

From the high peaks to the margins. Exploring Histories and Counterhistories of the Modern and Contemporary Ages Through the Proposals of ARO VIII

April 14, 2025

Spring has arrived and the first issue of the year of *Annals.Reviews.Online*, the free-access journal of the Italian-German Historical Institute, is out. Below is a summary of the contents, along with suggestions and recommended readings.

A.R.O. elevates us to new heights by dedicating its most prominent space, the Forum, to a widely discussed book. As the journal's editor notes in the [editorial](#), the book aims to break free from the confines of the ivory tower and connect with a broader audience.

I am talking about Andrea Zannini's *Controistoria dell'alpinismo* (Counterhistory of Mountaineering, Translator's note), reviewed by [Andrea Pojer](#) and [Paolo Costa](#), whose title already gives an idea of its position in the historiographical debate: an alternative version to the dominant or official one that sees the mountaineers of the late 18th century – and even more so of the 19th century – as the first “conquerors” of the main Alpine peaks; a version focused on the narrative of the everyday life in the mountains in pre-modern times, bringing to light – through different sources, *needless to say* – the most marginalized categories.

Speaking of Alps and marginalized figures, later in this new issue you can find *Women's Voices. Echoes of Life Experiences in the Alps and the Plain (17th – 19th Centuries)* by Stefania Bianchi and Miriam Nicoli, which aims to reassess the role of women in Alpine society. A book that, according to the [review by Maria Salome Adank](#), starts from fundamental questions such as: “to what extent did the socio-economic structure of the Alps and Pre-Alps between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries affect women's destinies? What forms of power – formal or informal – have women been able to exercise in these regions? How did they react to conflict situations, and what strategies did they devise to ensure their voices were heard? Finally, how have men and women negotiated their respective roles within an ever-changing society?”

In [the same section](#), you'll find [Matteo Di Tullio's review of](#) a monograph that was recently featured in the "Book of the Month" series of events. (If you're stopping by Trento, you can find all the details [here](#).) *As Gods Among Men. A History of the Rich in the West* written by Guido Alfani. This book is ideal for anyone looking to dive deeper than the daily news we hear—ranging from lengthy campaigns to tariff wars—and sheds light on the challenges of studying this subject, beginning with the very definition of wealth. The author himself acknowledged, in [an interview with](#) Claudio Ferlan, that "definining wealth over time is complicated. Also defining the rich is complicated, but here we can apply consistent standards across the centuries, if we consider that the rich are such *in relation* to everyone else".

As part of the "Book of the Month" series, another featured title can be found in the section dedicated to contemporary history: *Andare per colonie estive* (Going to Summer camps, Translator's note) by Stefano Pivato, [reviewed by Giorgio Lucaroni](#). This is as well, the reviewer notes, a proof that even in the field of historiography, narrative flow can coexist with scientific rigor, just as reading pleasure can align with respect for sources." Pivato offers an overview of the history of Italian summer camps from the late 19th century to the 1960s, highlighting their role in the education and socialization of kids.

In short, if you haven't already, take a look at the latest issue of A.R.O. and let our authors' proposals inspire you. As for me, I've already picked my favorite: the only biography featured in this issue, which focuses on a pivotal figure in 20th-century Italian politics: *Lina Merlin. One woman, two wars, three regimes*. Written by Monica Fioravanzo and reviewed for A.R.O. [by Laura Schettini](#), the study reconstructs the significant role played by Venetian politics since the 1920s and until the 1960s through the analysis of private writings, memories and archival documentation.

What about you? Where would you start?

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<https://magazine.fbk.eu/en/news/from-the-high-peaks-to-the-margins-exploring-histories-and-counterhistories-of-the-modern-and-contemporary-ages-through-the-proposals-of-aro-viii/>

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