

## **THE SPIRE OF SAINT-DENIS**

Heritage emotions and a reconstruction project in the  
21st century

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## Mots-clés

Globalisation - Identité - Patrimoine - Emotion - Gentrification

## Résumé

À l'ère de la globalisation, les nations, les villes et les individus perdent de vue leur propre identité en raison de la synchronisation et de la standardisation des espaces. Le patrimoine, en tant que trace du passé et preuve de la continuité du temps, crée une possibilité de retrouver nos propres racines. Dans cette quête d'identité, des émotions sont manifestées : l'anxiété de l'identité et la nostalgie de la culture locale, du passé voire du présent. Ces émotions patrimoniales, dans les villes du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle, comme le cas de Saint-Denis avec le remontage de sa flèche, sont en train de devenir un grand élan pour la mobilisation sociale et poussent l'accélération de la gentrification urbaine.

## Keywords

Globalization - Identity - Heritage - Emotion - Gentrification

## Brief

In the age of globalisation, nations, cities and individuals lose sight of their own identity due to the synchronisation and standardisation of spaces. Heritage, as a trace of the past and proof of the continuity of time, becomes the possibility to reconnect with our own roots. In this quest for identity, emotions are manifested: identity anxiety and nostalgia for local culture, the past and even the present. These heritage emotions, in the cities of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century, like the case of Saint-Denis with its reconstruction project of the spire, are becoming a great driver for social mobilisation and is pushing the acceleration of urban gentrification.

## Collective research of first phase

### Audio

The reconstruction of the spire of Saint-Denis in the 21st century



### Video

The timeline of the Basilica of Saint-Denis and its spire



## Photomontage

Graphic timeline depicting the history of the Basilica of Saint-Denis



## Chapter 1 : Heritage emotions and the birth of reconstruction project for Saint-Denis's spire

The fire that burned for 14 hours at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris on 15 April 2019 was the most talked-about heritage disaster in recent years. And what was most striking about this fire, apart from the completely burnt roof and collapsed spire, was the way people around the world reacted to this disaster, both during and after the fire. People crying on their knees at the side of the road when the fire broke out, crowds of people praying across the island late into the night while the fire was being extinguished, governments and people from different countries lamenting from afar, and people from all over the world raising funds to restore the cathedral afterwards. These expressions of emotion inspired by this heritage and the disaster it suffered can be described as « heritage emotions<sup>5</sup> » as defined by ethnologist and anthropologist Daniel Fabre in the late 1990s:

« It is the heritage status that results from the attribution of exceptional value, [...] through value judgements and, above all, through attachments, expressed either through words or attitudes [...] And this emotion takes on an even more collective dimension when its object is emotionally invested in by a large number of people<sup>6</sup>. »

### 1. The notion of heritage emotion: a collective dimension since the French Revolution

#### First expression of emotions related to heritage

This type of emotion did not appear suddenly, and Notre Dame is not the first case of such emotional inflation (Figure 6). During the French Revolution, the revolt against the Ancien Régime was accompanied by the destruction of important royal and religious buildings. These buildings were symbols of the power of the Ancien Régime, and anger against this regime translated into negative emotions towards them. Conservatives feel angry and devastated about the destruction of cultural and historical value that these buildings possess, and the destruction of the value of the buildings themselves. Immediately afterwards, these emotions turn into a strong desire to protect the buildings in order to prevent further destruction. According to Daniel Fabre and his academic team, this was the first collective event expressing<sup>7</sup> heritage emotions in France.

5 Definition by Daniel Fabre in « Introduction », dans Daniel Fabre(dir.), *Emotions patrimoniales*, Paris : Editions de la maison des sciences de l'homme, 2013.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Daniel Fabre, « Le patrimoine porté par l'émotion », dans Daniel Fabre(dir.), *Emotions patrimoniales*, *op.cit.*



Figure 5 : Pierre-Hoseph Lafontaine, *Alexandre Lenoir defending the tombs of kings in Saint-Denis against revolutionaries*, 1793.

The defenders of Saint-Denis against the revolutionaries show the first collective expression of heritage emotions.

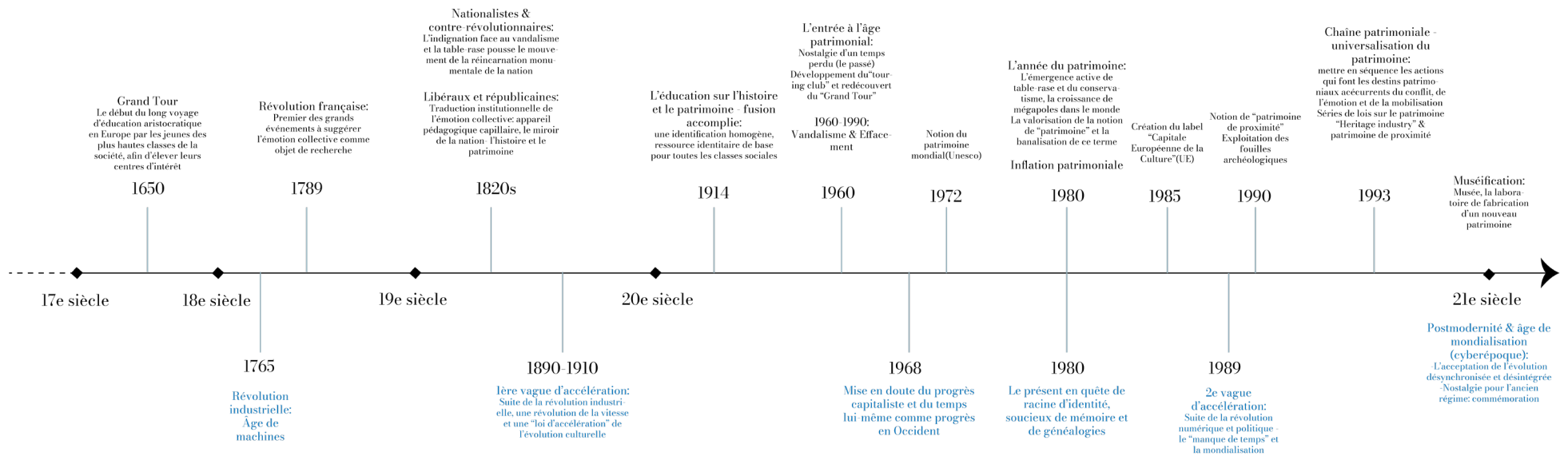


Figure 6 : Yuehan Li (timeline produced by author), *The timeline comparing key dates in French history and the development of the concept of heritage emotions*, 2022.

Heritage's definition often reveals the character of a particular era, meaning that heritage-related activities can be seen as a reference and a trace of history and culture.

During the Industrial Revolution, entirely new architectural structures, spaces and functions emerged. It was a society that constantly looked forward, imagining things that had never been seen before, more effective and powerful. People believed that the past had created a kind of confinement of thought, from reflection to construction, and wanted to pursue things that were not available in the past, or in the present. Contrary to the *Renaissance*, which made the past and history the supreme reference point (**a social phase of pastism**<sup>8</sup> according to historian François Hartog), this was a period when the past was abandoned and only the future was sought (a social phase of *futurism*<sup>9</sup>). Buildings adapted to the needs and industrial development of the time were constructed rapidly, while many older buildings were abandoned or even demolished.

### Revaluation of heritage, multiplication of heritage emotions

At the end of the 19th century, the State decided to promote heritage, a forgotten but important medium for transmitting history and culture, as part of the nation's basic education. In the first half of the 20th century, due to the continuous development of industrial technology and production lines, the automobile gradually entered Europe as a new means of daily transport. This development was accompanied by the growth of *Touring clubs*<sup>10</sup> in Europe in the 1960s, when people began to travel to nearby cities and countries to discover other cultures. At the same time, *Le Grand Tour*<sup>11</sup> which had already appeared in the second half of the 17th century, was re-explored by historians as one of the first waves of tourism and an early journey of heritage discovery. At the time of its origin, it was a practice reserved for young European aristocrats to complete their education. It was then developed in the 18th century and became a normal, even necessary practice for young people regardless of their social class. The universalisation of *Touring club* in the 20th century therefore shows the amplification of heritage awareness and the integration of this thinking into the daily life of French people of all social classes.

But where can traces of history be found? Which symbolic places are worth visiting? The French then began to re-explore old buildings and their histories, representative of the city and the country, in order to know which to restore and preserve. The « heritage inflation » appeared in 1980, and the growth in the number of ancient objects and buildings being rediscovered, indicate France's entry into the heritage age. This also means that the term « heritage » has become universalized in the country. In 1972, Unesco published the

8 Positive attitude of values of the past, according to François Hartog, *Régime d'historicité, Présentisme et expériences du temps*, Paris : La librairie du XXIe siècle, 2003.

9 Attitude of rejecting traditional aesthetics and embrace the modern world, especially for the urban civilization, machines and the speed according to François Hartog, *Régime d'historicité, Présentisme et expériences du temps*, Paris : La librairie du XXIe siècle, 2003.

10 Daniel Fabre(dir.), *L'échelle des émotions*, dans Daniel Fabre(dir.), *Emotions patrimoniales*, op.cit.

11 Gilles Bertrand, *Le Grand Tour revisité : pour une archéologie du tourisme : le voyage des Français en Italie, milieu XVIIIe siècle-début XIXe siècle*, Rome : École française de Rome, 2008.

definition of world heritage and in 1985, the label of European Capital of Culture (ECC) had been created, symbolising the gradual rise of heritage status on a larger scale and its importance accorded worldwide.

### Erase and conserve

The large-scale demolition of historic buildings began during the French Revolution, when religious and royal buildings were most at risk. At the same time, cities such as Paris have « benefited » from these actions and have gradually begun to make new plans and imagine their own urban development plans for the future<sup>12</sup>(such as the expansion of roads and housing estates, or the major Haussmannian works in the 19th century). Subsequently, during the world wars, many of the city's iconic buildings (particularly political-religious ones) were damaged by bombing.

During the 1960s and 1990s, in line with avant-garde trends, society once again took a negative view of styles inherited from the past. More and more spatially important buildings appeared in city centres, metropolitan cities increased and, with space being limited, cities inevitably turned to demolishing older buildings. Old neighbourhoods were seen as symbols of obsolescence and were emptied, regenerated, further accelerating the city's quest for the most futuristic image. Once again, some historic buildings seen as symbols of power were deliberately set on fire to erase the traces of the old regime.

If royal architecture serves as a memorial to the Ancien Régime on a national scale, les vieilles maisons rasées sont des souvenirs des familles à l'échelle urbaine. old houses that have been demolished are memories of families on an urban scale. Their disappearance has therefore prompted new conservation initiatives among the public. For example, with the advent of the definition of « patrimoine de proximité <sup>13</sup>(local heritage)» in 1990, the French people's sense of belonging and possession has been stimulated. Gradually, this feeling is spreading to the community, the village, and even the nation as a whole. And the definition on monumental heritage in the law of 1993<sup>14</sup> : « notre patrimoine, c'est la mémoire de notre histoire et le symbole de notre identité nationale »(our heritage, is the memory of our history and the symbol of our national identity), shows the hierarchisation and extension of heritage emotions' significance.

12 Based on the analysis of Pierre Pinon, *Paris détruit. Du vandalisme patrimonial aux grandes opérations d'urbanisme*, Paris : Parigramme, 2011.

13 Notion appeared in the 1990s in the senator Maine-et-Loire Jean-Paul Hugot's report, who notes the desire of French people to call for the preservation of all forms of heritage, including that of « local interest ». This concept is then defined by the State under the heading of Historic Monuments « non-listed and non-registered» and « likely to be recognised». (Explication développée par Irina Chunikhina, « Le « patrimoine de proximité » : du coup de cœur » au label », dans Daniel Fabre(dir.), *Emotions patrimoniales*, op.cit.)

14 Programme Law n°93-1437 du 31 décembre 1993 on monumental heritage

## 2. Heritage emotions and its direct impact on heritage projects: the case of Notre-Dame de Paris and the basilica of Saint-Denis

### 2.1. Notre-Dame de Paris and its spire to restore identically !

#### History of Notre-Dame de Paris

Returning to the case of Notre-Dame de Paris, this religious building is the carrier of Catholic attachment to memory and bears witness to the past glory of religious art in France at a time when belief is gradually weakening. Originally built in the 12th century, it was rebuilt and enlarged over two centuries before being completed in the mid-14th century, vandalised at the end of the 18th century during the French Revolution, then brought to the attention of Parisians and the whole country by Victor Hugo's eponymous work, which symbolised the awakening of the people's awareness<sup>15</sup> of the value of architecture after the French Revolution. Fifteen years after the book's publication, Notre-Dame de Paris underwent a major restoration over a period of 20 years under the direction of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. Since Napoleon's coronation, this cathedral in the heart of Paris has been the venue for important ceremonies over the centuries and continues to be so today. It also represents the continuity and transfer of power from the royal religion to the French civil religion.

#### The burnt spire of Notre-Dame de Paris

Today, Notre-Dame de Paris is one of the most visited sites in the world and is an important way for foreigners to discover French history and culture. It is the showcase for the Church of France and, according to historian Guillaume Cuchet, « un haut lieu de la mémoire française, religieuse et civile<sup>16</sup> »(a high point of French religious and civil memory). With its multiple identities and the development of heritage sentiment during the 20th century, the grief over its destruction is very powerful. Facing the destruction of this heritage, people's grief and mourning quickly turned into a powerful driving force for its restoration. As a result, by 16 April 2019 (one day after the fire), France had already received 700 million euros in donations from around the world, and on the same day, President Macron confirmed on television that Notre-Dame de Paris would be rebuilt in less than five years.

In this scene (Figure 8) in front of Notre-Dame, we recognise some very important French political figures: from left to right, there is Prime Minister Edouard Philippe, Minister of Culture Franck Riester, Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo, French President Emmanuel Macron and Archbishop of Paris Michel Aupetit. Although religion has been separated from state

15 Guillaume Cuchet, « L'incendie de Notre-Dame, une émotion patrimoniale », dans *Etudes*, « L'incendie de Notre-Dame, une émotion patrimoniale », *Cairn*, publié le 28 décembre 2021, consulté en 2022, disponible à l'adresse : <https://www.cairn.info/emotions-mobilisation--9782724610994-page-119.htm>

16 *Ibid.*



Figure 7 : AFP- Eric Feferberg, *The destruction of Notre-Dame is a shock for all the French people*, 2019.

Indeed, the Notre Dame fire is not only significant for its flames, but also for the reactions of great sorrow expressed by people around the world.



Figure 8 : Franceinfo, *“Nous rebâtirons” (we rebuild) Notre-Dame de Paris, promised Emmanuel Macron after the fire*, 2019.

The President of the Republic's speech in front of Notre-Dame de Paris brings together several important political figures.

political power since the beginning of the 20th century under the law in 1905<sup>17</sup>, the presence of figures here shows a fairly strong link between the two and a very intimate connection between the nation and religious architecture. This type of relationship will be analysed in greater depth in the next chapter in order to understand the intervention and impact of political power on heritage emotions and their expressions.

Since then, although the Prime Minister briefly launched a competition for the design of a new spire on line, three weeks later the government abandoned this idea and confirmed that the famous spire would be restored identically. In this case, although the government responded positively, popular sentiment regarding heritage and emotional reactions to the disaster could almost be considered the initial impetus that played a dominant role in the reconstruction of Notre-Dame de Paris, prompting the government to begin restoration as soon as possible.

In fact, alongside the restoration project for the spire of Notre-Dame de Paris, in the Paris suburbs, there is another project to restore the north spire of the Basilica of Saint-Denis, which has been lost for over 150 years.

## 2.2. Basilica of Saint-Denis and the spire to restore...or not ?

The Basilica of Saint-Denis is often described in the French press as the rival<sup>18</sup> of Notre-Dame de Paris. In reality, it is more than 600 years older than Notre-Dame and today receives less than one per cent<sup>19</sup> of visitors of its rival..

### History of the basilica of Saint-Denis

The Basilica of Saint-Denis, formerly the cemetery of Saint-Denis, was built in 250. In the 12th century, under the direction of Abbot Suger, the abbey was enlarged and rebuilt, and it was at this time that the 86-metre-high north tower was first constructed. The spire was subsequently renovated and reinforced several times and remained the tallest architectural landmark in Île-de-France until the 19th century. The church became the cradle of the European Gothic style churches that followed. During the French Revolution, the Basilica of

17 Loi du 9 décembre 1905 concerns the separation of church and state. This law establishes the concept of a secular state in France and repeals the ecclesiastical dictatorship of 1801 established by Napoleon. The law is based on three principles: the neutrality of the state, freedom of religious belief, and public authority over the Church, with secularism at the heart of the law.

18 Example of the press case : Florence Evin, « La basilique Saint-Denis devrait retrouver sa flèche », *LeMonde*, publié le 01 Juillet 2016, consulté en 2022, disponible à l'adresse suivante : [https://www.lemonde.fr/arts/article/2016/07/02/la-basilique-de-saint-denis-devrait-retrouver-sa-flèche\\_4962385\\_1655012.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/arts/article/2016/07/02/la-basilique-de-saint-denis-devrait-retrouver-sa-flèche_4962385_1655012.html)

19 Nathalie Revenu, « La basilique Saint-Denis et Notre-Dame de Paris, même combat »(The basilica of Saint-Denis and Notre-Dame de Paris, same combat), *LeParisien*, publié le 18 avril 2019, consulté en 2022, disponible à l'adresse : <https://www.leparisien.fr/seine-saint-denis-93/la-basilique-de-saint-denis-et-notre-dame-de-paris-meme-combat-18-04-2019-8056044.php>



Figure 9 : John Hill, d'après John Claude Nattes, *Vue de l'intérieur de l'église de Saint-Denis transformée en grenier*, 1806.

The transformation of a sacred space into a storage space also demonstrates the revolutionaries' indignation towards this heritage and the monarchy that it represents.



Figure 10 : Gonzalo Fuentes / AFP, *François Hollande à la basilique de Saint-Denis*, 2017, (Lien de la vidéo de la parole de François Hollande : [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCCHo\\_F6h\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCCHo_F6h_M))

François Hollande's speech lends significant political weight to this heritage restoration project and reinforces the attachment that local residents feel towards the basilica.

Saint-Denis was a symbol of monarchical power as a royal necropolis. It was therefore the target to be occupied for a time and used (or profaned) as a food warehouse for the revolutionary army. The bells and lead roofing were also melted down to make weapons<sup>20</sup>.

At the beginning of the 19th century, when Napoleon I<sup>er</sup> ascended to the throne, he chose to keep the basilica (which had not been completely destroyed) as the symbol of the continuity of monarchical power and undertook new restoration work. The signature of the Concordat<sup>21</sup> in 1801 by Napoléon I<sup>er</sup> and the pope Pie VII also signified the restoration of the relationship between Catholic power and state power, but under the supervision and control of the state. In 1813, architect François Debret took charge of the Basilica's restoration. In 1837, the north tower was demolished to a height of 30 metres due to structural damage caused by lightning and rebuilt the following year. The entire north tower was then demolished again in 1847 under the direction of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, as its spire was once again prone to new cracks caused by bad weather<sup>22</sup>. The restoration of the north tower has since been put on hold due to a lack of funds, but also because of the controversial nature of the restoration proposal and people's lack of trust of architects in France.

### **The restoration project of the Basilica's spire relaunched**

It was not until 1971 that Marcelin Berthelot, then mayor, decided to relaunch the project to restore the tower's spire. In 2013<sup>23</sup>, a committee was created to supervise and sponsor the rehabilitation of the north tower, and the project was relaunched by the mayor at the time, Didier Paillard, along with other committed figures.

In 2015, the official organization *Suivez la flèche* was created by residents, politicians and professionals committed to following and encouraging the project's progress. Following the impetus provided by several generations of mayors, the feasibility study for the restoration project finally began in 2016.

In 2017, the spire's restoration project received approval from the Ministry of Culture (due to its status as a national heritage site), despite the unfavourable and definitive opinion from the National Commission for Historic Monuments.

In the same year, François Hollande, President of the Republic but at the end of his term of office at that time, participated in placing the foundation stone to symbolise the start of

20 Centre des monuments nationaux, « Histoire du monument (Basilique cathédrale de Saint-Denis) », *Saint-Denis-Basilique*, consulté en 2022, disponible à l'adresse : <https://www.saint-denis-basilique.fr/Explorer/Histoire-du-monument>

21 The Concordat signed on 15 July 1801 consists of eleven articles supplemented by organic articles, defining the reorganisation and new functioning of the Church of France, and its hierarchical relation with the state power.

22 Jean-Michel Leniaud, Philippe Plagnieux, *La basilique Saint-Denis*, Editions du patrimoine, Centre des monuments nationaux, Paris, 2012.

23 Q.P., « La mairie lance la reconstruction de la flèche de la basilique Saint-Denis », *LACROIX*, le 1 mars 2013, consulté en 2022, disponible à l'adresse : <https://www.la-croix.com/Urbi-et-Orbi/Actualite/France/La-mairie-lance-la-reconstruction-de-la-fleche-de-la-basilique-de-Saint-Denis-2013-03-01-916671>

its reconstruction. In 2022, with the arrival of the socialist mayor in 2020, Mathieu Hanotin, Saint-Denis officially began preparations for future restoration work, and visits to the site are expected to open at Christmas.

### **From the main subject of heritage emotions to a forgotten antique site, the restoration project aims to restore the Basilica of Saint-Denis to its former glory.**

According to the history of the Basilica of Saint-Denis described above, its spire is, in a way, proof of the basilica but also the city's flourishing past.

Once served as a religious building, the symbol of royal power and the faith of the ancient dynasty, it was almost logically, the subject of a restoration project. In the 17th century, the Basilica of Saint-Denis was even the major object of emotional awareness given the importance of its restoration scale.

But at the end of the Empire, the spire seemed to disappear, gradually losing its prominence and function. It is interesting to note that this basilica, and its spire in particular, is a kind of witness to the evolution of heritage emotions in France – from the first demonstrations at the time of the French Revolution to the collective sentiment that has been rekindled today by the fire at Notre-Dame de Paris. As attention gradually shifted away from Notre-Dame de Paris and the importance of the basilica declined, the restoration project was gradually forgotten.

Today, it is with the continuous impetus of generations of mayors and committed groups, individually or collectively, that the spire restoration project gets to be carried out. When the restoration of the spire of Saint-Denis was resumed in 2013, the mayor at the time stated firmly at a press conference:

« The time has come to rebuild the spire. The project is part of a heritage initiative to restore the basilica's integrity and harmony. More than that, it is [...] a source of identity and pride for the local community<sup>24</sup>. »

At this meeting, the mayor demonstrated the strong sense of belonging that he, his predecessors and the organisations concerned have for the basilica and its spire - a sense of belonging to the history and honour of the city, not only as a government but also as a local resident, for its religious status and cultural values, and for the special place it occupies in its architectural history.

### **Rehabilitation of the basilica following the fire at Notre-Dame de Paris**

Following the fire at Notre-Dame de Paris in 2019, and due to the significant sorrow of loss and powerlessness in the face of the unchangeable fact, the restoration project of Saint-Denis's spire, which had been forgotten in a corner, was spontaneously reactivated and attendance at the basilica began to increase in a short period of time. The desire to preserve this architectural heritage has grown, also more and more people have become aware of the historical and cultural value that this cradle of Gothic religious architecture has always had.

24 Didier Paillard (maire de Saint-Denis au moment du parole), *La conférence de presse*, Saint-Denis, 01 mars 2013.

The petition<sup>25</sup> against the restoration of the spire by experts and academics from various countries is further proof – in very much the other way – of the great value and importance attached to the Basilica of Saint-Denis today. Furthermore, the restoration of the spire has been rapidly accelerated since 2019, and the site was opened to the public for the first time in the summer of 2019.

### **The pace of progress on the project in relation to the emotion invested in heritage**

Comparing the pace of progress on the Saint-Denis spire restoration project with the attention it has received, we can see that this pace is directly related to the attention and emotion that the Notre-Dame spire has received. The project has been discussed for many years due to the expressed emotional attachment of mayors and organisations to the basilica's spire. However, perhaps due to the complex social structure of Saint-Denis today, with citizens from different cultures and countries who do not feel a strong personal sense of belonging to the spire, the project has struggled to move to the next stage and has received little attention. Especially since the reform of the French political system after the French Revolution led to the desacralisation of Catholic power, and the Basilica of Saint-Denis thus lost its most important function as a product of the ancien régime. After the fire at Notre-Dame de Paris and the various events organised by the association *Suivez la flèche* and others related to the spire, residents were gradually encouraged to interact more in all ways (religious but also civil) with the spire and create memories around it, developing a new and increasingly strong emotional connection with it, such as the participatory stone-cutting workshop in the summer of 2019, which has now become a lively weekly workshop for young people in Saint-Denis. City-wide activities organised by the town hall, such as *Bel Hiver* with the illumination of the basilica and the *Fête de la Musique* since 2020. The basilica, in the centre of the city of Saint Denis, is no longer just a place of belief or honor of the local history, but is also becoming a main venue for urban activities and a more diverse population. Since then, the project has begun to make significant progress.

Notre-Dame de Paris, one of the most visited tourist sites in the world, was already a representative image of religious history for visitors, including non-Catholics. It has been imbued with rich emotions from personal and collective memory since the beginning of the project.

In these two cases of religious buildings, we can understand that in a world where religion and royalty are no longer at the centre of society, it is no longer obligation but the public's emotional attachment to architectural heritage that forms the very powerful and effective support for a heritage restoration project. As historian Jacques Le Goff wrote in 1995:

« Nous sommes entrés dans une époque où, [...] l'émotion était le principe et [...] le moteur<sup>26</sup> (we are now in the era where, emotions have become the main impetus for acts). »

25 Guerric Poncet, « Flèche de Saint-Denis : 128 experts dénoncent le projet de reconstruction », *LePoint Culture*, *op.cit.*

26 Jacques Le Goff (dir.), *Patrimoine et passions identitaires*, Paris : Fayard/Editions du patrimoine, coll. « Actes des Entretiens du patrimoine », juin 1998.

## **3. The expression of heritage emotions in a digital age**

### **3.1. The media : multiplier of heritage emotion**

#### **Mood of emotions**

Although heritage emotions have been around for a long time, it was not as evident as it is today due to different social contexts and political regimes. And the research<sup>27</sup> by anthropologist Daniel Fabre's group suggests that today, heritage emotions build up through a number of stages. This build-up (accumulation) is similar to the changes in temperature, with periods of plateau and mood swings (*sautes d'humeur*<sup>28</sup>). When the accumulation of emotions reaches a certain point or is triggered at a given moment, the mood swing occurs, a kind of patrimonial « fever ». At that time, as the two previous examples show, this emotional and impulsive outburst is clearly collective, unprofessional and « irrational » in nature. Furthermore, the emotions we may feel as members of the public or spectators, which are expressed and conveyed, are actually highly visual – through articles, news reports, especially via photos, videos, etc. – as if we can even see this heritage emotion being generated instantly, as if we were there, as if it were happening in front of our very eyes. This can have a much more powerful and shocking emotional impact than simply reading about it.

#### **Amplification of emotions through the media**

In fact, there is a special multiplier of heritage emotions in our time: the media. The particular role of this tool was demonstrated as early as the fire disaster at Lunéville Castle in 2003. Via the transmission of messages over the Internet, video footage of the fire became available on social media at the same time as it was happening. So many people sat at home, watching the fire unfold and even its severity, but unable to do anything about it. The repeated appearance of images, news reports, etc. also reinforces this sense of a heritage being lost, and the feeling of reliving the experience from a distance is very immersive. This impression of closeness and the simulation of participation also highlight the contrast between the physical distance most viewers have from the scene and the vivid feeling they experience. This may be one of the reasons why the restoration project for the spire of Notre-Dame de Paris was completed much more quickly than at Saint-Denis – it was as if what had happened at Notre-Dame de Paris was unfolding before their eyes, immediately inspiring feelings of heritage among the masses. However, the disaster involving the spire of Saint-Denis exists only in written documents, and there are no visual aids to help us feel or imagine the scene. It is therefore difficult to generate a strong and urgent sense of concern or anxiety and, consequently, enthusiasm for the restoration project.

27 Daniel Fabre, « L'échelle des émotions », dans Daniel Fabre (dir.), *Emotion patrimoniale*, Paris : Editions de la maison des sciences de l'homme, 2013.

28 *Ibid.*

### 3.2. Tourism, the search for identity and globalisation: special « catalysts » for heritage emotions

#### The disappearance of diversity in the globalised context

In addition to the role of the media, a comparison of the number of visitors to Notre-Dame de Paris and the Basilica of Saint-Denis was mentioned earlier. Interurban, interdepartmental and international tourism, which began in the 1960s, did not only mean the search for and exploitation of France's architectural heritage. It also implies an awareness of the value of architectural heritage – the historical legacy it represents, the traces of past cultures left behind over centuries. And the reason why people are so eager to search for the past in our era is that so many historic buildings and even entire cities were destroyed during the industrial era and the world wars. Urban plans at the time demolished too many historic areas of the city. Even today, with urbanisation, cities everywhere are constructing large-scale modern buildings in order to keep pace with the international context. It is difficult for people, especially citizens of metropolitan areas, to find the distinctive character or traces of local culture in the intensively built places where they live.

#### Second-hand nostalgia, evoked during travels

According to the analysis of the French sociologist, Nathalie Heinich<sup>29</sup>, heritage emotions are linked to three main values: authenticity, presence and beauty. This corresponds to the ability to link the past to the present, to a personal experience, and to its aesthetic quality. There are also two value amplifiers: age and rarity, which emphasise the uniqueness, irreplaceability and irreproducibility of the object (building) in time and space. This also means that cities, especially those that urbanised and modernised earlier, may have lost their unique historical buildings, and this loss cannot be recovered. As a result, through tourism, people actually feel nostalgia when looking at traces of other cultures' existence in spaces that are not related to their own experiences, associating them with their own cultural or historical loss. Since they can probably no longer find traces of the past in the city where they live, they can only find an authentic, idealised trace of the past in other cultures.<sup>30</sup>

This sentiment is particularly prevalent in the fields of heritage and tourism, especially in the face of cultural diversity loss, the disappearance of historical traces, and the creation of historical ruptures in the face of globalisation. Cultural anthropologist and sociologist Arjun Appadurai defined a « *nostalgie en pantoufle / armchair nostalgia*<sup>31</sup> » :

« Une propension chez les individus à pleurer ce qu'ils n'ont jamais perdu eux-mêmes (A

29 Nathalie Heinich, « Esquisse d'une typologie des émotions patrimoniales », dans Daniel Fabre(dir.), *Emotion patrimoniale*, op.cit.

30 With reference to the theories of Evans Grant, *The politics of ritual and remembrance. Laos since 1975*, Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii et de COLIN Long, 1998, pp.89-113. & Jonathan Sweet et Collin Long, *Globalization, nationalism and World Heritage. Interpreting Luang Prabang*, South East Asia research, vol.14, n3, 2006, pp.445-469.

31 Appadurai Arjun, *Après le colonialisme, Les conséquences culturelles de la globalisation*, Paris : Payot & Rivages, coll. « Petite bibliothèque Payot », 2015.

tendency among individuals to mourn what they have never lost themselves) ».

This may further explain why people feel such strong emotional attachment to heritage when it comes to the fire at Notre-Dame de Paris.

#### The quest for identity behind heritage emotions

In this cyber age, globalisation has become a dominant trend due to the synchronisation of information around the world and the need for different countries or cities to maintain this synchronisation. But it is also because of this « synchronisation » or uniform standards that different individuals and groups become so similar to each other and that their distinctive characteristics are forgotten or abandoned. Among these characteristics, we find the *milieu de mémoire*<sup>32</sup> (place of memory) defined by Pierre Nora, which is also a place where private emotions have been invested and passed down through different generations, and architectural heritage is part of this. Due to this trend towards homogenisation, individuals and communities are gradually losing their identity and thus the evidence of their uniqueness. This quest for the roots of identity and this concern about the disappearance of traces of the past also deepen and complicate the emotions that people of this era feel towards their heritage. Faced with the threat of heritage disappearing, the first emotional response is to stop this trend and preserve it.

### Conclusion

In this first part, we analyse the impact of emotions linked to heritage (particularly those generated or amplified after a disaster or irreversible loss) on the progress of a heritage project. We see how these kinds of emotions are initially triggered by feelings of loss, and how these emotions can rapidly become an impetus for launching a restoration project.

On the other hand, the revaluation of heritage as a trace of French history reactivates emotions linked to heritage and connects them with an appreciation of heritage values through its integration into the country's basic education system and self-valuation system. Furthermore, with the acceleration of time and the globalisation of our contemporary society, we also invest a concern for self-identity in the infinite time river with these emotions towards heritage. In this process, the heritage emotions we have today are richer and more varied than a simple emotion of damage or lamentation towards a construction.

On this basis of increasingly strong heritage emotions, when a disaster related to heritage occurs, strong collective emotions arise. And naturally, in order to express these emotions, they transform into spontaneous, collective and urgent enthusiasm to restore the heritage in order to make up for or repair the loss.

By comparing the restoration projects for the spires of Notre-Dame and Saint-Denis, we

32 Definition from Pierre Nora(dir.), *Les Lieux de mémoire*, Paris : Gallimard, 01 janvier 1984.

can see how the difference in the emotions accumulated for the two heritage sites has led to a difference in the pace of progress of the projects. This is why we can say that heritage emotions are nowadays the significant driving force behind heritage projects, as Jacques Le Goff<sup>33</sup> deduced earlier in 1998.



Figure 11 : Yann Mambert/CIT'IMAGES, stones of the Basilica of Saint-Denis'spire (Seine-Saint-Denis), dismantled in 1846, octobre 2016.



Figure 12 : Archive en ligne de la ville de Saint-Denis, *Basilique Saint-Denis, protection contre les bombardements, 1940.*

The decision to protect the basilica during the bombing and the photograph taken express public's strong sense of heritage.

33 Jacques Le Goff (dir.), *Patrimoine et passions identitaires*, Paris : Fayard/Éditions du patrimoine, coll. « Actes des Entretiens du patrimoine », juin 1998.

### **Résumé**

À l'ère de la globalisation, les nations, les villes et les individus perdent de vue leur propre identité en raison de la synchronisation et de la standardisation des espaces. Le patrimoine, en tant que trace du passé et preuve de la continuité du temps, crée une possibilité de retrouver nos propres racines. Dans cette quête d'identité, des émotions sont manifestées : l'angoisse de l'identité et la nostalgie de la culture locale, du passé voire du présent. Ces émotions patrimoniales, dans les villes du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle, comme le cas de Saint-Denis avec le remontage de sa flèche, sont en train de devenir un grand élan pour la mobilisation sociale et poussent l'accélération de la gentrification urbaine.

Globalisation - Identité - Patrimoine - Émotion - Gentrification

L'enquête sur la basilique Saint-Denis a fait l'objet d'une création documentaire de 8 minutes co-réalisée par Haiyun Chen, Octave Deslandes et Yuehan Li. Encadré par : Yves Belorgey, Margaux Darrieus, Christelle Lecœur, Soline Nivet