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English Summaries

Mathieu, From architecture in the Alps to alpine architecture. A historical introduction

In 1919, Bruno Taut, a Berlin architect, published a cycle of 30 sketches under the title *Alpine Architektur*. They were designed to react against the atrocities of World War I, and them the author depicted in the Alps overcome by powerful and hypertrophic glass constructions, sparkling with beauty and concentrated in space on the highest peaks. Taut's decision to visualise his idea precisely in the Alps is a reflection of the symbolic value that these mountains have acquired among the European nations and their perception.
With our analysis we propose to interpret the development of architecture over the entire Alpine range as an element of the history of its perception. We can distinguish three separate phases. From the 19th century onward, the peasant culture of the built environment was succeeded by the exogenous processes of folklorisation and commercialisation; in the 20th century, on the contrary, the Utopian views and expressions of the Modern Movement gave rise to the concept of an alpine architecture.

Benno Furrer, Construction at different elevations. Rural building and living in the Alps

Topography, climate or feudal considerations account for a sensible settlement and exploitation of the Alpine region, at different elevations and stages. Rural building culture shows striking varieties on the valley floor, but noticeably similar basic elements at the middle and upper Alpine meadow levels. Between

1200 and 1850, rural construction changed from mostly timber to partial or full masonry. Frontages are rarely decorated in Ticino and the foothills, topographical and economic conditions remaining similar. However, a remarkable variety characterises the Emmental valley, the Pays d'Enhaut and the Bernese Oberland. In some regions facades were decorated in inverse proportion to the interiors. Builders spread their business wide, while property-owners remained loyal to local tradition. The liberalisation of farming markets led Alpine farming to adapt and modernise. Alpine holiday resorts have recently begun to sport icons of famous architecture firms. Purely farm buildings often bear the traits of contractor architecture.

Claudine Remacle, Transmission of the Aosta Valley's architectural model from the Middle Ages to the 19th century

Since the late Middle Ages the shape of the hearth, its position in the plan and the technology used to preserve it and to expel smoke have contributed to the conception and conversion of houses. Since heavy use of timber had been limited by Royal Edict in 1758, large areas of the farmhouse – where hay, cereals and other foodstuffs were stored – had to be built wholly out of stone. In the Aosta Valley, the transition from a dissociated to a concentrated model occurred at different moments depending on the geographical areas. With the exception of the Cogne Valley, the result was a vast, vertically multi-purpose house with a split living-quarters (kitchen/common living room) on the first floor. Until the 19th century, communication between levels remained on the outside of the house, though the local elites introduced a corridor and internal staircases much earlier. Finally, comparing construction- and life-styles in the Valleys of Gressoney, Ayas and Valtournenche, we show different ways of renovating the local habitat, analysed diachronically.

Diego Giovanoli, Understanding the urban tradition of historic settlements in the Alps. The case of Poschiavo

Research has largely shunned "historic urban planning" in the Alps. Engineers and the few architects working on town and regional planning do little more than preserve the grounds of historic buildings and the road network, usually disregarding the genesis of historic settlements. Here we want to prove the importance of this approach and promote historical research to this end. Starting from Poschiavo, a small town in southern Grisons, we have examined: the architectural character, the social impact of its urban fabric, customs and existing building regulations, building evolution over time, and its urban framework. To identify the construction models of specific Alpine towns and villages we analysed: climate, topography, economics, and culture – essential criteria to better understand the architecture of a place. In turn, town-planning analysis is crucial for a keener understanding of local history, though precise, specific influences (for instance wind direction) prevent us from defining a univocal model of alpine urban planning.

Edwin Huwyler, The Swiss chalet: a success story from the 18th to the 20th centuries

The origin of the Swiss chalet goes back to the end of the 18th century, the fruit of theoretical studies by architects, in the wake of Romanticism. Based on various building components typical of traditional architecture of Bernese and Vaudois Oberland, a new style of house was designed which was to become hugely popular in central and northern Europe. Other nations had their own chalet: for instance Austria's *Tirolerhaus,* Germany's *Schwarzwaldhaus,* and Norway's *Norske Hus.* But it was the Swiss chalet that came to dominate the building market, as an icon encapsulating the bucolic, picturesque features of rural life that coloured the collective imagination of the time. The latter half of the 19th century saw the rise of the chalet industry, whose growth triggered a considerable boom in the housing market. Demand suddenly soared for prefabricated and standardized houses, as well as for houses completed to buyers' specification. Some projects even bore the signature of world-class architects.

Anne-Marie Granet-Abisset, The "Swiss chalet". An architectural model turned heritage in tourist resorts of the French Alps from the 19th century to the present

The chalet is one of the distinctive components in townspeople's representation of the mountain: a representation of which they are at once creators and users. This architectural pattern is particularly worth studying as it was designed and has evolved without any equivalent whatever in the tradition of Alpine dwellings, characterised by diverse forms and solutions. Born out of the imagination of early travellers in the Alps and embedded in literary and figurative clichés, the chalet has pride of place in the entire Alpine area. The alpine buildings which inspired the chalet-shape take on a new function, no longer related to the farming activities of mountain pastures, but rather to the tourism industry. Originally used as shelter for mountain climbers and winter sports practitioners, in the latter half of the 20th century, the chalet became a true holiday home. A cliché delivering its seal of approval, promoted by the property market and tourism and appreciated by the public, the chalet, by contrast, emphasizes even further the wealth of the architectural tradition of the Alpine region.

Luca Moretto, Principles of modern alpine architecture

In the Spring of 1912, joining his wife Katia in a Davos sanatorium, Thomas Mann came face to face with a magic mountain. The adventure of modern architecture, between theory and practice, was already underway. In the 20th century, it was to become versatile, sporadic, contaminated, disputed. The essay tells its story: from a sanatorium architecture to Loos' early modern rules; from the flat roof to Taut's utopia and alpine huts, through industrial plants to hydroelectric power plants, down to the architecture of sports tourism, to Albini's reflections and Mollino's proposals. To a modern architect, this environment has always suggested transcendental beauty, but no shared language. Depending on inclination, we are met by permanence (memory, continuity) or by discontinuity (rift, indifference). We move from emulating landscape to an approach filtered by the past, to removing context altogether, resorting to metaphysical, pure-geometry forms, or a contrived "alpine style", a surreal collage from the collective imagination transfigured without qualities.

Luciano Bolzoni, Architectures of the "elsewhere". Aspects of Alpine building in our day

Mountains have always been seen as a space where geography prevails, and where Nature's intrinsic qualities generally wrong-foot all architectural options. By their nature – so unpredictable and yet so powerful in their essential phenomena – mountains have been the unwitting theatre of all productive and constructive initiatives over a relatively short time span for the history of the Alps. In the 20th century, more particularly, all building at the upper and middle levels of elevation revealed a common misreading. The formal and functional themes of alpine architectural memory tended to be overlooked, buried under a pleasant architectural coating, only apparently true to local traditional models. The image of alpine architecture seems likely to spread wide on the wings of memory rather than engraved in history. The new resident of the mountains will find in the Alps the reassuring shapes of an architecture that is both comfortable and turned to the past.

Bruno Reichlin, When modern architects build in the mountains

A building acquires better visibility from belonging to an architectural movement or school. At the end of the 20th century, there was a proliferation of groups seeking a place in the sun on that basis. Some of these did have a common denominator, for instance "ironwork architecture" or "timber bridges". On the contrary, other collective name tags, such as "40 architects under 40" had an affected or fake ring. Where does "alpine architecture" stand in this respect? Is it a groundless notion, with no head or tail? If it does make sense, what are its distinctive features? We claim that the notion embodies a cultural meaning. In this article, Reichlin maps out a chart of the different currents that gained a foothold in Alpine architecture with the advent of the Modern Movement. Disregarding the all-too-common contrast between *Heimatschutz* and *the Moderns,* Reichlin pieces together the cultural background of the various alignments. Classifying certain constructions as "alpine" can only be provisional since the corpus denoted by such label must be constantly reviewed.

In the eye of the cyclone. Interview with Valentin Bearth

Born in Tiefencastel (Canton Grisons, Switzerland) in 1957, Valentin Bearth lives and works in Chur. After graduating in Architecture from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, under the supervision of Dolf Schnebli in 1983, he joined Peter Zumthor's practice. In 1988 he and Andrea Deplazes founded the Bearth & Deplazes practice, with offices in Chur and Zurich, and took Daniel Ladner into partnership in 1995. Thus began a very intense professional activity in Switzerland, especially in the Grisons, and abroad. The firm has produced numerous residential building projects and commissions for public works and schools, receiving widespread recognition in Switzerland and abroad: in 1999 it was a finalist for the prestigious Mies van der Rohe Award. From 1997 to 2000 Bearth was a member of the Federal Commission for the Safeguard of Built Heritage in Switzerland. In 2000, he was appointed Professor of design at the Academy of Architecture, Università della Svizzera italiana, Mendrisio, of which he became director in 2007. A person who was born in the Alps will carry in his memory the complex morphology of mountain landscapes. Then, if this person decides to become an architect, that landscape imprint becomes a sort of aesthetic and professional search for ways to update and re-launch the subtle connection between architecture and context. The Alps are an apt emblem of such relationship.

"Looking out of the window, you can see the mountains". An interview with Köbi Gantenbein on Alpine architecture

Köbi Gantenbein grew up in Canton Grisons and is editor-in-chief for *Hochparterre,* a journal of architecture and design published in Zurich. During the interview, he chronicles the stages of his professional life, presenting some of the projects he carried out, including a railway site in Engadina, a detached family house in the Rhine Valley, staff quarters at the Palace Hotel, an old house in a rural village, which has since been absorbed into an urban agglomerate stretching from Chur to Lake Konstanz. For Gantenbein, building and living in the Alps has its own specific significance: there, if you open the windows, you come face to face with the mountains. However, much of what the Alps offer may also be found elsewhere in the world. Architecture mirrors social structure.

Today, the prizes awarded to the so-called "Alpine architecture" must be seen as promoting certain aesthetic, social and environmental values. The criteria adopted are nonetheless subjective; asked whether there is a quintessentially alpine building mode, Gantenbein admits skepticism.

Nicolas Disch, Mercenary service in the Engelberg dominion, 1600–1800

The history of the mercenary service has strongly influenced our perception of alpine society. The impression is that it may have slowed down the economic, social and cultural development of the alpine regions. These stereotypical models of perception have their roots in a period between the late Middle Ages and the Reformation. Leaving aside this interpretation, one may ask how the alpine population itself saw the mercenary service and why it continued to thrive there. On this basis, our essay examines the topic of mercenary service in the jurisdiction of Engelberg between 1600 and 1800. The study shows the role of mercenary service in a soldier's curriculum, what social contacts were encouraged by emigration and what factors influenced a decision to emigrate. This case study suggests the following conclusion: our initial patterns of perception need to be modified in the light of new findings, which provide us with a better understanding of the world as well as of life in the Alps in the early Modern Age.

Laurence Fontaine, Chetan Singh, Migration and trade in mountain societies. A comparative study of historical processes in Upper Dauphine (Alps) and Kulu-Kinnaur (Himalaya)

This paper is a comparative study of migratory practices and economic entrepreneurship in two of the world's very different mountain systems: the Dauphine region in the French Alps and the Kulu valley in western Himalaya. Historically, these areas have nurtured strikingly different socio-economic systems and evolved equally diverse polities. Yet there exist some interesting points of overlap. The study is grounded in the authors' expertise in their respective re-

gions and draws on the assumption that certain shared paradigms and common issues have dominated social science research on mountain societies across the world. These commonalities enable the exploration of substantive points of comparison – both similarities and divergences. The sectional divisions in the essay discuss the pattern of migration, the nature of pastoralism, and the structure of trade, markets and money. Amidst these rather broad issues, it is the complex and dynamic interaction between economic opportunities and processes of migration that remains central to the discussion.

Alessio Fornasin, Carnia's Livestock. 18th to 19th centuries. Notes towards a history of cattle breeding

This study examines alpine cattle farming in terms of the production of goods of animal origin. Firstly, an account is given of the evolution of livestock in Carnia between the end of the 18th century and the end of the 19th century, including a description of some of the characteristics of the animal demography of this region. Secondly, certain issues related to the economy of livestock farming are given further consideration, with comparisons between the mountainous area of Carnia and the other agricultural zones in Friuli. In addition, an estimate is made of how much energy of animal origin is used for food, how much for labour, and the quantity of manure produced by livestock and usable in agriculture.

Anne-Lise Head-König, The Swiss Alpine world and some of the structural difficulties it encountered when faced with the emergence of modernity

There are many reasons for the lack of economic development in some communes of the Swiss alpine regions. Many of these reasons are well-known: a precarious farming sector, lack of work, emigration, and so on. Little attention, however, has been paid to other factors, which were considered of minor importance, but which in the Swiss context played an important part in the growing pauperisation of some mountain communes. This was especially the case with regard to the way in which poor relief in Switzerland had of necessity

to be provided to poor migrants settled outside their own commune of origin. With the commune of origin having to furnish them with the financial support they needed, the drain on the local resource could often be enormous and this resulted in the total incapacity of some communes to invest in their own modernisation. Other factors responsible for the lack of development have also been put forward, particularly that those leaving had greater initiative or were healthier than those members of the family left behind. However, even where modernization occurred and new sectors of activity developed, such as tourism, there were also negative factors involved, such as alcoholism and the loosening of social and familial networks.

Maria Papathanassiou, Women cowherds. Towards a history of female rural labour in the Austrian Alps, late 18th century to the Inter-war period

This paper tackles the history of women cowherds (German *Sennerinnen*) using contemporary ethnographic or autobiographical accounts. We address the gender-specific character of the activity; these women's social identity; and the specific aspects of their work. We observe that female rural labourers were more often employed as cowherds in the Eastern Austrian Alps: that might be because the alpine economy in that area was less commercialised and/or because of the scale of their farming concerns (small or medium-sized). Women labourers were hired for mountain pasture because they were paid cheap wages and also because it reflected ancestral customs. Yet, from the late 18th century, their chances of employment shrank steadily in favour of men. The paper also casts doubts on the idealised picture of a young, jolly and care-free *Sennerin*. It also shows the singular social role that women cowherds played in the peasant social structure, as their activity was conducted independently.

Mathieu Petite, Exchanging with Bhutan and Walser communities. Building local identities by means of cultural projects

This paper focuses on two cultural projects recently set up in Canton Valais and in Vallorcine, a Haute-Savoie municipality. The first is the cooperation between Canton Valais and the Kingdom of Bhutan. A footbridge was built in the context of this partnership. The second project associated Vallorcine with other Walser communities in the Alps. Both ventures illustrate how collective identities are shaped in the Alps, always a fluid process. On the one hand, these identities are fed by shared representations of nature and tradition; on the other, they respond to the demands of more pragmatic goals, for instance to enhance the value of a locality.