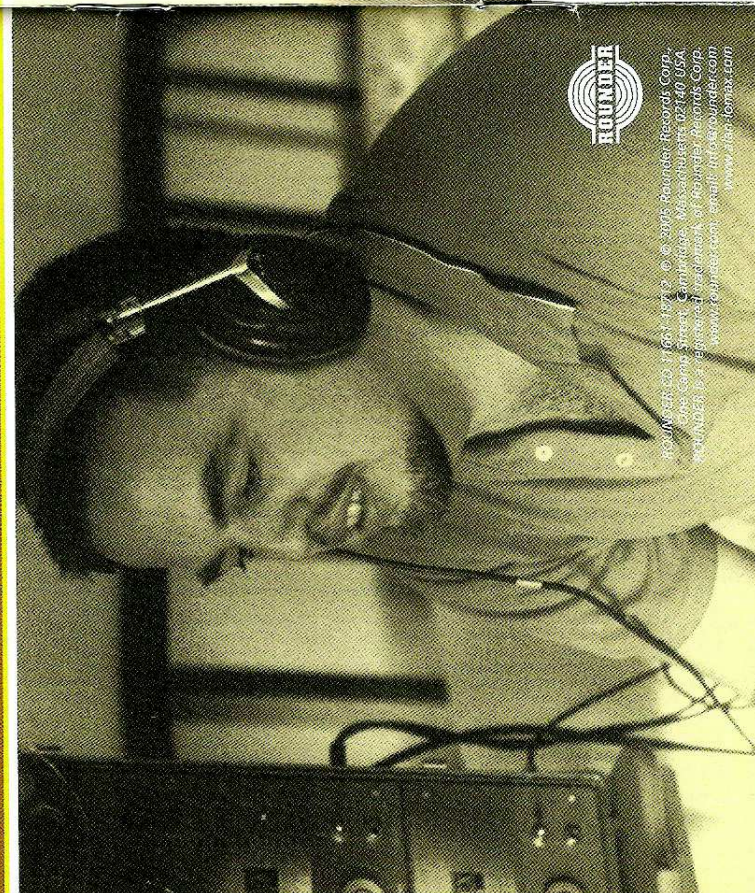


ITALIAN TREASURY



Lombardia



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Almenno San Salvatore, September 1964
Cantata della Sagra della Arca
Almenno San Salvatore, September 1964



LOMBARDY AND ITS MUSIC —Bruno Pianzà

The Italian region of Lombardy borders on Switzerland to the north. To the west is Piedmont and to the east the Veneto and a small part of Trentino. The southern border with Emilia-Romagna largely coincides with the Po River. The capital city, Milan, is the second most populous in Italy after Rome (the national capital) and, together with Turin in Piedmont and Genoa in Liguria, forms the so-called industrial triangle of Italy. Lombardy is subdivided into the administrative *province* named for their capital cities: Bergamo, Brescia, Como, Cremona, Lecco, Lodi, Mantova, Milan, Pavia, Sondrio, and Varese.

Physically, Lombardy comprises a pre-Alpine and Alpine zone (whose highest point reaches 13,284 feet); a foothill region partly of morainic material that abounds in lakes (including all or part of Lakes Garda, Lugano, Como, and Maggiore); and a rich alluvial plain that slopes gently to the Po River. Numerous tributary rivers drain southward into the Po basin, including the Ticino, the Adda, the Oglio, and the Mincio. This varied geography gives rise to marked economic and social diversity, such as exists between the industrial urban and hill plains of Brescia and Bergamo that produce cereals, rice, forage, milk and cheese. There also is a vibrant mountain economy of forestry, summer pasturing, mining, small family farms and vineyards in the Alpine and pre-Alpine areas (Sondrio and the mountain of Como, Bergamo, Brescia, and Lecco) and a distinctive type of Appennine *viticoltura* (grape growing and winemaking) in the hills of the Pavian Oltrepò.

The industrial crisis of recent years, together with massive waves of migration, first from the Veneto, then from southern Italy, and today from the developing countries, have greatly altered the social equilibrium of the region, enriching and multiplying its cultural valences. These changes were barely under way when Alan Lomax and Diego Carpitella made these recordings, a circumstance that helps us to contextualize and explain them. It should be kept in mind that published studies and collections of the folk music and popular traditions of Lombardy were of scant interest compared to those done elsewhere in Italy. Lombard collectors of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—Giovanni Battista Bolza, Antonio Traboschi, Carlo Tenca, and then Arrilio Frescura, Giacomo Bollini, Giovanni Re, Giovanni Biguami, and Vittorio Brunelli—although worthy, produced nothing to compare with Costantino Nigra's *Caniti popolari del Piemonte* (1888) or Giuseppe Pirra's *Biblioteca delle tradizioni popolari siciliane* (1841–1916).

Lomax and Carpitella's trip through Lombardy in the autumn of 1954 was therefore a foray into substantially unknown territory. We cannot with certainty trace the pathways—so far away from the Old Chisholm Trail—that brought them to Parre and Bottanuco (in the province of Bergamo) and Confienza (in the province of Pavia). In a few years vast quantities of information on the traditional music of Lombardy would emerge as a result of their pioneering research, including the later work of Carpitella himself; that of Roberto Leydi, Gianni Bosio, and their co-workers; of the Istituto "Ernesto de Martino" in Milan; and the A.E.S. (Archivio di Etnografia e Storia Sociale) of the Regione Lombardia; and numerous other scholars active in the territory. In the 1950s, however, the

songs of the rice-field workers (later collected in the regions of Crema and Mantova, as well as Milan and Pavia) were as yet unknown, as were the factory workers' songs and the protest repertoires; the so-called archaic repertoires of both mountain and plains; miners' songs; the extraordinary instrumental music of the Brescia mountains; and of the Appennines of the Oltrepò Pavese; and the compositions of the *cantastorie* (ballad singers) of the *piazze*, which were still numerous. Despite this, in the common perception (notwithstanding voluminous research, archives, publications, discographies, and documentation) Lombardy was, and still is, poor in musical traditions.

It was not possible for Lomax and Carpitella to do more in their limited time, so these recordings should be judged as a historic first attempt to document the ethnography of a region that represented the most advanced pole of economic and socioeconomic evolution. Yet this small collection records a vanished world and is a harbinger of riches waiting to be uncovered.

The Alan Lomax and Diego Carpitella recordings from Lombardia —Goffredo Plastino

Alan Lomax and Diego Carpitella probably began their recordings in Lombardy on September 23, 1954. They had come from the Trentino-Alto Adige and Friuli-Venezia Giulia, where they had stayed for nearly a week; their last recording prior to those in Lombardy had been in Moena (Trento) on September 22. According to the typewritten notes made by Lomax and his own handwritten ones on the tape boxes, we can reconstruct the sequence of the recording sessions presided over by the two ethnomusicologists.

1. Parre (Bergamo): September 23
2. Almenno S. Salvatore (Bergamo): September 24
3. Rota D'Innagna (Bergamo): September 24
4. Bottanuco (Bergamo): September 24
5. Confienza (Pavia): September 26

In all, five recording sessions took place in Lombardy, yielding a total of 28 recordings. A document at the Alan Lomax Archive in New York states that Alan Lomax and Diego Carpitella were in the Bolzano (Trentino-Alto Adige) studios of RAI (Radio Televisione Italiana) on September 23 from 10 to 10:30 A.M. (though conceivably they stayed a bit longer) supervising the transfer of four recordings of traditional music from the Trentino onto magnetic tape by RAI technicians. The distance from Bolzano to Parre is a little over 200 km, and we suppose the two ethnomusicologists held their first recording session in Lombardy at Parre in the evening of the same day.

After having documented the vocal polyphony of Parre, Lomax and Carpitella made two recordings of birdcalling (this traditional practice of mimicry of animal sounds evidently fascinated them) in Almenno S. Salvatore and Rota D'Innagna. That same day they recorded the performances of panpipes and folk music in Bottanuco. Two days later, in Confienza, they made only two recordings on what was probably a stop on their way to Piedmont.

Alan Lomax's field notes (with the sole exception of those from Sicily) were stolen at the end of his Italian field trip, in January 1955, in Campania. We therefore can't know exactly what inspired Lomax and Carpitella in these Lombard towns or

why their stay in the region was so brief. We do know that they had been advised about which traditional musicians to record and what places to visit by Giorgio Nataletti, then director of the National Center for the Study of Folk Music of Rome.³ As a rule, as Carpiella later recalled,⁴ they ignored Nataletti's suggestions, preferring to work autonomously. Nataletti's directions may, however, have led them to some of the Lombard material. The panpipe players of Bottanuco, for example, in all probability belonged to a local "folkloristic" ensemble (see notes to tracks 4 and 15). The singers from that town certainly did belong to such an organized group (see track 13). Such "folkloristic" ensembles received government support during the Fascist era, and hence their names were doubtless known in Rome. In 1949, moreover, Giorgio Nataletti himself had made 24 recordings of a group of panpipe players from Vighizzolo di Canù (Como), who were performing at an international festival of folk and popular music held in Venice that year, so Lomax and Carpiella undoubtedly were familiar with the panpipe repertoire of Lombardy.⁵

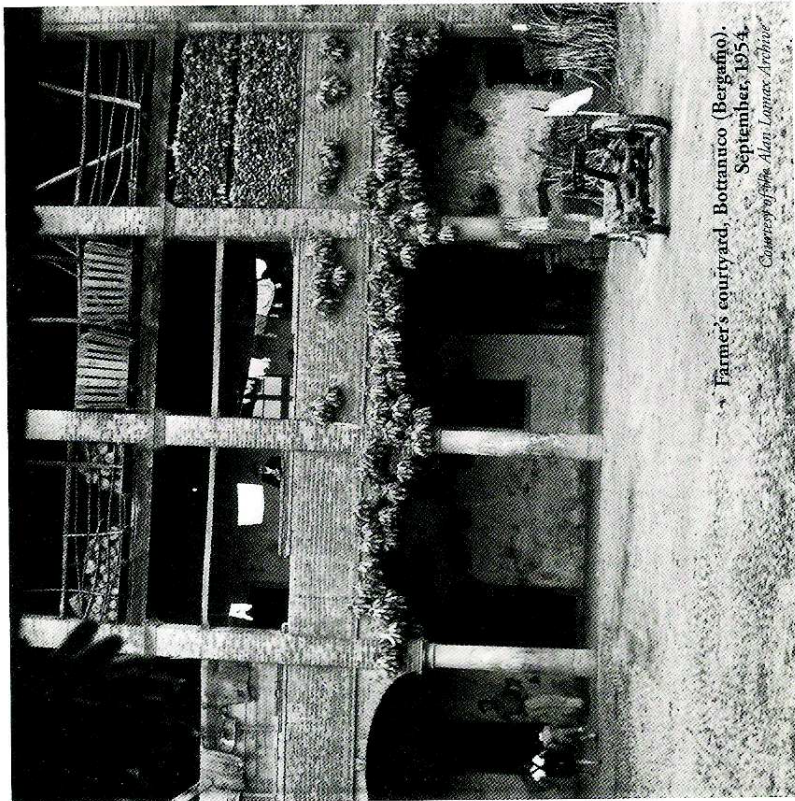
As Bruno Pianta notes, the picture that emerges from the sum of these recordings does not fully convey the richness of vocal styles and repertoire that existed in the region in the 1950s. Most noteworthy are the vocal traditions of Pare (tracks 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14), where polyphonic singing (mostly by women) was, and continues to be, predominant. The recordings from Confinza probably resulted from a fortuitous encounter with a group of rice workers (tracks 2 and 8). But, although limited in number, these recordings of ballads, lullabies, birdcalls, and instrumental pieces for panpipes nevertheless represent a critical moment in the ethnomusical awareness of

traditional oral music in Lombardy. Moreover, they constitute a historical document of great value and can be appreciated for their timeless beauty alone.

—University of Newcastle, November 2002

Historical Introduction —Ellen Harold

The region now known as Lombardy was settled by Celtic tribes in the seventh century B.C. and became part of the Roman Province of Cisalpine Gaul in the third century B.C. In 293 A.D., when Diocletian divided the Empire, he made Mediolanum (Milan) the administrative center of the West. It was from Milan that the Emperor Constantine proclaimed Christianity the imperial religion (312 A.D.), and under the bishopric of Saint Ambrose (340–397), the city was a focus of Catholic orthodoxy. With the fall of the Western Empire in the fifth century, Milan's importance diminished. During the barbarian invasions and the struggles between the Byzantines and the Goths, the fortified city of Pavia (Ticinum) emerged as a bulwark of resistance. The last Roman Emperor (435–493), who deposed the last Roman emperor, was crowned King of Italy at Pavia; and the fierce Langobards (Lombards), whose conquest in 569 gave the region its name, made it their capital. During their occupation there were three Italian capitals: a Lombard one at Pavia, a Latin one at Rome, and a Greek one at Ravenna, each with distinct legal systems and religions—for like all the Germanic tribes except the Franks, the Lombards were Arian Christians.⁶ Although they gradually adopted Roman manners and, under their queen Theodelinda (590–628), Roman Catholicism, the populace and the Pope continued to resent them and resisted their attempts to consolidate their rule. When the Lombard Aistulf



Farmer's courtyard, Bottanuco (Bergamo), September, 1954.

Courtesy of the Alan Lomax Archive

briefly took Ravenna (751) and demanded tribute from Rome, Pope Stephen II called in the Franks under Pepin the Short to overthrow them, and, in 772, Pepin's son Charlemagne assumed the iron crown of the Lombards for himself at Pavia.⁷ The Lombard occupation, as chronicled by Paul the Deacon (c.720-799),⁸ passed into the realm of legend and the Lombards themselves merged into the general population.

In 951, Otto I, the first Holy Roman Emperor, absorbed the titular Kingdom of Italy (i.e., Lombardy) into his transalpine imperium. He and his successors, however, were unable to administer it directly, and the increasingly prosperous Lombard towns became accustomed to communal self-government. Milan, in particular, resumed its former glory. By the High Middle Ages, the reputation for energy and enterprise of Lombard bankers and cloth merchants was such that Italian merchants abroad were referred to as Lombards whether they came from the region or not. A medieval chronicler noted that the Lombards had lain aside "the bitterness of their barbarous ferocity in consequence, perhaps, of their marriages with the Italians; so that they had children who inherited something of Roman mildness and intellect from their maternal parentage, or from the influence of soil and climate, and retain the elegance of the Latin language and a certain courtesy of manners. They also imitate the activity of the ancient Romans in the management of the cities and in the preservation of the state. Finally, they are so attached to their liberty that, to avoid the insolence of rulers, they prefer to be ruled by consuls [rather] than by princes."⁹

In 1167, Milan led a league of Lombard cities in defending their municipal independence against Frederick Barbarossa. Communal government in Northern Italy, however, ultimately gave way to the rule of strongmen and their families, who accumulated and consolidated the territories surrounding their cities. Lodovico Sforza (Duke of Milan, known as "il Moro," 1451-1508) is famous as the patron of Leonardo da Vinci, whom he employed to tame the waters of the Adda and the Ticino. In 1494, Sforza called on the French to invade Italy, inaugurating thirty years of foreign wars on Italian soil and, after the Spanish defeated the French at the battle of Pavia, three hundred more years of foreign domination. Plague and economic depression characterized Spanish rule, but under the Austrians (1713-1804 and 1815-1859) the region experienced relatively good government compared to the rest of Italy. Its ruling classes and intellectuals frequently combined deep conservatism with a pragmatic willingness to change.¹⁰ By the nineteenth century Lombardy was the most densely populated region in Italy and, with Piedmont, the most industrially developed. In agriculture, landowners experimented with the adoption of such new food crops as rice and maize (with the unlooked-for consequence that in the nineteenth century much of the peasantry suffered from pellagra). A semi-commercialized agriculture also fostered the growth of an agricultural proletariat of day laborers.

All recordings by Alan Lomax and Diego Capriella.

1. EL FIÒL DEL CONTE (THE COUNT'S SON)

Performed by Cleste Cappelli, Pace Cominelli, and Gina Bonatti (female vocalists).
Recorded in Parre (Bergamo), on September 23, 1954.

Parre, in the Alta Valle Seriana, is noted in the province of Bergamo as a village of shepherds who practiced transhumance (seasonal migration of flocks from low to high pastures). It was also rich in vocal traditions principally passed on by women.

This selection is an interesting if incomplete version of a narrative ballad found in countless versions all over Italy (Nigra 13, *Un'eroina* ["A Heroine"]¹¹ and Europe as a whole, about the resourceful girl who uses her wits to kill a mysterious seducer knight, who is revealed to be a serial wife murderer. In the British "Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight" (Child No. 4) the girl foils the knight's plan to drown her by making him turn around while she pretends to take off her fine clothes (which it would be a shame to consign to the swamp), and when his back is turned she pushes him into the water. The heroine of this Italian version, on the other hand, borrows the knight's sword on the pretext of cutting a tree branch to shade her horse and strikes down the evil-doer.

This rendition from Parre follows the typical musical scheme of the Alpine and Po areas: a solo voice introduces the strophe, with a second voice entering on the second line and the last two verses sung in harmony. Polyvocal ballad singing is rare in western Europe, but very common in Northern Italy.

*Si l'ghèra el fiù del conte che h'volèra tù miér
volìa spusà l'inglésa la figlià di un cavaliér*

*la sera la dimandà la marina la spòò
e con la bella inglesa per la Francia se ne andò*

*la fi trecento passì senza mai [...] [indistinct]
la si fa trecento d'altri e la incomincia a sospirar*

*che sospirò poi inglese perché mai sospirò vu
sòpro pudri e madri che non rivèdò mai più*

*rimira quel castello o si si l'ò remirà
là a trentatre sposine me la resta gh'ò taglià*

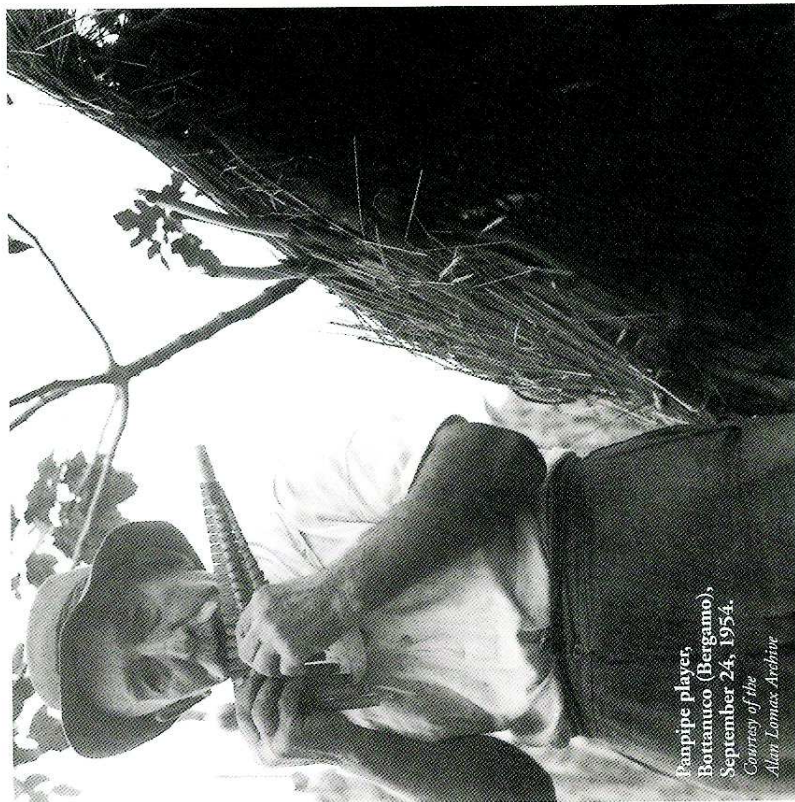
*marito mio marito impreteimì n'pò la spà(d)à
che vòt taglià una rama per far ombra al mio cavù*

*la rama l'è tagliata fiù del conte l'è già mort (accis)
e poi la bella inglesa per la Francia se ne andò*

*la riva a metà strada l'è incontrato l'ò fradel
n' do 'udt o bella inglesa in periglià da per vù*

*me vò a Roma santa a portar la novità
che me al fiù del conte me la resta gh'ò taglià*

Translation: *It was a count's son who wanted to take a wife, / he wanted to marry the English girl, the daughter of a knight. // In the evening he proposed to her, in the morning they were married, / and with the fair English girl, he left for France. // She went three hundred steps without [...]. / She went three hundred more, and she began to sigh. // "Why are you sighing, English girl, tell me, why do you sigh?" / "I am sighing for my father and mother, whom I shall see no more." // "Look yonder at that castle." / "Yes, yes, I have seen it." / "In that castle I have cut*



Panpipe player,
Bottanuco (Bergamo),
September 24, 1954.

Courtesy of the
Alan Lomax Archive

off the heads of thirty-three brides." // "Husband, o my husband, lend me your sword awhile. I want to cut that branch off to give my horse some shade." // The branch was cut and the count's son soon was dead (killed). I and then the fair English girl went on her way to France. // She came to the middle of her journey, where she met her brother. // "Where are you going, fair English girl, in peril I'da per vi," probably meaningless words to cover up a memory lapse (G.P.)" // "I'm going to Holy Rome to bring the news / that I have cut the head off the count's son."

2. IL GIORNO DI CARNEVALE (CARNIVAL DAY)

Performers unidentified (female vocalists).
Recorded in Confienza (Pavia), on September 26, 1954.
Previously unreleased.

Confienza is a village in Lomellina, a predominantly rice-growing agricultural region between the Ticino and the Po in the western part of the province of Pavia, bordering Novara and Vercelli, in Piedmont. These anonymous performers are *mondaine* (female seasonal rice workers) hired to transplant and weed the rice (from *mondare*, to clean or weed), and their repertoires reflect their practice of singing as they worked. The *mondaine* were drawn from all over Italy (but especially from Emilia Romagna, eastern Lombardy, and the Veneto), which made it possible for thousands of female agricultural laborers to get to know and learn from one another.

This breezy, frankly erotic ballad (Nigra, no. 97, "L'amante confessore"), also sung in other Italian regions, fully captures the rice workers' irreverent humor, albeit the performance style here isn't especially distinctive. Generally, the vocal style of the

rice fields is more drawn out, richly polyvocal, and with little melisma—unlike this performance.

A note by Alan Lomax on the tape box briefly describes these singers as "four teenaged girls, pretty as spotted pups, who work in the rice, but have on their Sunday clothes." The language of their song text is influenced by Piedmontese.

Il giorno di Carnevale gh'è malà la mè murusa
(twice)

o chme i ò mèi da fè anella a ritrué
vestito da capuccino mi coniene andé (twice)

As above:
vestito da capuccino andai busar la porta

uscì usci usci finì nèn imbalardì
chi gh'ò la figlia in letto che la vòl murì

e se la vòl murire bisogna confessarla

da giù che sei chi mi o pader confissur
muné stila scaltèa e cunfissela via

per confissarla in bisogna chiuder le porte

le porte son sarè le finestre spalancà
o dimmi dimmi bella dimmi i tuoi peccà

i miei peccàti sòno che avevo due amanti

e mi gh'avevi in e mi gh'avevi diù
e quel che mi amavi l'è chi propri lù
e mi gh'avevi sés e mi gh'avevi seti
e quel che mi amavi l'è chi press al lett

il frate capuccino sentendo quelle parole
alsa le dibbia e sotto alle lenzuole

o c'èpa c'èpa bala o c'èpa so cuedon
sa ta vòti chi t'èdga la resuscitèdon

l'asilièdon l'è dada el frate se ne va via
la figlia vien giù dal letto o mamma son guarita

sia benedèl cul frà col sò cuedon ca il gh'è
a l' m'è guarì la fra chi l'èva in létta mala

e dopo nove mesi è nato un bel bambino
che somigliava tutto al frate capuccino

sia maledèl cul frà col sò cuedon ca il gh'è
a l' m'è nadi la fra chi l'èva in létta mala

Spoken: Fine!

Translation: On Carnival day my sweetheart got sick. / How can I go and visit her? I'll contrive to dress as a Capuchin friar [who wore hoods] // Dressed as a Capuchin, I went and knocked at the door /

"Hush, hush, don't bother me, / my daughter is in bed and she is going to die." // "If she's going to die, she needs to be confessed." / "As long as you're here, o father confessor, / go upstairs and confess her." // "In order to confess her, I have to shut the doors." // The doors were closed and the windows opened wide. /

"Tell me, tell me, o beautiful, tell me about your sins." // "My sins are that I had two lovers; / I had one, I had two, / but the one I loved is here, right here. / I had six, I had seven, / but the one I loved is here, right by my bed." // When the friar heard these words, / he lifted up the blanket and went under the sheets. / "Grab hold, o beautiful, grab hold of my big rope, if you want me to give you resurrection" //

Abolution having been given, the friar went away. / The girl got out of bed. "O mother, I am cured" / "A blessing on that friar with his big rope. / He has cured my daughter, who was sick in bed." // And after nine months a fine baby was born. / He looked just like the Capuchin friar. / A curse on that friar with his big rope. / He betrayed my daughter who was sick in bed." (Spoken.) The end.

3. **CARO 'L ME TONE**
(MY DEAR TONIO)

Performed by Celeste Cappelli, Pace Cominelli,
Gina Bonetti (female vocalists);
Romolo Cappelli, Guido Batti (male vocalists).
Recorded in Parre (Bergamo), on September 23, 1954.
Previously unreleased.

The singers of Parre perform a local version of a song sometimes also known as "Caro 'l me Pèter" ("My Dear Peter"), that is sung throughout Lombardy. It has been collected in the province of Brescia, Como, and Milano, but although widely diffused, its function and meaning are obscure. The satiric tone and references to betrothal and marriage, to Carnival, and to Saint Martin's Day (November 11, when agricultural contracts traditionally expired and were renewed) suggest it was performed as part of a seasonal rite.

Caro 'l me Tone
sta sò algher
tò se 'l me negher
in verità (twice)

As above:
se me so negher
casa c'èmporà (n'imporà)
sò la me portà

cominde me
sò la me portà
sul mio canello
uno più bello
m'è capità

m'è capitato
con una rosa
per farmi sposa
sò carnènd

sò carnènd
sò san Martino
se l'è il destino
ci sposerem.

Translation: "My dear Tonio, / be of good cheer, / lo, you are my dark one,² / in truth." // "If I am dark, / I don't care. / At my front door / I am the boss." // "At my front door— / at my gate / I found somebody / handsomer than you. / When I found him, / he had a rose in his hand. / He asked me to be his bride, / this Carnival. // This Carnival, / this Saint Martin's Day / if fate wills it, / we will be married."

4. **MARCIA (MARCH)**
Performers unknown (panpipes, snare drum,
bass drum, cymbals).
Recorded in Bottanuco (Bergamo), on September 24, 1954.

These remarkable sounds were produced in the tiny, rustic village of Bottanuco, by the local panpipe band. Almost every locality in Northern Italy has a band of wind instruments, but in Bottanuco we have the survival (even encouraged by a local folklore movement) of a kind of orchestra that may date far back in time. Here the honest artisans of Bottanuco have enlarged their panpipe band to the dimensions

of a small symphony. Some pipes are six to eight feet long. —Alan Lomax¹³

Panpipes, played continuously for centuries in China, Eurasia, and South America, are a remarkable feature of the instrumental traditions of Lombardy, where they go by such names as *fregamusa*, *gramuson*, *frituluf*, *urghenti* and *orghenti*.

There is iconographic evidence of the presence of panpipes in the area around Bergamo dating from the beginning of the eighteenth century.¹⁴ They were traditionally heard on holidays in farm residences and taverns as solo instruments and in mixed ensembles of varying size. The last half of the nineteenth century saw the formation of panpipe ensembles whose makeup mirrored that of municipal brass bands. These *bande di cam* ("reed bands") as they were called used *frituluf* of various sizes for all of the instrumental parts and even added a percussion section, as in this recording. Before World War II, the fascist Opera Nazionale Popolavoro ("Afterwork Activities Organization") promoted panpipe bands through its sponsorship of folklore demonstrations, and they were thus institutionalized and regulated as folk revival groups.¹⁵

An active group of *frituluf* players, I Sifoi (founded in 1867), still exists in Bottanuco, and they are likely the performers here and on the other panpipe recordings on this disc (see tracks 10 and 15), although there is no corroborating written notation to that effect by Alan Lomax or Diego Carpitella. The fine march on this track is clearly of brass band origin.

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Lombardia, September, 1954.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Translation: *Ah, ah, ah, / ah, ah, ah, // If you go to sleep I will give you sweets, / But if you are naughty I will give you smacks. // (Spoken:) Go to sleep, go to sleep—with the pretty little angels, go to sleep. Oh, oh, go to sleep, what a good girl, Rosalba, what a good girl! Oh, oh—*

6. OIL CARNEAL EL VA EL VÉ (CARNIVAL COMES AND GOES)

Performed by Celeste Cappelli, Pace Cominelli, Gina Bonetti (female vocalists); Romolo Cappelli, Guido Boti (male vocalists).
Recorded in Parre (Bergamo), on September 23, 1954.
Previously unreleased.

One of Carnival's numerous ritual functions was as a rite of passage for girls, marking their attainment of the age of courtship. In the mountain culture of Lombardy, betrothal and marriages followed in rapid and inevitable succession. Verses encouraging the pretty girls and deriding the less attractive were and still are quite common in the Orobiane pre-Alps, and in the pre-Alpine regions of Bergamo and Brescia. The subject of these Carnival verses is the perpetual triangle of him, her, and her mother.

*Oi carneal el va el vé
ma grè questo ma grè questo
carneal el va el vé
ma grè questo no l'è 'l mé
forse chel che 'l vegnerà
forse chel forse chel
forse chel che 'l vegnerà
forse chel ol me sarà
tia-lalà-là chèle belle se marida
tia-lalà-là chèle brüte a la so cò*

5. NINNA NANNA (LULLABY)
Performed by Celeste Cappelli (female vocalist).
Recorded in Parre (Bergamo), on September 23, 1954.

Celeste Cappelli, a slippermaker of the village of Parre, is a celebrated singer of folksongs, with the silvery, clear, and tremulous voice so typical of Lombardy. Here she croons a lullaby of the region, alternately promising rewards and punishments to her child. —Alan Lomax

This fragmentary lullaby has the traditional eleven-syllable feminine metre that is typical of though not exclusive to, eastern Lombardy. The melody may be influenced by composed music: it resembles the beginning of *Fanèta uscia*, a Neapolitan song collected by Guillaume Cornau (but much older and probably of Sicilian origin) that appeared in his highly acclaimed *Passatempi musicali* (1825).¹⁶

The anomalous spoken exhortations at the end were probably made at the behest of the guests with the recording machine.

*Ah ah ah
ah ah ah
sa to faré nini na darò i coche
se to faré 'l catif na darò i bose
ah ah ah ah
ah ah ah ah
Spoken:
Fa la nanna, fa la nanna [...] voi bei anghel nehi, fa la bella nanna! Oh... oh... fa la nanna, oh che brava Rosalba, che brava! Oh... oh...*

'niant che la mamma
la fa i polpette
me ghe la pètte
me ghe la pètte
'niant che la mamma
la fa i polpette
me ghe la pètte
a fare l'amor

tra-lalalà chèle belle se maridà
tra-lalalà chèle bròte a la so cà

e 'niant che la mamma
la ciccia i onge
me ghe la pònde
'niant che la mamma
la ciccia i onge
me ghe la pònde
a fare l'amor

tra-lalalà chèle belle se maridà
tra-lalalà chèle bròte a la so cà

Translation: Carnival comes and goes, / but this isn't
the one for me. // Maybe the next one, / maybe the
next one will be mine [i.e., the one when I get
engaged]. // Tra-lalalà, the pretty girls get married, /
tra-lalalà, the ugly ones stay home. // While my moth-
er is making meatballs, / I'll seize the chance to go
make love. // Tra-lalalà, the pretty girls get married, /
tra-lalalà, the ugly ones stay home. // While mother
sucks her fingernails, / I'll do it behind her back, / I'll
go make love. // Tra-lalalà, the pretty girls get mar-
ried, / Tra-lalalà, the plain ones stay at home.

7. PIERÌ DE LA MONTAGNA (PIERINO OF THE MOUNTAIN)

Performed by Celeste Cappelli, Pece Cominelli,
Gina Bonetti (female vocalists), Romolo Cappelli,
Guido Botti (male vocalists).
Recorded in Paire (Bergamo), on September 23, 1954.
Previously unreleased.

Comic wedding songs making fun of outcast, minority, or simply different social groups are a tradition solidly rooted in popular European culture. This song was originally about a pauper's wedding, but through a semantic confusion the pauper became a mountain man—a sort of rustic or hillbilly. The mistake began with Costantino Nigra, who in *Canti popolari del Piemonte* (1888) entitled the song "Le nozze dell'alpigiانو" ("The Mountain Man's Wedding") (Nigra 114). Nigra overlooked the fact that the Piedmontese term *vittin* or *vittin* used in the text ("vittin de la montagna") refers rather to someone who originally came from the mountains and has taken up a tramp-like existence elsewhere. (The term is related to the jargon terms *guidò* or *guidòne*—an itinerant swindler—and *gaitto*—a strolling actor of the lowest social level.) The change in meaning was perpetuated by the mountain choruses who spread the song, translated into local languages, throughout the Alpine regions. Thus it is now accepted as poking good-natured fun at the simple ways of the mountain folk. The expression "Madonna Hignù" (lit. "Madonna Signore") is an interjection meaning roughly "good grief."

Pierì de la montagna el vòlta tò mè
e tò mè
vòlta spusà Rosina
l'era strèccia de 'uina l'era larga de spulà

alla moda alla moda alla moda dei muntagnù
e pota hignù Madonna Hignù
e pota 'à là òt fa cos'è

'l vestì che lù 'l g'irà tòlt e sì l'era 'n bel vestì
'n bel vestì

la guarnassa a righe 'l copèt a quadretù
alla moda alla moda alla moda dei muntagnù
e pota hignù Madonna Hignù
e pota 'à là òt fa cos'è

l'anel che lù g'irà tòlt e sì l'era 'in bel anel
'in bel anel

no l'era mia de or ma l'era de utù
alla moda alla moda alla moda dei muntagnù
e pota hignù Madonna Hignù
e pota 'à là òt fa cos'è

el prest che gù 'à spusa e sì l'era 'n bel prest
'n bel prest

no l'era gne grùs gus magher ma 'l g'hea 'n bel pensù
alla moda alla moda alla moda dei muntagnù
e pota hignù Madonna Hignù
e pota 'à là òt fa cos'è

el viasèt che lur i g'han fato sì l'era un bel viasèt
'un bel viasèt
i è andacc a Colognola i è turnai da Bucalèù
alla moda alla moda alla moda dei muntagnù
e pota hignù Madonna Hignù
e pota 'à là òt fa cos'è

el pranzèt che lur i g'han fato sì l'era 'in bel pranzèt
'in bel pranzèt
redic e capùsiera cum l'òle de nàisù
alla moda alla moda alla moda dei muntagnù
e pota hignù Madonna Hignù

e pota 'à là òt fa cos'è

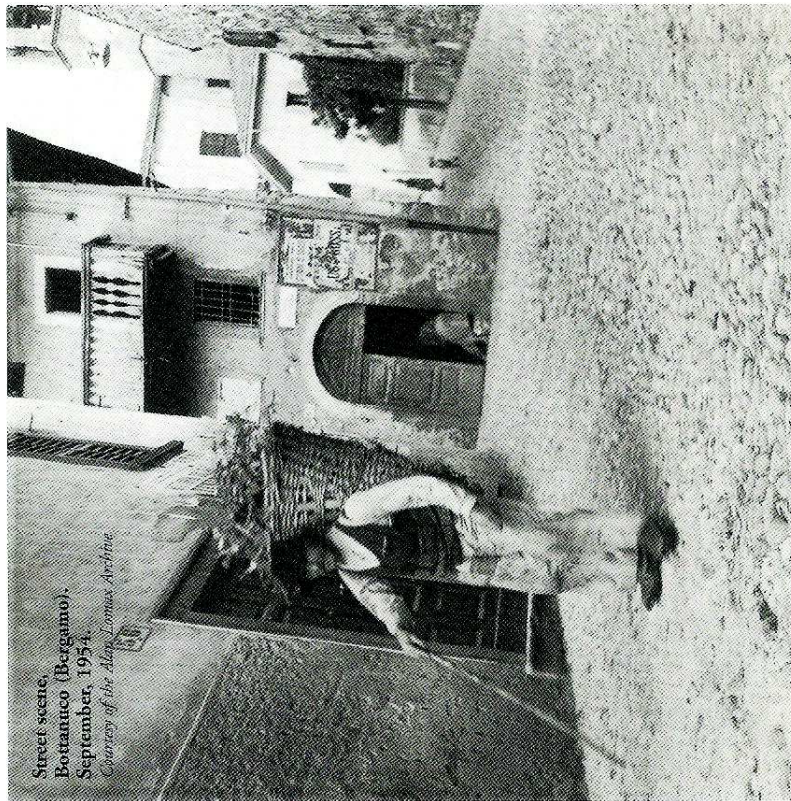
Translation: Pierino of the mountain wanted to take
a wife, / he wanted to marry Rosina. / Her waist was
narrow and her shoulders wide, / in the fashion, in
the fashion, in the fashion of the mountain folk. //

Refrain: Good grief, how about that? Certainly, and
what are you going to do? // The dress he chose for her
was really nice: / the undershirt was striped, the
bodice was checked, / in the fashion, the fashion, in
the fashion of the mountain folk. // (**Refrain, as
above.**) // The ring he bought for her was really nice,
/ not made of gold, but of tin, / in the fashion, the
fashion of the mountain folk (etc.) // The clergyman
who married them was really nice: / he wasn't fat or
thin, he had a fine pot belly / in the fashion, in the
fashion, in the fashion of the mountain folk. . . . //
The wedding trip they had was really nice, / they
went to Colognola, and came back from Bocalone²⁷
/ in the fashion, the fashion of the mountain folk . . .
// The wedding supper they had was really nice: /
radicchio and stuffed cabbage with rapeseed oil, / in
the fashion, the fashion of the mountain folk . . .

8. I 'NDALÀ VIVRÒN (THEY WENT TO VIVERONE)

Performers unknown (female vocalists).
Recorded in Confianza (Pavia), on September 26, 1954.
Previously unreleased.

The *mondine* made up satiric songs about friends, acquaintances, and memorable incidents. Unfortunately we don't know who or what inspired this song about a journey that ended in a Rabelaisian drunk. The refrain is a verse borrowed from another song alluding to the *mondines* own physical posture while at work—bent over with their posteriors in full view.



Street scene,
Botranico (Bergamo),
September, 1954.
Courtesy of the Alan Lomax Archive.

*i nandai a Vivorón
i àn mangià il culombón
alè alè alè
alè alè alè
i nandai a Vivorón
i àn mangià il culombón
alè alè alè
la varogna i gh'èn da dré*

As above:

*el haquale l'è pagà
e i suoi (cut) fuvbi l'an mangià*

*e d'la gran indignàion
i an cagà in di calsón*

*el Bisogn cul Fracianapa
sa fà ciuch come una vaca*

*el Pivan e la Madòt
i l'an fà i so cumpòt*

*al Casalon col [...]]
l'è mandà il so frulin*

*e mèi liter e quarin
i l'an fà anche i citin*

Translation: *They went to Vivorone, / they ate the big pigeon. / Refrain: alè alè alè let's go, let's go, let's go / their shame is on their backsides. // Pasquale paid for it / and those geniuses ate it / alè alè alè (etc). // They'd such a stomach ache, / they've crapped in their pants . . . // Bisogno and Fracianapa / were drunk as cats . . . // Pivano and Maiotti / hatched a plot . . . // Casalone with [...] / sent his little son . . . // And even the kids / drank halves and quarter liters . . .*

**9. L'È RIVÀ D'UN BASTIMENTO
(A SHIP HAS COME IN)**

Performed by Celeste Cappelli, Pace Cominelli,
Gina Bonetti (female vocalists); Romolo Cappelli,
Guido Botti (male vocalists).
Recorded in Pare (Bergamo), on September 23, 1964.

Gina Bonetti, a singing crony of Signora Cappelli, leads a group of her friends in an ancient ballad found all over Italy. Its theme appears in the folk poetry of other European countries (see, for example, Child in his preface to the ballad "Lord Ingram and Chiel Wyer" [Child No. 66]). In accordance with the chivalrous etiquette of the Middle Ages, the knight errant, forced by circumstances to share the bed of his host's wife, puts his sword between the lady and himself, facing dishonour should he take advantage of the proximity. The following is a parody of this custom: the hero is a clever pilgrim who seems to care less for his honour than for a bit of fun. —Alan Lomax

This ballad of the pilgrim from Rome who abuses the hospitality of his trusting host and seduces his wife ("Il pellegrino di Roma," Nigra 113) is a staple of the wineshops and taverns of Lombardy, and variants appear all over northern Italy, as well. It was a popular item in the folk revival of the 1960s and 1970s among folk and cabaret singers. Texts from other versions from Lombardy usually begin: "Pellegrin che vien da Roma con le scarpe rotte ai piè" ("Pilgrim returning from Rome, with rattled shoes on your feet"). This version from Bergamo describes the pilgrim's nocturnal exploits quite decorously: "l'ho baciatà e ribaciatà" —"I kissed her and kissed her again." Other versions are more explicit.

L'è rivà d'un bastimento

oh nini nini nini fà nini nini nini

Translation: Sleep, silly girl, for Daddy is coming / and he will bring your cituccio [baby talk, probably meaning "candy"], sleep, sleep, your nipa [pacifier], / "Mother, let me marry for I am grown up, / and my undershirt comes up to the middle of my legs, / if you don't, let me get married, I'll drive you crazy, / I'll break the ass of my stilet."

13. QUANDO SAREMO FÒRA DE LA VALSÜGANA (WHEN WE ARE AWAY FROM VALSÜGANA)

Performers unknown (male vocalists).
Recorded in Bottanuco (Bergamo) on September 24, 1954.
Previously unreleased.

Valsügana is one of the principal valleys of Trentino, and this song, in fact, is one of the staples of the eponymous chorus of the Alpine Society of Trent (S.A.T.), founded in 1926, the first and most famous of the innumerable Alpine choruses that were to follow. This performance by the anonymous singers of Bottanuco is a good example of how the folk process took a song that had been elaborately harmonized and reintroduced it into oral tradition. The original text in Trentino (from Trentino-Alto Adige) also underwent "Lombardization," as the vowels u and o, were rounded to ü and ö (in fòra, Valsügana, and lì).

*Quando saremo fòra fòra
de la Valsügana* (twice)

*nai andrem trouar la mamma
per saper come la sta* (twice)

As above:

*La mamma la sta bene
e il papà l'è armadato
e il mio ben parà soldato
chissà quando poi ritornerà
Tuc i me dis che lù è zà
zerà n'altra mamma*

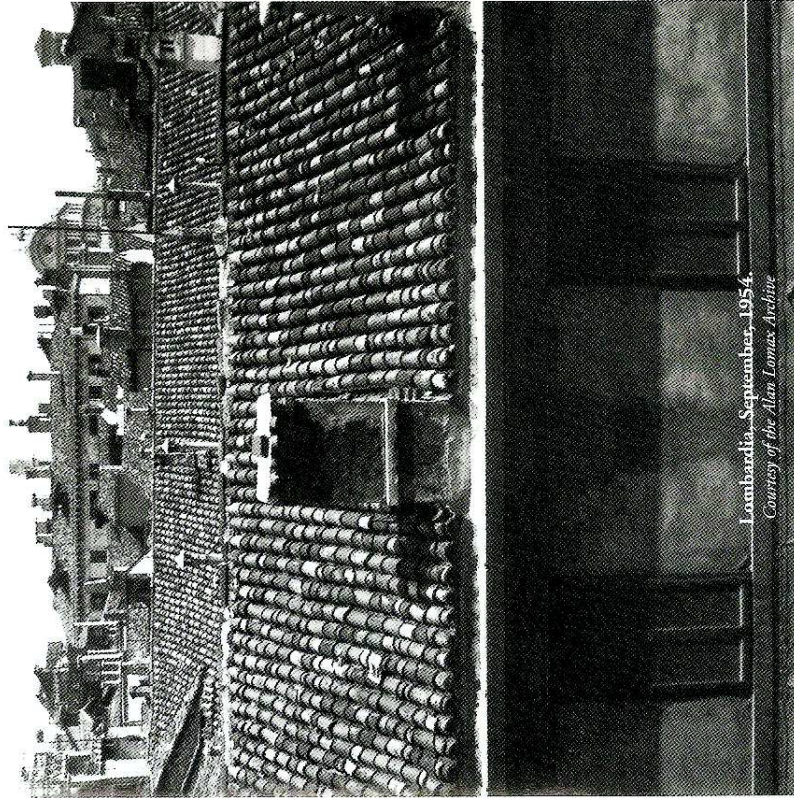
*l'è 'na storia dolorosa
che mi cre- mi credere no so*

Translation: When we are away, away / from Valsügana / we'll go and visit our mother / to learn how she is. // Mother is well, and Papà is sick, / and my true love has gone for a soldier, / Who knows when he'll return? // Everybody says he has already / looked for another girl, / It's a sad story, / and I really don't want to believe it.

14. MAMMA MIA LA SPUSA L'È CHÉ (MOTHER MINE, MY BRIDE IS HERE) / LE CARROZZE SON GIÀ PREPARATE (THE CARRIAGES ARE READY)

Performed by Celeste Cappelli, Pace Dominelli,
Gina Bonetti (female vocalists); Romolo Cappelli,
Guido Boti (male vocalists).
Recorded in Parè (Bergamo), on September 23, 1954.
Previously unreleased.

This performance unites fragments of two separate wedding songs known throughout Lombardy, especially in the eastern part. The first, "Mamma mia la spusa l'è ché" ("Mother Mine, My Bride is Here"), is the opening of a debate between the groom and his mother (in longer versions the bride



Lombardia, September, 1954.
Courtesy of the Alan Lomas Archive

also joins the fray) that prefigures and thus helps to diffuse future family tensions. The second song, usually known as "Le carrozze son già preparate" ("The Carriages Are Ready"), addresses the apprehensions of the wedding night.

1. Mamma mia la spusa l'è ché

Mamma mia la spusa l'è ché
fonghe alegrìa fonghe alegrìa
mamma mia la spusa l'è ché
fonghe alegrìa che incò l'è l'ò so dé. [Cheering]

incò l'è l'ò so dé domàn sarà l' mè
sa to l'è tòlla sa to l'è tòlla
incò l'è l'ò so dé domàn sarà l' mè
sa to l'è tòlla mantegna te. [Cheering]

Translation: "Mother mine, my bride is here. / Let's welcome her with joy. Mother mine, my bride is here. / Let's welcome her with joy, for today is her day. " / "Today is her day, tomorrow will be mine. / You've taken her for yourself, so you should maintain her."

2. Le carrozze son già preparate

Quando poi che faremo le nozze
inviteremo gli amici e i parenti
ma per vedere la sposa arrivare
e suoneremo quei dolci strumenti
ma per vedere la sposa arrivare. [Cheering]

Quando la sposa arriva a la porta
la par il color del limone
e la si lava col bianco sapone
per compartir una giovinetta d'amor

Eviviva gli sposi!

E le larina ne ore di notte
la si getta sul letto piangendo
o mamma mia l'è giovino il momento
ma di soffrire quei tristi dolor. [Cheering]

Translation: And when we have the wedding, / we'll invite our friends and relations, / and we will play those sweet instruments / when we see the bride arrive. / When the bride arrives at the door / she is the color of lemons. / She washes with white soap / so as to seem like a young girl in love. (repeat as before.) // [They cheer] Hurrah for the newlyweds! // [Sung] It is now three in the morning, / she throws herself on the bed, weeping. / Oh, mother mine, the moment has come / to suffer those doleful pains."

15. RIGOLETTO

Performers unknown (panpipes, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals).

Recorded in Bottanuco (Bergamo), on September 24, 1964.

Sounding like a circus callopie coming to town, 25 handmade panpipes took forth the musical charms of the nineteenth century in remarkable concert.

—Alan Lomax

Panpipe band repertoires included (in addition to traditional folk music) patriotic music, pop songs, dances, and arrangements of operatic arias by Donizetti (*La favorita*), Bellini (*Norma*), and above all Verdi (*Nabucco*, *Otello*, and *Rigoletto*), whose music the brass bands have spread all over Italy. Panpipe players learn their repertoire by ear and consider their individual interpretations and per-

formances, which often depart from the composers' scores, very personal.²⁰

16. RICHIAMI PER GLI UCCELLI (Birdcalls)

Performed by Angelo Natali and Callisto Natali, bird lures. Recorded in Almemo S. Salvatore (Bergamo), on September 24, 1964. *Previously unreleased.*

The province of Bergamo is renowned for skillful hunters, one of whose specialties used to be shooting migratory songbirds. When they didn't use dogs to find the birds by sight, the hunters would wait shotgun in hand, in blinds made of branches located in a *rocòlo* (small park) on the migratory flight path. Sometimes they used live birds (which, alas, had often been blinded) to call their fellows, or they employed small, handcrafted bird-calling instruments, as here. Today it is illegal to hunt most of the birds listed below, but the tradition of bird calling persists in the form of individual contests of skill at country fairs. The correct use of bird lures requires great mastery, which, in this recording (in which Diego Carpitella's voice can also be heard) is deployed to imitate the calls of the following birds:

rodina (tree pipit, *anthus trivialis trivialis*)
ballarina (gray wagtail, *motacilla cinerea cinerea*)
ballarosa (white wagtail, *motacilla alba alba*)
boarin (yellow wagtail, *motacilla flava flava*)
balola (lark, *alauda arvensis*)
chinza (bunting, *emberiza*)
cingallaga minore (tinnunculus, *parulus ceruleus*)
finelli (linnet, *acanthis camarina*)
sguizzette (meadow pipit, *anthus pratensis*)
sguizzetoni (red-throated pipit, *anthus cervinus*)

sri-lazzo (corn bunting, *emberiza calandra*)
passeri (sparrows, *passer montanus* or *passer domesticus italie*)
calandiani (calandra lark, *melanocorypha calandra*)

FOOTNOTES

¹ Bruno Pianta was the director of the Archivio di Etinografia e Storia Sociale della Regione Lombardia from 1973 to 2002 and editor of the series *Mondo Popolare in Lombardia* (see Bibliography and Discography).

² John Avery Lomax, Alan Lomax's father, grew up on a farm in Bosque County, Texas, near the celebrated Old Chisholm Trail, along which cowboys drove their herds from South Texas northward through the Indian country of Oklahoma to the railway stockyards of Abilene, Kansas. As a boy, Lomax heard cowboys singing as they watered their cattle at a branch of the stream near his father's farm. This and his acquaintance with cowboys at "townabouts" at local picnics and holidays inspired him to collect the songs published in his first book: *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* in 1910 (republished, New York: Collier Books, 1986, 1996).

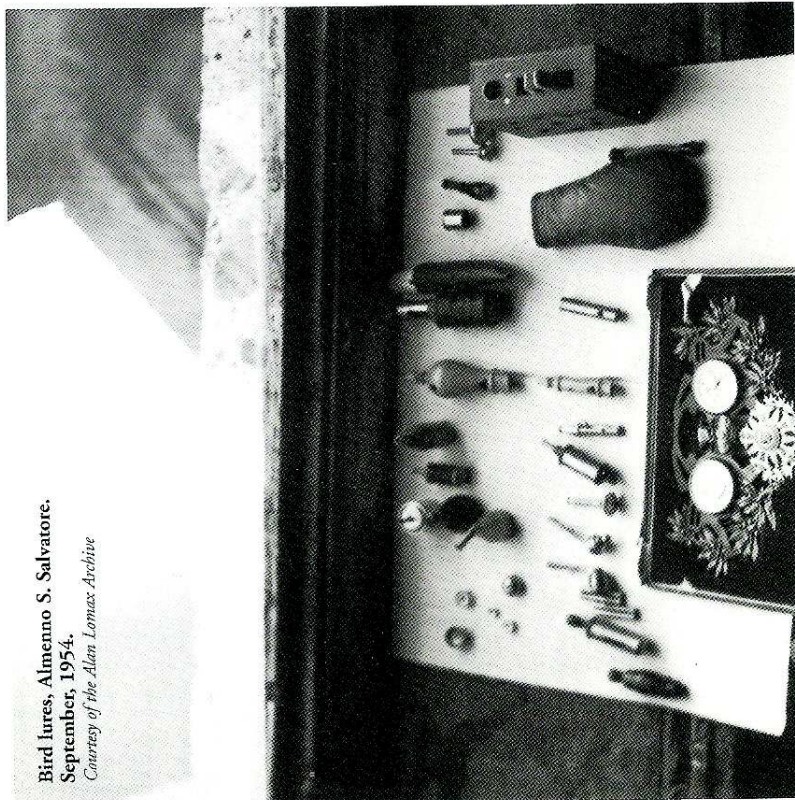
³ See the introduction by Anna Lomax Chairetakis and Goffredo Plastino to *Folk Music and Songs of Italy: A Sampler* (Rounder 1801, 1999).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ See Rossana Ferretti, "Indici delle raccolte degli Archivi di Etnomusicologia," in *EM. Annuario degli Archivi di Etnomusicologia dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia*, a. 1, 1993, pp. 159–160 (raccolta 10).

⁶ Bishop Ufflas (or Wulfila, c. 311–383), converted to Christianity at Constantinople and translated the Bible into his native Gothic. Thanks to his missionary activity in the Balkans and what is now

Bird lures, Almenno S. Salvatore, September, 1954.
Courtesy of the Alan Lomax Archive



Hungary, the Goths, Vandals, and other Germanic tribes became staunch Arians who for many years used their religion as a marker of identity.

⁷ Used to crown Charlemagne, Charles V, and other emperors as kings of Lombardy or of Italy, it is now kept at Monza. According to tradition the crown incorporated iron from a nail from Christ's cross. The last to wear it was Napoleon I, who, when crowned King of Italy in Milan in 1805, exclaimed, "Dio me l'ha dato; guai à chi la tocca!" ("God has given it to me; woe to whoever touches it!")

⁸ His *Historia gentis Langobardorum*. Libri VI enjoyed considerable popularity in the Middle Ages and was a source for popular legends and folk tales.

⁹ "An Imperialist View of the Lombard Communes" by Otto of Freising, in James Bruce Ross and Mary Martin McLaughlin, *The Portable Medieval Reader* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1955, reprinted 1977) p. 281.

¹⁰ The Milanese reformer Cesare Beccaria (1738–1794) took care to preface his groundbreaking proposals to abolish torture and reform the criminal code with an acknowledgement addressed to the Austrian authorities, of the necessity for strong government. Beccaria's grandson, novelist Alessandro Manzoni (1785–1873), did much to make Italian nationalism acceptable by combining it with a sincere, if resigned, acceptance of the status quo. Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi*, set in Lombardy under the Spaniards, celebrates Cardinal Borromeo (1538–1584), a leading figure in the Counter Reformation, who, in the novel, represents both temporal justice and the salvation offered by the Church.

¹¹ Costantino Nigra, *Canti popolari del Piemonte* (Torino: Loescher, 1888).

¹² *Nègher* (black) in dialect means dark haired or complexioned (as opposed to *biando* or *biandino* (blond)) and also denotes a manual labourer who does outdoor work, such as a porter or other menial. Both meanings are present here.

¹³ This and the following notes by Alan Lomax are excerpted from *Italian Folk Music*. *Pradmont*, *Emilia, Lombardy* (Folkways FE 4261, 1972) LP.

¹⁴ The paintings of Giacomo Francesco Cipperi, known as "il Todeschini" (1664–1736), born in Austria but active in Bergamo, frequently included accurate depictions of musical instruments. In one of his paintings a man is playing a pan flute with twelve or thirteen reeds (see Giorgio Foti, *Il flauto di Pan nel Bergamasco*. Bergamo: Sistema Bibliotecario Urbano, 1988, p. 16 and photo 14).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 23–25.

¹⁶ "Finestra vascia" was one of the tunes used by Liszt in his *Venezia e Napoli* piano sketches (1859) and is a musical chestnut when arranged for tenor. Here the motif is repeated litany fashion, as is traditional in lullabies.

¹⁷ Colognola and Boccaccone are neighborhoods in Bergamo.

¹⁸ Giorgio Foti, *Il flauto di Pan*, cit., p. 63.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 83 and 126.

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ITALIAN TREASURY

From the summer of 1954 to January 1955 Alan Lomax, accompanied by ethnomusicologist Diego Carpitella undertook a period of intensive fieldwork in Italy. The goal of this research, carefully prepared for beforehand, had been to document the folk music of the different regions of the country for a recorded anthology in the *Columbia World Library and Primitive Music* series. But the scope of the initial project quickly broadened to become a "voyage of discovery," exploring a musical reality previously little known, one of great beauty and richness. From south to north — from Sicily to Liguria and then south again to Campania — in over a hundred localities, Lomax and Carpitella recorded the music and sounds of that rural Italy which writer/director Pier Paolo Pasolini defined as "a limitless preindustrial and prenational peasant world," formed by men and women — "consumers of the most basic of goods" that rendered "their poor and precarious lives extremely necessary" — a world that would be erased in a few short years by emigration and mass culture. Before the microphone they stopped to play and sing — peasants, shepherds, fishermen, artisans — participants in a musical culture that was, for Lomax, "the richest in western Europe."

Lomax, who remembered the time he spent in Italy as one of the happiest in his life, wrote, "By chance, I happened to be the first person to record in the field over the whole Italian countryside. In a sense, I was a kind of musical Columbus in reverse. Nor had I arrived on the scene a moment too soon."

Considered models of ethnomusicological research, Lomax's extraordinary tapes are invaluable as source materials for anyone wishing to understand the musical cultures of a vanished premodern Italy. Some of these recordings were issued in the well-known anthologies *Northern and Central Italy and the Albanians of Calabria* (1957); *Southern Italy and the Islands* (1957); and *Folk Music and Song of Italy* (1958), and are here again made available. The majority have never before been released and are now issued and annotated as part of the *Italian Treasury*. The series comprises single volumes on the music of various regions and anthologies dedicated to particular repertoires.

CREDITS

Original field recordings by Alan Lomax and Diego Carpitella, 1954

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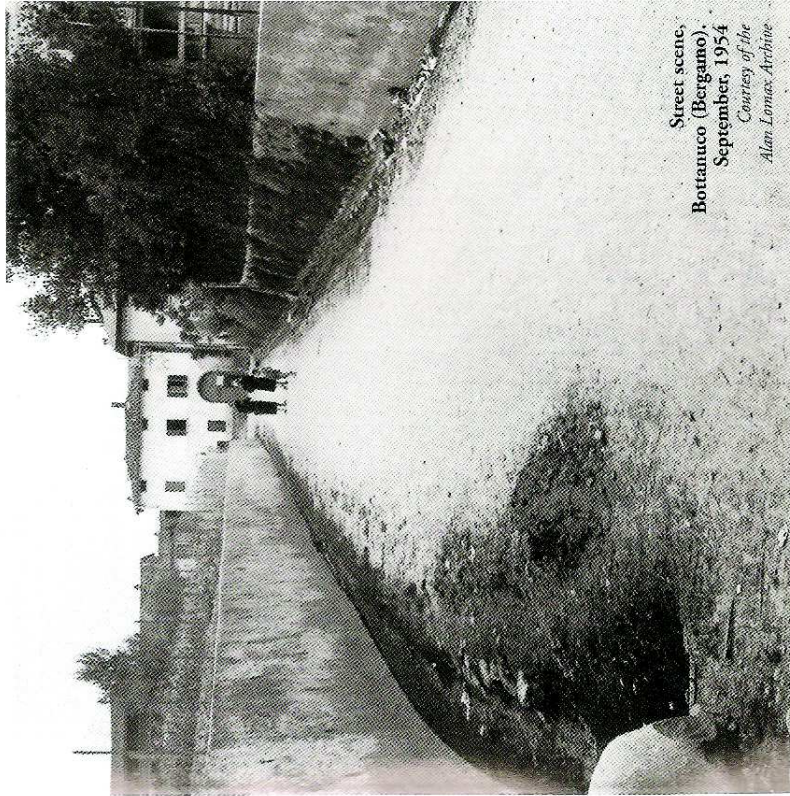
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Every effort has been made to make these historic recordings sound as good as they did when Alan Lomax made them in the field. All transfers were made from the original source materials using the Sony Sonoma Direct Stream Digital (DSD) workstation and Sony Super Bit Mapping (SBM).



Street scene,
Bottanuco (Bergamo),
September, 1954

*Courtesy of the
Alan Lomax Archive*