



Venue

Universität Bern
Unitobler
Room F 013
Lerchenweg 36
CH-3012 Bern

Organization

Riccardo E. Rossi: riccardo.rossi@hist.unibe.ch
Roberto Zaugg: roberto.zaugg@hist.unibe.ch

www.atlanticitalies.net



Doing consumer history

Empirical sources and methodological challenges

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Atlantic Italies
Economic and Cultural Entanglements

Doing consumer history

Empirical sources and methodological challenges

During the early modern era, the intensified intercontinental circulation of goods catalysed by the development of oceanic trade routes fuelled new consumer needs and an increasing differentiation of material culture. Scholarship has investigated the use and appropriation of exogenous goods, intellectual debates and changing attitudes concerning 'luxury' as well as the emergence of new forms of sociability related to specific consumer practices. The eighteenth century, in particular, has been identified – by scholars dealing primarily with north-western Europe – as an era of a 'consumer revolution' and technological innovation that resulted in a substantially augmented access to delectable goods by ordinary people.

What commodities were consumed by which social groups? How fast did new patterns of consumption evolve and to what extent were lower social strata and rural areas involved in these processes? Which goods remained exclusive and which became popular? How did information on new commodities spread and how did changing consumer habits influence material culture and aesthetical styles? Measuring and analysing the change and persistence of consumer patterns is a challenging endeavour. Our workshop will tackle these questions, discussing empirical sources and methodological approaches we can use as historians when we deal with consumption in past societies.

Image: Albert Anker, Stilleben mit Kaffee, 1877 – Stiftung für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte Winterthur.

Session 1

- 9:15 Roberto Zaugg - Bern
Welcome address
- 9:45 Jon Stobart - Manchester
Sugar and spice, coffee and calico.
Selling and owning colonial goods in
the English villages, c. 1660-1760
- 10:30 Jon Mathieu - Luzern
Discussion
- 11:15 Coffee break

Session 2 – chair: Roberto Zaugg

- 11:45 Alida Clemente - Foggia
Is it all about methodology?
Inventories, real wages, and the
narratives of the consumer revolution
- 12:30 Valentin Groebner - Luzern
Discussion
- 13:15 Lunch

Session 3 – chair: Christiane Berth

- 14:30 Susanna Burghartz, Ina Serif, Anna
Reimann - Basel
Printed markets. Information, data,
and news in the Basel „Avis-Blatt“,
1729-1845
- 15:30 Discussion
- 16:15 Coffee break

Session 4 – chair: Riccardo E. Rossi

- 16:45 Noémie Étienne, Claire Brizon, Chonja
Lee, Étienne Wismer - Bern
Looking, touching, unfolding. Un-
derstanding material culture through
qualitative analysis
- 17:45 Discussion
- 18:30 End
- 19:30 Conference dinner

Session 5 – chair: Eva Dal Canto

- 9:15 Claudia Ravazzolo - Jena
Balancing quantity and quality.
Analysing material culture in Bernese
bankruptcy inventories (1660-1798)
- 9:45 Mattia Viale - Milano
Searching for actual patterns of
consumption in early modern period.
The role of household budgets
- 10:15 Discussion
- 11:00 Coffee break

Session 6 – chair: Christian Windler

- 11:30 Riccardo E. Rossi - Bern
Serial data from the Alps? Potentials
and problems of post-mortem
inventories from the Italian-speaking
valleys of the Three Leagues, 1650-1850
- 12:00 Discussion
- 12:30 Kim Siebenhüner - Jena
Conclusions
- 13:00 End