

WORLD MUSIC

FRANCE

Introduction

The traditional entry here is a madrigal in the style of a Middle Ages troubadour ballad which was written recently by André Poutchy with music by him and Marie-Jo Morbelli. Due to its antiquated style, this music stands by itself and could not be grouped with the more recent traditional French songs.

For the rest of French traditional and folkloric songs you are referred to the next section entitled "[France – Folkloric](#)" music.

WD-FR1 France 1984

LA GROTTTE DE LOMBRIVES *

WD – Troubadour Ballad – Vocal

Mus: Marie-Jo MORBELLI & André POUTCHY

Lyr: André POUTCHY ([LY-WD18](#))

Rts: (SACEM)

Perf: LES BALADINS

Robert Luiggi & Jean-Louis Guimard (lead tenors)

Choral Dir: Henri Bouteille

Prod. Co: Elyon Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur

HENRI IV

Rec. Co: Elyon; Marseille

Rec. Date: 28-29 April & 1 May 1984

Liner Notes: (Lyrics inside gatefold jacket)

Time:

LP: L'EPOPEE CATHARE

Elyon EL 35027 (Gatefold Cover)

12" 33rpm (Sd 2 – Bd 10)

Notes: Composed as a madrigal in the style of a medieval troubadour ballad, this piece has 8 four-verse stanzas. It is performed in a stiff, stilted manner where each syllable is carefully sung with emphasis dropping on the last syllable. The three first verses build and the fourth verse falls off.

Some would classify this as classical music; nothing of the sort, it's not in the classical mode at all. Troubadour music in the Middle Ages, whether performed in France or Spain, had solid roots in the ethnic music of a region during a given period. "Troubadour songs were usually monophonic... Most were composed by the troubadours themselves. Some were set to pre-existing pieces of music." (Anon. 2012)

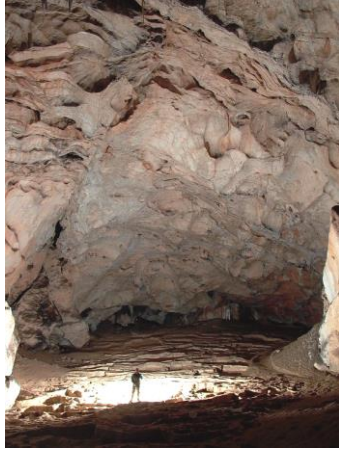
The lyrics are based on one of many legends concerning the Grotte de Lombrives, located at Ussat-les-Bain in the Ariège department. The ballad tells of the visit to the cave in the 16th Century by King Henry IV (formerly King Henri III de Navarre, seated in nearby Foix) –

- | | |
|---|---|
| II. Le roi Henri est en tête,
De ses mains tient les flambeau;
Avec sa troupe, il s'entête
A visiter ce tombeau. | II. King Henry leads the way
Holding a torch in his hands;
With his company, he insists
On visiting this tomb. |
|---|---|



He was making a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Cathares, the religious group who were persecuted as heretics in the 13th Century. According to legend, they took refuge in this cave with their bishop Amiel Aicard after abandoning the chateau of Montségur.

Stanza 3 tells how King Henri found there 100 corpses covered with flowstone. They were in the Cathedral chamber (see photo), which was reached from the entrance passage by a low crawlway. All the pursuers



had to do was wall up this crawlway to prevent their escape.

In stanza 6 the King says a prayer –

VI. Le roi dit une prière	VI. The King said a prayer
Pout tous ces vaillants martyrs	For all these valiant martyrs
Que l'eau recouvrit de pierre	Which water covered with calcite
Pour ne point les voir périr.	So as not to see them die.

The ballad ends with stanza 8, but the full 9 stanzas are printed inside gatefold jacket.

The false legend about the 500 Cathares that perished in the Grotte de Lombrives in 1328 was started by Napoléon Peyrat in his book, *Histoire des Albigeos*, published in 1879. This legend was later promulgated and embroidered on by Antonin Gadal and Otto Rahn in the 1930s. Contrary to all the archeological and paleontological evidence which had already been published in the 19th Century and in the early 20th concerning the numerous human bone deposits in this cave these authors deliberately ignored the scientific findings and furthered their own agenda.

Christian Bernadac devotes several pages to Lombrives and he sums up the issue of the human bones found there – “... *il serait facile de reprendre d'autres études de préhistoriens ayant consacré plusieurs compagnes de fouilles au 'Cimetière' de Lombrives. Unanimes, ils renvoient cet 'amoncellement d'os', à la protohistoire, c'est-à-dire bien loin – de plusieurs millénaires – de l'hérésie cathare. Je la répète, Antonin Gadal et Otto Rahn ne pouvaient l'ignorer.*”

[It would be easy to cite other studies by prehistorians who spent several sessions of excavations at the 'Cemetery' of Lombrives. Unanimously, they attributed this 'pile of bones' to prehistory, that is to say long before – thousands of years before – the Cathare heresy. I repeat, Antonin Gadal and Otto Rahn could not ignore this.]

René Gailli, who wrote two volumes on the Cathares, categorically states that the stories about the 500 Cathares walled up in the Cathedral Chamber and the visit by King Henri IV are all false. The records of the Dominican Inquisition in 1328 make no mention of it and the visit of the King in 1578 to the cave where he supposedly finds the Cathare remains is never mentioned by the historians of his period.

Ref: Anon. 2012, Troubadour, [Wikipedia](#)

Les Baladins de la Chanson, André Poutch, Biography (in French), [lesbaladinsdelachanson](#)

Les Baladins de la Chanson, Discographie, [lesbaladinsdelachanson](#)

Bernadac, Christian 1978, *Le Mystère Otto Rahn*, Éditions France-Empire, Paris, p. 116-174

Dengerma, Joseph 1967, *Les Cinq Cents Cathares emmurés de Lombrives*, Gadrat-Doumenc, Foix, Ariège, p. 6-8, 27-28, 35-37, 46-48

Gailli, René 1999, *Les Cathares ou le martyre de l'Occitanie – Livre II – Raymond VII*, C. Lacour Éditeurs, Nîmes, p. 248-256

Grotte de Lombrives, (in French), [Wikipedia](#)

Henry IV de France, (in French) [Wikipedia](#) & (in English) [Wikipedia](#)

Vallois, Henri 1927, Les Ossements énéolithiques de L'ombrives (Ariège), *L'Anthropologie*, v. 37, 1927, p. 277-489

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