The mills of Pralognan

Background history

Located in the surroundings of St André, alongside 2 streams called: “the mill stream” and “the saw stream” were in use

1730: 15 mills and 1 drop hammer (Sardinian Map).

1742: 20mills and 1 drop hammer (land regis).

1793: 11 mills (inventory of the 26 brumaire an II).

1798: 20 mills, 2 forges, 2 nail factories, 2 saw mills (depart of civil Engineering, departmental archive).

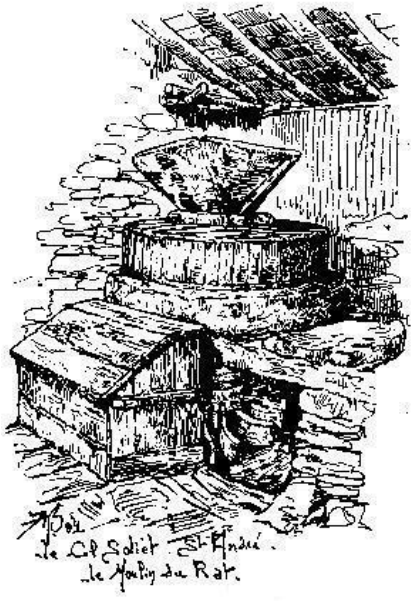
1901: 19 mills 2 saw mills (civil Engineering statistics).

1917: 11 mills (inventory of the war Department archives, department archives).

2004: 5 mills have been restored, 3 in working order, 1 turned into a small museum.

Description

- **The building**



The mills are small, plain buildings made of drystone with the roof covered with flat stones called “lauzes”. A slit or tiny window lets the daylight in, The ground is made of hard earth.
A pile of flat stones protects against dampness.

- **The water supply**

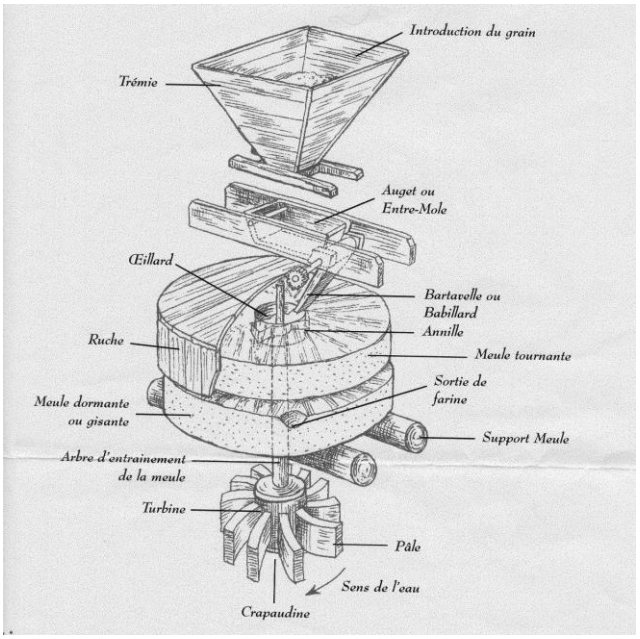
For the use of the mill, water is sometimes collected along several miles upstream, then channeled in the hollowed trunks of larches.

- **The use**

The mill enabled people to grind cereals such as rye, wheat, barley as well as beans. They were used by several families of the district and managed by a convention signed by all the beneficiaries which stated the modes of use and maintenance.

How they work

Our mills are of Nordic style with a horizontal wheel.
The upper grinding stone or “turning stone” is activated by the water hitting the paddles below.
One wheel turn is equivalent to one grinding stone turn.



The lower stone or «sleeping stone” is fixed

The grain is poured into a funnel (trémie), the narrow bottom of which reaches a bucket (auget).
it flows slowly and regularly thanks to a vibrating motion given by a piece of wood (babillard or bartavelle) that rubs against the moving stone.

The grain passes down between the two grinding stones through a central hole called “oeillard”.
Once crushed and ground, it is collected as flour into a chest.

The carving and grooving of the stones.

Special hammers are required for these operations.

- **Rayonnage:** grooves are dug in the direction of the “oeillard” together with parallel lines.
- **Piquage**: it consists in making small, regular holes on the surface of the stone to avoid any smooth space.