



NEWSLETTER OF ASSOCIATION SUISSE TURQUIE

No 46

February 2025

We hope that the new year has started well for everyone. After our traditional fondue night, this edition takes a look into Geneva's medieval past and its famous fairs. Although the first recorded mention of these fairs dates back to 1262, earlier fairs are believed to have existed, such as the annual fair held during the festivities of Saint Peter's birthday, the patron saint of the city. Over time, interest in these events grew, making it possible to establish additional fairs. By the 15th century, they had become well-established, taking place four times a year: during Epiphany (January), Easter, Saint Peter's Day (August 1st), and All Saints' Day (November 1st). Each fair lasted between seven and twenty days, providing ample time for merchants and buyers to conduct their business.

The fairs were initially held in Geneva's streets, known as the "Rues Basses," stretching from Rue St-Léger to Places du Bourg-de-Four, Fusterie, and Molard. At the time, houses had roofs extending several meters over the front, supported by long columns. These roofs joined with those of the neighbouring houses across the street, forming covered galleries under which merchants set up their stands. Additional space was rented in other public areas, and each category of merchandise was sold in a designated section. As the prominence of these fairs grew, the first dedicated hall was constructed in 1310 at Place du Molard to facilitate the unloading of goods arriving by lake. A second hall was built a century later between the original hall and the river.

As commercial interest expanded, military protection and regulatory measures concerning goods, weight standards, tolls, and taxes were frequently updated. For instance, in an exchange with the Milanese syndicate, Amadée II, Count of Geneva, agreed to provide protection for Italian merchants attending the fairs in Geneva.

These fairs served as hubs for both commerce and finance. Geneva's strategic location attracted merchants from various regions. In the 15th century, Italian traders and bankers were predominant, followed by merchants from the Rhineland, the Danubian regions, France, and the Netherlands. These traders brought with them luxury goods such as textiles (including fine cloth and silk), spices, dyes, metals, weapons, and leather products. The fairs became renowned for offering high-quality and diverse merchandise, appealing to discerning buyers. While the fairs facilitated the exchange of a vast array of goods, they also played a crucial role in international banking, with transactions often involving letters of exchange and other financial instruments.

The fairs were vibrant events that transformed Geneva into a bustling center of activity. The influx of participants—from wealthy merchants to common folk—created a lively atmosphere. Inns were filled to capacity, and the city's streets teemed with people engaged in trade, entertainment, and socializing. While the fairs significantly boosted the local economy, they also brought challenges such as overcrowding and occasional disputes. Despite these issues, the economic benefits were substantial. The fairs generated significant revenue through taxes and fees levied on transactions and goods, contributing to Geneva's prosperity and shaping the city's economic and social landscape. By the 15th century, Geneva's fairs had reached their peak. However, every success invites competition. In 1420, Lyon established its own fairs, recognizing the success of those in Geneva. By the end of the 15th century, measures taken by King Louis XI of France to make Lyon the dominant hub for fairs in the region ultimately led to the decline of Geneva's fairs.

For more detailed information, feel free to explore Frédéric Borel's comprehensive study, *Les foires de Genève au XV^e siècle*.

We wish you a Happy Valentine's Day and great February holidays to all the children!

Bezen Hong

Please keep us posted on events and news that you would like to share at assosuisseturquie@gmail.com

MARCH and APRIL EVENTS

Association Events

Association Events

Conference with M. Metin Arditi on the 20th of March 2025

General Assembly on the 3rd of April 2025

For future Association events: www.assoctr.ch

Other Events

Conference: The Future of Syria after the Fall of Assad – February 19 at 12:30

Graduate Institute, Auditorium Ivan Pictet B

This interesting conference will be given by Professors Cyrus Schayegh and Christiana Parreira. For more details:

<https://www.graduateinstitute.ch/communications/events/future-syria-after-fall-assad>

The Carnival in Basel – March 10-12

The largest carnival of Switzerland is also inscribed in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List. For more details on

the carnival and its events: <https://www.basel.com/en/events/carnival>

Puppet Festival – March 22-23

Chêne Bougeries

This festival for "all" ages will include show, workshops and other activities. For the program and more details:

<https://www.tempslibre.ch/gen-ve/spectacles/440557-festival-des-marionnettes>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Donations

Our association makes regular donations to various foundations and schools both in Switzerland and Türkiye. Our website has a specific page on these: <https://www.assoctr.ch/fr/yardimlarimiz>

"Lausanne Bizim Lozan"

100th year Edition

The much praised book published by our Association is available for purchase at:

Online on our website www.assoctr.ch

Bookstore Boyut Yayınevi (<https://www.boyutstore.com/bizim-lozan-lausanne>)

and at D&R in Türkiye

We believe it will be a very much appreciated gift by your friends and family!

Cornucopia Magazine

Our annual sponsor and the source of many events that take place in Türkiye and around the world, is now also digital and includes all the past editions.

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RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

Swiss Days Istanbul Videos

Newsletter of the Swiss Chamber of Commerce in Türkiye uploaded the videos of the panels during the Swiss Days organized in September 2024. These can be found on https://www.tr-ch.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Newsletter_December_2024_v3.pdf?v=1

ARTS UPDATE sponsored by Cornucopia Magazine

Exhibitions and Events

New and Newest Music Festival

Arter, Dolapdere, Istanbul

February 20-23

<https://www.cornucopia.net/events/new-and-newest-music-festival/>

Nuri Bilgi Ceylan: On the Road

Dirimart Dolapdere

Until February 23

<https://www.cornucopia.net/events/nuri-bilgi-ceylan-on-the-road/>

Silk Roads

British Museum

Until February 23

<https://www.cornucopia.net/events/silk-roads/>

Elisa Zonaro's Istanbul

Kazlıçesme Sanat, Zeytinburnu

Until May 31

<https://www.cornucopia.net/events/elisa-zonaros-istanbul/>

Rick Pickings from the Cornucopia Bookshop

Tulips and Peacocks: William Morris and Art from the Islamic World by Rowan Bain

Yale University Press

An introduction to William Morris's personal collection of artworks from the Islamic world and how they came to influence his pattern-making. One of the principal founders of the Arts and Crafts movement, William Morris was responsible for hundreds of patterns for wallpapers, fabrics, tapestries, and carpets that are iconic of the late nineteenth century and continue to resonate today. It is now widely acknowledged that his artistic production was stimulated by his deep familiarity with embroideries, woven velvets, silks, carpets, and metalwork from Iran, Syria, and Turkey, which he collected throughout his lifetime.

<https://www.cornucopia.net/store/books/tulips-and-peacocks-william-morris-and-art-from-the-islamic-world/>

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