

POWER AND POLITICS

POWER AND POLITICS

On the second and most magnificent storey of the building the theme is the «traditional» view of history: Events, individuals (mostly male), law, administration, institutions. The presentation emphasises dates and chronologies. It cannot be complete but shows examples, which are especially revealing. In any case it is always about power and politics.

It poses the question of power:

- Who had and who still has power?
- How was and how is power still wielded?
- What kinds of power are there?
- How do we recognise power?

From this perspective, each room displays important themes in the history of Graubünden:

Armies and Wars; Lords and Castles; Three Leagues and Subject Territory Veltlin; The Dark Side of Justice

A constant issue in the history of Graubünden is the interest of foreign powers in the passes and in the fragmented political landscape.

The building in which we are is part of this history. For centuries the family von Buol belonged to the Bündner ruling class of the foremost dynasties.

POWER AND POLITICS

Who had and who has the power?

- 1 **Johannes Paul Beeli von Belfort**, protestant pastor in Chur (and Chiavenna?), around 1700
- 2 **Walo Burkart**, district forester and archaeologist, 1877–1952
- 3 **Gian Giacomo Trivulzio**, holder of the Lordship Misox, 1487–1518
- 4 **Andreas Gadiant**, Major General, 1927–2015
- 5 **Napoleon Bonaparte**, French Emperor, 1769–1821
- 6 **Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf**, Federal Councillor 2008–2015, born 1956
- 7 **Girl from the family Laurer of Chur**, 1827–1846
- 8 **Otto Barblan**, composer, 1860–1943
- 9 **Barbara Danuser** from Felsberg, sewing teacher and horticulturist, 1899–1986
- 10 **Donat Cadruvi**, Cantonal Councillor 1979–88, 1923–1998
- 11 **Margaretha Enderlin von Montzwick**, 1647–1711
- 12 **Wilhelm Maria Rizzi**, church and portrait painter, 1802–1858

- 13 Rodolfo Baldini and Giulia Baldini-Santi**, Bergell family in Italy, first half 19th c.
- 14 Gabriele de Gabrieli**, architect from Roveredo, 1671–1747
- 15 Johann Friedrich von Tscharner**, publicist and politician from Chur, 1780–1844
- 16 Bernhard Laurer-Risch**, pharmacist, guild master from Chur, 1764–1823
Elisabeth Laurer-Risch, wife of guild master Bernhard, 1774–1847
- 17 Martin Schreiber-Risch**, postmaster in Thusis, 1812–1871
- 18 Ugo Foscolo**, Italian poet, emigrant in Misox, 1778–1827
- 19 Ulysses von Salis-Marschlins**, führender Politiker, 1728–1800
- 20 Giusep Nay**, Swiss federal judge 1989–2006, born 1942
- 21 Johann Gaudenz von Salis-Seewis**, officer and poet, 1762–1834
- 22 Giovanni Segantini**, painter, 1858–1899
- 23 Charlemagne**, King and Emperor of the Frankish Empire, 768–814
- 24 Jörg Jenatsch**, protestant pastor, officer, politician, 1596–1639

- 25 **Vitus Huonder**, Bishop of Chur 2007–2019,
born 1942
- 26 **Small unknown child, sitting**, around 1800
- 27 **Pater Placi a Spescha**, monk and scientist,
1752–1833
- 28 **Georg Fient**, cantonal chancellery secretary and poet,
1845–1912
- 29 **Josias Hartmann** from Says, world champion
marksman, 1893–1982
- 30 **Ortlieb von Brandis**, Bishop of Chur, 1458–1491
- 31 **Angelika Kauffmann**, painter, born in Chur,
1741–1807
- 32 **Meta von Salis-Marschlins**, historian and feminist,
1855–1915
- 33 **Johannes Guler von Wynegg** (the Elder), military
leader, historian, 1562–1637
- 34 **Carlo Casati**, Spanish Ambassador, died 1730
- 35 **Andreas Rudolf von Planta**, entrepreneur and
politician, 1819–1889
- 36 **Christian Klucker**, mountain guide, 1852–1928
- 37 **Giachen Caspar Muoth**, teacher, historian and poet,
1844–1906
- 38 **A. Feldscher** from Masein, actor in Russia,
1825–1885

- 39 **Heini Hemmi**, Olympic champion 1976 in giant slalom, born 1949
- 40 **Georg Philipp von Schauenstein**, Freiherr von Haldenstein, 1671–1695, on a Gulden (silver coin)
- 41 **Johann Alois Wolf** from Untervaz, Swiss drum-major, 1839–1927
- 42 **Pompejus von Planta**, leading politician, 1569–1621
- 43 **Henri Duc de Rohan**, French field commander, 1579–1638
- 44 **Claudius**, Roman Emperor, 41–54 A.D.
- 45 **Antonio de Molina**, politician and military from the Calanca valley, ca. 1580–1650
- 46 **Maximilian Franz**, several times cantonal governing council, 1814–1889
- 47 **Thomas Domenig**, architect, born 1933
- 48 **Anna Meisser** from Klosters, born 1855
- 49 **Reto Gurtner**, tourism entrepreneur, born 1955
- 50 **Sep Antoni Deragisch jun.**, potter in Bugnei (Tujetsch), 1842–1931
- 51 **Fidelis von Sigmaringen**, martyr, 1577–1622
- 52 **Magdalena Martullo-Blocher**, head of EMS-Chemie Holding AG, born 1969
- 53 **Cla Feuerstein**, hunter, Scuol, around 1920

- 54 Gian Francesco Trivulzio**, last holder of the Lordship Misox 1518–1549, on a Testone (silver coin)
- 55 Maria Franz**, née Cloëtta, wife of Cantonal Councillor Franz, 1816–1897
- 56 Johann Gaudenz von Salis-Seewis**, officer and poet, 1762–1834
- 57 Tobias Deflorin**, master chimney sweep in Trun, 1903–1977
- 58 Jakob Ulrich Sprecher von Bernegg**, leading politician, 1765–1841
- 59 Simeon Benedict**, protestant pastor in Chur, 1767–1832
- 60 Amalia von Sprecher-von Marchion**, 1829–1879
- 61 Hanspeter Lebrument**, publisher, born 1941
- 62 And I:** Do I have power too? Do I also make politics?
- 63 John Hitz** from Klosters, Swiss Consul General in Washington, 1797–1864
- 64 Richard Coray**, bridge builder, 1869–1946
- 65 Diocletian**, Roman Emperor, 284–305 A.D.
- 66 Josephus von Planta**, principal librarian of the British Museum, 1744–1827
- 67 Peter Zumthor**, architect, born 1943

- 68 Alfred (Florian Adolf) von Planta**, National Councillor, Ambassador in Rome and Berlin, 1857–1922
- 69 Jakob Beeli-Sprecher**, café owner in Posen (today in Poland), 1791–1867
- 70 Leon Schlumpf**, Federal Councillor 1980–87, 1925–2012
- 71 Jean de Castelmur**, French Baron, castle owner in Stampa-Coltura, 1800–1871
- 72 Augustus**, Roman Emperor, 27 B.C.–14 A.D.
- 73 Benedetg Fontana**, national hero, killed in action, 1499
- 74 Johann Wilhelm Fortunat Coaz**, topographer, senior federal forestry inspector, 1822–1918
- 75 Gaudenz von Planta, «the Bear»**, leading politician, 1757–1834
- 76 Conrad von Planta**, first State Governor from Graubünden in the Veltlin, 1512
- 77 Giulia Santi**, later Baldini, 1836
- 78 Otto Largiadèr with family**, Cantonal Councillor 1975–1986, 1926–2012
- 79 Felix Maria Diogg**, portrait painter, 1762–1834
- 80 Anton Cadonau**, merchant and philanthropist, 1850–1929
- 81 Richard La Nicca**, engineer, 1794–1883
- 82 Tiberius**, Roman Alpine campaign 15 B.C., Emperor 14–37 A.D.
- 83 Christine Mohr**, born 1671

ARMIES AND WARS

The numerous military conflicts from antiquity to the present reflect the eventful history of Graubünden and the importance of the region.

In 15 B.C. the Romans led a campaign over the Raetian passes to protect themselves better against the Alpine clans and to conquer new provinces.

At the end of the 15th century the League of the House of God and the League of the Ten Jurisdictions formed an alliance with the Swiss Confederation against the Habsburgs. After that came the bloody Swabian War of 1499.

Confessionally and politically torn, Graubünden became embroiled in the Thirty-Years War (1618–1648) and threatened to break up. Famine and plague followed the devastations of war.

In 1799 conflicts between the great European powers broke out. Despite grim resistance, French troops seized the country.

During the Second World War, too, every day life of the population was seriously aggravated. Men fit for the military served at the borders and were sorely missed in business at home.

15 B.C.: The Roman Alpine Campaign In the summer of 15 B.C. stepsons of the Emperor Augustus, Tiberius and Drusus with their legions launched an offensive to the north. Classical authors report that the Roman armies moved forward within just a few months from the west towards Lake Constance and from the south over the Septimer pass through the Bergell. Additional military units advanced northwards from Trento over the Reschen or the Brenner passes.

Finds from the region of the Septimer pass and the Oberhalbstein prove that units from three legions were on the move. Besides sling leads with stamps of the 3rd, 10th and 12th legion, there were other projectiles, fragments of various weapons, hobnails, fibulas, tent pegs, and coins.

There were probably battles in the region of the Crap Ses gorge (Oberhalbstein). The Roman military units by far outmatched the local troops. Thus, the Roman legions were able to advance over Lenzerheide as far as Chur. From there they continued through the Alpine Rhine Valley to the north. In the area of Lake Constance all the Roman troops congregated in order to move on to Augsburg.

During the entire campaign the Romans apparently conquered no less than 46 tribes. Among them were

probably the Rigusci (Oberhalbstein, Hinterrheintal?), the Suanetes (Vorderrheintal?) and the Calucones (area around Chur). As a result the Alpine tribes kept quiet and remained obedient to Roman rule. The conquest of the Alps was a significant step in Roman expansion policy.

1499: The Swabian War The Swabian War was characterised by a multitude of great battles and small raids. In doing so the Swiss and the Bündner achieved crucial triumphs against the Habsburg superiority.

The civil population suffered severely under the acts of war. Especially the Münstertal and the Engadine were ravaged. Shattering reports describe the misery and famine of the time. Cruel massacres occurred even among the fighters. The Swiss especially had a reputation of «not keeping prisoners».

In the battle of Calven on May 22, 1499 the Habsburg troops of approx. 13'000 men fought a grim battle with about 8'000 Bündner at an entrenchment. Thanks to the legendary self-sacrifice of the Bündner captain Benedikt Fontana the breakthrough finally succeeded. The Habsburgs fled and in the confusion suffered great losses. The battle and Benedikt

Fontana became the symbol of Graubünden's liberty in the second half of the 19th century. This hero worship reached its culmination in the Calven Celebration of 1899.

Donna Lupa also found a place of honour in the history of Graubünden. When the Tyrolean troops reached Tschlin, they were allegedly persuaded to retreat by Donna Lupa's cunning.

The war ended in the autumn of 1499 with the Treaty of Basel in favour of the Swiss and the Bündner. This allowed them to affirm their independence within the Holy Roman Empire.

1603–1639: The «Bündner Wirren» During the Thirty Years War 1618–1648 the confessionally and politically torn Freestate Graubünden got caught in the conflict between the great powers. The von Planta family mainly supported Austria and Spain, the von Salis family France and Venice.

In 1620 Spanish troops invaded the Veltlin and Austrian troops the Münstertal. Approximately 600 Protestants were murdered in the Veltlin. In 1622 the Graubünden subject territories were also officially lost. In the following two decades the foreign parties alternatively took over power in Graubünden. With

the help of the Capuchin Order the Austrians strove to re-convert the Protestant regions to Catholicism. The formerly Protestant clergyman Jörg Jenatsch, warlord and politician, led the resistance against Austria-Spain, and in 1621 participated in the murder of Pompejus von Planta. With the «Prättigauer Sturm» (uprising in the Prättigau) in 1622 the farmers rose up against the Austrian sovereignty. Father Fidelis of Sigmaringen, head of the Capuchin mission, was killed.

Under the leadership of Duke Henri de Rohan the French gained control in 1631. In opposition to the persisting French occupation Jörg Jenatsch switched sides. He converted to the Catholic belief and secretly allied himself with Austria and Spain. In 1637 the French had to leave. In the Milan treaty of 1639 Graubünden regained their subject territories. In the same year Jörg Jenatsch was killed in Chur.

1799: The French Are Coming! In 1798 the Three Leagues formed a military alliance with Austria. The French interpreted this as a breach of neutrality. In March 1799 their troops invaded Graubünden. Fierce combats took place in the Surselva and in the Lower Engadine. The following period was marked by constant changes of power.

In May 1799 an uprising began in the Surselva. It culminated in the disastrous defeat of the 6'000 Oberländer (people from the Surselva region) in the battle at Reichenau. In this and further battles 638 local combatants died. French soldiers burnt the villages of Tamins and Disentis to the ground. The French also took bloody revenge on the civilian population for the massacres, which the Bündner had committed on French prisoners. During these incidents Anna Maria Bühler gained heroic fame as « Cannon Maid of Ems». While the French were retreating through her village, she grabbed the reins of the horses pulling a French cannon, so that the farmers were able to seize the weapon.

One of the most prominent figures of this war was the Russian General Suworow, who was an ally of the Austrians. In October 1799 he and his troops succeeded in enforcing the passage over the snow-covered Panix pass. The French General MacDonald, who led an army of approximately 15'000 men over

the Splügen pass in the winter of 1800, also caused a big sensation.

The war ended with the Treaty of Lunéville in February 1800. Austria had to pull out of Graubünden.

1939–45 : Graubünden and the Second World War

Switzerland and Graubünden were spared the atrocities of war. However, the times were marked by scarcity and the fear of a German occupation.

On August 28, 1939 the Federal Government mobilised the border guards, two days later Henri Guisan was appointed general by the Federal Assembly. At the beginning of September mobilisation of the entire Swiss Army followed. Men fit for military service had to leave their homes and report for extended duty while the abandoned families suffered from a shortage of manpower.

Food and fuel were progressively and severely rationed. With the so-called Cultivation Battle («Anbauschlacht»), an attempt was made to guarantee the supply of staple foods for the population. Crops were planted on every available space.

The countless persecuted who sought protection in Switzerland were not always successful. The southern valleys of Graubünden also witnessed the fate of many refugees. 1200 Polish internees were relocated in Graubünden in 1941. Numerous so-called Polish Roads («Polenwege») such as in the Safien Valley, the Chur Rhine Valley, and the Domleschg are evidence of the work they did.

In the evening the population had to blackout their windows. Towards the end of the war bombers could be heard in the border regions thundering by almost every night. Damaged allied airplanes crashed or had to make emergency landings. During the entire war bombs were repeatedly dropped over Switzerland. On February 22, 1945 Vals was bombed. People were killed or suffered injuries.

«Power is any chance within a social relationship to enforce one's own will even against resistance.»
(Max Weber)

POWER AND POLITICS A short chronology

2008 First female Federal Councillor from Graubünden (Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf)

1971, 1972 women's suffrage on cantonal and national level

1914–18, 1939–45 Switzerland is spared in the First and Second World Wars

1803 Graubünden becomes a Swiss canton

1799–1803 Graubünden is part of the Helvetian Republic

1797 Subject Territories join the Cisalpine Republic

1779 last witch trial in Graubünden (Oberhalbstein)

1603–1639 «Bündner Wirren» (distress of war)

1524 Federal Charter of the Three Leagues

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1523 | start of the Reformation in large parts of Rhaetia |
| 1512 | Veltlin, Chiavenna and Bormio become subject territories of Graubünden |
| 1499 | Swabian War with Battle at the Calven |
| 1465 | foundation of the 5 guilds in Chur |
| 1436 | foundation of the League of the Ten Jurisdictions |
| 1395 | foundation of the Grey or Upper League |
| 1367 | foundation of the League of the House of God |
| 11 th century | onset of castle construction |
| 451 AD | first mention of a bishop in Chur (Bishop Asinio) |
| 15 B.C. | conquest of Rhaetia by the Romans |
| 10'000 B.C., approx. | first traces of human activities (Chur-Marsöl) |

LORDS AND CASTLES

Mediaeval society was clearly structured. Its different classes were bound by legal and sovereignty norms, such as protection, tax obligation, or oath.

From the 11th century up to the beginning of the 14th the area of today's canton Graubünden developed into a downright land of castles. Castles were centers of small territorial dominions and symbols of regional power. At the same time they served as residences, agricultural and trade enterprises.

The scattered castles in Raetia had no coordinated strategic military function. As a rule they simply consisted of a tower surrounded by smaller out-buildings and a circular wall. In untroubled times an average castle probably housed between 15 and 20 people.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages many castles were destroyed, abandoned, or converted.

Numerous archaeological finds document the life of the castle inhabitants. Even though feuds, sieges, and destruction are attested, war was not a predominant element in everyday castle life.

The Potentates in Rhaetia After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire, Rhaetia first went over to the Ostrogothic, later in 537 to the Frankish Empire. Administration headquarters and at the same time bishop's seat was Chur. The conflicts between the different parts of the Frankish Empire allowed Rhaetia a high degree of autonomy. Until the middle of the 8th century the Victorides governed – a family of the local ruling classes. They were both religious as well as secular potentates. After they died out in 765 (Bishop Tello), Churraetia was again more closely integrated into the Frankish Empire. Secular power progressively passed from the bishops' hands into those of the earls.

From the 11th century on the bishops of Chur regained power. They assumed stately rights and engaged in power politics. They waged war and strove to expand their possessions. Their power basis was control of the passes. In exchange the diocese received extensive privileges from the kings and emperors, such as jurisdiction, tariff and market rights, as well as the right to mint coins.

Secular power was distributed not only among the bishops but also among Episcopal bailiffs, imperial bailiffs and among the important families of Tarasp, Rhäzuns and Vaz as well as among less important aristocrats of the Vorderrheintal. From the 11th century on some of these rulers began to build

castles. Lesser aristocrats and the commissionaires of the religious and secular potentates followed suit. The fragmentation of sovereignty rights, accompanied by the gradual loss of the bishop's power, is mirrored in the close meshed net of castles in Graubünden.

Castles as Farms Unlike castles such as Rhäzüns, Mesocco, Belfort and the Bishop's palace in Chur, which were sovereign residences, life in smaller castles often had little to do with courtly culture.

The background noise of everyday life was not the rattling of arms, but the tinkling of bells, the clamour of the animals and the din of the craftsmen. Livestock and humans lived together in close quarters.

The importance of the castle as a farming enterprise can be seen from the archeological finds. Fields and gardens were worked with hoes, sickles, and grape knives. Axes and chains document forestry. Bells and dung forks indicate animal husbandry. Horses were especially important for riding and as draft- and pack-animals. Archaeological digs have produced spurs, horseshoes and horseshoe nails, snaffles, stirrups, and metal fragments of harnesses.

Bone specimens confirm that hunting was of high social value for the aristocracy. Animals hunted were mainly deer, chamois, capricorn, bears, and wild boars. Fishing was also actively pursued.

All types of crafts to do with their own needs such as repairing household equipment or maintenance of buildings were undertaken directly at the castle. Such tasks were probably mostly attended to not only by the servants but also by the knight's family members themselves. Sewing needles, thimbles, spindles, spindle whorls and loom weights document the activities of the aristocratic ladies.

Clacking Dice instead of Rattling Arms Helmets, swords, and daggers rarely appear among the finds in castles. With the exception of iron arrow points and crossbow bolts, finds of weaponry are rather rare. Weapons were also used for hunting and were aristocratic status symbols. Everyday life of Rhaetian castle lords was probably seldom warlike.

Some amusements such as knights' games, hunting, or falconry were exclusively reserved for aristocrats. Others resembled those of common people. For example gambling, often with high stakes, was extremely popular. Games were played with dice usually made of bone. Board games such as

Backgammon and Nine Men's Morris were common. Chess, which originated in the Far East, was also very popular in Rhaetia.

Sometimes music filled the halls of the castles. However, no elaborate string or wind instruments were found in Graubünden. People here probably sang and made music mainly with simple instruments. Especially popular was the Jew's harp and flutes carved from bones. From time to time travelling minstrels must have entertained castle inhabitants, as did bards who sang of their love for an unreachable noble lady. Not much is known about the spread of knightly culture in Rhaetian aristocracy. At least two representations from the Manesse song manuscript and the terracotta figurine of a courtly couple on horseback point in this direction.

Living in the Castle In the castles of the Late Middle Ages it was dark and cool. Only few rooms could be heated. In winter the inhabitants had to bar window slits with wooden shutters to protect themselves against wind and cold. The centre of the dwelling was the fireplace. This was used equally for heating, cooking, and lighting.

The emergence of the ceramic-tiled stove in the late 12th century made life in the castle considerably more pleasant. A new warm, smoke-free room came into being: the living-room. At first the stove tiles were cup-shaped, later square, glazed and decorated.

During the 14th century the appearance of glass panels allowed for larger window openings. The great hall could thus be used all year round. Such rooms were often plastered and painted, or decorated with representations in a scratching technique, later sometimes panelled. Whether they had wall tapestries in Graubünden cannot be ascertained. In many castles the floors were covered with tiles in geometric or figurative patterns.

Castles were probably sparsely furnished with wooden furniture. Finds like parts of fittings, decorated locks and keys point to the frequent use of chests and cupboards. No tables, chairs, benches, and beds have been preserved. Domestic appliances, such as pots, and soapstone (Lavez) drinking cups, wooden dishes, and iron knives were found. All these finds attest to a modest everyday life.

THREE LEAGUES

AND SUBJECT TERRITORY VELTLIN

From the 16th to the 18th century the area of present-day Graubünden was the Freestate of the Three Leagues. These were the Grey (Upper) League, the League of the House of God and the League of the Ten Jurisdictions.

In the Late Middle Ages the communes succeeded the local feudal nobility. Basis of the Constitution was the Federal Charter of 1524. There was no real central power.

Decisions in the approx. 50 juridical communes were made by the citizens assembly. On all levels the influence and power of the ruling class determined the results of polls and elections.

Because of its geographic location, and since it was the bishop's see, and also due to its relatively large size the city of Chur was the unofficial capital.

The Three Leagues governed their subjects in the Veltlin, in Chiavenna, and Bormio, at the southern foot of the Alpine passes for almost three centuries from 1512 to 1797.

At the end of the 18th century the State of the Three Leagues lost its «colonies» and its independence. 1799–1803 it was part of the Helvetian Republic. Since 1803 Graubünden is a canton of the Swiss Confederation.

The Juridical Communes «We have our own scepter and seal, rod and gallows, thank God, we owe nothing to foreign prince or lord», it says proudly in the Landbuch, the 1622 statutes of the Juridical Commune of Avers. It thus names the central symbols of sovereignty which all have to do with its own autonomous jurisdiction.

The high valley of Avers was one of the approximately 50 juridical communes in the Freestate of the Three Leagues. These all had a high measure of autonomy. Every juridical commune included a valley or a section of one. It usually combined several neighbourhoods, which approximately correspond to today's political communities. Head of the juridical commune was the Landammann (mayor), who as a member of the male citizens was elected at the Landsgemeinde (communal assembly). In times of war, the men marched into battle carrying the banner of the High Court.

The Juridical Commune of Heinzenberg, for instance, belonged to the High Court of Thusis, in the Grey or Upper League. Within this juridical commune were the neighbouring villages of Flerden, Portein, Präz, Sarn and Urmein.

Every Bündner juridical commune was something like a microstate with far reaching competences. They all

belonged to one of the Three Leagues, who together constituted a sovereign, though rather weak state. Its competences were limited and mainly applied to foreign policy. Other attempts at standardization, for example of weights and measures, were hardly successful. As late as the 18th century, for example, a pound in the Münstertal did not weigh the same as in Chur.

The «Big Shots» A few dozen aristocratic or noble families and clans made up the ruling class. Prominent among them were the Salis and the Planta. In the comparatively democratic Bünden, however, these families hardly had the right to claim political privileges. Instead, they set themselves apart due to their incomes, fortunes, education, and a far-reaching network. Like all women, female aristocrats were barred from the public arena of politics. Nevertheless, they were an important part of marriage- and inheritance strategies.

The common man tended to leave to the elite the most important posts (which could often be bought) in juridical communes, Bünden, and subject territories. He was not in fact politically dependent on them but often economically. At sporadic intervals «Fähnliilupfen» (raising of military banners) and

tribunals against the so-called «Big Shots» were held. A common accusation was that they had acted against the interest of the state. Not infrequently these special courts imposed draconian penalties. However, these were not always uprisings from below – as for example in times of war, hardship, and famine – but often a means of party politics.

Possibly because of the powerful position of individual families and the frequently violent politics, a grim popular saying went as follows: In Graubünden you need three people to deliver a person from life to death: One Salis (= willow; bend up the lower left arm), a Planta (= plant; same movement with the lower right arm) and a Travers (= crossbeam; indicate a crossbeam above).

The Unofficial Capital Chur was a bishopric at the latest by 451. After the League of the House of God was founded in 1367, the power of the bishop slowly dwindled. With the establishment of the 5 guilds in 1465 and the Reformation after 1523 Chur became irrevocably emancipated.

Without formally being the capital, Chur achieved a central function thanks to its location and economic significance. This was similarly true for Chiavenna at

the southern foot of the Alps. Foreign ambassadors considered Chur the only real Bündner city suitable for residence. Dissatisfied countrymen also liked to flock to the tribunal in Chur after a «Fähnliupf» (military banner-raising).

As capital of the League of the House of God, Chur was on the same level as Davos (League of the Ten Jurisdictions) and Ilanz (Grey or Upper League). The federal assemblies with the council envoys of the juridical communes took place alternatively at these three locations. Chur never succeeded in becoming a city-state with its own surrounding dominion. Its legal status was never very different from that of the rural juridical communes.

The Freestate of the Three Leagues did not have a permanent government. Neither was there a joint administration. The few ongoing jobs were taken over by the only juridical commune that had a stable apparatus. Correspondence addressed to the Freestate was opened by the president of the League of the House of God (until 1700 always the Mayor of Chur) later by a city councillor. The town clerk of Chur usually distributed the sparse state funds.

The Subjects In 1512 the Three Leagues seized the Veltlin and the counties of Chiavenna and Bormio. Thus they not only controlled the Alpine passes at the northern, but also at the southern foot of the Alps.

Historiography is at odds about whether the Veltlin and the counties originally were promised equal rights. In reality they were treated as subject territories. Chief vice-regent was the state governor based in Sondrio. At his side stood the Vicari. In Chiavenna the Commissari had his seat, in six other communities there was a Podestà. The juridical commune assigned the posts in fixed rotation.

These Bündner magistrates were entitled to the revenues from fines and litigation fees. This led to gross malpractice and to bribery in obtaining posts. This caused trouble and rebellion often also of confessional character. Regarding local administration and in economic life the population was able to maintain its independence. Not infrequently the upper classes co-operated with the Bündner authorities.

The more and more frequent complaints of the subjects were ineffective. Even after the French Revolution equal rights remained out of the question for the majority of the Bündner. So in 1797 the Veltlin joined the Cisalpine Republic and was forever

irretrievable. For Graubünden this was also an enormous loss from an economic point of view.

The «Herrschaft» (sovereignty) Maienfeld held a curious position, being both a subject territory with a Bündner bailiff as well as a member of the League of the Ten Jurisdictions.

THE DARK SIDE OF JUSTICE

Criminal law in the Three Leagues was a matter for the juridical commune. Until the middle of the 19th century local bylaws were in force. The fact that torture remained allowed in order to extort a confession was disastrous. This led to coerced testimony and denunciations of innocent people.

Especially in the 17th century witchcraft frenzy raged in numerous valleys of Graubünden. The majority of the victims accused of black magic were women.

The executioner played a central role. Before torturing he showed the accused the instruments in order to elicit an early confession. Usually Chur was the only place where there was an executioner («Meister Hans»).

Many of places of execution were located near the highway in order to drastically demonstrate to the public the consequences of felony. The cantonal penal law of 1851 knew the death penalty but only for some few capital crimes.

Torture and the death penalty have not disappeared from our world. Amnesty International continues to campaign for the abolition of torture.

Imprint

Permanent exhibition «Power and Politics» on the first upper floor

Concept::

Jürg Simonett
Yves Mühlemann

Exhibition design and graphics:

gasser, derungs Innenarchitekturen

Structural measures:

Hochbauamt Graubünden
Rudolf Fontana & Partner AG

Translations:

Standeskanzlei Graubünden
Jane Gillespie-Gasparis

Photos:

Rätisches Museum
Die Südostschweiz
Bündner Tagblatt

Loans:

Archäologischer Dienst Graubünden
Kantonsbibliothek Graubünden
Staatsarchiv Graubünden
Mr and Mrs Trepp, Cinuos-chel

S BU DREI KRIEGE UNTE E LAND

Tuesday to Sunday 10am–5pm

Rätisches Museum
Museum retic
Museo retico

Hofstrasse 1, 7000 Chur
Telephone 081 257 48 40
www.raetischesmuseum.gr.ch