





Cultural landscapes along the Albula and Bernina line

 Landscapes and natural monuments of national importance

 Parc Ela

Core zone

 Core zone with railway and cultural landscape

Buffer zone

 Buffer zone in the near area

 Buffer zone in the distant area (backdrop)

 Horizon line

Other contents

 Other stretches of the Rhaetian Railway

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2.a.7 Cultural landscapes along the Albula and Bernina line

The cultural landscapes along the Albula/Bernina railway line differ considerably both in appearance and in the way they are used. If exploitation in the Heinzenberg/Domleschg region is moderate to intensive, the Albula valley is characterised rather by utilisation that is close-to-nature and principally agrarian. In the Upper Engadin, cultural landscapes largely determined by tourism alternate with virtually intact natural environments, whereas Val Poschiavo and the Veltlin Valley, with its southern ambience, juxtapose the greatest contrasts within a very small area. On its way from Thusis to Tirano, the railway runs through several altitude levels as well as differing climatic and tectonic-geological zones; what is more, it passes through three different cultural areas that are reflected in completely disparate building styles. The railway installations have had a strong impact on the landscapes in the regions traversed and have given important impulses to settlement and economic development. Some structures built for the railway have in fact become “landmarks” or even “trademarks” for that particular region.

A cultural landscape is a natural landscape that has been changed by man. Its development is determined by natural conditions such as topography, climate, geology, soil, water resources and vegetation and by the type of settlement pattern and exploitation of the land as well as essential infrastructure systems such as traffic routes and power lines. There are several different cultural landscapes along the Albula/Bernina railway line. These can be named after the various valley communities: in Switzerland the Domleschg/Heinzenberg, Albula, Upper Engadin and Poschiavo valleys, in Italy the Veltlin. The cultural landscapes cannot be considered apart from their surrounding natural environments, which are either intact or hardly touched. These “backdrops” are extremely important for the overall perception of the cultural landscape; they are the backgrounds on the postcards and are frequently a landmark for the entire region.

Domleschg/Heinzenberg

High above Thusis, the starting point for the Albula Railway, is Piz Beverin – effectively the

landmark for the whole Domleschg/Heinzenberg valley community. The mountain is particularly impressive in spring and early summer when – still in purest winter white – it stands out against the lush green meadows and the blossom of the fruit trees down in the valley.

Thusis, an old market town, is situated slightly higher, above the upper reaches of the Rhine. The line forks behind Thusis: the once so important north – south transit route continues through the Viamala gorge and on across the Splügen or San Bernardino Pass. Towards the east, through the Schin gorge, the track climbs to the Albula Pass before descending into the Engadin. The way through the sinister Viamala, a deep gorge cut by the Hinterrhein (Upper Rhine) that pierces the almost insurmountable rock barrier behind Thusis is still impressive today; it is hardly surprising that the uncanny mystery of the Viamala is sung in numerous legends and stories.

The cross section of the Domleschg and Heinzenberg is an asymmetric transverse valley. The form of the flanks of the valley is defined



Heinzenberg/Domleschg > Monumental secular buildings, like Ortenstein castle, are a striking feature of the Domleschg cultural landscape. On the right, the gently sloping Heinzenberg with the snow covered Piz Beverin in the background.
M. Kunfermann



Sils i.D. > The Holy Sepulchre church of St. Cassian in the Domleschg valley stands isolated on a hilltop.
A. Badrutt

by the tectonics of the underlying rock, or rather their formation by glaciers and erosion. The gradient of the rock (Graubünden slate), runs from west to east and the western flank of the Heinzenberg is gently inclined in the same direction whereas the eastern flank, the Domleschg, is characterised by the precipitous mountain slopes, ridges of rock and the peaks of the Stäzerhorn chain. The particular cultural landscape of the Domleschg – on a national comparison it is classed as “important” – is characterised by small lakes and wetlands nestling between moraines, by meadows, hedgerows, fields and fruit trees as well as compact villages surmounted by forts perched on striking outcrops of rock or hills. The “Domleschg apples”, once highly prized at aristocratic tables throughout Europe, are a particularly interesting feature of farming history in the Domleschg. Today the cultivation of this rare, old variety of apple is again being promoted. In the Domleschg, the villages and the previously only temporarily occupied Maiensässe (cf. 2.b.4), cling to the terraces like swallows’ nests. The sunny situation and relative dryness made tillage possible up to a high altitude; the old field terraces are still clearly visible. Cereals are no longer cultivated in the Domleschg today.

The cultural landscape on the Heinzenberg is very different to that of the Domleschg. Here, it is the cultivation of feed crops that dominates. The landscape is characterised by meadows, forests, Maiensässe and alps.

At the beginning of the 19th century the valley floor belonged to the meandering young Rhine, the Hinterrhein. A mid 19th century land-improvement project made the valley floor suitable for farming: the river was straightened and the flatland covered with alluvial depos-

its from the Nollabach, that flows down from Piz Beverin carrying a great deal of fine material. The fertile land created by this project is still farmed intensively today. New roads were built from the mid 19th century onwards and the Chur–Thusis railway line was opened in 1896. The beginning of the power station and road-building boom attracted trade to the Thusis–Sils i.D. region. The siliceous limestone quarried in Sils i.D. is used, among other things, as ballast for the rail track, and is still loaded on to the rail trucks at Sils i.D. station. The former Rhätische Werke below Thusis station is one of the oldest industrial buildings in Graubünden and once produced the carbide for the station lighting. The power plants in the Thusis–Sils i.D. area still make a major contribution to the present day power supply for the Rhaetian Railway (cf. 2.b.7). High-voltage cables from the Albula valley and from the south link up here before being led to the north and the major agglomerations. From 1960 the settlements expanded as a consequence of the rapid growth in population. The building of the A13 motorway in the 1970s had an incisive impact on the Heinzenberg/Domleschg cultural landscape. It follows the canalised Rhine; the engineers opted for a tunnel to solve the Viamala problem.

Albula Valley

The Albula valley extends from the Schin gorge to the Albula Pass. It can be subdivided into various sections: the Schin gorge, the central and the inner Albula valley. The section as far as Filisur – an inner alpine, longitudinal valley – continues in the Landwasser valley, famous for its Zügenschlucht and the world-renowned health resort of Davos. After Filisur, the Albula valley changes direction and starts to run south, to the Al-



Schin gorge > Solis Viaduct on the Albul line, behind it the dry meadows and the terraced villages of Zorten, Lain and Muldain.
Foto Geiger



Surava > "Crap Furo" (Romansh for "rock full of holes").
R. Zuber



Central Albula Valley > Sunny slopes and terraced hedge and bush landscape.
A. Badrutt

bula Pass. The Albula valley is one of the most sparsely populated regions in Graubünden; together with the Oberhalbstein valley it is part of the “Parc Ela” nature park. The Rhaetian Railway with its particular structures and vegetation is an important element of the nature park.

Schin gorge (Thusis to Tiefencastel)

The Schin is a deep-cut gorge in geologically very unstable layers of rock (Graubünden slate). Earlier, the road (“Old Schin”) led from Obervaz or Alvaschein into the Domleschg, along the rock on the right bank of the Albula river. In contrast, the railway line was laid on the left, steep and densely forested, side of the valley. Numerous engineering structures were necessary to overcome the Schin section; the Solis viaduct is the most impressive of these (cf. 2.a.4). The northeast slope above the gorge is characterised by extensive dry meadows, the former terraced fields that are still visible and the compact villages of Zorten, Lain and Muldain. Mutten, a Walser village, lies on the rather shady slope opposite; the settlement breaks down into three separate groups of buildings at altitudes between 1,470 m and 1,870 m. The Walsers are a German-speaking people who probably immigrated from Davos or Avers during the 15th century.

Central Albula Valley (Tiefencastel – Filisur)

The central Albula valley is a dry valley with low precipitation and relatively mild temperatures. It extends from Tiefencastel to Filisur; its two flanks, on either side of the rather narrow valley floor, differ considerably as there is a pronounced sunny and shady side. The landscape of the central Albula valley is dom-

inated by the Muchetta, that towers above Filisur, with its “textbook” scree slopes, similar to those found in the Swiss National Park. The Bergünstöcke – Piz Mitgel and Corn da Tinizong – rising above the forests are almost invisible from the valley floor.

The forests (some are intact natural forests) dominate the shady slope, interrupted only by rocky outcrops and crags, such as Crap Furo, a greywacke pointing up out of the forest like a finger. This Silvretta nappe sediment marks the geographical centre of Graubünden. The tributary valleys emerging on the shady side are steep and end in steps; the imposing waterfall in the Schaftobel flows over one of these rockfalls. The streams carry large quantities of alluvial detritus.

The sunny side breaks down into three steps. Farming is intensive on the valley floor. As the gravelly soil is very permeable, the fields have to be irrigated in dry periods; traces of old irrigation systems can still be found here and there. Previously the slopes above the valley floor were tilled; dry-stone walls supported the terraces and prevented the fertile soil being washed down from the steep slopes. With the exception of potatoes, arable farming was abandoned after the Second World War and the old terraces gradually became overgrown with grass and bushes. The outcome was a hedgerow landscape that is quite unique in Graubünden. It extends from Mon and Stierva over Alvaschein, Brienz/Brinzauls, Surava, Alvaneu and Schmitten as far as Filisur. It is particularly important as a refuge for biodiversity. The hedges and the extensive dry meadows are an eldorado for butterflies, birds and other animals. Recently, a few terraces have again been used for the organic cultivation of old species of cereals (e.g. buckwheat).



Albula line > The loop entering the Schmittentobel and the Landwasser Valley.
T. Keller



Bergün/Bravuogn > "Il Crap" a rock barrier (also called the "Bergünerstein") before Bergün/Bravuogn is pierced by a tunnel; in contrast, the road runs along the rock face.
T. Keller



Bergün/Bravuogn > The inner Albula Valley is mostly steep and narrow. View from Bergün/Bravuogn towards the Albula Pass.
D. Enz

The settlements include both nucleated and ribbon-built villages. On the higher reaches of the sunny slope they are built on terraces, so only church steeples and isolated houses are visible from the railway. The church complex of Schmitten, which is built on a striking roche moutonnée, is particularly notable in this respect.

The traffic junction of Tiefencastel, with its once-fortified church hill, today dominated by a baroque church, derives most of its income from the tourists who stay at the two large hotels and eat at the restaurants.

Since the 19th century, Surava has been considered industrial: the match factory, rusk factory, mill, sawmill, pottery, dyeing works and previously a chalk works all document an earlier industrial era. Trade plays a major role in the economic life of Surava today as well; Misapor, a cellular glass ballast, has been produced here since the 1980s and is even exported abroad. The village comprises a western part of farming aspect with houses in the Engadin style (cf. 2.a.6) and the more commercial quarter in the east.

Alvaneu Bad developed into a well-known spa resort in the mid 19th century thanks to its iron and sulphurous spring; the large spa hotel built at that time was not used after the Second World War, gradually fell into ruin and was eventually demolished. Today it has been replaced by a new spa building with its own golf course.

Filisur has become an important traffic hub since the railway was built. It is here that the line through the wild Zügen gorge, also built and operated by the Rhaetian Railway, branches off from the Albula line. Besides farming, running hotels and catering for guests, trade and crafts have always played

an important role in Filisur. The building of the Albula/Landwasser power station (cf. 2.b.7) with regulating reservoirs and command stations in Bergün/Bravuogn, Filisur and Tiefencastel, had a significant impact on the further economic development of Filisur and the entire Albula valley after the Second World War. The well-conserved village nucleus of Filisur is a compact whole with a large number of Engadin-type houses. The structural transformation of agriculture led to the setting up of new farming units beyond the edge of the village; the cramped conditions inside the village prevented any rational farming – the same applies for all the villages throughout the Albula valley (cf. 4.a.2).

The Landwasser Viaduct has made an indelible impact on the area. This technical structure blends harmoniously but self-confidently with the landscape and has become the “trademark” for the Rhaetian Railway.

Inner Albula Valley (Filisur – Preda)

The inner Albula Valley is steep and narrow; forests, and the courses of rock slides and avalanches define the landscape. Protection from the forces of nature like rockfalls and avalanches was essential where the railway line runs across open terrain. The railway pierces the natural rock barrier of the “Bergünstein” before Bergün/Bravuogn with a tunnel; the road, in contrast, runs along the rock face. In view of the topographic conditions in this part of the valley, agriculture was only feasible in the hollow of Bergün/Bravuogn and around the villages of Latsch and Stugl/Stuls that lie on natural terraces and in the environs of Preda. The railway uses the Bergün/Bravuogn basin to overcome a difference in altitude of 100 m in two loops. Altogether, the



Preda > The plain at Preda-Naz, previously only occupied by the Bergün farmers for a few months of the year as Maiensäss, became a permanent settlement following the construction of the railway.
B. Studer



Bever > The entrance to the Engadin. The broad, open, 1,700 – 1,800 m Upper Engadin landscape gives the impression of being surprisingly expansive.
A. Badrutt

railway layout, like the road, clearly defines the cultural landscape in the narrow section of the valley from Bergün/Bravuogn to Preda. The Dolomite massif of Piz Ela closes the horizon to the west majestically.

Bergün/Bravuogn with its touch of the Engadin is well conserved. Since the beginning of traffic across the pass, tourism has been the most important source of income in the village. After the railway was constructed, several hotels were built, including the remarkable Hotel Kurhaus which tapped the mineral springs. Today this spa hotel has been restored to its former glory. The plain at Preda-Naz, previously only occupied by the Bergün farmers for a few months of the year as Maiensäss (cf. 2.b.4), became a permanent settlement following the construction of the railway.

Upper Engadin

The Upper Engadin is entered through Val Bever, a landscape of pastures and larches, with steep screes and courses gouged out by avalanches. In comparison to the ruggedness and narrowness of the inner Albula valley, the countryside here is broad and gentle. The Upper Engadin is part of a tectonically defined inner alpine, longitudinal valley stretching from Maloja to Martina. The trough shape is due to glacial erosion. The Upper Engadin separates the east alpine Bernina nappe in the south from the Julier and Err nappe in the north. The broad, open, 1,700–1,800 m landscape gives the impression of being surprisingly expansive. Unusual for a high altitude valley is the broad flatland called the “Campagna” around Samedan; it was built up by the Flaz, flowing from the Bernina valley, and the river Inn. To counter the danger of serious

flooding, the Flaz was recently directed into a new bed using the latest river-correction and ecological know-how (cf. 4.a.2). The Bernina massif rises to heights of some 4,000 m, standing out clearly from the surrounding peaks that barely attain 3,400 m. The Bernina massif is in fact the highest in the eastern Alps. The river Inn, which flows through the Engadin and gave the valley its name, rises on the Lunghin Pass and joins the Danube at Passau before flowing into the Black Sea. The orientation of the axis of the valley is responsible for the great contrast between the northern, sunny and the southern, shady flank. The shady side is largely covered with larch and Swiss stonepine forests; the tree line is at an altitude of 2,300 m! On the plain and on the sunny side, in contrast, airy larch forests predominate. A large proportion of the settlements and the traffic routes are on the sunny side of the valley.

Unlike today, when crops are only grown for fodder, until the 16th century agriculture in the valley was at subsistence level – an extraordinary fact considering the altitude of the farms. The farmers even grew bread cereals on their own land; “Chantarella”, the name of an area above St. Moritz, at 2,000 m, means “little field” indicating that the land was once tilled. The floor of the valley was unsuitable for arable farming due to the danger of frost in the pockets of cold air; instead the farmers had recourse to the lower parts of the slopes. The old field terraces are still visible above the villages of Celerina, Samedan and Pontresina. With few exceptions, agriculture in the Engadin was organised at only two levels; a Maiensäss level with the associated buildings is completely lacking here, similarly there are no outbuildings for livestock, so typical of other



Upper Engadin > A broad, high Alpine U-shaped valley, left St. Moritz, right, the Samedan "Campagna" plain in the background.
A. Badrutt



Celerina > The old terraces, still clearly visible on the slope high above the village (1,800 m) prove that arable farming was commonplace here in earlier years.
A. Badrutt



St. Moritz > The pioneer tourist resort of St. Moritz is today one of the best known tourist destinations worldwide.
A. Badrutt

valleys in the Graubünden (cf. 2.b.4). The countryside beyond the villages is open, with no buildings. The historic nucleate villages are characterised by the typical Engadin houses; sturdy, massively built houses with living quarters, stables and a utility zone all under one roof (cf. 2.a.6).

The lakeland area with the Sils i.E., Silvaplana and Champfèr lakes, the towering peaks to the north and south and the eternal snows of the mountain massif, the glaciers creeping towards the valleys and above all the vibrant colours of the larch forests in autumn make the Upper Engadin one of the most unique regions in Switzerland. The air and the light in the Upper Engadin are also quite extraordinary – due to the high altitude. Since the beginnings of tourism, all this has attracted visitors from all over the world and has inspired poets, writers and painters like Giovanni Segantini, Rainer Maria Rilke and Friedrich Nietzsche.

The rapid spread of tourism in the Upper Engadin during the second half of the 19th century was the impetus for the construction of the Albula Railway (cf. 2.b.9 and 2.b.10). Today tourism is all-important here. Most of the people living in the valley live directly or indirectly from this industry. St. Moritz, the pioneer of tourism, is today one of the best-known mountain resorts worldwide; it has a cosmopolitan, even urban ambience of its own. About 1800 the medicinal spring (ferrous carbonated water) at St. Moritz-Bad (St. Moritz-Spa), which was already tapped in prehistoric times, started to attract visitors in large numbers (cf. 2.b.1). A first, rather modest Kurhaus was built in 1832; later this gave way to much larger and more luxurious establishments: these Grand Hotels stand like

castles in the landscape, giving it a very special character. Originally the guests spent the summer months in the Engadin, sport-oriented winter tourism started to develop gradually from the 1880s onwards. This also gave the impetus for the construction of the first cable cars; the Muottas Muragl cable car, built in 1907, was the first and famous for the breathtaking view of the Upper Engadin lakeland. The second cable car in the Upper Engadin was built in 1913; it ran from St. Moritz-Dorf to Chantarella. The cable car was designed primarily to provide access to the Chantarella hotel complex built at the same time. Early highlights of winter tourism were the 1928 and 1948 Winter Olympic games. In preparation for the 1928 Olympiad, the Chantarella funicular railway was extended to Corviglia in 1927 to transport the winter sports enthusiasts. A real boom in cable cars and building in general broke out after the Second World War. Skiing became a popular sport and mass tourism arrived in the Engadin. The new cable railways – the Diavolezza and the Corvatsch in 1956, with a view of the Bernina massif, the Lagalb in 1962 – together with the ski tows, holiday homes, tourist infrastructure and roads changed the face of the landscape enormously.

Samedan, as a railway and traffic hub with its own rail settlement, developed naturally into the logistics centre of the Upper Engadin during the 20th century. A regional airfield, schools, hospitals, retirement homes, commercial buildings and utilities complexes are the outward signs of a tourism-oriented cultural landscape.

The “hotel palaces” are also the dominant feature in Pontresina, at the entrance to the Bernina valley, and in the Val Roseg (cf. 2.a.6 and



Bernina region > The Morteratsch glacier with Piz Palü and Piz Bernina.
Kur- und Verkehrsverein St. Moritz



Bernina Pass > The Lago Bianco reservoir is coloured white by the glacier milk from the Cambrena glacier, the blue-black Lago Nero, behind it, is fed by spring water.
A. Badrutt

2.a.9). The countryside between Pontresina and the Bernina Pass is bleak and alpine; railway, road, alp buildings and a high-voltage cable are virtually the sole signs of civilisation here. The valley in the Morteratsch region offers a breathtaking vista of the mighty Morteratsch glacier surrounded by Piz Palü, Piz Bernina and Piz Morteratsch: a unique mountain panorama; however, the glacier has shrunk considerably in recent years due to global warming. There is a geologically interesting feature at the foot of Piz Alv, not far from the Lagalb and Diavolezza cable car valley stations: the red Alv-Brekzie from the Triassic period. This blend of crystalline and chalk rocks, found only in a very restricted area, is responsible for a variety of plants in Val Fain (Hay Valley) that is unique to Europe. The plants here have been protected for many years (plant reserve).

The railway approaches the alpine zone on the Bernina Pass. The pass is a textbook example of a glaciated transfluence area, marked by Piz Cambrena with its glacial tongue, stream deltas and screes, roches moutonnées, moraines and lakes. Lago Bianco, originally two small lakes with broad silted zones, was dammed in conjunction with the construction of the Kraftwerke Brusio AG (today Rätia Energie) power station at the beginning of the 20th century. Since then, it has formed the upper basin reservoir of the generating plant, which is one of the oldest power stations in Switzerland and closely linked to the establishment of the Bernina Railway (cf. 2.b.7). The storage reservoir is harmoniously embedded in the landscape; the dam to the north is hardly noticeable. Lago Bianco gets its white colour from the “glacier milk” coming from the Cambrena glacier. Lago Nero, the ‘Black

Lake’, which is fed solely by spring water, makes a sharp contrast. The climate at an altitude of some 2,260 m is merciless.

Poschiavo Valley

From the eternal snows of the Bernina group, the Poschiavo valley drops, only about 25 km as the crow flies, to the southern ambience of the Veltlin. Every possible vegetation step can be found within a relatively small area, from the sparse growth and bleak stone-strewn crest of the pass over green pastures, lush meadows and dense larch forests to the tobacco fields and chestnut, peach, fig, cabbage and mulberry trees near the border. The flora and the great variety in types of agriculture reflect the southern influence of the climate.

With the exception of the serpentine (Pennine stone) that is quarried in the Selva district, the underlying rock comprises east alpine nappes. The Sassalbo in the eastern mountain range, which is formed of several different kinds of marble, is particularly striking. The valley follows the tectonically defined shifts between the upper and lower east alpine nappes. It is drained by the Poschiavo river, which joins the Adda in the Veltlin, which in turn flows into the Po and on to the Adriatic / Mediterranean. Two large tributary valleys branch off from Val Poschiavo: the Val di Camp from Sfazu, and the Val dal Saent from Campascio. The Val di Camp is renowned for its beautiful lakes that were originally formed by a massive rockfall (landscape of national importance). The high-altitude hamlet of Cavaione in Val dal Saent is only partly inhabited today. The Val dal Saent did not definitively become part of Switzerland until 1875; for over a hundred years it was “no man’s land” belonging neither to Switzerland nor Italy. The inhabitants



Alp Grüm > A natural dome, moulded and polished by the glacier. In its shade the Lago di Palü.
A. Badrutt



Alp Grüm > Spectacular view of the Palü glacier. In the foreground the Lago di Palü.
T. Keller



Poschiavo > The bowl of the valley, with Lago di Poschiavo is characterised by various alluvial fans, in part overgrown with hedges, intensively used meadows with the first potato fields and settlements some of which have an urban air.
A. Badrutt

made the most of this situation by assuring the Swiss authorities that they were Italian, and the Italian authorities that they were Swiss. The first stage of the Poschiavo valley stretches from the Bernina Pass to Alp Grüm. Whereas the road makes its way through Val Agoné, the railway follows the route through the Cavaglia taken by the old mule track years ago (cf. 2.b.3). Alp Grüm, rounded by glacial erosion, is a favourite with tourists thanks to the fantastic view into the Poschiavo valley with Piz Palü and its glacier. From Alp Grüm the valley drops down to the Cavaglia plain with the hamlet of the same name at 1,700 m, originally only inhabited for a few months of the year. The beautifully formed moulins are an interesting feature. They are some 500 m to the south of Cavaglia rail station, where the Cavaglia river cuts through a smoothly polished rock barrier. The next large step is formed by the basin and Lago di Poschiavo (1,000 m). This is characterised by various alluvial fans, some overgrown with hedges, intensively used pastures and the first potato fields and settlements, some of which already have an urban air. The lake was dammed up by a massive rock fall in the Motta/Miralago area. The fourth step descends through the ever-narrowing valley to Campocologno (700 m). The railway has made a strong impact on the Poschiavo cultural landscape; among the striking structures are the loops winding up from San Carlo to Alp Grüm, perfectly embedded in the countryside, and the circular viaduct at Brusio. Agriculture was long the principal source of income in the valley. The traditional division of the utilised zones into valley, Maiensäss and alp, so typical in Graubünden, applies here as well (cf. 2.b.4). At the lowest valley level (from Campocologno to above

Brusio) are the homesteads of the “field-alp farms”, the typical form in dry valleys. Farming is varied, with fields separated from one another by supporting walls and hedges. The irrigated meadows can be mown up to four times a year. At the next valley stage (from Miralago to San Carlo), farming is less varied. The “meadow-alp farms” are found here. Conditions are similar on the terraces at Viano and Cavaione. The Maiensässe are built on natural flat patches in forest clearings at an altitude of 1,100 to 1,600 m. The associated settlements come in all forms from scattered homesteads to small villages. The alpine pastures are very extensive, but the terrain is frequently very steep. The local livestock was insufficient for comprehensive grazing so the Poschiavo farmers fetched cattle from the Veltlin and sheep from Bergamo to spend the summer on the alps.

Since earliest times the restricted opportunities for making a living in Poschiavo have obliged many of its people to emigrate. Besides military emigration, economic emigration was also widespread; the Poschiavo confectioners, in particular, who travelled to all the countries of Europe and often made considerable fortunes abroad, are well known. When they came home again they often invested their money in real estate. One particularly impressive example of ‘returning emigrant’ architecture is the row of “palazzi” along the southern edge of the Poschiavo Borgo with its urban air (cf. 2.b.4).

Besides employment in the power station, today trades and crafts, passing traffic and the rapidly developing tourist trade offer earning opportunities. The beginnings of tourism in Poschiavo go back to the mid 19th century, when a spa hotel was built on the lake at Le Prese that



Poschiavo Valley > Thanks to its mild climate, the valley floor of the lower Poschiavo Valley is densely populated and the land is farmed intensively. The slopes are covered with deciduous trees.

A. Badrutt



Lago di Poschiavo > The lake was dammed by a massive rockfall and is used to generate hydro-electric power.

A. Badrutt



Campascio > Carefully cultivated terraced landscape below the Campascio halt.

A. Badrutt

made use of the sulphur springs; the bathing facilities were luxurious by the standards of the day. After a period of stagnation, the spa hotel was sold to Kraftwerke Brusio AG (now Rätia Energie AG). Today it is once again run as a hotel. There are various sizable businesses in Brusio specialising in the vegetable and wine trades.

Veltlin

The climate in the Veltlin is varied: the air currents from Lake Como bank up against the mountains causing frequent rainfall; the region becomes progressively drier to the east. There is even a sharp contrast in conditions between the two sides of the valley. Thanks to almost continuous exposure to the sun, temperatures on the south flank are relatively high, even in winter, and snow does not accumulate as it does on the north flank. This encourages agriculture and in particular vine growing up to a relatively high altitude. The north side of the valley is colder, has fewer buildings and is characterised by extensive forests and pastures. Precipitation is unevenly distributed as the mountains to the south fend off the humid air currents from the plain. The wind blows from two directions: the south wind coming from Lake Como and the “Föhn” from the north.

The region’s terrain and climate determined its settlement patterns. The centres of settlement were localised in the lower and central Veltlin valley. The villages are strung out on the southern flank, at an altitude of 500 to 800 m in a west-east direction, surrounded by vineyards. The farms below these preferred locations are mostly devoted to stock farming. The situation of the villages on the northern flank is quite different to those on the southern flank: stock farming predominates here and there is little vine grow-

ing, while farming has largely become a part-time occupation. Vine and fruit growing (18% and 10% respectively) are highly specialised in the Veltlin. The varieties of apples grown are “Delicious”, “Stark” and “Golden Apples”. Key focus is on the production of quality wines bearing the D.O.C. and D.O.C.G. labels (Denominazione di Origine Controllata and Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita respectively). The principal varieties are “Rosso di Valtellina”, “Valtellina Superiore”, “Sassella” “Grumello” “Inferno”, “Vagella”, “Maroggia” and “Sforzato”. The valley runs from west to east: the tectonic formation is referred as the “linea insubrica”. Alpine folding along this plane has created an unstable zone which was subjected to further pressure by pronounced glacial activity during the Ice Age. Consequently, the valley developed a typical open U-shape, although its floor is concealed by a thick sedimentary deposit. During the Quaternary period, the entire valley was remoulded by glacial advances with the consequent deposit of moraines indicating the course of the old glaciers. The tributary streams formed alluvial fans and cones on the flanks of the valleys.