



Dinosaurian geosites: successful geotouristic destinations ?

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In response to the overcrowding of some tourist sites, as a result of the worldwide growth of this economic sector, innovative strategies emerged around the world. Geotourism offers new destinations and among them dinosaurian geosites hold an important place.

The birth of dinosaurian geotourism, can be dated from 1957, the year of the inauguration of the Carnegie Quarry, Utah, the first site museum devoted to this theme. Since then, dinosaur deposits, "high places" of paleontological discoveries have evolved into geotourism destinations contributing to local economic development based on the construction of specific territorial resources through the patrimonialization of these exceptionnals geosites.

Three types of deposits characterize dinosaurian geosites:

The cemeteries, composed by numerous fossilized bones, allow the paleontologists' work to be staged, by the selective removal of the most beautiful elements. For example, the Ischigualasto site in Argentina, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000, has just inaugurated the William Sill site museum.

Nesting areas, where dinosaur nests and/or eggs can be found. Thus, the Dinosaur Egg Geological Museum, established in 2016 on the Qinglong Mountain National Geological Park site, is one of China's 10 most beautiful museums.

Footprints and dinosaur tracks left in suitable environments, numerous all over the world and whose interpretation makes it possible to describe certain behaviors of these disappeared animals. For example, the Cretacico Park, which highlights the tracks discovered in 2002 in Cal Orcko, Bolivia, has become the most visited tourist site in the country with 170,000 visitors a year.

The geotouristic valorisation of these sites, which is based on strategies enhanced at different territorial scales, has been in full expansion for some twenty years.

This presentation analyzes how was build the attractiveness of these new tourist destinations by comparing the graphs of networks of actors involved. As part of the field of digital humanities, the corpus of data relating to the networks that actors weave have been collected on the web via the links they create between themselves and with others. The analysis shows that geotourism clusters have been developed creating business ecosystems whose spontaneous or constructed origin may explain the greater or lesser success and / or sustainability of these destinations.

Tourism globalization must meet the preservation of these exceptional geoheritage in order to develop sustainable tourism practices.