

*Quaderni Valtellinesi*, Sondrio, 1<sup>st</sup> Trimester 2013, no. 115, 61 p.

*Quaderni Valtellinesi* (The Valtellina Papers) is an Italian quarterly covering a wide range of topics: history, architecture, urbanism, art, religion, politics, travel accounts and reviews, relating to – as the title indicates – the Valtellina Valley. Issued on a regular basis since 1981, the publication (<http://www.quadernivaltellinesi.it/>) aims to promote the Alpine identity, considered a defining element for the local social community. Under the slogan ‘Local Culture and the World’, it endorses local culture as the key to confronting the world and the new challenges set by modern society.

Situated in northern Italy, next to the Swiss border, the Valtellina Valley (Italian *Valtellina*, Lombard *Valtulina*, German *Vellin*, Romansh *Vuclina*) is the upper valley of the Adda river, from its sources in the Ortles Mountains to lake Como. Enclosed by the Bernina Alps (north), the Ortles Mountains (northeast) and the Orobic Alps (south), the valley is traversed by several roads crossing Alpine passes. Historically, because of this strategic location, it was often a disputed territory until it finally became part of the Kingdom of Italy in 1859. Inhabited by an Italian-speaking Roman Catholic population, the valley is today known for its wines, cheeses, hot springs and skiing. The main towns of the valley are Sondrio, Tirano, Chiavenna, Morbegno and Bormio, all five represented on the editorial board of the *Quaderni Valtellinesi*.

The quarterly is divided into several richly illustrated sections. The opening editorial is followed by a section entitled ‘A Culture for Living’ (*Una cultura per vivere*), then by ‘From Valtellina and its Surroundings’ (*Della Valtellina e contadi*), the largest section of the publication; ‘And still, it moves’ (*Epur si muove*) comes next, before the final reviews section.

The first 2013 issue of *Quaderni Valtellinesi* (no. 115) is a good illustration of the spirit of the publication. The opening editorial, entitled ‘Democracy and community’, pleads for better political representation of local communities in Italy, considering ‘community democracy’ as a propitious way to overcome the current political and economic crisis.

The cultural section of the quarterly is dedicated to the religious revival in Russia. The subject of the article, by a local Italian couple, Nemo and Eliana Canetta, is occasioned by a long journey in the Russian Federation undertaken by the authors in 2006, which took them from Novosibirsk, across the Ural Mountains, to Syktyvkar and Moscow. After an accurate historical overview of Russian communism, the authors emphasise the religious repression before – and the religious revival following – the political reforms of the 1990s.

The mid-section starts with an article by Gianluigi Garbellini on an important episode in local history: the arrival of the Grisons in Valtellina, and the 1512 occupation. The Grey Leagues (or Graubünden) was an independent, mutual – defence region of Switzerland (which originated in an alliance of three leagues: the League of God’s House, the Grey League and the League of Ten Jurisdictions). In September 2012, the historical and cultural ties between Valtellina and the Grisons were solemnly celebrated on the occasion of the five-hundredth anniversary of the so-called Pact of Toglio, a solemn declaration in which Valtellina swore allegiance to the bishop of Chur and to the union of the free independent states of the Three Leagues, in exchange for the utmost respect for its privileges and ancient customs.

Following this historical introduction is an article by architect Dario Benetti, the director of *Quaderni Valtellinesi*, which re-launches the proposal for the creation of a Rhaetian Euroregion (Rhaetia is a territory which straddles the Alps, taking in some of northeastern Italy and southeastern Switzerland, inhabited by an Italian speaking population). The initiative, the author considers, has a precedent in the advanced discussions around the Alps-Adriatic region and the signing, in 2012, of the constitutive act of the EGTC (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation) ‘Euregio without

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Borders' agreement between the Italian regions of Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia, and the Austrian land of Carinthia.

Another historical article, edited by Marco Moscarello, relates the accounts of Nikolai Vasilyevich Berg (1823–1884), a Russian poet and historian, who travelled to Lombardy in 1859, during the Austro–Italian–French war, as a correspondent of 'The Russian Messenger' to report on the progress of Giuseppe Garibaldi's army.

The article by Danilo Sava brings the readers back to the present, drawing attention to the Plan established by the territorial government in 2011 for Sondrio, the provincial capital, focusing particularly on its main critics. The Plan was the result of a 2005 regional law aimed at achieving sustainable development and was intended to be an instrument for the city's strategic development; it gave Sondrio the possibility to define its position both locally and nationally, building a development scenario for the city and its territory.

Gaetano Conforto presents a school project in which local teenagers become acquainted with theoretical aspects relating to Valtellina and its development, from an environmental, ethnographical and cultural point of view. Another short article comments on a 1945 photo relating to an event that took place at the end of the Second World War.

An interesting article, also by Dario Benetti, introduces the readers to the region's artistic universe. Following a visit to Stampa (a small Swiss municipality close to the Italian border in the Alpine Valley of Val Bregaglia), Benetti writes an article on the Giacometti artist family.

The 'Epur si muove' section broadens the reader's view once more, with a travel account of a journey along the Danube (from Belgrade to Novi Sad, Budapest, Bratislava and Vienna) given by a local engineer, Stefano Zazzi. The topic, however, is not out of the regional context, since the Inn river, which rises in the Swiss Alps, not far from the Valtellina Valley, is a right tributary of the Danube.

The final review section presents an exhibition hosted by the Valtellina Museum of History and Art of Sondrio at the end of 2012. Deborah Grosso comments on the fourteenth and fifteenth century cycles of frescoes from Poggiridenti, representing the seven works of mercy. *Quaderni Valtellinesi* ends with the presentation of two editorial events: the reprinting of *Aque misteriose*, by Giuseppe Songini and *Crotti di Valchiavenna*, edited by Guido Scaramellini.

*Quaderni Valtellinesi* is of interest to all scientists concerned with Alpine communities and regional studies, but also to those concerned with new European topics, such as the euroregions. The publication particularly relates to Romanian Sociology, by virtue of having Paul Henri Stahl among its contributors (see nos. 20, 32 and 49). Stahl, who conducted extensive fieldwork in Italy, published – among other things – a volume with Dario Benetti in 1995, 'Roots of an alpine valley. A historical and social anthropology of the Tartano Valley' (*Le radici di una valle alpina. Antropologia storica e sociale della Val Tartano*, Sondrio: Cooperativa Editoriale Quaderni Valtellinesi, 334 p.), a thorough interdisciplinary study of the Tartano Alpine Valley covering a large period of time, from the end of the seventeenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

(Irina Stahl)

