

Zeitschrift: Histoire des Alpes = Storia delle Alpi = Geschichte der Alpen
Herausgeber: Association Internationale pour l'Histoire des Alpes
Band: 26 (2021)

Rubrik: English summaries

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 21.08.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Madline Favre, Networks, practices and motivations of local actors engaged in botanical research in an Alpine environment. The case of Valais, 1750–1810

The wealth of the archives – comprising mainly Egodocuments – which stores evidence of the botanical activity of three Valaisans between 1750 and 1810 enables us to get a closer look at what prompted these three local actors to botanize, their practices as well as their networks. In particular, this study highlights the existence of local networks and reveals the close links between botany and medicine in the practice of the latter. Finally, the paper highlights their role as disseminators/mediators of the latest scientific findings among the population, since they make tangible use of their knowledge in the service of the inhabitants of their region.

Carlo Bovolo, Researching in the Italian Alps. University of Turin zoologists and the natural sciences in the mountains in the 19th century

The paper presents an overview of research and studies on the Alps conducted by the naturalists who held the Chair of Zoology at the University of Turin during the long 19th century. Allowing for differences in their approaches and the evolution of their discipline, they rediscovered the Alps as a laboratory of natural science, which afforded them material for studying the alpine environment, describing species, collecting specimens, reflecting on the conservation and management of alpine wildlife. The paper highlights the scientific activities of Piedmontese zoologists in the Alps and their contributions in shaping and popularizing images and knowledge of alpine space and nature.

Himani Upadhyaya, Natural science and the Kumaon Himalayas. Richard Strachey, the Bhotiyas and knowledge-production (1846–1849)

This paper discusses the botanical and glaciological research conducted by Richard Strachey (1817–1908), a British military engineer who travelled in the Kumaon Himalayas in 1846–1849. Later in his career, he held influential positions, such as the presidency of the Royal Geographical Society of London (1887–1889). Through a study of Strachey's early career, his notes and publications in the journals of the Royal Geographical Society and the Asiatic Society of Bengal, I show that practices of geographical and botanical knowledge-production in the nineteenth century were shaped not only by contemporary European writings about the Alps and the Himalayas, but also by field experience and interaction with the local knowledge of the Bhotiyas.

250

Stefano R. Torres, A mountain range as a (super)natural barrier. The Andes as seen and recounted by a 17th-century Jesuit

One of the most famous descriptions of the Andes Cordillera appears in the *Histórica Relación del Reyno de Chile* (1646), a chronicle of the Jesuit Alonso de Ovalle (1603–1651). By adopting a socio-cultural and intellectual perspective, this paper shows that Ovalle's descriptive discourse is legitimized by personal experience (*autopsía*) and contemplation. Assuming that description is a discursive operation that implies a specific representation, the article demonstrates that the mountain range is characterized by an instrumentalized providentialism, which justifies the conquest of the Chilean territory and the affirmation of a Jesuit provincialism.

Corinna Guerra, From Mont Cenis to Mount Vesuvius and back again

In October 1813, the Neapolitan naturalist Carmine Lippi planned a colossal hydraulic work on Mont Cenis. Lippi was best known for his totally atypical theories on the eruptions of Mount Vesuvius, but he had a rare ability in his time to think of nature globally, from a true international perspective. Mont Cenis – exactly on the border between Piedmont, part of the Italian peninsula, and Savoy, part of France – had been chosen by Napoleon Bonaparte for the construction of a monument to celebrate the efforts of the populations of the two countries to fight in the Emperor's retinue, unaware of impending military reversals.

Giacomo Bonan, Claudio Lorenzini, Forestry and forest management in the eastern Alpine area (18th–19th century). Developments in hybrid science

One of the foundations of forestry policies in the eastern Alpine area is the wide-ranging debate on the woods that unfolded within the agricultural academies in the Republic of Venice since the mid-eighteenth century. The space reserved for mountain forests was negligible compared to that for the preservation of lowland oaks, indispensable for ship building of the Arsenale. However, when the discussion took on the collective legal nature of the forests, it immediately tackled the mountain areas: they were a testing ground for improving the (alleged) community mismanagement, which was bad enough to cause their disappearance. And again, the practices and knowledge gained by those who worked in the woods became subject to review – for example observing the phases of the moon for tree felling – indeed they, too, influence the development of scientific forestry.

251

Karin Fuchs, Natural resources from the Graubünden mountains. A study of mineral springs with regard to associativism, the economy and young statehood (1800–1900)

Ever since natural scientists began to study the Alpine region, they have been interested in mineral springs as natural phenomena and as remedies. Karin Fuchs's contribution looks into the conditions of the intensification of research on mineral springs in the 19th century. The researchers who carried out these scientific activities were doctors and natural scientists, whose fields of knowledge developed rapidly during the 19th century. Using three examples, the article shows how research conditions in Graubünden changed, but also how central networking was in the framework of the Naturforschenden Gesellschaft Graubünden as a member organisation of the Schweizerische Naturforschende Gesellschaft. Research efforts were also harnessed for economic promotion.

William Bainbridge, Geological Riddles. The origins of geotourism in the Dolomite Mountains

The article links the emergence of geotourism in the Dolomites to the nineteenth-century debate on the origin of the Earth. In the second decade of the century, the investigations of Count Giuseppe Marzari Pencati in the mountains around Predazzo transformed a little village in the Fassa Valley into a site of international attraction. The guestbook, or Memoriale, of the hotel Nave d'Oro offers a precious source of information for exploring the encounter between scientists and tourists in the region. In the guestbook, the signatures

of illustrious scientists – Humboldt, Fuchs, Richthofen, Murchison, and many others – feature together with a crowd of less-known visitors, equally attracted by the geological riddles of Predazzo. The article highlights the entrepreneurship of an industrious inn-keeper able to benefit from the exchange among the most prominent geologists of the time, visiting his hotel in search of the origins of the Earth.

Émilie-Anne Pépy, From the Alps to the Andes. The botanical issues of the voyage to South America of the “King’s botanist” Joseph Dombey (France, late 18th century)

In the second half of the 18th century, the natural sciences integrated research issues driven by the imperial ambitions of the great powers. Botanical research on the mountains of Europe took off in new directions, including comparisons with other mountains of the world. This paper focuses on the reception in France of the results of the Franco-Spanish expedition to Peru by Dombey, Ruiz and Pavón (1775–1788), intended to improve knowledge of the Andes and their natural products. Research on plants remained very competitive. Invited to look into plant productions that were thought to be acclimatisable for the benefit of the metropolis and its colonies, Dombey proposed the introduction of South American trees and plants to the mountains of the Kingdom of France. The credence given to such prospects in scholarly circles and in the spheres of government was indicative of the ambitions that his contemporaries held for the natural sciences.

Daniela Vaj, Altitude and health in the 19th century. The circulation of knowledge from the Himalayas to the high plateaus of Latin America via the Alps

Studies conducted by doctors and scientists on the therapeutic properties of mountain climates have played a central role in the development of tourism in the Alps. During the 19th century, scientists were inspired by a vast debate on the effects of spending time at altitude, which later, through their writings, extended to doctors. These in turn advised their patients to visit mountain resorts, where other doctors applied “Altitude Therapy”. My paper aims to show that the “medicalization” of many Alpine regions benefited greatly from the circulation of knowledge and the debates generated by scientific research, conducted not only in Europe but also in Asia and Latin America.

Anne-Marie Granet-Abisset, Nature re-discovered. Scientist-hikers in the Alps, from Horace-Bénédict de Saussure to Antoine de Baecque, 18th–21st century

From the end of the 18th century, scientists came to see the Alps as territories to discover and places to observe, analyse, compare. They found there a real open-air laboratory, which they necessarily reached on foot, a place for experimenting with the new sciences: physics, chemistry, botany, mathematics, etc. Having become hikers, if not mountaineers, they went on to test the effects that this way of moving had on the body and health generally. It was a means of accessing the high valleys as much as a goal and activity in itself. A number of examples from the 18th century to the present day illustrate how hikers related to walking and how this relationship changed, as it was looked at afresh, as an element of academic as well as social distinction, which went hand in hand with a certain way of viewing territories in space and time.