

The International Symposium of the Swiss Geomorphological Society, 3-5th September 2009, Olivone, Canton of Ticino, Switzerland

The beginning of autumn was marked in the Swiss geomorphologic calendar by the Symposium of the Swiss Geomorphological Society, a scientific event with an international participation, having the theme "The Alpine Geomorphology: between patrimony and constraints". The picturesque small town of Olivone situated in the sunny Italian-speaking canton of Ticino, on the Blenio Valley, was the place selected this year for an interesting geomorphologic meeting. About 40 participants joined the symposium, most of them Swiss geomorphologists but there were also specialists from France, Italy, Hungary and Romania. The event was successfully organized by the Swiss Geomorphological Society together with the Institute of Geography from the University of Lausanne and supported by the Geosciences/Platform of the Swiss Academy of Sciences but also by cantonal institutions from Ticino (The "Societa Ticinese di Scienze Naturale" and "Museo cantonale di storia naturale). The hospitable local community of Blenio (commune di Blenio) had also an important role.

A number of 27 presentations, including posters were selected by the scientific committee for the programme. Their thematic was centered on the alpine and mountain regions morphodynamics' under the conditions of the environmental changes. Some contributions must be noticed: the morphodynamics of rock glaciers in the Swiss Alps (R. Delaoye, C. Lambiel and C. Scapozza, E. Cossart and C. Perrier), the morphodynamics of rock slopes after the End of the Little Ice Age in the Northern French Alps (L. Ravanel and P. Deline), the geomorphosites inventory, analysis and touristic integration in the Swiss Alps and Jura Mountains (B. Maillard, A. Perret, S. Morard and A. Staub), the high magnitude torrential processes in the Swiss Alps (C. Graf). An interesting presentation focused on the implementation of the international mountain route of "Via Geo Alpina" which will cross some of the most important areas with geomorphosites in the Alpine chain (M. Schlup et al.).

Other contributions focused on new research techniques applied in mountain landscape and morphodynamics investigation like the Synthetic Aperture Radar interferometry (T. Strozzi and R. Delaoye, S. Mari et al.), the dendrogeomorphological analysis (C. Scapozza et al., V. Garvaglia et al., L. Astrade et al.), the GIS and remote sensing mapping and modeling of the morphodynamic features (G. Toth, Mihai et. al etc.).

A poster section was focused on the young geomorphologist research output but not only. There were included original contributions like the Swiss geomorphosite inventory (S. Martin), the debris slopes features in the Swiss Alps (D. Abbett et al., C. Dvorak et al.) the dydactics of geomorphology (S. Morard et al.), the morphodynamics of torrential systems (D. Theler et al.), the mountain landscape changes (L. Laigre et al.) or some features regarding the local features of rock glaciers (G. Ramelli et al.). A really interesting presentation was focused on the water supply systems of "bisses" from the Swiss canton of Valais, in the Bernese Alps, made by prof. dr. E. Reynard from University of Lausanne, a specialist of these issues.

The meeting was a complete one with a new volume presentation (C. Scapozza and G. Fontana), focused on the local geomorphic features (Le Alpi Bleniesi: storia glaciale e patrimonio geomorfologico) and an introduction in the study of geomorphology, a conference of a local researcher (M. Antognini), from the Cantonal Museum of Natural History in Lugano.

The last day a field trip was organized around the area of Lucomagno/Lukmanier Pass (1916 m) and along the Valley of Santa Maria. The main organizer, Cristian Scapozza and some collaborators choosed an interesting walking route in an area with a complex geology, a region rich in periglacial morphodynamics and karstic morphology. There were discussed issues of applied geology and geomorphology (the area is crossed by an old transalpine road and will be crossed in the near

future, in the underground, by the Gotthard Basis Tunnel), glacial and periglacial geomorphology, karstic evolution and environmental protection of alpine river floodplain areas.

The conference was a real opportunity to be in contact with some of the latest achievements of the Swiss geomorphologic community. The selection of a wonderful mountain valley and town in Ticino and the integration of science with the local hospitality were perfectly merged by Cristian Scapozza, an enthusiastic young geomorphologist

born in this area, and by Professor Emmanuel Reynard our host from the Institute of Geography of the University of Lausanne and his team.

The Romanian Association of Geomorphologists was represented by prof.dr. Bogdan Mihai. He received the invitation of the Swiss Geomorphological Society and the Institute of Geography of the University of Lausanne to join the conference with a financial support of the Swiss SCOPES programme.



Prof. dr. Bogdan MIHAI