

# Abstracts

## Beat Näf

*Eucherius of Lyons, his account of the martyrdom of Maurice and the Theban legion, and the historical topography of late antiquity and the early middle ages*

The primary account of the famous martyrdom of Maurice and the Theban legion is that provided by Eucherius of Lyons (ca. 380–450): During the period of persecution under Diocletian, Maximian took an army to Gaul which included a Christian Theban legion commanded by Maurice (Mauricius). Because the legion refused to kill other Christians, it was massacred by Maximian at Acaunus (Saint-Maurice). The bodies of the martyrs were revealed many years after their death to the local bishop, Theodore of Octodurus, who built a church in Saint-Maurice and installed a cult there. Even today, there is still heated debated as to whether there is any truth contained in the account written by Eucherius. There are those who, to varying degrees, believe that there is a ‘historical nucleus’ behind it. Others deny the account’s validity entirely, on the basis that historians do not have any other information about the persecution of Christians or the execution of soldiers in the Alps. In practice, it is impossible to ascertain the historical truth behind this story, but we can piece together a lot of historical information of relevance to the transition from late antiquity to the early middle ages. For example, many sources testify to the historical importance of Theodore and Eucherius, bishops of growing power who were promoters of monasticism. The hagiographical legend also provides valuable information about ecclesiastical structures and local topography. The main zone in which the Theban saints were worshipped was the Burgundian empire. Eucherius had an interest in the North because he was an influential and highly active bishop, but also because he mapped out new spiritual centres in this expanding empire.

## Aldo A. Settia

*The fortifications of the Goths in Italy*

Following trends prevalent in the period of late antiquity, one of Teodorico’s prime concerns was the reinforcement of the alpine defences based on the ‘Chiuse’ (reinforced sections in narrow parts of the valleys) and on a number of new fortified posts placed at the mouths of valleys. For the eastern part of the alps, however, the protection offered by the defensive apparatus existing outside the geographic confines of Italy was considered to be already sufficient. The border defences incorporated fortified centres of refuge for the civilian population in times of emergency, as was the case at Verruca, the Adige / Etsch valley, and the massif of

Monte Barro on lake Lecco. Within the kingdom of the Goths, such a system of defence also included castles set up by large landowners. Teodorico dedicated great care to the question of city walls, and some towns lacking in them (such as Tortona and Ancona) were protected by castles. Urban centres thus assumed both civil and military functions, making it difficult to classify them according to overly abstract categories. Following the late antique model, the kingdom's strategic defence was systematically extended to counter attacks from the north, but during the Greco-Gothic war it was obliged to confront an enemy coming from the opposite direction. The difficulties encountered in this process of adaptation probably contributed to the kingdom's ultimate defeat, and hence to the disappearance of the Gothic people from European history.

### Giulio Ciampoltrini

*Late antique and medieval Lucca (4th–8th centuries). The archaeology of an urban structure “in a fluid state”*

Reading the scant literary and epigraphic sources in the light of the archaeological evidence reveals that Lucca rediscovered an important strategic role from the end of the third century A.D. onwards. This is also evident from the centrality of its position in the transappennine network and from the fact that it was chosen as the site of an imperial manufactory of *spathae*. This development culminated in the theodosian era, when the city walls seemed to provide the real point of reference for an urban fabric composed of a chaotic sequence of areas of settlement that had fluid contours, but were oriented loosely around the town's administrative buildings, the cathedral, and the extramural sepulchral churches. During the course of the 8th century, the archipelago of settlements progressively became consolidated around a nucleus of ecclesiastical foundations and monasteries. The archaeological data make especially evident the role played by intramural burial areas in establishing these foundations. Therefore, the city described by the documents from the late lombard era does not appear to be very dissimilar to that which emerges from the archaeological data available for the late antique period, except for the growth of ecclesiastical foundations in the areas of most consistent settlement.

### Werner Eck

*From Agrippina to Colonia: a city survival at the edge of the declining Roman Empire*

The city of Cologne, founded in the period of late-antiquity, survived into the era of the Franks without experiencing any fundamental decline. There was no break

in the succession of bishops, and the community was able to build an impressive church with an adjacent baptistery – something that was only possible if the local economy was strong enough. Most important, however, was the inclusion of a new area of 20 hectares within the city boundaries, which constituted exactly the opposite of what can be seen in other cities in late-antique Gaul and Germany.

### Anselmo Baroni

*Towns and regions between local history and general history: some reflections on the case of the Alps*

The ancient Alps entered history only when the entire alpine region became an integrated part of the administrative and political system of the Roman Empire. The local history of each region and municipality can only be traced and comprehended through the dialectical relationship to the ‘greater history’ of larger political and administrative structures. Thus, vital ancient documents like the Tabula Clesiana or the inscribed monument of La Turbie acquire their full historical significance against the background of Roman imperial history. This essay aims to demonstrate the closeness of the relationship between local history and general history on the basis of the alpine case.

### Andrea Sarri

*The Fascist regime and the Catholic press: the “Katholisches Sonntagsblatt” in Bressanone / Brixen (1927–1940)*

The author analyzes the political stances adopted by the Katholisches Sonntagsblatt, a weekly Catholic newspaper for the diocese of Bressanone / Brixen (Alto Adige / Südtirol), from its foundation in 1927 up until the outbreak of the Second World War. The article dwells in particular on the priest Johann Tschurtschenthaler (1890–1976), the paper’s editor, who had been socialised in a Christian-Social environment in Tyrol. The weekly’s changing fortunes are examined within the wider context of the role played by the Catholic press under the Fascist regime in Alto Adige and Italy. Close attention is paid to the newspaper’s attitude towards the Concordat between the Holy See and the Italian state in 1929, the constant appeal to the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the celebration of the social kingship of Christ, which had been proclaimed by Pius XI in 1925 to promote the defence of the ‘rights of God and the Church’ against the threats from the modern world.

Erika Kustatscher

*“Nonsensical” – women’s concerns about their appearance from the perspective of the Italian-Tyrolean moral theologian Alberto Alberti SJ (1593–1676)*

The article examines a substantial work of moral theology by the Jesuit, Alberto Alberti (1593–1676), who was born in Italian-Tyrol and later lived and worked in Milan. At the core of Alberti’s work is a harsh critique of the contemporary fashion in women’s clothing for low-cut dresses. At the same time, he provides general reflections on the rectitude of using beauty-enhancing means. Alberti does not reject these altogether, but actually approves them up to a certain degree. There is also a background discussion on the nature of the female being. Alongside traditional clichés, Alberti adopts an objective, respectful perspective, which includes a sober assessment of contrasting flaws among men. Written mainly for preachers, the work constitutes an important contribution to the sharpening of already existing contours in early modern views of the relationship between the sexes.