

# Pathways

Exploring the Routes of a  
Movement Heritage



*Edited by*

**Daniel Svensson, Katarina Saltzman  
and Sverker Sörlin**

**PATHWAYS:  
EXPLORING THE ROUTES OF A MOVEMENT HERITAGE**

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***With a Foreword by Tim Ingold***

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## CONTENTS

List of figures	vii
Author biographies	xi
Acknowledgements	xix
Foreword – <i>Tim Ingold</i>	xxi
Introduction	1
Movement Heritage and Path Dependence: Layering the Past – <i>Daniel Svensson, Katarina Saltzman, Sverker Sörlin</i>	
SECTION I – PAST PRECONDITIONS OF PATHS	31
Chapter 1. Footpaths in England: Notes Towards a Radical History – <i>Paul Readman</i>	33
Chapter 2. Delineating the Landscape: Planning, Mapping and the Historic Imaginings of Rights of Way in Twentieth-century England and Wales – <i>Clare Hickman and Glen O'Hara</i>	56
Chapter 3. Appropriated Heritage? Access Campaigns, Trespass, and Local Rights in Early-twentieth Century Upland England and Austria – <i>Ben Anderson</i>	74
Chapter 4. Hefting the Land: A Locative Heritage of Hooves and Feet – <i>Karen Lykke Syse</i>	97
Chapter 5. 'Following in the Footsteps of History': Sixteen Multimedia Itineraries through the First World War Sites in the Stelvio National Park and Adamello Park (Italy) – <i>Stefano     Morosini</i>	114
SECTION II – OFF THE BEATEN TRACKS	129
Chapter 6. Archipelagic Paths: Narratives, Heritage and Community in Public Trail Walking on the Åland Islands – <i>Susanne     Österlund-Pötzsch</i>	131

Chapter 7. Fusion: Co-created Heritage in Stories from the Camino de Santiago – <i>Camilla Brudin Borg</i>	152
Chapter 8. Tracing Memories: The Guided Trail as an Aid to Cultural Memory in Artworks by Janet Cardiff – <i>Laura Bertens</i>	167
Chapter 9. Walking and Worlding: Trails as Storylines in Video Games – <i>Finn Arne Jørgensen</i>	186
Chapter 10. Attentive Walking: Encountering Mineralness – <i>Petra Lilja</i>	201
SECTION III – SEARCHING FOR NEW PATH HERITAGE	219
Chapter 11. Kodagu Walking Trails and Indigenous Heritage Making: A Bioregional Study – <i>Subarna De</i>	221
Chapter 12. Heritage Trails: Pathways to Sustainable Development Goals – <i>John Martin, Joane Serrano, Jacqueline Nowakowski and Dominica Williamson</i>	240
Chapter 13. Walking on Terrils. Ruderal Ecologies and Toxic Heritage in Wallonia, Belgium – <i>Daniele Valisena</i>	264
Chapter 14. Walking, Remembering and Enunciating the Place: Jewish-Israeli Memorial Trails in Nature – <i>Maria Piekarska</i>	279
Chapter 15. Walking the Kalderimi: Embodied Knowledge and Heritage Narratives in a Participatory Building Workshop at Zagori (NW Greece) – <i>Faidon Moudopoulos Athanasiou and Ionas Sklavounos</i>	295
Chapter 16. Forming Paths within Post-industrial Landscapes – <i>Benjamin Richards</i>	316

## CHAPTER 5.

# 'FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HISTORY'. SIXTEEN MULTIMEDIA ITINERARIES THROUGH THE FIRST WORLD WAR SITES IN THE STELVIO NATIONAL PARK AND ADAMELLO PARK (ITALY)

*Stefano Morosini*

There are many traces of the First World War in Northern Italy's mountain areas, above all in the Stelvio National Park and the Adamello Park, where fighting took place. These are beautiful places at an average altitude of between 2,000 and 3,000 metres above sea level, where extraordinary natural scenes starkly contrast with the tragic nature of the events that occurred in this extreme environment. To promote this priceless patrimony, the ensuing essay will present the recovery and enhancement of an Austro-Hungarian barracks located on top of Mount Scorluzzo (3,094 metres), by means of an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research project. The essay will also describe the creation of sixteen themed itineraries using innovative, zero environmental impact technologies. These experiential itineraries give visitors a new, participatory and interactive approach to these sites and explain (in Italian, English and German languages) the events that took place here during the First World War. Using a georeferenced and accessible to everyone App, visitors can encounter fragments of history and details on natural surroundings, taking a step back in time. These projects aim to help new generations understand what Europe went through before becoming a largely peaceful and borderless multinational space.

### The white war

The earliest studies of alpine warfare were products of reverence for the beauty of the scenery combined with fear resulting from the inclement harshness of the climate. Temperatures as low as  $-50^{\circ}\text{C}$ ; blizzards and avalanches in autumn, winter and spring; powerful thunderstorms during the remaining months, when, after 'white death' had already taken a heavy toll, lightning bolts came to claim more lives. All of this led to a romanticised description of alpine warfare,

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### 5. 'Following in the Footsteps of History'

an excellent example of which is Mario Mariani's 1915 poetic description of fighting at the Stelvio National Park territory:

It was a war of chamois hunters, of alpine patrols concealed in ambush or climbing up the inaccessible peaks on the offensive, armed with craftiness and patience, with crampons and ice axe, war of bandits and daredevils, scattered over airy suspended trails, hidden amongst the glaciers' crevasses, under the rocks' brushwood, inside every grotto, inside every cavern, a war that cannot be followed, a war in which to prevail one had to be an actor too.<sup>1</sup>

A great contribution to the study of alpine warfare was made by personal memoirs released by several Italian and Austro-Hungarian officers in the interwar period.<sup>2</sup> High altitude warfare then became a topic of interest for historians by passion, but not by training; these sources contain a wealth of information, but lack academic rigour and in many cases this implies heroic tones and sometimes nationalist accents.<sup>3</sup> Archive-based studies realised in the past decades have shed a more historically accurate and unbiased light on high-altitude warfare.<sup>4</sup> This theme has also progressively become of great interest to environmental history, a fertile field of cutting-edge interdisciplinary analysis.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, natural sciences have also proved indispensable for an all-round understanding of the complex realities of First World War battlefields.<sup>6</sup> Analysis of historically relevant phenomena through the lens of the natural sciences has also been made in relation to alpine warfare.<sup>7</sup>

Contemporary analyses of the First World War at high altitude have definitely abandoned not only romanticised (or heroic, or nationalist) interpretations, but also the resulting excessive focus on the 'bare-handed man versus nature' narrative. This had long downplayed the highly technological and modern

- 1 Mariani, *Sulle Alpi e sull'Isonzo*, p. 153. Quote translated by the author.
- 2 von Lempruch, *Der König der Deutschen Alpen*; Fiocca, *Come occupammo lo Stelvio*; von Ompteda, *Bergkrieg*; Robbiati and Viazzi, *Guerra d'Aquile*; Martinelli, *La guerra a 3000 metri*; Fetterappa Sandri, *La Guerra sotto le Stelle*; Robbiati and Viazzi, *Guerra Bianca*; Flores, *La Guerra in Montagna*.
- 3 Schaumann, *Schauplätze des Gebirgskrieges*; von Lichem, *Gebirgskrieg 1915–1918*; Martinelli, *Guerra alpina sull'Adamello*; Viazzi, *La guerra alpina sul fronte Ortler-Cevedale*.
- 4 David, *Stilfserjoch-Umbrail 1914–1918*; Jordan, *Krieg um die Alpen*; Thompson, *The White War*; Keller, 'The Mountains Roar'; Camanni, *Il fuoco e il gelo*; John, *The Italian Army and the First World War*; Labanca, 'The Italian Front'; Leoni, *La guerra verticale*; Cimbolli, *Al di là delle trincee*; Sigurtà, *Montagne di guerra*; Segesser, 'Fighting'.
- 5 Hughes, *An Environmental History of the World*, p. 4; McNeill, 'Observations on the Nature', p. 6; Isenberg, 'Introduction'; Daly et al., 'Landscapes of War', p. 3.
- 6 Pirc et al., 'Remains of World War I'; Souvent et al., 'Pollution Caused by Metallic Fragments'; Baba et al., 'Effect of Warfare Waste on Soil'; Bausinger et al., 'Environmental Remnants of the First World War'; Van Meirvenne, 'Could Shelling in the First World War?'; Meerschman, 'Geostatistical Assessment of the Impact of World War I'; Thouin et al., 'Characterization and Mobility of Arsenic and Heavy Metals'.
- 7 Angetter, 'Über den Minierkrieg in hochalpinen Fels'.



**Figure 1.**

The Mount Scorluzzo (3,094 metres) Austro-Hungarian barracks. Recovery and enhancement of the site and interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research project. Source: © Stelvio National Park.

character of high-altitude warfare and the considerable successes achieved by anthropic aggression against the mountains. A fitting example of these is the cableway, which Austro-Hungarian troops had built by November 1915 in the Ortles-Cevedale area. It linked the valley floor with the Dreisprachenspitze (2,843 m) and consisted of two incredible single-span segments, one of which was 2,500 metres in length. In little less than an hour, supplies travelled 1,245 m in altitude and the cableway operated 22 hours a day, constituting the sole means to resupply the forward high-altitude positions during wintertime, when roads could be buried under as many as ten metres of snow.

This paragraph presents the theme, scope and core methodological aspects of the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research project activated in 2019 to study an Austro-Hungarian artificial barracked cave originally built in the summer of 1915 at 3,094 metres above sea level on the top of Mount Scorluzzo. The mountain is part of Stelvio National Park and belongs to the Ortles-Cevedale range, whose highest summits reach up to almost 4,000 metres, which stretches between the Italian regions of Lombardy and Trentino-



5. *'Following in the Footsteps of History'*

Alto Adige/Südtirol and borders Switzerland. Mount Scorluzzo was key to the defence of the Stelvio Pass itself. It directly overlooks the pass and has a commanding position over the nearby valleys and lower lands. At the beginning of the war, it was in undisputed Italian territory, right at the crossroads between the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Kingdom of Italy and the Swiss Confederacy. Italian troops refrained from active military actions on the Stelvio front during the first months of the war and Mount Scorluzzo was given no permanent garrison.

On 4 June 1915, the personal initiative of a Merano Gendarmery Rittermeister, Andreas Steiner, led to the Austro-Hungarian conquest of Mount Scorluzzo.<sup>8</sup> Being fully aware of the strategic position they had just acquired, Imperial troops immediately began fortifying it and did so to such an extent that, notwithstanding several Italian attempts to recapture the summit, Mount Scorluzzo and its twin lower peak, Scorluzzino (2,990 metres) remained consistently in Austro-Hungarian hands until the very end of the war. The conquest of Mount Scorluzzo received enthusiastic celebration in the Austro-Hungarian and German press: the first 3,000-metre peak in the history of warfare had been conquered. What is more, as Jewish Austro-Hungarian journalist Alice Schalek wrote, recalling the words of an ecstatic Austro-Hungarian officer: 'we have our front line on enemy territory; we have Monte Scorluzzo'.<sup>9</sup> Since then, Mount Scorluzzo has become known both amongst Italian and Austro-Hungarian troops as the 'mountain of blood and iron'.<sup>10</sup>

The recovery of the Mount Scorluzzo barracked cave began in 2017. One hundred years after its construction, climate change had caused such a retreat of the glaciers that it became conceivable to excavate and retrieve the barrack. Yet, its entire surface was sealed in sixty cubic metres of ice and its location made recovery operations possible only during the summer months. The first surveys started in 2015–2016, when the upper strata of the ice were melted to reveal the barrack's wood structure (deck, supporting pillars, wood plank walls and ceiling). During the month of August in 2017, 2018 and 2019 the remaining ice was removed, approximately one third at a time with pressure washers, thanks to the voluntary effort of the staff of the White War Museum located in Temù (Brescia). More than 300 disparate artefacts were recovered (munitions, provisions, uniforms, stoves, lanterns, personal items, documents and books, etc.). Finally, in August 2020, a high-altitude engineering team

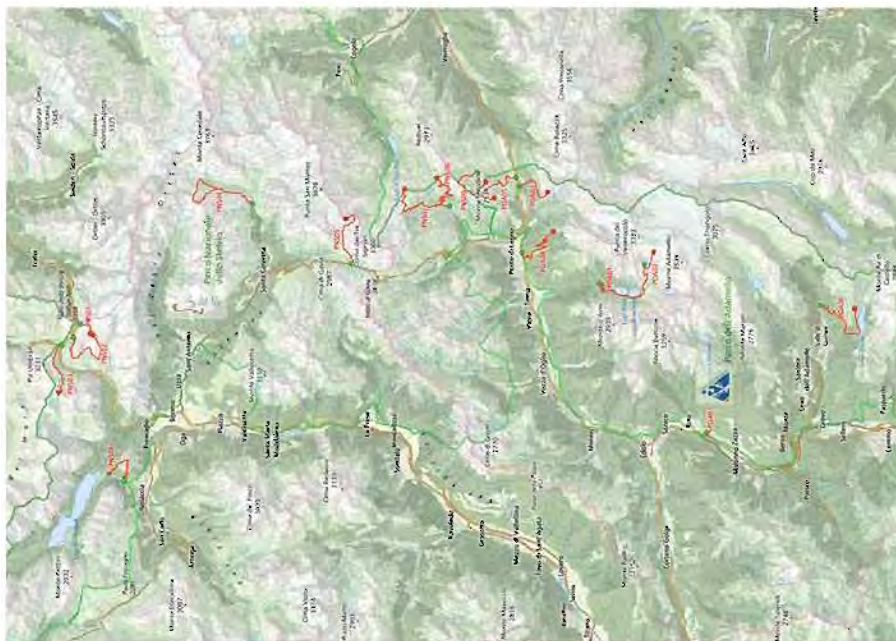
8 Jordan, *Krieg um die Alpen*, p. 231.

9 Schalek, *Tirol in Waffen Kriegsberichte*, p. 23.

10 Fettarappa Sandri, *La Guerra sotto le Stelle*, p. 26; Springensch, *Unter dem Tiroler Adler*, p. 25; von Lempruch et al., *Ortles*, p. 36.

*Stefano Marosini*

proceeded to disassemble the entire wood structure, catalogue it and transport it via helicopter to the nearby town of Bormio, as well as to structurally reinforce the cave through micro-piling. The barrack will be rebuilt in a new museum that will open in Bormio in 2022–2023, containing all recovered artefacts. A replica of the original barrack will be set up on the top of Mount Scorluzzo, provided with lighting and information boards and open to visitors during guided tours following the multimedia war itineraries.



**The project**

There are many traces of World War One in the Lombard mountains and especially here, in the Stelvio National Park and the Adamello Park, where the war was fought at very high altitudes and in extreme conditions. Excavating projects in which the beauty of the natural setting contrasts with the tragic nature of the events which took place here, to preserve this emotional heritage. The Lombardy Region, General Authority and Cultural Heritage Department, in collaboration with the "Stelvio War Museum" - with designing a Lombard Great War heritage promotion initiative based on the creation of thematic itineraries through the mountains with some landscape stops. The 16 experiential itineraries offered are a novel, moving and interactive way to visit some of the sites of the Italian-Austrian War, and learn more about the fighting which took place here from 1914 to 1918 on these mountains.

On the occasion of university accessible technology, visitors can now explore fragments of history and culture, gain insights into details they might not otherwise notice and look around them, taking a step back in time. With the "Oltre le tracce della storia" (Following in the footsteps of history) APP you can listen to the voice of actor and writer Giuseppe Castellani concerning the war history and environment and bring their story, with period sources narrated by actor Marco Calisto.

**"Oltre le tracce della storia" (Following in the footsteps of history) APP**

The "Oltre le tracce della storia" (Following in the footsteps of history) APP is available on the App Store and Google Play. It is available in Italian and English. It is available on the App Store and Google Play. It is available on the App Store and Google Play.

**How to install the APP**

Download the APP by scanning the QR code or visit the website [www.stelvio.it/oltre-le-tracce-della-storia](http://www.stelvio.it/oltre-le-tracce-della-storia) to download the APP on the App Store or Google Play Store.

**Following in the footsteps of history**

**16 multimedia itineraries through World War One sites**

**Figures 2 and 3.**

General description of the project 'Following in the footsteps of history'. Source: © Stelvio National Park.

### 5. 'Following in the Footsteps of History'

The project is rooted in the methodology of environmental history, but the group of more than twenty researchers belong to a range of disciplines: botany, chemistry, ecology, epidemiology, genetics, glaciology, geology, geomorphology, history, microbiology, palynology, topography, zoology, escaping disciplinary hierarchies. The Scorluzzo project has attracted unprecedented international attention since it was covered in May 2021 by *The Guardian* in its online and printed editions. The news was reported widely across the globe and, most notably, the *New York Times* also covered the project in both online and printed editions.<sup>11</sup>

The unique recovery and enhancement of the Mount Scorluzzo barracks is not the only project that the Stelvio National Park has dedicated to the historical traces of the First World War in its territory. This particular mountain front has guaranteed the specific conservation of many signs of the presence of the two armies on these peaks. In partnership with the Adamello Natural Park, the 'Following in the footsteps of history' project and its sixteen itineraries want to offer historical and environmental contents without setting up and managing info boards, which could be considered as an element of negative impact on the landscape. The aim of the project is to describe places, events and artefacts linked to the First World War, bringing out hitherto unknown aspects of the war and, above all, remembering that the history of the White War, like that of the Great War as a whole, is a story of unimaginable suffering on both sides.

Moving along the sixteen itineraries, users receive mobile phone notifications as they reach points of interest. A map of the area appears automatically, giving the opportunity to activate an audio description in Italian, English or German and performed (in the Italian version) by the Oscar-winning actor Giuseppe Cederna. The use of headphones is recommended to remain focused on the route during the walk. Besides audio information, the App also shows a series of historical images. During the vocal description, users will find a selection of quotes from letters, diaries, and books of Italian and Austrian soldiers. The App aims to be accessible for a wide audience in both ways: in its usability, and in the ease of understanding its historical and environmental contents. In fact, paths are easy to walk for a large public of hikers and have no mountaineering difficulties. Seven of the sixteen itineraries are also accessible to people with disabilities by the use of a 'Joelette', and one is accessible for people in wheelchairs. The hope is that users of this App will undertake a beautiful walk

11 Giuffrida, 'Melting Ice Reveals First World War Relics'; Fortin, 'Melting Glaciers Have Exposed Frozen Relics of World War I'; Squires, 'Melting Alpine Glacier Reveals Hidden WW1 Tunnels and Bunker'; Suliman, 'Historians Found a WWI Bunker "Frozen in Time" in the Alps'. Overall more than 40 media outlets from 18 different nations covered the Scorluzzo project, writing in 13 different languages.

*Stefano Morosini*



**Figures 4 and 5.**

The Stelvio Pass–Mount Scorluzzo itinerary. Source: © Stelvio National Park.

5. *'Following in the Footsteps of History'*

in a spirit that is respectful not only of nature but first and foremost of the memory of the men who were obliged to fight here. A different, and higher, aim is dedicated to the European unification process. This project aims to help new generations in the understanding of what Europe tragically endured before becoming a peaceful and borderless multinational space.

The itinerary from Passo dello Stelvio to the peak of Mount Scorluzzo follows path number 13, a straightforward footpath with an altitude gain and loss of around 336 metres and an average ascent time of around one hour. Along this short and easy itinerary, users come across four points of interest: artillery positions on the ridge to the south of Passo dello Stelvio; remains of trenches in the moonscape at Passo delle Platigliole; trenches and positions dominating Passo dello Stelvio at Mount Scorluzzino; and, lastly, to the south, the front-line positions on the peak of Mount Scorluzzo.

Until just before the war, Passo dello Stelvio was guarded by a small number of Italian and Austrian soldiers. A few hours before the formal beginning of the war, set at zero hour on 24 May 1915, the Italian squad received an order to abandon the pass and withdraw to the valley as no shelters or supply routes invisible to the Austrian army had been set up. A small squad of *Alpini* occupied the peak of Mount Scorluzzino. This almost inevitable withdrawal had a significant impact on later military action in this area. In fact, all subsequent Italian attempts to capture Passo dello Stelvio were blocked by stubborn Austrian resistance facilitated by dominant positions on Mts Scorluzzo and Scorluzzino.

Just after leaving Passo dello Stelvio, hikers come across certain artillery positions carved out of the rock on the small ridge above it. Looking westwards it is clear that these positions enabled the Austrians to control the entire upper Braulio valley and consequently a large part of the Stelvio road on the Italian side. When war broke out, Austria had been fighting ultra-fierce battles on the Russian Front in Galicia for nearly a year. To defend the new front with Italy, Austria had only very limited resources, mainly *Standeschützen*, local divisions made up of civilians outside military conscription age but enrolled at the shooting ranges, which were then very common in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They were excellent marksmen and knew the area very well indeed.

These cave positions were built by Austrian soldiers in 1916 when the front line had been stabilised after small-scale fighting in the summer of 1915. Prior to digging these cave positions, the Austrians had set up open air positions just behind the ridge and only a few digging traces and slight stone parapets remain of these. This position took the name of Ferdinandstellung, in honour of the hotel nearby destroyed by Italian artillery in autumn 1915.

At that time, the ridge remained above the area's permanent snowfields

*Stefano Morosini*

only for a few weeks in summer. In a book about First World War in the Alps, Austrian historian Heinz von Lichem described the strategies employed on this section of the front very well

The Italians continued vainly to attack the natural fortresses, strenuously defended by the Austrians. It should be said to the credit of the Italians and the fighting spirit of the Alpini soldiers: if the Italians had managed to occupy the ridges first, the Tyroleans and the Austrians would equally have thrown themselves uselessly against rock and ice walls. The conformation of the terrain meant that the Italians were forced to attack from below on open ground towards dominant strategic positions, an entirely thankless and ultimately pointless military enterprise.<sup>12</sup>

The footpath to the peak of Mount Scorluzzo deviates from the road and climbs up a scree slope. Looking from north to south, the landscape shows evident signs of the work of the ancient glaciers. The different formations of the rocks around it are also easily visible. On the pass, they are limestone, the outcome of sedimentation in an ultra-ancient ocean, while Mount Scorluzzo is made up, for the most part, of metamorphic schists.

During First World War the highest rocks of the whole Passo delle Platigliole emerged from the perennial snow fields for only a few weeks per year, linking up to the ridge which continues to the higher Nagler Spitze (Cima del Chiodo) and subsequent Punta del Naso. On these rocks the Austrians built an advanced defence line with machine gun positions directed at Valle dei Vitelli. Protected walkways and trenches were carved out using metal cages filled with stones. Today what has survived the passage of time in this quasi-lunar landscape, almost always windy, gives us an insight into the lives of the soldiers of the day, with snow over ten metres thick for many months a year. This defensive line was guarded by the Standschützen battalion *Prad-Stilfs-Taufers* for the whole duration of the war. It is interesting to remember certain peculiarities of the *Standschützen*: this peculiar Tyrolese defence militia – integrated in the Austro-Hungarian army since 1871– whose members were enlisted in local shooting ranges could enlist marksmen from seventeen to over fifty years of age and elect their own junior officers and their captain in command. They also had their own division flag. At the outset of the war, with no access to army logistical supplies, which were still not present in the area, their wives and mothers provided directly for getting the necessary food to them from their valley hometowns.

Approximately halfway between Passo delle Platigliole and the peak of Mount Scorluzzo, there is a rocky spur at 2,995 metres, commonly called Scorluzzino. This rocky bastion juts out northwards like a terrace with a direct

12 von Lichem, *Gebirgskrieg 1915–1918*, p. 76. Quote translated by the author.

### 5. 'Following in the Footsteps of History'

view over Passo dello Stelvio. It was in these very rocks, without stable shelters or the chance for rapid supplies, that the soldiers of Tirano Alpini Battalion attempted to establish an approximate defensive line in the first days of the war, from 24th May to early June 1915. However, in the first days of June 1915, the captain of the Austrian gendarmes, Andreas Steiner, commanding a squad of soldiers, attacked the Italian frontline and occupied it. The defenders withdrew to Mount Scorluzzo, whence they were immediately obliged to withdraw. From that moment, the Austrians occupied the whole ridge from Passo dello Stelvio to Mount Scorluzzo with small divisions and, to the west, the rocky ridge as far as Nagler Spitze. This guard was progressively reinforced with a number of wooden barracks for the troops and firing positions for rifles and machine guns. Later on, certain caves were carved out as soldiers' shelters. A spotlight was placed in the cave to light up the area around Passo dello Stelvio and thus head off potential night attacks from Valle del Braulio. Colonel Carlo Fetterappa Sandri described the Austrian attack:

Optimally supported by short range but certain fire from the Gold See battery, on 7th June a detachment made up of soldiers from the Gendarmeria, Guardie di Finanza, Landstürmer and Standschützen reached the great Mount Scorluzzo via Eben Ferner and Scorluzzino. In actual fact, all that remained on the peak was a sort of distant back line guard made up of just a few men who withdrew to join the bulk of the large platoon which had descended some time earlier.<sup>13</sup>

Given the altitude of nearly 3,000 metres, the severe weather conditions and terrain reduced to bare rock and debris, it is somehow surprising to find plants here. The vegetation no longer manages to fill whole areas but is limited to small isolated green patches. These are the high altitude 'specialists' such as Alpine rock jasmine – dense cushions of little leaves with small pink flowers – or yellow flowering *Geum reptans*. Given the difficulty of producing seeds in these extreme conditions, it produces red stolons, which stretch out from the mother plant to colonise the surrounding space. And there is the *Glacier Crowfoot*, the Alpine plant with the altitude record. On the Bernese Alps in Switzerland, it has been found at altitudes of 4,275 metres.

The final item in this multimedia itinerary is located at the peak of Mount Scorluzzo, at an altitude of 3,094 metres. On a clear day, the views across the horizon are truly majestic, and the beauty of the high-altitude environment is astonishing. In this area, it is frequently possible to encounter groups of chamois early in the morning and also to see Golden Eagles – the park's symbol – or Bearded Vultures in flight. Since being reintroduced to the Alps, this latter is

13 Fetterappa Sandri, *La Guerra sotto le Stelle*, p. 112. Quote translated by the author.

*Stefano Morosini*

now the most majestic of the Alpine birds with females, the largest, reaching a wingspan of 2.8 metres. Its diet, made up, for the most part, of the bones of dead animals, is also unusual. On the peak of Mount Scorluzzo and the rocky ridges, which descend southwards and westwards from it, the remains of what was once the most important Austrian fortress over Passo dello Stelvio can be seen. After occupation in early June 1915, the Austrians built a great many rifle and machine gun positions on this peak, as well as shelters for troops, and placed Mountain guns here both in the open air and in caves. As Colonel Carlo Fetterappa Sandri wrote:

This Stelvio defensive pillar, this unequalled observation point, was now in enemy hands and, immediately realising the importance of its easy conquest, the latter did not hesitate to reinforce Mount Scorluzzo and supply it with a few guns.<sup>14</sup>

These high-altitude positions were visited on 16 September 1917 by no less than Austro-Hungarian Emperor Karl I. Comfortably protected in a trench behind the Swiss border, just a little below Cima Garibaldi, the emperor observed the defensive line as far as Mount Scorluzzo. A strange situation which developed near Cima Garibaldi is worthy of mention: in the large, almost flat space to the north called Gold See, the Austrians built an army village equipped with shelters for the troops, warehouses and open-air artillery positions. This army guard would have been an easy target for the Italian artillery positioned in Valle del Braulio but, as any shells would have passed through Swiss air space, violating its neutrality, the Italian command forbade fire in this direction.

The Italians attempted to recapture the peak on more than one occasion: one attack was launched on 26 June 1915 by the 46th Company of the Alpini Battalion Tirano, by climbing up from Rese and Filon dei Mot, but the Austrians successfully defended their positions. Other attacks were made by the Val D'Orco Alpini Battalion in May and June 1916, but these were also unsuccessful. No further attacks on Mount Scorluzzo are documented but the peak was a constant target of Italian artillery fire for the whole duration of the war.

From up here, Austrian soldiers had full visibility over the whole upper Braulio valley and to Platigliole and dominated the whole Filon dei Mot crest with their artillery too, with an Italian circular advanced position that visibly stands out on the rocky ridge from the peak. If you are very careful you can visit the remains of Austrian buildings and defensive positions made with metal cages here, a clear sign of the huge effort made to adapt the mountains to their needs for shelter and defence. It is up to us to take these signs of history on board and remember the young men on both sides who fought on these mountains.

14 Ibid.: 145. Quote translated by the author.



### 5. 'Following in the Footsteps of History'

#### Conclusions. Paths between first world war heritage

The Italian framework legislation on protected areas, approved in 1991, states in the first article that parks have to promote the integration between humans and environment through the conservation of anthropological, archeological, historical and architectural heritage and through the conservation of traditional agro-silvo-pastoral activities. The recovery, conservation and evaluation of the First World War sites in this peculiar alpine area provide an interesting case study in a comparative analysis of movement heritage and are entirely consistent with the purposes of two parks, the Stelvio National Park and Adamello Park. Walking inside original trenches and coming inside artificial caves dug between 1915 and 1918 is an interesting way to directly live a historical experience and to savour cultural and sustainable tourism. It also helps new generations understand what Europe went through before becoming a largely peaceful and borderless multinational space. First World War sites like Mount Scorluzzo and the other places described in the sixteen multimedia itineraries give a direct experience of how soldiers, but also women, children and animals, shaped these paths and help to understand wartime experience in an extreme environment. It is not only hiking or mountaineering in a beautiful alpine scene, but also a remembrance activity that can be practised without causing large-scale environmental degradation.

These mountains are also a clear representation of climate change. In this alpine sector, landscape is not only a scene of war, but also an Anthropocene representation. Every summer, the dramatic retreat of glaciers and the dropping of their surface make new artefacts and relics of the First World War emerge. This huge phenomenon makes this heritage accessible and permits the recovery and conservation of cultural patrimony: for this reason it could be considered a positive consequence of global warming but, on the other hand, the huge transformation of the mountain landscape and the risk of collapse of structural elements of the historical sites due to the melting of ice and permafrost areas are extremely dangerous and worrying.

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