

1. ALLEGHE: FROM ITS ORIGINS TO THE FORMATION OF THE LAKE

Origins of the territory

Arrows and spearheads discovered in the area of Malga Pioda and near the Forcella di Alleghe at an altitude of 1805 metres above sea level bear witness to the presence of man in the area from the Mesolithic period (6000-4500 BC).

This region was frequented seasonally during hunting expeditions by the inhabitants of the Belluno valley, as evidenced by the finds on the Sella Pass, but especially by the discovery in 1985 of a Mesolithic burial site in the nearby municipality of Selva di Cadore.

This is the so-called Mondeval man, whose tomb was found by Vittorino Cazzetta under an erratic dolomite boulder at an altitude of 2150 metres above sea level.

From the Roman period, we have no evidence of permanent settlements in the Alleghe area, as well as in the entire upper Agordo area, although the presence of small fortifications or guard posts cannot be ruled out, especially in connection with the discovery in the early 1930s by mountaineer Domenico Rudatis of three Roman boundary inscriptions.

They marked a straight boundary line between the Belunati and the Iulienses, probably made in 54 AD. This was the year in which Zuglio Carnico went from being a municipality to a colony. One of the inscriptions reads FN BEL-IUL (borders between the territory of Belluno and the Cadore territory of Iulium Carnicum).

We do not know much about the barbarian period, except for the possible derivation of some toponyms of the period such as 'La Sala', which in Lombard meant cohorts, then curtis or villa centre. Certainly, the people of Agordo preserved Longobard customs and traditions until after 1100, calling them usum nostrum agordinorum.

The historian Giorgio Piloni gives us evidence of the early Middle Ages in one of his manuscripts, where he tells of the order given in 950 by Bishop Abdonio (Aimone according to Tamis) to subject all the inhabitants of the Agordino area, including Alleghe, to the church of Saints Simon and Judas. While the first written document where we find the name of Alleghe is a bull of 1185 by Pontiff Lucius III, in which the 'Capellam de Alegue' is mentioned, among other things.

The community must have reached a certain consistency in the 12th century to justify the presence of an oratory on site.

Within the territory of Sopra Chiusa, Alleghe between the 12th and 14th centuries was the seat of a Seigniorship that exerted its influence for a certain period of time even over the mines in the Zoldo area.

At the beginning of the 14th century, the Sommariva family, ancient lords of the place, owned, in the village of the same name, now submerged by the lake, a palace, as evidenced by the records of submerged property, and a castle or fortified tower located in a second settlement upstream of the first and which took its name from: Torre.

According to Giorgio Piloni, it was built during the barbarian invasions, but there is no other evidence.

In 1321, Bittino and Pietro Sommariva, who had moved to Belluno, sold their possessions in Alleghe to the city for the sum of 4580 lire.

The following year, Bittino allied himself with Guadagnino da Avoscano and, with the help of Cangrande della Scala, took back the fortress, losing it immediately after being exiled from the city. From this moment on, Alleghe, as well as the entire Agordino area, remained under the Avoscano hegemony at least until 10 August 1350 when Charles IV of Bohemia conquered the castle of Andraz where the family had established their residence.

The wealth of the area then lay in the existence of small iron and lead quarries, which were worked

on site along with iron from the nearby Fursil mines. It is no coincidence that the toponym Fusina of one of the villas buried by the landslide recalls metalworking.

Alleghe would later become famous for the production of blades and swords, particularly sought after for their temper.

The territory changed hands from Charles IV to Ludovico of Hungary in 1360 to Francesco da Carrara lord of Padua and finally in 1388 to Galeazzo Visconti.

It was the heated battles between the Guelphs of Carrara and the Lords of Milan that led to the destruction in 1391 of the Pietore Fortress where these hostile forces had barricaded themselves in. Alleghe began to be part of the Venetian Republic in the mid-15th century with the completion of the organisation of the Magnifica Comunità Agordina.

The legal organisation was based on the institution of the Community of Agordo or Agordino Council, whose territory was divided into Sopra Chiusa and Sotto Chiusa.

Here, the community council represented the people of Agordo and was governed by a Captain initially sent by the Bishop and later appointed by the Podestà of the city of Belluno.

The Captain, whose term of office lasted one year, had the power to judge crimes and impose fines.

In order to represent the various rules and protect their interests, the General Captain's Syndicate of sixty-one members was founded in 1385.

From 1414 to 1420, the Venetians were replaced by the Bohemian-Hungarian rule by the army of King Sigismund of Bohemia, who crossed Austria and descended into Italy against the Republic.

Only two other interruptions occurred during the War of Cambrais to Marciano's rule: the occupation of Belluno by Maximilian of Austria in 1509 and the occupation the following year by the Tyrolean Leonardo Velz of the Agordino area, who was dedicated to harassment and looting.

From 1510 the territory returned under the rule of the Serenissima until its fall in 1797.

11 January 1771

Report of the deputies of the Alleghe and Calloneghe regulations to the Podestà of Belluno:

'On the 11th of January at 8 o'clock in the night the high mountain Piz in the Calloneghe area in front of Alleghe fell from the top to the bottom of the valley, where the Cordevole river was flowing [...] with such a multitude of stones, boulders and ruins that it filled the channel one and a half miles long and formed a high mountain of ruins in the middle of the two highest mountains [...]. In order to verify the fearful massacre, the particular signification of what is most grievous will be useful: the precipitous ruin of the mountain flattened and buried three villas, Riete, that is, located halfway up the mountain it ravaged, Marin and Fusine, located at the bottom of the valley [...].

Neither here is an end to what is particularly lugubrious. Once the course of the Cordevole river is closed, a lake is formed, which is rising day by day[...].'