

## A nation's parks: failure and success in Fascist nature conservation

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Nature conservation is a complex venture, with a great impact, among other things, on local and national power relationships. Nature conservation also depends on a wide set of variables to determine any one planned initiative's long-term success or failure. This article explores what made the difference between success and failure in the history of nature conservation under Mussolini's regime. Many parks were planned in those years in Italy, but only a handful were effectively instituted. This essay will address the following questions: What were the reasons behind the planning and creation of these national parks? What was the role of Fascist ideology in determining the long-term success of a park proposal? Was there anything specifically Fascist in Italian nature conservation in the 1920s and 1930s? Which other variables impacted on the involved decision-making processes?

**Keywords:** national parks; nature conservation; Fascism; economic issues; propaganda

Nature conservation was not a central issue in the activities of Mussolini's regime. The idea that nature needed to be transformed in order to adapt it to their own idea of nature was, in fact, much more important to the Fascists than the idea that it needed to be protected (Armiero and Hardenberg 2013, 310–311). It might also be said that, as was the case in Nazi Germany (Ditt 2000, 161), in Fascist Italy nature conservation reduced itself essentially to paperwork. Nonetheless propaganda unequivocally narrated the deployment and development of nature conservation under Fascist rule as a success story (Armiero and Hardenberg 2013, 285–286). Just a couple of months after it took power, the regime was eager to present the creation of two national parks (Gran Paradiso and Abruzzo) as factual proof of its superiority in respect of what it depicted as liberal 'chit-chat', and the institution of two more parks in the mid-1930s (Stelvio and Circeo) further served as a symbol of its interest in the defence of Italy's landscapes and historical heritage.

In this paper, however, I do not want to discuss only the alleged success stories in 'Fascist' nature conservation: the parks that were actually created under Fascist rule and the image of a regime that was effective in turning long-lasting debates effectively into policies. I want to also focus on those conservation institutions that did not make it, and examine some examples of parks that were suggested but did not get beyond the planning stage. The idea behind this analysis is that the history of failure can give as much, if not more, insight into the approach of the Fascist regime to nature conservation than the history of alleged success. The case studies that I discuss are the Sila National Park, a project for a national park in Latium that pre-dates the

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one around the Circeo, and the plans for a park around the Adamello-Brenta massif in Trentino, just a few kilometres south of the area where the Stelvio National Park was later instituted.

But before we look at the failed projects, it is worthwhile to give at least a brief overview of how it came to pass that the Fascist regime, which, as mentioned earlier and as will be shown in this paper, had no primary interest in the preservation of nature, or rather had a view of nature, as highlighted by Caprotti and Kaïka (2008, 618), that required it to be ‘conquered’ and transformed, achieved the creation of four national parks in its two decades of government.

### Successes that were not: a brief overview of nature conservation initiatives in Fascist Italy

To begin, it must be stressed that the institution of the first two Italian national parks on the Gran Paradiso massif and in Abruzzo, though used by the regime for the aims of propaganda, was not

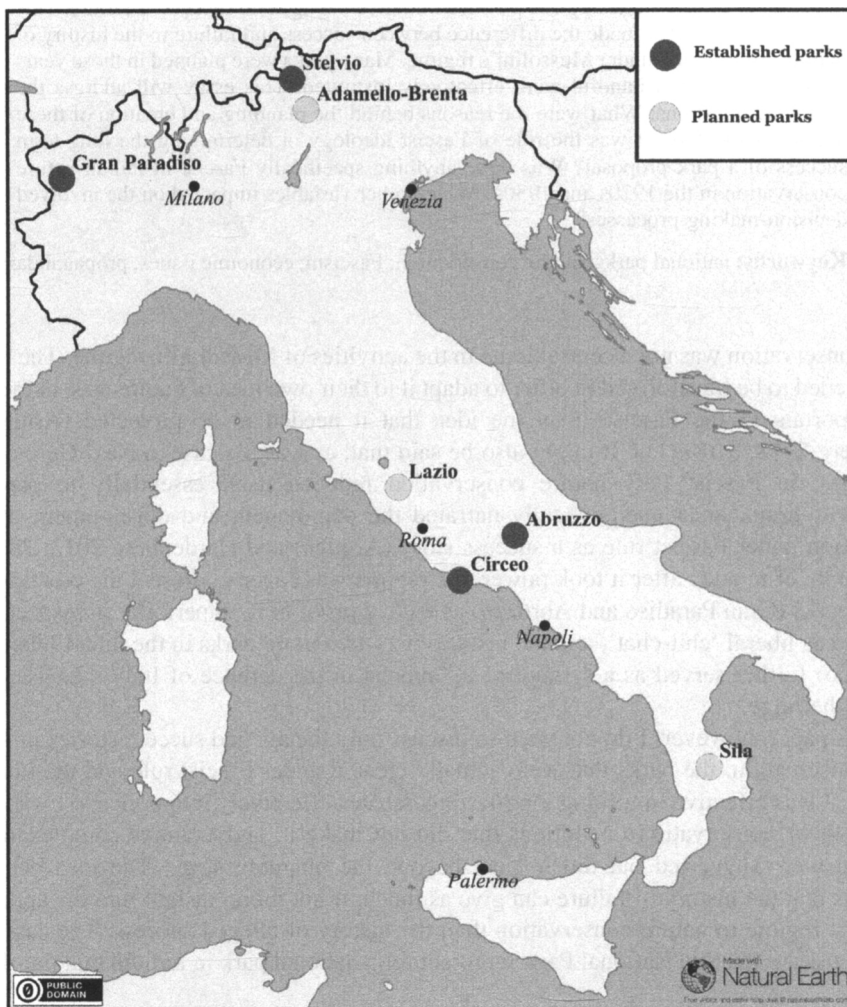


Figure 1. Map of existing and planned parks in the Fascist era.

in essence the effect of Fascist ideology and government practice. The institution of these parks was instead the by-product of a long-lasting debate on nature conservation that had taken place since the years immediately preceding the First World War. This debate was inspired in part by the increasing number of parks instituted worldwide since the 1872 establishment of Yellowstone National Park.<sup>1</sup> From the early twentieth century until the first months of Fascist rule, the issue of the institution of one or more national parks in Italy came up quite frequently. During this period a great number of sites were proposed for the institution of national parks: 14 new proposals were made just in the years immediately following the war, in addition to the 11 made before the war (Piccioni 1999, 198; Sievert 2000, 173). Yet in the end, the areas that generally seemed more promising were the Val di Sangro in Abruzzo, the Gran Paradiso massif in Valle d'Aosta, and the Sila in Calabria.

Regarding Abruzzo in particular, after the closure of the local royal hunting reserve of the Val di Sangro in 1912 and the Senate's refusal in 1921 to debate a comprehensive law on national parks, the *Federazione Pro Montibus* decided to pursue the task independently. This association started to gather funds to buy and rent lots of land in the area, in order to establish a private nature reserve. By the summer of 1922 *Pro Montibus* had succeeded in renting all the required lots from the municipalities and on 9 September of that year the park was inaugurated. The only thing still missing was official recognition, which was eventually granted by the regime in January 1923 (Hardenberg 2010b, 38; Sievert 2000, 177).

The debate over the institution of a park on the Gran Paradiso massif gained momentum following the king's decision in 1919 to donate the area's royal hunting reserve to the state. The Ministry of Agriculture immediately set up a study commission with the task to determine the desirability and feasibility of setting up a national park in the area. The commission went well beyond its original task and, along with warmly supporting the institution of a park, also suggested protecting a wider area than the one originally planned (Vaccari 1920). The Treasury, however, refused to fund the park because of the difficult post-war financial situation, thus effectively stopping its establishment (Dayné 1980, 27–28). Confronted with the risk that the former hunting reserve would remain unprotected and at the mercy of poachers, the provincial government of Turin tried to cover for the lack of state support with the implementation of temporary hunting restrictions (Commissione Reale del Parco, 1925). In autumn of 1920 the Senate eventually started to discuss a bill envisaging the creation of a park around the Gran Paradiso, but was not able to settle on the kind of park the country needed.<sup>2</sup> The lengthy parliamentary debate concerning the establishment of the Gran Paradiso National Park was at last resolved on 3 December 1922, when quite suddenly Mussolini's government passed a decree creating a national park on the land that formerly constituted the royal hunting reserve.<sup>3</sup>

The initial resoluteness of the Fascist regime in decision-making positively impressed many among the early preservationists (Piccioni 1999, 246). The representatives of the conservation movement, in part to make their requests more appealing to the regime, but also because of the regime's seemingly favourable inclination towards their causes, soon adapted their discourses to the regime's rhetoric. An example of this adaptation may be seen in a statement made by Erminio Sipari, one of the main actors behind the institution and management of the Abruzzo National Park, during the parliamentary debate about the budget on 9 March 1927:

The solution of the problem of the Gran Paradiso National Park was due to the generosity of the king and to the brilliant initiative of Benito Mussolini, while the previous governments had completely neglected the same. With the same genius, the Fascist government turned its ardent thought to Abruzzo instituting there the second national park that so much will profit the preservation of the beautiful forests of that region. (*La Stampa*, March 10, 1927)

Yet an analysis of Fascist legislation supports the thesis that these early nature conservation initiatives were induced mainly by reasons of propaganda and power politics, as they became increasingly rare over the years. After the creation of the parks the government lost interest in their management. In particular, an attempt in 1933 to issue a law on the protection of natural and panoramic beauties was stopped by the intervention of the Ministry of Justice. The ministry was concerned over the technical and economic issues resulting from the principle of monetary reparations for losses caused to landowners by the imposition of nature preservation (Melis 1996, 332; Dogliani 1998, 34; Armiero and Hardenberg 2013, 309–310).

In the 1930s the Fascist regime instituted, however, two further national parks, one in the north-eastern Alps around the Stelvio–Ortles–Cevedale massif and one in an area left over during the regime’s massive integral land-reclamation programme of the Pontine Marshes, the Circeo. These new national parks sported a more explicitly Fascist attitude, with a focus respectively on the promotion of mountain mass tourism and an attempt to impose the physical recreation of the ‘golden age’ of imperial Rome on the landscape. Thus while the Gran Paradiso and Abruzzo parks were ideologically firmly grounded in the scientific debates of the pre-Fascist years and were more attentive, at least during the 1920s, to issues related to the preservation of iconic animal species and wildlife in general, the latter parks had no firm grounding in any form of wilderness conservation whatsoever.<sup>4</sup>

The differences in implementation and representation were essentially side effects of the specific ideological assumptions standing behind the processes that led to their institution (Armiero and Hardenberg 2013, 299). The creation in 1934 of the Circeo National Park, greatly supported by Mussolini himself, was, as just said, a mere carry-over of the environmentally ruinous integral land-reclamation of the Pontine Marshes. Just about 3000 out of 20,000 hectares of forests and swamps were put under protection as a reminder of how the region supposedly looked during the Roman Empire. This gesture was mainly in the interest of propaganda. Moreover, 700 hectares were reforested with alien species in order to re-create the windbreak effect formerly caused by the Mediterranean maquis (Saba 2001, 85). Almost a year later, in April 1935, the regime also founded the Stelvio National Park. Various plans for such an endeavour had been made since the beginning of the century. Alas, these plans focused mainly on the neighbouring Livigno valley, bordering the Swiss National Park in Engadina. Unlike the earlier efforts, the idea for a park around the Stelvio massif was mainly the product of the attempts of the Italian Touring Club and of the Alpine Club to promote tourism in the regions that had been the scenario of some of the First World War’s most impervious battlefields: the high Alpine peaks of South Tyrol and Tridentine Venetia (G. Bertarelli 1929). This park was created essentially as a natural war memorial and to foster the presence of the Italian state in the recently acquired regions on the border with Austria (Hardenberg 2013, 61–66). The common aim of the two national parks founded by the Fascist regime in the 1930s was to foster outdoor leisure activities, as part of a major plan drafted by the regime in those years to promote tourism (Piccioni 1999, 265–268; Hardenberg 2010a, 191–192).

### **The phantom park: politics, modernisation and propaganda in the Sila**

The most cited example in the historiography of nature conservation in Fascist Italy of a park that did get close to being created, but did not actually make the cut, is the Sila National Park in Calabria, Italy’s southernmost continental region. The idea of a park on the Sila massif was first hinted at in print in 1918 on the pages of the magazine of the Italian Touring Club and seemed in those years one of the most plausible plans. The idea was greatly promoted by the hydropower

lobby as a means of securing the forest cover needed for the conservation of the area's drainage basins (L.V. Bertarelli 1918, 663–664; Saba 2001, 84).

Between 1922 and 1923 some Fascist officials attempted thus to create a park on the massif, which was extensively covered by forests and known in common parlance as 'il gran bosco d'Italia' (Italy's great forest) (Berardelli 1932). In 1924, in a board meeting the Fascist *gerarca* Michele Bianchi is even explicitly referred to as director of a *Parco Nazionale della Sila* (Parco Nazionale del Gran Paradiso 1924). This however, as we will see below, was just a symbolic add-on to Bianchi's role as patron of Calabrian politics, rather than a real office.

Fascism was a minority phenomenon in Calabria, where patronage still characterised most of local politics, leaving those who had traditionally been in charge of public affairs in control of local administration. Yet a fast adaptation of the ruling elites to the new power relations, or at least to their symbolic aspects, led to a steady and quick increment in the number of sections of the National Fascist Party all around the region. This shift was immediately apparent after the March on Rome, leaving the impression of a thorough Fascistisation. Moreover it led to a steady inclusion of elements from the previously ruling elites in the new Fascist power system, a process that was greatly favoured by the central government in an attempt to grant itself widespread support. Another traditional means used by the regime to credit itself locally was the political use of public funds. Various requests for funding of public works were filed in the early years after the March on Rome and a good number were supported by the central government, essentially as means of propaganda (Cordova 2003, 137–139, 152, 175). It is therefore plausible to assume that the promised institution of a national park on the Sila massif was part of such a system of patronage.

Michele Bianchi (1883–1930), founding member and leading figure of the Fascist movement, as well as first secretary of the National Fascist Party and secretary general of the Ministry of Interior, was a native of Calabria. In a fit of polycratic politics, during the early years of the regime most affairs related to the region passed through his hands. In fact, Bianchi was seen by the local elites as the best option to have a holding in the affairs of the central government. His early visits to the region, just after the regime had been set up, were greeted with great shows of support in rallies and public meetings. In an improvised discourse during his visit to the town of Castrovillari in December 1922, Bianchi declared his continued effort and will to support Calabrian interests under Mussolini's 'perpetual' rule (Cordova 2003, 161–177).

In September 1923 Bianchi made a further trip to Calabria, where he established the board of directors of the elusive national park on the Sila massif and attended the official inauguration of the same on mount Botte Donato, the highest peak of the massif at almost 2000 metres (Cordova 2003, 178). These acts were, once more, just propaganda, through which Bianchi profiled himself as a reliable patron of local interests in front of the regime.

Not much documentation is left concerning the Sila National Park in this early incarnation.<sup>5</sup> Essentially, what is available is the previously mentioned document produced by the Gran Paradiso National Park administration, a couple of reports in Calabrian local newspapers, a reference in a book of 1932, and a brief account in a report of 1925 on Italy's national parks written by Ansel F. Hall, Chief Naturalist of the United States National Park Service (*Verbale dell'adunanza*, 25 January 1924; Hall 1925, 207, 236; Berardelli 1932; Cordova 2003, 177). A Sila National Park is, for example, never cited in the magazine of the Italian Touring Club, even if in the same years the latter keenly discussed issues related to national parks both in general and regarding specific examples, and published articles about the Sila in general (Touring Club Italiano 1933).

In particular, Hall, whose report mostly focuses on historical, geological and forestry features of the region, mentions that the park ‘exists by law ... but the actual acquisition of the land rests in the hands of the *Federazione Pro Montibus*’. It is worth remembering that *Pro Montibus*, one of the main actors in Italy’s nature conservation movement, was the same association that spurred the acquisition of land in the Abruzzo area, which resulted in the creation of the national park. In this case, however, it seems that no actual acquisition of land was ever accomplished, leaving the Sila to be a paper park (Armiero and Hardenberg 2013, 304–305). It must also be noted that, technically, the park did not even exist on paper: according to a repository of Fascist legislation between 1922 and 1928, Michele Bianchi did indeed pose a parliamentary question about the institution of the Sila National Park on 19 November 1924 (thus actually more than a year after its ‘inauguration’). This question was, however, dropped on 21 November without further discussion (Alberti 1929, 1558).

The planned institution of a park in the Sila has been described as a side effect of the reforestation projects undertaken as part of the plans for the development of hydroelectric power in the region. These efforts were part of the attempts by the Fascist regime to support the area’s economy and of the longstanding tradition of patronage politics. For these reasons the plans for a national park on the Sila massif faced allegedly stern reactions from the local communities, who were afraid of losing vast extents of land as well as their customary rights of use of the existing woods (Barone 1986, 243–276; Armiero 2011, 36–37). The water reservoirs needed by the hydropower companies were swiftly realised, but the idea of a national park soon fell into oblivion. It might be hypothesised that the opposition of the local mountain-dwellers convinced the regime and the hydropower companies to retreat from the idea to set up a national park in the region as a form of compensation for the creation of the reservoirs. This was a decision that in the long term did not bode well for the preservation of the forests of the Sila, which were almost completely ravaged between the 1920s and 1940s (Saba 2001, 84).

### **The park before the park: early attempts to create a national park in Latium**

Plans for a national park in Latium, the region surrounding Italy’s capital Rome, were made as early as 1925, thus nearly 10 years before a national park was created around the few remnants of ‘wilderness’ left behind by the extensive Fascist reclamation of the Pontine Marshes and about three years before Fascist legislation on integral land-reclamation (the Mussolini Law) was passed in 1928 (Melis 1996, 330–334). This project, however, was intended to preserve a completely different area in the region, north of the capital, in the hills surrounding the Vico Lake.

A letter sent by the local secretary of the party to Mussolini’s offices on 11 August 1925 is the first, and essentially last, time such a project is mentioned (Segretario Federale, *Federazione Fascista Laziale Sabina* 1925). The letter states that the government formulated a project for such a park. Besides the proposals in this letter and the following reply by the government, however, there are no other indications of the possible development of such a project. Nonetheless, according to the local secretary this park was included among the undertakings the government was about to implement in order to contribute to ‘the prosperous fortune of our country’. The improvement of agriculture and forestry were among the specific stated aims of such a plan. Both the existing acts of the forestry authorities in this regard and the desire of every citizen in the province to create such a park are also mentioned by the author. In particular, the secretary stresses the need to preserve the ‘many specimens of our flora, perennial beauty of our fields, our hills, our mountains’.

The author suggested how to accelerate the process and best proceed with the institution of a park: his idea was to use the municipal forest of Vetralla, which, he claimed, the municipality was more than willing to sell to the government at the lowest estimated price for this purpose.<sup>6</sup> To support his proposal the local secretary mentioned that the forestry authorities also considered this area the most apt for the creation of a new national park, both because of the richness of its flora and because of its extent.

The Minister of National Economy, however, blocked these plans with a letter dated 16 September 1925 (Ministro dell'Economia Nazionale 1925). The minister claimed that the recently founded existing national parks had not yet produced results that might serve as benchmarks to make an informed decision concerning the opportunity to support the institution of additional parks. The minister thought that it was therefore advisable to defer any decision in this regard. Moreover, the minister was worried about the financial cost the state would incur to cover the acquisition price, as well as the recurring maintenance and administration costs. The minister specifically asserted that such costs would swiftly increase if all requests for the institution of national parks were accepted.<sup>7</sup> The only promise the minister made in the letter was that all possible solutions for obtaining the conservation of the area by other, cheaper means would be considered. Specifically, as regards the case of the municipal forest of Vetralla, the convenience of its acquisition by the *Azienda del Demanio Forestale di Stato* was considered. Once again, however, it was decided to defer any decision on such a purchase. The decision was made instead to allow the municipality to implement the rational use of the same. This would improve the municipality's financial gains, and preventively define the customary rights regarding the forest. The latter, it was felt, could in fact prevent the *Azienda* from being able to administer the forest with the freedom necessary to foster its conservation.<sup>8</sup>

### **Bears, tourists and hunts: the struggle for the preservation of the Alpine brown bear**

A further case of a nature reserve with a lengthier planning history that got quite close to being created under the Fascist regime, but instead had to wait until the late 1960s, is that of the current Regional Park Adamello-Brenta. Early proposals for the institution of a park in the region just south of the area destined to become the Stelvio National Park in 1935 were made as early as 1919 (F. Pedrotti 2008, 143–178; see also Castelli 1935b; Finocchi and Mussi 2002).

In fact, that year a series of articles were published to this extent in different magazines. In January Luigi Vittorio Bertarelli, a prominent member of the Touring Club, took charge of presenting to the public an idea of the Tridentine Alpine Society President, Giovanni Pedrotti, to create two national parks in Tridentine Venetia, just acquired from Austria at the end of the First World War. Pedrotti himself, however, did not publish a full account of his project before September 1919. One of the proposed parks should have been set up in the eastern part of the region, where currently the Regional Park Paneveggio-Pale di S. Martino is located, while the other was planned in the area of the Adamello-Brenta massif, one of the last haunts of the Alpine brown bear (L.V. Bertarelli 1919; G. Pedrotti 1919; Sievert 2000, 144). In February of that year, a reader's letter to the editor widened the scope of the project, including claims for the need to preserve the 'wild beauty, richness in flora and fauna of the proposed areas' (Sardagna 1919). Among the reader's proposals was also the enlargement of the area to be protected, so as to include another valley, 'not less enchanting, wild and interesting than the two previous valleys, if possibly less important as regards richness and variety of flora and fauna'. The reader stresses in particular that since the area is almost completely uninhabited it should be easier to create a

national park there. *Le Vie d'Italia* being, as it was, the magazine of the Touring Club, great attention was also given to the presence of roads and means to reach the planned park. These plans were not realised by either the liberal or the Fascist government: the difficulties and costs of setting up a park on privately owned land was still perceived as overwhelming by the state administration.<sup>9</sup>

Further proposals for a park in the same area were later made by Gian Giacomo Gallarati Scotti, later mayor of Milan and senator, and Oscar de Beaux, director of the Natural History Museum in Genoa, respectively in 1928 and 1929 (F. Pedrotti 2008, 23–24; Piccioni 2010, 160–162). Although the protection of the brown bear was central in these later projects, there was no lack of attention to traditional aesthetic and tourism-related issues. Exemplary of this is that at first Gallarati Scotti proposed to name the park after an important tourist destination in the region: Madonna di Campiglio (Letter to the Minister of National Economy, from Cesare Nava et al., n.d. [1928], in F. Pedrotti 2008, 461).

What sets these projects apart from the coeval, successful institution of the Stelvio National Park was the fact that they appeared to have a much greater impact on the life of the local community: a park on the Adamello-Brenta massif was bound to bring with it much stronger regulations regarding wildlife preservation, particularly regarding the brown bear, which was widely perceived as a dangerous species. Moreover, it was feared the park would have a greater impact on local customary rights of use (Hardenberg 2011, 34–35). The letter sent by a group of senators led by Cesare Nava to the ministry of national economy in 1928 stresses instead how the harsh forestry rulings of the Habsburg Empire had successfully protected the flora and fauna of the region and conditioned the mountain-dwellers not to hunt freely in the area. Taken with the fact that most of the area was municipal property, Nava and his colleagues affirm that the Adamello-Brenta massif presented unequalled conditions for the institution of a national park without infringing on pre-existing rights, and thus without incurring excessive costs. Nava claims that minister Martelli received this proposal with exceeding favour, with only an objection regarding the cost of such a venture. Nava, however, also claims that the minister was willing to take into consideration the ‘enormous economic advantage that would derive to the state from the prudent conservation of so much wealth and so many natural beauties’ (Letter from Cesare Nava to Gian Giacomo Gallarati Scotti, 15 December 1928, in F. Pedrotti 2008, 462). There are, however, no traces in the archival sources of any further action in this respect by the enthusiastic minister.

A further spur to the attempts to set up a national park on the Adamello-Brenta massif was given in 1935 by the publication of Guido Castelli’s seminal book on the need to preserve the local brown bear colony (Castelli 1935a; F. Pedrotti 2008, 474–486). In the end the only, if actually rather important, form of preservation that was granted to the brown bear by the Fascist regime was part of the hunting laws of 1939, in which bear hunts, like those of other species of iconic macro-fauna, were forbidden in the whole country.

## Conclusions

Comparing the alleged successes of nature conservation in Fascist Italy, as seen in the four historic national parks in Gran Paradiso, Abruzzo, Circeo and Stelvio, with a few of the parks that were planned but did not reach the stage of becoming actual preservation institutions, we can note a few trends that illustrate the views of the Italian Fascist regime with regard to conservation at large. This comparison may bring perspective to the propaganda exercised by the Fascist regime, and its self-declared role as saviour of the nation’s nature.



Unavoidably noticeable is how the parks that were actually created all had a peculiar history; either because of their roots in the pre-Fascist debates on nature conservation or by reason of some exceptional feature, such as a symbolic link to either the First World War or the extensive reclamation works in the Pontine Marshes. Moreover, a major feature in the cases of both Gran Paradiso and Abruzzo was the fact that both used to be royal hunting reserves. This common past favoured their preservation, because of both a royal moral suasion and a perceived, but not always real, greater ease to impose preservation rulings on land that had already been subject to similar limitations, if for rather different reasons.

The three planned parks discussed above instead all seem to have stalled because of a general lack of interest in conservation within the regime, especially when the latter was required to actually invest money in the venture. Money, or rather the lack of it, indeed was the main issue when it came to make a final decision about whether to formally preserve an area or not. The Sila may represent an exception, since the main reasons for the failure of this project can be found in local and social political issues. Nonetheless, the lack of funding played an important role in this case as well, as it may have been central in the failure of *Pro Montibus* in running a renewed successful acquisition campaign, such as the one it had just finished in Abruzzo.

In general, however, the attention to economic and budget issues reveals the level of consideration of the Mussolini government for the preservation of the natural world: definitely not a primary concern in any terms. Only when it appeared that the institution of a park could be used as a means of propaganda, or the supporters were able to effectively bypass the Ministry of National Economy and involve Mussolini in the projects, were money issues swiftly overcome, as seen in the cases of the Circeo and Stelvio national parks.

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### Notes

1. The first 20 years of the twentieth century were marked by the creation of numerous parks in many European countries: Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Poland, and, as a project, the USSR (Dogliani 1998).
2. One of the main questions in the debate about the institution of national parks in Italy just after the First World War was what sort of parks Italy needed: ones focused on scientific research (the 'Swiss' model in contemporary parlance) or on the promotion of tourism and recreation (the, then so-called, 'American' model)? On this issue see Hardenberg (2013, 53–54).
3. See Royal Decree-Law 1584, 3 December 1922.
4. See Hardenberg (2013) for a comparison of the cases of the Gran Paradiso and the Stelvio.
5. A national park was actually established on the Sila only in 1968, with the creation of the *Parco Nazionale della Calabria*. A Sila National Park was officially (re-)established under this name in 1997.
6. Selling or attempting to sell land to interested private parties or the state on the occasion of the planned institution of nature conservation institutions was not an uncommon practice in the early history of European conservation. For, respectively, a French and an Austrian example of such a practice, see Zuanon (1995, 67–78, 93–95, 115–120) and Würflinger (2007, 79). It is still to be assessed whether it was the buyers who were taking advantage of money-starved municipalities or the local communities who were trying to profit from conservationist hype by selling relatively unproductive land.

7. It is worth mentioning here that, while in June 1922 the Parliament, still with a Liberal majority, had passed a law on the preservation of 'natural beauties', Italy did not have, under Fascist rule, any coherent legislation as regards the criteria to be adopted to set up and manage a national park. See Law 778, June 11, 1922 and Piccioni (1999, 242–250).
8. In the same years the Fascist regime was very active in promoting a reordering of common and customary access rights to land and resources. In particular see Royal Decree 751, 22 May 1924 and the Law 1766, 16 June 1927, which instituted a legislature charged with the task of ascertaining and settling or liquidating any existing common or mixed use.
9. See the stance taken by the Minister of National Economy in respect of the proposal for a national park in Latium discussed previously.

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