2017

Waldensian Tour Guide

Kathleen Demsky
Anders University, demskyk@andrews.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/books

Part of the Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Art and Architecture Commons, and the History of Christianity Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/books/7

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Books by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact repository@andrews.edu.
LUX LUCET EN TENEBRIS

The words surrounding the lighted candle symbolize Christ’s message in Matthew 5:16, “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven.”

The dark blue background represents the night sky and the spiritual darkness of the world.

The seven gold stars represent the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation and suggest the apostolic origin of the Waldensian church.

One oak tree branch and one laurel tree branch are tied together with a light blue ribbon to symbolize strength, hope, and the glory of God.

The laurel wreath is “The Church Triumphant.”
Please note that some years the venue will change.
The mighty Castelluzzo, Castle of Light, stands like a sentinel in the Waldensian Valleys, a sacred monument to the faith and sacrifice of a people who were willing to pay the ultimate price for their Lord and Savior. On this mountain, during the Easter Massacre of 1655, thousands were hurled to their deaths—mothers with their children, fathers, the elderly—a horror of horrors. Mt. Castelluzzo rises above Torre Pellice, frequently covered by clouds that wrap its rocky, tree-clad splendor from view, hiding its past sorrows. About halfway up the face of the mountain a dark, immovable shadow marks the mouth of a cave so roomy, hundreds of people can crowd inside. To this friendly chamber the Waldenses retreated when the valley beneath was in pandemonium, glimmering with steel, red with crime, and ringing with screams and evil blasphemies. Here many of the Vaudois fled on the occasion of the great massacre. Alas, their persecutors tracked them down, dragging them forth to roll them down the awful precipice.
A hidden pathway between two very large stones lies at the summit of Castelluzzo. At the end of this passage a great stone platform is revealed, adorned only by a simple monument of stacked stones, reminiscent of the ancient altars of Biblical times. This monument is unique among martyrs’ monuments the whole world over. While Castelluzzo stands, the memory of the great crime committed there cannot die. Throughout the ages the mountain will continue to cry that cry which Milton interpreted in his sonnet, “On the Late Massacre in the Piedmonts”: “Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints!” While climbing the trail that leads to the monument at the summit, think about what it would have been like to run up that trail, fleeing from tormentors. Think about what it would have been like to stand firm for your faith in the face of dire consequences. Remember, one day we will meet the faithful Waldenses in a beautiful land far away (Isaiah 33:17).

On the way to Castelluzzo’s summit is the little village of Coppiers. Look for the church where many of the important Protestants of the past are buried. This was the original church of Torre Pellice, until Charles Beckwith built the one currently located in the valley. Just beyond the old church is the ancient house of Pastor Gilly, as well as Henri Arnaud’s house, located just behind the old hospital.
Torre Pellice

Torre Pellice, the Waldensian capital and headquarters of the Waldensian Church, is a lovely village situated at the foot of Monte Vandalino (6500 ft.) In its Arnaud Piazza stand the Waldensian Seminary, the Beckwith Church, the Waldensian Museum, and the Casa Valdese (church headquarters). To this day, ancient Waldensian hymns are still sung by the local choir to aid in the preservation of their heritage.

The Waldensian Museum is the leading institution in a series of museums, temples, and historical sites in the Pellice, Chisone, and Germanasca valleys. Together, these locations comprise the
Waldensian Valleys Eco-historical Museum System. Now over a hundred years old, the Torre Pellice Museum has been modified several times and is now composed of two parts. The historical section showcases a reconstruction of events relating to Waldensian history from the Middle Ages to the present time. The ethnographic section focuses on the settings and daily activities of Waldensian life and culture in the 1800s and 1900s. Every Friday, for several hundred years, an outdoor market has been held in Torre Pellice, which provides its citizens with everything from fresh produce to clothing and shoes.

The story of Torre Pellice begins around the year 1000 A.D., when a tower (torre) was built on the fortress from which the town derived its name. The construction of this tower was a response to the invasion of the Saracens and other adventurers who occupied the valleys, causing devastation. In 1561, the fortress was re-constructed on a hill just outside the town, and a tunnel was dug from the fortress to a monastery in Torre. There the Waldenses were taken by persecutors hellbent on suppressing the faithful people, who tortured them for being “heretics.” The tunnel and fortress were mercifully destroyed by Henry Arnaud and his men on the Glorious Return, and were never rebuilt. The ruins remain today, witness to a violent past.
College of the Barbas
*Elevation 3227 ft*

Located just a short hike up from the church in Angrona is the Barba’s College. In the Middle Ages, evangelists were trained in this remote, secluded spot to take the Gospel to many parts of Europe. When the Roman Church branded them heretics and forbade them to preach or circulate Scripture, declaring that even possession of a Bible was punishable by death, the Waldenses were forced into concealment and had to disguise themselves to achieve their evangelistic purposes.

Waldensian ministers, called “barbas,” trained at this seminary for their clandestine operations. Closely surrounded by steep, impenetrable mountains, and with only one access road, a narrow passage chiseled by spring thaws in the southeast, the village was virtually impervious to outside attack. The school consequently served not only as a sanctuary for the barbas, but also as a fortress for refugees from the lower valleys in times of siege.
Here, during the long Alpine winters, the barbas studied the Bible, committing to memory much of the New Testament, the Psalms, and Job. As they perfected their evangelistic skills, they also studied Latin, French, and Italian, and transcribed books of the Bible into their own language, a dialect called Patois. They wrote religious tracts and poetry and translated the works of Biblical scholars. They learned mathematics and enough botany and basic medical skills to deal with simple illnesses. They also learned a trade or profession to provide both income and a disguise, allowing them to travel incognito on missionary assignments to spread the Word.
Valley of Angroagna

Elevation 3227 ft
Angroga is one of most beautiful valleys in the Piedmont region and has a significant place in Waldensian history. After leaving Torre Pellice and crossing the Angroga River, the ascent to the Pra Del Tor begins. Here God sent a great fog to disorient the troops of Catinat, marshal of France. Turning on each other, many fell into the river below as they fled from the Waldenses. Waldensian writers have acclaimed this little valley as the source from which the Word of God flowed like a shining river through the darkness of the Middle Ages; the spring from whence the barbas, and therefore the Waldensian movement, drew sustenance and strength to endure the persecutions that were to fall upon them. There is hardly a place you can step in Angroga that was not once stained with blood shed by the ancient martyrs for their faith.

In 1487, the papal captain Sacchetti led a skirmish in Angroga, standing on a boulder in the midst of the river to direct his troops. As the villagers fled, a lame man and his son who were unable to escape with the others hid in the bushes; the father had his bow and wanted to use it. His son, fearing they would be noticed and killed, pled with his father, saying, “Don’t shoot, Father, don’t shoot!” When the man saw Sacchetti within bowshot, however, he took careful aim and loosed his arrow straight into the captain’s heart. Sacchetti fell into the torrent and died, and his soldiers rapidly fled the Valley.
Waldensian worship services were outlawed; reading the Bible was expressly forbidden. Confiscated Bibles were burned, and anyone caught reading the Bible was imprisoned, tortured, and executed. The Waldenses’ long history of secrecy put them in good stead to withstand the relentless persecution. When their temples were raided and destroyed, the villagers moved their worship services to woods or caves, fleeing there to escape capture and death.

One such hiding place was the Gheisa d’la Tana (“Church in the Cave”). Situated in one of the mountains rising from the Angrogna Valley, its low, narrow entrance is well concealed by trees and rocks, and can only be entered on hands and knees. Imagine the kind of intense and determined faith that would lead men, women, and children to crawl into a cave to find a safe place to worship God, with a watch posted outside to warn them of danger.

God split the mountain with a great earthquake to provide his people a haven of worship. One can picture worshipers kneeling on the damp cavern floor to pray and encourage one another with passages of memorized scripture. At one end of the cave, where the pastor
stood to speak, a small shaft of light breaks the darkness over a natural stone platform. Worship in the cave was a hallowed moment. Though the cave provided sanctuary in times of siege, the threat of capture was always imminent. During one siege, soldiers followed a group of Waldenses as they fled from their village and saw them disappear into the mountain. Examining the area, the soldiers found both the entrance to the cave and the light-shaft opening farther up on the slope. Over the shaft they built a bonfire of wet brush to smoke out the refugees hiding inside. As the people, blinded and choked by the smoke, crawled from the cave, the soldiers killed them one by one.

BECKWITH SCHOOL
Education was important to the Waldenses. They believed that the Bible was central to the Christian life, and they cherished the right of individuals to read and interpret for Scripture themselves. To that end, they believed that everyone should have the privilege of learning to read. When it appeared that all their Bibles would be destroyed, every person, including the children, memorized one or more books of the Bible so that if the worst horror befell them—if their Scriptures were consigned to the flames—they could recreate the sacred text from their collective memories. The privilege of education came to be prized when, during times of persecution, civil liberties as well as religious freedoms were revoked.

General John Charles Beckwith settled in the Waldensian Valleys from September 1827 until his death on July 19, 1862. Beckwith was a Canadian officer in the British army and aide to General Wellington in the Battle of Waterloo, when Napoleon was defeated. The wounds Beckwith sustained in that battle ended his military career at age twenty-six, leaving him a retired man with a wooden leg. While visiting Wellington some years later, Beckwith providentially came across a book about the Waldenses. He found their story so intriguing that he made a visit to the Valleys and remained there for nearly thirty years. Profoundly impressed by the Waldenses, he wanted to do something for them. He believed strongly in their evangelistic spirit, and believed that education was vital to achieving their evangelistic goals. Consequently, he helped build schools in each of the tiny hamlets, because during the hard winters with deep snows the children could not possibly attend school in a neighboring village. A total of 165 schools were built. At his own expense Beckwith sent many promising but poor young people to Lausanne or Geneva to study for ministry or teaching careers (McCall, Maxine, Guide to the Trail of Faith).
In 1517, Luther’s hammer rang out on the doors of the Wittenberg church as he nailed up his 95 Theses. Luther’s actions brought the protest against the Roman Church to a boil and were a catalyst for three separate Protestant movements occurring simultaneously in Germany, Switzerland, and France. At the same time, the Archbishop of Turin toured the valleys offering indulgences for the remission of sins, to which the Waldenses protested, “We have no need of the Pope’s indulgences.”

As word of the Reformation’s growing strength reached the Valleys, the Waldenses reacted with cautious interest. While they identified with the Reformers’ desire to bring the Christian Church back to its original purity and to reaffirm Scripture as the absolute standard for faith, they felt the need to test the Reformation doctrines with Scripture before making any formal alliances. To this end they sent their barbas to confer with the Reformers in Germany and Switzerland and bring back ideas for study. After 15 years of prayerful deliberation, the Waldenses made the decision to join the Reformation. In September 1532, thousands of pastors and laymen met with the Reformers Farel, Saunier, and Olivetan at Chanforan,
a grassy, sloped meadow in the parish of Angrogna. The decision followed six days of “lively discussion,” during which Swiss reformer William Farel, with great zeal and eloquence, prevailed upon the Waldenses “to finish with concealment and join hands openly with the great reform movement.”

This decision resulted in major changes for the Waldensian Church. Secrecy was abandoned. Waldenses began to openly erect temples, hold public worship, and be served by resident pastors instead of itinerant preachers. French and Italian replaced Patois as the official languages of the Waldensian Church. French was used for communication with Reformed churches beyond Italy’s borders, while Italian was used in relationships with churches in the Piedmont and Italy. The last time Patois was used for a religious meeting was at the Synod at Chanforan. In 1932, four hundred years after the Waldensians met with the reformers, a granite monolith was raised in the meadow to commemorate the 1532 Synod.

**THE OLIVETAN BIBLE, 1535**

As a capstone to the Chanforan event, the Waldenses, with their long history of proficient Bible translation, pledged funds toward a most priceless treasure in honor of the Reformation: The first translation of the entire Bible into French.

Pierre Robert Olivetan was in his late twenties when he became a pastor to the Waldensians. He inspired his cousin John Calvin to begin his life work as a pastor and master of the Scriptures. Olivetan spent three years in the Valleys translating Greek and Hebrew texts into the Olivetan Bible. The finished product, published at Neuchatel in 1535, was a beautiful volume of two thousand pages in gothic characters. To cover the production cost, 1500 ecus of gold, the Waldenses sold a year’s worth of rare white wool from their flocks.

Later revised by Calvin, the Olivetan Bible became the “authorized version” of French Protestantism, with fifty editions printed before the end of the sixteenth century. It was a literary milestone, and as significant for the French-speaking world as was the King James translation into English.

At this time, a providential awareness of the terrible mistreatment of the faithful, innocent Waldenses began to dawn upon the whole of Europe. This awareness provided a network of spiritual encouragement as well as financial and military support during the persecutions to come.
Ciabas

Ciabas, originally built in 1555, is one of the oldest temples in the Waldensian Valleys. Though the primitive church, originally built with a thatched roof, burned to the ground, it was later rebuilt as we see it today. The early Waldensian temples were built without bell towers because the Waldenses were forbidden from calling people to gather for worship.

Attending church was often punishable by death. Temples such as this were built like fortresses to serve as places of refuge during times of siege. As the Waldenses grew more openly defiant against the Medieval Church, methods of persecution grew more vicious; but the more zealous the attacks, the more the Waldensian faith seemed to flourish.

Because Protestants were not permitted burial grounds, many of their bodies were sent to Ciabas for burial under the church floor. Within the church walls are buried a number of distinguished foreign Protestants. Today it is possible to read the names of the Protestant heroes etched into the stone flooring of the little temple. Behind Ciabas on the slopes of Roccia Maneoud, a David and Goliath story played out in 1484 when Cattaneo’s army was determined to wipe out the Waldenses. As the war raged and it seemed that the enemy was at the point of victory, the women and elderly at the rear of the Waldensian position fell upon their knees and cried out to God, “O! God, of our fathers, help us. Oh! God, deliver us.” One of Cattaneo’s leaders, known as il Nero di Mondovi (the Black) heard this cry and answered that he would give them the answer to their prayers. The knight raised his visor to speak when a youth, Pierre Revel, aimed an arrow, piercing Mondovi’s eye. The knight then fell a corpse, and upon seeing this disaster his men fell back and were completely routed.
The Fenestrelle fortress, commonly known as “the Great Wall of the Piedmont,” is a complex of buildings surrounded by a vast stone wall. Fenestrelle is the largest fortress in Europe and covers an area of 1,350,000 meters. In a recent issue of The Smithsonian, it was featured as one of the “Top Ten” places to visit before it crumbles and is destroyed. It is also known as the Siberia of the Alps because of its location and the cold winds that blow down the snowy Alps into the unheated prison cells. Few who were imprisoned in Fenestrelle lived to tell the story. Its purpose was to house the soldiers sent to subdue and destroy the Waldensians, to guard a major pass between Italy and France, and to imprison and torture the Waldenses before their execution. Bishops, monks, and other leaders were frequently sent “on vacation” to Fenestrelle to meditate on the rules of discipline.

Beginning in 1343, Waldensian “heresy” led to centuries of persecutions and strife. The earliest fortification built in that area was called Fort Mutin and was a bulwark against the Waldenses.

Later the fortress, designed by Antonio Bertola and his son Ignazio (one of the greatest military engineers of his time), was significantly enlarged. Expansion began in 1727 and took 122 years to complete; Fenestrelle remained operational until 1947. The Carlo Alberto Redoubt was half demolished by state highway widening. The fortress soon became the favorite “help yourself” site for both the public and the private. Things like doors, window fittings, floorboards, handrails, roofing stones, hand-crafted iron grilles, and even entire roofs, flagstones, and frescoed walls were carried away for use elsewhere.

One of the most unusual features of the fortress is the covered staircase, which climbs up the mountain for some four thousand steps.
In ancient times the road to France and Spain wound its way across Italy and through the little village of Balziglia. Scholars have suggested that if the Apostle Paul actually journeyed from Rome to Spain he would have taken this pathway. One can easily hike the old path to the little hamlet of Clot de Main. Here the ancient buildings and trails have stood the test of time for over five hundred years. The key to the endurance of Waldensian homes is their simplicity and the beauty of natural materials.

Under heavy persecution, the Waldenses were forced to evacuate the Valleys. For those who survived the grueling march across the mountains to Switzerland, freedom was a blessed reward. At long last, the Waldenses could exercise their religion openly without fear or danger. They were safe. The Swiss treated them with kindness and respect, but they were not happy. Switzerland was not “home.” Their roots and their hearts were still in the Valleys with all they held precious there. Inevitably, they would make efforts to return.

On the night of August 16, 1689, nine hundred stalwart men pushed off from the north shore of Lake Geneva in fourteen boats and crossed over to Savoy. The journey home had begun. What a journey it was! Sartell Prentice, Jr. captured something of the spirit of that night at Lake Geneva when he said: “We stand in awe before the little band
of... heroes, led by Pastor Henri Arnaud, . . . as we see them embark on the maddest, most glorious, and most incredible venture to be found in all the annals of history—nothing less than the re-conquest of their beloved Waldensian Valleys. If captured, they could expect to spend the rest of their lives as galley slaves, chained to the oars, or, more likely, death by fire. Waiting for them are the combined armies of France and Savoy—to say nothing of the formidable mountain barrier of the Alps. No wonder that no less an authority than Napoleon himself marveled at this ‘Glorious Return’ of the Waldenses, and considered it to be the greatest military exploit of the seventeenth century.”

God was on the side of the Waldenses. Arnaud lead them across 128 miles of treacherous mountain terrain to reach the edge of the Piedmont in only eight days. On August 27, Arnaud and his men entered the first Waldensian village, Balziglia, at the extreme point of the Massello Valley. There Arnaud led them in the first public worship of their march. He preached from Psalm 129: “Many a time have they afflicted me from youth; yet they have not prevailed against me.” What a picture they must have made—seven hundred men sitting on a hillside, lifting praises to God in thanksgiving.

It was from Balziglia, months later, that these ragged men made a dramatic, heart-stopping escape over a treacherous mountain pass—in the dark, in dense fog, and within inches of enemy campfire. They crawled on their hands and knees past the French troops up the icy trails that led them away from danger. By morning light the next day, as they reached the summit and looked back over the path they had just struggled to master, even these strong mountain men stood in shock. Only the hand of God could have brought them safely through the night on that treacherous trail.
After leaving Balziglia, Arnaud and his men pressed on from one summit to the next until they reached the valley of Pellice. They camped at Sibaud near the village of Bobbio. There, on Sunday, September 1, 1689, the entire company—pastors, officers, and soldiers—made a covenant to defend one another and their cause to the death.

**THE COVENANT OF SIBAUD**

“By the grace of God we have been brought back to the land of our forebears, to reestablish here the pure service of our holy religion, in continuation of and for accomplishment of the great purpose which this mighty God of hosts has hitherto carried out for our good: We pastors, captains, and other officers swear and promise before God, and on the life of our souls, to keep union and order among ourselves and to never sever ourselves from one another, while God shall preserve us in life, even if we should be reduced to three or four in number. And we soldiers promise and swear this day before God to obey the orders of our officers, and to continue faithful to
them, even to the last drop of our blood. ... “And in order that union, the soul of our affairs, may remain forever unbroken among us, (we) officers swear fidelity to the soldiers, and (we) soldiers to the officers, all as one promising our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to rescue, as far as at all possible, the dispersed remnants of our people from the yoke which oppresses them, that along with them we may reestablish and maintain Christ’s rule, even unto death, observing in good faith this present engagement so long as we shall live.”

To this day, in significant gatherings, the Waldenses sing the following hymn in witness to their historic choice to stand united and faithful to God.

The Oath of Sibaud

We raise our arms to the heavens,  
for this is the land where our forebears  
swore faithfulness to God,  
and swore to raise memorials  
where for God’s sake they died.

Sovereign of Sinai, Sovereign of Israel,  
God of the saints, of the patriarchs,  
as you saved these you have saved us, too.  
In the land of our forebears  
ever let us abandon our faith—  
struggle with us who fight for you.

With this oath may Heaven bless our forebears,  
and in this hour may God bless us again.  
Hands joined together, Waldensians, let us repeat—  
I swear, my God, to live and die for you.
The Reggia Venaria Reale (Royal Palace of Venaria) with its many gardens and residences has been a World Heritage Site since 1997. In 1999, work began to restore the beautiful complex to its former glory. The renovation of the Reggia may well have been the largest restoration project in Europe. The palace is a compound of unique architectural beauty which has undergone numerous modifications over the centuries. The complex is very large, made up of the city village, gardens, chapel, stables, and forest (known as the Mandria Park). An entire village was dismantled in order for the project to take place.

The Reggia is the main building and has undergone repeated modifications to suit its residents over time. In the 18th century, a massive expansion was commissioned by the Duke of Savoy. At the same time, the palace gardens were also restored. During the reign of Napoleon, the Reggia lost its splendor (due to the emperor’s preference for other imperial abodes). After the fall of Napoleon’s empire it was converted into military barracks.

The gardens were destroyed in the 19th century, a great loss considering their great age and rarity. They have recently been restored, and the old plants have been replaced.

Parco della Mandria is one of the major regional parks of the Piedmonts and constitutes a significant portion of the Reggia. The estate has a surface area of 3000 hectares, bordered by 35 kilometers of stone walls. The area was originally chosen by the Savoy family as a hunting territory. There they raised purebred horses for their hunting parties. Today, the Borgo Antico represents Venaria’s historic center, together with the palace, park, and gardens. Piazza dell’ Annunziata is the heart of the village. The architect intended to create a scenic view of the magnificent Reggia which would catch the eye of the visitor. The shape of the square is reminiscent of the ancient symbol of the Savoy family.
Rora

Elevation 3135 ft

Rora, the little village home of the celebrated Joshua Gianavel, played a major role in the history of the Waldenses. Gianavel is known as the Lion of the Waldenses. With lion-like courage he led a small band of farmer and peasant warriors with a brilliance that can only be compared to the heroic faith and courage of the Old Testament Moses. In 1655, Gianavel and his small band of men waged warfare against Europe’s mightiest army. God was the Victor.

The Marquis de Pianezza led the papal armies, intent on wiping out all traces of the faithful people whose only evil was accepting the Scriptures as their one rule of faith. Gianavel’s wife and daughters were taken captive by the Marquis, who then wrote to Gianavel: “I exhort you for the last time to renounce your heresy. This is the only hope of saving your wife and daughters, now my prisoners, whom I will burn alive. As for you, be assured if you fall into my hands there are no torments too terrible with which I will punish your rebellion.”
Gianavel wrote in reply: “There are no torments so terrible, no death so barbarous that I would not choose, rather than deny my Saviour. Should the Marquis de Pianezza cause my wife and daughters to pass through the fire, it can but consume their mortal bodies; their souls I commend to God; and mine also, should it please Him that I fall into the Marquis’ hands.”

Gianavel’s faith was rewarded by the eventual release of his wife and daughters.
Tribes of Celts inhabited the region between the Alps and the Adriatic as early as 600 B.C., ruled by kings using the title “Cottius.” They remained unconquerable for centuries.

Through this region Hannibal and his elephants made their epic journey, successfully crossing the Alps with vast and diverse armies on their way to conquer the armies of Rome. History states that the Romans first learned of this region from Hannibal, and perhaps this is how the Romans, continuing their quest for imperial domination, set out to conquer the Celtic tribes in the Cottian Alps. The Roman historian, Diodorus Seculus, paints a colorful picture of these Celtic barbarians: “Their aspect is terrifying ... They are very tall in stature, with rippling muscles under clear white skin. Their hair is blond, but not naturally so: they bleach it, to this day, artificially, washing it in lime and combing it back from their foreheads. They look like wood-demons, their hair thick and shaggy like a horse’s mane.”

Susa: The Seat of King Cottius

*Elevation 770 ft*
The Romans found it difficult to conquer these fierce Alpine warriors. When Caesar Augustus sent his armies to attack the Celtic people in the lands of the Cottian Alps, his troops fled before the terrifying barbarians, driven away by their unusual methods of warfare. The Celts wore carved bronze helmets with horns, which made them look taller than they already were. Others covered themselves with breastplates of chains, but most contented themselves with the weapons nature gave them; they went naked into battle, screaming in unison with deep, harsh voices, blowing discordant horns, and beating their swords rhythmically against their shields.

After unsuccessful attempts to conquer the Celts, Augustus himself met with the Celtic king. The Caesar allowed Cottius to reign as a client king, or prefect, and thus secured the Cottian Alps to satisfy the Roman conquest.

ARCH OF AUGUSTUS
Elevation 1713 ft

Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus (63 BC - 14 AD) is considered the first emperor of the Roman Empire. This is the same Emperor who ordered that a census be taken in the land of Palestine. Luke 2:1 reads, “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.” In Susa, Italy there is a monument to the great Caesar Augustus. The last living Celtic King, Marcus Julius Cottius, built a grand arch in honor of Caesar Augustus, 8 years before the birth of Christ, and it stands to this day, testifying to the antiquity of the Piedmont Alps.
Quarry
Stone Cutter’s Manufacturing, Elevation 1837 ft

The stone quarries have become a favorite site to visit while touring in the Piedmont Alps of Italy. The owners of the stone manufacturing companies are very generous in permitting the group from Andrews University to visit both venues. We have been told that we are the only group allowed to visit the quarries.

Italy exports more than 2.2 million tons and imports 1.7 million tons of stone materials per year, equivalent to approximately 25% of the total world market. The market for stone as an architectural material and for other purposes remains lucrative due to the increasing demand for natural building materials.

Stonecutting is extremely difficult, even with today’s modern machinery. In the past, everything was done by hand at the cost of life and limb. When there are not enough locals to work in the quarries and factories, men from other countries are hired to help. Recently many Chinese have moved into the region to work as stonecutters, but they are paid at a lower rate than local Italians.
Rodoretto

*Rlevation 4671 ft*

Rodoretto is a charming village in the Valley of Germanasca, situated only eight miles from Ghigo Prali. The name “Rodoretto” may be derived from the word “rhododendron,” a brilliant pink flower blooming profusely around the Envie river, which winds its way down a steep course to the edge of the village.

The inhabitants of Rodoretto are known as the Rodorini. They all seem to be related, and their history is ancient. There is not a place along the village streets where flower boxes or cords of wood are not piled in the most artistic way. The people are warm and friendly, and the village boasts a small restaurant famous for its delicious food. Locals can recall an invasion of German soldiers in World War II, who shot randomly into the village and took some residents prisoner, locking them in a building at the top of the village.
There are two small museums in Rodoretto, one that depicts mountain life and agricultural activities, and one that commemorates the old Beckwith School. At the top of the village is an ancient Waldensian temple, where a list of Waldensian pastors stretching many years back is preserved. Many of the names are familiar to persons familiar with Waldensian history. Henry Arnaud and his men passed through the village on their way to worship at the temple in Ghigo Prali.
Ghigo
Elevation 4773 ft

Ghigo Prali is a renowned ski resort situated in the Valley of Chisone and Germanasca. The village is a beautiful place, particularly if you appreciate the quiet of nature. Situated in a grassy meadow with a river running through it and surrounded by snow-covered Alps, the village is ancient, its rich history preserved in a local museum. Built in 1556, the museum was originally a Waldensian church, but today it depicts the history of the Germanasca Valley from antiquity until the modern day.

After the Glorious Return in 1689, Henry Arnaud and his soldiers came directly to Ghigo to worship in that church. The little church could not hold Arnaud’s four hundred men, so they placed a bench in the doorway of the church upon which Henry stood to preach his first public sermon since 1686. After the message, the men sang Psalms 129:
“They have greatly oppressed me from my youth”—let Israel say—
“They have greatly oppressed me from my youth, but they have not gained the victory over me. Plowmen have plowed my back and made their furrows long. But the LORD is righteous; he has cut me free from the cords of the wicked.”
May all who hate Zion be turned back in shame. May they be like grass on the roof, which withers before it can grow; with it the reaper cannot fill his hands, nor the one who gathers fill his arms. May those who pass by not say, “The blessing of the LORD be upon you; we bless you in the name of the LORD.”
On the Late Massacre in Piedmont
John Milton (1608-74)

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O’er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.
ESCAPE OF WALDENSES FROM BALZIGLIA
(From a mural in Balziglia Museum)

- ▲: French Advance Troops.
- ●: Waldensian Outposts.
- ▲: Waldensian Trenches.
- ●: Direction of Attack, 8th May, 1690.
- ▲: French Camps, 20th May.
- ●: Direction of Attack, 24th May.
- ●: Waldenses surrounded, 24th May.
- →: Direction of Flight.