

English summaries

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ENGLISH SUMMARIES

RUTH-E. MOHRMANN, MATERIAL CULTURE STUDIES IN FOLKLORE

Material culture studies in folklore, nowadays, proceed from a complexity of questions. The comprehensive approach that typifies recent and present-day research looks upon things as indicators of cultural processes. It seeks the variety of meanings and the many-layered character of objects, as well as the system of signs and symbols. Thus, questions concerning dispositions and mentalities, patterns of interpretation and attitudes, as well as value systems behind them gain ever-increasing importance. This article shows the stages on the path to the present state of research and provides a view of future inter-disciplinary collaboration. The reciprocal give-and-take will attain growing importance in the vast and vastly ramified field of material culture studies.

COLETTE JOURDAIN-ANNEQUIN, CAN ONE WRITE AN EVERYDAY HISTORY OF THE ALPINE PEOPLES IN ANCIENT TIMES?

The contribution analyses the relations of alpine societies towards their territory in ancient times. The written sources in the Greek and Roman era provide numerous indications of peculiarities in the material culture in the mountains, especially concerning the use of natural resources and the economy in pre-alpine and alpine regions (farming, viticulture, forestry, handicraft). Though the Alps formed a repugnant territory in ancient value systems, they were never a secluded world. Human activities served to stamp the alpine territories, especially by cattle-raising and mining. These activities provide an explanation for certain settlements in the mountains and led to a complementary relationship between the lowlands and the valleys.

EMANUELA RENZETTI, RODOLFO TAIANI, IN CONTACT WITH NATURE: WOODS, PASTURES, MINERAL WEALTH AND WATER. ITALIAN STUDIES ON ALPINE MATERIAL CULTURE

The material sources are neglected by scientific studies and serve, as a rule, only as support for written sources. Their use as an evidence for material culture has to take into account several points: the technical tendency to which they belong; the necessities that are the basis of their function and form, their material and style; the technical gestures that lead to their use. An analysis of four contexts especially significant for the alpine environment – woods, pastures, mineral sources and water – shows that modern research on material culture in the Trentino is still far from fulfilling such claims. This leads to the demand for inter-disciplinary approaches that would allow the objects to be connected with socio-economic, geographical, technical and cultural realities.

VOLKER LAUBE, THE BASILIC CHURCH OF ST. LORENZ AND THE RESIDENCE IN KEMPTEN. A GREAT BUILDING PROJECT OF THE 17TH CENTURY IN PUBLIC DISCUSSION

With the example of the baroque monastery of the princely abbey of Kempten, a vast building project of the mid-17th century, the question arises of the political-symbolic dimension of architecture. The new building was undertaken in an economic tense, and a politically unstable situation. The building program, designed for creating identity with Carolingian-like hints on the chapel of Aachen, had been concipated by the prince-abbot in this situation as a monument of self-assertion. Nevertheless, the political opponents of the abbot succeeded afterwards in re-interpreting the whole project as a symbol for the inconstancy, lack of concept and maladministration of the builder. For the abbot this meant a decisive loss of authority, which paved the way for his later loss of power. The public squabble over the building project may therefore be interpreted as a struggle for the symbolical supremacy of interpretation.

**AMEI LANG, THE ALPS – A COMMUNICATION PROMOTING
HINDRANCE IN THE LATER IRON AGE:
EXAMPLES FROM THE INN-, EISACK- AND ETSCH-VALLEYS**

Since the end of the Ice Age the Alps were in no way a hindrance to the mobility of mankind, though the alpine main range formed a cultural divide up to about 500/450 BC. Then there appeared over the Brenner and Reschen passes a uniform cultural system in the valleys of the Inn, Eisack and the Etsch: the Fritzens-Sanzeno culture, lasting until the time about the birth of Christ. Contacts with the Celts in southern Bavaria and northern Italy led with regard to apparel and arms to the acceptance and adaptation of a selection of Celtic material culture, both north and south of the alpine main range. Literacy, votives and pictorials of the Fritzens-Sanzeno culture stem from the Venetian Etruscan area of northern and central Italy and were adopted essentially south of the Brenner pass. So the willingness to adopt material culture was equally distinct on both sides of the Brenner, for mental culture, however, distinctly stronger on the southern side. The alpine main range thereby formed no communication hindrance; decisive was the different mental disposition in both parts of the Fritzens-Sanzeno culture.

**GERHARD WEBER, ON THE MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE NORTH-
WEST PROVINCES OF THE IMPERIUM ROMANUM. ITS ROLE
IN CHRONOLOGY AND THE PROCESS OF ROMANIZATION**

The discipline of Provincial Roman Archaeology has its roots in language-related “Ancient History”, in “Classical Archaeology” orientated towards art history, and in “Pre- and Early-Historical Archaeology” (Vor- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie). For the massive development of the discipline after World War II archaeological methods and material sources played a decisive role. The contribution shows its importance for chronological questions and for the investigation of the process of romanization. Via material culture one can come closer to the history of the native population which is not documented by written sources. Central to the treatise are the conditions in the northern alpine forelands.

JANA HORVAT, ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE IN THE SLOVENIAN ALPINE AREA

Near, and above the timber line the living conditions, and therefore those for settlement and economic development, are harder than in the lower regions. Mankind is to a greater extent forced to adapt to the environment. In Slovenia the higher alpine mountains were peopled already in the Palaeolithic Age, and since the 13th century BC settlement density increased for the first time. After a certain decline at the end of the Bronze Age the number of settlement sites in the upper mountains grew strongly in the Roman period. Excavations have documented surprising buildings for cattle-rearing of this period. From the early Middle Ages, however, there are no archaeological traces known, and with the later Middle Ages there then sets in the written tradition concerning the *Alpwirtschaft*. Future archaeological research should make it possible to deal with this problem of continuity or discontinuity in settlement between Antiquity and the Middle Ages more exactly.

WERNER MEYER, LIFE IN THE MOUNTAINS. ALPINE SETTLEMENT SITES FROM THE MIDDLE AGES, FINDS AND FINDINGS

Whoever wishes to grasp an “alpine material culture” finds himself first of all faced with the fact that only few objects of medieval, pre-industrial everyday life appear exclusively in the alpine area. Typical of alpine culture was less a certain complex of implements than a massive dependency of mankind on the mountain world. It was characterized by a capability of adaptation to the peculiarities of mountain landscape which drew on experience and was stabilized by tradition. The technology was insufficient to do away with mountain risks, yet experience allowed the alpine inhabitants to avoid dangers and to produce bearable living conditions even on meagre land, in rugged heights and in secluded valleys. And this on the basis of a very simple material culture, as the excavation findings from the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period show.

**BIRGIT KATA, NEW FINDINGS ON THE MATERIAL CULTURE
OF THE LATE MIDDLE AGES AND EARLY MODERN PERIOD
FROM THE MÜHLBERG ENSEMBLE IN KEMPTEN, ALLGÄU**

In the winter of 1996/97 the archaeological services of the city of Kempten found numerous medieval and early modern everyday objects in the fillings-up of the floors and walls of a house under restoration. The scientific evaluation of this Europe-wide remarkable complex has been promoted since September 2000 by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)*. The present contribution pursues the question of how the historian's view of the site – the house group of the so-called Mühlberg Ensemble in the old town – has been changed by the extraordinary discovery. The finds oblige treatment of subjects so far hardly examined for the late Middle Ages, such as the handling of waste material. In the intensive dialogue between all disciplines concerned new views and questions come up, while simultaneously old stands are re-considered.

**ELISABETH VAVRA, CENTRE OR PERIPHERY. THE WORK OF ART
BETWEEN THE COMMISSIONER AND THE ARTIST**

Triptychs or winged altars are a firm component of almost all church fittings in the late Middle Ages. Compounded into the standard world, they reflect it in their pictures and are at the same time one of its parts. The author examines this “everyday situation” of the winged altars in the Tyrol and the Grisons. Thereby certain significant differences between the two regions come to light which show how strongly material culture was influenced by economic, social and political factors. Generally, one strove for up-to-date representation. In order to have an appropriate church decoration for the town or the village one informed oneself of the offer in the centres for skilled handicraft and used existent connections for the bestowal of commissions to outsiders. This “mentality” makes it difficult for historians to treat the winged altars as sources for alpine material culture. Every case calls for examination as to where and how the object was in fact created, before it can be used as a direct proof.

JASNA HORVAT, PICTORIAL OBJECT REPRESENTATION ON GOTHIC WALL-PAINTINGS IN SLOVENIA

One source for the examination of late medieval material culture is wall-paintings. In Slovenia they show more than one hundred objects from various spheres of life. For analytical purposes, the author deals with the general development of single objects as compared to the objects in the possession of Slovenian museum collections. It turns out that the pictorial sources, first of all, contribute to the documentation and identification of typical products of the late Middle Ages. Secondly, they increase our knowledge about their various forms. Thirdly, certain objects can be documented by means of pictorial sources, though no examples thereof are still existent in museum collections. For a number of objects there is, fourthly, considerably more pictorial than material evidence.

JEAN-HENRY PAPILLOU, IMAGES AND MATERIAL CULTURE. THE AUDIO-VISUAL SOURCES AND THE HISTORY OF THE VALAIS

Lots of things have changed in the past fifty years in the Valais. The development is spectacular, the change visible in all fields. This acceleration of history appears since the end of the 1940s, but it fits into a movement that had its roots in much earlier periods. Can one not only produce a narrative of such change phenomena, but also link them together and thus understand them? In this perspective, the recourse to historical images aims beyond mere illustration – it enriches the debate in a unique manner. The author illustrates this by the example of field irrigation and population history and, in conclusion, points to a project that makes the pictorial documents of the region accessible via internet. The basis of the contribution are the audio-visual collections of the Mediathèque of the Valais.

**ANNE-MARIE GRANET-ABISSET, MEMORY OF PEOPLE,
PLACES AND THINGS: WHEN THE PHOTO QUESTIONS
THE HISTORIAN**

The use of photographs as historical sources is bound up with methodical problems. One example thereof are postcards: produced in order to transmit short pieces of information, they become vehicles for the spread of motives by means of which one aims at creating identity and commerciality. The photos open up, though, numerous analytical possibilities, too. For oral inquiries and for questions concerning the regional economic conditions of mountain societies they are, as props of memory, of great value. As a directed path they, furthermore, give evidence of disappeared gestures and realities that form the conscious or unconscious reflex of producers and actors. Thus the photo embraces a social and symbolical-representative dimension. Hard to handle because of its ambiguity, it is a source that can enrich the questioning of the past.

**PIER LUCA PATRIA, INVENTORIES OF HOUSES OR INVENTORIES
OF CHURCHES. RESEARCH GAPS AND RESULTS IN WEST-ALPINE
HISTORIOGRAPHY**

The Piedmontese local scholars of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were deeply rooted in the world of elites and directed their intellectual interest mainly towards churches, strongholds and castles. The few inventories they used concerned above all liturgical implements, whilst the material culture of the wider population received little attention. This material culture only becomes a theme in modern research. Archaeological studies now shed light upon the general characteristics of houses and stalls in the Western Alps during the Middle Ages. A bulk of almost 200 post mortem inventories from the Val di Susa between 1280 and 1480 permits in addition the closer examination of certain aspects of household furniture. The inventories illustrate among other things the widespread use of wood for tableware, the furnishing of kitchens, the making of trunks, beds and many working tools.

BURKHARD PÖTTLER, POST MORTEM INVENTORIES AS A SOURCE OF ALPINE MATERIAL CULTURE

The contribution focusses on post mortem inventories from the realm of the ecclesiastical foundation of Steckau in Upper Styria which are included in their original style and almost completely in an electronic data base. The formalization of a hermeneutic approach within a semantically enlarged data base model not only supports interpretation by means of directed questioning along with the closest possible nearness to sources, but also offers an interface to quantifying methods, so that a combination of both these two approaches is possible. Objects for *Alpwirtschaft* are to be recognized in the inventories (1) by their specific designation, (2) by an explicit place indication or (3) by compilation into unequivocally named groups, whereby the third possibility can only be found in less than 5 per cent of the inventories. On the other hand, the lack of objects specifically associated with *Alpwirtschaft* may not be accounted for its absence.

HARALD STADLER, INTER-DISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATIONS CONCERNING RECENT CERAMICS PRODUCTION IN THE PUSTERTAL, AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE POTTERY OF HÖFER-TROGER-STEGER IN ABFALTERSBACH, EAST-TYROL

The article presents the desperate and finally unsuccessful struggle for survival of a rural and traditional pottery against the industrial production of the 19th and 20th centuries. It concerns the works of the Höfer-Troger and Steger families that were of local, and at all events, regional importance and after its closing-down may serve, by means of comprehensive documentation and interpretation, as an example of a business falling into collapse through industrialization. In a peripheral East-Tyrol region this decline took place more slowly than in economically advanced regions. The investigation is based on ten years of research and designed very much along inter-disciplinary lines. It makes use of approaches from economic and legal history, geography, building analysis, dendrochronology and archaeology. Such studies still count as exceptional in Austria.

**CONELIA HERRMANN, WOOD OR STONE?
ALPINE CURE- AND MOUNTAIN-HOUSES
IN LIECHTENSTEIN BETWEEN TRADITION
AND MODERNITY**

An investigation of the building history of alpine cure- and mountain-houses in Liechtenstein since the late 19th century reveals the needs and interests of the builders between tradition and modernity. The needs are reflected in the no longer present leather-covered armchair of the princely hunting-hut, in the broken-off veranda, in the lobby of the cure-house, or in the timeless purpose-orientation of the alpine club hut. Generally it goes that the sources improve with increasing temporal closeness to the investigated building and that thus the demands to research alter. Through the inclusion of bills, workshop books, drawings, plans and other documents, one can obtain many new insights from the material culture complex “building/furniture/object”.

**ERSILIA ALESSANDRONE PERONA, THE ALPS
AS A MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE HISTORY**

Although by the end of the Cold War and the Soviet-Union the forms and contents of national history museums have been fundamentally changed, these still retain a very essential pedagogical and public function. It consists in getting rid of the dangers of political instrumentalization of history and in seeking new ways of bringing museums closer to historical research practice. Including territory as site of traces of the past fits into this perspective. It has to be accompanied by new interpretation centres that make it easier for the visitors to grasp the visible fragments in the territory. In this way some initiatives have made it possible to reconstruct the long-term uses of the territory and to highlight the peculiarities of the alpine cultures. Here one thinks especially of initiatives in the Western Alps and in Piemont.

GIOVANNI KEZICH, EUROPE'S ATTIC

Is there in Europe a really alpine culture? Among the anthropologists and folklorists one comes across two visions thereto: the Alps as a special cultural unity, and the Alps as an area fragmented by languages, ways of life, nutrition habits etc. The author proposes an alternative view, which is based upon the museographic method and is capable of illustrating the material culture by its contexts and usages. Thus there arises a many-layered history, in which the objects take up varying positions within the geographical and cultural fields. Thereby the Alps must be regarded as an area of retardation in which a certain trait manifests itself comparatively late and its original stamp maintains itself for a relatively long time. If the Alps are "Europe's attic", the conditions and exchange processes that have brought about it provide useful indications for the understanding of European cultural history.

FRANÇOIS DE CAPITANI, CHANGE IN THE ALPINE IMAGE – CHANGE IN THE MUSEUMS' TASKS. THE SWISS ALPINE MUSEUM IN BERNE

Museums are not only collections open to the public, but also monuments. The representation of a content by both the monument and the museum reached its peak in the last years of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. That the theme "Alps" in its manifold aspects was extremely appropriate for monumentalization in the museum, is quite obvious. With the example of the Swiss Alpine Museum, founded in 1905, the tasks and possibilities of the institution in the 20th century can be demonstrated. Its history reflects the changing – but never laming – interest in the mountain world. The museum today stands in a quite different media landscape from one hundred years ago; this must be taken as a challenge and a chance.