia towards the late sixteenth century.

* Responsibility for this section lies with the editor.

Laurence Fontaine:

Social structure and regional economy in three Alpine regions during the eighteenth century

This essay starts by reviewing three contrasting experiences of regional specialization in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, namely, the Briançonnais, the Biellese and the Beaufortin. All three areas were characterized by a predominance of smallholding, and all three combined agriculture with non-agricultural activities and emigration, albeit in varying degrees. The Briançonnais experienced the development of commercial cattle raising from the seventeenth century onwards, which was primarily fostered by demand from the military sector (cheese, meat, horses). This process went hand-in-hand with a growing inequality with respect to land ownership. In parallel, peddling and cotton processing became major activities among the lower classes. It was reinforced by political developments that led to the creation of a strong trade barrier between the Dauphinois and the Piedmont after the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which disrupted traditional patterns of exchange with the Northern Italian plain and demanded a reorientation of the local economy. Peddling, for instance, became concentrated on the book trade and the sale of haberdashery and was led by a local elite who organized a dependent workforce allied to them through kinship and credit relationships.

The Biellese presents a proto-industrial region oriented towards the manufacture of woollen cloth. The author argues that the organization of this sector closely resembled the one of peddling: The major merchants were present on the local level part-time at best, but seemed to use informal networks of kinship and clientage to organize a large dispersed workforce. The Beaufortin, finally, concerns an area situated on the north-western slope of the Alps where the frequency of rainfall made possible an early specialization on cattle raising and dairying, which was stimulated by demand from the military sector during the Thirty Years War. Again, this process went together with a strong increase in social inequality. A few local merchants and notables accumulated the great majority of pasture land and rented it out to tenant farmers who used it to raise cattle and to produce hard cheese. The mass of the population practiced subsistence agriculture and earned income by keeping the cattle of the large entrepreneurs during winter time. Among the elite, involvement in this pasture economy was frequently blended with peddling, as several individuals from the area rose to importance in the commercialization of clocks and jewelry manufactured in Geneva.

In comparing these regions, three similarities stand out: Firstly, specialization is never total, but pluri-activity prevails, at least on the level of the region as a

whole, but sometimes also at the level of the individual village and the individual household; secondly, pluri-activity makes possible a shift from one activity to another as a response to economic fluctuations and changes in the institutional environment; and, thirdly, the different activities performed within a particular regions partly depend on each other. In particular, peddling can play important role for the commercialization of the products of domestic industry. These common features can be explained by power relations and family strategies that appear typical of the central and western parts of the Alps. Parenthood and credit relations provide the base for the formation of extended clientage networks which can be used by the elite both for political ends and the control of the labor force of the population at large. In order to control the whole set of mutually interdependent economic opportunities, these vertically structured social entities engage in multiple related activities (*front de métier*). Elite clans, for instance, endeavored to place members in the political realm, in the Church, in the organization of local production as well as in long-distance commerce. In this perspective, migration does not constitute a response to demographic pressure or unfavorable agrarian conditions but is part of family strategies geared to exploit a wide array of economic opportunities. At the same time, the logic of regional specialization is strongly determined by specific patterns of social structure.

Anne-Lise Head-König:

Types and functions of commercial enterprises in a Pre-Alpine setting: the role of social networks and patronage in the patterns of regional specialization in Glarus (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries)

The canton of Glarus, situated in the northern Alps, constitutes an important part of the larger cotton district in nineteenth-century Switzerland. The development of an industrial sector, however, was prepared by a multitude of activities oriented towards supra-regional markets for goods and labor from the sixteenth century onwards, which went hand-in-hand with considerable population growth. This development is all the more remarkable as the main valley of the canton is not a major trade route and, therefore, the process of regional specialization could not profit from a pre-existing infrastructure of trade and transport. Rather, the foundations for regional specialization were probably laid by mercenary service in which military entrepreneurs of the canton played an important role during the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. Mercenary service in France and elsewhere created networks of information from which peddling and the commercialization of local products could emanate. The progressive confessionalization of politics further promoted the emergence of these alternative activities, since protestants

became progressively excluded from entrepreneurship in mercenary service (the canton was confessionally divided).

The activity that lies at the heart of the rise of a commercial sector in Glarus was the production and sale of slate tables from the late sixteenth century onwards, which although being a highly specialized product, were in steady demand over large parts of western Europe. This craft was based on the processing of local raw materials and involved the division of labor between several villages, each specializing in a particular stage in the chain of value creation (workers in slate-quarries, carpenters, merchants engaged in the export trade). Another activity concerned the processing of silk waste, which was acquired in neighboring Zürich, into wads for surgical and other uses. This craft was practiced as an itinerant trade involving long journeys of its practitioners into towns all across Europe. The sale of slate tables and silk wads in turn gave rise to peddling, which as in other Alpine valleys, was not anymore specialized on particular goods. Finally, merchants from Glarus successfully marketed a local variety of white cheese (*Zieger*) spiced with herbs that constituted a widely consumed specialty with a high value added.

In many cases, product innovations seem to have been introduced by foreigners. However, restrictive legislation by the cantonal authorities, limiting the economic opportunities of immigrants made possible the rapid exploitation of new opportunities by inhabitants of the valley. Itinerant craft trades and peddling were based on extended kinship networks that also interacted with the political elite. Reliance on consanguine cousins to maintain business in distant trade centers after the death of a family member can be documented, but there is also an important case of reciprocity between two patrilineal groups maintained over at least four generations. The fact that these networks extended over several sectors (including the political realm) explains, in part, the flexibility with which Glarus adapted to new opportunities, including the rise of the cotton industry.

Jon Mathieu:

Migration in the central Alps, fifteenth to nineteenth centuries: a review of recent research

The chapter focuses on the proceedings of a conference on migration in different parts of the Alps (with a strong focus on the German-speaking areas) held in 1991, but places these studies in a wider research context. A first observation pertains to the multiplicity of migration in the Alpine sphere. Out-migration (both into the neighboring plains and into wider Europe) was far from the only type of migration. There was immigration of qualified craftsmen — the Alps stood out-

side the customary tramping networks and, therefore, disposed of limited possibilities for autochthonous human capital accumulation — and specialization on particular itinerant craft trades often necessitated the immigration of craftsmen from other Alpine areas in order to satisfy local demand for goods and services in sectors other than the one in which a region had specialized.

In the second part of his analysis the author turns to the methodological issue of estimating the size of migration during the early modern period. The conclusion is rather frustrating in the sense that, given the poor quality of most available sources, it still remains very difficult to establish the chronology and temporal fluctuations of migration in the Alpine context before the nineteenth century. This renders it difficult to appreciate the degree of the participation of a particular area in intra- and inter-regional labor markets.

A third statement is devoted to the social status of migrants and to patterns of state intervention on behalf of migration. During the early modern period, migrants often possessed a double status. At home, itinerant entrepreneurs and merchants were usually highly respected, whereas in the societies of destination they were frequently disreputed as foreigners and intruders. Their low status was also reinforced by the fact that they often performed functions at the margin of local society that, almost by definition, fell outside the framework of a society of estates. State regulation of migration reflected this situation but had little effect before the nineteenth century.

The final remarks pertain to the question whether the available knowledge makes it possible to view migration in the Alps as an indicator for regional development. The conclusions are mixed. In particular, the author stresses that local, regional and supra-regional patterns of migration (and hence, labor markets) often overlapped so that the spatial boundaries of one particular region are difficult to delineate. At the same time, the scarcity of information on the quantitative aspects of migration implies a lack of empirical support for the assertion that the Alps were characterized by an early integration into wider labor markets. Finally, the evidence of micro-studies on migration is often difficult to interpret in a framework of regional specialization based on comparative advantage. The role of social networks in the process of migration and the status structure of migrants suggest that cultural factors may prevail over rational decision making in explaining patterns of migration in the Alps.

Vittorio H. Beonio-Brocchieri:

The mountains of the State of Milano: economic specialization and regional integration, c. 1550–1650

This study contributes to the ongoing re-evaluation of Alpine migration, which is conceived less as the ultimate means of a destitute population unable to make a living from subsistence agriculture, than as a way to participate in labor markets. At the same time, the specific mode of emigration or labor market participation is considered not as a result of local poverty but rather as an element in the complex web of the organization of the local economy. The latter point, in particular, is developed on the basis of three case studies of micro-regions buttressed by an analysis of detailed household lists. The three micro-regions are the mountains to the north of Varese, the Lambro valley east of Como and the Valsassina east of Lake Como.

All three areas were characterized by a predominance of small-holding, large commons, a deficit in grains and a considerable development of non-agricultural activities, including temporal migration. Concrete patterns differed remarkably, however. The mountains to the north of Varese were located close to a major route of water transport (the Lago Maggiore), which linked the city of Milano to the mountain passes across the Alps. Major craft activities were related to the opportunities created by low transport costs, including the production of primary materials for urban construction (the production of stone and marble slabs, wood cutting, etc.) on the one hand, and the processing of leather on the other hand (major cattle markets that mediated the export of cattle from the northern slopes of the Alps into Lombardy were located in or near the area). At the same time, emigration — which involved a considerable proportion of the male work force — was centered mainly on professions linked to the activities in which the region specialized, that is, the leather and building trades.

Around 1600, the Lambro valley was part of a major zone of wool processing centered on Monza. The area specialized on preparatory tasks such as wool cleaning and carding, which were primarily male tasks. Correspondingly, emigration was weaker than in the other two areas. The third area, the Valsassina, displayed an important metallurgical sector, which comprised a number of work processes ranging from mining in the mountains, the production of wood carbon, down to smiting in the water mills along the rivers of the valley. Work in the metallurgical sector was combined with emigration consisting partly of peddling devoted to the commercialization of the ironware produced locally, partly of itinerant craft trades related to the metal trades.

Beyond factors related to local conditions, the paper stresses two related forces

that favored regional specialization within the State of Milan during the early modern period: Firstly, the early development of a territorial state led to a weakening of the power of towns over their rural hinterland, thus favoring a type of specialization according to comparative advantage. Secondly, specialization was promoted from the fifteenth century onwards by a system of canals that linked the different areas of the Duchy of Milan at low transport costs.

A considerable part of the chapter is devoted to a analysis of the relationship between family organization, craft trades and emigration. The author stresses the fact that different types of labor migration were connected to the life-course in a variable way (for instance, limited to the early phase of the life cycle in the construction trades, extending to married men in the metal trades). Hence, migration went together with several types of household composition. The analysis also stresses the point that the occurrence of multiple households in the mountain area was less linked to a stem family organization (the inheritance system was one of partible inheritance) than to a strategy of risk containment by distributing the family work force across different economic sectors. Pluri-activity, which was a common feature in the three micro-regions examined, seems therefore to have been closely linked to family strategies.

Luca Mocarelli:

At the periphery of a regional economy: the Bresciano in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

The Bresciano, which constituted a major province of the Venetian Terraferma, already displayed a remarkable degree of economic diversification during the early modern period, primarily because of the existence of an important and multi-faceted manufacturing sector. The chapter investigates how and to what extent the Bresciano took part in the process of the creation of an economic macro-region in Lombardy which, although being politically divided during the early modern period, underwent an early process of economic integration.

The analysis starts by considering the situation of Brescia, a city with 35,000 inhabitants, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. This centrally located town, in spite of its size, lent little support to the process of regional development in the neighboring countryside, largely because of its modest importance as a commercial center. This finding, which contradicts established wisdom on the role of urban centers in the process of regional development, is explained, on the one hand, by the economic policies of Venice, which endowed the towns in its dominions with few privileges over their surrounding countryside. On the other hand, local factors are invoked. As a result of a choice made by Brescian mer-

chants, related mainly to opportunity costs, Brescia ceased to be an important textile center from the seventeenth century onwards and, correspondingly, entrepreneurial know-how related to manufacturing was lost. At the same time, Brescia seems to have exerted limited functions in trades referring both to food crops and raw silk, too. Other cities of Lombardy such as Milan and the neighboring town of Bergamo, emerged as poles of attraction with considerable influence over the commercial structuring of the Bresciano. This is particularly evident in the case of the rise of silk production during the eighteenth century, which responded largely to demand in these commercial centers of central Lombardy.

Within the Bresciano itself, it was the mountain area where the most important manufactures of the province were located, that made the greatest contribution to the process of regional integration. These manufacturing activities included a wide variety of metal goods as well as paper milling. Production was usually organized by local manufacturers who emerged as proprietors of major factors of production (forests, mines, smithies, etc.) by the mid-eighteenth century. The capability to extend credits to the local population and involvement in the import trade of food crops resulted in a tight control of the labor force. Control of both long distance trade and political conditions was facilitated by family ties between manufacturers, traders and local notables.

Ulrich Pfister:

Regional specialization and commercial infrastructure in the Alpine area, fifteenth to eighteenth centuries

The paper develops a framework for the interpretation of experiences of regional integration in the Alpine area during the early modern period. After a brief portrait of four contrasting cases, a simple typology of specialization based on economic sector and market type (factor vs. product markets) is developed. The second main part discusses the role of factor endowment, commercial infrastructure in terms of communities of merchants and entrepreneurs, and state institutions in determining specific development paths.

Given the lack of other institutions of skill and information transmission in the Alpine context, kinship and clientage networks were vital entities for the transformation of a specific factor endowment into a process of regional specialization. The local character of these networks go a long way towards explaining the strong internal differentiation of regions in the Alps. Variations with respect to state structures are invoked in order to account for major differences with respect to the development of economic regions in different parts of the Alpine arc. The control of peasants over property rights, for instance, was essential for the emer-

gence of family strategies that included the temporal absence of a member as peddlers or itinerant craftsmen. Likewise, the varying degree of control by the local elites over the state machinery bore on their particular choice with respect to the sector to which they oriented out-migration: If they achieved a high level of control over the state, such as in many Swiss cantons, they tended to prefer mercenary service, which permitted the creation of monopoly profits. Where the state was geographically distant and control over it weak, local elites preferred other types of labor migration involving a high level of organization such as itinerant craft trades or peddling.