

reservation aside, Carocci's book should now stand as the seminal work on medieval South Italian aristocratic power and the rural world. It is a must-read and a quite astonishing achievement which re-shapes our understanding of the field.

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LUIGI LORENZETTI, YANN DECORZANT, and ANNE-LISE HEAD-KÖNIG (eds), *Relire l'altitude: la terre et ses usages, Suisse et espace avoisinants, XIIIe-XXIe siècles* (Éditions Alphil – Presses universitaires suisses, 2019). 338 pp. €29.90 / free open access.

The basic idea of this collection is impressive: it aims to trace the effects of a geographical factor – altitude – on human activity through time. For, according to the implicit hypothesis, even something as immutable as altitude is subject to change in the course of history, to changes of function and meaning.

Admittedly, Luigi Lorenzetti, Yann Decorzant and Anne-Lise Head-König are not the first to tackle this subject. Inspired by the European voyages of discovery and conquest, natural scientists have been studying the effects of altitude since the eighteenth century, and several historical studies using comparative approaches have already been published. Nevertheless, the question of how altitude has shaped (agricultural) economic production methods and social formations in various historical and geographical contexts has not been conclusively answered. Jon Mathieu writes in the foreword to his 2011 survey *The third dimension: A comparative history of mountains in the modern era*, that a global comparative view can only be the beginning, and that many more studies 'in different tones' are needed to understand the complexity and multifaceted development of mountain regions and their societies. And so the editors of the present volume evidently see their contribution to this complex of questions as a renewed focus on altitude, a '*relire*'. They focus on Switzerland and mountain regions in neighbouring Italy, France and Austria, from the middle ages to the present.

The book features 11 case studies and one systematic comparison between mountain regions and lowlands. The contributions in French and German examine the effects of altitude on land use systems, on market relations and on political institutions. It is striking that each of the chapters is assigned to one of the three focal points, but that each also uses all three dimensions to explain the developments they describe.

The chosen geographical framework makes it possible to cover the development of the individual regions

over a long period and in a variety of thematic areas. Thus, Lombardy, the French Alps and Switzerland are covered by several articles and are examined from multiple perspectives, showing particularly clearly the changing function and meaning of altitude over time. The transnational perspective also clearly demonstrates the far-reaching market relations between highlands and lowlands. These cross-border connections are described and impressively visualized with maps in the chapter by Mark Bertogliati and Patrik Krebs on charcoal production and trade between the Insubric Alpine valleys and the northern Italian cities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the same region and the same period, Luca Mocarelli explores the interconnections and mutual dependences between town and country, plain and mountain. He focuses on grain, but also depicts the diversified economic strategies of mountain households, which are described in other articles too.

The institutions of mountain societies and the widespread practices of collective organization are mentioned several times. They are an explicit theme of Fabrice Mouthon's chapter, which traces the geographical shift of a collective ownership category, the '*mas*', in medieval Savoie-Dauphiné. While it disappeared in the valley areas, the *mas* became dominant in the mountain areas. Mouthon also examines how tax regimes and legal practices strengthened collective organization. At the other end of the temporal scale, in the twentieth century, Yann Decorzant, Jean-Charles Fellay and Jean Rochat take a closer look at a '*consortage d'alpage*' in Swiss Valais and show how this form of organization combined – and to this day continues to combine – both political and economic action and therefore must be analysed as a hybrid private-public organization.

The great variety of organizational forms that appears in the volume is accompanied by a wide range of land uses and forms of production. The articles by Hannes Obermair and Volker Stamm on Tyrol from the middle ages to the early modern period, by Luigi Lorenzetti on the area around Locarno between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, by Claudio Besana and Andrea Maria Locatelli on Valtellina in the nineteenth century, and by Anne-Lise Head-König about Switzerland between 1750 and 1914 all describe the spatial patterns of cereal growing, cattle breeding, dairy farming and specialized agriculture, like viticulture. Firstly, it appears that altitude was by no means the only factor that influenced a particular form of production at a particular location. Other natural factors such as exposure and slope inclination also played a role. Secondly, in many places there were small-scale patterns and close interdependencies

between the various forms of production (like the diversified economic strategies discussed in the volume). And thirdly, over time, striking shifts in these patterns become apparent, which are always related to economic developments in the surrounding areas. There can be no talk of natural determinism, and even the concept of path dependency falters in these descriptions.

G rard B aur's survey article finally focuses on the systematic comparison between mountain and valley areas. The author questions the peculiarities ascribed to mountain regions because of their exclusivity. The result is a highly differentiated picture of factors that have different degrees of importance. A clear list of what constitutes a mountain region – even in a long-term historical perspective – is characteristically not available.

Introducing a fourth dimension, the history of knowledge, would have been a possibility, alongside land use, market relations and institutional arrangements. After all, the conception of mountain regions is a prominent topic in two contributions, namely in those of Anne-Marie Granet-Abisset, and Michela Barbot and Matteo Di Tullio. Both chapters deal with political attempts to modernize mountain regions, focusing on the French Hautes Alpes *d partement* after the Second World War, and the mountainous regions of Lombardy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The article by Romed Aschwanden on supply policy conflicts between the Swiss federal authorities and cantonal representatives from Central Switzerland during the First World War raises a further area of interest for historians of knowledge: mountain populations' understanding of the space they inhabit and manage. It is just such a juxtaposition of the external and internal perspectives on altitude and the negotiation processes between the two positions that could generate further insights when exploring the question at issue here.

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MARKUS LAMPE and PAUL SHARP, *A land of milk and butter: how elites created the modern Danish dairy industry* (University of Chicago Press, 2018). 320 pp. 39 illus. \$65.00.

Danish history writing traditionally considers the late nineteenth-century cooperatives key to the success of the Danish road to economic development. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, middle-sized peasant-farmers united in cooperatives enabling them to produce butter competitively to the British market. The success story of the so-called Danish model was largely ascribed to these middle-sized farmers, who gained importance not only in economic matters but

also socially and politically. The Danish historian Thorkild Kj rgaard has described this predominant narrative as the 'peasant-farmer line' in Danish history writing. In their new book, Markus Lampe and Paul Sharp challenge this narrative.

The authors have both contributed significantly to the economic history of Danish agricultural development in previous articles, and their new book brings their research into a more complete account. This makes for a very original interpretation of the Danish success story. Their main argument throughout the book is that the cooperatives – their focus is on the important cooperative dairies – did not represent a turning point but rather a continuation of earlier Danish agricultural success. Throughout the book, they trace the roots of this development from the eighteenth century to the establishment of the first cooperative dairy in 1882 and their subsequent rapid spread.

In sixteenth-century Schleswig and Holstein – the German part of the Danish monarchy and personal union – estate owners developed a characteristic kind of field system called *kobbelwirtschaft*. This field system replaced the three-field rotation with an eleven-field rotation, which entailed more intensive cultivation and larger amounts of livestock. Estate owners often combined this rotation system with a centralized dairy on the estate; a combination termed the Holstein system. The system spread to estates in Denmark proper from the mid-eighteenth century when German elites started to buy estates in Denmark and imported German agricultural expertise. By 1800, most demesnes were using *kobbelwirtschaft*, some of which combined it with dairy production. Sharp and Lampe show that the first dairy cooperatives between 1882 and 1890 were more likely to be established closer to estates with a centralized dairy, and in a series of further arguments, they convincingly demonstrate that the introduction of the more centralized and rationalized Holstein system on Danish estates paved the way for Danish agricultural modernization.

Throughout chapters 4–7, Sharp and Lampe dive into different aspects of this process of agricultural modernization. They show how the landowning elite developed new rationalized accounting practices and techniques and disseminated their knowledge through agricultural journals and societies. These developments were important for the spread of high-quality butter production, firstly on estates and community dairies, later through the cooperatives. Estate owners, shipping entrepreneurs, and merchants worked together to establish trade links between Denmark and the British market long before 1864, which is conventionally recognized as the turning point for Danish