

The sources: how the history of the traders is known

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

Since the history of the commodity traders of Zug is known only in part, the practitioner and the historian must be aware of the limits of the sources. The trading houses, which were private companies until the listing of Glencore in 2011, published little about their business. Their archives are closed. The official records, the entries in the commercial register and the tax files are either brief or confidential. Much of what is known comes from three kinds of sources: the records of criminal and civil proceedings, above all in the United States, the investigations of journalists and non-governmental organisations, and the memoirs and interviews of the traders themselves.

For the Rich era, the principal sources are the indictment of 1983 and the proceedings that followed, the congressional and journalistic investigations into the pardon of 2001, and a small number of books, among them a biography written with Rich's cooperation by the Swiss journalist Daniel Ammann, published in 2009 under the title *The King of Oil*, and an earlier account by the American journalist A. Craig Copetas, *Metal Men*, published in 1985.¹ For the modern industry, the book by Javier Blas and Jack Farchy, *The World for Sale*, published in 2021, is the most comprehensive account and draws on interviews with many of the leading traders, including those of Zug.² For the history of the cluster in the canton itself, the articles of the online history "Zug in der Welt" and the study of Gianni Bomio, cited throughout this book, are the most valuable sources.

The limits of these sources have two consequences for the account given here. The first is that the history of the traders tends to be written from the perspective of their conflicts with the law, since the proceedings produce the most detailed records. The ordinary business of the traders, the thousands of lawful transactions that make up the bulk of their activity, is less well documented than their misconduct. The second is that many statements about the traders rest on the testimony of interested parties,

whether the traders themselves, their prosecutors or their critics. The footnotes of this book identify the sources of each statement so that the reader can weigh them accordingly.

1 Notes

1. Daniel Ammann, *The King of Oil: The Secret Lives of Marc Rich*, St. Martin's Press, New York 2009 (ISBN 978-0-312-57074-3; publication October 2009 according to Wikipedia, "The King of Oil", and Publishers Weekly, publishersweekly.com); A. Craig Copetas, *Metal Men: Marc Rich and the 10-Billion-Dollar Scam*, Putnam, New York 1985 (ISBN 978-0-399-13078-6; bookseller records on biblio.com and abebooks.com). ↩
2. Javier Blas and Jack Farchy, *The World for Sale: Money, Power and the Traders Who Barter the Earth's Resources*, Random House Business (Penguin Random House UK), London 2021, ISBN 978-1-84794-265-4 (hardback); details as given in the academic reviews listed on researchgate.net and ssrn.com. ↩

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