

IL LAGO DI RESIA ED IL CAMPANILE DI CURON

Lake Resia - "Reschensee" in German, "Lago di Resia" in Italian - is located in the western part of South Tyrol, at Curon Venosta near the Passo di Resia mountain pass. Its striking landmark - a steeple towering from the lake - does not only individuate this 6.6. km long and 1 km wide lake, but is in fact symbol of the entire valley and known beyond borders. Directly at the lakeshore there are the villages of Curon Venosta and Resia as well as the hamlets of Casone and Spin.

Up to 1950, there were three lakes in this area: Lake Resia, Lake Curon and Lake San Valentino alla Muta. When the reservoir was dammed after the construction of the dam wall (1947-1949), the locality of Curon Venosta as well as much of the village of Resia were flooded and destroyed. The only remnant of Old Curon is the steeple, which still towers out of the waters and is nowadays a historical landmark. There are several narrations and legends around this historical happening and the steeple - it is said that sometimes you can hear the bells ring from the depths of the lake! In the waters of Lake Resia, various fish species like vendaces, brown trouts, perch, pikes and rainbow trouts splash around. At the lakeshore, people enjoy walking, nordic walking, jogging and cycling. The deep blue Lake Resia, however, is also a mekka for kitesurfers, as this place features the right wind conditions, and is perfect for a ship tour on board of the MS Hubertus Interregio. In winter, however, the lake offers ideal conditions for ice sailers and ice surfers, whereas at its west end the valley station of the Belpiano skiing area can be found.

The symbol of Venosta Valley is quite fascinating and rather like a fable. A solitary church steeple emerges half out of the clear waters of the 6 km long Resia Lake, against the majestic background of the wild Langtaufers Valley. However, the story behind this postcard-like image is far less idyllic and the romantic 14th Century church bears testimony to the irresponsible decision of the State to locate a dam there after the end of the Second World War.

As from 1922, Fascism had taken hold in Italy, including South Tyrol. In 1939, the Montecatini conglomerate began the construction of a of 22-meter deep dam project in Resia/Reschen, with complete disregard for the sensibilities and remonstrations of the local South Tyrolean population. Construction was suspended after the outbreak of the War and it was hoped that this would mark the end of the project. But in 1947, just two years after the end of the War and much to the dismay of the local population, Montecatini announced that work on the construction of the dam was to be resumed.

By the summer of 1950, it was all over. The locks had been tightened and the water was rising, flooding 677 hectares of land affecting 150 families, half of which were forced to emigrate. Compensation was meagre and the inhabitants of the town of Curon/Graun, which was completely flooded, were housed in temporary accommodation – basic shacks located at the entrance of the Vallelunga/Langtaufers. The dam was the product of fascism and through it hundreds of families lost the basis of their livelihood.

The half-submerged church steeple in the Resia Lake has been declared a protected historical artefact, becoming a tourist attraction and thus symbolizing the legacy of old Curon.