



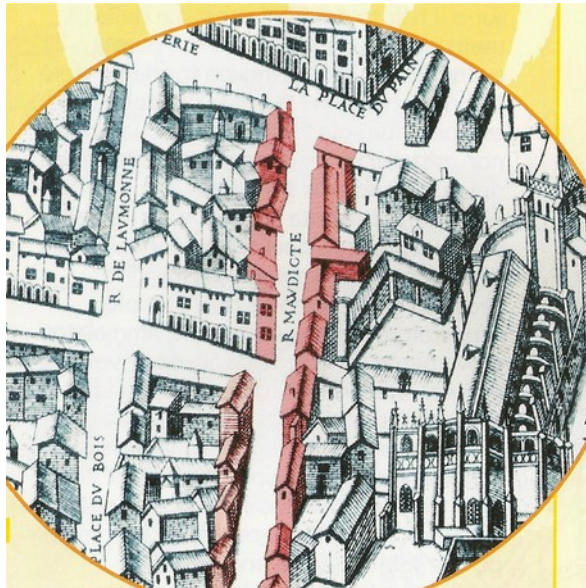
From movement to church.

The Waldensians and the Reformation through Europe and Italy along the centuries

Waldensian movement

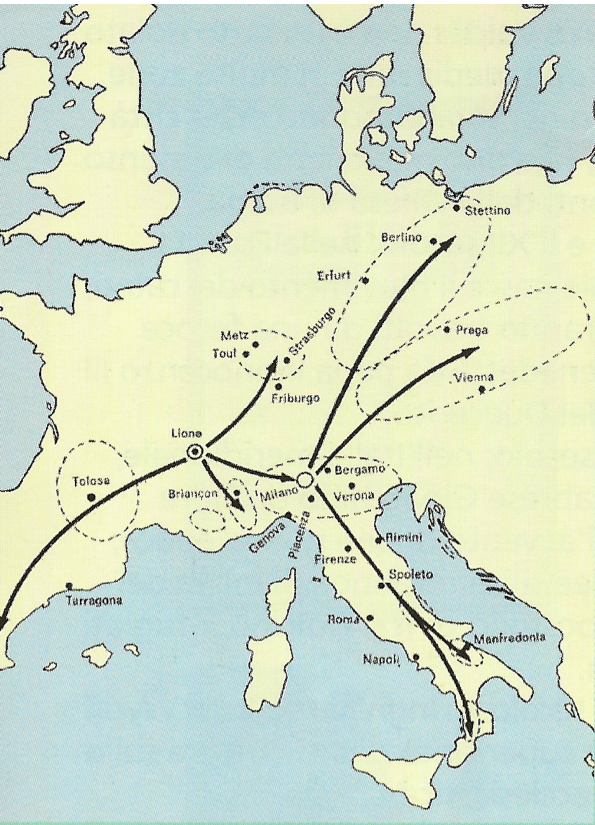


Waldensian movement was born around 1170 in Lyon, under the thrust to the reform of the church that animated the people in that period.



Valdo was the initiator of the movement

The movement spread in Europe



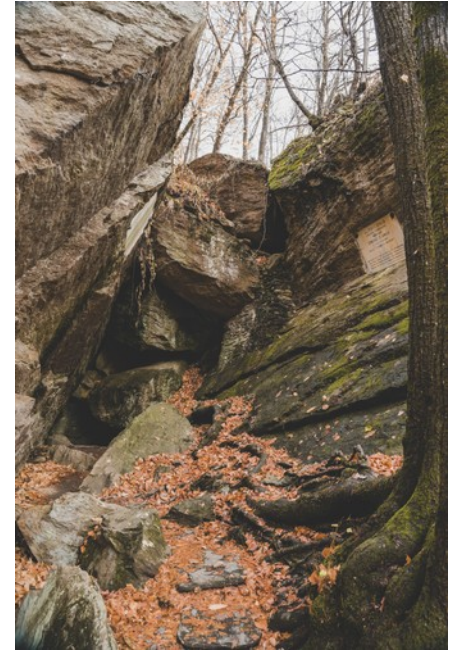
The movement spread from the south of France to Italy, before in the North and then to the North. It moved from Lyon to Bergamo, from Provence, in South of France, to Guardia Piemontese in Calabria (South Italy), from the Waldensian Valleys in Piedmont (North-West of Italy) to Venice (North-East of Italy). Then the movement arrived in Austria, Germany, Poland, Czech.



Persecution and resistance



This movement was persecuted and Waldensians had to hide themselves for centuries,



but it resisted and it's preachers, the "Barba", went all around Europe to meet people with their "portions of the bible" in current language.

What did they believe?



“Cena valdese” in Naumburg in Turingia XIII century: you can see the fish, a typical element of the Waldensian holy supper.

Waldensians met also, in XV century, in Boemia, the hussite theologians that give to their movement a more structured theology.

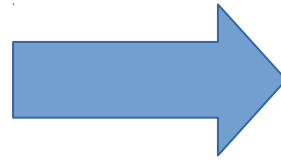


When they met the Reformation

In XVI century the Waldensian movement met the ideas of reformation that arrived from Germany and Switzerland. In 1526 they decided to send two “Barba” to Basel and Strasburg with some questions for the Reformators.



Laux lake in val Chisone



Strasbourg

They said to the Reformators: “We are here. For centuries we have said that people have to read the Bible, that there are not intermediaries, that every one must have the bread and the wine of the Eucharist service and so on. What is different in your propose?”.



The reformers Ecolampadio and Bucer said them: “We are saved by Grace”. They said also that Waldensian movement was the precursor of the movement of Reformation that was spreading across Europe.



Reformation in Italy



The message and ideas of the Reformation spread very quickly also in Italy. The ideas found a fertile soil in Piedmont, Tuscany, Venice ...

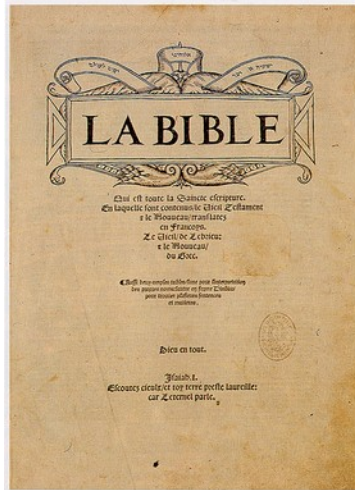
But in Italy, the papacy reacted ruthlessly against any form of religious disagreement.



Chanforan



In 1532 the Waldensian movement gathered at Chanforan in the Waldensian Valleys, and the assembly decided to join the Reformation. With this decision the movement began a Church.



The persecution



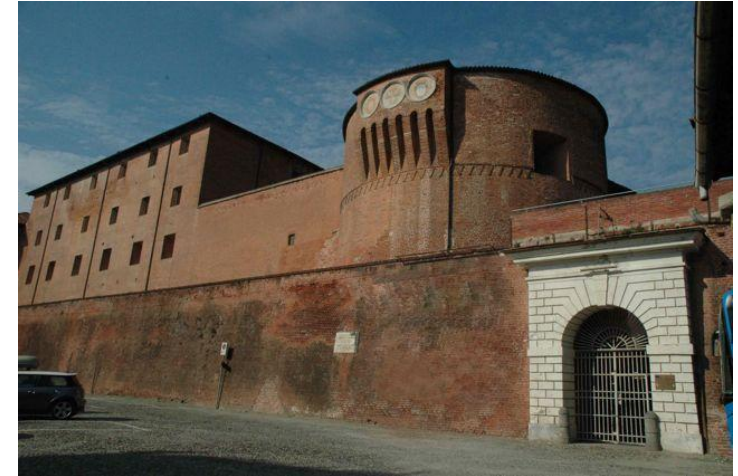
In 1545 in Provence the communities were exterminated and the same thing happened in Guardia Piemontese in 1561. In the same years also in Piedmont began the persecution but the Waldensian fought and resisted.



The Blood Door in Guardia Piemontese, Calabria

The deportation and the Return

The persecution continued through XVII century just to, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, the imprisonment of all the Waldensians (12.000 persons) and the deportation of survivors (2.700 persons) from Piedmont to Geneva in 1687. In 1689 the Waldensians returned in their valleys in arms to regain their lands and their right to exist (Glorioso Rimpatrio).



They won but for more than another century they didn't have the possibility to move outside of the border of the Waldensian Valleys ("Waldensian Ghetto")

In Italy



Only in 1848 the king Carlo Alberto of Savoia gave to Waldensians the civil freedom and they could go outside of the Valleys. The time were changed and they went all through Italy to speak of the Gospel, and the Reformation movement spread from Torino to Rome, from Milan to Palermo, from Florence to Naples.



Today



Today the Waldensian church is a minority church in Italy and in Rio de la Plata on the other side of the ocean; it is a Presbyterian church that has relationships with the Italian State with which has a good collaboration (e.g. social services and in the field of cultural activity). “The movement has began a Church”, its development crossed European borders and arrived in North and South America.



The Waldensians from 1848 have founded in Italy, in South America, and wherever they went, schools and social services; they have participated at the peace and ecumenical movement; they have tried to develop their principles of democracy that are practiced in the church just from the real beginning. A tradition that arrived at Waldensians from centuries of fight for freedom of conscience.





Thank you for your attention