

of how the continuities with the Liberal age, including personnel, acted in practice to give shape to conservation governance under Fascist rule. In contrast, Chapter 3 tackles the nuanced history of conflicts about access rights that was sparked by the transition of conservation from the authority of the royal house to that of the state. This transition was perceived by the locals as a betrayal of their rights, which led to numerous tripartite confrontations among the state, the park, and the local communities. The analysis of their complexities is central to supporting my claim that conflict about access to resources allowed, even in Fascist Italy, for spaces of social dialectics and the expression of interests that antagonized the policy decision of a wanna-be totalitarian state. Chapter 4 then examines the impact of the decision taken in 1933 by the government in Rome to centralize its administration on the park's effectiveness. The overall reform of the way the park was managed led to renewed conflicts with the local communities, as well as a collapse of the ibex population.

Chapters 5 and 6 break the mostly chronological structure of the narrative to broach two topics that, for their relevance, need to be looked at in relation to their intrinsic coherence over the whole arc of the park's history in the interwar years. The first is the role of scientific inquiry in the way the park, which had been thought by many as inspired by the Swiss plans for a total reservation aimed at fostering scientific research, was managed. The other is the at times conflictual relationship of the park and its administrators with the promotion of tourism, an important facet of conservationism in many countries. The Epilogue reaches into the early years of the reestablishment of the park as an autonomous agency immediately after the end of World War Two, contributing to a better understanding of the continuities and ruptures that characterized the history of conservation on the Gran Paradiso massif and in Italy generally through the first half of the twentieth century and beyond the Fascist experience.

The Gran Paradiso National Park was founded at a time of major social upheaval, brought about by the Fascist rise to power and radical changes in Italy's economic and power structures, and it acted at the heart of low-intensity, local conflicts around access to natural resources. Set at the crossroads of the local and the national, the material and the ideological, the case of the Gran Paradiso provides an exemplary illustration of the ways that local communities reacted to the social and political changes of the interwar years.⁴⁸ Moreover, although set up at around the same time as the Fascist power grab, the park was founded on decision-making processes that were rooted in the tradition of liberal Italy.⁴⁹ The park was established in accordance with long-term debates and discussions and originally was structured

along the lines of other, previous Liberal policies and ways of thinking. In this book I examine how local actors, scientific networks, and political institutions reacted to Fascism throughout its period at the helm of the country, and how this reaction determined the strategies and outcomes of localized conflicts over access to natural resources, their public representation, and the way in which science and tourism affected how conservation was practiced under Fascist rule.