«Hello, oh pius Courmayeur, you represent thr last joyful laugh of Italy, at the foot of the giant Alps »
- Giosué Carducci

• <u>Main cities:</u> **AOSTA**, Courmayeur

• <u>Historical overview</u>: The first inhabitants of the Aosta Valley were Celts and Ligures; the region was lately conquered by Romans (25BC) to secure the strategic mountain passes. After being repeatedly ruled by French and Sardinians it **joined** the new Kingdom of **Italy** in **1861**.

• <u>Spoken languages</u>: **Italian** and **French** are the **official languages**, though much of the native population also speak Valdôtain, a dialect of Arpitan (Franco-Provençal), as their home language; about half of the population can speak all three languages.

• <u>Climate:</u> The region is very cold in the winter, especially when compared with other places in the Western Alps. The valleys that lie around 1300m high, develop a Humid continental climate, although with mild winter temperatures for this kind of climate, similar to the temperatures of the Norwegian fjords. The snow season starts in November and lasts until March.

Gran Paradiso National Park

Castel of Fénis

Roman monuments, Aosta

VALLE D'AOSTA – Literature and Art

The Matterhorn, Leonardo Roda

Xavier de Maistre was born in Aosta Valley area before its borders were determinated in the way we know them today. His *Voyage autour de ma chambre* (1794), a parody set in the tradition of the grand travel narrative, is an autobiographical account of how a young official, imprisoned in his room for six weeks, looks at the furniture, engravings, etc., as if they were scenes from a voyage in a strange land. He praises this voyage because it does not cost anything, for this reason it is strongly recommended to the poor, the infirm, and the lazy. His room is a long square, and the perimeter is thirty-six paces. "*When I travel through my room,*" he writes, "*I rarely follow a straight line: I go from the table towards a picture hanging in a corner; from there, I set out obliquely towards the door; but even though. (...)*".