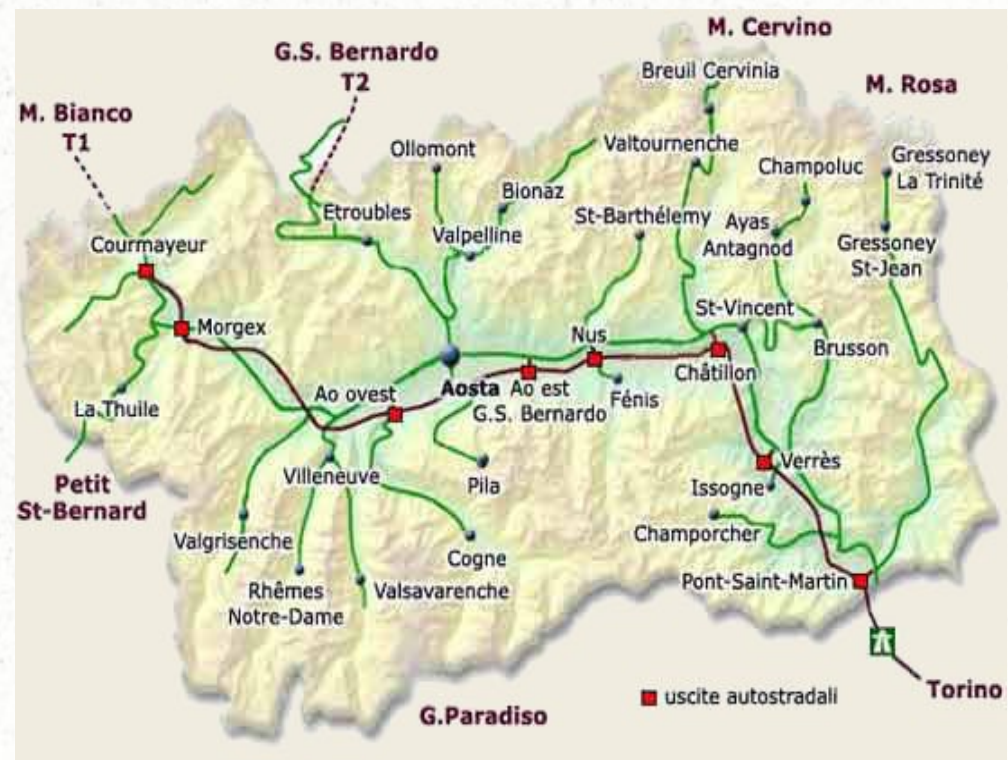


# *Local legends*

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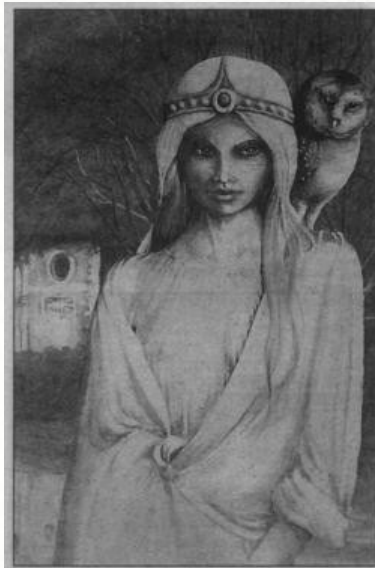
I.S. Regina Maria  
Adelaide

Academic year  
2012-2013



# *Aisha Kandisha*

Aisha Kandisha was, according to the legend, a very beautiful Moroccan woman who had long black hair and almond shaped eyes, wearing a white robe. She was the daughter of a rich man living in the high Atlas during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. During that period there were some Portuguese invasions of Morocco, so in order to help the soldiers protect her family's lands from the invaders, she attracted the soldiers into dark corners and killed them. Now her ghost is believed to continue wandering the city alleys, at night she appears to men in isolated places and frightens them. The only way to scare her away is showing her a metal thing like a knife. The legend of Aisha Kandisha is still used today to send naughty children to bed.





# *The malicious spirit of Guillemore*

A local legend tells about a **highwayman**, Guillaume, who had settled on the edge of the gorge which separates the top of the high Vallaise (in Aosta Valley) from the bottom. This highwayman would invite the **wayfarers** to his place, he would rob them, kill them, and throw their bodies down into the gorge. When the police found the **murderer**, they did not imprison him, but threw him into the gorge. That was a happy day for the locals, and they shouted "Guillaume is dead, or -*Guillaume est mort!* (In French which was the local language at the time) the exclamation gave the place its name: **Guillemore**. But Guillaume's soul **was not fit** even for hell which refused him, so he became an evil spirit. The spirit is believed to still **abide** the gorge where he continues frightening the wayfarers with his cry.

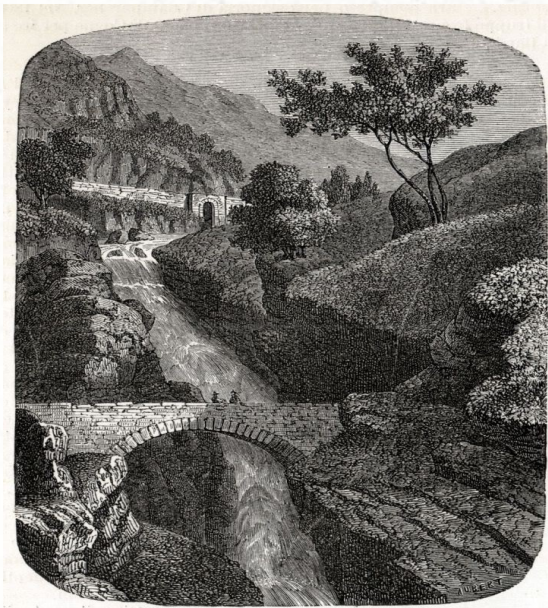


Fig. 108. — Orrido di Guillemore a Fontainemore.



# *The last bear of Val D'Ayas*

A night in 1782, a strong and brave man decided to go to Saint Jacques (in the South-East of Aosta Valley). That day a lot of snow had fallen so the man wasn't walking very fast.

Suddenly a huge and frightening bear, which hadn't eaten yet, **showed up.**

The terrible animal approached the man and opened its mouth to devour him.

The man had never fought with such a creature before, but he was very brave.

So he grabbed the bear by the throat with his bare hands and choked it.

Then he cut the bear's paws and fixed them over the door of his house as a trophy.





# *The fooled village*

The common reason for the burial of our late relatives provides testimony of a collective memory, that reminds of the people who are here no more. In Aosta Valley there are a lot of legends on this matter, particularly regarding those villages which have been submerged by water from rivers, lakes or landslides.

One of the most famous legend about flooded villages is that of the village near "Oyace" in Valpelline in the basin of the lake "By". This legendary village was submerged by the water of the lake apparently without any cause.

The legend goes that a local farmer had been hurriedly farming his land to finish his work by the end of the summer. The day of the Patron Saint he did not refrain from his work but in the evening the oxen were thirsty and the farmer had run out of water both for them and his fields. The farmer got angry, he didn't know what to do and swore at the patron saint.

All of a sudden the water of the lake flooded the whole village on the very day of the patron saint.

From that day the people have been feeling eery entities and mysterious noises coming from the lake, but no-one knows the reason why...



# *The devils*

Once upon a time, the Mountain Maudit's devils were used to leaving their home to go and cause trouble in Val Veny. They they trod over fields and destroyed the crops. So the population asked the local priests to do some exorcism, but such practices did not help and nobody knew why... One day a devil told a farmer that the priests' exorcisms had been failing because their hearts weren't pure. So the community decided to take a really pious man, who was found not at the top of the Church hierarchy but at the bottom. This man was a francescan friar. In the end the devils, were defeated by the pure man's heart; they went back to hell and from that day on Val Veny was never disturbed by any evil spirit again.





# *The Ruitor Glacier, La Thuile*

Where today there is the Ruitor Glacier, long time ago there used to be only meadows.

One day a beggar asked a farmer for some milk, but that man decided to throw it on the grass, rather than give it to him.

The beggar told the farmer that it would start snowing and it would never stop, which **came true** and explains the formation of the glacier at La Thuile.





# *The legend of Sant'Orso's day*

If on Sant'Orso's Day, February 1<sup>st</sup>, the weather is sunny, the bear and all the other wild animals, who have **hibernated** for the wintertime, go out with the hay on which they have been sleeping and let it dry. Then they go back to sleep because after the winter ends, on 21<sup>st</sup> March, there will be 40 more cloudy and rainy days. On the contrary if the weather is cloudy on February 1<sup>st</sup>, the animals will continue sleeping until the real start of spring that is on 21<sup>st</sup> March.





# *Monte Cervino's legend*

Once upon a time Gargantua, a giant, used to live and reign in the Alps. He was always busy eating and drinking. He was said to have a dozen oxen with a hearty side dish of roast pork for breakfast and to be able to empty a bathtub full of wine in one gulp. A king so **fond of** good food could not be anything but peaceful, as a matter of fact, in his kingdom there was never news of either battles or wars. One day, however, Gargantua was wondering: "I am a peaceful king indeed, but beyond the mountains there may be peoples who are preparing to invade my kingdom and destroy it, so I'd better go and see for myself!" For Gargantua to see beyond the Alps was easy, all he had to do was stand up on his feet, so he did. Unfortunately that day he had happened to eat and drink a little more than usual. So after he had come, with a single step, to the top of the mountain to see what was happening behind it, an amazing thing happened: the mountain spot where he had been standing, could not hold his weight any longer and came tumbling down. What remained was the pyramid of rock that was between the giant's feet: today's Monte Cervino: Matterhorn.





# *The giant's tooth*

The giant Gargantua left a tooth of his in Aosta Valley after his death, in order to fix the glaciers of Mont Blanc.

What the local people don't know is that lots of evil spirits are imprisoned inside this mountain, they are all the spirits who used to live in Aosta Valley.

A wizard coming from the East had been asked to rid our region from them. He climbed all the valleys saying mysterious words.

He put a spell on the spirits who were attracted by the wizard's words and followed him, ignoring what was awaiting them: eternal imprisonment .

One by one all the bewitched spirits entered the mountain and the door closed behind them forever.





# *Courmayeur VS La Thuile*

During the making of the national road connecting Morgex and Pré-Saint-Didier, the men of La Thuile and those of Courmayeur worked side by side but with a competitive spirit that drove them to the continuous comparison of their abilities. So they decided to let their women fight in a match to establish which village was the strongest: La Thuile or Courmayeur. La Thuile decided to let Trifolla, a very strong woman, fight for them. While Courmayeur was represented by Mezola, a clever and sporting girl, but not as strong as Trifolla. The battle took place at Pré-Saint-Didier, in the church square, where two matches were fought, both of which had to be won by the same team in order to gain the winner's title. But the result was a draw. So the 2 villages could not decide who the winner was and the match was ended with a delicious dinner during which it was decided that La Thuile held the primacy of force, thanks to Trifolla's physical strength, while Courmayeur held the primacy of dexterity, thanks to Mezola's agility.





# THE END

