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Le Alpi – modernizzazione e risorse

## ABSTRACTS

**Patrick Kupper**

**On Mines and Railways. The Rabenstein Mine in Tyrol in the last quarter of the Nineteenth Century**

This article describes an episode in the history of the Tyrolean mining industry during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At the end of the 1870s, a young English gentleman, William Basil Wilberforce (1850–1913), acquired a mine at Rabenstein in the Sarn valley. He arranged for machinery from England and Italian workers to come to this southern Alpine valley, which was near to the town of Bozen, but difficult to access. The extracted raw materials, principally lead ore, were subsequently exported, including to the German Empire. However, after only ten years of full production, the mine was closed in 1891, the workers laid off, and the owner applied for bankruptcy. Using a wide range of sources, the article discusses the events of the time and places them within the larger framework of contemporary developments.

**Michael Flütsch**

**A System of Local Resource Usage versus ‘Forests in the Service of the Homeland’. The Muot project at Bergün 1900–1939**

This article offers a regional historical case study of the Muot mountain slope, which is located south-east of the village of Bergün/Bravuogn in the Swiss canton of Grisons. Before the Albula railway was built (1898–1904), the area was intensively used by the local population for both wood harvesting and goat grazing. To protect the new line, the Rhaetian railway established one of the largest avalanche control and reforestation projects in Switzerland at the time. This happened in close cooperation with leading federal and cantonal forestry experts. The project had far-reaching effects on the local population, resulting in massive restrictions on traditional forms of resource utilization. Ultimately, Muot was even expropriated from the municipality of Bergün. Despite this, the project was presented at the Swiss National Exhibition (‘Landi’) in 1939 as an exemplary model for Swiss avalanche protection. This article ultimately sheds light on the internal contradictions between the concept shown at the exhibition and the tangible, real-world impacts of the project on the local population of Bergün.

**Sara Šifrar Krajnik**

**“Every Cubic Metre of This Water Will Turn to Gold”. Public Debates on the Construction of the First Regional Hydroelectric Power Plant in Carniola, Slovenia (1909–1919)**

This article sheds light on the development of the Slovenian hydroelectric power system between 1909 and 1919, when the Završnica hydropower plant was a major topic of public debate. In the region of Carniola, harnessing the potential of Alpine rivers for electrification, both across Austria-Hungary and within the individual crownlands, was accompanied by tensions and conflicts between local, regional and national actors. The article aims to illustrate the complex events surrounding the

construction of the first hydropower plant in Carniola. According to Dr Otto Felix Schoßberger, the plant's chief engineer, there were some unusual, yet interesting developments during its construction. Contemporary reports in the Slovenian regional and national press reveal much about these unusual episodes or, more precisely, the complications and conflicts that occurred during the construction of the Završnica hydropower plant and after its completion. At the same time, the article examines the opposing views circulating in the newspapers between 1909 and 1919, and what led to the decision to build the power plant in this particular time and location.

**Aldo Castellano/Luca Mocarelli**

**The Hydroelectric Industry in the Western Italian Alps: an Opportunity or an unwelcome Presence? The case of Valtellina between the End of the Nineteenth and the Start of the Twentieth Century**

This contribution deals with the period between the end of the nineteenth and the start of the twentieth century, when the hydroelectric industry in Italy was first becoming established. The authors focus on the Valtellina, which provides an interesting case study due to its points of contact but also some significant differences with other Alpine valleys. They begin by briefly delineating the hard-fought legislative changes occurring with regard to the exploitation of hydraulic power in the period under investigation, as well as describing the resulting developments in the hydroelectrical sector. Based on a systematic perusal of local documents, the article dwells on the discussion and choices made in the Valtellina, which grew out of a complex exchange with representatives of the Italian state on the one hand and private contractors on the other hand. This process culminated in the decisive final step, in the form of a convention signed in 1907 by the municipality of Milan, the province of Sondrio and the villages in the water catchment area of the upper Adda river concerning the use of water from the Adda and Roasco rivers.

**Stefano Morosini**

**'My grandmother quickly guessed the radical changes that were about to occur'. Hydroelectric Infrastructure in the Upper Valtellina from an environmental and historical perspective (1906–1968)**

The article aims to provide a series of analytical points regarding the transformations occurring to the environment and countryside in the Upper Valtellina resulting from the arrival of the first forms of hydroelectric production at the start of the twentieth century and the massive development it underwent, up until the end of the 1960s. In particular, the article undertakes a descriptive analysis of the various phases of unabridged hydroelectric exploitation that have affected this area. It looks closely at the documentary sources and also presents the first results from a series of investigations being carried out within an ongoing interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research project. Finally, drawing on the stimulus provided by the discussion in recent years at the international level within the Environmental Humanities, the article also undertakes an analytical examination of the interdependent relationship that has emerged between the city of Milan and a remote region located in the centre of the Alps.

**Andrea Pojer**

**'...proceeding further, to where the oxen do not come to graze'. The Representation of the Mountain Environment on the Boundaries of the Dolomites during the sixteenth and seventeenth Centuries**

The article seeks to go beyond a conception of landscape defined only by the availability and exploitation of resources and to emphasize how the mountain summits and rock faces in reality constitute a central feature of the spatial organization of the landscape. This becomes apparent from the cartographic material and documents of court proceedings emanating from various surveys and boundary disputes in the Dolomite region during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These sources record the exchanges between central authorities and local communities. In doing so, they not only provide a detailed description of the mountain environment but they also allow us to investigate how the local population perceived their surroundings. The boundaries were often traced according to natural features in the morphology of the mountains, yet they were also deeply rooted in the collective memory of local communities and in the everyday encounters of the inhabitants with the mountain peaks.