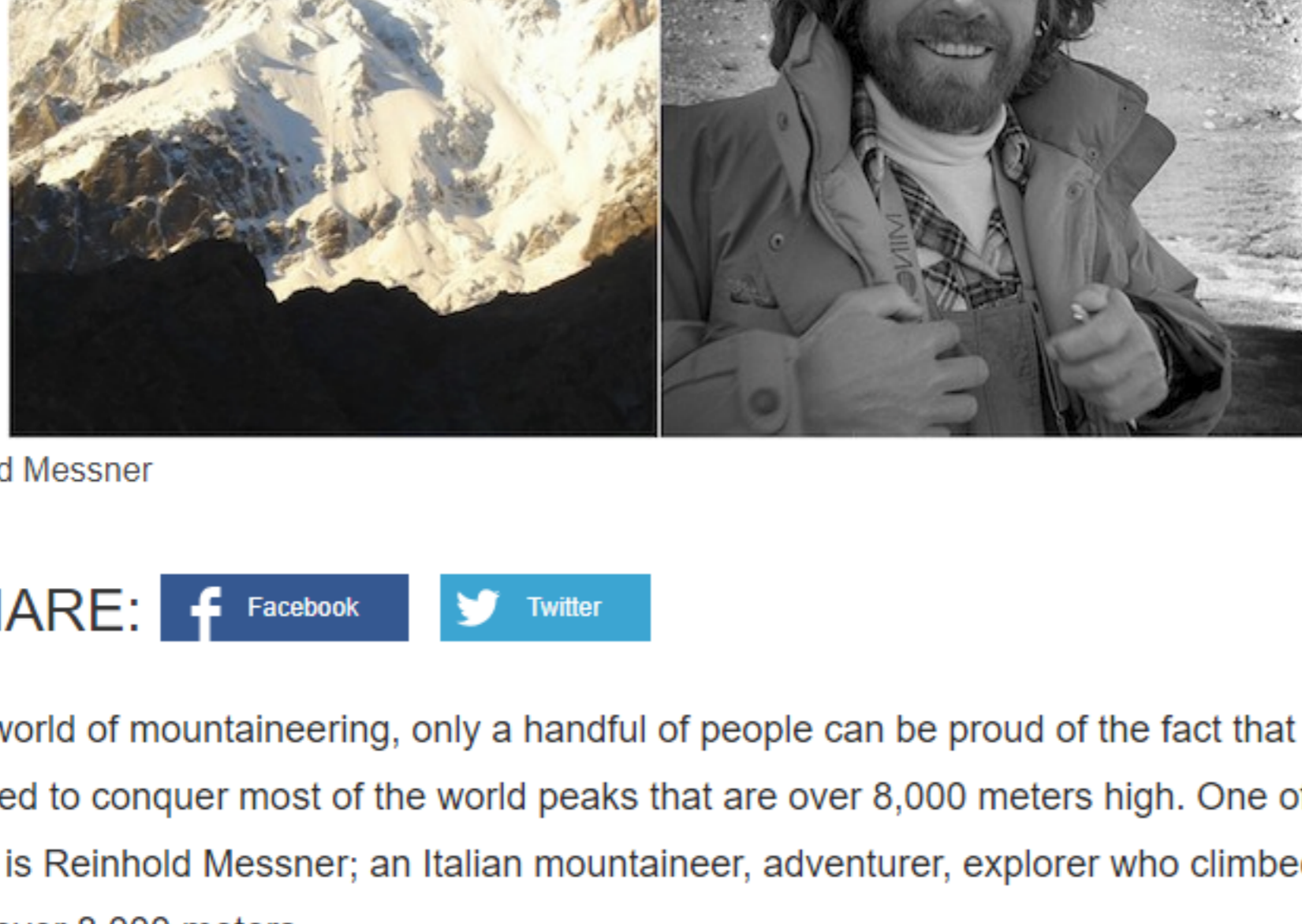




Reinhold Messner – 14 peaks over 8,000 meters without supplemental oxygen

By Boban
Publish Date: Jun 27, 2017



Reinhold Messner

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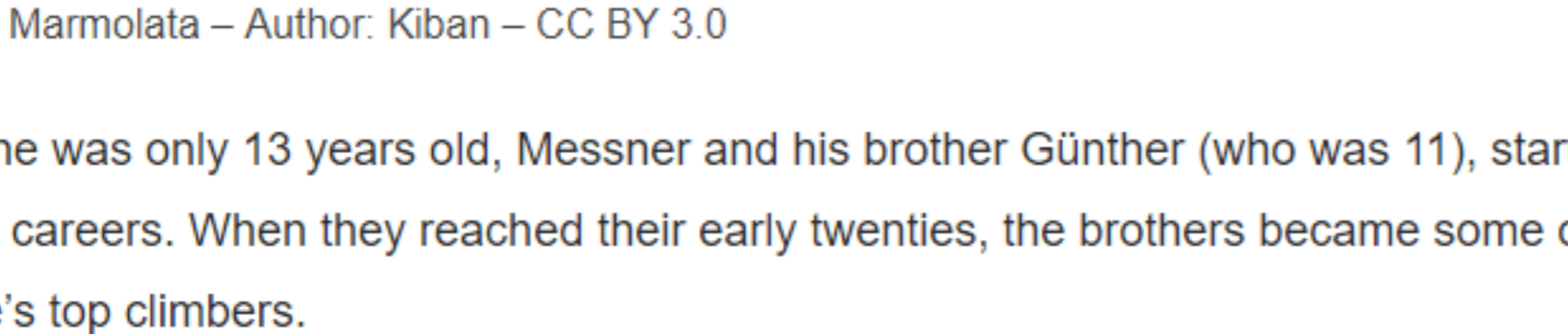
In the world of mountaineering, only a handful of people can be proud of the fact that they managed to conquer most of the world peaks that are over 8,000 meters high. One of those people is Reinhold Messner; an Italian mountaineer, adventurer, explorer who climbed all 14 peaks over 8,000 meters.

Messner who was born in Brixen, in the province South Tyrol in northern Italy, spent most of his early childhood climbing the Alps. As a young mountaineer, he fell in love with the Dolomites, the mountain range of his homeland. Reinhold's father, Josef Messner, took him on his first summit when he was only five years old.

Soon, Reinhold embarked on his lifetime adventure that will make him one of the best mountaineers in the world. Messner was born into a big family. He had eight brothers and one sister, and it looks like most of them have adventure running through their veins.

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One of his brothers, Günther, was also a climber, and his brother Hubert enjoyed making Arctic crossings.



Marmolata – Author: Kiban – CC BY 3.0

When he was only 13 years old, Messner and his brother Günther (who was 11), started their alpinist careers. When they reached their early twenties, the brothers became some of Europe's top climbers.

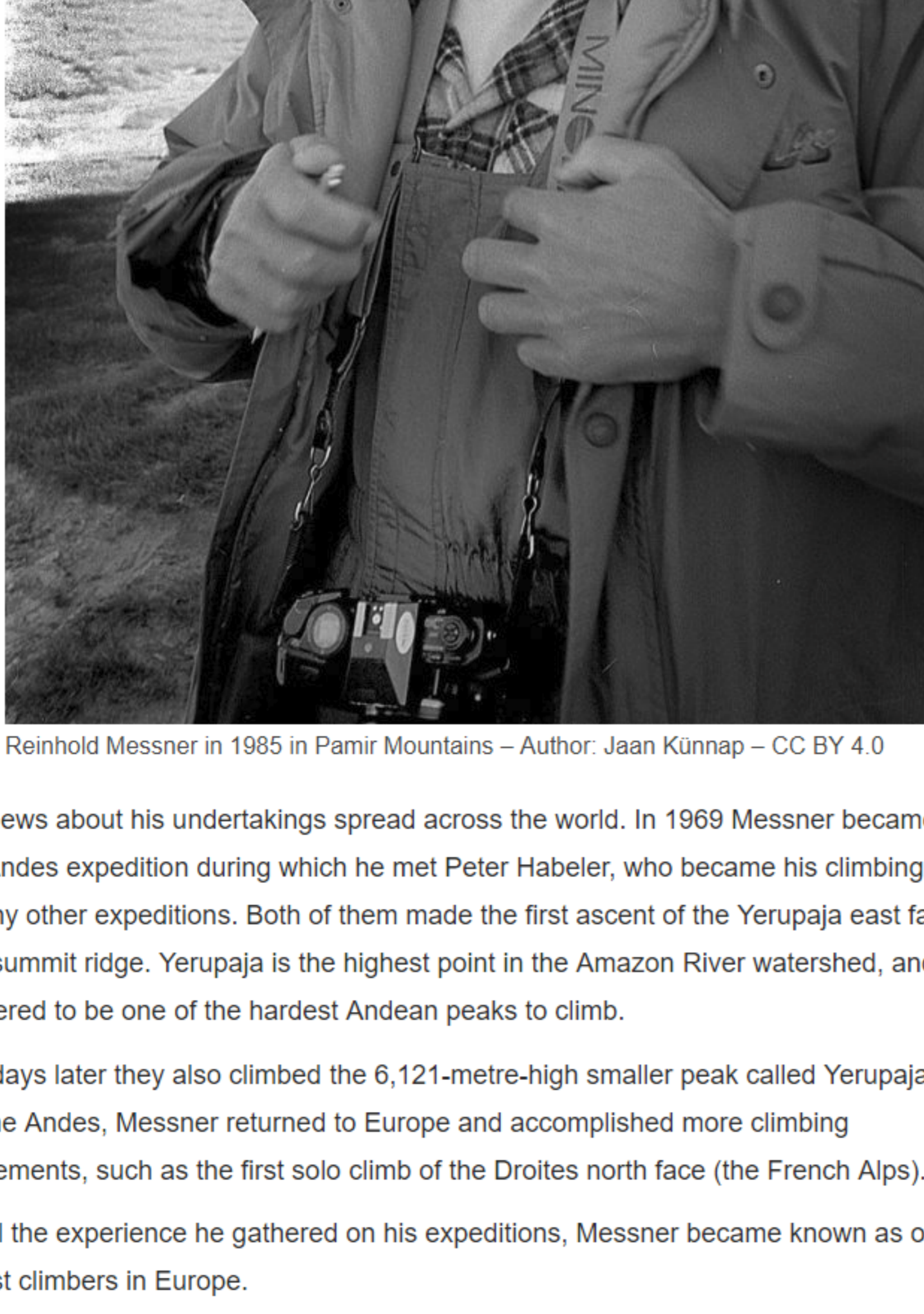
In his early days as a professional climber, Messner became famous mainly because of his achievements on the Alps.

In the period between 1960 and 1964, Messner made over 500 climbs, most of which were in the Dolomites. Between 1965 and 1969 Reinhold made a lot of ascends across the Alps. He succeeded in climbing some of Europe's highest and hardest to accessible peaks, as well as finding new routes.

In 1965 climbed a new "direttissima" route on the north face of the Ortler the main peak of the Ortler Range in the Eastern Alps.

The following year he succeeded in climbing the Walker Spur, the highest peak on the Grandes Jorasses (which is part of the Mont Blanc massif). In 1967 he made the first winter climbs of the north faces of Agnér and Furchetta (the Dolomites).

In 1968, he made more successful first attempts. Among other important ascends, he managed to climb the direct south face of the Marmolata, the highest mountain of the Dolomites.



Reinhold Messner in 1985 in Pamir Mountains – Author: Jaan Künnap – CC BY 4.0

Soon news about his undertakings spread across the world. In 1969 Messner became part of an Andes expedition during which he met Peter Habeler, who became his climbing partner on many other expeditions. Both of them made the first ascent of the Yerupaja east face up to the summit ridge. Yerupaja is the highest point in the Amazon River watershed, and it is considered to be one of the hardest Andean peaks to climb.

A few days later they also climbed the 6,121-metre-high smaller peak called Yerupaja Chico. After the Andes, Messner returned to Europe and accomplished more climbing achievements, such as the first solo climb of the Droites north face (the French Alps).

With all the experience he gathered on his expeditions, Messner became known as one of the best climbers in Europe.

In 1970, his reputation got him invited on a major Himalayan expedition. It turned out that 1970 would become a crucial year in Reinhold's life, both because of a tragedy and because of his mountaineering success.

In 1970 Reinhold and his brother Günther arrived in the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan where Nanga Parbat is located. The goal of the expedition led by Karl Herrligkoffer was to climb the, as yet unclimbed, Rupal Face – the highest rock and ice face in the world. Nanga Parbat is the ninth highest mountain in the world at 8,126 meters (26,660 ft) above sea level. It stands tall at the Western end of the Himalayas. It is regarded as one of the most challenging peaks to climb, because of the deaths of many mountaineers, Nanga got its nickname "killer mountain." Unfortunately, Reinhold's brother was among those who lost their lives on Nanga Parbat.

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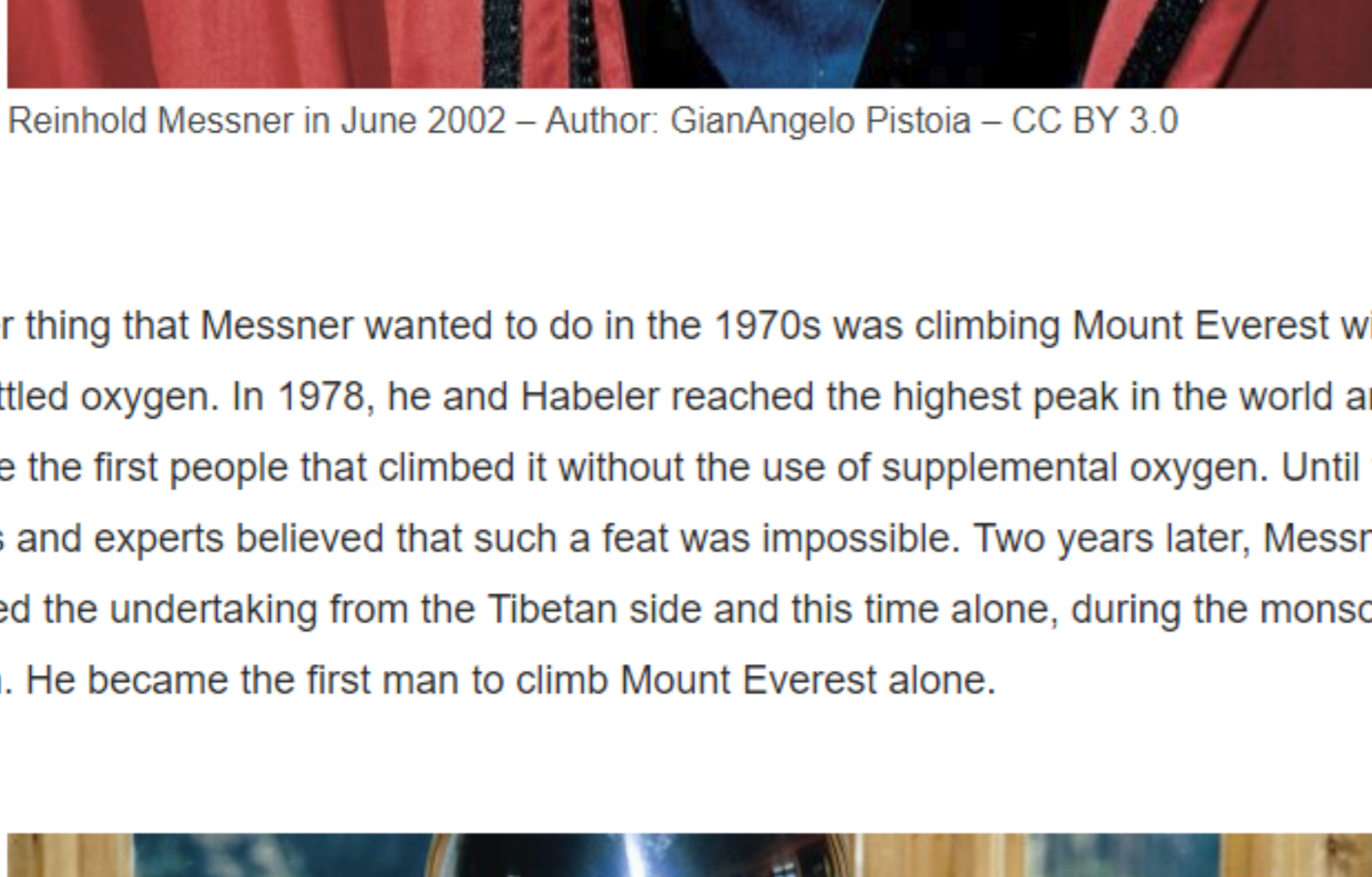
Rupal face of Nanga Parbat- Author: Daniel Martin – GFDL 1.2

Both Reinhold and his brother managed to reach the summit, but two days later, while they were descending on the Diamir Face of the mountain, they got further and further separated from each other. Messner claimed his brother got swept away by an avalanche.

Six days later, Reinhold returned alone to the Valley with severe frostbite. He lost seven toes, and because of that he is unable to climb rock comfortably; that is why he continued to pursue some of the highest ice-covered peaks in the world. Günther's fate was undetermined until 2005 when a major increase in temperatures on the mountain revealed his body and proved Reinhold's claims.

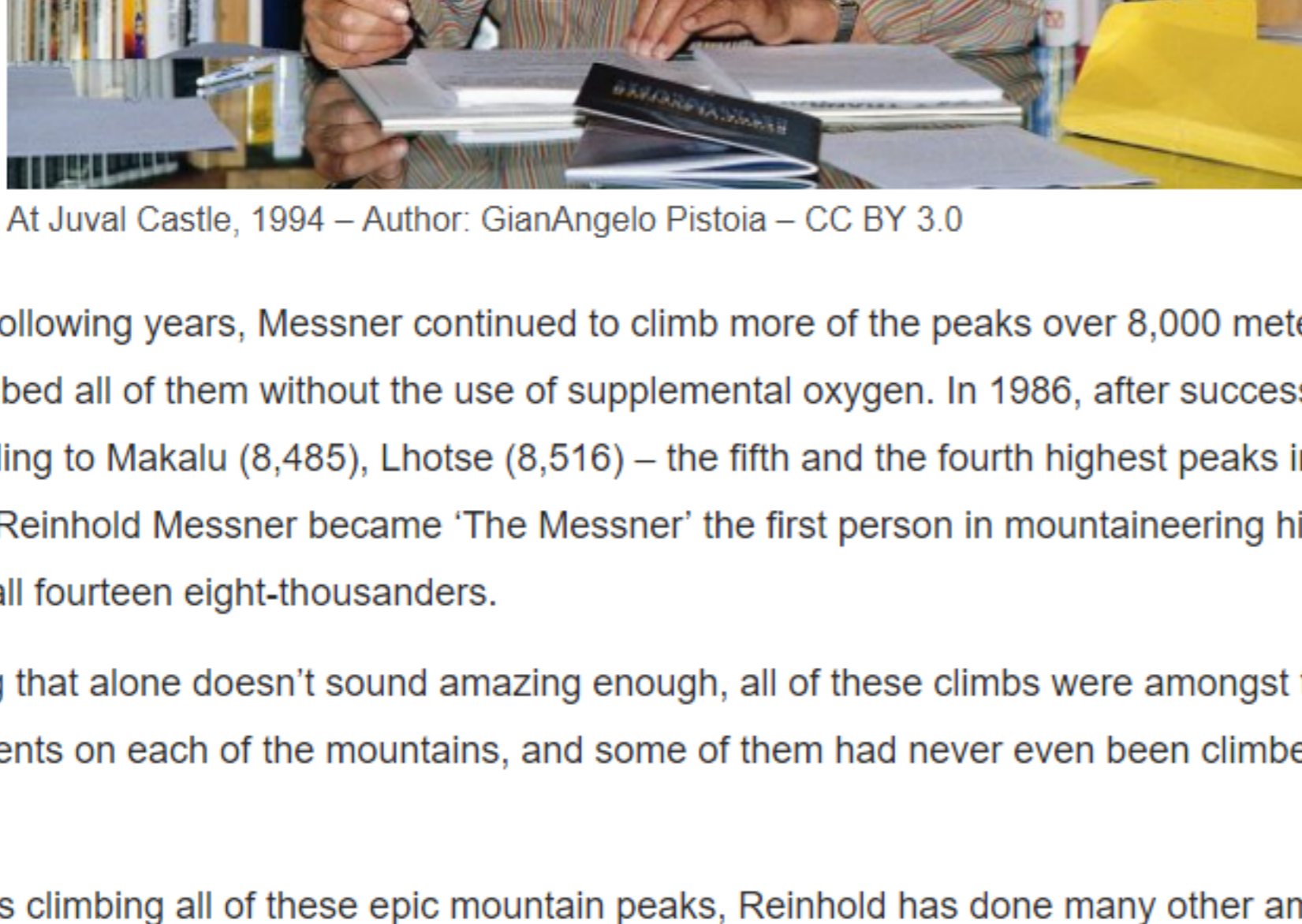
It is important to note that since the 1960s Messner has been one of the biggest supporters of the alpine style of Himalayan mountaineering – which means everyone carries his own equipment with a minimum of external help.

According to Messner and other alpine style supporters, this way is friendlier to nature than the typical expedition style ("siege tactics") which harms nature and the mountains.



Reinhold Messner in June 2002 – Author: GianAngelo Pistoia – CC BY 3.0

Another thing that Messner wanted to do in the 1970s was climbing Mount Everest without any bottled oxygen. In 1978, he and Habeler reached the highest peak in the world and became the first people that climbed it without the use of supplemental oxygen. Until then, doctors and experts believed that such a feat was impossible. Two years later, Messner repeated the undertaking from the Tibetan side and this time alone, during the monsoon season. He became the first man to climb Mount Everest alone.



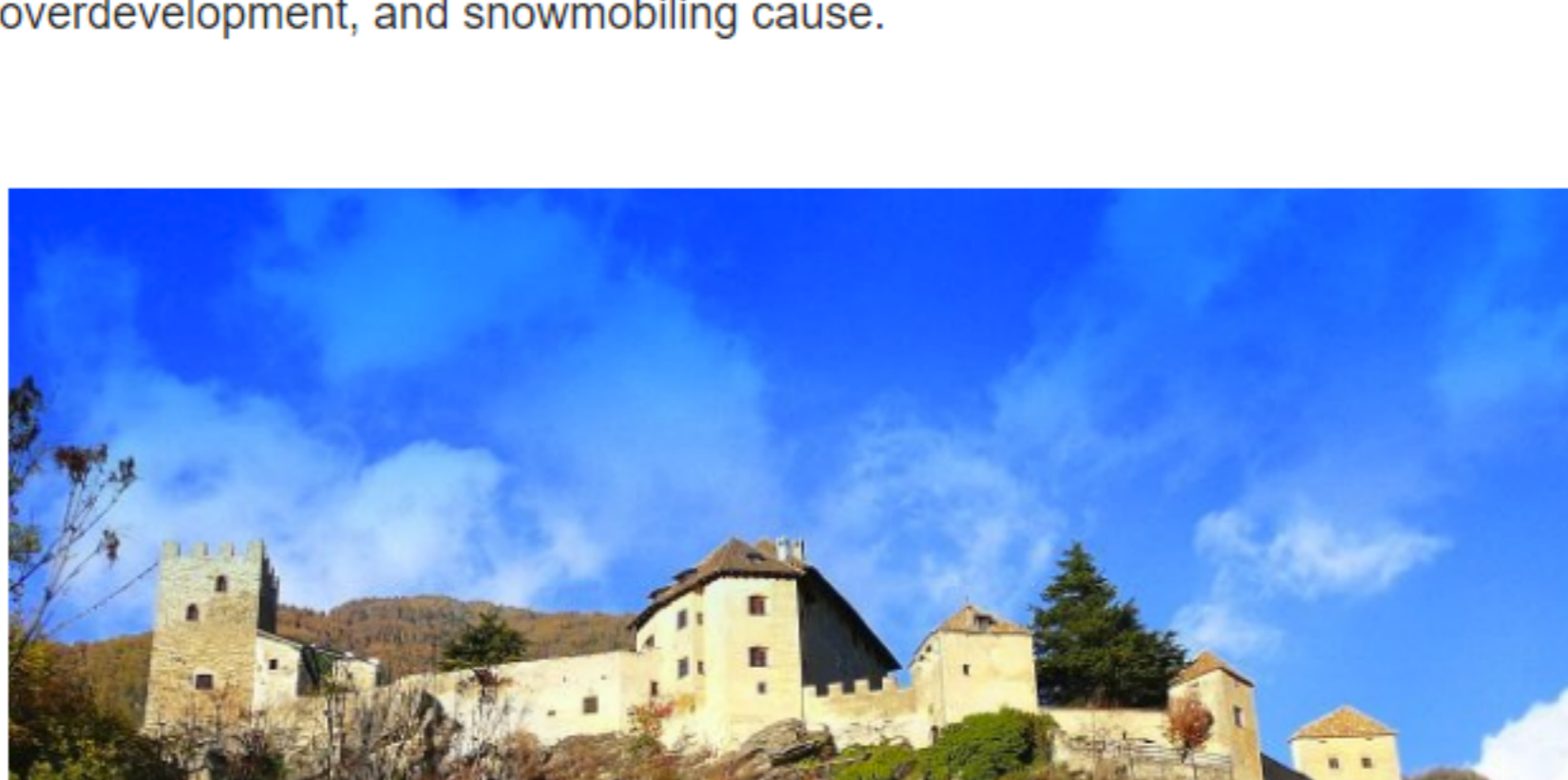
At Juval Castle, 1994 – Author: GianAngelo Pistoia – CC BY 3.0

In the following years, Messner continued to climb more of the peaks over 8,000 meters, and he climbed all of them without the use of supplemental oxygen. In 1986, after successfully ascending to Makalu (8,485), Lhotse (8,516) – the fifth and the fourth highest peaks in the world, Reinhold Messner became "The Messner" the first person in mountaineering history to reach all fourteen eight-thousanders.

If doing that alone doesn't sound amazing enough, all of these climbs were amongst the first 20 ascents on each of the mountains, and some of them had never even been climbed before.

Besides climbing all of these epic mountain peaks, Reinhold has done many other amazing feats such as: crossing Antarctica on foot and making a 2,000-kilometre (1,200 mi) solo journey across the Gobi Desert.

Messner has dedicated his whole life to the mountains and exploration, but he also holds a degree in architectural engineering. He used this knowledge to build his astonishing Messner Mountain Museums in five different South Tyrol locations.



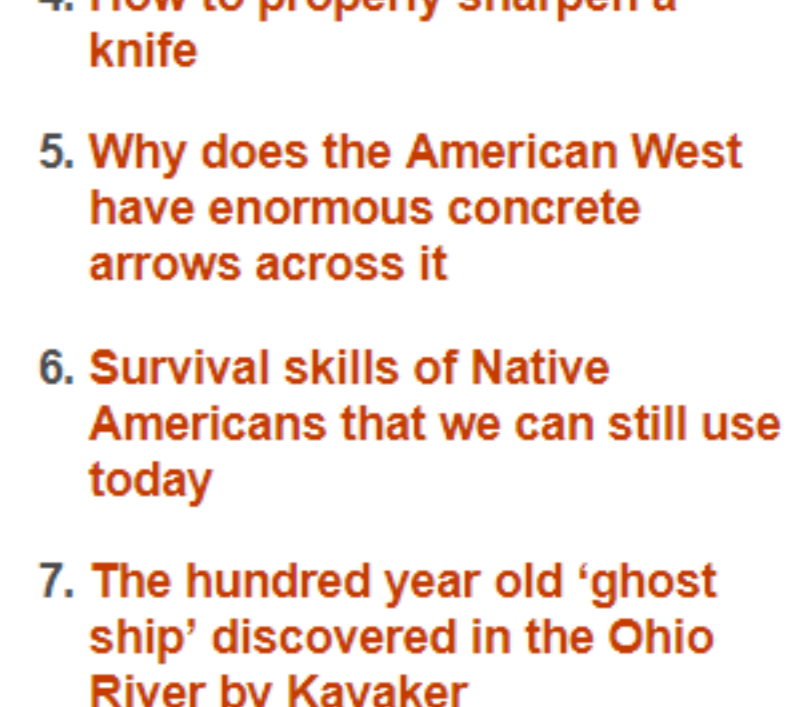
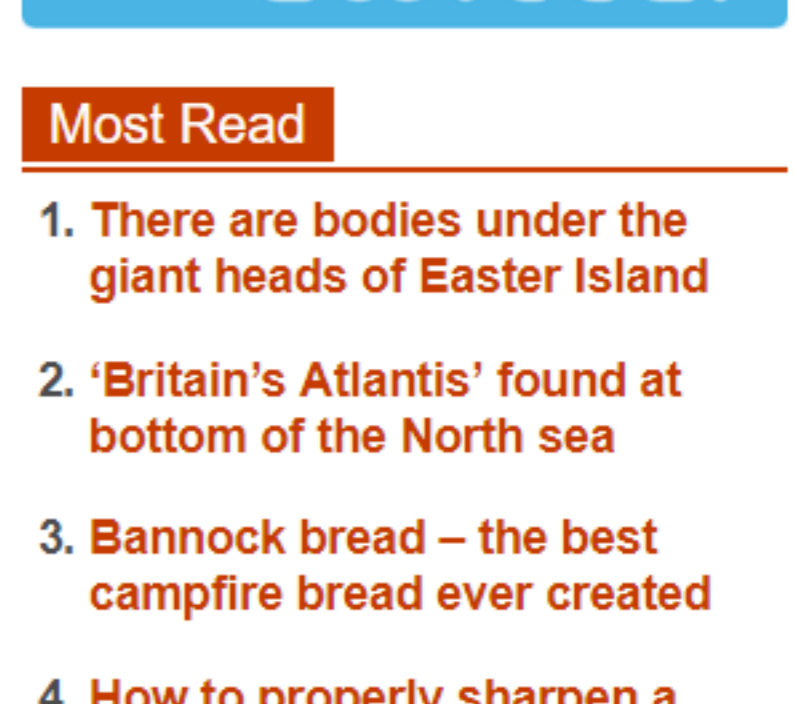
Location of the eight-thousanders – Author: Kauk0r – CC BY 3.0

To date, Messner has written more than 60 books in which he describes his countless adventures across the world. Reinhold's life has never been boring; he has done a lot of different expeditions, and he has worked on a lot of different projects, but all of them have been aimed towards mountaineering or the protection of the environment. He even was elected as a Member of the European Parliament as a candidate representing the Italian Green Party.

Reinhold Messner was also one of the founders of the Mountain Wilderness organization whose goals are protection and preservation of mountainous regions around the world. The organization tries to protect the mountainous parts of the world from the destruction that heli-skiing, overdevelopment, and snowmobiling cause.

Juval Castle – Author: F.Delventhal – CC BY 2.0

Today, Reinhold passes most of his time in his Messner Mountain Museum at the Juval Castle, above the village of Naturns, Northern Italy.



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