What Do Closed Mountain Roads Tell Us About Territories? A Critical Analysis of Abandonment, Re-Appropriation and Valorisation in the Vercors (19th-21st Century)

Emma-Sophie Mouret

Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/rga/5567>

DOI: 10.4000/rga.5567

ISSN: 1760-7426

This article is a translation of:

Quand les routes fermées de montagne racontent les territoires. L'exemple du Vercors : entre invisibilités, réappropriations et mises en valeur (XIX^e-XXI^e siècles) - URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/rga/5558> [fr]

Publisher:

Association pour la diffusion de la recherche alpine, UGA Éditions/Université Grenoble Alpes

Electronic reference

Emma-Sophie Mouret, "What Do Closed Mountain Roads Tell Us About Territories? A Critical Analysis of Abandonment, Re-Appropriation and Valorisation in the Vercors (19th-21st Century)", *Journal of Alpine Research | Revue de géographie alpine* [Online], 107-1 | 2019, Online since 06 April 2019, connection on 08 December 2022. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/rga/5567> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/rga.5567>

This text was automatically generated on 8 December 2022.

Creative Commons - Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International - CC BY-NC-ND 4.0
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

What Do Closed Mountain Roads Tell Us About Territories? A Critical Analysis of Abandonment, Re-Appropriation and Valorisation in the Vercors (19th-21st Century)

Emma-Sophie Mouret

Introduction

- 1 Can closed mountain roads be considered heritage sites? For most mountain territories seeking an economic conversion to tourism, access has become a major issue. Road closures illustrate the changing uses and practices of local societies for whom the road no longer meets their needs. Can we still talk of heritage sites? Since the middle of the 20th century, the number of heritage sites has increased to the point of raising land-use issues and examination within the academic community. Military, industrial and commercial are the designations applied to these abandoned sites based on their original functions (Janin, Andres, 2008). The territories that are left behind are defined as “heritage sites” representing social and economic change (Raffestin, 2012). Moreover, abandoned roads are a precious source of information about their former use, as well as an indication of their contemporary vocation. The roads symbolised modernity when they were built and obsolescence when they were closed.
- 2 The Vercors mountain range is an interesting example. The lowlands and the highlands experienced the effects of the state’s modernisation policies along with new road-building technology in the middle of the 19th century when a network of carriageable roads was constructed.¹ These lands had previously been linked by non-carriageable roads.

- 3 The roads that were built were categorised as “Chemins de Grande Communication” in the department, depending on the departmental hierarchy established by the Service Vicinal. They are famous for their staggering heights and have consistently appeared in the literature on the Vercors. They are believed to have provided access to previously autarkic societies. These roads were essential in shaping development on the local level. They are hard to widen and were built on slopes prone to landslides. For this reason, tunnels were built, and dangerous turns were widened. Abandoned roads were left to slowly deteriorate. “Délaissés routiers” is the term used by local populations and elected officials to refer to such abandoned roads. They are often left next to the newly built roads and represent visible vestiges of development projects from years gone by. This paper seeks to examine roads as heritage sites. Roads connecting ski resorts are frequently abandoned and are a major part of Gauchon’s “landscape of heritage sites” (Gauchon, 1997). Some of them, such as the Moucherotte gondola and, more recently, the ski jumping ramp of Saint-Nizier (Bachimon, Bourdeau, Corneloup, Bessy, 2014), have already been studied. The recent closure of the Grands Goulets road offered some insight into the issue (Croze, 2004). However, the “délaissés routiers ” have not been studied by the scientific community, even though it could be interesting to compare their idiosyncrasies with other cases.
- 4 What are the characteristics of a mountain road heritage site? Its construction, closure and management once it becomes a heritage site need to be considered. Is it abandoned, re-used in other forms or considered a heritage site? And if so, how does it fit the memory and perceptions of the Vercors? In order to study these questions over the long term (19th–21st century), we examine archival work, nominal data, tourist documentation, participant observations and oral surveys.

Figure 1: Main carriageable roads built during the 19th century to access the Vercors range

Authors: Grégoire Marais, Emma-Sophie Mouret, 2018.

The road: a sign of territorial changes

Roads as drivers of and brakes on territorial evolution

- 5 Roads make it possible to understand territorial change. In the Vercors mountain range, they have been one of the main parameters related to economic growth since the 19th century.² The shift from mule roads to carriageable roads was carried out mainly to improve the exploitation of state-owned forests. Thus, the former forests' exploitation experienced some changes (Hanus, 2000), since carriageable roads were better suited to transporting greater amounts of wood. The route planning of these roads followed the mountain reliefs and the location of state-owned forests.³ That was the case with the road from Die to Saint-Eulalie-en-Royans (1866), Les Écouges road (1883) and the Combe Laval road (1896).
- 6 When these roads opened, they rapidly attracted tourists and became tourist roads between the 19th and 20th centuries. Road-related tourism represents a resource for both inhabitants and external actors. Consequently, activities such as hotel services, transportation and road maintenance were developed and integrated into local working practices. This led to changes in the socio-economic systems. An interesting example is the hamlet of Barraques-en-Vercors (Hameau des Barraques-en-Vercors). This tiny settlement is located at the beginning of the Grands Goulets road; it appeared on the land registry for the first time in 1861. At first, an innkeeper and a road-mender settled into a former road worker house, and by 1872, 28 inhabitants had taken up road- or tourism-related jobs.⁴
- 7 This road-related tourism was particularly active until the Second World War. At the end of the 1940s, a particular kind of memorial tourism related to remembering the war emerged, especially in the southern part of the mountain range (Vergnon, 2002). Visitors also used these roads to train for mountain sports and engage in leisure activities. Their popularity rapidly increased during the Winter Olympic Games held in Grenoble in 1968. In this context, several road works began, especially in the northern part of the Vercors, such as the Mortier tunnel that was dug in 1967. This is proof of a new way of relating to the mountain between the 1960s and 1980s that was especially characterised by winter tourism (Lorenzetti, Delmenico, 2017). As a result, these places became access roads for everyday use. This tendency grew in 1970 with the creation of the Vercors Regional Natural Park, which drew new tourists and consequently required roads that would offer fast and safe access to the highlands. Thus, the notion of speed became a central issue – one that was and still is at the heart of the debate around road building and maintenance.

A constant search for speed and mobility

- 8 The concepts of speed and distance are deeply connected and represent key parameters in the history of mountain paths.⁵ A road is perceived as obsolete if it no longer provides fast access. Indeed, with the new Vercors roads network completely re-designed, a reset of access and proximity between villages is observed.
- 9 Nowadays, the speed of access to the Vercors highland and the safety for those using the roads is regarded as a development factor. In this context, landslides on roads cause

some disruptions to the flow of traffic. In order to avoid these events and the risks associated with them, new road layouts have been created: The well-known Grands Goulets road was closed in 2005 and replaced by a tunnel in 2008. The first Col du Rousset tunnel, situated on the road from Die to Sainte-Eulalie-en-Royans, was dug in 1866 and closed in 1979. In this same year, a second tunnel, on a lower level, was opened that is accessible all year round. Lastly, the Mortier tunnel was closed in 1992, due to a landslide on the road leading up to it.⁶

Figure 2: Some of the closed roads and tunnels in the Vercors

Picture 1: Entrance to the Mortier tunnel

Photo:Valerco, 2017.

Picture 2: Les Écouges road: abandoned part on the left, tunnel on the right.

Source: <http://www.gite-la-source.com/gite-activ-nanecouges01-impr.html>

Picture 3: Gorges de la Bourne: Arbois tunnel on the left and an abandoned section on the right.
Photo: E. S. Mouret, 2015.

Picture 4: Walled entrance of the previous Col de Rousset tunnel

Source: <http://courantsd-aire.over-blog.com/2014/08/infidelite-dromoise-54-souvenirs-du-vercors.html>, 2014, accessed in March 2018.

Picture 5: Closed entrance of the Grands Goulets's road.

Picture 6: Abandoned tunnel on the Combe Laval road.

Photo: E.S. Mouret 2018.

The consequences of a road closure

- 10 The closure of a mountain road may be detrimental to a road-related tourism economy. Because of legal and economic reasons (Croze, 2004), the Grands Goulets road did not re-open after the new tunnel was inaugurated, although the General Council of the Drôme (Conseil general de la Drôme) had previously announced otherwise. Therefore, the activity of the tourist village of Barraques-en-Vercors has changed. This is an example of how road-related tourism and daily road use cannot always be combined. The owner of the Grands Goulets Hotel subsequently sold it, and at present, the hotel is

only partially open. Other hotel establishments created by and for the road-related tourism have also closed.

Figure 3: Hotel restaurant “le Refuge” near the Grands Goulets tunnel

Photo: E.S. Mouret.

- 11 The closure of this road completed a process started some decades earlier with the decline in road-related tourism in the southern Vercors. It became increasingly difficult to ensure the different uses of this road, such as daily trips, wood transport and tourism,⁷ and, as a result, these places slowly become “tourist wastelands” (Gauchon, 1997).

Invisibility and appropriation of closed roads

From closure to abandonment

- 12 The closure of a section of road leads to it being abandoned. The economic worth of open roads is well illustrated by this statement from a tourism professional in the Vercors. An abandoned section of road is a portion of the road that still ‘exists’ while disappearing from the visitor’s point of view.⁸ When they are closed, they no longer appeal to tourists.⁹ The municipality of La Chapelle-en-Vercors can be taken as an example: On its website, the Grands Goulet tunnel is described as “the longest tunnel of the Drôme department: 1,700 metres in length, inaugurated on 28 June 2008.”¹⁰ The modern infrastructure is highlighted, although nothing is mentioned about the historical character of the road. Furthermore, on the website of the Vercors Regional Natural Park, no information can be found about the Grands Goulets road nor about the Mortier tunnel.¹¹

Different forms of re-appropriation

- ¹³ These abandoned roads are re-used in different ways, however. Firstly, they serve as lookout points for drivers and bikers seeking to appreciate the landscape, take pictures and rest. On these roads, such resting places are sought after but few and far between because the roads are so narrow. Moreover, some of these closed roads are used for climbing practices (Fig. 6).
- ¹⁴ Firemen also come to practise climbing. In addition, the rocks could be useful for people doing environmental and geological analyses.¹² In these same areas, the number of people practising drone activities is on the rise. Roads like the Mortier tunnel are also prized by cyclists. In the Grands Goulets, fishermen climb over the fences. Additionally, these closed roads are a topic of discussion for local politics. A plaque is fixed in the Gorges d'Arbois to commemorate a victim of a landslide in 2004. Some other tunnels are a meeting point for musical events like rave parties.¹³

Figure 4: Rocks and climbing ropes on a portion of the Arbois road that is closed to traffic

Photo: E. S. Mouret.

- ¹⁵ These unauthorised uses of closed roads are indeed re-appropriations, making the term “wastelands” no longer appropriate. Thus, can these particular ways of re-appropriation be considered a form of heritage?

An ambivalent heritage

- ¹⁶ The term “heritage” here means “the part of the past that is worth being transmitted in order to find its value in the present” (Lazzarotti, 2003). However, it is essential that the actors’ ideas and opinions be considered in order to understand their aims insofar as they relate to heritage building (Rautenberg, 2000, Fagnoni, Gravari-Barbas, 2015). Since the second half of the 19th century, the Alps have been at the centre of heritage-

centred policy. The most “archetypal” characteristics of Alpine societies have been emphasised and sometimes even reduced to simplistic clichés. Some aspects of these societies, such as their industrial heritage (Lorenzetti, Valsangiacomo, 2016), have been deliberately forgotten. Very few initiatives concerning heritage have been carried out on the roads of Vercors, even though their architectural aspects could justify an interest in them as heritage. Nevertheless, mountain roads were conceived by (and for) societies, which makes them architectural and social heritage (Hanus, 2016, Bernier, 2009). Some communities in Royans have published heritage-related works on the roads of the Vercors since the 1990s, but these works rarely cover the entire Vercors road system and focus their attention on a departmental perspective. This last part demonstrates a reflection on the complexity and the role of this roadway heritage in the way the Vercors is remembered and represented.

Building roads and developing road-related tourism as decisive initiatives

- 17 When a mountain road becomes heritage, some recurring themes appear, including presenting its construction as the ultimate challenge that had to be overcome. The economic benefits for the inhabitants resulting from the building process are also highlighted. In 1983, the Vercors Regional Natural Park published a book entitled “Un siècle de route en Vercors, aventure des bâtisseurs du Vercors : genèse d’un patrimoine”. Improving access and facing a daunting challenge are important parts of such heritage-related works. Documentaries and/or reports on the construction of mountain roads are also available online.¹⁴ Road-related tourism is a recurring element in the discourse on heritage, which presents it as a key moment in the history of these roads and, more generally, of the Vercors. There is an emphasis on the sensational aspect of driving wood-laden trucks and clearing snow on these roads.
- 18 At the same time, elements such as the inhabitants’ day-to-day lives and habits are forgotten in this discourse. Their participation in the roadworks is documented to a much smaller degree than that of the Italian immigrant workers, who symbolise the most impressive accomplishments in Alpine transit. Most of the heritage-related works concerning the Vercors roads have long followed a “departmental logic”. In 2017, the Drôme department conceived of a heritage valorisation project for the Grands Goulets and the Combe Laval roads, both of which have been listed sites since 1939 and 1991, respectively. The agents of the DREAL (Direction Régionale de l’Environnement de l’Aménagement et du Logement) recommended the same strategy for all Vercors roads. The Vercors Regional Natural Park was in charge of the overall management of this project. This was presented as a unifying project for the Vercors¹⁵ The purpose is to avoid project failures such as a recent one involving an inter-communality project. The aim was to unite the massif’s four different municipalities. The 2017 project attempts to refer to a “broader” identity: the Vercors. The roads contributed to building the visibility of this constructed territory (Sgard, 2001), which was subsequently bolstered by remembering the role played by the Resistance (Vergnon, 2002, Wullschleger, 2004).

Focus on open roads

- 19 The heritage discourse on the Vercors roads mainly concerns those that are open. Nothing is said about the sections of closed road. The Mortier tunnel, the former Rousset tunnel, Les Écouges or even the closed sections of Arbois and Combe Laval are not mentioned in works related to heritage. Some records of local politicians and tourism officers explain that they can't be showed.¹⁶ These sections of abandoned roads contrast sharply with green tourism and territories that are modern and otherwise appealing. Furthermore, it can sometimes be a "trauma" for the affected communities (Janin, Andres, 2008) when sections of road are declared to be out of service. From a territorial marketing point of view, closed roads have a pejorative connotation. Thus, the most emphasised element is the tunnel, which functions as a symbol of modernity and progress, in contrast with the former road.
- 20 The example of the Grands Goulets is particularly striking. The closure of the "historical road", called as such by many inhabitants, represents a traumatic event for them. Today, accessing it is strictly forbidden. Most of the inhabitants insist on the heritage and memorial value of this road.¹⁷ Some local tourism professionals agree with them. This concept is clearly explained by many videos online: "Who can remember the zeal employed for the opening of the first road of Vercors in 1852? The new tunnel erased this patrimonial journey. For all of those who won't have the chance to see this road, this tribute to the builders still remains"; "What a shame that it is no longer possible to visit the old road, one of our heritage jewels." Here, the will to make an abandoned road more visible is considered a form of heritage building. Yet, it is forbidden to access the road, and there has even been legal action against those who encourage others on social media to access it.¹⁸ There have also been conflicts between different political and social actors with regard to the road regulation policies. On several occasions, the department and/or local communities have considered undertaking valorisation projects. These initiatives were abandoned, however, because of the risk of landslides.¹⁹ In addition, the closed section is used to access the tunnel for maintenance. Re-opening it would lead to the presence of pedestrians and affect maintenance. In parallel, the closed section is also the emergency exit. For this reason, the tunnel opening is closely linked to the risk of a landslide. So, for many people, this closure appears to be a way to partially legitimise the costs of digging the tunnel. However, many former users do not understand why the Combe Laval road, which presents similar risks, is still open and is currently the focus of heritage and tourist initiatives.

Challenge management?

- 21 Inhabitants drive on the Combe Laval road every day, and bikers and a large number of cyclists also use it as frequently. Landslides are common and require rigorous and complex maintenance activity. Therefore, an annual working plan has been established by a departmental technician requiring the closure of the road. Nevertheless, alternative routes are possible in the form of the Col de l'Echarasson road and the Arps road. This kind of maintenance work has to be done during the off-season, but spring is not an option since the work would interfere with the mating of the hawks living in the rocks of the Combe Laval. Tourism hinders the possibility of these works being carried out in the summer. The work, therefore, can only be done during a very short period in

the autumn, on clear days.²⁰ Furthermore, some masonry work to secure the mountainside is highly criticised since it deteriorates the nature and the landscape. Its cost is criticised as well.

Figure 5: Cartoon about masonry activity in the Gorges de la Bourne, Serge Lombard, 2013

Source: <http://www.initiatives-vercors.fr/humour-Les-travaux-des-gorges-de>, accessed in April 2017.

- 22 The drawing represents the Gorges de la Bourne. The protective structures create an oppressive effect. The writing refers to the well-known Land artists who ridiculed the unsightly aspect of these constructions.
- 23 Closing the Combe Laval road for half a day has been discussed in the context of the recent valorisation project for the Vercors roads. The aim is to return to a “slower conception” of the roads (“retour à la lenteur”), which would allow only soft motilities in order to “return the road to its users”²¹ (“rendre la route aux usagers”). But exactly what kind of users are being considered? This initiative, launched by some tourism actors, attempts to turn the road into an instrument of development associated with slow tourism (Bourdeau, Marcotte, 2015). This kind of tourism is growing in the Vercors.²² This idea of “slowness” (lenteur) is based on wholly invented representations. Those different uses are symptomatic of the multiple vocations of the road and, more broadly, of the territory. Whether open or closed, the road appears as a conflicting object and can generate new territorialities (Gal, 2016). A possible solution could be to implement those initiatives in the already closed sections of the road – despite the many risks noted above.

Conclusion: What is the story that closed mountain roads can tell?

- 24 Mountain roads enable us to have a better understanding of territorial change. Modifying or closing them suggests a change in the socio-economic development model, often generated by the need to access the highlands more quickly and to be safe in transit. The heritage left by the road network contributes to the “story” of the Vercors through emblematic phases such as the opening up of the mountain range thanks to road-linked tourism. Many of these elements are in use today, but at the same time, little is said about the roads that are closed to the public. The silence on these closed roads is an omission from history and the heritage of these territories. This tendency can be explained by considering the Vercors’s image as a dynamic territory. As a result, talk about abandoned roads stands in contrast with the strategy of marketing the territory. There is a significant interest in determining the viability of these roads given the reality of possible landslides, maintenance etc. Broaching the subject of road closings includes speaking about the political and economic interests of the territory.
- 25 The weaknesses of defining a common approach to defining heritage illustrate the broader issue of defining roads as a standalone historical topic. So, the question remains: Which story do the local administrations want (to allow) closed roads to tell?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bachimon P., Bourdeau P., Corneloup J. et Bessy O., 2014.- « Du tourisme à l'après-tourisme, le tournant d'une station de moyenne montagne : Saint-Nizier-du-Moucherotte (Isère) », *Géococonfluences*, avril 2014.
- Belli-Riz P., 2002.- « Tourisme et automobilisme : de la route aux pistes », dans *Revue de géographie alpine*, tome 90, n° 4, pp. 73-84.
- Bernier X., 2007.- “Mountain roads as heritage objects : towards a typology of heritage status development processes”, *11 th World Conference on Transport Research*, June 24-28 2007 - University of California Ed.- Berkeley CA - USA.
- Blache J., 1931.- « Les massifs de la Grande-Chartreuse et du Vercors. Étude géographique » . Thèse, Grenoble.
- Blaise A., 2000.- « Mobilité et chemins en Vercors, autrefois », *Jadis au pays des quatre montagnes, généalogie et histoire locale*, coll. « Les Cahiers du Peuil », n° 4, Méaudre, pp. 188-201.
- Blanchard R., 1938.- *Les Alpes occidentales. T.1. Les Préalpes françaises du Nord*, dans *Les Études rhodaniennes*, vol. 14, n° 2-3.
- Bourdeau L. et Marcotte P. (dir.), 2015.- *Les routes touristiques*. Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval, 254 p.

Della-vedova G., (à paraître). – *Les acteurs du développement rural en Isère : canton de Villard-de-Lans XIX^e-XXI^e siècles*, thèse en cours d'édition.

– « L'évolution et l'organisation du tourisme dans le canton de Villard-de-Lans (massif du Vercors) du milieu du XIX^e siècle au milieu du XX^e siècle », dans Marc GIGASE, Cédric HUMAIR, Laurent TISSOT, *Le tourisme comme facteur de transformations économiques, techniques et sociales (XIX^e -XX^e siècles)*, éditions Alphil - Presses Universitaires Suisses, Neuchâtel, 2014, pp. 107-123.

Favier R., 1993. – *Les villes du Dauphiné aux 17^e et 18^e siècles*, Grenoble, Presses universitaires de Grenoble.

Fillet P-L., 2009. – « Les routes du Vercors », p. 98-101, dans Conservation du patrimoine du département de la Drôme, *Patrimoines du Royans-Vercors, paysages, architecture et histoire*, département de la Drôme.

Gal S., 2016. – « Montagnes et conflictualité : le conflit, facteur d'adaptations et d'innovations territoriales », *Journal of Alpine Research / Revue de géographie alpine* [En ligne], 104-1 | 2016.

Gauchon Christophe, 1997. – « Anciennes remontées mécaniques dans les montagnes françaises : pour une géographie des friches Touristiques », dans *Bulletin de l'Association de géographes français*, 74^e année, 1997-3 (septembre). Didactique de la géographie. Aménagement et moyennes montagnes. pp. 296-310.

Granet Abisset A-M., 2018. – « Et si la vitesse était la plus grande transformation pour les sociétés (de montagne) contemporaines ? » in Francesco Garufo, Jean-Daniel Morerod (éd.), *Laurent Tissot, une passion loin des sentiers battus*, Neuchâtel, Ed. Alphil-Presses universitaires suisses, 390 pages.

Gravari-Barbas M. et Fagnoni E., 2015. –, « Patrimoine et patrimonialisation, de l'objet à la relation », communication dans le cadre d'un Café géographique, Café de Flore, Paris, 24 novembre 2015.

Hanus P., 2000. – *Je suis né charbonnier dans le Vercors : petite histoire des hommes dans la forêt*, Lans, Maison du Parc, 2000.

Hanus P., 2007. – *L'appel des Coulmes. Histoire d'une forêt du Vercors*, Grenoble, Conservation du patrimoine de l'Isère-Musée dauphinois.

Janin C., Andres L., 2008. – « Les friches : espaces en marge ou marges de manœuvre pour l'aménagement des territoires ? », dans *Annales de géographie*, 2008/5 ? (n° 663), pp. 62-81.

Jorré G., 1921. – « L'établissement des routes dans le massif du Vercors » dans *Revue de géographie alpine*, tome 9, n° 2, 1921. pp. 229-284.

Lorenzetti L., Delmenico D., 2017. – « La transition touristique d'une "station-village" Multipositionnalité et gestion foncière à Champéry (Valais) », 1870-1970 », *Revue de géographie alpine* 105-4 | 2017.

Lorenzetti L., Valsangiacomo N. (dir.), 2016. – « Alpi e patrimonio industriale, Alpes et patrimoine industriel, alpen und industriellen Erbe », Mendrisio, Accademia di Architettura.

Parc Naturel Régional du Vercors, 1983. – *Un siècle de routes en Vercors : le roman des routes du Vercors, voies de pénétration et sites remarquables, l'établissement des routes en Vercors*, Grenoble, La manufacture.

Raffestin C., 2012. – « Une société de la friche ou une société en friche », dans *Revista Movimentos Sociais e Dinâmicas Espaciais*, Recife : UFPE/MSEU, v.01, n. 02, 2012.

Rautenberg M., 2003.– Comment s'inventent de nouveaux patrimoines : usages sociaux, pratiques institutionnelles et politiques publiques en Savoie. In : Culture & Musées, n° 1. Nouveaux regards sur le patrimoine (sous la direction de Jean Davallon) pp. 19-40.

Rautenberg M., Micoud A., Marchenay P., Berard L., 2000.– *Campagnes de tous nos désirs : patrimoine et nouveaux usages*, Éditions de la MSH, pp. 194.

Sgard A., 1997.– *Paysages du Vercors : entre mémoire et identité*, Pézenas, Domens.

Sgard A., 2001.– « Vercors, l'invention d'un territoire », in *ALPE, la revue du Musée Dauphinois* numéro hors-série « Vercors en question », Glénat.

Vernon G., 2002.– *Le Vercors, histoire et mémoire d'un maquis*. Paris, Les Éditions de l'Atelier.

Wullschlegler M. 2004.– *Le Vercors : forteresse ouverte*, Collection Les Patrimoines, Éditions Le Dauphiné.

Mémoires de Master

Croze É., 2004.– « D'une route à l'autre : continuité du discours sur l'ouverture de la "forteresse Vercors". "Les Grands Goulets", la route pittoresque du Vercors central », mémoire de master sous la direction d'Anne-Marie Granet-Abisset, 2004.

Rochas Aurélien, 2015.– « Le Vercors : théâtre d'une bataille des routes (an X-1920). Transformation et accessibilité du territoire des Quatre-Montagnes iséroises par le Chemin de Grande Communication n° 6 de Grenoble à Villard-de-Lans par Sassenage et les Gorges d'Engins », mémoire de recherche sous la direction d'Anne-Marie Granet-Abisset, 2015.

NOTES

1. This is the Saint-Simonianism way of thinking.
2. These are complex socio-economic processes.
3. Archives Départementale de l'Isère, 1403, Dossier 1855, Rapport de l'agent voyer Chaumartin, 1855.
4. Archives Départementales de la Drôme, 6M448, Recensements de la commune de Saint-Martin-en-Vercors.
5. The historian Anne-Marie Granet-Abisset started an analysis on this topic. « Et si la vitesse était la plus grande transformation pour les sociétés (de montagne) contemporaines? » in Francesco Garufo, Jean-Daniel Morerod (éd.), Laurent Tissot, une passion loin des sentiers battus, Neuchâtel, Ed. Alphil-Presses universitaires suisses, 2018.
6. The Gorges d'Arbois were mentioned by the geographer Xavier Bernier.
7. It was highlighted by various oral surveys.
8. Oral survey conducted in 2017.
9. On the *inspiration Vercors* website's "routes panoramiques" section, nothing is said about Grands Goulets road or the Mortier tunnel <https://www.inspiration-vercors.com/destinations/routes-panoramiques#road-49> consulted in December 2017.
10. <http://www.lachapelleenvercors.fr/556/> consulted in February 2018.
11. http://parc-du-vercors.fr/fr_FR/les-actions-1109/patrimoine-et-culture-1452/connaitre-et-valoriser-les-patrimoines-1453.html, consulted in February 2018.
12. Oral survey conducted in July 2018.
13. <http://www.bassexpression.com/viewtopic.php?id=2287>, consulted on 10 March 2017.
14. Wobook made for safety works of the Gorges de la Bourne in 2014 <https://www.wobook.com/WB6Y2Ge7Y517-2-a/Gorges-de-la-Bourne-vuedici-org/Page-2.html>.

15. Oral survey conducted in February 2018.
 16. Oral survey conducted in November 2017.
 17. All oral surveys conducted since 2015.
 18. Oral survey conducted in July 2018.
 19. Oral survey conducted in February 2018.
 20. Oral survey conducted in July 2018.
 21. Oral survey conducted in February 2018.
 22. For example, “Slows days” organised in Corrençon-en-Vercors in September 2018.
-

ABSTRACTS

In the Alps, mountain roads offer clear examples of the 19th-century policy of modernising road networks. In the middle of the 1800s, the Vercors mountain range in the French departments of Isère and Drôme was criss-crossed by a network of carriageable roads. Most of these roads were built to transport wood but rapidly became tourist routes. After the Second World War, the roads started being used more and more as daily transit increased. At the end of the 1970s, however, the risk of landslides was increasingly becoming an issue. Some of the roads were closed following landslides or after the construction of safer and faster roads. At the time they were built, these roads were symbols of modernity. Later, as they became obsolete, they came to embody both the development strategies of territories and the legacy of former policies of modernisation. Now, this closed roads aren't showed alongside other “magnificent roads”.

INDEX

Keywords: road, mountain, territory, wasteland, heritage, speed, risk

AUTHOR

EMMA-SOPHIE MOURET

Doctoral student in Human, Political and Territorial Sciences, LARHRA (UMR 5190) - ARC 7 région Auvergne Rhône-Alpes, Université Grenoble Alpes.
emmasophiemouret@gmail.com