

Study of the Reconstruction of a Historical Circuit: The Case of the Wangermée Circuit

Banze Twite Lydie

Assistant at the University of Lubumbashi

Abstract: *The study on the Wangermée circuit in Lubumbashi highlights the current condition of historical sites, marked by degradation and abandonment, despite their cultural and industrial value. The Kafubu post, the Étoile Mine, and the Gécamines plants represent a heritage that is at once historical, industrial, and urban, offering opportunities for reconstruction and tourism development. Historical reconstruction, supported by documentation and direct observation, helps preserve collective memory and create immersive experiences for visitors. The circuit can be structured as an integrated tourism product, combining guided tours, cultural mediation, and site interpretation. This approach contributes to the development of cultural tourism, the creation of local jobs, and the economic revitalization of the region. The study emphasizes the need to balance authenticity, safety, and accessibility to maximize attractiveness. It also highlights the importance of coherent itinerary planning and appropriate communication strategies. Finally, the research provides a methodological foundation for the future valorization of historical sites in Lubumbashi and the Haut-Katanga region.*

Keywords: Historical reconstruction, Tourist circuit, Tourism product

1. Observed Phenomenon

We observed that many historical sites located in Haut-Katanga, particularly in the city of Lubumbashi, are currently in a picturesque state characterized by degradation and abandonment. These places, despite their strong historical and cultural value, suffer from a lack of maintenance, valorization, and sometimes even institutional recognition. This situation leads to a gradual loss of collective memory and deprives the local population of a heritage that could be passed on to future generations. The absence of proper development and preservation initiatives further increases their vulnerability to time and human activities.

However, the reconstruction and enhancement of these sites represent a major opportunity for tourism development in the region. By bringing these spaces back to life through structured and scientifically grounded projects, it is possible to create new attractive tourism products capable of generating interest among local and international visitors. These initiatives may include historical reconstructions, cultural circuits, open-air museums, or thematic events, thus offering an immersive and enriching experience. Such a dynamic would help strengthen Lubumbashi's image as a cultural and historical destination.

Moreover, the development of these tourism activities would have significant economic benefits for the local population. The creation of new direct and indirect jobs, particularly in tourism management, cultural mediation, crafts, and hospitality, would improve living conditions. In addition, increased tourism demand would stimulate local economic activities and encourage investment in infrastructure. Thus, the reconstruction of historical sites appears not only as a means of heritage preservation but also as a strategic lever for sustainable regional development.

2. Introduction

Historical reconstruction is an essential approach for enhancing the past by relying on reliable material, cultural,

and scientific sources. It helps make history more vivid, accessible, and immersive, while contributing to heritage preservation. In this context, it is necessary to assess the current state of historical sites and circuits in order to plan their reconstruction in a rigorous and relevant manner.

In this study, we focus on the Wangermée circuit, aiming to determine its current condition and the steps required for its reconstruction. Our hypothesis is that these sites are currently abandoned and poorly developed, which limits their tourism attractiveness. Their reconstruction would require thorough inspection and preliminary field studies.

To conduct this research, we used the historical method through documentation (books and internet sources) and direct observation of the circuit and its sites. This study has a threefold interest: to understand concretely the reconstruction of historical circuits, to propose innovative ideas for their enhancement, and to contribute to the enrichment of scientific knowledge in this field.

3. Theoretical Foundations

3.1. Definition of Concepts

3.1.1. Historical Reconstruction

Historical reconstruction is defined as a scientific approach aimed at reproducing objects, practices, and ways of life from the past based on reliable sources such as written, iconographic, and archaeological documents. According to Pesez (1997), this practice relies on the rigorous study of material culture in order to faithfully restore historical realities. Similarly, Leroi-Gourhan (1964) emphasizes that reproducing ancient techniques helps better understand the skills and living conditions of past societies.

Furthermore, historical reconstruction is part of a broader process of heritage valorization and cultural mediation. Poulot (2006) argues that it is an effective means of transmitting historical knowledge by making the past accessible and understandable to the general public. It thus

promotes an immersive approach to history while contributing to the construction of collective memory.

3.1.2 Tourist Circuit

A tourist circuit is generally defined as an organized itinerary connecting several sites of interest. According to Hoerner (2002), it is a structured route built around a specific theme, facilitating the progressive discovery of multiple tourist locations. This organization optimizes the visitor's experience by providing coherence to the journey.

From an economic perspective, the tourist circuit is also considered a global product. Raffour (2005) describes it as a combination of services including transportation, accommodation, and activities, meeting tourists' expectations in terms of organization and safety. This approach highlights the role of circuits in the development of tourism offerings.

3.1.3 Tourism Product

A tourism product is defined as a set of goods and services designed to satisfy tourists' needs. According to Kotler et al. (2017), it is a global offering that integrates several components such as transportation, accommodation, catering, and leisure activities. This definition emphasizes the marketing dimension of the tourism product.

Moreover, Medlik and Middleton (1973) consider the tourism product as a combination of tangible and intangible elements, including attractions, infrastructure, and accessibility. Holloway (2004) adds that this product is characterized by intangibility, perishability, and heterogeneity, making its management complex and requiring effective coordination among stakeholders.

3.2. Study Theories

3.2.1 Heritage Valorization Theory

The theory of heritage valorization, notably developed by Poulot (2006), argues that the preservation and enhancement of historical sites are essential tools for strengthening cultural identity and collective memory. This approach is based on the idea that heritage is not only material but also immaterial, and that it plays a central role in transmitting knowledge and historical values.

According to Smith (2006), heritage valorization involves transforming historical remains and objects into educational and cultural resources, enabling the public to connect with past experiences.

Furthermore, this theory emphasizes the importance of cultural mediation practices in making history accessible and engaging. Historical reconstruction, considered an educational and immersive tool, allows the public to experience the past through sensory engagement, including observation of reconstructed objects, costumes, and the reproduction of historical gestures or events. Studies in cultural mediation show that interactivity and immersion are key factors in understanding and retaining historical content (Falk & Dierking, 2013).

Applied to the Wangermée circuit in Lubumbashi, this theory suggests that reconstruction and site development can

transform an abandoned space into a medium for cultural and tourist transmission. Activating these historical sites through staging and contextual interpretation can strengthen local identity while creating new economic and social opportunities. As emphasized by Timothy and Boyd (2003), involving local communities in heritage management enhances sustainability and the positive impact of tourism projects.

3.2.2 Integrated Tourism Product Theory

The theory of the integrated tourism product, developed by Kotler et al. (2017) and Medlik and Middleton (1973), defines the tourism product as a coherent set of tangible and intangible elements, including transportation, accommodation, activities, attractions, and additional services. This approach highlights that a destination's attractiveness depends on the harmonious integration of these components to create a complete and satisfying visitor experience.

In this context, structuring a tourist circuit goes beyond simply visiting a site; it requires careful planning of services, routes, and visitor interactions. Applied to the Wangermée circuit in Lubumbashi, this theory allows historical reconstruction to be viewed not only as heritage preservation but as a complete tourism product.

Reintegrating abandoned sites into a structured tourist circuit involves organizing guided tours, creating immersive experiences, implementing signage, and ensuring visitor reception. According to Holloway (2004), the quality of the tourism experience depends on coordinating all these elements to provide a smooth, coherent, and attractive journey while respecting the historical character of the site.

This approach also emphasizes the importance of meeting tourists' expectations to generate sustainable demand. When designed as a tourism product, historical reconstruction can enhance economic attractiveness and create local employment opportunities. Timothy and Boyd (2003) show that involving local communities in heritage management promotes project sustainability, visitor loyalty, and the growth of cultural tourism.

3.3 State of the Question

According to Poulot (2006), heritage valorization is central to the transmission of history and collective memory. He emphasizes that practices such as historical reconstruction make the past accessible and understandable to the general public through cultural mediation. This approach highlights the role of reconstruction in revitalizing historical sites and integrating them into cultural and tourism development projects.

Hoerner (2002) defines the tourist circuit as a structured itinerary connecting multiple sites around a common theme. He stresses the importance of organization and coherence in circuit design to facilitate visitor understanding and experience. This perspective shows that well-developed historical circuits can serve as effective tools for heritage valorization.

From a marketing perspective, Kotler et al. (2017) consider the tourism product as a combination of services and experiences designed to meet tourists' needs. They emphasize the importance of structuring and adapting tourism offerings to attract and retain demand. This approach is essential in reconstructing historical circuits, which must be designed as attractive and competitive products.

Medlik and Middleton (1973) highlight that tourism development relies on the integrated organization of various product components, including attractions, accessibility, and infrastructure. They stress that a tourist site cannot be attractive without proper valorization of its resources. This reinforces the importance of reconstructing and developing historical circuits to improve their attractiveness.

Ouédraogo (2006) points out that many historical sites remain underutilized due to a lack of development and valorization policies. He also emphasizes the importance of involving local communities in tourism projects to ensure their sustainability. This reality is evident in Lubumbashi, where circuits such as Wangermée have strong potential but remain underdeveloped, thus justifying the relevance of this study.

4. Presentation of the Study Areas

4.1 Lubumbashi

Lubumbashi corresponds to the first metallurgical installations of the Union Minière, located near the falls of the Lubumbashi River. The river's water provided the hydraulic energy necessary for industrial processes. The smelter and factories formed the industrial core of the emerging Katanga. The site symbolizes the beginning of the region's urban and economic development.

The Union Minière du Haut-Katanga, founded in 1906, was a central actor in industrial development. It employed both local and international labor and played a structuring role in the creation of infrastructure. The installations included factories, offices, and housing for personnel. This organization shaped the economic and social identity of Katanga.

Today, the Union Minière has become Gécamines, which continues to exploit copper, cobalt, and uranium. The company employs several thousand people and manages hospitals, schools, and industrial sites. Lubumbashi remains a historical and economic pillar of the Haut-Katanga province, reflecting the evolution of mining and industrial exploitation.



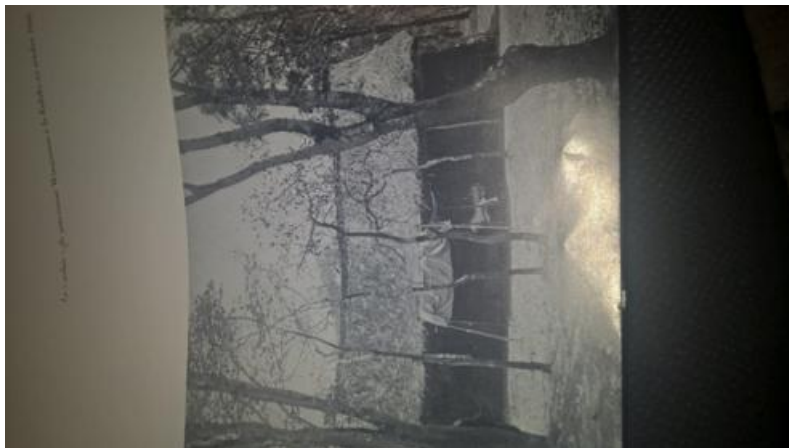
4.2 Kafubu

The Kafubu post is the administrative and military point of the Wangermée triangle. Located near the Naviundu farm, it is now situated in a sparsely populated area. This site hosted the headquarters of the Comité Spécial du Katanga and the residence of Major Emil Wangermée. It played a key role in controlling the region and facilitating territorial organization.

The installations included adobe offices, housing for officials, and a military post. Major Wangermée supervised

infrastructure and local projects, ensuring order and contributing to the development of Katanga. Today, local inhabitants have limited knowledge of its history, making its historical reconstruction essential.

Currently, Kafubu remains a natural and underdeveloped area, offering an authentic setting for observing the past. Its proximity to Naviundu farm makes access easier, although the exact identification of the site requires historical references. Its strategic role makes it a significant landmark within the Wangermée circuit.



4.3. Étoile Mine

The Étoile Mine, formerly known as the “Star of the Congo” or *Elisabethmine*, is located a few kilometers from the future center of Elisabethville. Founded by the Union Minière, it attracted an international population of miners, engineers, and traders. The mine was the economic engine of the region and a central point of early industrial activity.

The infrastructure included administrative offices, a court, a police station, and dwellings made of adobe and thatch. The

population was cosmopolitan, including British, Belgian, Romanian, Norwegian, and other residents. This site already represented the embryo of a modern city in the heart of the Katangese bush.

Today, the mine is operated by Ruashi Mining, in partnership with the Metorex Group and Jinchuan Group. The modern hydrometallurgical plant continues the extraction of copper and cobalt. Despite its transformation, it retains its historical and economic importance in the Katanga region.



5. Methodological Framework

For this research, we primarily used the historical method, focused on the study and analysis of written documents. This approach involves examining specialized books, scientific articles, and sources available on the Internet. It enables an accurate reconstruction of the past and helps understand the evolution of historical circuits. Documentary research provides a solid theoretical framework and makes it possible to identify verifiable facts. It also serves to compare different authors' interpretations. Finally, this method helps situate the historical and cultural context of the studied sites.

In addition to documentation, we applied direct field observation. This technique consists of carefully examining the sites within the historical circuit in order to assess their current condition. It allows us to identify elements that have been preserved, damaged, or lost over time. Direct observation facilitates the verification of information

collected from written sources. It also provides qualitative data on the environment, architecture, and spatial organization of the sites. Through this method, we were able to enrich our practical understanding of the historical circuit.

We also incorporated cross-comparison as an analytical technique. This involves confronting archival data with field observations. This approach helps detect inconsistencies or gaps in documentary sources. It contributes to establishing a more reliable reconstruction of historical circuits. Cross-comparison also helps understand how sites have evolved over time. Thus, this technique strengthens the scientific rigor of the study and reduces the risk of error.

Qualitative analysis was another key technique. It aims to interpret the collected information, identify patterns, and understand the dynamics of historical circuits. Qualitative analysis goes beyond visible facts and includes the social, cultural, and heritage dimensions of the sites. This technique

makes it possible to identify trends, relationships, and underlying meanings within the data. It is essential for formulating solid hypotheses regarding reconstruction and valorization. By combining observation and analysis, we obtain a comprehensive and nuanced understanding.

Finally, we used data synthesis and reporting as the final technique. This involves organizing and presenting the collected information in a coherent and structured manner. This step makes it possible to produce clear conclusions on reconstruction methods and the characteristics of historical circuits. Reporting may include maps, diagrams, or tables to illustrate findings. It also ensures that the results are understandable and usable for future research. Thus, the combination of all these methods and techniques guarantees the reliability and relevance of the study.

6. Results

The study reveals that the Wangermée circuit connects three key sites: the Kafubu post, the Étoile Mine, and the Gécamines plants. Each site presents a mixed condition, combining historical remains with contemporary transformations. The results show that historical authenticity is partially preserved. The sites have varying levels of infrastructure and accessibility. These observations make it possible to plan reconstruction interventions.

At the Kafubu post, the study indicates that traditional remains are still visible, although some structures have been modified by urbanization. Data analysis shows that reconstruction using natural materials is feasible. Residents and potential visitors perceive the site as culturally significant. The site remains easily accessible and integrated into the urban fabric. The preservation of heritage elements is a key factor for the circuit.

Regarding the Étoile Mine, the results reveal that modern industrial exploitation limits physical reconstruction. Observations show that operations by Ruashi Mining are technically advanced, but the site's history remains identifiable. Visitors can follow the evolution of the mine through qualified guides. The mine combines historical heritage with contemporary exploitation. The study highlights the need for an interpretive route rather than material reconstruction.

The Gécamines plants present inactive but historically relevant infrastructure. The results show that these installations make it possible to retrace industrial history. Chimneys and buildings are in sufficient condition to accommodate guided tours. Safety and accessibility are priorities for visitors. The study confirms that the site

constitutes a major heritage component of the Wangermée circuit.

The descriptive analysis of the three sites made it possible to identify the strengths and constraints of each location. The results indicate that Kafubu is suitable for reconstruction, the Étoile Mine for guided observation, and the plants for secure industrial tourism. The sites require targeted interventions for restoration and enhancement. Historical coherence and tourism feasibility are evaluated at each stage. These conclusions guide the planning of the circuit.

The study highlights the importance of itinerary planning. The results show that the circuit can be organized to connect the sites in a safe and immersive way. The proximity of the sites and road accessibility enhance the tourist experience. The collected data make it possible to design educational and interactive visits. The organization of the route takes into account both heritage and visitor comfort.

The analysis of potential visitors' expectations reveals an interest in industrial history and local culture. The results show that the public seeks an approach combining observation, explanation, and reconstruction. Local and international tourists are the main beneficiaries. The establishment of competent guides is essential for knowledge transmission. The data also highlight the importance of visual and digital materials.

The study emphasizes the role of communication and marketing strategies. The results show that information dissemination through media and social networks is crucial to attract visitors. The creation of an interactive website would help present the circuit and sell tickets. Customer segmentation analysis recommends affordable pricing and discounts for school groups. These strategies enhance the visibility and attractiveness of the project.

The economic evaluation of the sites reveals strong potential for sustainable tourism development. The results indicate that the combination of history, culture, and natural landscapes creates an attractive product. The circuit offers educational opportunities while generating local revenue. The study suggests balancing heritage conservation with profitability. Planning complementary services, such as light catering, is recommended.

The study demonstrates that the sites within the Wangermée circuit possess rich and diverse heritage. The results help prioritize interventions for reconstruction and guided observation. The sites combine historical, industrial, and urban value. Reconstruction must respect authenticity while ensuring accessibility and safety. These findings provide a solid foundation for developing an educational and attractive tourist circuit in Lubumbashi.



7. Contribution of the Study

This study makes a significant contribution to the valorization of the historical and industrial heritage of Lubumbashi by providing detailed documentation on the current state of the sites within the Wangermée circuit. It highlights the elements to be preserved, the industrial and urban remains still visible, and enables the planning of a faithful reconstruction of the Kafubu post. The Étoile Mine and the Gécamines plants are analyzed in their current context, with particular attention paid to their evolution and contemporary exploitation. This analysis offers an in-depth understanding of the transformations of the urban and industrial landscape over time. It thus provides authorities and tourism stakeholders with essential information for the conservation and enhancement of these sites. Finally, it establishes a solid foundation for designing immersive and educational tourist circuits.

Furthermore, the study contributes to the development of sustainable cultural and educational tourism, capable of raising awareness among the local population and visitors about the history and industrialization of the region. The results make it possible to identify appropriate planning, communication, and promotion strategies for different audiences, including students and tourists. It also proposes ways to improve site accessibility and safety while respecting authenticity. The integration of historical, urban, and industrial aspects fosters a complete and coherent tourist experience. This contribution strengthens the economic and educational potential of the Wangermée circuit. Finally, it provides a methodological framework for future studies on heritage valorization in Lubumbashi.

8. Discussion of Results

The results obtained regarding the Kafubu post and the preservation of its traditional character align with the observations of Pierre Nora (1984), who emphasizes the importance of sites of memory in historical and identity transmission. According to him, the valorization of a site depends on its ability to connect the past with the present and to create an immersive experience for visitors. In the case of the Wangermée circuit, maintaining traditional structures and developing the site helps establish a tangible link with postcolonial history, confirming Nora's idea of the central role of material memory in heritage construction.

Regarding the Étoile Mine and industrial transformations, the results are consistent with the work of David Harvey (1989) on urbanization and industrial development. Harvey highlights that industrial sites reflect socio-economic dynamics and technological transitions within a region. The study shows that, despite modernization and current exploitation by Ruashi Mining, historical traces remain and can be used for industrial tourism, confirming the importance of spatial and economic analysis in understanding site evolution.

Finally, the analysis of the Gécamines plants and their heritage value corresponds with the conclusions of Laurajane Smith (2006), who emphasizes the social and cultural dimensions of heritage. According to Smith, a site truly becomes heritage only when it is recognized and appropriated by the community and visitors. The plants offer opportunities for education and cultural mediation, as they illustrate the economic history of Lubumbashi while engaging diverse audiences. Their integration into the Wangermée circuit clearly demonstrates the link between material heritage and social appropriation.

9. Conclusion

The study of the Wangermée circuit in Lubumbashi reveals that historical and industrial sites, although partially degraded, retain significant heritage and tourism potential. The historical reconstruction and valorization of sites such as the Kafubu post, the Étoile Mine, and the Gécamines plants not only preserve collective memory but also create immersive and educational experiences for the public. Integrating these sites into a structured tourist circuit offers a unique opportunity to combine heritage, culture, and tourism while strengthening local identity and knowledge of the region's industrial past.

Moreover, the enhancement of these sites presents important economic and social benefits. It promotes job creation, the development of local infrastructure, and the growth of sustainable cultural tourism. The success of such a project depends on rigorous planning, site security, accessibility, and the involvement of local communities. Finally, this study provides a solid methodological foundation for future initiatives in heritage conservation and valorization in Lubumbashi and across the Haut-Katanga region, by

balancing historical authenticity with sustainable tourism development.

References

- [1] Falk, J. H., & Dierking, L. D. (2013). *The museum experience revisited*. Left Coast Press.
- [2] Harvey, D. (1989). *The condition of postmodernity: An enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- [3] Hoerner, J.-M. (2002). *Géographie du tourisme*. Paris, France: Ellipses.
- [4] Holloway, J. C. (2004). *Marketing for tourism* (4th ed.). Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.
- [5] Kotler, P., Bowen, J. T., & Makens, J. C. (2017). *Marketing for hospitality and tourism* (7th ed.). Boston, MA, USA: Pearson.
- [6] Leroi-Gourhan, A. (1964). *Le geste et la parole*. Albin Michel.
- [7] Medlik, S., & Middleton, V. T. C. (1973). Product formulation in tourism. *Tourism and Marketing Journal*, Londres, UK.
- [8] Nora, P. (1984). *Les lieux de mémoire*. Paris, France: Gallimard.
- [9] Ouédraogo, D. (2006). *Développement local et valorisation du patrimoine en Afrique*. Paris, France: Karthala.
- [10] Pesez, J.-M. (1997). *La culture matérielle*. Armand Colin.
- [11] Poulot, D. (2006). *Une histoire du patrimoine en Occident*. Presses Universitaires de France.
- [12] Raffour, G. (2005). *Le tourisme: économie et management*. Bréal.
- [13] Smith, L. (2006). *Uses of heritage*. London, UK: Routledge.
- [14] Timothy, D. J., & Boyd, S. W. (2003). *Heritage tourism*. Pearson Education.