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Problems Papered Over? Early Modern Strategies of Paper Supply in Wartime and Economic Crisis.

This paper explores how, when the Italian Wars and related economic crises led to an irregular, expensive, and uncertain supply of an increasingly necessary civic and political resource in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Austria, entrepreneurs and statesmen shifted from importing Italian-made paper to the stimulation of domestic and southern German paper production and distribution. Though scholars work with paper on a daily basis, the historical role of this durable, portable, affordable, and material technology of communication and administration has often been overlooked. Although paper was manufactured in Italy by the 1270s, arriving there from China via the Muslim Mediterranean, paper-mills were not widespread across the European continent until the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries -- precisely the period in which historians have traditionally seen incipient "states" striving to develop more effective communication with and jurisdiction over populations which eventually came to be described as "citizens". Paper played a crucial role in this process. The paper draws on archivally-preserved financial records of merchants, papermakers, and princely government to trace how citizens and statesmen responded to challenges of paper provision in an era of financial, military, civic, and confessional crisis.