

Château de Montségur

Château de Montségur <i>Montsegur (oc)</i>		
<div></div> <p>Le château de Montségur dominant le village</p>		
Latitude	[[1] 42° 52′ 32″ Nord	
Longitude	01° 49′ 57″ Est42.87556, 1.8325]	
Commune	Montségur	
Région historique	Comté de Foix	
Département	Ariège	
Région	Midi-Pyrénées	
Pays		
Période ou style		
Type		
Architecte		
Début construction		
Fin construction		
Propriétaire initial		
Destination initiale		
Propriétaire actuel		
Destination actuelle		
Classement		
Site internet		

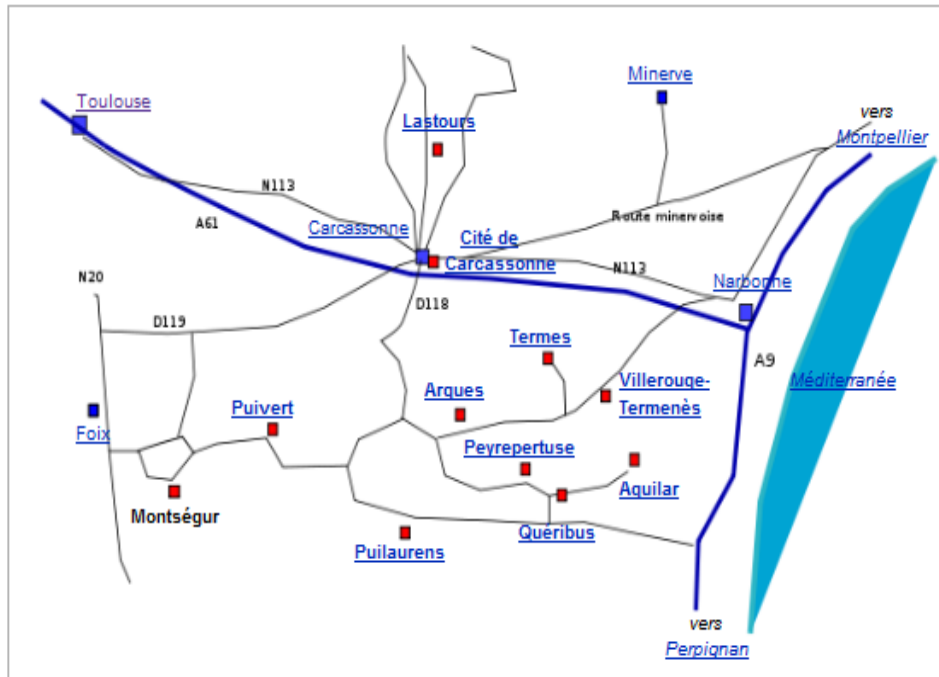
Le **château de Montségur** (Montsegur en occitan) est qualifié de château cathare. En effet, ce château fut implanté à l'emplacement arasé de l'ancien village fortifié qui constituait, jusqu'au siège de 1244, le lieu de résistance des cathares et des faydits. Les cotes architecturales démontrent que le château actuel fut conçu sur la base de la canne anglaise qui ne fut introduite qu'ultérieurement ce qui prouve que celui-ci a été partiellement reconstruit par la famille du nouveau Seigneur des lieux, le Maréchal de la Foi Guy II de Lévis après la reddition cathare de 1244.

Géographie

Située sur la commune de Montségur dans le département de l'Ariège et la région Midi-Pyrénées.

Le château est situé sur le point culminant de la montagne qui surplombe le village, à 1 207 mètres d'altitude.

Carte des châteaux cathares



Histoire

Le château sur le site actuel a connu trois époques majeures au cours desquelles la forteresse se transformera peu à peu.

Une première forteresse fut érigée au sommet de la montagne, appelée aussi *pog* (un Pog, est l'interprétation libre, par Napoléon Peyrat, d'une forme ariégeoise du mot occitan, *pech*, du latin *podium*, signifiant « éminence », pour désigner la montagne en forme de pain de sucre de Montségur. Cette version est désormais communément admise, mais exclusivement au bénéfice de Montségur), dont on ne sait peu de choses si ce n'est qu'elle était en ruines aux alentours de 1204, date à laquelle le village fortifié cathare fut bâti sous la direction de Raymond de Péreille. C'est le village fortifié ou *castrum* auquel les archéologues ont donné le nom de *Montségur II*.

La forteresse cathare

Le dispositif défensif de cette forteresse était différent de celui que l'on connaît actuellement. Le *castrum* en lui-même comprenait la demeure fortifiée du seigneur des lieux, le *castellum* ou *castèl* en occitan (qui sera sans doute restauré par la maison de Lévis pour donner la forteresse actuelle) et le village cathare de l'époque entourés par une enceinte fortifiée. Du côté de la route actuelle, se dressaient trois murs de défense dont le premier se situait au niveau du guichet actuel pour la visite payante du château. De l'autre côté du pog, à 800 mètres environ, se trouvait une tour de guet (au Roc dit de « La Tor » *la tour*) surplombant une falaise de 80 mètres. L'entrée du *castrum* qui donne sur cette tour de guet était défendue par une barbacane. À l'intérieur de l'enceinte de la forteresse, se dressait un village dont il ne reste que quelques terrasses au nord-ouest du château actuel. Sur ces dernières, on y trouve les fondations de plusieurs habitations, des escaliers pour communiquer entre les terrasses, une citerne et un silo.

Montségur abrita une communauté cathare importante. En 1215, le concile de Latran cite la forteresse comme étant un repère d'hérétiques. En 1229, le rôle de Montségur comme abri pour l'Église cathare est réaffirmé dans le traité de Meaux-Paris. À partir de 1232, ce rôle ne cesse de se renforcer. Parallèlement, le château accueille également les chevaliers *faydits* qui furent dépossédés de leur terres par le traité de 1229. Au nombre de ces derniers figure Pierre-Roger de Mirepoix, cousin de Raymond de Péreille qui sera le maître militaire de Montségur.

Le siège du castrum

Dans la première moitié du XIII^e siècle, la forteresse subit pas moins de quatre sièges dont un seul sera couronné de succès :

- Guy de Montfort, frère de Simon IV de Montfort fait une première tentative en 1212,
- Simon IV de Montfort dirige la deuxième en 1213,
- En juillet 1241, Raymond VII de Toulouse sur l'ordre de Louis IX débute un siège qu'il lève sans même donner un assaut,
- Le dernier est l'œuvre de Hugues des Arcis, sénéchal de Carcassonne.

Ce dernier fut déclenché par le massacre de quelques inquisiteurs en 1242 à Avignonet par une soixantaine d'hommes issus de la garnison de Montségur. Le sénéchal de Carcassonne et l'archevêque de Narbonne (Pierre Amiel) furent chargés d'assiéger la forteresse, sur l'ordre de Blanche de Castille et de Louis IX. En mai 1243, les croisés, au nombre d'environ 6 000 hommes, entourent Montségur.

L'équilibre des forces perdure jusqu'à Noël 1243 où une poignée d'« alpinistes » parvient, suite à une escalade audacieuse effectuée de nuit, à se rendre maître de la tour de guet. À partir de ce moment, un trébuchet est acheminé et monté, qui bombarde sans relâche la position des assiégés comme en témoignent les nombreux boulets de pierre taillée retrouvés sur le site. Environ un mois plus tard, peut-être suite à une trahison locale, la barbacane tombe aux mains des assaillants.

Un dernier assaut lancé en février sera repoussé mais laissera les assiégés très affaiblis.

La reddition de la place forte

Le 1^{er} mars 1244, Pierre-Roger de Mirepoix se voit contraint de négocier la reddition de la place forte. Les termes en sont les suivants :

- la vie des soldats et des laïcs sera épargnée,
- les parfaits qui renient leur foi seront sauvés,
- une trêve de 15 jours est accordée pour les cathares qui veulent se préparer et recevoir les derniers sacrements.

16 mars, la forteresse s'ouvre à nouveau. Tous les cathares qui refusèrent de renier leur foi périrent sur le bûcher qui fut dressé pour un peu plus de 200 suppliciés (le nombre varie légèrement suivant les sources) dont la femme, la fille et la belle-mère de Raymond de Péreille.

Pour certains, le bûcher aurait été monté à 200 m du castrum dans le "Prat dels Cremats" (le champ des brûlés) où une stèle fut par la suite érigée par la contemporaine Société du souvenir et des études cathares. Sur la stèle figure l'inscription : "Als catars, als martirs del pur amor crestian. 16 de març 1244". Pour d'autres, il semblerait que le lieu réel du bûcher soit sur la colline au-dessus du parking à droite du col en se rendant sur Montferrier.

D'après Yves Dossat, le bûcher fut érigé à Bram, dans le canton de Fanjeaux.^[2]

Montségur sous le règne de la famille de Lévis

Après la prise du château en 1244, la possession du *pog* revient à Guy II de Lévis, Maréchal de la Foi, seigneur officiel de Mirepoix depuis le traité de 1229. Les restes du village cathare furent rasés ainsi que l'enceinte fortifiée extérieure. Le *castellum* fut restauré et réaménagé pour y poster une garnison d'une trentaine d'hommes qui resta présente jusqu'au Traité des Pyrénées au XVII^e siècle. Certains documents mentionnent le château comme étant « défensible » en 1510. Puis, au fil des décennies, le château finit par être abandonné



Vue intérieure du château

Réhabilitation du château

Le château fut classé monument historique en 1875 et le *puòg* sur lequel il est situé rejoint ce classement en 1883.

Depuis, le site n'a cessé d'enflammer les imaginations à un tel point que beaucoup n'ont pas hésité à fouiller le *puòg* à titre personnel pour les raisons que nous verrons plus bas. Paradoxalement, la campagne de restauration du château débutée en 1947 freina ces dégradations et effaça dans le même temps certains indices archéologiques. Cette restauration motiva une prospection spéléologique de la montagne, menée par la *Société spéléologique de l'Ariège*. Cette dernière aboutit, en 1964 à l'exhumation d'une sépulture dans *l'avenc du trébuchet*. En 1968, le *GRAME* (Groupe de Recherche Archéologique de Montségur et Environs) est fondé. Ce dernier a déjà conduit plusieurs campagnes de fouilles sur le site.

Les mythes autour de Montségur

On doit à l'ariégeois Napoléon Peyrat, vers 1870, la redécouverte enthousiaste de Montségur; et sa plume inspirée, l'atmosphère romantique qui depuis lors habite le lieu. Au point qu'il est encore difficile aujourd'hui à un certain public d'admettre que le temple de Paraclet n'est qu'un petit château français du XIV^e siècle. En outre, une légende voudrait que Montségur ait été le lieu de refuge des derniers Templiers, après avoir été excommuniés par le Pape Clément V.

Le phénomène solaire de Montségur

Chaque année, au solstice d'hiver, le premier rayon de soleil à l'horizon traverse le château dans sa longueur et, au solstice d'été, il traverse les quatre archères du donjon au nord-ouest avec une précision millimétrique. Un phénomène comparable est visible à Quéribus. Certaines personnes y voient un lien entre le culte solaire, d'origine Manichéenne, et la religion des cathares.

Le trésor de l'église cathare

Montségur est supposé avoir abrité le riche trésor de l'église cathare. De ce supposé trésor nous ne savons que peu de choses. Deux faits alimentent les suppositions autour de ce trésor. Le premier, est la fuite à cheval du parfait Mathieu et du diacre Bonnet aux environs de Noël 1243 emportant avec eux "de l'or et de l'argent et une infime quantité de monnaie". On pense que ce trésor est parvenu en Italie à Crémone, lieu d'Italie où une autre communauté cathare importante a vécu. Cette supposition est renforcée par les correspondances épistolaires avérées entre les deux communautés.

Un deuxième trésor aurait été sauvé durant la trêve de mars 1244 puisqu'il est fait état de quatre individus s'enfuyant de Montségur avec un chargement. Les historiens conjecturent que ce trésor réunissait les nombreux textes hérétiques conservés par les Parfaits dans la forteresse.

Le Graal pyrénéen

Montségur a été considéré comme étant le château du Graal. Le Graal aurait été une des pièces du trésor de l'église cathare : la coupe dans laquelle Joseph d'Arimathie aurait recueilli le sang du Christ sur le mont Golgotha ou bien l'émeraude tombée de la couronne de Lucifer lors de la chute des Anges. L'Allemand Otto Rahn a été l'artisan zélé de ce mythe que lui avait inspiré un érudit d'Ussat-les-Bains, Antonin Gadai.

Otto Rahn avait étudié l'histoire des cathares et était passionné par ce Languedoc riche en « légendes ». En 1932, il s'était installé dans la petite station thermale d'Ussat-les-Bains à l'hôtel Les Marronniers dont il avait pris la gérance. Grâce aux théories poétiques d'Antonin Gadai, il écrivit la « Croisade contre le Graal » qui participa activement, après le premier essai sur Montségur de Napoléon Peyrat, au regain d'intérêt pour l'Occitanie.

Notes

- [1] http://stable.toolserver.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Ch%C3%A2teau_de_Monts%C3%A9gur&language=fr¶ms=42_52_32_N_01_49_57_E_type:landmark
- [2] Yves Dossat, *Le bûcher de Montségur et les bûchers de l'Inquisition*, in collectif, *Le Credo, la morale et l'Inquisition*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux, n° 6, Privat, Toulouse, 1971, p. 362-378

Bibliographie

- Jean Duvernoy, *Le dossier de Montségur : interrogatoires d'Inquisition, 1242-1247*, Le Pérégrinateur éditeur, (ISBN 2-910352-08-0)
- Zoé Oldenbourg, *Le bûcher de Montségur : 16 mars 1244*, Galimard, coll. « Les journées qui ont fait la France », Paris, 1959 (réimpr. 2003) (ISBN 2-07-032507-9)

Romans historiques

- Gérard Bavoux, *Le porteur de lumière*, Pygmalion, 1996
- Henri Gougaud, *L'expédition*, Éditions du Seuil, 1991
- Michel Peyramaure, *La passion cathare*, Robert Laffont, 1999

Voir aussi

- G.R.A.M.E. : Groupe de recherches archéologiques de Montségur et ses environs

Anecdotes

- Le siège de Montségur et le massacre des cathares qui a suivi ont inspiré le célèbre groupe de heavy metal Iron Maiden qui en a fait une chanson présente sur l'album Dance of Death.

Articles connexes

- Châteaux cathares
- Le trésor des cathares
- Siège de Montségur

Liens externes

- Galerie de photos sur le château de Montségur (<http://www.photos-france.net/content/view/14/52/>)
- Montségur sur cathares.org (<http://cathares.org/montsegur.html>)
- Montségur sur Histariège.com (<http://histariege.com/montsegur.htm>)
- Le symbole de Montségur (http://www.chemins-cathares.eu/05_01_cathares_symbole_montsegur.php)
- La page du château de Montségur sur le site de Casteland (<http://www.casteland.com/pfr/chateau/cathare/montsegur/montsegur.htm>)

Source: <http://fr.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?oldid=39382497>

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