

CIMA POZZIN: HOW TO FOLD A ROCK

Observation point: belvedere in Passo d'Eira, or just before, belvedere over the path from Trepalle

From this point, towards north-east, Cima Pozzin folded rocks show the relevant strenghts involved in alpine chain building.

During Jurassic period, all this area was at the margin of a narrow ocean between African and European continental plates. 130 millions of years ago, while dinosaurs began their decline up to complete extinction, Africa starts its rotational movement towards Europe: at a first time, oceanic crust shortened, sinking under continental one, then - 60 millions of years ago - the ocean completely closed and the two plates crushed one against the other. Some residual oceanic floor was squeezed out and involved into the collision: now, it outcrops westward, in Val Malenco area. Sea-bottom sediments, deposited on the plates' margins, over about two hundred million years, were also pushed and compressed. Hard, unyielding massive dolomitic rocks broken into huge slabs, put one onto the other, while plastic shaley and marly layered rocks were tightly folded: at the dawn of a new era, like a Venus born from the sea, Alps started to rise from the water, growing up for thousand of meters towards the sky!

It was a long, complex process, lasting at least 30 MY; in the same time, while the chain became higher, erosion started to mould its flanks, carving valleys and sharpening crests.

In front of you, one of this deeply cut incision shows the bedded sediments of the Jurassic sea-floor, involved in these orogenetic imposing events: large, recumbent folds of grey shaley marls, underlined by slim limestone layers, appear to run towards the south, pulled away by the dolomitic bulk of Pizzo del Ferro massif at their back.

From yonder mountains, 230 millions of years of planet Earth history behold you!