

Current MSc-Project within the Paleoecology section

Holocene vegetation dynamics in the Ossola valley, Northern Italy

Although the vegetation history of the Valais and the Ticino has been extensively studied in the past, there are no paleoecological records from neighboring Valle d'Ossola in Northern Italy. We are currently trying to fill this gap with an ongoing MSc-project that will reconstruct the Holocene vegetation dynamics at a lake within the subalpine belt in the Valle Devero, an alpine valley with a rich archeological history, pointing to human presence since the Mesolithic. To reconstruct past treeline changes and increase the spatial resolution of our study, we propose a second MSc-project that will focus on a lake at lower elevation in the montane zone of the Valle d'Ossola. Ultimately, the results of the project will allow us to determine the natural vegetation of the Ossola valley and assess possible climate change impacts in the future.

Methods: Lake sediment coring, pollen, macrofossil and charcoal analysis, numerical techniques

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Lago di Mergozzo is a lake at the lower end of the Ossola Valley. The basin was connected to the Lago di Maggiore in historical times but was cut off by delta aggradation from the Toce river. A recent paleoecological coring campaign allowed us to date the separation of the lake to ca. 1300 AD.