

Royal hunting routes in the park of Gran Paradiso, Italy

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The thesis revolves around the network of royal hunting routes. These ways were created by the three first Italian sovereigns, but mainly by Victor Emanuel II, the “Roi Chasseur”, between 1850, the year when royal hunting first started in the area of Gran Paradiso, and 1919, year when Victor Emanuel III stated he was prepared to give his mountain preserves towards the creation of the first Italian National Park.

Mountain hunting presumably started towards the 1830s, but only as from 1850 Victor Emanuel II started regularly to go to the area of Gran Paradiso for rock goat hunting.



Between 1860 and 1863 Victor Emanuel allowed more than 300 Km of mule track to be built to connect five hunting lodges. From these lodges he managed to connect the stages for reaching the “boxes” of the “royal gamekeepers”, some even above 2,900 metres.

The geographic area of Gran Paradiso, divided into two different regions and united under the aegis of the National Park, is a very complex areas.



The research conducted for this thesis is addressed to the knowledge and the comprehension of the Gran Paradiso Massif as a unique area. The analysis of the history and the historical maps showed that the area involved in the research has always been considered as a single area. The valleys of Cogne, Valsavarenche and Rhêmes appeared more closed to the Valleys of Orco and Soana compared to the Valleys of Aosta Valley.

The identification of the analogies which characterize the two mountainsides makes it possible to read the concept of the Gran Paradiso crest line as element of physical division and to recognize the continuity and link that the culture of the area developed.

Recent planning philosophy and the operative interventions highlight the prime importance of the defence and of the preservation of this historical heritage.

Such attitude in the history-project, innovation-preservation relationship attributes strategic importance to the territory and environment values. It also outlines new comparative opportunities of history and knowledge of the processes and phenomena, defence and planning.

Currently planning, control, Government trends include more strictly the principle of the recovery of quality. This the need to recognize the specific traits and the historical-cultural features that typify an area, focusing their possibility of transformation and to the principle of "value" and "quality".

As well as identifying this heritage, an analysis able to face with the existing and future processes of transformation is needed as a lens to interpret the global structure of the considered area.

A very important aspect linked to the Gran Paradiso game preserve concerns the interesting novelties which were introduced within land use.

Actually Victor Emanuel II was the first who clearly recognized an economic value to the prerogative of preserving part of the wild nature otherwise committed to exploitation and to the possibility of using it.

This attitude was fostered by the local residents that obtained various advantages from the Royal presence. The idea of reviving Royal Routes, paths of indubitable historical-cultural worth, has great potential. First of all the environment might be more comprehensively known with the recovery of such way, at the same time developing a sustainable environment.

However it is also a way that would piece together environment highly linked to the human presence. This would enable us to understand not only Nature, but the whole Alpine world in its complexity where Man ,in the past and present, is protagonist.



Recently the works for the drafting of the Plan of the Gran Paradiso Park have been resumed. In the Plan complex sustainable development must be faced: i.e. how to stimulate mountain area economy with an environmentally friendly tourism which today can interest a vast group of users. In fact, the future of the Gran Paradiso residents prevalently depends, even if not exclusively, on the tourism and the future of the tourism depends on the future of the National Park.

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