

Rieupeyroux belongs to the «Pays d'art et d'histoire des Bastides du Rouergue»

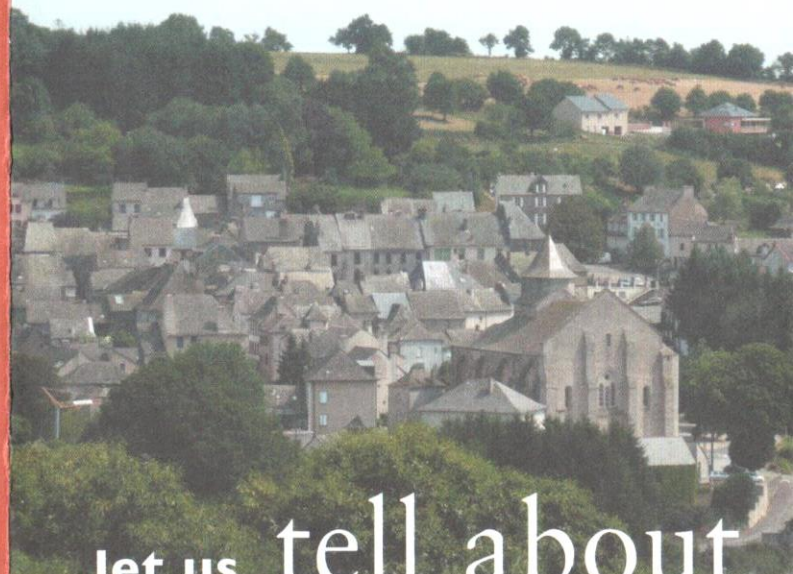
The Culture and Communication ministry attributes the title «Ville et Pays d'art et d'histoire» to the local communities who brings out and animate their heritage. It warrants the competency and expertise of its conference guides and professional animation team whose responsibility is to bring out and expose the diversity of its heritage.

Today, a network of 153 cities and counties offers its knowledge and know how all across France.

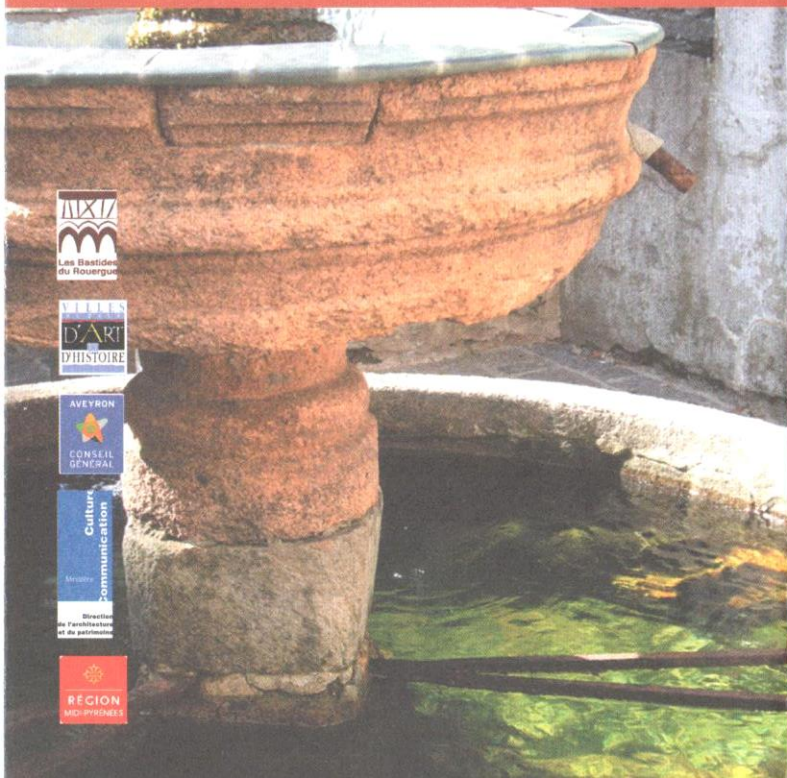
Nearby

Cahors, Figeac, Millau, Montauban, Auch, the Dordogne Lotoise Valley and the Cathars Pyrénées region as well as the Valleys of Aure and Louron enjoy the title of «Ville et Pays d'art et d'histoire».

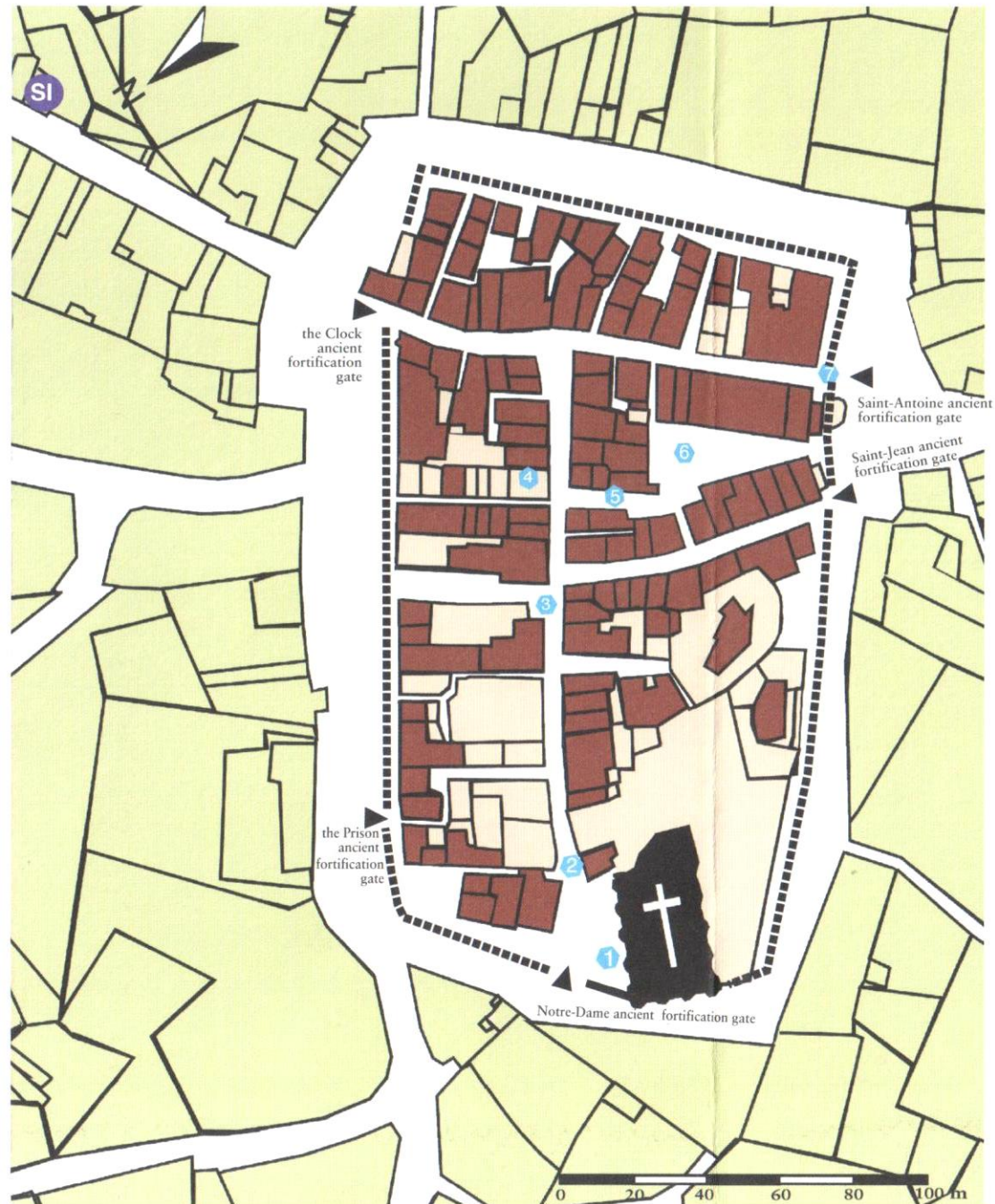
Pays d'art et d'histoire des Bastides du Rouergue



let us tell about
Rieupeyroux



Map of the Benedictine “sauveté” of Rieupeyroux



Legend

- built and conserved parcels
- built and destroyed parcels
- ancient agricultural parcels and urban extensions from 19th and 20th century
- location of the ancient urban defensive belt
- Syndicat d'Initiatives
- architecture elements to discover

The city of Rieupeyroux, in the heart of the Segala region was founded in 11th century by a community of Benedictine monks. It bears witness of the need for elite religious community to regroup and protect the local country population for the purpose of better exploiting natural resources and improving economical exchanges.

A nobleman gift

In 1009, Escaffre (Iscafred) a local nobleman, member of the Peyrolle family, travels with his wife Rixende towards the Saint-Martial Abbey in Limoges. He makes a promise to the abbot : he will give the community part of his properties in Mododulencia (a chapel still bears the name) if his son was to die childless : which is what happened.

The pilgrimage and the land donation occurred right after the great scare of Year 1000 : period nourished with great fears and apocalyptic visions. These two events translate the need for Escaffre, probably at the end of his life, to generously express his faith and salvage his soul.

The Foundation

Around 1030, in spite of serious objection in the Escaffre family members, a cross is driven into the ground marking the foundation of the "sauveté". Oldoric, the cleric in Saint-Martial de Limoges, Arnaldus, bishop in Rodez and Hugues, Count

of Rouergue assisted the ceremony. A community of Benedictine monks, supervised by a dean, arrive and settle in. Soon after the construction of the church and monastery begin.

The implantation of the "sauveté" follows : stone crosses materialized its inviolable borders. Farmers and craftsmen settle in, travelers and homeless folks find shelter under spiritual protection and guidance. The monastery disposes of a considerable real estate territory and it spreads its influence across many parishes.

The foundation of the "sauveté" is in keeping with the general peace movement instaurated by the Church at the end of the 10th century ("God's peace"). This movement, while giving birth to new parishes, is destined to regroup and protect the countryside inhabitants at the time when military noblemen behave with great violence.

Urbanism and economy

A very ancient road ran right across the hillside occupied by the "sauveté". This road was used for transportation of merchandise, cattle moving ("transhumance") and therefore was submitted to taxes and toll.

The plan of this monastic subdivision is almost perfectly eight-sided : it disposes of a market square, an exchange hall ("Gitat square"), and several government representatives

or "consuls" will be named. This set up prefaces the urban and social organization of the "bastides."

The town dwellers are expected to perform diverse chores and are submitted to taxes ("cens, dime and champart"), but they are also granted a house lot ("casaux") a kitchen garden as well as a cultivable lot and a pasture ("tenure"). They actively participate in the maintenance of the monastic domain. The cattle breeding and the cereal growing (mainly rye) seem to be the most frequent. Small and large cattle, horses and goods, are usually sold during the two annual fairs (one occurs on St Mark Day).

Until the end of the "Ancien Régime", merchants, innkeepers, surgeons, jurists and notaries work beside the craftsmen : carders, weavers, fuller, dyers work the textiles, blacksmiths, masons and carpenters.

Times of crisis and misery

The end of the Middle age is marked by a succession of crisis : bad weather, periods of starvation, black plague epidemic (1348) and The Hundred Years War...

In 1352 Englishmen or their mercenaries set the Church St-Martial on fire. This one is fortified in 1356 and a defensive belt with towers and gates is built. However, in virtue of the Treaty of Bretigny, the Englishmen occupy Rieupeyroux and the whole Rouergue region from 1361 to 1368.

In 1590, some of the inhabitants converted to protestant religion. The city is besieged by the Marechal de Châtillon and his troops : the prison gate is destroyed by artillery gun fires, while Saint Antoine gate and the Clock are hit.

In the early 17th century, poor crops, the high price of cereals and tax increases, push the farmers in Rouergue to rebel against the royal administration. In June 1643, the "Croquants", very active in Rieupeyroux, take over the castle in Najac and besiege Villefranche. Overtaken by the royal troops, their leaders, among them Jean Petit and Guillaume Brasc will be executed.

In the middle of the 18th century, the priory that used to contribute to economic exchanges and provided help to the poorest is dismembered. The farming of rye, potatoes and chestnut are not enough to feed a very poor population.

During the second half of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, while the cattle raising is still predominant, agricultural practices develop and improve ; the intensive liming of the acid soil in the Segala region allows, at last, for the more diverse and intensive cereal production : cornerstone of the economy.

The department of architecture and heritage

The department of architecture and heritage who coordinates the Pays d'art et d'histoire des Bastides du Rouergue initiatives has conceived this program.

All year long it proposes animations for the general public and the school children.

It is at your disposal for inquiries concerning any project.

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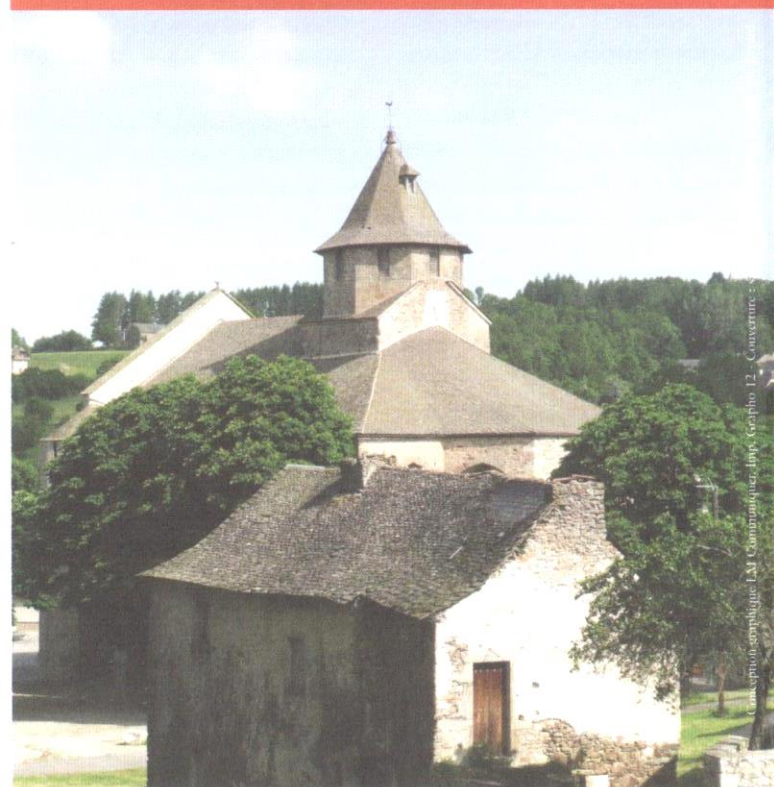
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Conception graphique : M. Camargue, J. J. Creffo, L. Couvreur

