

# Portraits of the Loire in the Renaissance

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## ABSTRACT

The Loire forms a key link for the Centre-Val-de-Loire and Pays-de-la-Loire Regions and for their inhabitants alike. It is unquestionably a geographic link, but also one which stems from the territory's long-standing history. This is the focus of the current project's aspirations through six animated films (4-5 minutes). To talk about the way in which the Loire's riverside territories relate to the river and about how this relation has its roots in a historical process involving the shaping of a landscape. The aim is to help the general public to picture what the Loire and its banks might have looked like in Renaissance times, and in doing so to grasp the ever-present nature of a relationship with the river forged slowly and patiently over time, which also shows that today's landscapes are a foundation for the landscapes of tomorrow.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Keywords:

World Heritage management

Cultural landscape

Loire

Film series

Renaissance

## Presentation

### ***The Presentation of the Loire Valley: listed site and key points***

The Loire Valley was included on the World Heritage List as a "continuing and organically evolved cultural landscape" on 30 November 2000. It is the largest site ever listed in France. This inclusion – the culmination of decades' worth of extensive work and attention devoted to the site – bestows international recognition upon it and adds a new, more general aspect: a cultural, economic and social vision.

The convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 1972. The World Heritage Committee is the "jury", the decision-making body, which considers nominations of properties for inclusion submitted by States Parties and identifies which sites will be included on the World Heritage List. There are 21 States Parties to the Convention, which meet at least once a year. Inclusion in itself does not result in another law; it has no direct legal consequence on the site in question. That said, upon signature each State Party undertakes to preserve and enhance listed properties within its territory with respect to UNESCO and the international community.

UNESCO listed properties are divided into three main categories: cultural properties, natural properties or mixed properties (cultural and natural). "Cultural landscapes" are mixed properties. The "cultural landscapes" category has existed since 1992. These are sites which have also gained UNESCO recognition for their tangible and human factors (intangible and symbolic). Tangible factors encompass both nature, with its biodiversity, and architecture. Human factors are the activities of the civilizations that have shaped this landscape or contributed to the identity of the territory. Three types of cultural landscape can be distinguished:

- the cultural landscape designed and created intentionally, such as gardens or parklands
- organically evolved or continuing landscapes (with an economic or social activity for example)
- associative landscapes, connected with culture, religion or art.

An organically evolved or continuing landscape is a combined work of nature and man, "which retain an active social role in contemporary society [...], and

in which the evolutionary process is still in progress" (UNESCO, 2012a: 88).

A site is recognized on account of its value, "which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity" (UNESCO, 2012a: 14): *outstanding universal value*. The OUV of each site is determined at the time of its inclusion on the basis of the criteria set by UNESCO. The Committee refers to ten criteria when assessing nominations, at least one of which must be met if the site is to be listed. The "organically evolved and continuing landscape" of the Loire Valley meets the three following criteria out of the ten existing for UNESCO (UNESCO, 2000: 44):

*Criterion (i):* represent a masterpiece of human creative genius

The Loire Valley is noteworthy for the quality of its architectural heritage, in its historic towns such as Blois, Chinon, Orleans, Saumur, and Tours, but in particular in its world-famous castles, such as the *Château de Chambord*. The *Château de Chambord*, listed under criterion (i) since 1983, has been included within the perimeter.

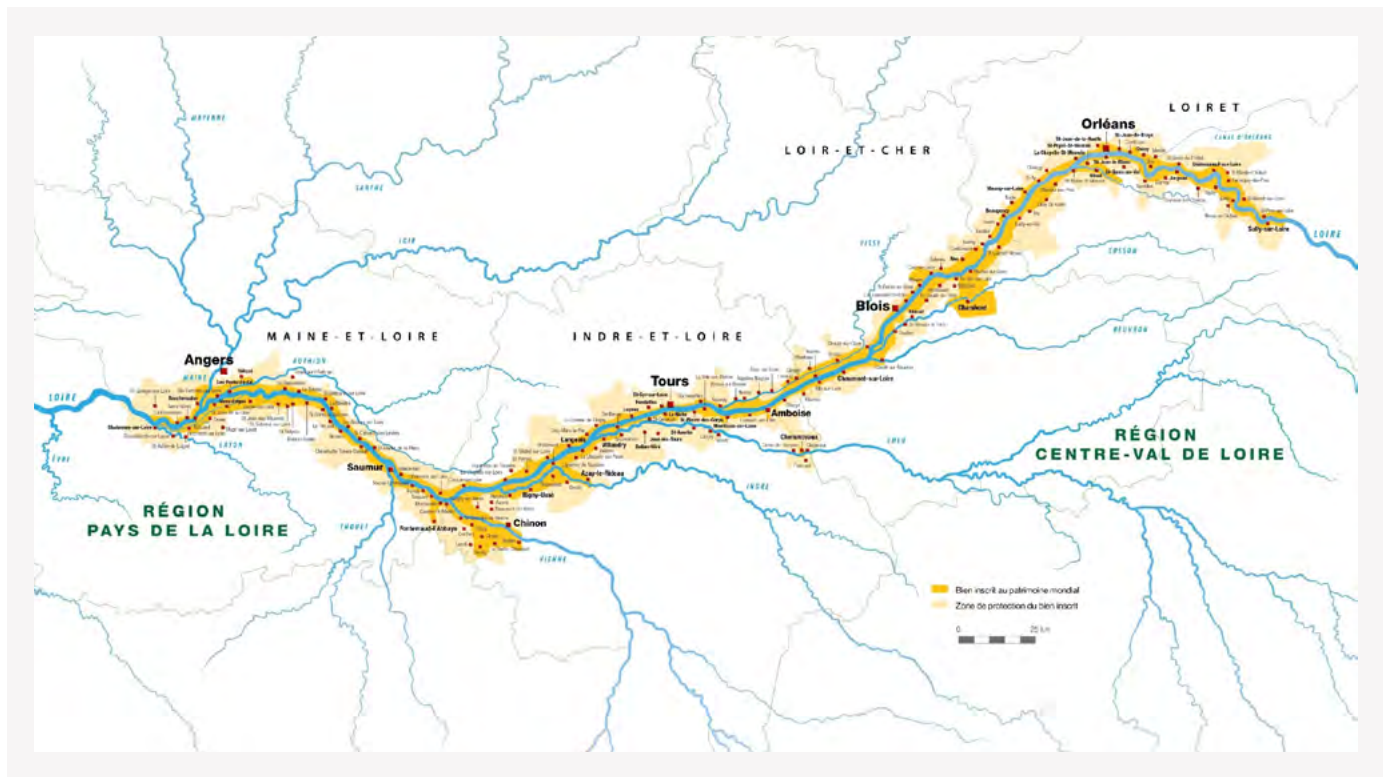
*Criterion (ii):* exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design.

The Loire Valley is an outstanding cultural landscape along a major river which bears witness to an interchange of influences and human values and to a harmonious development of interactions between human beings and their environment over two millennia.

*Criterion (iv):* be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.

The landscape of the Loire Valley, and more particularly its many cultural monuments, illustrate to an exceptional degree the ideals of the Renaissance and the Age of the Enlightenment on western European thought and design.

The project *Portraits of the Loire in the Renaissance* is created to respond and reflect these three criterions.



**FIGURE 1. THE LISTED PERIMETER OF THE LOIRE VALLEY WORLD HERITAGE SITE**

Source: © Mission Val de Loire.

The listed perimeter encompasses the middle course of the river, from Sully-sur-Loire upstream to Chalonnes-sur-Loire downstream, over a length of 300km and extending over nearly 850km<sup>2</sup>. The listed site runs from the riverbed right up to the hilltops or levees. In 2019 it embraces 155 riverside municipalities, 4 departments (Loiret, Loire-et-Cher, Indre-et-Loire and Maine-et-Loire), 2 regions (Centre and Pays-de-la-Loire) and 1 regional natural park (Loire-Anjou-Touraine PNR). 900,000 inhabitants currently live within the perimeter.

The factors that give this area an identity come to light through a less administrative approach. The Loire Valley is characterised by the components defining its landscape: the river – stone – vines and gardens.

The river: The Loire with its myriad tributaries (Cosson, Beuvron, Cher, Indre, Vienne, Thouet and Maine) outlines the landscape and paves the way for the development of human societies connected to it. The river valleys are cultural and economic corridors along which such concepts as civilization and urban planning have been able to emerge and flourish.

The quintessential stones are also a defining feature of the Loire Valley landscape: tuffeau (a sort of limestone) and slate (a sort of schist), which are the most commonly used stones in all sorts of buildings.

The dazzling white of the latter contrasts with the gleaming black of slate, contributing to the identity of the perimeter.

Vines have become the most typical crop grown on Loire hillsides. Quality vineyards have been tended since the 15th century, dividing the landscape up into plots. Wine forms one of the cornerstones of French cuisine.

The Loire Valley gardens have proven a testing ground for gardens across France. The French-style garden, modelled on the monastic design, originated at Louis XI's Château du Plessis. Royal presence brought Italian gardeners to the region (Blois, Amboise). From the 18th century, exotic plants arrived from the port of Nantes, and gardens were graced with rare botanical species: cedars, chestnut trees, tulip trees and sequoias among others. The traditions for designing and redesigning gardens are still going strong in the 21st century (Villandry, Chaumont).

The Loire Valley represents a wellspring of human civilization, as the birthplace and home of a cast of inspirational figures. Following on from the Renaissance kings and their noteworthy contemporaries – Du Bellay, Rabelais and Ronsard among them – between 1800 and 2000 such prominent names as Honoré de Balzac, Charles Péguy, René Bazin, Hervé Bazin, Max Ernst,

## **“THE FACTORS THAT GIVE THIS AREA AN IDENTITY COME TO LIGHT THROUGH A LESS ADMINISTRATIVE APPROACH. THE LOIRE VALLEY IS CHARACTERISED BY THE COMPONENTS DEFINING ITS LANDSCAPE: THE RIVER – STONE – VINES AND GARDENS”**

Olivier Debré, Alexander Calder and others have each helped to shape the history of the Loire landscape in turn.

### ***The Presentation of the Mission Val de Loire***

In their readiness to pursue a policy in keeping with UNESCO's guidelines, in 2002 the State, its representatives and local stakeholders signed the Loire Valley Charter of Commitment. The same year, this document led to the founding of Mission Val de Loire, an interregional joint association, in line with the wishes of the Centre (now Centre-Val de Loire) and Pays de la Loire regions. These two regions take it in turns to chair this association, for a three-year period each time. The Pays de la Loire region is its current chair. Financing of the association is also shared between the regions: two-thirds for the Centre region and one-third for Pays de la Loire. Eight members of staff make up the Mission Val de Loire team. Not all listed sites are run according to a similar association, but in the Nord Pas-de-Calais mining basin for example, there is a similar structure operating on the ground.

The Mission Val de Loire is positioned at the intersection of several different parties: it oversees coordination between UNESCO, the State and local operators/stakeholders. It liaises with UNESCO's world heritage headquarters and ensures that the inscription is taken on board across the perimeter at all levels. Its guidelines are set out in the Property Management Plan, approved in 2012 (UNESCO 2012b: 110-147), underpinned by three priorities:

Guideline 7, as contributing to the organization of a sustainable form of tourism that safeguards the site's landscape and heritage values.

Guideline 8, as upholding the action for fostering assimilation of the UNESCO listing's values by the territory's stakeholders.

Guideline 9, as upholding the action for assisting decision-makers with advice and constant guidance.

It is responsible for managing use of the label and certifies educational, scientific, and cultural

initiatives where they contribute to enhancing the site. Policy coherence requires close collaboration between the heads of the different managing bodies of local collectivities and the State. To foster the networking of stakeholders – one of the most important missions of the structure – the team runs a number of forums for getting together and holding discussions, all of which are key calendar dates to make aware of and share the values of the world heritage listing.

Mission Val de Loire acts as an interface when it comes to knowledge and research. It invites scientists and operators within the perimeter to deepen knowledge through dialogue, publications, and numerous consultations.

Mission Val de Loire communicates across a number of platforms, including the [www.valde Loire.com](http://www.valde Loire.com) (in English [www.loirevalley-worldheritage.org](http://www.loirevalley-worldheritage.org)) website. This provides a wealth of information: it can be used as a database with practical publications and teaching aids that can be downloaded, but also as a tourist platform with an agenda showcasing a whole host of events for a wide range of audiences, ages and interests.

### ***The Presentation of Mission Val de Loire's action in terms of enhancement and cultural mediation of heritage***

*Fostering assimilation of the listing's values by all stakeholders across the territory* is crucial to Mission Val de Loire's purpose. This is one of its guidelines (8), identified in the Management Plan (UNESCO 2012b: 121-123) for the listed perimeter. And yet Mission Val de Loire does not have its own exhibition venue or other site for receiving the public. It therefore looks for potential partnerships and lends support to an array of cultural projects whose organizers and leaders may be local authorities or associations for example. Tools specific to cultural mediation include posters, brochures, films, DVDs and exhibitions. There are currently eight exhibitions available for borrowing at no cost, designed by MVL in mobile format (photos,

panels, roller banners, pop-up stands and interactive terminals). These combine the collective expertise of specialists in a range of themes all committed to enhancing Loire heritage.

In an effort to reach out to younger generations, Mission Val de Loire has teamed up with the local education authorities of Orléans-Tours and Nantes. Since 2011 a *Teachers' Toolkit*, designed and set up by Mission Val de Loire, has made numerous documents available (for downloading) via a search engine, for all school levels from infant right through to high school. Exhibitions with accompanying questionnaires-activities have also come about through this collaboration.

## The project called Portraits of the Loire in the Renaissance



### **The context: The 500 years of Renaissances**

In 2019 the Centre-Val de Loire Region has put together a cultural season on the theme of the Renaissance. This decision is based upon a number of landmark anniversaries: First, 2019 marks the 500th anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci's death at the *Manoir de Cloux*, now known as the Clos Lucé, in Amboise. The artist spent the last three years of his life near the royal court as a personal guest of King Francis I. He nurtured a new approach to art and the sciences alike. He was a pioneering figure and an inspiration for the technological innovation taking place in the Region today. Second, building work on *Château de Chambord* began 500 years ago, back in September 1519. This prominent

monument to the Renaissance also bears traces of the genius Leonardo da Vinci. Finally, Catherine de Medici, the wife of French King Henry II, was also born in 1519. As owner of *Château de Chenonceau*, she had a part to play in the emergence of a new era, especially with her Renaissance-style gardens. She also represents a link between France and Italy, the latter serving as the model for the French Renaissance. It was in the Centre Region that the Kings of France had their châteaux built, inspired by the new style witnessed and appreciated in Italy. The Loire Valley can be considered the birthplace of the French Renaissance.

These anniversary commemorations are an opportunity to bring together stakeholders from the culture, science and tech sectors as part of a large-scale initiative.

The UNESCO listing encompasses two regions, however: the Centre-Val de Loire and the Pays-de-la-Loire, whose capital city is Nantes. Although the Centre-Val de Loire Region is showcasing its local monuments and past, Mission Val de Loire demonstrates, for its part, that today's administrative boundaries did not exist back in the Renaissance, and that the Loire, as a main thoroughfare and the territory being listed as a site with its own characteristics, calls for greater coherence. This consideration is clearly stated within Mission Val de Loire's policy, including in all these measures.

### **The key implementation issues**

This territory has been so strongly shaped by the Renaissance that UNESCO has selected this period as one of the criteria for the site's inclusion on the World Heritage List. The key words of the regional initiative, such as *Renaissance, innovation, creativity, humanism*, correspond to the criteria behind the UNESCO listing. They are in keeping with its guidelines: promote the landscape values (7), foster assimilation of the values by residents and stakeholders in the territory (8) and assist decision-makers (9). The cultural season represents a challenge and a tremendous opportunity for Mission Val de Loire. By bringing partners together and contributing to content, it is playing a key role in this initiative.

Mission Val de Loire was eager to personally contribute to the cultural program. It decided to focus its proposal on the common thread running all the way through the territory: the Loire. The Loire forms a key link for the Centre-Val-de-Loire and Pays-de-la-Loire Regions and for their inhabitants alike. It is unquestionably a geographic link, but also one which

stems from the territory's long-standing history. This is the focus of the project's aspirations. The way in which the Loire's riverside territories relate to it has its roots in a historical process involving the shaping of a landscape. Our aim is to help the general public to picture what the Loire and its banks might have looked like in Renaissance times, and in doing so to grasp the ever-present nature of a relationship with the river forged slowly and patiently over time, which also shows that today's landscapes are a foundation for the landscapes of tomorrow. The project *Portraits de Loire à la Renaissance* has been designed to shed light on the three criteria underpinning the listing. It was about preparing a presentation, for the general public, of a historical portrait of the river, which resonates with its present-day image. The choice of format was mulled over for a long time: digital tool, traditional publication or exhibition? The requirements were clear, though: a scientifically grounded, informative and entertaining format.

A six months long historical, documentary, and iconographic research assignment was undertaken by a historian, thanks to which a whole host of sources could be gathered: texts from the time and an image database. The historian, hired especially for the project was to cooperate with scientific partners, cross information and propose a thematised content. The intention was not to engage in an extensive research program, however; rather, it was to make use of knowledge that has already been acquired, compile it and cross-link it in an interdisciplinary manner. With that in mind, a call was launched to a group of local, national, European and international academic and scientific partners, to archives, universities and schools, museums and qualified individuals in a bid to compile the "material" available: chronicles, publications, accounts, reports from archaeological digs: the whole of a scientifically sound corpus that can be communicated to a broad audience. Today's bargees and shipbuilders have also been able to contribute their specialist knowledge. Once all of this data had been obtained, and thematically organized, the format type was decided on: a web series made up of short films would reach out to all generations. Distribution over the Internet would mainly appeal to young people, while public screenings would be organized for all ages. The web series is organized around three main themes – development, trade and travel – with 2 episodes per theme and episodes lasting 4-5 minutes. These animation films should adopt a style and language that makes the scientific subject matter

easily understandable to the general public.

From this vast set of documents, it was possible to paint a naturally fragmented "portrait": a whole made up of distinctive parts. The content is formed from a set of "focal points" bearing on specific, scientifically substantiated facts (archaeological digs, *ad hoc* research, sedimentology, documentary approaches and so on). One episode demonstrates that the riverbanks have shifted over time, while in another we learn about the venerable age of a portside development. The practices of fishermen, washerwomen and boatmen are all touched on. Historically high and low water levels as well as ice jams have had to be chronicled. The ancestors of our levees today are also presented, as are some aspects to do with the "status of the river", which at that time had tolls dotted all along its length, etc.

The sheer number of sources from the time sparked an earnest discussion within the team. How can such a complex history be told in a concise, easy-to-follow way, during short episodes? How can the team's enthusiasm be passed on to viewers? How can archive images and written sources be presented in a meaningful way? A good number of meetings were required to tailor the contents for the audience. Period accounts have been updated to make them easier to understand. Rémi Deleplanque, responsible for the educational and cultural heritage development activities of the Mission Val de Loire was following the project from the beginning. It proved to be useful that the hired historian continued working closely on the realisation of the episodes. The fluid interaction between texts and images, to illustrate each situation made necessary to refine continuously the iconographic research. The chosen service provider was attentive and grasped the importance of respecting sources (Christophe Gaillard /MASAO Productions and Igor Mitrecey). Promoting the original sources was obviously a key requirement. We were aiming for an animation designed for a mainstream audience that was entertaining, engaging and relevant. The possibilities offered up by technology were harnessed to showcase the beauty and wealth of the historical documents, and the sound was also chosen with particular care (Sound design: Fabien Bourdier).

The historical research was programmed between July and December of 2018, the provider company was chosen through an open public tender between January and March of 2019, while the phases of the realisation was programmed between April and December of 2019. The financial investment was

shared in a following way: approximately a quarter of the project's costs were dedicated as a salary for the historian, a half of the budget was provided for the company of the co-producer for the realisation and the rest was divided between image diffusion rights and communication.

**Portraits of the Loire in the Renaissance**



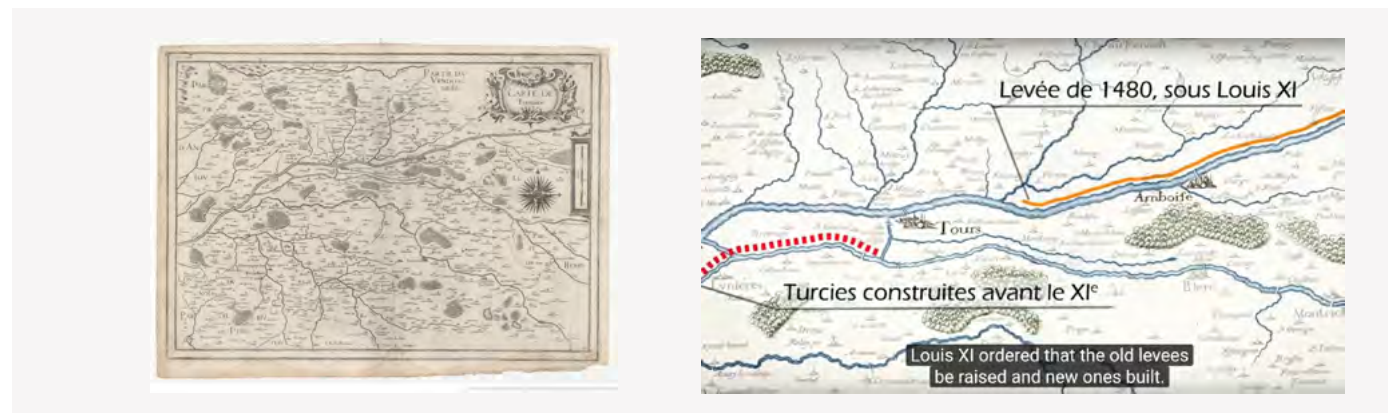
But what might the Loire and its riverbanks have looked like during the Renaissance? Directed by Mission Val de

Loire, the web series *Portraits de Loire à la Renaissance* immerses us into this historical period, criss-crosses this landscape and tells us about the close relationship that has always existed between the Loire and its communities. ... In some respects, this period is also similar to our own.

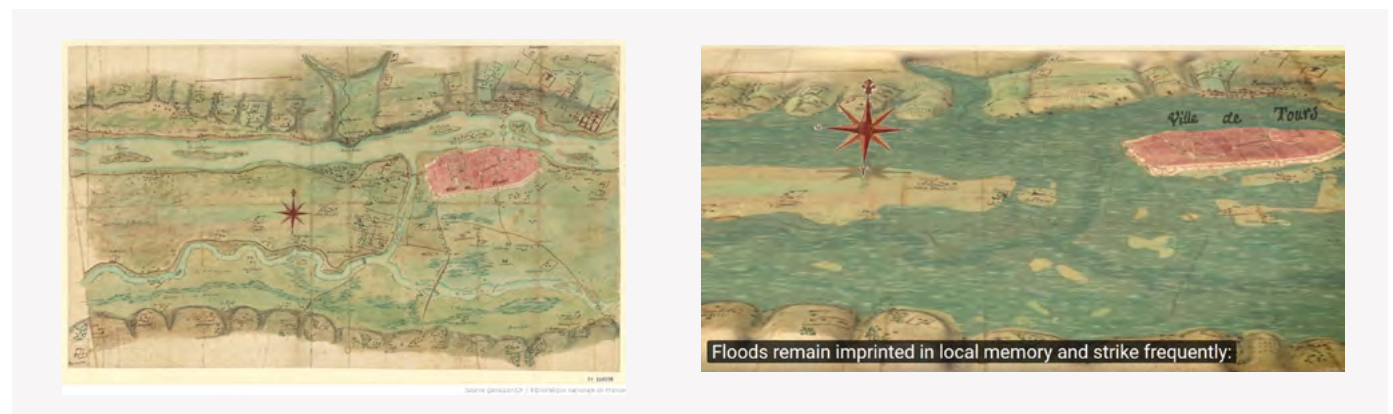
Three teasers were released before the first "proper" episodes were aired, focusing on this central question. The first presented the theme within the context of the UNESCO listing, the second delved into the close link between the river and society and the third talked about the history of the Loire Valley during the period in question.

**Chapter 1: Developing the landscape**

The Loire is fickle: inconstant flow, severe low water levels and catastrophic floods. It may strike us as controlled today, but back in Renaissance times, residents had to keep on their guard because of this capricious, difficult nature. By the 16th century, the levees were already well-established. They made



**FIGURE 2&3. COMPOSIT ATLAS, TOURAINE, CH. TASSIN AND N-J. VISSCHER, GRAVURE, 1641**  
 Source: © gallica.bnf.fr / BnF and the same map animated by MASAO Productions and Igor Mitrecey.



**FIGURE 4&5. FOUR DRAWINGS OF THE COURSE OF THE LOIRE, 17th C.**  
 Source: © gallica.bnf.fr / BnF and the same map animated by MASAO Productions and Igor Mitrecey.



FIGURE 6. VIEW OF ORLEANS, JORIS HOEFNAGEL, PRINTED BY G. BRAUN AND FR. HONGENBERG, 1575

Source: © Biblioteca Nacional de España, 21120.

navigation easier, contained the most common high water levels and protected farmland. Vineyards gained ground across the valleys around Angers or Orléans, while the countryside around Blois was shaped more by cereal crops. The alluvial plain in Touraine was ideal for market gardeners. And so, the Loire Valley became a land of gardens. And yet, the main course of the river could change, and its banks could shift: the Loire was in no way tamed. The movement of *alluvia* paved the way for islands and myriad channels. Flow variations supplied natural and artificial canals. There were several devastating floods that would forever stay etched in locals' minds. Repairs were conducted by the towns by royal order. In 1615 François Bourneau, a witness back in the day, described a freak flood dubbed "the deluge of Saumur":

*Winter had been harsh, with heavy snowfall. For nearly a month the land remained blanketed in snow, which began to melt as Lent approached. On one side, Loire, Vienne and Authion rose up against us and besieged our town – all around was nothing but sea. Saumur, which is akin to a peninsula, between four rivers, looked more like an island floating amidst the mass of water. (Champion, 1959: 229-230)*

But how beautiful this landscape is! So many Renaissance poets waxed lyrical about it!

*This initial episode gives the public an opportunity to make a direct comparison with the Loire they know today. We understand how the levees came about and we realize that the islands we see today weren't always there – and might one day disappear. That despite our efforts, the river has not always flowed within its bed*

*and has threatened the communities alongside it. But also, that these communities chose to settle near its banks as they have gained from its wealth and life-giving nature. The testimony gives us a glimpse into the local concerns of the day.*

## Chapter 2: Developing the towns

Royal presence in the Loire Valley expedited the growth of towns. Back in Renaissance times, the river, its banks and its bridges were used and exploited. Direct access to the water was blocked by ramparts, but developments increasingly sprung up along the banks. A final wave of defense system reinforcements took place in the 16th century. This was the responsibility of the respective municipalities, and certain trades set up at the water's edge for convenience's sake. Tanners, dyers, butchers and washerwomen could thus all be found on the riverbanks in a carefully thought-out order. Despite the evident hygiene problems, the residents paid scant attention when it came to their banks and emptied their waste indiscriminately into the Loire. Infectious diseases were rampant in heavily populated towns.

At the end of the 15th century, there were only eight bridges straddling the Loire between Sully-sur-Loire and Chalonnes-sur-Loire. These often-comprised different sections and different materials dating back to different periods. The hotchpotch of constructions along the bridges meant that crossing over them was no easy matter: drawbridges, houses, shops and public toilets could all be found across them. In June 1623, in Angers, an alderman bemoaned "just how laborious it was for the locals to go from one side of the town to



*the other via the big bridge – such that on market days there were so many carts obstructing the way that it was impossible or immensely difficult to get across on horseback or by foot”* (Courant, 1997: 23). Beneath the bridges, water mills and fishing huts added to the hustle and bustle. The municipality let out plots and managed their upkeep while the locals kept an eye on safety. The Loire was the beating heart of community life and the country's economy.

*This episode enables the public to picture what life on the riverbanks was like. We learn that the river played more of an economic role in residents' day-to-day life than it does today. Hygiene is still a relevant issue today, as is the maintenance of civil engineering structures and bridges, and even the safety of local communities. The testimony enables the perspectives of a resident back then and a resident today to be compared.*

### **Chapter 3: Navigating come what may**

The Loire has been navigated along since prehistoric times, but during the Renaissance it could be likened to a busy motorway – a main thoroughfare for the country's trade and transport. All manner of boats and users took to it, and navigating it was fraught with difficulty.

Vessels were designed with flat bottoms. Traditional *chaland* barges were the largest vessels equipped with square sails. The *piautre* was the name of the rudder specific to these boats, and the bargee's pole, pushed into the sand, helped to steer them. Some tradesmen sailed themselves, but most entrusted their goods to “water carriers”. The latter worked from generation to generation, their lives tough and uncertain. One corporation, the “Community of Merchants operating along the River Loire and rivers descending into the latter”, acted as a kind of trade union for the channel's upkeep, signposting, known as marking out, and toll management. It governed compensations and defended the interests of its members. Tolls, a sort of river customs duty, were common, and managed by lords, ecclesiastical communities or towns. Printed or handwritten signs were displayed, setting the taxes for each product traded. There was a plethora of different regulations and enforcing them was a challenge. Despite efforts to improve the safety of sailing, accidents frequently arose, and compensation was paid out. In 1507 for example, 15 *livres tournois* (Tours pounds) were paid *“to Benoist Mycier, merchant of Nevers, to compensate the cargo of wheat and barley that he lost, in the month of April, near Laril, parish of*



**FIGURE 7. VIEW OF BLOIS WITH CHALAND BARGES, DRAWING, 1600-1650**

Source: © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-T-1948-372(R).



**FIGURES 8 & 9. VIEW OF ORLEANS, ENGRAVING, CIRCA 1650**

Source: © Médiathèque d'Orléans, ICO G 138 / Bibliothèque Numérique Orléans and the same view animated by MASAO Productions.

*Saint-Benoist-sur-Loire, because of two mills that were in the way of the chaland barges*" (Mantellier, 1864 (2): 448). The economic importance of the Loire was such that, at the turn of the 16th century, Leonardo da Vinci, living in Amboise at the time, drew up plans for connecting the Loire to the Rhône, and therefore the Atlantic to the Mediterranean!

*This episode shows that flat-bottomed boats are a very old model and that the bargee's profession goes back many centuries. The testimony addresses the types of transport vessel, cargoes and the kinds of difficulties encountered. It is also possible to discover, study, compare and understand the newly built traditions boats on the Loire, and consider the obstacles that bridges, barrages or difficult climate situations mean to the navigation.*

#### **Chapter 4: Products transported**

In the 16th century, royal presence in the Loire Valley and discoveries of far-flung countries ushered in a new golden age for trade along the Loire. During the Renaissance, France's longest river acted as a transit

route for products from almost all over the known world at the time. The most common commodities were salt, wheat and wine, which were staple ingredients in people's diet back then. Quality varied wildly and fraud was rife. Products from inland were sent downriver to Nantes while boats sailed back up with goods that were often imported. Wealthy French or Italian merchants who had made their homes in towns along the banks had luxury, exotic products brought in. Oranges, wool and soda arrived from Spain and Portugal, while metals came from England and Ireland, fabrics from Flanders and leather from Cordoba. With such new products now appearing on the scene from overseas, the tradesfolk were obliged to change their practices. The toll signs setting the taxes on goods or accounts give a precise idea of the local or imported products used in communities' day-to-day lives. The royal "catering" accounts indicating the products that arrived at the Court show the kinds of food that this privileged class enjoyed. Certain "noble" products such as paper, books, sugar and slate for the castle and stately residence roofs were exempt from duties.

Accordingly, in 1521, the Judgment of the Parliament of Paris decreed that a "Boat laden with slate shall be exempt from tax: He who steers the boat shall shout upon approaching the toll: "I bring slate" and shall throw a piece of slate into the water" (Mantellier, 1864 (3): 111). The thriving trade along the Loire during the Renaissance was a key factor in the development of the whole kingdom.

*This episode gives a clearer idea of the Loire Valley's prominence within the kingdom and the global trading network which was taking shape and developing at the time. By following the journey taken by products, the public will realize that "globalisation" was already in motion back in Renaissance times. We find out where all sorts of consumer products we take for granted today came from, about the conflicts of interest and transformation of the feudal system, as well as the emergence of new social classes.*

### Chapter 5: Travelling in times of peace and war

In times of peace, the Loire Valley played host to constructions of all sorts and its river linked it with the world. After the unrest of the Hundred Years' War, the decades of peace that followed and regular visits by the royal court drove a building boom in the Loire Valley, in which the many boats sailing up and down the river played their part. Commissioners harked from all walks of life: municipalities, the wealthy nobility, city-dwellers and the royal court itself. Timber was brought up from the forests of the Massif-Central by simple pine barges known as *sapines*. Blocks of white *tuffeau* stone were ferried up or down the river on *chaland* barges. Books were regarded as an example of precious cargo. They attested to the free movement of thoughts and ideals – of Protestantism in particular – which spread from the

1520s across western France via Orléans, Tours and Saumur.

In times of war, the Loire Valley became a strategic battleground. From the latter half of the 16th century, the Wars of Religion brought turmoil and strife to life in the Loire Valley, which played a key role in this context. Towns protected themselves as best they could but suffered tremendously for all that.

In 1569 in Blois, "To defend the areas around Le Port-Vieux, thirty posts are delivered for driving into the riverbed [...]. Masons have to cut off the bridge to prevent the enemies from crossing the Loire. [...]. The City's Assembly has decided to repair the wall of St-Laumer towards the river, wall up all the windows of the gallery over the water and, on the side of this gallery, pierce oblique loop-holes..." (Trouëssart, 1999: 98-101).

Trade was paralysed, the passing armies terrorised the locals and shortages in food staples led to famine. The Loire and its ships were witnesses and actors of the tragic events unfolding. In 1598 the Edict of Nantes represented peace, but problems continued to dog domestic policy and the Loire Valley remained a key battleground. French Kings Henry IV and Louis XIII fought to cement their power. The journeys taken by construction materials shaped and enhanced the Loire Valley. Those embarked on by men of arms remind us that the Renaissance was not just a time of greater open-mindedness, but also one of intolerance.

*This episode throws light on the contradictions of this famous and often admired period. On the one hand we approve the striking transformation of the landscape and construction of its celebrated châteaux. On the other we are obliged to face with the human limits to this openness, development, and inventiveness that the Renaissance tends to represent in our eyes.*



**FIGURES 10 & 11. THE MASSACRE OF TOURS, ENGRAVING BY J. TORTORELAND J. J. PERRISSIN, circa 1570**

Source: © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-78.770-17 and the same engraving animated by MASAO Productions.



FIGURE 12. THE ESTATES GENERAL IN TOURS IN 1470, IN "LES CRONONIQUES..." BY PHILIPPE DE COMMYNES, ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT, 1510-1520

Source: © Musée Dobrée – Grand Patrimoine de Loire-Atlantique, Ms. 18, fol. 66v.

### Chapter 6: Visits by "ordinary" and royal travellers

Since the kingdom revolved around the *châteaux* and their immediate surroundings, the Loire was truly a Renaissance heartland. Royal families, ambassadors and other political figures all travelled along it, and its towns put on wholly worthy welcomes steeped in symbolism. "Tableaux vivants" are vestiges of medieval theatre, but draw inspiration from the triumphant entrances of old reinterpreted by the Renaissance artists. Many feature the river. Locals closely followed the private and public lives of their kings and queens: experiencing royal births, engagements or deaths as family events. The Loire carried living and deceased members of the court. Bargees decked out their

*toues* or *galiotes*, merchants transported foodstuffs and aldermen organised delivery of their gifts. The municipalities expected a reward in return for publicly supporting the royalty, in the form of liberties, exemptions or other types of rights granted during these special occasions. In this way, the town sought not only to appeal to the monarch's better nature but also to enchant its own population. In 1539, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V travelled through France from Spain to Flanders to crush the uprisings. "On the third day of the month of December, Francis I took to the River Loire to sail to Orléans. The aldermen sent him in Gien ten or twelve boats all draped in satin, with rooms, fireplaces, etc." (Du Bellay-Langei, 1753: 370). At the same time, the river also continued to serve ordinary

folk who visited its banks and towns, and to inspire a great many poets.

*The final episode invites the public to experience the excitement of Renaissance festivities. In addition to admiring the splendour and wealth, we find out exactly how these events were organised by aldermen and how almost every inhabitant in the town had a part to play.*

## Conclusion

### Extended Promotional Methods

During the creation of the little films, we realised that it was sensible, necessary even, to round off the film contents with a documentary pack. This would also give teachers an opportunity to refresh or add to their teaching resources. This series of documents, which are freely accessible on the Mission Val de Loire website, back up the narrative, provide non-updated transcriptions of written sources and offer a bibliography and a selection of images. All written and iconographic sources are credited, referenced and, where possible, refer users to the place where they are stored.

One episode a month was broadcasted between July and December 2019. Episode 6 was followed by a "making of", taking viewers behind the scenes of each step in the production process from research right through to broadcasting.

The main communication channel is Mission Val de Loire's website: [www.valdeloire.org](http://www.valdeloire.org) and on the Mission's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mlUSUmiNKM&list=PLNoHPCDmd3pYsaa-tYTGFWbsbbrvZaFaC>. Viewing is also possible on the website of the Region's initiative: [www.vivadavinci2019.fr](http://www.vivadavinci2019.fr). There are also links on social media, such as the respective Facebook pages.

In addition to this web series, a series of public screenings, workshops and conferences has also been planned from the autumn of 2019 (The Journey of the stone, early September, Tours – Blois – Saint-Dyé-sur-Loire, The Loire Festival in Orléans, The Rendez-vous of History in Blois in October). They serve as a basis to deepen the knowledge of groups of children, to exchange with history enthusiasts or to direct attention of the general public towards their neighbouring landscape's issues.

### Potential for future discussion: creation – promotion

*The films set the stage for (re)discovering the link between past and present and even for planning for the*

*future. These complex ideas are laying the groundwork for 2020, the year which marks the 20th anniversary of the UNESCO listing. This opportunity is all the more invaluable as it encourages us to renew our perspective of the territory and of its values. The web series Portraits de Loire à la Renaissance serves as an effective tool in this context, a stepping stone to new discussions. In 2021-2022 we plan to work on a new series, based again on the UNESCO inscription criteria (UNESCO 2000: 44), that concentrates on the Age of the Enlightenment, called also as siècle des Lumières (the Century of Light) in France. For the primary goal of the listing was never to turn the factors assessed into static museum pieces, but to encourage us to become aware of them and manage them responsibly. This is a living, continually changing territory and inhabitants and policymakers alike are encouraged to keep the interaction between the river and its community responsible and ongoing through their thoughts and actions. As such, for us, looking to the past is useful only in the way it enables us to plan for our future.*

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