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Change Le changement is the only constant reste la seule constante

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Editor-in-chief /
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Change is the only constant

Do you have a feeling that everything around you is changing rapidly, and you can't keep up? It was Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher, who coined the phrase "change is the only constant in life." I guess nothing has really changed since ancient times!

Over the past couple of years, so much about our working and daily lives has changed it is hard at times to recall what 'normal' was. This is also true for international relations, diplomacy, and international development architecture.

We have several articles that bring you insights into how things have changed or are changing. The interview with the French Council General in Geneva dives deeply into how cross-border operations and international relations are changing, which I think you will find very interesting. We also have overview articles on what we learned from the pandemic (and what we may still need to learn) and how we are growing with the lessons from it. We tried to bring you views from people of different generations, experiences, and stages of life experience. I hope you will enjoy them.

And of course, we have lots more.

Enjoy reading this issue! ■

Le changement reste la seule constante

Avez-vous le sentiment que tout autour de vous change rapidement et que vous ne pouvez pas suivre? C'est Héraclite, un philosophe grec, qui a inventé l'expression «le changement est la seule constante dans la vie». Je pense que rien n'a vraiment changé depuis l'antiquité!

Au cours des deux dernières années, tant de choses ont changé dans nos vies professionnelles et quotidiennes, il est parfois difficile de se rappeler ce qu'était la «normalité». Cela vaut également pour les relations internationales, la diplomatie et l'architecture du développement international.

Nous avons plusieurs articles qui vous donnent un aperçu de la façon dont les choses ont changé ou sont en train de changer. L'entretien avec le Consul général de France à Genève plonge profondément dans l'évolution des relations transfrontalières et internationales, je pense que vous trouverez très intéressant. Vous lirez aussi des articles de synthèse sur ce que nous avons appris depuis la pandémie (et ce que nous avons peut-être encore besoin d'apprendre) et comment nous grandissons avec les leçons qui en découlent. Nous avons essayé de vous apporter des points de vue des personnes de générations, d'expériences et stades de vie différentes. J'espère que vous l'apprécierez.

Et bien sûr, nous vous laissons découvrir la suite.

Bonne lecture de ce numéro! ■

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Rencontre avec Patrick Lachaussée, Consul général de France à Genève

Le paysage international genevois recèle parfois des personnalités atypiques qui possèdent une approche non formatée et proposent une approche nourrie de leur spécificité.



© Christian David

Trois éléments paraissent essentiels: la bienveillance, la solidarité entre nous et l'exigence.

CHRISTIAN DAVID, ONUG

Votre parcours est assez étonnant: vous êtes écrivain, musicien, vous avez organisé des festivals de musique, des événements culturels.

Dans ma jeunesse, j'ai joué dans des groupes de jazz, de rock. J'ai eu le bonheur de fréquenter de grands artistes comme Didier Lockwood, Michel Petrucciani. La musique a toujours constitué un marqueur très puissant dans ma vie. Je pratique le piano depuis l'enfance, mon père était musicien ainsi que mes enfants. En tant que conseiller municipal à Evry, ville de la banlieue parisienne, j'avais créé l'évènement «aux arts citoyens». Nous avons distribué des livres aux habitants issus de 42 nationalités différentes. Les portes se sont ouvertes, quelques parfums, images, instruments de musique plus tard, nous les avons réunis et ils se sont mélangés au travers de cette initiative. Quand j'étais maire du village de Fossoy, à côté de Reims, j'ai décidé avec quelques amis de faire venir des artistes du monde entier dans un festival que nous avons appelé «le festival des mondes solidaires». Finalement, quelle que soit notre origine, nous possédons tous des valeurs de paix et de partage.

À quel moment avez-vous choisi votre carrière actuelle?

J'ai effectivement un choix une carrière dans l'administration. Puis, je suis rentré au Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (Quai d'Orsay) en 1991. En 1995, j'ai intégré la direction des français à l'étranger et plus particulièrement la cellule de crise. Pendant 10 ans, j'ai créé puis dirigé la cellule de veille sur la sécurité des Français de l'étranger. La cellule interministérielle de négociation intégrait plusieurs entités dont les négociateurs du RAID, du GIGN, les Ministères de l'Intérieur, de la Justice, de la Défense et le Quai d'Orsay. Par la suite, et entre autres, j'ai contribué à la création d'un centre de crise et géré notamment des prises d'otages et autres événements tragiques. J'ai par la suite occupé d'autres fonctions dans mon pays et à l'étranger.

Comment devient-on Consul général de France à Genève?

Cette fonction recouvre la dimension humaine de la diplomatie. J'avais occupé les fonctions de Consul général adjoint à New York. Je suis arrivé à Genève en 2019, dans ce consulat qui gère la plus grosse communauté française. Avec mes 45 collaborateurs,



Accords bilatéraux entre la France et la Suisse.

J'ai essayé de proposer un projet collectif visant à améliorer les conditions de travail, d'accueil avec l'aménagement de nouveaux espaces. Toute l'équipe s'est mobilisée. Nous avons développé une équipe managériale de projets basée sur trois éléments qui me paraissent essentiels: la bienveillance, la solidarité entre nous et un degré d'exigence que nous essayons de faire monter. Il a fallu convaincre et puis la pandémie est arrivée freinant un peu ce processus. Répondre aux demandes exige en effet une excellente connaissance de la procédure mais aussi du doigté et de la patience pour proposer la meilleure solution. Je me suis beaucoup déplacé au début pour rencontrer chercheurs, entreprises, enseignants, associations, acteurs culturels. Beaucoup de compatriotes se sont implantés en Suisse pour des raisons professionnelles, familiales. Il y a aussi des gens comme moi qui un jour travaillent à Paris ou à Singapour et se retrouvent à Genève. Dans l'environnement Nations Unies, énormément de compatriotes composent le paysage international et nous avons travaillé avec les Ambassadeurs de la Mission française pour les déplacements pendant la crise covid.

Comment organisez-vous le travail?

Il s'agit tout d'abord de piloter le fonctionnement général de l'activité consulaire, faire face à des problématiques difficiles avec par exemple les violences faites aux femmes,

En liaison avec l'ambassade à Berne, nous restons en relation avec des interlocuteurs suisses, la police, la santé, l'enseignement scolaire et universitaire. Il est nécessaire enfin d'entretenir les relations bilatérales transfrontalières sur les questions économiques, créer des liens. Le consulat n'est pas un acteur de décision mais de mise en relation, mettre une goutte d'huile dans un engrenage peut souvent permettre de trouver la solution. Encore une fois, c'est l'humain qui l'emporte.

Comment se sont déroulées les élections présidentielles?

Ce fut un travail considérable qui avait commencé depuis deux ans. Nous devons identifier les bureaux de vote. Entre 2017 et 2022, le nombre d'électeurs a augmenté est passé de 101 000 à 125 000. Nous devons anticiper une situation sanitaire avec une option de multiplier

les lieux de vote. Nous avons atteint le chiffre de 107 bureaux de votes soit l'équivalent d'une ville comme Lille. Tout s'est mis en place et s'est emboîté. L'équipe du consulat renforcée, nous étions 80, les 900 bénévoles, ont été formidables.

Comment avez-vous géré la crise sanitaire?

Avant tout grâce à mon équipe à qui je rends hommage. Mon expérience m'a appris qu'à chaque nouvelle crise, il faut oublier comment a été gérée la précédente. Il fallait s'adapter en permanence et le lien avec l'équipe a permis la mise en place de procédures claires. Il a fallu anticiper et notamment pour assurer l'interaction avec les services de crises que sont les hôpitaux, les services cantonaux. Un annuaire des contacts a été remis à jour. La relation que nous avons eue pendant cette période de tension a été exceptionnelle avec l'ensemble des cantons de Suisse romande. La cellule opérationnelle a intégré toute cette chaîne d'interlocuteurs tout en maintenant une fluidité de fonctionnement.

Lorsque nous avons été obligés de fermer le consulat, nous sommes concentrés sur le travail

à distance. Nous avons reçu 80 000 appels téléphoniques, 370 000 emails auxquels nous avons répondu d'une manière ou d'une autre. Par la suite, il a fallu reprendre l'activité avec un retard important pour la délivrance de papiers d'identité. Nous avons aussi eu notre lot de malades. Je me félicite tous les jours de travailler avec de vrais professionnels qui sont en contact avec le public ce qui est loin d'être évident. Avec le développement des réseaux sociaux, le site web et les réponses, notamment téléphoniques nous avons pu capter davantage de personnes et de mieux détecter tous les problèmes. Nous avons enfin introduit une dynamique de complémentarité des activités, pour que chacun soit à même d'exercer toutes les tâches, ce qui a été déterminant pour la reprise progressive.

Avez-vous des exemples de la collaboration avec les autorités locales?

J'étais observateur pour l'exercice de sécurité binational, simulant une accident majeur, qui s'était déroulé sur le trajet du Léman express en 2019. J'ai pu constater l'interaction entre les différents services: police, pompiers,

ambulanciers, etc.

Avec les personnels de la police, nous avons beaucoup travaillé pendant la pandémie. Les accords bilatéraux entre la France et la Suisse, justice, police, les accords de Paris, la sécurité autour de l'aéroport, les questions de frontières. Des échanges permanents et de bonnes pratiques se sont mis en place pour les questions opérationnelles. Nous avons la chance de nous trouver dans un environnement qui permet de travailler sereinement et avec efficacité.

Les questions qui n'étaient pas dans les circulaires ni dans les instructions ont trouvé des réponses de manière efficace et immédiate et ont permis de débloquent des centaines de situations. Les différents interlocuteurs se connaissent, les points de contacts sont identifiés et une confiance s'est instaurée et le tout génère une efficacité au qui

est au service de la population. L'organisation autour de la police internationale avec des grands événements sportifs nécessitent une réelle interaction entre tous les services de secours. Le centre de coordination police et douane (CCPD) est à ce titre, un modèle car il amalgame les services de sécurité des deux pays. Il s'agit d'une mécanique que je ne connaissais pas.

Quelle est votre perception de la guerre en Ukraine

Tous les messages lancés par nos autorités, par la communauté internationale sur le maintien du dialogue et l'évacuation des populations en danger, la création de couloirs humanitaires et faire sortir les gens de cet enfer. Je travaille sur cette question pour les personnes qui viennent s'installer en France, en Suisse. Les associations et la solidarité s'organise.

Que vous a apporté votre découverte de Genève et du bassin transfrontalier?

Une richesse architecturale, artistique, des paysages, de l'environnement, tout a été pour moi, une réelle découverte. Vous pouvez vous rendre à l'opéra, voir une pièce au théâtre, assister à un concert. Cette richesse est due également à des talents locaux. Cette dynamique dans tous les domaines: recherche, finance, industrie, horlogerie, parfumerie. Le domaine de la formation professionnelle, le pôle de santé qui se met en places questions de santé. C'est le seul endroit au monde où existe ce tram transfrontalier, cette coopération sanitaire renforcée, ce travail sur les questions de sécurité, des échanges. 155 000 français habitent en Suisse 41% dans le canton de Vaud et 37% dans le canton de Genève. De l'autre côté de la frontière, mon

collègue suisse en place à Lyon, gère la plus grosse communauté, soit environ 140 000 qui habitent côté France. Les interactions sont évidentes dans tous les domaines et nous pouvons parler effectivement parler de bassin de vie transfrontalier. ■



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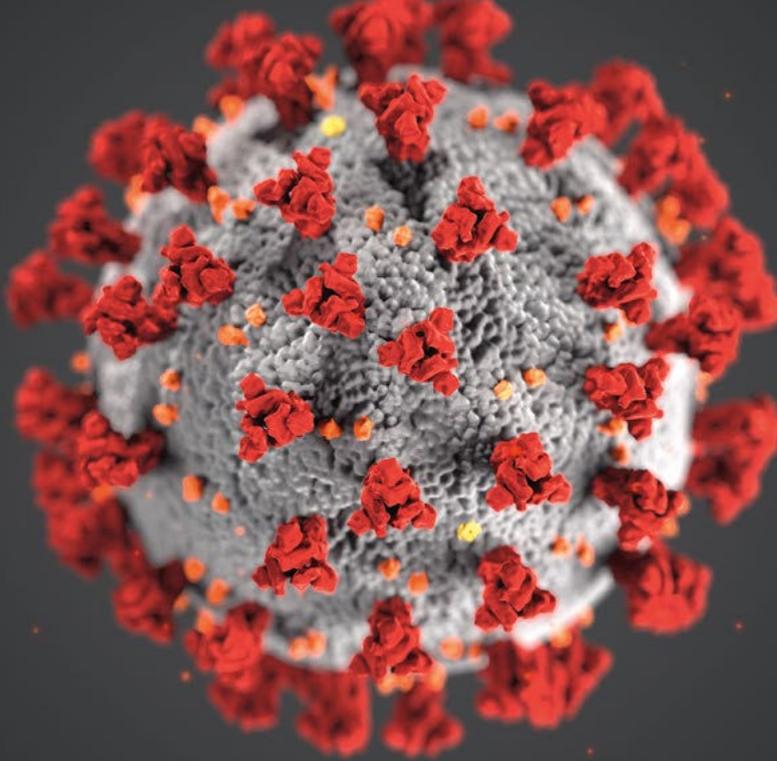
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COVID: Nearly three years on, what have we learned?

The COVID pandemic disrupted nearly every angle of our lives, economies and society, both initially as well as today, with its knock-on effects. Nearly three years on, what have we learned?

PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU

What were the main downsides and upsides to COVID-19? (Yes, believe it or not, there were some upsides!) Beyond its immediate impact, today, some of the more subtle consequences of COVID-19 are still only just becoming apparent.

In terms of health, COVID-19 has caused a cumulative total of some 617.6 million cases worldwide and over 6.5 million deaths to date¹. It is noticeable that while the case load continues to be high (especially over the winter season), the level of deaths attributed to

COVID has been reducing overall, due to improved treatments and the impact of vaccinations, especially for the elderly and/or vulnerable in rich countries able to afford extensive public vaccination campaigns.

Medicine has made huge strides, with the equivalent of five or ten years' worth of progress in medical research (especially in mRNA vaccines) achieved in the first year of the pandemic. Simply through reading the news, everyone took a basic crash course in epidemics, contagious diseases and basic hygiene. For a while,

the news was full of explanations about how viruses spread, genetic mutations and hygiene measures. We all found out how risk averse they were, and which risks we were willing to accept in the course of our ordinary lives.

Perhaps one of the longer lasting effects of COVID has been to change the relationship between citizens and the State. Governments entered new territory, closing borders and imposing often strict and extensive lockdowns in liberal countries and highly regulated countries alike. They experimented with travel bans

and restrictions, testing procedures, tracing apps and vaccine passports, often to the growing concerns of civil libertarians and ordinary citizens alike.

Even fairly liberal Governments found themselves involved in trying to support the hospitals dealing with the fall-out from the epidemic, and in some countries, the army and civil operations units were called in to support health services and vaccination campaigns. Meanwhile, lockdowns and travel restrictions induced the closure of large parts of the travel, entertainment, aviation and hospitality industries.

Economically, the pandemic has cost nearly every country a huge amount. Estimates about the economic cost of the COVID-19 pandemic vary, but all estimates agree – its economic cost has been huge, especially taking into account ensuing market disruptions. In January 2022, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) revised its forecasts of the COVID-19 pandemic upwards, predicting that it would cost the global economy US\$12.5 trillion through 2024.

In the United States alone, in the first two months of the pandemic, it is estimated that over 22 million Americans were put out of work, as the U.S. unemployment rate hit

an all-time high of 14.7% in April 2020, the highest since unemployment data began to be recorded in 1948. In the United Kingdom, the government helped underwrite 80% of the wage bill for large swathes of the economy, effectively almost ‘nationalising’ large parts of the economy overnight.

On the upside, the COVID-19 pandemic induced the only real reductions in carbon emissions we have seen recently, with the lack of travel and closure of many industries, factories and distribution chains. In terms of changed, slowed or absent consumption habits, COVID-19 represented mostly good news for the environment and nature.

However, some of the most severe consequences of the pandemic lay in education, and the changed plans of young people deprived of their studies, university experience, and in some cases, even their planned future. At the height of the pandemic, some 185 countries closed schools (partially or nationwide), with some 1.5 billion schoolchildren² and over 63 million schoolteachers affected by school or class closures³. Even in rich, industrialized countries able to put in place support systems, it has been estimated that students lost anywhere between six months and a year of effective learning. Teachers and students

alike experimented with remote learning where possible, with self-led learning exploding in popularity.

Socially, almost everyone found themselves more isolated at some point (notable exceptions being health workers and emergency services, who found themselves working flat-out). Bars, restaurants and nightclubs closed, while communications and dating moved online to a large extent (or vanished, for a time). Teleconferencing apps such as Zoom and Webex came into their own, as a means of staying in touch with family and colleagues, and workers experimented with teleworking.

Given the economic consequences of the pandemic (which continue to persist, even today), many people relocated or moved – quite often, out of cities to suburbs or remote areas with the possibility. Young people moved back in with their families as they lost work, wanted or needed to save money. Indeed, some families found themselves spending large amounts of time together for the first time in a long time, often with unintended consequences for relationships and families.

Online forums filled up with advice about anxiety and stress management and relaxation

techniques, as everyone was challenged to find their own coping techniques. More people took up exercise to stay healthy, while some people took on pets for company or took up new hobbies. Overall, we have all been forced to explore our priorities, how we can cope with change and stress, and what is really important for us, individually or as families. Although the phenomenon of the ‘Great Resignation’ may be overhyped, this re-evaluation exercise of priorities continues for many of us today.

The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the biggest ‘stress test’ we have faced in recent history – individually, as societies and systems and globally. It has introduced uncertainty and instability on many fronts, but at the same time, COVID-19 has given us an opportunity to re-evaluate and to improve our organisation and response. Although it is far from clear that we have managed to ‘build back better’, at least we now have a better sense of how we might begin to respond to a truly global challenge... To be ready for the next one. ■

1 <https://covid19.who.int>

2 <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-emergencies/coronavirus-school-closures>

3 <https://en.unesco.org/news/covid-19-webinar-new-world-teachers-educations-frontline-workers>

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Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Dutch Proverbs*, Google Art Project.

Epigrams and more

Aphorisms have a long history from the Chinese Lao Tze and Confucius, to King Solomon's Proverbs [Ecclesiastes 1:10, from the Hebrew *שֵׁן לִבּוֹ נִיא* (*nihil novi sub sole est*)], to Ben Sirach's *Book of wisdom* (51 chapters!), to the Greeks Solon, Hippocrates (who invented the term), Pythagoras, Hesiod, Diogenes and Epictetus, to the Romans Cicero, Catullus, Horace, Ovid, Seneca, Lucretius, Tacitus, Martial, Juvenal, to the Latin grammarian Aelius Donatus who expressed his exasperation about the difficulties of being original: "*Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt*", to the Iranian Avicenna and the Cordoban Averroes, to the mediaeval scholastic writers like Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus, to the Renaissance writers Michel de Montaigne, Desiderius Erasmus,

Blaise Pascal, William Shakespeare, Martin Luther, to the Spaniards Miguel de Cervantes and Baltasar Gracián, the Dutchman Baruch Spinoza, the French Jean de la Bruyère, Jean de La Fontaine, François de La Rochefoucauld, François-Marie Arouet (Voltaire), Jean Jacques Rousseau, the Germans Wolfgang von Goethe, Karl May, Wilhelm Busch, Artur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche and Theodor Fontane, the Russians Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, Fjodor Dostoyevsky, Ivan Turgenev, and Leo Tolstoy, the Brits William Shakespeare, John Dryden, Alexander Pope, Lord Byron, Benjamin Disraeli, George Eliot, the Irishmen par excellence Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw, the Americans Benjamin Franklin, Mark Twain, Emily Dickinson, H.L. Mencken, Groucho Marx, the Indian Rabindranath Tagore...

ALFRED DE ZAYAS,
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

A cherished form of literature, the art of formulating maxims or epigrams seems to have fallen out of favour with XXst and XXIst century authors. This form of concentrated philosophy can be compared with the popular Japanese art of writing haikus.

A vast wealth of aphorisms has come down to us: ethical, unethical, cynical, humorous, enlightening, excruciatingly cruel, and frequently worth more reflection than many books. Epigrams are tasty nuggets of humour, wit, irony, melancholy, momentary reflections, “bargain-basement philosophy”, paradoxes, allegories, metaphors! They have even been the subject of famous paintings, including the representation of 200 Dutch proverbs and popular sayings by Pieter Brueghel the Elder in his *Nederlandse Spreekwoorden*. At the *Gemäldegalerie* in Berlin, we can admire Brueghel's “*The Blue Cloak or The Topsy Turvy World*”.

Below are random thoughts, some of which have grown into mini-essays.

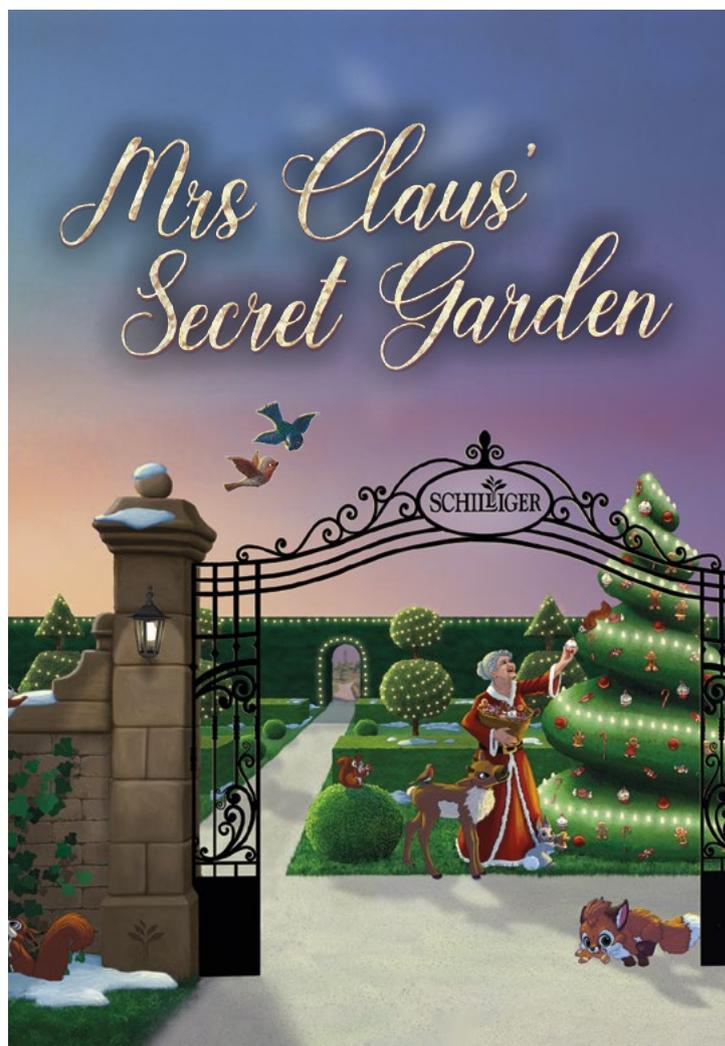
Lessons not learned: It is a sad fact that in spite of the lessons we could and should have learned from Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount*, Seneca's *De Vita Beata*, Juvenalis' *Satires*, Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly*, Bartolomé de las Casas' *The Devastation of the Indies*, Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract*, Voltaire's *Candide*, Thoreau's *Walden*, Spengler's *The*



Ovidius (43 BC - 17 AD).

Decline of the West, Remarque's *All Quiet in the Western Front*, Russell's *Power*, Orwell's *1984*, Galeano's *Open veins of Latin America*, Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent*, Pilger's *Hidden Agendas*, Zinn's *People's History of the United States*, Solomon's *War made Easy*, Kinzer's *Overthrow*, Klein's *The Shock Doctrine*, Sachs' *The Price of Civilization*, Blum's *America's Deadliest Export*, Giriharadas' *Winners Take All*, and Snowden's *Permanent Record* – relatively little ever changes in the power equations that rule humankind. Notwithstanding the United Nations and the High Commissioner for Human Rights, social injustice prevails in most corners of the world. It seems that Thucydides' Melian dialogue in the *Peloponnesian War* remains as valid today as in the 5th century BC: “The strong do as they want, and the weak suffer what they must”. And yet, we must not give up striving to improve the world around us, to influence what realistically can be influenced, to contribute to change step by step, drop by drop. I cannot abandon the hope that if we strive toward micro-justice in our immediate environment, perhaps one day macro-justice will emerge triumphant. *Gutta cavat lapidem!* (Ovidius, *Ex Ponto* 4, 10,5)

History-writing: Notwithstanding what some historians pretend, history-writing is an art, not a science, a form of literature, story-telling with good and bad guys, happiness and tragedy, fiction and nonfiction, comedy and drama. History knows many uses, the creation and expansion of national myths, hero-worship, demonization of enemies, the shaping of identities, expectations, perceptions, prejudices – moral and immoral – patriotic, geopolitical, economic, financial and social. History books are full of fake news that once matured into fake history and attained a level of respectability just by virtue of repetition and quotation.



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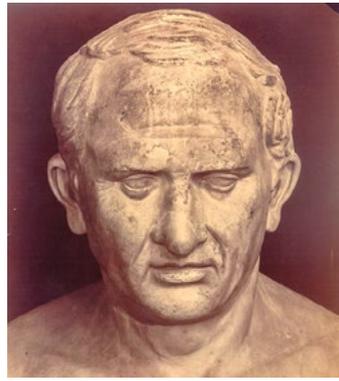
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Indeed, once a historical canard has gained track, it is difficult to remove it from its pedestal. Historians who attempt to dismantle myths are likely to be accused of being “revisionists”. But what, if not revision, is the vocation of the historian? The very essence of the profession is to search for new clues, evidences, documents, records, inscriptions, archeological finds, and then to review existing narratives, always applying the seven Cs of history writing: chronology, context, comprehensiveness, causality, coherence, comparison, and “cui bono?” (Cicero, *Pro Milone*, who stands to gain from a certain event, fact or omission?).

What is Patriotism? True love of country, of the “fatherland” or “motherland” is not limited to applauding the leadership of our governments and institutions. Patriotism requires conscious commitment and when necessary, constructive dissent. Indeed, conscientious objection can be an important manifestation of patriotism, when our politicians stampede into war and chaos. Patriotism is more than waving flags and joining band-wagons, denouncing enemies and howling with the wolves. It is not populism, blind obedience to the government and its military machine, not just cheering “heroes” and swimming in the



Cicero (106 BC-43 BC).

mainstream. Patriotism means genuine love of a country’s population and concern for everyone’s welfare, especially the most vulnerable. It entails respect for a country’s values and traditions, a commitment to truthfulness and intellectual honesty. It demands responsibility from each and every one of us, awareness of the issues and a conscious effort to contribute to the commonweal with courage and perseverance. Sometimes it may require significant economic and personal sacrifice. It should be the credo of every citizen.

The tyranny of “isms”: The most effective tyranny over society is not fascism, Nazism, communism, capitalism or any other “ism”. It is the subtle control of our minds through the subliminal manipulation of consciousness. Few are conscious of the selective

processing of information by government and corporate media, the *Zeitgeist*, compounded by the moral blackmail of an artificially imposed sense of right and wrong. Reality is not objective reality, but the “perception” of our environment, history, values in a way that those in the midst of this artificial value system frequently cannot recognize as contrived, do not see as a kind of intellectual prison. Many live in a bubble, failing to realize that there is something outside the immediate world which surrounds them. Such control of consciousness is Big Brother’s ultimate triumph.

Optimism in Covid-19 times. In these coronavirus months and years, we have all the more reason to reconnect with nature – that fountainhead of wonderment. We should cultivate a new appreciation of the treasures of wildlife – even in our gardens, where –if we are patient – we can watch many forms of life – the squirrels, salamanders, birds and hedgehogs – I just photographed a green woodpecker (*Picus viridis*). In autumn we feast on the lushness of the forests, the rustling of the leaves, the perfumed air. The spectacular transformations of the seasons brought a sheer explosion of autumn colours... When we pick up a simple acorn – we can see it a symbol of hope, ready to germinate on fertile ground! We can see the poetry of the beautiful but very toxic *Amanita muscaria*. And soon we shall admire the pristine beauty of the first snows, flake by flake... to be followed by the riot of spring, the blossoms, flowers and myriad butterflies, for nature does not capitulate before Covid-19! Promenades in nature, hikes in the mountains, reading good literature, playing the piano, listening to a Händel Oratorio – all these simple pursuits bestow on us serenity and stability, an opportunity to escape – even temporarily – the Corona blues. We owe it to ourselves, to our families and friends to remain optimistic, to embrace the bounty of beauty

that surrounds us. We must never lose enthusiasm, must have an eye for the gentle things, garner and appreciate good news, the genial moments, the phenomenal healing power of a smile! Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus also understands this link – we spoke about it under a plane tree.

Corona Blues: The coronavirus upheaval justifies posing fundamental questions. Do we want to go back to “business as usual”, do we want to pick up on a dysfunctional economic model? This is a historic opportunity to demand and implement cross-cutting changes in the system, demand that our governments cease wasting our limited resources in wars, missiles, drones, military bases, false flag and other criminal interventions. This is the time to draw on the experience of top economists like Jeffrey Sachs, Joseph Stiglitz and Thomas Piketty to reorient the economy toward a coherent human-security paradigm that leaves no one behind. We can and must demand transparency and accountability from the authorities, whose responsibility it is to convert the economy into a sustainable people-centered institution that creates jobs in the health, education and services sectors. We must pushback against the embrace of Big Brother, globalism, militarism, totalitarianism, intrusive government surveillance, conformist culture and homologation, thought police and denunciation, fake news from government and the so-called “quality press”, fake law, fake history, censorship and self-censorship. We must pushback against efforts to turn us into mere numbers, robots, or “consumers”. Inaction against the social virus of conformism and indifference means surrendering the fundamental freedoms and human rights *acquis* that prior generations won for themselves and for us. This is no time to cop out, deceiving ourselves that things eventually will fall into place. This is the moment to



Alfred de Zayas with Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus at the Château de Penthes.

rise up to the challenge, demand reasonable budgetary priorities, laws and regulations that place people above profits, demand ethics in foreign policy, an end to the insane arms race and criminal wars.

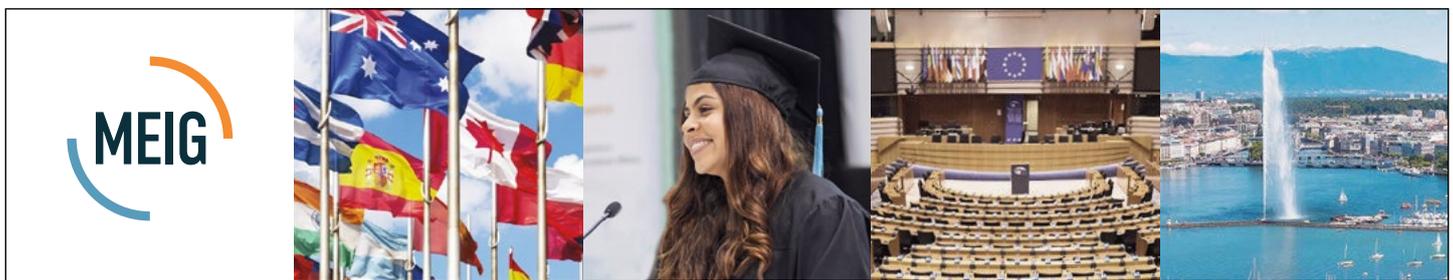
Addictions and cold turkey: We can all agree that addictions are bad – whether to alcohol, nicotine, cocaine, opiates, soft drinks, chips, junk food, etc. It is not only toxic, but also unwise to become hooked on something that will restrict our independence, our judgment, our sense of proportions. Amazingly enough, no one seems particularly concerned about a new kind of addiction – an obsession for “news”, a scurrilous dependence which for many constitutes a source of stress and anxiety. Indeed, many experience a sense of impotence and exasperation because of our inability to “make a difference”, to change

anything around us. Besides our addiction to “news”, there seems to be also a craving for “fake news”, sensationalist news, a prurient interest in “conspiracy theories” and a sordid pleasure in character assassination. Watching “news” means immersing ourselves in virtual reality, which for most of us is a total waste of time, unless we consciously endeavour to arrive at an approximation of truth. But who really wants to know the truth, when the truth hurts? And if deprived of news and fake news, do we suddenly suffer “cold turkey” symptoms? In principle, comprehensive knowledge of the domestic and international issues should enable us to meaningfully contribute to democratic change, but this requires familiarity with a plurality of views and drawing from multiple sources and news services, contrasting them, making a synthesis of facts and opinion.

Only thus can we responsibly demand accountability from our “democratically elected” officials. Of course, watching the nightly news has some kind of entertainment value – akin to voyeurism. Echoing the nonsense we hear in CNN or Fox is of scarce value to anyone – except, perhaps, to the advertisers. Isn’t it time we acknowledge that life is not what is reported in the news, but what we experience ourselves, how we shape our personal relationships and activities, how we manage our ambitions and phobias? Watching “news” is mostly a waste of time, a sterile form of surrogate living inhabited by irrelevant virtual pantomimes.

A guide to tolerance: Since *Ecclesiastes*, Greek and Roman poets and playwrights, medieval and renaissance scholars, we know that there are many disparate views around, as many as there

are people *quot homines, tot sententiae* (Terentius, *Phormio*). We also instinctively know that truth is simplicity – *veritas simplex oratio* (Seneca), but we also realize that sometimes candor backfires and engenders hostility, *veritas odium parit* (Terentius, *Andria*). One wonders how to navigate safely through troubled waters, while keeping our self-respect, own identity, our opinions, knowing that most people prefer to join bandwagons and instinctively suspect loners – *vae soli* – and weird birds – *rara avis* (Horatius). Moreover, people believe what they want, *quae volumus, ea libenter credimus* (Caesar, *De Bello Civile*) – worse still, people actually like to be deceived, *mundus vult decepti* (St. Augustine). Thus, it is prudent to look before we leap, *rescipe finem*, and watch what we say when and to whom, *cave quid dicis, quando et*



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Bernard de Clairvaux (1090-1153).



Portrait de Jean-Baptiste Poquelin dit Molière (1622-1673).

cui. We are well advised to keep a low profile, *bene vixit qui bene latuit* (Ovid), and accept to lose some battles, as long as we don't lose the war, *vulneratus non victus*, aware that often patience pays off – *vincit qui patitur*. In love, we can be moderate and always keep a little distance, so as not to succumb to Ovid's ominous paradox of not being able to live with or without the loved one, *sic ego non sine te nec tecum vivere possum* (*Amores*, 3, 11, 39). As for friends, we remember that it is in calamity that they prove their mettle, *calamitas virtutis occasio*. (Seneca, *de Providentia* 4,6). Best is to accept others as they are, including their right to be wrong. As for me, I stick to the rule “live and let live”, *vive et vivet*, and endorse Cicero's optimistic maxim – *dum spiro, spero* – as long as I am breathing, I harbour hope. It is comforting to know that true friends and family often practice a kind of benevolent tolerance and take me as I am – a complex individual who follows his conscience and inevitably errs here and there. I kind of like the formula of Bernard de Clairvaux, “whoever likes me also should like my dog” – in other words, accept me as I am, with my caprices, contradictions, habits and convictions – *qui me amat, amat et canem meum*.

Is there a “deep state”? Persons moderately informed have a vague idea of what the “deep state” means. Of course, we do not see the “deep state”, but only

its impacts, we see contours and extrapolate. Deductive logic does not help in a world of secrecy and “fake news”. We can only use inductive reasoning and base ourselves on incomplete data. That is why many persons tend to dismiss the narrative as a kind of “conspiracy theory”. We perceive the day to day functioning of our institutions as a normal routine operation, more or less following the “laws” of the marketplace or the anonymous forces of nature, not visualizing that the deep state can very well manage these forces – and that it wears the faces of our corporate boardrooms. Closer to our skins is our social environment, the pervasive *Zeitgeist* with the daily indoctrination by the mainstream media, television, movies, even comic-books, which ably combine “fake news” with the suppression of crucial facts, and advance the subliminal message that we are “the good guys” and that our governments' actions are not only “legal” but also noble and honourable. What is more disturbing is that the media engage in what some may consider “benevolent brainwashing”, in fact, well-calculated hot-and-cold onslaughts, sometimes “fearmongering” against foreign “enemies”, horror stories about pandemics and their origins, alternating with the dissemination of trivial “feel good” stories. The result is that public opinion is conveniently manipulated and that the phenomenon of self-censorship gradually sets in, because we want to “belong” to

the “majority”. Only a few dare to be “odd man out”. Thus, we accept the lies that are fed to us by the media – because it is the easiest way to deal with the monstrosities that are occurring all around us. *Mundus vult decipi*. The world wants to be deceived.

How to cope with hypocrisy: Comedy helps us come to terms with the antics of politicians, with their brazen lies and implausible rationales. Laughter is indeed the best medicine against the legitimate anger that we should feel against elected “representatives” who do not represent but only grandstand. Indeed, many politicians are like Molière's *Le Tartuffe*, especially when they feign morality or piety, instrumentalize ethics or religion for career advancement. Every day, we see how they weaponize human rights and humanitarian law to discredit geopolitical rivals and make their schemes of enforced “regime change” in other countries appear a fulfillment of democracy instead of a vulgar violation of international law. Many politicians destroy language by calling naked aggression a form of self-defense. They corrupt the administration of justice by engaging in lawfare against whistle-blowers or anyone who dares tell the truth. They name impostors and call them legitimate democratic representatives of other countries. This would not be all that pernicious if the narrative managers of the mainstream media did not echo

the ridiculous arguments, which are all too easy to rebut. Yes, we live in dysfunctional democracies, where the press fails in its “watchdog” vocation and become attack dogs and apologists for the crimes of government, transnational corporations, private security companies and mercenaries. All of this is enough to make any of us into *Misanthropes* as in Molière's comedy. ■

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© Lianne Hopkin

Live shows are back in full swing.

Growing and learning from the pandemic

Most people think about working from home, loneliness, and how different life was when Covid-19 became a global pandemic. But what are some lessons we've learnt throughout the last two years?

LISANNE HOPKIN, EDITORIAL ASSISTANT, NEWSPECIAL

Almost three years later, Covid-19 still seems to be on our minds. And that's understandable, though many of us would like to move on from it. It has been something that has affected us all, in many ways, and may continue to do so for some time. It's not just about our 'new normal', how we've adapted and hopefully learned from the pandemic. I do think there are some life lessons

that we can take from the pandemic that will stay with us for the rest of our lives.

Number one: life is full of surprises. Unfortunately, they can be good and bad surprises, and if you don't like surprises, this can be even tougher. I've learned from a young age, that life is unpredictable, and you can never really know where it'll take you. Personally, I'm very fortunate, but I know this is not the case for many



© Lisanna Hopkin

Find your rays of sunshine
on grey days

people. Covid-19 has been incredibly difficult for some people in ways that they could probably not ever imagine. No one ever dreams that a global pandemic is going to 'control' the world for a few years. No one can even bear to imagine losing a family member or loved one to Covid-19. It has been brutal and heartbreaking. But we are coming out of it. With broken hearts and foggy brains, we're re-adjusting, adapting, and coming together. That itself is surprising, too. We're determined to keep going and to make life a better place.

Number two: the people who love you and who matter will stay by your side. I think many of us know that one of the consequences of a global pandemic, and several lockdowns, is that things became more virtual. Yes, it can be fun having movie nights with friends

all over the world, but it can also be challenging when you cannot see them in person. Internet conversations are nice, but they cannot stop you from feeling lonely. It can be even more of a challenge when people disappear from your life. Covid-19 had a strange way of being able to cut out unimportant people from our lives. Maybe this was something done by the people themselves. They found it difficult that you couldn't spend time together in person, so they decided that you wouldn't be a part of their lives any more. Or, maybe this was something that you decided. Maybe you realised that someone was not bringing any good or happiness in your life, and you decided you were better off without them. Maybe you've just grown apart from some friends. Either way, hopefully, you are now surrounded by the most important and loving

people who are like rays of sunshine on grey days. I hope they're making you feel special. You are special.

Number three: WE ARE BECOMING SO MUCH MORE VOCAL. I'm not entirely sure if this is down to the Covid-19 pandemic, or if it is just something that's happening without the nudge of a pandemic, but I would say, most of us are becoming more vocal with what we want and what we think is right or wrong. Perhaps we have grown restless over the last two years and have realised that everything that we want to say, should be said. Everyone knows that we are not promised a single day on this earth, and Covid-19 proved that. We cannot take each day for granted, and this is perhaps one of the reasons we have become more vocal. It could be about anything; climate

change, gender and sexual inequality, racism, disability, the online world and its toxic ways... We're learning to speak out, and we're realising just how much of an impact speaking out can have. Communicating is also incredibly important when it comes to relationships, not just romantic ones. If you can communicate well with friends, family members, work colleagues, loved ones, your life and your relationships may improve for the better. Being vocal, expressing your thoughts and opinions, and starting to learn what you believe in has started to shape a lot of young people throughout the pandemic.

Number four: the arts industry is a blessing to this world. I cannot put into words how much the arts industry means to me, but I am so unbelievably grateful that it has survived, and kind of



© Editorial staff at the Tribune Times

Healthcare workers are guardian angels.

thrived, over the last two years. When you think about it, so much revolves around art. Museums, TV shows, theatre, concerts... Now imagine a world where none of those things exist. It's not hard to, considering we had to go for two years without some of them. I think we are so incredibly fortunate that actors and performers have been able to keep producing content for us throughout the pandemic. While live shows and concerts were put on hold or done virtually, groups of actors were able to come together and create art for us. Yes, they had to be regularly tested, and if someone caught Covid-19, they usually all had to go home for two weeks and wait until no one was infected in order for them to start acting again. But I'm very appreciative of all their work and dedication to keeping us entertained. Life would be so incredibly dull and bleak if the arts had not survived the pandemic. A lot of setbacks were overcome, thankfully, and we seem to be back in full swing in the arts world.

Number five: doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers are guardian angels. This has been proved a lot throughout the pandemic, but anyone who works in healthcare is an incredible superhero. They have been constantly overworked over the last two years, and yet are still trying to get through every single day and help everyone else get better. They're exhausted,

frustrated, probably heartbroken, and still they do their best. Not only that, but they look after everyone, continuously trying to make us feel better and get better, and yet, they have the most ludicrous work hours and are not being looked after, thanked, or even paid properly. It has been so unbelievable how they have helped us get through the pandemic. They have been the ones to support us and look after us in our times of need. Sometimes they're the friendly faces that we've come to rely on for support and guidance. Before the pandemic, I'd say most people took doctors, nurses, and healthcare workers for granted. But now we know how vital their work is, I hope we never take them for granted again. Their work is invaluable to us, and so are the people who are doing all the work. We mustn't forget that healthcare workers are human beings and not robots. They are indispensable and irreplaceable.

Number six: sometimes you have to put yourself first. This has always been an important life lesson for me, but I think the pandemic has proved to a lot more people that you have to make yourself a priority. At the end of the day, you are in charge of your life. Only you can make decisions for yourself. And sometimes, you should be the most important person in your life. For some of us, it may seem impossible not to focus

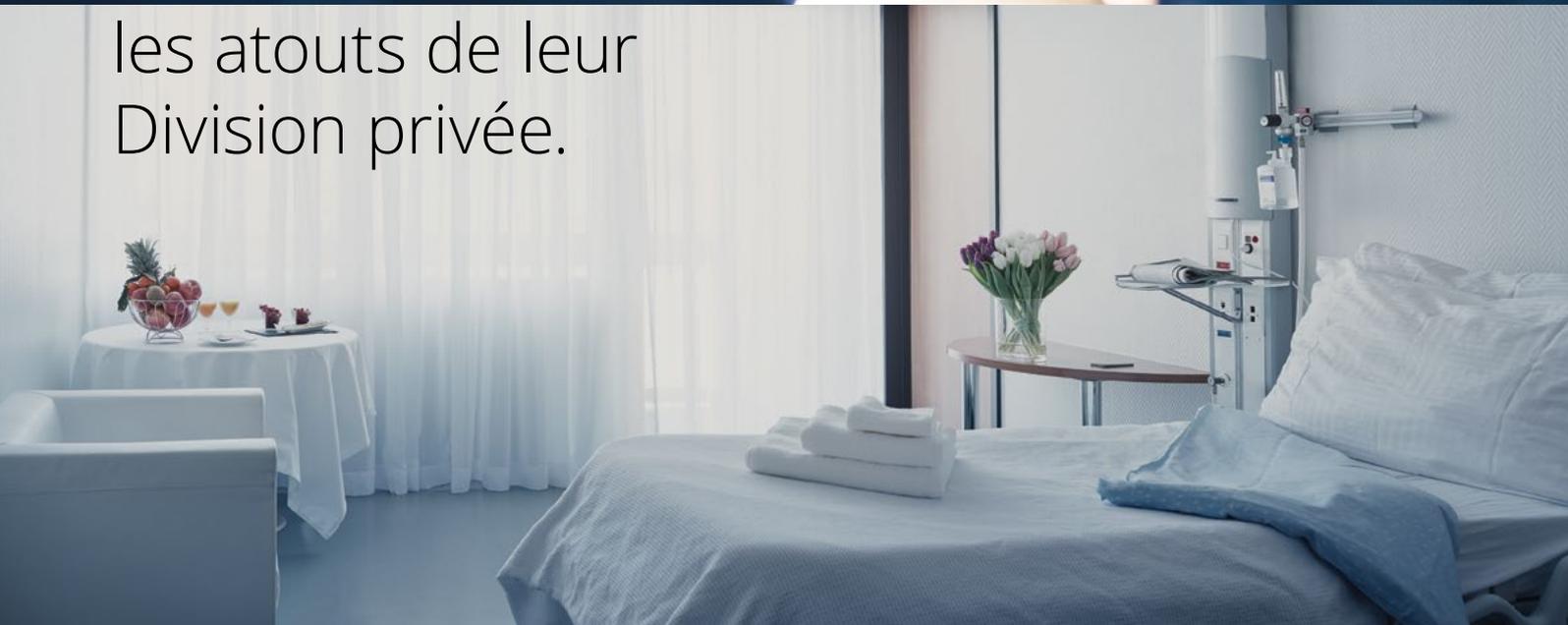
on everyone else but ourselves. Perhaps you are the only adult in a household and have to look after lots of children, pay lots of bills, work every day to earn money. However, if you are not looking after yourself, you may experience burnout. In the grand scheme of things, if you're tired and overworked, your immune system will be weaker, and you may be on bed rest for a few days. Your usual cold could knock you out and leave you feeling quite crummy. This is not ideal if you have other people to look after. So yes, work out how to look after the important people in your life, those who are by your side and who support you, but put yourself first too. Give yourself some time to relax, unwind, explore, follow new dreams. Like I said, this is your life, you are somewhat in control of what happens. Do what you want to do, do what makes you happy. We are lucky and fortunate to be on this planet. Make the most of it.

Number seven: you are much more resilient than you think you are. Look at you. You have made it through every single day. I know you have, because you're reading this. I'm really proud of you for getting through the toughest days. You are proving to yourself that you are so much more capable than you think you are. Keep going. You're doing really well. ■



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The Art of the Civil Servant



© Eric Stener Carlson

The author, Eric Stener Carlson, with his Olivetti "Studio 42".

"These past few years, immersed like the rest of the world in the terrors – real and imagined – of the COVID pandemic... writing these stories has kept my spirit alive."

ERIC STENER CARLSON, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

This quote to the left comes from the introduction to my new collection of ghost stories, *Dark Arts* (Tartarus Press, 2022). Through these stories, I explore the mystery, magic and obscurity of art in a variety of forms – novels, noire movies, photographs, jazz, paintings.

I wrote most of these stories during the COVID pandemic, under a variety of lockdowns and quarantines.

I won't say anything good has come from the pandemic. Too many people suffered, too many lost loved ones, too many of us are still struggling to find a place for ourselves in "the new normal".

But I will say that going through the pandemic helped crystallize who I am. You see, I'm a writer. And I'm also, like you (I assume if you're reading this), an international civil servant.

It's taken me a long time to accept both sides of myself. Not because either side is bad. Not because they're incompatible. It's just that I've always felt this tension between public service and private art. For a long time, I had this idea that human rights is what I do for others; art is what I do for myself.

It's a bit like the struggle Hermann Hesse describes in his classic novel, *Steppenwolf* – the life of the world versus the life of the soul, the difference between classical music and jazz.

Like yourself, I devote all my days (and sometimes nights and weekends) to promoting dialogue, dignity, and respect for others. I'm dedicated to my work. I'm driven. Perhaps, yes, I'm also a little obsessed. And I love it – there's nothing better than a life spent in the service of humanity.

But the flip side is that it leaves very little time for myself. And this was especially

true during COVID, when we worked from home, and family life and work life blended together in a continual blur.

So, when I find a quiet moment, a time all to myself, very early in the morning, or very late at night, on scraps of paper, backs of envelopes, I write, and I dream, and I imagine a world where I take flight and circle the peaks of Paradise.

I've lived like this for many years, and both lives ran their separate courses. Most friends at work didn't know I was a writer. Most of my writer friends didn't know I was a civil servant.

I was content with these two, separate lives, but I had a nagging feeling that something was missing.

This was brought home to me at a recent event organized by PEN Suisse-Romand. I was reading to a large audience some poems from the tour-de-force writer and sex worker activist, Grisélidis Réal. And in the middle of the reading, I was suddenly overcome by emotion. Part of the reason was because Réal's poetry is so raw, so powerful; but the other part was that I realized it was the first time I was presenting – in public and without a mask – since the COVID pandemic began.

I realized that, propelled by the inertia of physical distancing and the fear of contagion, I'd cut myself off from others. Just like I'd split my public (service) self from my private (artistic) self. And things had to change.

What I learned from that experience is that, as civil servants, yes, we're here to improve the material world – through policies and laws and dialogue – but we also need to reach for that magical, mystical world of art, and we need to find a place to bring those two worlds together. But where was this place, that Hesse called the "Magic Theatre"?

It turns out, it's right here in Geneva, and it's called the UN Society of Writers (UNSW). When I first joined the Society a few years ago, I was surprised to find there existed such a great group of poets, translators, novelists



Cover photo of "Dark Arts" by Eric Stener Carlson.

and essayists – who are UN civil servants, too. It turns out, I wasn't alone.

Looking back, I'm not sure why I was so surprised. After all, we follow a long tradition of UN workers who were also writers, from Albert Cohen (ILO) who wrote *Belle de Seigneur*, to Julio Cortázar (UNESCO) who wrote – among many other books – *Rayuela*, to Dag Hammarskjöld (our second Secretary-General), who wrote *Markings*, a book which inspired me as a young child to work for the UN.

Through the UNSW, I often meet colleagues that I know from my day job, but this time I get to know them in a literary context. And it's so wonderful to see how the languages we've learned, the people we've had the honour to serve, the places we've lived, and even the hardships we've gone through, all shape our writing. And that community of UN writers helped me when I needed it most.

Just before the first wave of COVID hit Geneva, I was helping to facilitate a UNSW creative

writing workshop in the Palais library. I worked with small groups of UN colleagues to write impromptu short stories in the space of a few minutes, inspired by whatever we saw around us. It was great to see everyone's energy and creativity, exploring the written word.

As for myself, the fragment of the story I wrote for that workshop became the first page of my short story, "The Leopard-spotted Scarf". I didn't know it at the time, but it was to become the first story of my book, *Dark Arts*. So, when the various lockdowns came, I already had the starting point for my collection, and the rest of my stories grew from there.

Writing those stories helped me deal with the fear and isolation that came with COVID; they helped keep my spirit alive. That's why it was so meaningful to me when I recently presented my book to my friends at the UNSW – to the very people who'd helped spark the idea for it.

I think there is an art to public service; our work requires not only skill, but also a certain sensibility, a connectivity, and an empathy with others.

And there is art in public servants. Members of the UNSW have proved that to me. And I'm sure that there are many more of us out there – colleagues in blue helmets scribbling poetry in the trenches, drivers singing to themselves

during long convoys, aid workers who, coming back to their tents after a hard day's work, draw in sketchbooks before they fall asleep.

I think that most of us who create art in the UN system do it without an audience. We work together to make a better world, but we read our own poetry alone. And of all the rights we promote, we forget that Article 27 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights applies to us, too: "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts..."

As such, we don't know the full depths of the beauty, the quality, and the talent of our UN community that surrounds us every day. But if we could bring that creativity together, if we could share the art that's in our hearts, our souls, then what an exhibition that would be!

Those are just my thoughts as a civil servant, and as a writer. ■

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BURKINA FASO

Filbert Tologo...

... acrobat-dancer, all in fusion

- *Bobo-Dioulasso, 1978*
- *Dance - Compagnie Filbert Tologo*
- *"The Grütli theater, where the Echos Festival is held, a festival I created which brings together dancers from different countries."*

newSpecial is delighted to include profiles presented by Zahi Haddad, in his book "126 Heartbeats for International Geneva". We thank the author and his publisher, Slatkine, for this exclusivity.

"I literally met International Geneva when I joined the company 'Foofwa d'immobilité' in the early 2000s." A group of European, African and South American musicians and dancers, led by choreographer Frédéric Gagner. Filbert Tologo thus remembers the welcoming he received when arriving on the shores of Lake Geneva. With joyful eyes. With a communicative smile, that of the kid he used to be in Bobo-Dioulasso and who still marvels at the world around him. He, who was noticed on the streets of his childhood. He, who performed acrobatics for fun, surprised to receive a few coins for his prowess.

Filbert is only ten years old and nicknamed "Bobo" because of his talent, which is still in the making. He meets up with a troupe of dancers, leaving far behind his life as a cultivator and herder in Burkina Faso, West Africa. This gives him as further mastery in dance. With this new family, Filbert wins two prizes as part of the National Culture Week of Bobo-Dioulasso. It was the

beginning of the 1990s and he was barely entering adolescence. Curious, always listening, he perfects his dance steps, learns to twirl, perch on stilts, opening up to new techniques which he mastered, one after the other. Until traditional dance belonged to him entirely.

His tours reveal an exotic fusion of African history with new body language, images, with some added Western twists. Filbert discovers contemporary dance and combines it with his past. "African dance is very coded, energetic and follows the rhythm of percussion; and, all of a sudden, I projected myself into a world of more personal construction, having to convey more nuanced emotions and ideas." On this path, a master of dance influences Filbert: "It was Congo Alassane, a dancer trained by Béjart. I fell in love with his work, with his energy!"

With these dawning talents and interests, Filbert dares to launch his own company, Bobo. Filbert is the first to introduce this style: "I

was told that it was the dance of the Whites, when today everyone has adopted the contemporary dance and even struggles to keep room for the traditional dance." In Bobo-Dioulasso, Filbert meets his future wife in the early 2000s. A woman from Geneva, who takes him to the end of Lake Geneva and introduces him to the celebrations of the Fête de la Musique and its ethnomusicology workshops, which Filbert starts leading. Filbert is now in the Geneva orbit and is especially eager to cross paths with the master of all masters... Maurice Béjart. Béjart and Filbert meet and he is asked to choreograph an African creation for Béjart's "Around the world in eighty minutes". An "eternal honor!"

With his Geneva company, Filbert explores movement and its expression of the human being, his wounds and his travels – the unknown and emigration, identity, belonging, experiences that have marked his own life. The man who tries to control everything. Surrounded by colorful artists, Filbert travels around

the planet, learns cultures, discovers his own humanity and shares it through dance with his audiences. With Genevan representatives of the United Nations. "This is my strength. And I do not forget my artistic roots." And, as if it were necessary to further affirm his commitment, Filbert creates Echos, a contemporary African dance festival that has become biennial, "to give the stage to African dancers and to the fusion of genres." To his mixed soul, growing every day a little more. ■

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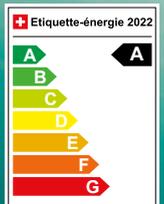
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The Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) work aims to ensure

better preparedness and equitable response for future pandemics, and to advance the principles of equity, solidarity and health for all. The INB is a subdivision of the World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of WHO, and is comprised of WHO's 194 Member States, Associate Members, and regional economic integration organizations.

In July 2022, INB members agreed, through consensus, that they will work to conclude a new, legally-binding international pandemic agreement. They are working to conclude this agreement in May 2024. The next meeting of the INB will be held in December 2022.

More info: <https://inb.who.int>



Thinking out of the box

The experience of growing up in lockdowns is unique. There are many positive learnings from that experience. Your happiness depends on you and I know that thanks to the pandemic.



This is a lovely picture of my mother and I that was taken during Covid in February 2021.

NORAH TALON, GYMNASE DE MORGES

Introduction

As you know, in March 2020, on March 13th to be precise, in Switzerland, we all had to go through a lockdown where we were forced to stay at home for about two months. As social beings, that was a one-time life experience, which could have been either a good one or a bad one. It must have been difficult for adults who couldn't go to work, but for us teenagers, in my opinion, it was even harder being used to go to school every day, seeing our friends or simply enjoying being teenagers. Everyone had a different experience during the lockdown. Anger, disbelief, or even revolt are emotions that many of us encountered. I went through all these emotions, and I didn't know how it would go.

At that time, I was fifteen and now I am seventeen going on eighteen, so I can give you some feedback and a general idea of what I learned during the lockdown.

Learnings

Let's go back to that famous day, 13th March 2020. After the Federal Council's announcement, at school, students were hysterical and insanely happy. I was just like them, we all looked at it like another holiday without school. Coming home, I was immediately disappointed.

Me, who used to go out almost every weekend and rarely spent time at home came back home to two parents (my mum working at WHO, an international health organization and my dad being an engineer and a sports coach in his free time), telling me and my siblings that we couldn't go out anymore and needed to practice social distancing. A few things were also put in place: taking supplements to boost our immune system, washing our hands systematically and disinfecting objects after using them. These seemed useless to me at the beginning, but one thing that I learned was the **importance of taking care of my physical and mental health**. If we come back to the present, some of those "useless habits" have become a routine for me.

Ex: I systematically disinfect my phone daily when I come home from school. It makes me feel better about being on my phone without all the germs. I was grateful to my parents, especially my mum who works in an international health organization and helped us as a family to counter the virus with many health tips and cleaning procedures which she installed in our house.

Another lesson that I learned was the greatness in the simplicity of everyday things. For example, staying at home, the



A picture of my family and I at the park after a basketball match.



A picture taken at the lake of an outing with my family.

first few days was quite difficult, but as things progressed, I simply loved it. While still studying a bit (my teachers didn't give us much work), I did different activities, which I hadn't had the time to do before due to my eagerness to go out. I quote: reading books, calling my boyfriend and friends, doing sports in my room, or laying in a chair in my garden doing nothing. I also often went to play basketball at the park, did grocery shopping (which was our only outing) and putting music on, dancing when we came back with my family.

Before the lockdown, we were close as a family, but didn't spend as much time together except during holidays, whilst being all stuck at home made us develop our relationships. I know that I was lucky, as I saw on the news that for some families, such a task was more difficult for them to accomplish. So, I would say that the lockdown would have been more difficult without **a loving family by my side** and managing to **think outside the box**.

With the lockdown, I was also confronted with existential questions. Crazy, but true. Being alone in my room helped **develop my self-confidence and self-love**, and made me think about **what kind of human I wanted to be in the future**. Social media such as TikTok were tools that helped me build my confidence, as well

as listening to music and reading books about different problems that teenagers were faced with, such as anorexia, bulimia or self-harm. Also, thinking and meditating on different thoughts made me tougher and stronger, and I developed a critical sense of different subjects. It helped me to know that I loved myself on the inside as well as on the outside, and although there will be a long path ahead, I felt excited about it.

To conclude, I once told my parents when we were having a debate about the coronavirus, a few months after the lockdown, that "it ruined my teenage years". I acknowledge that I had that thought then, however now, as I will soon become an adult, my opinion is that it didn't ruin my teenage years at all. It only made me grow as a human being, and I learned, with the help of my mother, ways in which I could improve my health. I also learned that staying at home wasn't that awful. Now, I even sometimes prefer staying at home to going out. It was also a break that was well needed for us students, who were often tired out with all the school work that our teachers were giving us.

I think the most important learning that I acquired was that in a teenager's life there are up and downs, but the downs and ups aren't necessarily what I thought

they were. An up can be staying at home on a Saturday evening reading a good book and not necessarily partying every weekend. A down can be not succeeding in something that you worked hard for, and it is not necessarily one bad grade that wouldn't count two years later. **Your happiness depends on you**, and thanks to the lockdown, I was able to see that. ■

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Video: Polio vaccinators make their rounds in Cameroon.

During recent polio vaccination campaigns in Cameroon.

Donors making a difference in the fight against polio

Countries are redoubling their efforts to keep children safe from polio in the wake of disruptions to childhood immunization programmes caused by COVID-19, natural disasters and conflicts.

WHO / OMS COMMUNICATIONS TEAM BASED ON STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Countries are redoubling their efforts to keep children safe from polio in the wake of disruptions¹ to childhood immunization programmes caused by COVID-19, natural disasters and conflicts.

The recent reappearance of poliovirus in the United States and other countries long free of the paralyzing disease are “a disturbing reminder that until polio is eradicated everywhere, it remains a threat everywhere,” said WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Support from contributors – among them the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the US Centers

for Disease Control, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and Rotary International – is helping countries provide vaccinations, even to children on the move and in remote areas, while monitoring communities for the presence of wild and vaccine-derived poliovirus.

Polio and other infectious diseases are presenting a special threat in Pakistan, where months of floods have brought on a humanitarian crisis. In August, WHO allocated US\$ 10 million from its Contingency Fund for Emergencies (CFE) to help Pakistan respond. The CFE is fueled by flexible contributions from 16 Member States. The fund’s top contributors are the United States and Germany.

Good news comes this week from Sudan, where health officials marked the end of a polio outbreak.

Worldwide, polio cases have dropped 99 percent since the founding in 1988 of the public-private Global Polio Eradication Initiative – of which WHO is a core partner. The fight against wild poliovirus is concentrated in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the virus is still endemic.

This week, we touch upon efforts to stop polio in Afghanistan, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



Sudan is free of polio after 2020 outbreak



A baby gets her polio vaccination in Sudan.

Sudan this week celebrated the end of a poliovirus outbreak that the country defeated with a vigorous campaign of child vaccination and disease surveillance, supported by WHO and other partners.

The outbreak began in March 2020, when the virus spread from Nigeria via Chad to Sudan.

By the end of 2020, the outbreak reported its last case. An outbreak is considered over when poliovirus is not detected anywhere in the country for at least a year.

Sudan will continue disease surveillance, which involves testing sewage runoff for the virus and monitoring the population for symptoms – until

chains of poliovirus transmission elsewhere in the world are interrupted.



Read the article



Video from Sudan

In Palestine, the seven people you meet during a polio campaign



The remote health worker: "The roads are very difficult, and the weather is hot. In the coming week we will do another day in the remote areas so we can accomplish our mission," said nurse Mohammad Rashaida of the Bedouin community of Arab al-Rashaida.

The registrar. The vaccinator. The mother. The father. The grandparent. The cold-chain manager. The remote health worker.



Read the story of a vaccination campaign in this culturally, environmentally diverse land through the faces and voices of those who took part.

In Tajikistan, fast action stops a polio outbreak in its tracks



A health worker in Tajikistan.

Detection of just one case of polio is considered an outbreak and requires an immediate, comprehensive response. Read about how Tajikistan squelched an outbreak with help from WHO and other Global Polio Eradication Initiative partners.

"This outbreak and the subsequent response came at a time when

the health system was already overstretched by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the country was mounting a massive COVID-19 vaccination drive," said Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge, WHO Regional Director for Europe. "Both outbreak responses had to be done without disrupting the vitally important provision of other routine vaccines to children."



Read the article



MAP: Polio outbreaks worldwide The latest data comes from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.



Video: What is vaccine-derived poliovirus?

In southern Africa, countries hurry to safeguard children, stamp out polio



At the Malawi-Mozambique border, health worker Douglas Alimoyo provides the polio vaccine to children on the move.



Read the article

Diary of a polio surveillance reviewer: eight days in Afghanistan's west



©WHO
Dr Abdinoor Mohamed, at work in Afghanistan.

A team of experts recently visited Afghanistan to review the country's polio surveillance system. Dr. Abdinoor Mohamed, an epidemiologist with the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, kept a diary of the work.

He began:

We're here to apply a magnifying glass to Afghanistan's surveillance system, to see if there's anywhere the virus might still be hiding, and recommend adjustments to make sure the system is capable of catching it.



Read his full diary.



Related: The challenges of polio surveillance in Yemen.

Ending polio in Somalia: children vaccinated in national immunization day



©WHO/Ilissa Ahmed
Health workers collect wastewater samples in Mogadishu to check for poliovirus.

Somalia has been protecting millions of small children from polio through special immunization days that WHO and UNICEF have helped organize.

Reaching every child, especially

those who have no vaccination history, is challenging for the country's fragile health system, and the national immunization days give the effort a boost, said WHO Somalia Representative Dr. Sk Md Mamunur Rahman Malik.



Read the article.

Malawi's borders serve as vaccination points to stop the spread of polio



©UNICEF
Health worker Mirriam Golozela sets out to vaccinate children for polio in Malawi.

Vaccination campaigns are being carried out across Southern Africa following Malawi's detection earlier this year of its first wild poliovirus case in 30 years. The participating countries are Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

"Every effort is being made to vaccinate every eligible child. This is a dangerous disease with no cure, but full vaccination can prevent paralysis," said Dr. Modjirom Ndoutabe, Polio Programme Coordinator at the WHO Regional Office for Africa. "We are supporting these five countries to deliver

quality and effective vaccination campaigns, which will safeguard children and stamp out the virus."



Read the article



MAP: Polio outbreaks worldwide The latest data comes from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.



Video: What is vaccine-derived poliovirus?



Polio remains a public health emergency of international concern, committee finds.

WHO thanks all governments, organizations and individuals who are contributing to the Organization's work, and in particular those who have provided fully flexible contributions to maintain a strong, independent WHO.

Donors and partners featured in this week's stories include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation,

the US Centers for Disease Control, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Rotary International, UNICEF and UNRWA.

The following contributors have funded WHO's work to fight polio since 2020: African Development Bank Group, African Field Epidemiology Network, Al Ansari Exchange, Australia, the Bill &

Melinda Gates Foundation, Canada, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Egypt, the European Commission, European Investment Bank, Germany, Islamic Development Bank, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, National Philanthropic Trust, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, OPEC Fund for International Development, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Donna L

Rengh Revocable Trust, Rotary International, Spain, Switzerland, Tajikistan, **Türkiye**, United Arab Emirates, UN Foundation, UNICEF, United Kingdom, UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund, UN Fund for International Partnerships, World Bank. ■

Terroir littéraire et agricole

Vous souhaitez mieux connaître la littérature, les bières et les vins genevois – ou mieux en profiter ?



MARIE-JOSÉ ASTRE-DÉMOULIN, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Alors, n'hésitez pas: rendez vous chez C.pages, 8 rue Frédéric Amiel à Genève et vous trouverez tout cela réuni au sein d'une boutique insolite, à la fois librairie et vithèque.

Passionnée de littérature et amoureuse du terroir genevois, Catherine Méan, maîtresse des lieux, a ouvert sa boutique il y a quelques mois dans une petite rue paisible du quartier des Délices.

Côté librairie, des centaines de BD, livres pour enfants, ouvrages de sciences humaines, polars, livres d'art, romans, récits ou essais, tous écrits par des Genevois, ou en rapport direct avec la ville.

Du côté de la vithèque, les rayonnages regorgent de vins rosés, rouges ou blancs, produits par des vigneron locaux, ainsi que de bières artisanales, venues de sept brasseries autochtones.

En outre, vous aurez l'occasion de bavarder avec Catherine Méan qui a une parfaite

connaissance des produits qu'elle propose. Qu'il s'agisse des vins ou des livres, elle les a tous sélectionnés avec soin, et elle adore en parler.

«J'ai toujours voulu avoir ma propre boutique afin de rencontrer des gens avec qui échanger sur des sujets qui m'intéressent», dit Catherine Méan.

Il n'est qu'à voir le plaisir qu'elle prend à conseiller une dame venue chercher des contes suisses pour ses petits-enfants ou à discuter d'un cépage avec un client régulier pour ne pas en douter!

Mais rien de mieux que la présentation faite par C.pages sur son site Internet pour décrire l'ambiance et la logique du lieu:

«On pourrait (presque!) dire que Voltaire est venu dans notre librairie & vithèque, puisqu'elle se situe réellement sur son ancienne propriété où il vécut dix ans. Il y écrivit Candide, qui parut en 1759. Voltaire renomma cette parcelle «les Délices» et y fit notamment pousser de la vigne. Car depuis le

Moyen-Âge et jusqu'au XIX^e siècle, Saint-Jean était un lieu viticole renommé. Il y avait des vignes au pied des falaises, en haut de celles-ci et tout le long des rives du Rhône jusqu'à Aire. Ces vignes bénéficiaient d'une bonne exposition et le raisin était ensuite vinifié dans des caves creusées dans les falaises. Ce vin était très apprécié, «de qualité singulière et admirable» selon les mots de Voltaire qui aimait le faire déguster.» ■

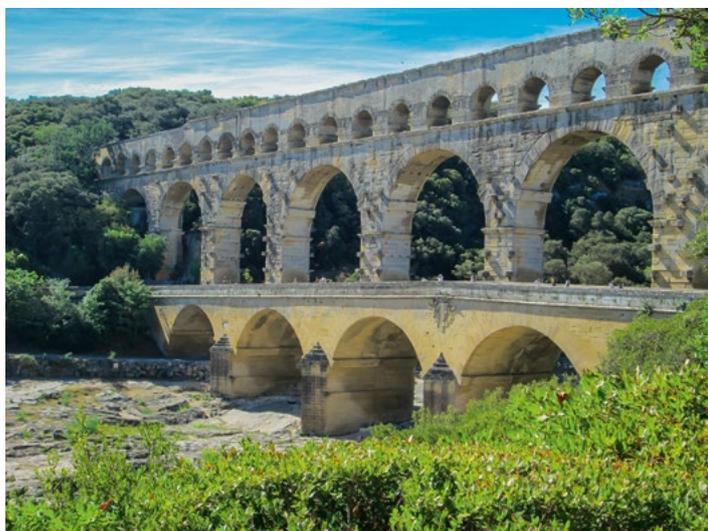
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Ouvert du mardi au vendredi de 9 heures à 19 heures et le samedi, de 9 heures à dix-huit heures. TPG arrêt Délices.

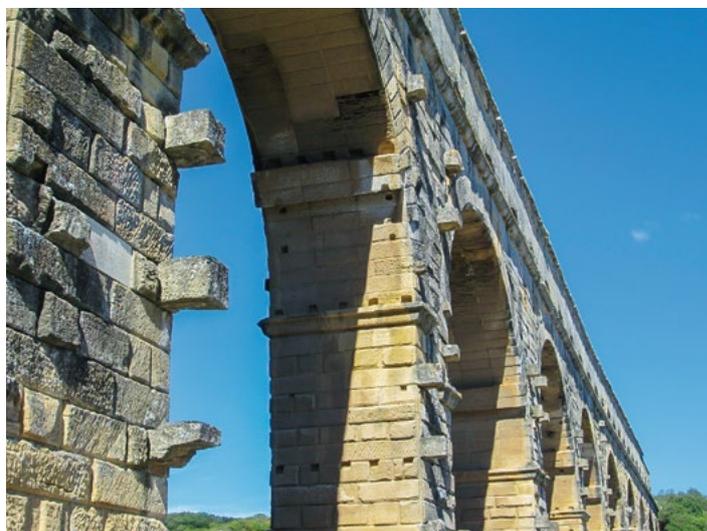
Roman Megaprojects

Aqueducts, unripe figs, and inverted syphons

A three-and-a-half-hour drive south of Geneva, into the heartlands of Provence, and you can visit part of one of the best-preserved Roman aqueducts in Europe. The majestic Pont du Gard spans the Gardon river between Nîmes and Avignon and is an outstanding example of the engineering prowess of ancient Rome when these man-made waterways were the megaprojects of their day.



"Modern" bridge along the Roman works.



Protruding stones to support original scaffold.

KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO

In his *Chronicle*, the historian Marius of Avenches (a Gallo-Roman writer who became Bishop of Lausanne) detailed Burgundian and Franconian history in the 5th and 6th centuries. He recorded the traditions and stories of the corner of Vaud in which he lived, at that time under the control of the Kingdom of Orleans. His work recounts a dramatic incident in AD 563 that he described as follows:

"The great mountain of Tauretunum, in the territory of the Valais, fell so suddenly that it covered a castle in its neighbourhood, and some villages with their inhabitants; it so agitated the lake

for 60 miles in length and 20 in breadth that it overflowed both its banks; it destroyed very ancient villages, with men and cattle; it entombed several holy places, with the religious belonging to them. It swept away with fury the Bridge of Geneva, the mills and the men; and, flowing into the city of Geneva, caused the loss of several lives."

The event is also recorded in the *Historia Francorum* (History of the Franks) by the writer Gregory of Tours who particularly noted that the water overtopped the city walls and that the landslide occurred near to the place where the river Rhône flows into

Lac Léman. It forced water back up the river and affected villages along its banks.

It was in this area at the eastern end of the lake that academics from the University of Geneva concentrated their research in 2012. They were mapping the sediment using seismic reflection, sending waves into the lakebed, and detecting reflections from the different layers using a principle similar to sonar.

The data did reveal an unusual and distinct layer beneath the lakebed, deposited very quickly at some time between AD 381 and AD 612. The material was



The Point du Gard bridge work.



Surreal landscape of Las Medulas, a Roman gold mine.

five metres thick and covered around 50 square kilometres in a lens shape, but surprisingly it was found in the centre of the lake and not close to the presumed location of the initial rock fall. It seemed a good candidate, however, for a link with the historic cataclysm.

The discovery of the sediment suggested that the landslide into the lake's water was not the whole story. The hypothesis now tested was that the collapse of the mountain side had a knock-on effect, in which it displaced a large volume of sediment sitting at the east end of the lake and deposited there by the Rhône. The sediment was forced from the river delta into the middle of the lake, accentuating the displacement of the water to create the tsunami that the chroniclers described.

Computer modelling of the shape and bathymetry of the lake predicted that the tsunami wave would have been 13 metres high when it reached Lausanne after 15 minutes, and was eight metres high when it struck Geneva, some 70 minutes after the initial rockslide. That is the length of a London double-decker bus stood on end washing over the city. Waves as high as 16 metres may have occurred in some locations, and no part of the lakeshore was unaffected.

Furthermore, sediment analysis showed other rapid-deposition events deeper than the presumed Tauredunum layer and dating back during the last 10,000 years. This hints that AD 563 was not an isolated phenomenon, and that such landslides and their associated tsunamis may be a regular, although long-cycle, feature of life around Alpine lakes.

Further lakebed penetrating analysis and sediment drilling is needed to build up a more comprehensive picture to understand the risk more completely, and this would also be supported by studies of the stability of the mountain slopes around the lake's basins to predict where the next event might occur. Needless to say, that a similar tsunami today would have much more serious consequences along the densely populated shoreline of 2022.

Since the shocking television images of the 2011 tsunami that hit Japan, most people are familiar with the phenomenon of ocean tsunamis and the incredible damage they can do. The idea that such waves can occur in a landlocked body such as Lake Geneva is much less well known, however, and less studied. Although it may not happen for thousands of years. ■

In addition to supplying water for city use, the Romans were also adept at hydraulic engineering for mining – redirecting large volumes of water at pressure in a process called hushing. A prime example of this is the gold mines at Las Medulas in Spain. Pliny the Elder visited the area and described the hellish conditions of working the mines as follows: “What happens is far beyond the work of giants. The mountains are bored with corridors and galleries made by lamplight with a duration that is used to measure the shifts. For months, the miners cannot see the sunlight, and many of them die inside the tunnels. This type of mine has been given the name of ruina montium. The cracks made in the entrails of the stone are so dangerous that it would be easier to find purpurin or pearls at the bottom of the sea than make scars in the rock. How dangerous we have made the Earth!”

“Samedi du Partage”

A Geneva-based charity taking place this month

You may have already heard about “Samedi du Partage”, or maybe not. Christian Pauletto, a long-time supporter and volunteer, was interviewed by Julien Rigoulet, a staff member of the association, to raise awareness about this unique activity.

JULIEN RIGOLET, ASSOCIATION PARTAGE

Can you introduce yourself?

I was born and raised in Geneva, and had my career mainly focused on international affairs, with the Swiss government. However, my canton is very dear to me, and I take pride in contributing to giving a better life for people in precarious situations in Geneva. My motivation to engage with “Samedi du Partage” was a natural fit. The association warmly welcomes people from all paths of life to join us in the action, and I think it would reinforce the position of Geneva as the main hub for international affairs to have a variety of volunteers, such as expatriates. It’s also a meaningful way to get involved in the life of Geneva.

What is “Samedi du Partage”?

It is a charity association created in Geneva in 1993 whose aim is to provide food for people in need in Geneva. Despite our robust economy, there are people in need in this canton. Four times a year, the association collects food from about a hundred retail shops across the canton. The latest edition of June 2022 collected over 150 tons of food, thanks to the generosity of the population. The next edition will take place on November 25th-26th. Concerning volunteers, they are typically located at the entrance of retail

shops to encourage shoppers to get a little extra food to donate to the association at the end of their errand. Then, the association stores the food donations and organizes a gradual distribution to over 50 grassroot-organizations working with people in need in Geneva. These organizations help close to 13,000 persons per week in the canton. However, for obvious perishability reasons, the association can only collect non-perishable items, like pantry produce (rice, pasta, cereals, etc.).

How did you hear about this association?

I simply saw volunteers in the Migros in my neighbourhood and started chatting with them. I was amazed by their actions and the overall mission of the association and immediately decided to join as a volunteer myself, and since then have enrolled in every edition of the action. Now, the association is also quite visible on social media and in conventional media as well, making it easy to follow its activities.

How does it work for volunteers and how do you sign up?

It is very easy and flexible. The association has a dedicated volunteers’ registration web page, www.partage.ch/benevole, and people can choose one of the listed shops and pick a time



slot. Having close to a hundred shops participating on a regular basis makes it easy to find a good slot. This canton-wide action still requires a total of 1,500 volunteers per “Samedi du Partage”. It is open to everyone to give a bit of their time, and there is no commitment requirement. It can be a one-time volunteering action or much more! If you have some queries, you can directly interact by e-mail and send your question to benevolat@partage.ch, or call 078 692 90 80. The association works in a very lean, user-friendly manner and is always keen to

assist and guide newcomers in French and English.

What would you say to someone who is hesitant to get involved?

If someone is hesitant, maybe an expatriate who has recently moved to Geneva and isn't familiar with its charity network, I would advise you to ask yourself the following questions. ‘Do I wish to be involved in a true Geneva “tradition”? ‘Do I value helping others around me?’ Am I ready to give just a couple of hours of my time to be part of a canton-wide action alongside

more than a thousand of other volunteers?’ If the answers are yes, I encourage you to check the website and the shops taking part in the action and the time slots available. If this fits in your agenda, save the date and register! Two hours is so little when you think of it objectively. I believe it is the addition of multiple small involvements that make “Samedi du Partage” so successful and popular. The idea of this action is not just to follow a conventional donation scheme, but to have a true, collective engagement of the people that make Geneva, with

its international community that is, in my opinion, most definitely part of it. Participating in this action is also an opportunity to meet new people who share the same values, and that can only be a humbling and enriching experience. ■

Contact info:

Website: www.samedidupartage.ch or www.partage.ch/benevole

Email: benevolat@partage.ch

Phone: 078 692 90 80

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© Deborah Randolph Talon

A visit to the lost city of Petra and the Dead Sea

DEBORAH RANDOLPH TALON, WHO

I remember watching Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989) as he and his father rode amidst the sandy rocks and valleys towards the famous entrance of the Treasury of Petra, in search of the Holy Grail. The look of awe on their faces as they and their guide approached this amazing monument carved out of the rocks knowing that they were in the presence of something greater than themselves.

I still remember the words (and yes, I have watched it a thousand times), Sean Connery (Indiana Jones' Father) goes *"Elsa never really believed in the Grail, she thought she'd found a prize."* Harrison Ford (Indiana Jones) swallows and turns around slowly. He asks, *"What did you find Dad?"* Sean glances up in awe at the Treasury and replies *"Me... illumination."*

It was then I knew that I needed to get a hat just like Indiana Jones, learn to horse ride and visit Petra. Horse riding was tried and tested, but disliked and I am still working on buying that hat. However, at the end of last summer the opportunity came to visit both the city of Petra and the Dead Sea in Jordan: I needed no convincing.

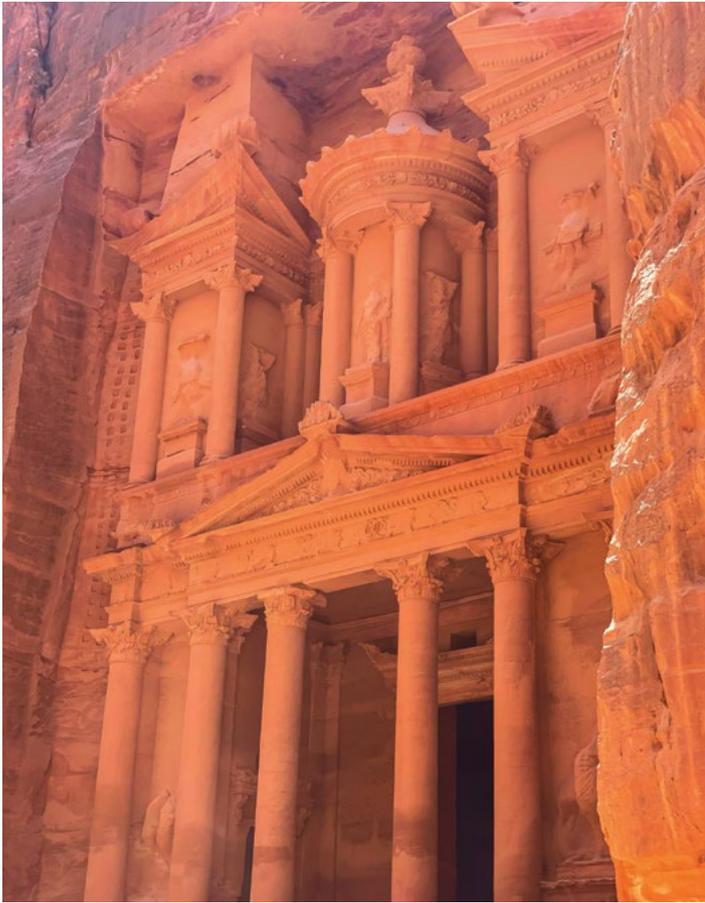
The **Jordanian City of Petra**, also known as the "Lost City" is situated among a series of rocks and valleys in the southwestern part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. It was once a trading center and the capital of the Nabateen Empire between 400 B.C. and A.D 106. It lay mostly abandoned and in ruins until it was discovered in 1812 by a Swiss explorer, Johann Ludwig Burckhardt.

It has been a UNESCO world heritage site since 1985.

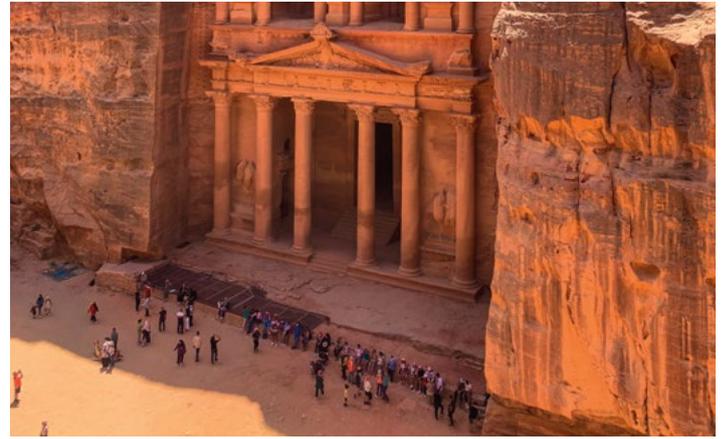
Today, a visit of the city itself would take you about a day to complete. It has become a major tourist site with well-marked trails ranging from easy to moderate and covering from 1.5km to 8km.

It is worth visiting with a guide as the beauty of Petra is not only in the amazing facades, but in the ingenuity of mankind to create a thriving city in such conditions. I remember our guide pointing to the remnants of the ceramic pipes that was used to bring water to the city as well as providing a history of the fading statues and gods and goddesses which are still visible in the rocks.

The walk through the Siq to the famous entry of the Al Khazneh (the Treasury) is breathtaking. The entrance to the Treasury is over 70 meters high and is made of pillars and carvings



© Deborah Randolph Talon



© Deborah Randolph Talon



© Deborah Randolph Talon

directly in the rock. There is a strong Roman influence, and an experienced guide will be able to tell you the significance of each pillar and carving. Although the city has other beautiful and interesting sites, the Treasury is the most famous and can easily be reached both by children and adults (about a 45-minute walk downhill). Those with more energy can continue to visit the remaining 11 sites of the city, from the Street of Facades to the Ad-Deir Monastery.

Like all tourist sites, be ready to be harassed by offers to horse or camel ride or take a golf cart. However a simple “no”, should leave you in peace to enjoy the scenery.

Jordan has a plethora of historic sites. I was very surprised at how many biblical ones there were, and regretted having booked just a few days to explore. (On our way from Amann to the city of Petra,

we stopped at an underground water spring where Moses was supposed to have hit his staff on the floor, thus creating the water source).

A visit to the **Dead Sea** is another must in Jordan, above all, if you are staying in the capital Amman. (As the hotel manager told me, it is such a short ride, he could jog to the Dead Sea every day.) The Dead Sea is actually a salt lake situated between Israel and the Westbank (West) and Jordan (East). It is known for its high concentration of salt which keeps swimmers afloat at all times.

Remember to enter the sea walking backwards, and immediately lie on your back. Those with cuts or bruises should refrain from getting in as the salt finds each nook and cranny. The Dead Seas’ rich mineral clay and salt is used in many a spa both in and out of Jordan due to its healing properties.

Depending on one’s budget, there are high class beaches, spas, hotels or public beaches which give you access to the Dead Sea. We decided to choose a local hotel for the day, which was at a reasonable price, and provided us with Dead Sea clay, chairs and towels. Coming back from the Dead Sea, you can stop at one of the government-owned Dead Sea outlets, where the products are cheaper.

Although short, visiting these two sites in Jordan was definitely worth it. A few tips in the event you plan on doing the same.

- Be prepared to spend more than expected. (The Jordan Dinar is stronger than the Swiss Franc, and the tourist sites do not come cheap).
- Be prepared to bargain hard. (My trip to Petra was reduced by half when I changed tour operators and then haggled with my new contact).

- Get the Jordan Pass¹ before you leave your home country, as this reduces the cost not only to the tourist sites, but even the cost of your entry visa at the airport.
- Like all countries, tips from the locals will make your stay not only cheaper, but far more interesting.
- If you are an experienced driver, the Jordanian roads are in top condition, and although for me they swerved quite fast from one lane to the next, getting by with a car is feasible; above all, if have limited time and would like to make the most of your stay. ■

¹ <https://www.jordanpass.io>

Aurora Musicalis

From frozen fjords: Form follows function¹.

Oslo's Opera transcends emotion

Art and architecture triumph at every junction:

Sloping landscapes sweep in sound and motion.

Every city now builds temples to the heart,

audacious monuments to universal karma,

passion and prestige, keen metaphors of breathing art,

bold oracles of song, dance, dreams and drama.

Utzon², Eliasson³ and Lundevall⁴ reach heights

as archetypes of Neolithic intimation,

Nordic architects of Northern lights,

stone and crystal masons of ingenious inspiration.

Destiny blessed Kirsten Flagstad with devotion

to Wagnerian roles, today's sopranos scarcely may surpass.

I see Isolde stretching out to me the magic potion:

Cheerfully I toast to her with champagne in my glass!

**ALFRED DE ZAYAS,
UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS**

¹ Motto of the American architect Louis Sullivan (1856-1924)

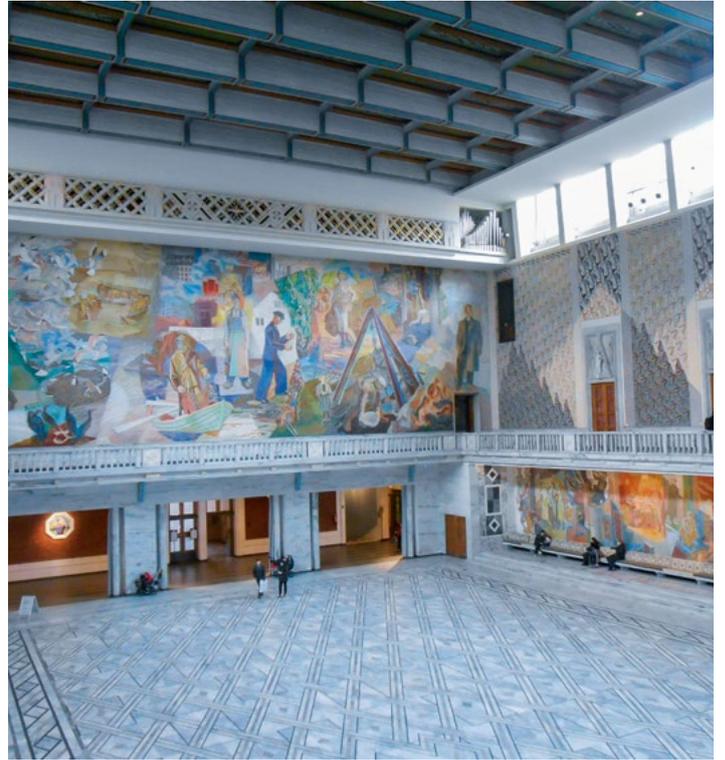
² Danish architect Jorn Utzon, Sydney Opera House

³ Icelandic architect Olafur Eliasson, built the Harpa 2011 in Reykjavik

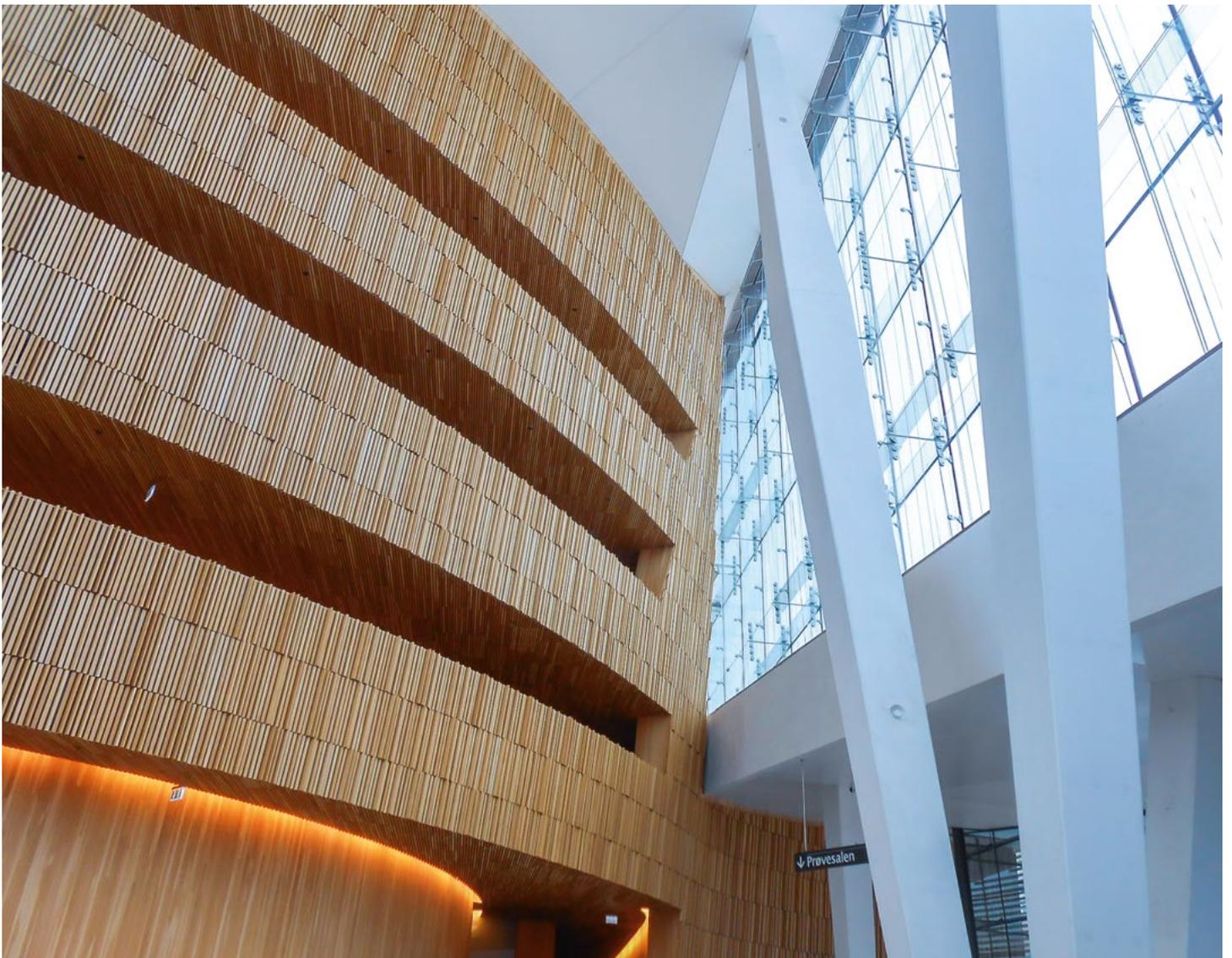
⁴ Norwegian architect Tarald Lundevall built the Oslo Opera 2008



Statue of Kirsten Flagstad before the Oslo Opera House.



Atrium of Oslo's City Hall.



Entrance hall of the Oslo Opera House.



© Olga Fontanella

Hike to Schönbiel hut in Zermatt

The hike up to the rather remote Schönbiel hut is one of the longest and easy hikes in the Zermatt area. The trail ascends the valley of the Zmuttgletscher as it works its way toward the much lesser-known side of the Matterhorn, its “North Face”.

OLGA FONTANELLAZ

Zermatt. One of the most visited places in Switzerland. Everyone knows this mountain ski village, but not everyone comes here for skiing or hiking. Many come because of the Matterhorn that the French-speaking Swiss call Cervin. It's the emblem of Switzerland and probably the most photographed peak in the world. Despite its fame and the non-ending flow of tourists, Zermatt somehow manages to retain its charm as a small mountain village. Here, everyone walks – cars are forbidden in Zermatt. Or use electric cars. Or sleighs in winter. Or horse carriages in summer.

We are here to hike. All seven of us. In the morning, we get up with the first sunlight, when the sun's rays begin to light up the Matterhorn and when the bottom of the valley is still plunged in the shade. After

a hearty breakfast, equipped with sandwiches and motivational biscuits, we head toward the Schönbiel hut, or Schönbielhütte as they call it here.

The trail is pretty and quiet, and the climb is gentle. After about one hour, we arrive at the tiny 500-year-old hamlet of Zmutt, a group of picturesque chalets located among lush alpine pastures. Looking like a photo from a glossy brochure depicting idyllic alpine scenery, Zmutt depends on tourism. This tiny village located at 1,936 metres has restaurants – Jägerstube Zmutt and Z'Mutt, both serving fabulous food!

The trail leading to the Schönbiel hut is one of the most varied. Beyond Zmutt, it starts to gently climb on the edge of the forest of alpine larches. We pass through meadows, plains, forests and

glaciers. We see Edelweiss, purple gentians, eagles, and marmots. Apparently, there are ibexes and chamois too, but we don't get a chance to see them today.

Looking back in the direction of Zermatt, we catch a glimpse of Gornergrat perched on the open ridge and looking down, we see man-made structures, an eyesore. At the bottom of the valley lies a gigantic hydroelectric plant area which was built in the 1950s, using the humongous amount of water flowing from the Zmut Glacier.

After a short break near Arbenbach waterfall, we continue walking toward Zmuttgletscher, or Zmutt Glacier. You can get an idea of its size a few decades ago by looking at the basin that the glacier left behind after it melted. It's simply enormous.

There used to be a trail going along the ridge of the old moraine, extremely narrow in some places due to erosion. I think it's completely unpassable now, and all the hikers must take the low-lying trail on the right-hand side of the moraine.

We have an encounter of a different kind, a flock of sheep. They are the famous Blacknose Valais sheep, the mascot of Zermatt. It's a young and adventurous Blacknose sheep, and it's called Wolli. These sturdy creatures are mountain sheep feeling themselves at home in the rugged mountainous terrain. They have twisted horns and flops of hair hanging down over their eyes, long and soft white curly wool and a distinct black face and nose, hence, their name. They are so cute and also incredibly rare, with only 12,000 registered in Switzerland. Each



© Olga Fontanellez



© Olga Fontanellez



© Olga Fontanellez

summer, they climb the Alps to live half the year in mountain meadows.

We finally see the Schönbiel hut from the distance. Built in stone, this beautiful hut is perched at 2,694 metres in an exceptional location, on a small summit above the Zmuttgletscher. From there, you have a direct view of the north face of the Matterhorn and the Dent of Hérens, with the Stockjigletscher on its right. The views are simply incredible!

The forerunner of the Schönbiel hut, the Stockje hut, or Stockjehütte in German, was built in 1875 at the end of the Zmutt valley. It was Zermatt's first hut and one of the Swiss Alpine Club (SAC) first huts ever. In 1890, it was destroyed by an avalanche and rebuilt in 1909, this time on higher grounds. For this occasion, it changed its

name. Demolished in 1955, its foundations have been used to build the current hut.

In the morning, with its magical light, we appreciate the place even more. While we prepare ourselves to go down, some hard-core hikers continue to Bertol hut. The weather is splendid, and before returning to Zermatt, we decide to extend our hike, stopping at Stafelalp and Schwarzsee. ■

Practical information

Access: Schönbielhütte is located in the canton of Valais in Switzerland. You reach the hut from Zermatt in 4-5 hours (or in 2,5 hours if you take a cable car to Schwarzsee and hike from there). It's a long but easy hike (T2).

Accommodation: Schönbiel hut:
<http://schoenbielhuetten.ch>

Olga together with her husband Errol created a project, www.anywayinaway.com, to showcase the world's cultural diversity. When she is not travelling to some remote corners of the world, she spends time hiking in Switzerland.



© Olga Fontanellez



© Olga Fontanellez



© Carla Edelembos

L'église St. Rémi.

La Suisse inconnue, à la découverte des 26 cantons

Canton des Grisons: Falera

Une série de 26 impressions de lieux
plutôt inconnus – loin du tourisme.

CARLA EDELENBOS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Le canton des Grisons est le plus vaste de Suisse. On y parle trois langues: l'alsacien, l'italien et le romanche. Il abrite aussi l'unique parc national suisse, dans la Haute-Engadine, à côté de Zerne. Par sa beauté naturelle et ses sommets enneigés, ainsi que ses stations de ski de luxe, le canton est une destination populaire pour des touristes. C'est aussi le canton le plus éloigné de Genève, surtout si on veut aller dans l'Engadine que certains considèrent comme la plus belle région de Suisse.

Nous décidons de ne pas nous aventurer si loin, mais plutôt de nous rendre dans la région du Rhin antérieur. Le Rhin a sa source dans les montagnes des Grisons à côté du col d'Oberalp, à la frontière avec le canton d'Uri. En prenant la route depuis le col,

ou par le train avec le fameux Glacier Express, qui relie Zermatt à Davos et St. Moritz) on suit donc le jeune Rhin jusqu'à Ilanz, dénommée fièrement: «La première ville au Rhin». Ilanz est un endroit assez joli qu'il vaut la peine de visiter, ainsi que les gorges du Rhin qui commencent juste après, mais cette fois nous bifurquons à gauche pour laisser le Rhin s'écouler tranquillement. Nous prenons la direction de Laax, connu avec Flims pour son domaine de ski. Depuis Laax, une petite route nous mène à Falera, à 1200 mètres d'altitude, où nous trouvons une chambre dans l'unique hôtel du village.

Depuis le centre du village, une belle allée de tilleuls mène à l'église romane, qui se trouve sur une colline parfaitement ronde (une muota en romanche) avec vue sur la vallée du Rhin. L'existence d'une paroisse ici est

attestée déjà en 765, par le testament de l'évêque de Coire. L'église romane qu'on voit actuellement fut quant à elle mentionnée pour la première fois en 1045. En 1491, elle fut agrandie et prit sa forme actuelle. L'intérieur de l'église est richement décoré et contient plusieurs fresques du 17^{ème} siècle. J'apprécie particulièrement les peintures au plafond du chœur, probablement faites à une date ultérieure, qui donnent une légèreté à l'ensemble. Quand nous entendons les belles cloches, nous nous émerveillons de savoir qu'une d'entre elles fut coulée en 1300 et qu'elle continue de tinter jusqu'à maintenant.

L'église est dédiée à St. Rémi, connu pour avoir baptisé Clovis, le roi des Francs, vers 495. À l'époque de la christianisation, l'Eglise faisait souvent appel à ce saint lorsque subsistait une forte prééminence aux rites de

l'ancienne religion païenne. En fait, la colline était déjà un lieu spirituel pendant l'âge de bronze, quand il existait ici un centre dédié au culte du soleil. Pas loin de l'église, nous apercevons des dizaines de menhirs, qui indiquent par leur placement, les jours les plus importants de l'année, comme les solstices et les équinoxes. Il n'est donc guère étonnant qu'une église ait été construite très tôt déjà sur ce lieu de culte «païen».

Nous avons de la chance de pouvoir participer à une visite guidée du site le lendemain de notre arrivée. Notre guide est une passionnée, tombée dans le bain de la préhistoire quand enfant elle accompagnait son père qui avait commencé à organiser des visites guidées dans les années 1980s. Elle nous explique que la muota était habitée entre 1800 et 800 av. J.C. Des trouvailles d'objets



Église au centre du village.



Place du village.



Intérieur de l'église St. Rémi.



Cimetière sur la muotta.

en bronze montrent qu'il y avait déjà des échanges commerciaux avec d'autres pays, parce qu'il n'y avait pas de mines de bronze en Suisse. Le plus important de ces découvertes est une aiguille en bronze de la taille exceptionnelle de 83 cm qui se trouve maintenant au musée cantonal à Coire. La guide nous montre plusieurs mégalithes, comme la pierre du soleil, dans laquelle un cercle fut gravé et dont on pense qu'elle était utilisée comme calendrier solaire ou même comme cadran solaire. Mais la pierre qui parle le plus à notre imagination, est celle de l'«homme mégalithique souriant», une image gravée sur la pierre qui semble nous dire bonjour depuis des temps préhistoriens, Allegra!, comme on dit en romanche.

Après la visite, nous nous promenons dans le village, où des habitants parlent romanche.

Cette langue témoigne de la présence des Romains pendant quatre siècles, jusqu'à l'an 400, et s'est développée parallèlement à l'italien à partir de vieilles racines latines. En Suisse, il existe même cinq dialectes régionaux (plus une version standardisée pour être utilisée par les autorités!) et à Falera on parle ce langage qu'on appelle le sursilvan. Cette langue est enseignée à l'école primaire et utilisée pendant les trois premières classes. À partir de la quatrième année, les écoliers apprennent l'allemand comme première langue étrangère. Dans le passé le village vivait de l'agriculture, mais actuellement il ne reste qu'une poignée d'agriculteurs. En fait, le principal revenu du village provient du tourisme. Ses 500 habitants voient leur nombre tripler en hiver avec des visiteurs du domaine de ski que le village partage avec Flims et Laax. Au moins cela a l'avantage

qu'un petit supermarché survit au village, ainsi que plusieurs restaurants où on peut déguster une spécialité grisonne, les «capuns», des feuilles de blettes enroulées autour d'un mélange de pâtes et viande, couvertes de sauce et souvent garnies de fromage d'alpage et d'oignons rôtis.

Une deuxième église a été construite en 1902 au centre du village surtout pour éviter à la population de devoir grimper la colline enneigée et verglacée pendant l'hiver. Les maisons du village sont construites plutôt en style chalet. Des sgraffites, ces décorations si typiques d'autres régions des Grisons, sont rares ici. Au bord des champs, éloigné de la pollution lumineuse, se trouve un observatoire astronomique populaire, géré par des bénévoles, qui proposent des visites au public; malheureusement, notre visite est annulée à cause de la météo:

le ciel est complètement couvert et il pleut, pas d'étoile en vue!

Malgré ce contretemps nous gardons un souvenir radieux de notre visite à Falera. Pour dire dans la langue locale: Engraziell! Sin seveser! ■

Depuis Genève, prenez le train en direction de Zürich. À Zürich, changez pour le train en direction de Coire (Chur), où vous prenez le car postal pour Laax. À Laax, changez pour le car postal vers Falera. Durée du trajet: 5 heures et 15 minutes. Pour un trajet plus intéressant, mais aussi plus long, prenez le train pour Brig, et après le train pour Andermatt et Ilanz. Depuis Ilanz, prenez le car postal pour Falera.

L'observatoire offre des visites tous les vendredis et samedis soir, réservation obligatoire: 081 921 6565.

Le site préhistorique se visite librement: <https://www.parclamutta.falera.net>. Des visites guidées sont organisées occasionnellement, pour plus d'information contactez le bureau de tourisme: 081 921 3030.



À deux pas du palais ducal de Mantoue, la cathédrale San Pietro datant du XVI^e siècle est la principale de la ville.

Italie du Nord (3/4)

Maranello, fief de Ferrari

Dans la galaxie des grands personnages de l'automobile, aucun astre ne brille davantage qu'Enzo Ferrari, créateur d'une pléiade de supervoitures à l'écusson le plus célèbre au monde, celui du cheval cabré. Trente-quatre années après sa disparition, sa légende reste toujours aussi extraordinaire et fascinante.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

Dernier regard sur le lac de Garde (*voir le newSpecial du mois passé*) avant de prendre la route pour Maranello; depuis le château qui surplombe la station balnéaire de Padenghe sul Garda la vue sur le plus grand des lacs italiens est magnifique. Et, de manière tout à fait inattendu, à l'intérieur des remparts médiévaux qui protègent la forteresse se niche un petit village historique d'une vingtaine de maisons encore habitées.

Une soixantaine de kilomètres plus au sud, Mantoue¹ se profile à l'horizon. Fondée par les Étrusques au VI^e siècle av. J.-C., Mantoue avait, dans le passé, des conditions naturelles idéales pour se défendre. En effet, de trois côtés, la ville est entourée de lacs

formés sur la rivière Mincio, affluent du Pô. Cet emplacement pittoresque et les nombreux monuments érigés dans la ville en font un lieu incontournable à visiter. En 2008, le centre Renaissance de Mantoue a été inscrit sur la liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO.

Maranello approche; située à 16 km au sud de Modène, la ville de 17 000 habitants est, depuis 1942, le fief de Ferrari, l'un des plus prestigieux concepteurs de voitures de prestige et de sport au monde.

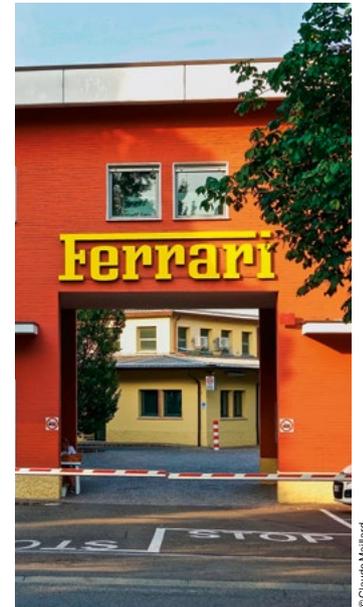
Enzo Ferrari, de la passion au Mythe
Des découvertes archéologiques font remonter l'histoire de Maranello à l'âge du bronze (de 2700 à 900 av. J.-C.). Mais

beaucoup plus proche de nous, Maranello est surtout connue pour être le siège historique de Ferrari.² La course automobile, elle, était comme chevillée au corps d'Enzo Ferrari. Né en 1898 à Modène, en même temps que l'automobile, ce fils d'artisan en fera sa raison d'être. En premier lieu comme pilote, puis comme concepteur de voitures de course. Travaillant tout d'abord pour Alfa Romeo, il crée en 1929 une structure chargée de faire courir des voitures de la marque milanaise. Mais quelques années plus tard, Alfa Romeo met un terme à cette collaboration. Enzo Ferrari n'a d'autre choix que de fabriquer ses propres voitures à partir de 1947.

Le petit constructeur de voitures de course, à l'unité dans un premier temps, se lance



Chaque année, lors du Palio della Marcigliana, la ville de Chioggia est plongée dans le Moyen Âge en souvenir de la guerre de 1379.



Via Abetone inferiore 4 à Maranello, le portail d'entrée mythique qui donne accès au siège historique de la «Maison du Cheval cabré».

progressivement dans la fabrication de modèles de Grand Tourisme dérivés de ceux de compétition. Leurs brillantes mécaniques et leurs éblouissantes carrosseries réalisées par des artisans de renom décupleront la renommée de Ferrari. Cette activité lucrative permet au patron, surnommé «*Il Commendatore*», de financer en partie la Scuderia, le service compétition. Depuis, que ce soit en Formule 1, en sport-prototype ou dans différentes autres catégories, les Ferrari sont omniprésentes sur tous les circuits du monde. La marque au cheval cabré a décroché 243 victoires en F1 et remporté 16 fois le titre constructeurs et 15 fois le titre pilotes.

Cela fait donc 75 ans que Ferrari poursuit une trajectoire sportive couronnée de succès en piste et de prestige sur la route. La Scuderia a réuni une multitude de pilotes d'exception, d'Alberto Ascari à Michael Schumacher, en passant par Juan Manuel Fangio, Jacky Ickx, Niki Lauda, Clay Regazzoni, Gilles Villeneuve, Alain Prost, Sébastien Vettel ou encore Charles Leclerc et Carlos Sainz engagés cette année dans le championnat du monde de Formule 1 au volant de la Ferrari F1-75.

Maranello voit rouge

Il y a quelque chose de magique que de pouvoir franchir le mythique portail d'entrée rouge brique de la «Maison du cheval cabré», siège historique de Ferrari, Via Abetone inferiore 4. Ce privilège exceptionnel nous a été offert les 18 et 19 juin derniers à l'occasion de la «*Notte Rossa*» (nuit rouge) organisée à Maranello pour célébrer le 75^e anniversaire de la création de la Scuderia Ferrari. Fermé à la circulation, le centre-ville était, pour la durée d'un week-end de folie, envahi de centaines de Ferrari venues de toute l'Europe. Bien alignées, les «belles rouges» (pour la plupart) ont fait le bonheur d'une foule considérable venue approcher au plus près leurs voitures de rêve, dont la légendaire Dino 206 GT élaborée en 1967 et baptisée du prénom du fils aîné du «*Commendatore*» disparu prématurément à l'âge de 24 ans. À ses côtés, le modèle 125 S de 1947, la première voiture de course à porter la marque Ferrari (qui remportera d'entrée six des treize courses auxquelles elle participa) et la F8 Tributo développant 720 chevaux, la dernière née des Ferrari produite depuis 2019.

Des Ferrari F8 Tributo, nous aurons l'occasion d'en apercevoir

en cours de fabrication au sein de l'usine Ferrari ouverte au public pour fêter l'événement. Sur 551 000 m², une quarantaine de bâtiments, dont la gigantesque soufflerie (permettant de tester l'aérodynamisme des voitures), sont desservis par des rues aux noms évocateurs des «Grands» qui ont fait la notoriété de la marque. Une ville dans la ville qui accueille 3000 collaborateurs considérés comme l'élite des travailleurs italiens. En 2021, année record des ventes, 11 155 exemplaires de voitures ont été vendus dans le monde. Et, avant de retrouver leur propriétaire, chacune de ces Ferrari est testée sur le circuit privé de Fiorano, dont la piste de plus de 3 km est construite à proximité de l'usine, Via Gilles Villeneuve, au nom du pilote de Formule 1 préféré d'Enzo Ferrari qui trouva la mort au Grand Prix de Belgique en 1982.

Ce formidable week-end ne pouvait pas se terminer sans la visite du Musée Ferrari qui jouxte l'usine et la piste d'essais. Les touristes et les fans du monde entier s'y pressent pour contempler les anciens modèles et les moteurs de voitures de compétition, ainsi que les tenues, casques et

trophées des pilotes de l'une des plus anciennes et prestigieuses écuries de Formule 1 ayant jamais existé. Et lorsque, bien fatigué, une pause détente est d'actualité, le restaurant «*le Cavallino*» est tout à fait approprié. C'est un petit paradis rappelant les moments passés par Enzo Ferrari dans ces mêmes lieux, à ne surtout pas louper. Face à la porte d'entrée de l'usine, c'est une véritable oasis de goût, de détente, de découverte et de divertissement enrichi d'une collection rare de souvenirs et de pièces uniques.

Terminé les Ferrari, place aux gondoles. Direction Venise en longeant la côte Adriatique, en passant par Ravenne et Chioggia.

Ravenne et ses mosaïques

Considérée aujourd'hui comme la capitale mondiale de la mosaïque, Ravenne³ recèle des trésors incroyables. De somptueuses mosaïques aux influences antique et orientale décorent bon nombre d'églises de la ville. En 1996, huit monuments de Ravenne furent inscrits sur la liste du patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO. Il s'agit du baptistère de Néon, de la basilique Saint-Apollinaire-le-Neuf, du baptistère des Ariens,

de la chapelle archiépiscopale et de son musée, du mausolée de Théodoric, de la basilique Saint-Vital, de la basilique Saint-Apollinaire in Classe et du mausolée de Galla Placidia. Le style paléochrétien de ce dernier, édifié dans la première moitié du V^e siècle, en fait l'un des monuments les plus anciens et attachants de la ville.

Au nord de Ravenne, le delta du Pô s'étend sur les régions de l'Emilie-Romagne et de la Vénétie. Le plus long des fleuves italiens se jette dans la mer Adriatique à travers 14 bras. C'est le plus important sanctuaire d'oiseaux du sud de l'Europe, et la biosphère de cette vaste étendue composée de marais, de forêts et de salines est tellement riche que la réserve est inscrite au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO depuis 1999.

Ville côtière située sur une petite île à l'entrée sud de la lagune de la capitale de la Vénétie, Chioggia⁴ est surnommée «la petite Venise». Avec ses ruelles étroites, ses canaux, son port de pêche et ses maisons aux façades colorées, Chioggia est un lieu extrêmement charmant où règne une atmosphère familiale. En 1379 à Chioggia eut lieu une bataille entre les deux puissances maritimes de Gènes et de Venise; cette dernière l'emporta. Chaque année, une reconstitution de la bataille est organisée. Les habitants portent des costumes historiques et dansent au rythme de la musique de l'époque et la ville semble retomber au Moyen Âge.

Le soleil se couche sur l'Adriatique; il est temps de reprendre la route pour Venise, ville unique au monde, exceptionnelle, magique... la reine de l'Adriatique. (À découvrir dans le prochain numéro du *newSpecial*). ■

1 www.turismo.mantova.it
 2 www.ferrari.com
 3 www.turismo.ra.it
 4 www.visitchioggia.com



La Ferrari 250 LM, une véritable œuvre d'art, dont un exemplaire piloté par Jochen Rindt remporta les 24 Heures du Mans en 1965.



Créée pour célébrer le 50^e anniversaire de Ferrari, la F50 est la voiture la plus proche d'un modèle de Formule 1 jamais construit.



Au premier plan la Ferrari 126 CK de Gilles Villeneuve disparu tragiquement aux essais du Grand Prix de Belgique en 1982.



Ferrari 159 S qui a permis au constructeur italien de remporter sa première victoire internationale (Grand Prix de Turin en 1947).



Exposée au Musée Ferrari de Maranello, la F8 Tributo de 720 cv rend hommage au moteur V8 Ferrari le plus puissant à ce jour.



Au sein de l'usine Ferrari, fraîchement peintes, plusieurs F8 Tributo attendent de recevoir leur moteur.



Dans les rues de Maranello, le week-end de la «Notte Rossa», la Ferrari 125 de 1947 aux côtés de la Ferrari F8 Tributo de 2019.

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Garry Aslanyan – newSpecial
OMS, 20 av. Appia, CH-1202 Genève, Suisse
Par courrier électronique: info@newspecial.org

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Send your thoughts to:
Garry Aslanyan – newSpecial
WHO, 20, av Appia CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland
By email: info@newspecial.org



newSpecial
WHO, office 4139
20 av. Appia
1202 Genève
info@newspecial.org

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Éditeur / Publisher
Publicité / Advertising
C•E•P S.A.
Quai Gustave-Ador 42
1207 Genève
T. +41 22 700 98 00
cepinfo@bluewin.ch

Graphisme / Design
Atelier Schnegg+
Michel Schnegg
Rue du Simplon 5
1207 Genève
T. +41 22 344 72 90
www.atelier-schnegg.ch

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Courvoisier-Gassmann SA
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