

Ecomuseum of Stone “Le Loze di Rorà”

Rorà

The Ecomuseum of Stone in Rorà consists of two sites, both greatly representative of community life. The first site can be located in the heart of the village: one of most ancient buildings hosts the Waldensian museum, which, through artifacts and tools, testifies the rich and eventful life of the inhabitants of Rorà, peasants and quarrymen. The other site is in the open: it's the historical quarry of Tupinet, which is no longer operative and effectively represents the condition of the original 19th century quarries. The track, along which life-sized mannequins have been placed, unfolds through the mountains, depicting the various phases of the work inside the quarry. The visitor explores and rediscovers in a “material” fashion techniques and tools - both ancient and modern, working and operational needs, working conditions and atavistic daily gestures.

In the Pellice valley, the cultivation of ornamental stone repositories is documented starting from the medieval period, which set the principle according to which whoever discovered new quarries had the right to freely access them. The basin which turned out to be the most productive was the one located in the Luserna valley. The Luserna Stone was widely used, later on, in the prestigious age-old construction of the Italian capital of the Savoias: Turin. During the reign of Umberto I, thanks to the new railway connection, the use of the Luserna Stone in Turin reached its all-time peak.

A relevant part of the cultural identity of the Waldensians is strongly linked to the cultivation and the stonework of the Luserna Stone: the quarrymen and the improvers of the mining techniques were almost always Waldensians. Today, the mining area of the Luserna Stone, covering the towns of Bagnolo Piemonte, Luserna San Giovanni and Rorà, has one of the top outputs in Italy with approximately 300.000 tons of stonework per annum.

In the past, the Luserna Stone was always considered a cheap material and was often used for roofing, paving, balconies, sidewalks, modillions and windowsills.

In the 19th century, a great architect, Alessandro Antonelli, seemingly redeeming the fate of such a beautiful material, used the Luserna Stone in his most daring and admirable work: the Mole Antonelliana. Today the Luserna Stone, whose market has become worldwide, is used in the public building industry for paving, sheathing, interior and exterior furnishing. Aside from this more “traditional” usage of the stone, the Luserna Stone is also used in the production of artifacts.

