

# Reorganising space and time: A comparative analysis of the heritage development of the Chauvet cave and the Millau viaduct

Nicolas Senil

► **To cite this version:**

Nicolas Senil. Reorganising space and time: A comparative analysis of the heritage development of the Chauvet cave and the Millau viaduct. *Revue de Géographie Alpine / Journal of Alpine Research*, Association pour la diffusion de la recherche alpine, 2011, 2 (99), pp.8. 10.4000/rga.1436 . halshs-00668618

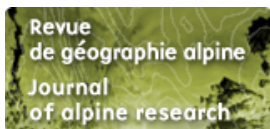
**HAL Id: halshs-00668618**

**<https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00668618>**

Submitted on 10 Feb 2012

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



# Revue de géographie alpine

99-2 (2011)

Nouveaux patrimoines : objets, acteurs et controverses

Nicolas Senil

## Reorganising space and time:

A comparative analysis of the heritage development of the Chauvet cave and the Millau viaduct

### Avertissement

Le contenu de ce site relève de la législation française sur la propriété intellectuelle et est la propriété exclusive de l'éditeur.

Les œuvres figurant sur ce site peuvent être consultées et reproduites sur un support papier ou numérique sous réserve qu'elles soient strictement réservées à un usage soit personnel, soit scientifique ou pédagogique excluant toute exploitation commerciale. La reproduction devra obligatoirement mentionner l'éditeur, le nom de la revue, l'auteur et la référence du document.

Toute autre reproduction est interdite sauf accord préalable de l'éditeur, en dehors des cas prévus par la législation en vigueur en France.

**revues.org**

Revues.org est un portail de revues en sciences humaines et sociales développé par le Cléo, Centre pour l'édition électronique ouverte (CNRS, EHESS, UP, UAPV).

### Référence électronique

Nicolas Senil, « Reorganising space and time: », *Revue de géographie alpine* [En ligne], 99-2 | 2011, mis en ligne le 20 juillet 2011, consulté le 09 février 2012. URL : <http://rga.revues.org/1442> ; DOI : 10.4000/rga.1442

Éditeur : Association pour la diffusion de la recherche alpine

<http://rga.revues.org>

<http://www.revues.org>

Document accessible en ligne sur :

<http://rga.revues.org/1442>

Document généré automatiquement le 09 février 2012.

© Revue de géographie alpine/Journal of Alpine Research

Nicolas Senil

## Reorganising space and time:

A comparative analysis of the heritage development of the Chauvet cave and the Millau viaduct

- 1 The development of heritage creation processes over recent decades has revealed successive increases in the number of objects, actors and projects undertaken. This development, rooted in the final stages of state monopoly, reflected recently in an attempt to transfer certain national monuments to regional authorities, has given rise to three types of change. The first is spatial in that heritage construction processes are henceforth undertaken at larger scales (Gravari-Barbas, 2002). The second is temporal, given that age is no longer totally obligatory. Finally, a third change has been at the level of the market and sanctions the possible use of heritage as a resource at the regional or local level (Landel, 2007). Thus, instead of being restricted to the domain of experts, heritage has become socially appropriated by a plurality of actors with numerous rationales.
- 2 At the same time, significant changes have affected more local areas and their futures. The certainties of modernity have thus given way to the uncertainties of contemporaneity, described, by U. Beck (2001) among others, as the “society of risk”. The national framework and its time in history, anchored in the promise of a better future accessible via growth and progress, have gradually given way to a change in the relationships with time and space, linked to the emergence of a contracted space and a denied historicity.
- 3 Our hypothesis is thus that the two movements, territorialisation and patrimonialisation, are linked and that the current developments affecting heritage and territory are contributing to a reconstruction of this problematic relationship. By giving a temporal dimension to space and a spatial dimension to time, these two movements, to be considered together in a restructuring space-time, enable societies to reconstruct their presence in the world. The present and the nearby, re-anchored in the past and the locality, re-identified and revalued, then appear as a form of reaction or adaptation to this new imposed context. To address these questions, two examples are used, the Chauvet cave, discovered in 1994 in Ardèche, and the Millau viaduct opened ten years later.
- 4 The idea of analysing a site that boasts the oldest paintings known to humanity and a modern civil engineering structure may appear surprising. However, apart from the fact that the two objects have both acquired the status of heritage sites, the value in adopting this perspective is two-fold. On the one hand, these objects are rooted in two opposing representations, prehistory and modernity, the latter having been largely constructed on the basis of a negation of the former (Latour, 1991). The Chauvet cave constitutes a unique prehistoric artistic reference, since it houses the oldest paintings known to humanity at present. The Millau viaduct, on the other hand, demonstrates the capacities of modern man when freed of his beliefs and natural constraints. Their spatial imprints, however, could not be more different. The Chauvet cave is invisible since it is underground and has been closed to the public in order to guarantee its protection. In stark contrast, the Millau Viaduct has imposed its presence on the entire landscape of the Grands Causses high plateaux. Finally, since both objects have only appeared recently (one being discovered, the other constructed), they provide us with an interesting opportunity to study the processes now underway and to closely monitor actions as they unfold.

### Symmetric objects

#### The Chauvet cave in Ardèche

- 5 The history of the Chauvet cave began on December 18, 1994. At the top of a natural slope, three amateur speleologists discovered the natural cavity in the rock after having unblocked a narrow entrance passage. The cave is situated close to the natural arch of the Pont d’Arc, in the Estre cirque, a former meander of the river Ardeche. Very quickly, the presence of marks on the rock suggested to the speleologists that the cave had been formerly inhabited, and soon

their eyes met with numerous cave paintings. The discovery was announced a few days later to the Curator for Heritage of the DRAC (Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs). J. Clottes, scientific adviser to the Minister of Culture for decorated caves, immediately travelled to Ardeche to authenticate the find. Based on his analysis of the paintings, involving a comparison with those of other known caves, he suggested the cave dated from the Solutrean period (18 000 years ago). The discovery was publicly announced on 18 January 1995 at the Ministry of Culture in Paris and the cave was listed as an historic monument on October 13, 1995. Finally, Carbon 14 analyses, conducted a few months after the discovery, revealed that the paintings in the cave were more than 30 000 years old, which makes them the oldest known paintings in the world to date. This declaration completely revolutionized our knowledge of parietal art and, more generally, of the evolution of art. In this voluminous cavern, 420 drawings were finally discovered, representing 16 different animal species. The use of perspective and smudging techniques enabled the painters to portray, with considerable precision, the anatomy and behaviour of the animals represented. Since the cave had been closed by the collapse of the natural porch some 20 000 years ago, the value of barring access to the cave and of prohibiting entry on a permanent basis quickly became apparent to the different protagonists (Duval, 2007). Since then, the Chauvet cave has been better protected than numerous national museums and its access has been strictly regulated.

### The Millau Viaduct in Aveyron

- 6 Even if the Millau Viaduct has been somewhat of an apparition for local people, it has in no way been a discovery. It was “born” out of a long process of reflection involving numerous partners. First of all, its story mobilised political actors, but very quickly numerous other actors and considerations were brought to bear on the project: “empty” France, planning and development, the Massif Central, the Rhone valley and then the Causses plateaux and their river, the Tarn. The A75 motorway, which now crosses the structure, became part of the major rhetoric of planning and development authorities. Launched in 1975 by Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, the project is the fruit of the desire to open up the Massif Central by linking Clermont-Ferrand with the Mediterranean (Montpellier and Béziers) and at the same time to address the problem of traffic congestion in the Rhone Valley. Locally, this motorway was meant to help traffic avoid the “the Millau bottleneck” that built up whenever there was heavy tourist traffic, but it also brought major media attention to the town as well as economic spin-off effects.
- 7 In 1987, the first drafts of the route through the Grands Causses were prepared, and several proposals were put forward to resolve the problem of crossing the Tarn valley. For the engineers, the challenge appeared, from the very outset, as the major obstacle along the route, and it took several years before a final decision was reached. The option finally chosen was the route that crossed the region in the immediate vicinity of Millau and required the creation of an imposing engineering structure. In 1996, following calls for tender, the solution proposed by M. Virlogeux, chief engineer of the Ponts et Chaussées (French Highways and Bridges authority) and designed by the architect, Sir Norman Foster, was selected. However, faced with funding problems, the government decided in 1998 to grant concessions both for the construction and the operation of the viaduct. With the exception of the mayor of Millau (J. Godfrain, a close friend of J. Chirac), all the locally elected representatives were opposed to introducing a toll. They considered it would have a negative impact on the development of local business and activities. Its advocates, on the other hand, were convinced that a concession was the only way in which a viaduct would be built. In October 2001, following a call for tender, the government opted for a solution associating concrete (piers) and steel (deck) recommended by the construction group Eiffage. The company was made responsible for both the construction and the operation of the viaduct for a period of 75 years. The adventure began on December 14, 2001, with the laying of the first stone.
- 8 The government-backed project met with opposition, however, from numerous local inhabitants. The impact of the chosen route on the environment (presence of the main groundwater layers beneath the route), on the landscape (disproportionate size of the structure

and the estuarine architecture) and on the local economy was the subject of extensive debate. The committee proposing the A75 solution canvassed the local population, elected officials, and decision-makers and went as far as to propose an alternative route designed to address the criticism levelled against the viaduct. Nevertheless, it was mainly the granting of a concession that raised most local concerns. All the elected officials of the Aveyron region were opposed to this decision since it went against the principle of there being no fees, as initially promised, and raised fears that this section of the route alone would cancel out the potential benefits of the opening up of the region by the motorway. In the end, the Millau viaduct was built in three years and was inaugurated on December 14, 2004. The bridge is 2460 metres long and crosses the valley some 240 metres above the Tarn. The pier-pylon structure reaches its highest point at 343 metres, making the cable-stayed bridge the tallest in the world.

## A shared heritage commitment

- 9 Patrimonialisation, or heritage creation, began as a unique process, but its socio-political evolution came to strengthen the distinction made by M. Rautenberg (2004) in defining two types of heritage creation: designation and appropriation. The first is the creation of a single actor, providing a “truly ordered account of the setting up of institutions (translation)” (Micoud, 2004). As for the second, “it is strictly speaking impossible, since it would require taking into account all those countless actors that have constantly given rise to as many voices as there are new collective groups demanding to be recognised” (Micoud, 2004). But behind the initial segmentation, reflecting the increase in the number of cases, the heritage creation process has nevertheless experienced unified development. Based on the work of several authors who have examined the different phases of the process (Laplante, 1992, Guérin, 2004, Landel, 2007, Di Méo, 2007), a detailed formalisation may be proposed (François et al., 2006).

## Heritage iteration

- 10 The heritage development process involves several stages. These stages, however, do not take place in linear fashion but are more iterative. We distinguish four such stages: discovery, justification, conservation and exposition, to which may be added an optional stage, that of promotion.
- 11 Firstly, a process of construction takes place as soon as the objects have been selected on the basis of the potential they contain. As P.-A. Landel (2007) points out, this identification process may be a moment of discovery, called “invention”, as may occur in archaeological digs. Justification then makes it possible to reposition the object in its context. Thus, with the passage to the next stage, the object is constructed and evolves under the effect of exchanges and the confrontation of different representations, thus modifying its status (Faure, 2000). Indeed, “for the latter to really exist for us, we have to recognise that it has a value and to feel responsible for it, beginning with the need to conserve it: a good that we abandon and squander is no longer a heritage item (translation)” (Bourdin, 1992). This consideration leads to conservation of the good, which enables us to maintain the value and meaning attributed to it. This includes not only preservation operations, but also restoration and rehabilitation. The idea of transmission is mainly underlying. An operation such as rehabilitation thus makes it possible to bring about a change of state. Then the exposition stage provides the means to present the good to the public, thus affording it social recognition (Laplante, 1992). It is at this moment then that a link is potentially made with operators such as those in tourism (François, 2007). Shows, interpretative nature trails or the illumination of monuments are examples of such exposition. The change in use that results attributes additional value to the object, making this greater than the initial value.
- 12 At the same time, appropriation appears as a fundamental step in the process, whatever the stage, since the heritage creation process assumes that we identify what has meaning for the actors. This is all the more important given that, *a priori*, the heritage creation process is for the benefit of “descendants” (the local population, for example) and not “foreigners” or outside populations (tourists).

## The process in action

- 13 The Chauvet cave, discovered in 1994, became almost instantaneously an obvious heritage item and the process was consequently shortened. The discovery or “invention” of the cave was immediately followed by the recognition of its importance, supported by the opinion of experts. From the first authentication, conducted the day after the Minister of Culture learned of its discovery, the cave was considered as exceptional and worthy of protective measures. These were then put in place by the State and the cave was rapidly listed as a heritage site. At the same time as these steps were being taken, there was a rapid appropriation of the discovery by the local population, reflected in the crowds of inhabitants who attended the public presentations of a film made by the discoverers of the cave. Nonetheless, the heritage object was quickly overshadowed by other concerns and each phase of heritage creation led to a lawsuit. The status of “discoverer” became the subject of an attempt at plundering, the landowners are still in a legal battle with the State, and the cave’s “discoverers” still hope to get their image reproduction rights re-evaluated. Thus, local enthusiasm gradually waned and many inhabitants and elected representatives felt that they were ignored. For a number of cave enthusiasts, the story of its development as a heritage site became nothing more than a legal saga lasting several years.
- 14 In the case of the Chauvet cave, the heritage creation process led to two contradictory actions. On the one hand, it made the site attractive, but on the other it had made it inaccessible to the public. Conscious of the dilemma, however, local elected officials made themselves guarantors for the cave’s restitution elsewhere. Since then, the objective has been to make the cave visible and to meet heritage responsibilities with respect to its necessary transmission. For this reason, a project is underway to create a restitution site.
- 15 The story of the patrimonialisation of the Millau viaduct is more surprising, but less problematic. The viaduct was designed as a motorway bridge structure with a strictly functional purpose, but quickly became the subject of a heritage development process. However, the social construction process in the case of this object followed a rather special path. Thus, unlike the process observed for the Chauvet cave, the heritage development process associated with the bridge involved first of all an exposition phase. This is explained in part by the time it took to construct the bridge. During this period, the social practices of the object evolved, undergoing a construction through the agglomerative effect of individuals’ spontaneous behaviour resulting in the discovery of a new relationship with the object. The increasing presence of visitors encouraged local actors to create a tourism product in the form of a visit, the success of which surpassed all initial ambitions. Everyone had imagined that the Millau viaduct would be prejudicial to the town, but within a few months it had become a tourist attraction. During the period of construction work, the site thus attracted some 700,000 visitors, reflecting a veritable passion for the structure. Such a reaction, however, had not been easily foreseeable. As outlined earlier in the story behind the decision to build the bridge, its appropriation by the local population was not at all obvious. Indeed, it was initially rejected and then the subject of serious doubts. Little by little, however, the viaduct won people over and earned their recognition. Beginning with the exposition phase, the heritage creation process was then implemented through a conservative strategy put in place by its designers (State, Eiffage and the architect) and carried out by each in turn. Finally, the inauguration speech by President Jacques Chirac (14 December, 2004) marked the end of a perfectly managed symbolic construction project. The structure was then presented to observers as the incarnation of “French genius” and the nation’s capacity for enterprise, with the Aveyron Department of Tourism going as far as to call it “a high altar of France’s industrial heritage (translation)”. The continuity with other major civil engineering structures was underlined, such as the Pont du Gard, the Garabit Viaduc and even the Eiffel Tower, the designer of which was a direct ancestor of the franchise holder. At the same time, the techniques of the different building trades were also regularly identified as being part of a long tradition of crafts and skills (boilermaker, welder, topographer).

## A similar but reversed heritage creation process

- 16 A comparison of the two heritage objects reveals immediate differences. The visibility, accessibility, age, initial function as well as the first perception by the local area seem to separate the two objects irretrievably. And yet despite these differences, similar processes are observed around these two objects and their involvement in a heritage development process ultimately places them in identical value systems. The different stages in the heritage creation process mentioned earlier were thus verified in both cases. The selection of the object as a heritage object, the rhetoric of justification, the conservation procedures and the dynamics of the exposition process are undoubtedly shared.
- 17 Nevertheless, analysis of the chronology observed reveals a reversal of phases. While heritage development procedures in the case of the Chauvet cave followed the usual path, those associated with the Millau viaduct were distinct in that they began with an initial exposition phase (without any heritage creation in mind) which was then followed by the other phases, resulting in the final selection of the object as a heritage item.
- 18 The initial status of the object and its appropriation constitute the main causes of this difference. Although the age of the cave immediately set it aside as a heritage object, the viaduct was not, in the beginning, designed with this idea in mind. A latent possibility existed, however, which enabled the bridge's gradual appropriation and the social construction of the object as heritage item. This was facilitated by the fact that appropriation of the viaduct was allowed, while that of the cave was blocked. In the case of the latter, visits were impossible and communications very quickly failed, which together with the exclusive political management of the development project gradually stifled local interest (even if an attempt to win back local interest has recently been embarked upon). Thus the reversal of the process is not only apparent in the visibility, but also in the forms of appropriation and the path that these take.

### Perceptions and appropriation of the Chauvet cave and the Millau viaduct

	Chauvet cave	Millau viaduct
Initial perceptions of object	<i>Ascending</i>	<i>Descending</i>
<i>Appropriation path</i>	<i>Descending</i>	<i>Ascending</i>

(Senil, 2011)

## The search for a re-appropriation in space and time

- 19 The development of the Millau viaduct as a heritage object is a product of the historicization of the structure. The viaduct's spatial dimension was related to its cause (the opening up of the region) and effect (the height), but historicization provided it with a temporal dimension that was *a priori* absent. Formalised by local actors, but given impetus by the State and the concessionary authority, the rhetoric is based on a search for symmetric anchorage. This then links space and time by associating heritage with a geographical concept, that of territory.

### A conceptual relationship

- 20 The linking of the notions of heritage and territory may at first seem paradoxical (Micoud, 1999). Indeed, heritage refers *a priori* more to temporality than to spatiality. However, several geographical studies point out that heritage creation involves using an "essential interpretative framework to analyse the ongoing processes in the development, appropriation and transformation of spaces (translation)" (Veschambre, 2007). Most research has been conducted as part of a critical and political study of the phenomenon peculiar to a certain approach in social geography. Heritage creation then appears as a tool to exclude, as in the case of urban centres undergoing gentrification. But this type of study was completed after 1995 by a more global reflection encouraged by G. Di Méo (1995), who was the first to use an association of these notions. The same year also witnessed the publication of another article written by J.-L. Piveteau (1995), entitled "Le territoire est-il un lieu de mémoire? Despite the different proposals, the motivation was the same. For both authors, the aim was to enrich the notion of territory with thinking on the representations present from the past. Heritage is thus

no longer only studied as an object with a spatial dimension, but is integrated in a geographic process and placed at the heart of spatial construction.

- 21 Apart from this observed conceptual relationship, heritage and territory share the fact that they give meaning and value to objects (Gauchon, 2010). They participate in the emergence of a common space, with which the group identifies itself, to which it lays claim, and around which it develops. For P. Melé (2009), heritage development processes involve a specific relationship with territory. The link with the past is no longer imposed but revealed through a process that is present and concerned about its contribution to building the future. Heritage creation is based on “reflective territoriality”, an idea that B. Debarbieux (2009) also adheres to. In this respect, both the Chauvet cave and the Millau viaduct constitute exemplary case studies.

### Co-constructing the heritage object

- 22 The heritage development process based on the Millau viaduct led to the structure receiving a temporal dimension that a priori was prohibited by the structure’s contemporaneity. However, repositioned within the chronology of other major structures, it became a heritage object to acknowledge and mark, in a lasting manner, the success of a French company, the will of the French State to promote development projects - realised without government funding - and the economic and touristic attraction of a region.
- 23 The Chauvet cave was rendered “invisible” by the heritage creation process and thereby denied any spatial dimension. However, local actors were aware of what was at stake and, as soon as the cave was closed, undertook to recreate the site elsewhere. They thus sought to provide the discovery with a spatial dimension and thereby a territorial expression. Financed by the Conseil Général de l’Ardèche and, since 2005, by the Conseil Régional Rhône-Alpes (Rhône Alps General Council), the project entitled “Espace de Restitution de la Grotte Chauvet” has already been relocated twice. The problems of establishing a new site thus reveal the important issues at stake and the difficulty of allotting a space to such a territorial resource. (Gumuchian and Pecqueur, 2007). The somewhat difficult relations with the “here” (the commune of Vallon Pont d’Arc where the original cave is located, the French département in which it is located, or the region in general) and the “elsewhere” (the adjacent Gard département, the neighbouring Drôme département, or the South-East of France with its numerous listed UNESCO sites) bear witness to this situation. Furthermore, the project territory recommended in the contract drawn up between the region and the State (Contrat de Projet Etat Région) has always been refused any well- defined spatial expression. It is hoped that the cave will thus spread its influence as far as possible.
- 24 Spatialisation also has a third aspect relating to the desire to see the cave listed as a world heritage site by UNESCO. Thus the objective is to provide a space in keeping with the vertiginous temporal scale of the discovery, to promote it, and bring it to the attention of the general public. But this potential recognition also contributes to its extraction from its immediate environment. Management of the site, henceforth governed by rules defined elsewhere, arouses a certain number of local concerns.
- 25 Thus, in both cases, the actors involved begin with a concern to register the initial object, which is characterised by one particular dimensional reference, in the complementary dimension of time or space. While territory (the local area) is able to benefit from heritage development, as was the case for the Millau viaduct, heritage is also rooted in territory, as observed with the Chauvet cave.

### Giving time a place

- 26 Based on our observations from this comparative approach, heritage and territory (local area) appear to be the product of a common system. Thus heritage is to time, as territory is to space. It is suggested that territorialisation and heritage creation are processes that re-order or reorganise time and space based on a dialectical procedure. This movement is rooted in a partial calling into question of modernity and its future in numerous ways.
- 27 This process of controlled development helps, first of all, to redefine an adapted spatio-temporal framework capable of escaping modernity and its negation of time and space. Next, it represents a re-integration of tradition (Rautenberg, 2003). The opposition to this, on which



modernity was constructed, is also called into question. The Millau viaduct, an emblem of French modernity and its capacity to become reality, is becoming a heritage object, rooted in the tradition of major engineering structures. The Chauvet cave on the other hand has established itself through metaphor and comparison with the great structures of modernity. In both cases, the message thus expresses the fact that “we have always been modern.”<sup>1</sup>.

28 Tradition and modernity therefore continue to be associated and hybridized despite the apparent purification (Latour, 1999) they have been subjected to and the alleged post-modern development now underway. Consequently, the relationship of our society with time and space can no longer be considered unique and self-evident. The notion of historicity regime proposed by F. Hartog (2003) also deserves to be integrated and extended in geography (“geographicity” may be mobilised for this purpose).

## A few additional observations

### Shared commodification

29 Conceived as a status enabling certain objects to be extracted from ordinary treatment by society, heritage has always been perceived as a notion that is a little unconventional. Indeed, despite the different standpoints taken to comprehend it, it appears detached from simple banality. Thus set to one side, heritage is rooted in a purity that is indispensable to the way it functions, which is supposed to impose a specific type of management, the irrefutable objectives of which are transmission and conservation. And yet, analysis conducted on objects that are in the process of becoming heritage has revealed a construction involving both time and space that is far removed from the assumed dissociation of these elements. The processes underway around the Chauvet cave and Millau viaduct are thus combining heritage creation and development. In the case of the cave, the desire to recreate it represents a combined objective of transmission and promotion. The site, entrusted to a private authority, will represent a cultural facility with a tourist vocation and will act as a relay point for other activities in the local area. The responsibility felt by the elected representatives thus concerns just as much the heritage value of the cave to be promoted as its economic value to be optimised. In the case of the Millau viaduct, the heritage creation process clearly serves the local development project. The heritage development of the structure represents, for the locals, much more the means of ensuring the creation and continuation of a tourist substitution activity than the conservation of the structure, already ensured by the obligations of its motorway function and by its management authority.

30 Consequently, the analysis warrants being completed by a notion capable of linking heritage and territory and market/non-market considerations. For this reason, the territorial resource is proposed (François et al., 2006) as a composite notion capable of taking into account the hybridisation forms observed.

### Towards a re-invention of national heritage?

31 The important undertaking of the State with regard to the two objects discussed in this article raises a final question relating to the possible renaissance of a national heritage, thought by many to have been abandoned. For this reason, the State became involved, via different ministries, in prominent action programmes. In the case of the Chauvet cave, the Ministry of Culture took responsibility for the conservation and study of the cave. For the Millau viaduct, the Transport Ministry decided on the construction programme and ensured its conservation throughout the building period, refusing numerous proposals that might have affected the formal purity of the structure, whilst the President of the Republic crystallized the structure’s symbolisation.

32 Yet despite this investment in both projects, differences are perceptible and the treatment is not the same. The Chauvet cave is paying the price for its late discovery and appears to be in the shadow of the Lascaux cave, generally preferred by both political actors and the general public. Thus, local and regional authorities, in particular the General Council of Ardeche and the Rhône-Alpes Region, remain the main actors in the project.

33 As for the Millau viaduct, it stands as a unique emblem of French technological success, a success in which all the actors involved are acknowledged and which has encouraged numerous visitors to declare they are “proud to be French”. Nevertheless, the approach to heritage development adopted by the Millau viaduct involves multiple investments. With respect to the typology proposed by A. Micoud (2005), distinguishing national heritage that has lived, local heritage that is still living, and heritage for humanity that has to be given life, the viaduct scores on all three registers. It represents, at one and the same time, the accomplishment of French technology, the local tourist site to visit, and an example of western modernity to be perpetuated. In this sense, the structure expresses a new patrimonial form that relates more to a form of testament, responsible for expressing what we would like to pass on to future generations, than to heritage for which we find ourselves guardians. Thus, reflexivity finds itself expressed and reinforced by a new spatio-temporal framework produced from our intentionality. The analysis of these two objects, both undergoing heritage development and territoriality processes at the same time, is thus part of a more general reflection on the role of time and space in the re-appropriation of our future.

---

### **Bibliographie**

- BECK U., 2001. – *La société du risque*, Flammarion.
- BOURDIN A., 1992. – « Patrimoine et demande sociale ». In NEYRET R. (Eds.) *Le patrimoine atout du développement*, Presses Universitaires de Lyon.
- DEBARBIEUX B., 2009. – « Territoire, territorialité, territorialisation. Aujourd'hui et bien moins que demain ». In VANIER M. (Eds.) *Territoires, territorialité, territorialisation, Controverses et perspectives*, Presses Universitaires de Rennes.
- DI MÉO G., 1995. – « Patrimoine et territoire, une parenté conceptuelle ». *Espaces et Sociétés*, n°78, pp. 15-34.
- DI MÉO G., 2007. – « Processus de patrimonialisation et construction de territoire ». In *Patrimoine et industrie : connaître pour valoriser*. Acte du colloque Patrimoine et industrie : connaître pour valoriser, Poitiers-Châtelleraut, 19 p.
- DUVAL M., 2007. – *Dynamiques spatiales et enjeux territoriaux des processus de patrimonialisation et de développement touristique : étude comparée des gorges de l'Ardèche et du karst slovène*, Thèse de doctorat, Université de Savoie.
- FAURE M., 2000. – *Du produit agricole à l'objet culturel : les processus de patrimonialisation des productions fromagères dans les Alpes du Nord*. Thèse de doctorat, Faculté de Sociologie et d'Anthropologie, Université Lumière Lyon II.
- FRANÇOIS H., 2007. – *De la station ressource pour le territoire au territoire ressource pour la station. Le cas des stations de moyenne montagne périurbaines de Grenoble*, Thèse de doctorat, Institut de Géographie Alpine. Université Joseph Fourier.
- FRANÇOIS H., HIRCZAK M., SENIL, N., 2006. – « Territoire et patrimoine : la co-construction d'une dynamique et de ses ressources ». *Revue d'Economie Régionale et Urbaine*, n°5, pp. 683-700.
- GAUCHON C., 2010. – *Tourisme et patrimoine. Un creuset pour les territoires ?* Habilitation à Diriger des Recherches, Université de Savoie.
- GRAVARI-BARBAS M., 2002. – « Le patrimoine territorial. Construction patrimoniale, construction territoriale : vers une gouvernance patrimoniale ? ». *ESO*, n°18, pp. 85-92.
- GUÉRIN M.-A., 2004. – *Action publique locale et patrimoine culturel. Production et légitimation des territorialités politiques*. Thèse de doctorat, Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Grenoble, Université Pierre Mendès-France.
- GUMUCHIAN H., PECQUEUR B., 2007 – *La ressource territoriale*, Anthropos.
- HARTOG F., 2003. – *Des régimes d'historicité : Présentisme et expériences du temps*, Seuil.
- LANDEL P. A., 2007. – « Invention de patrimoines et construction des territoires ». In GUMUCHIAN H., PECQUEUR, B. (Eds.) *La ressource territoriale*. Anthropos, pp. 157-176.
- LAPLANTE M., 1992. – « Le patrimoine en tant qu'attraction touristique: histoire, possibilités et limites ». In NEYRET R. (Eds.) *Le patrimoine atout du développement*. Presses Universitaires de Lyon, pp. 49-75.
- LATOUR B., 1991. – *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes*, La découverte.

LATOURE B., 1999. – Politiques de la nature, La Découverte.

MELÉ P., 2009. – « Identifier un régime de territorialité réflexive ». In VANIER M., (Eds.) *Territoires, territorialité, territorialisation, Controverses et perspectives*. Presses Universitaires de Rennes, pp. 34-42.

MICOUD A., 1999. – « Patrimoine et légitimité des territoires. De la construction d'un autre espace et d'un autre temps commun ». In GERBAUX F. (Eds.) *Utopie pour le territoire : cohérence ou complexité ?*. Edition de l'Aube, pp. 53-65.

MICOUD A., 2004. – « Des patrimoines aux territoires durables. Ethnologie et écologie dans les campagnes françaises ». *Ethnologie française*, XXXIV, pp. 13-22.

MICOUD A., 2005. – « Patrimonialisation : redire ce qui nous relie ? » In BARRÈRE C., BARTHELEMY D., NIEDDU M., VIVIEN F. D., (Eds.) *Réinventer le patrimoine. De la culture à l'économie, une nouvelle pensée du patrimoine ?* L'Harmattan, pp. 81-96.

PIVETEAU J.-L., 1995. – « Le territoire est-il un lieu de mémoire ? » *L'Espace géographique*, n°2, pp. 113-123.

RAUTENBERG M., 2003. – *La rupture patrimoniale*, A la croisée, Bernin.

RAUTENBERG M., 2004. – « La patrimonialisation, entre appropriation sociale et désignation institutionnelle ». I, DEBARBIEUX B., FOURNY M.-C., (Eds.) *L'effet géographique. Construction sociale, appréhension cognitive et configuration matérielle des objets géographiques*. MSH-Alpes.

VESCHAMBRE V., 2007. – Le processus de patrimonialisation : revalorisation, appropriation et marquage de l'espace. *Cafégéo*, [www.cafe-geo.net/article.php3?id\\_article=1180](http://www.cafe-geo.net/article.php3?id_article=1180).

### Notes

1 This assertion does not place us in opposition to B. Latour who suggests “We have never been modern”, with which we agree as we have already explained.

### Pour citer cet article

Référence électronique

Nicolas Senil, « Reorganising space and time: », *Revue de géographie alpine* [En ligne], 99-2 | 2011, mis en ligne le 20 juillet 2011, consulté le 09 février 2012. URL : <http://rga.revues.org/1442> ; DOI : 10.4000/rga.1442

### À propos de l'auteur

Nicolas Senil

Pacte/Territoires – Cermosem, [nicolas\\_senil@yahoo.fr](mailto:nicolas_senil@yahoo.fr)

### Droits d'auteur

© Revue de géographie alpine/Journal of Alpine Research

### Abstract / Résumé

The multiplication of objects, actors and underlying rationales of heritage development, or patrimonialisation, is increasingly blurring the strength and meaning of our relationship with the past. The aim of this article is to reflect on the processes involved in the emergence of new heritage objects and on the consequences of these developments. The article is based on a comparative analysis of two symmetric objects, both of which have been the subject of heritage development processes: the Chauvet cave and the Millau viaduct in Southern France. By showing that each object is projected in the spatial or temporal dimension from which it was *a priori* excluded at the time of its discovery, the analysis demonstrates the necessity

of integrating a heritage approach to our understanding of territorial dynamics. The analysis suggests that the interplay of territorialisation and heritage development processes represents a reconstruction of a controlled time-space, a prerequisite for addressing a recurring problem in our society, that of its sustainability.

**Keywords :** sustainability, territorialisation, patrimonialisation, heritage development, time-space

La multiplication des objets, des acteurs et des logiques de la patrimonialisation génère un brouillage de plus en plus important sur la force et le sens de nos rapports au passé. Dans ce contexte, cet article se propose de réfléchir aux processus d'émergence de nouveaux objets patrimoniaux et aux conséquences de ces mobilisations. Il s'appuie sur l'analyse comparée de deux objets symétriques et tous deux patrimonialisés : la grotte Chauvet et le viaduc de Millau. En montrant que chaque objet est projeté dans la dimension spatiale ou temporelle dont il se trouve *a priori* exclu lors de son invention, l'analyse rappelle la nécessité d'intégrer une approche patrimoniale à notre lecture des dynamiques territoriales. Elle propose alors l'idée que ces mouvements croisés représentent une reconstruction d'un espace-temps maîtrisé, nécessaire pour répondre au problème renouvelé de notre société : sa durabilité.

**Mots clés :** durabilité, territorialisation, patrimonialisation, espace-temps