



Journal of Alpine Research | Revue de géographie alpine

102-2 | 2014

Espaces et acteurs pastoraux : entre pastoralisme(s) et pastoralité(s)

Pastoral areas and actors: between pastoralism and pastorality

Forewords

Coralie Mounet and Olivier Turquin



Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/rga/2464>

DOI: 10.4000/rga.2464

ISSN: 1760-7426

Publisher:

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

Electronic reference

Coralie Mounet and Olivier Turquin, « Pastoral areas and actors: between pastoralism and pastorality », *Journal of Alpine Research | Revue de géographie alpine* [Online], 102-2 | 2014, Online since 11 September 2014, connection on 22 September 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/rga/2464> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/rga.2464>

This text was automatically generated on 22 September 2020.



La Revue de Géographie Alpine est mise à disposition selon les termes de la licence Creative Commons Attribution - Pas d'Utilisation Commerciale - Pas de Modification 4.0 International.

Pastoral areas and actors: between pastoralism and pastorality

Forewords

Coralie Mounet and Olivier Turquin

EDITOR'S NOTE

Translation: Brian Keogh

- ¹ In its first issue, in 1913, the *Revue de Géographie Alpine* published an article by Philippe Arbos on the pastoral economy of some of the valleys in the Savoie region of France (*Économie pastorale dans quelques vallées savoyardes*), in which he made the following observation: “livestock is the main, if not the only, resource: the farmer lives from livestock and lives well (translation).”
- ² Over the past century, rural society has undergone considerable change and the concept of pastoralism has been profoundly altered, while at the same time preserving its links with the past. One of the changes relates to the role of pastoralism in pastoral areas. Pastoralism and pastoral areas do not in fact only concern those involved in pastoral activities but also impact on recreation, the environment and cultural values.

Emergence of a notion

- ³ The setting up of Territorial Pastoral Plans (Plans Pastoraux Territoriaux or PPT) in the Rhône-Alpes region provided an ideal platform for observing the different issues facing pastoral areas. The plans were drawn up and implemented at scales corresponding to an individual mountain ranges and involved close collaboration with each area's numerous actors in pastoral activities. As well as pastoral objectives the plans also had other aims relating to biodiversity and the multi-purpose use of pastoral areas.

- 4 Some of the areas involved in this process were the subject of participatory observation (Calmettes, 2010; Cournil, 2010). In the debates that took place, it became apparent that the term “pastoralism” did not have the same meaning for all the actors involved. In discussions between inhabitants, elected officials and pastoral actors involved in the governance of the pastoral plans, use of the term sometimes led to misunderstandings. Some observers talked about the technical aspects of pastoralism, while others referred to the set of values attributed to the activity and, by extension, to the areas where it was practised. The need therefore emerged for a more precise definition of the limits of pastoralism. Although pastoralism may be understood in its technical aspects, as in the definition given by Larousse (“a method of extensive stock-rearing practised by nomadic peoples and founded on the use of natural vegetation (translation)”), and, by extension, in terms of the sciences and the technical fields associated with it, it would seem expedient to use a new word to refer to the qualities and virtues attributed to pastoral activities and actors. This is why in the call for papers we suggested interpreting *pastorality* as “*the character and essence of what is pastoral*” or, in other words, “*all the values and characteristics, real or assumed, of that which is pastoral, and incarnated by pastoral actors*” in the same way as rurality evokes that which is rural, urbanity that which is urban, and naturality, or naturalness, that which is natural.
- 5 The term *pastorality* is not often used in everyday language or in the scientific literature, though it is sometimes used in the context of discovery trails. However, on the rare occasions it has been used in scientific publications, the authors have generally failed to take sufficient care in defining what they actually mean by it. To our knowledge, only Jean Gallais (1975) attempted to really define the term, but then quickly dropped it from his vocabulary. According to him, “by ignoring the terms “nomadity” and “pastorality” the language underlines the fact that to be a nomad or a pastoralist is less of a state, such as sedentarity, than an experience or lifestyle (translation).” In other words, for Gallais, use of the term *pastorality* involved a risk of reducing the activity of the pastoralist to a set of essential attributes, while in fact he was attempting to demonstrate¹ its flexible and reversible character. Reviewing these ideas of Jean Gallais, Denis Retailié (1989) identified a “scale of *pastorality*” and a scale of mobility to take into account the diversity of pastoral situations. Although he did not define the term, it would seem that by *pastoralism* he meant, like Jean Gallais, the degree of economic dependence, as well as affective and social dependence, on the herd, the lowest degree of *pastorality* being represented by the arable and livestock farmer.
- 6 To further our understanding of pastoral actors and areas in this issue, we have sought to open the debate on a certain number of questions. Our first aim is to understand the issues surrounding *pastoralism* today. In particular, this issue of the RGA looks at the roles of pastoral actors and areas in the construction of the territories in which they are found. Can *pastoralism* meet all the expectations?
- 7 Our next objective is to identify what differentiates pastoral situations and what brings them together. Can one speak of *pastoralism* and *pastorality* or does the diversity of possible situations mean that we should talk about different types of *pastoralism* and *pastorality*?
- 8 Finally, we take a more reflective look at the emergence of the notion of *pastorality* and its meaning. Why and how is this notion emerging today? What does this say about the changes affecting pastoral areas and actors? Does it correspond to a greening of the

rhetoric, a heritagization of activities, and/or the development of practices that are becoming more ecological? What effects does this have on the actors: is it resulting in the image of pastoralism becoming increasingly blurred or, on the contrary, enjoying new legitimacy? The call for contributions on this theme thus has a double objective: first to place the notion of *pastorality* under the scrutiny of the academic world with a view to testing its relevance and providing it with a new definition; second to identify other fields where this term is emerging and to understand the effects of this on the actors and the territories involved.

Contributions helping to enrich and develop the notion

- 9 The special make up of this issue, which combines purely academic contributions with those that are more hybrid, shows that the call for papers stimulated interest not only from the academic world but also the technical sphere. Moreover, the discussions on *pastorality* in this issue go beyond its simple emergence and seek to test its relevance in other mountain areas of France (the Southern Alps, the Pyrenees, the Mediterranean mountains, the Massif Central) as well as in other countries and contexts, for example Turkey.
- 10 The articles examine *pastorality* in terms of three dimensions that help enhance the way in which the notion is conceived: as a set of values attributed to stock-rearing activities, as resources for territories, and as values attributed to the areas or territories in which it is practised.

Pastorality as a set of values attributed to stock-rearing activities: pastoralties seen “from the outside” and “from within”

- 11 *Pastorality*, according to Corinne Eychenne and Lucie Lazaro, cannot be simply limited to those representations held by the non-pastoral actors of pastoralism (those on the outside). In addition to this *pastorality seen from the outside*, they suggest adding “*pastorality from within*”, “*perceived and constructed by the pastoral actors themselves (translation)*”. To demonstrate this “*pastorality from within*”, Eychenne and Lazaro examine the special case of pastoralism in the Pyrenees. This type of *pastorality*, like other forms, is based on the collective dimension of the management of pastoral resources, or the management of common goods. However, such management is challenged today by a *pastorality from the outside*, which envisages pastoral areas as open to all and pastoralism as a producer of collective services and both material and immaterial goods. With the rapid increase in the use of these areas for other purposes, *pastorality from the outside* seems to be gaining ground over *pastorality from within*.
- 12 This observation is shared by Laurent Garde *et al* whose article shows how pastoral grazing in the Southern Alps has evolved and adapted over thousands of years. Although the use of pastoral areas for livestock herds and the associated mobility of both men and animals have always been factors in determining the way pastoral stock-raising has resisted or adapted to change, the authors question the permanence of this type of stock-rearing and its associated culture in the context of the contradictory demands made on it today. Between the demand for a healthy diet and animal welfare and the demand for greater naturalness, pastoral farmers are caught between two

contradictory *pastoralities* “*from the outside*” that raise questions about the right pastoral practices and techniques to adopt.

- 13 The studies by Claire Aubron *et al* and Sabine Chabrat *et al* also provide insights into the contradictions between *pastoralities from within* and pastoralism in the stock-rearing activities that benefit from quality control procedures. Based on a study and comparison of the technical specifications of 8 quality certification procedures in the Mediterranean hinterland region, Claire Aubron *et al* question the relationship between quality procedures and pastoralism in France, and reveal this to be ambiguous. The authors show how these procedures, which require a substantial commitment to pastoralism, tend, as they develop, to increasingly restrict the role of pastoralism in both the stock-rearing practices and in the territories in which they take place, as they seek to meet the “demands” of the consumer. Ultimately, what keeps the pastoral livestock sector and pastoral territories alive could also be that which is responsible for them losing their pastoral character. The authors thus underline the need for pastoralism and *pastorality*, and for the “real practices of pastoralism” and the “values associated with it” to be as close as possible to one another so as to avoid such a situation.
- 14 The article by Sabine Chabrat *et al*, looks at the relationship between pastoralism and pastorality, with a case study of the protected origin quality label (Appellation d'origine protégée or AOP) “fin gras du Mézenc”. Unlike the actors in the quality procedures studied by Claire Aubron *et al*, the actors involved in the case study by Chabrat *et al* do not make any demands regarding their link with pastoralism, which they consider too attached in the collective imagination to values of nomadism and transhumance, values from which they wish to differentiate themselves. While their type of livestock farming does have a pastoral component with the extensive grazing of animals, it is the sedentarity that is important in the techniques related to the winter fattening of livestock and in the identity constructed around the permanent habitat and the ruggedness of the characters. Although *pastorality seen from the outside* is attached to transhumance, the case of the AOP “fin gras du Mézenc” could represent a new type of *pastorality from within*, attached to its sedentary character rather than its *nomadity*.

Pastorality as a resource for and in the territory

- 15 Different authors consider pastoralism and *pastorality* through the resources that they may represent in the development of a particular area or territory (for example, Aubron *et al.*, Chabrat *et al.*, Garde *et al.*).
- 16 Laurent Dobremez *et al* examine the creation of new work collectives associated with the pastoral question in the context of the programme “Alpages sentinelles”. The aim of this programme is to strengthen the adaptation capabilities of pastoral actors and their technical systems in the face of climate change with a view to ensuring the sustainable management of mountain pastures. The programme may be seen as a tool designed to assist analysis and decision-making and the hybrid work collectives that were created to help implement it were precursors to new forms of governance in the relations between pastoralism and territory. However, the example of the Ecrins National Park shows that the adoption of a common culture is not something that can be decreed but stems from a lengthy period of collaboration, collaboration that has

first been forged around pastoral techniques and then expanded more recently to take into account territorial issues. This appropriation of a common culture and the methods of governance and territorial engineering that are developing in the “Alpages sentinelles” programme may be seen as different aspects of a certain type of *pastorality*.

The pastorality of a territory

- 17 The last two contributions in this issue examine *pastorality* from the point of view of an attribute of a particular area or territory, and identify degrees of *pastorality*.
- 18 For Pierre Derioz *et al.*, *pastorality* includes the “pastoral dimension of the territorial system and of the identity of a territory (translation)”. In the context of an area undergoing change from an industrial economy to one based more on tourism, Pierre Derioz *et al* look at the place given to pastoralism in the definition of the territorial project Vicdessos. They demonstrate the disconnect that may exist between the real pastoral component of the territory and the way in which stock-rearing is presented, even promoted, by the territory (especially in its historical aspects, presented as part of the heritage rather than for its economic vitality). This observation provides them with the means to distinguish *symbolic pastorality* from *user pastorality*.
- 19 These two dimensions of *pastorality* could also be applied at the scale of stock-rearing in the case presented by Sabine Chabrat *et al*, where the stakeholders in the “fin gras du Mézenc” programme are shown to be developing a *symbolic pastorality* that is out of tune with their *user pastorality*.
- 20 Michael Thévenin considers *pastorality* in terms of the “capacity of a territory to adopt, maintain and transform both pastoral practices and the communities that implement them (translation)”. In a study of Kurdish pastoralists in Turkey and their involvement in different national, tribal and inherited systems of logic, he reveals the risk inherent in a definition of *pastorality* that is too heritage-based and too fixed in time, space and pastoral identity. Instead, he insists on the importance of the resilience and adaptation of pastoralism and the territories in which it is practised, and in this respect his ideas are in line with those of Laurent Garde *et al* on the capacity of change in the livestock grazing systems of the French Southern Alps.
- 21 Together, the different contributions in this issue help us to complete the initial definition of *pastorality* as proposed in the call for papers. While the concept may be understood as “the essence of that which is pastoral”, it also includes “the dimension of pastoralism that is experienced and appropriated”, in the same way as territoriality constitutes a set of representations and practices that enable each actor to construct his or her own territory as they experience it.
- 22 Defined in this way, *pastorality* avoids, we hope, the risk of essentialization related to the process of heritagization, as suggested by Michael Thévenin, by opening a dialogue between the two aspects placed in opposition to one another by Jean Gallais, namely the state and the values attributed to pastoralism, such as the way of living pastoralism. This group of values, practices and representations derives from both pastoral actors (*pastoralities* “from within”) and non-pastoral actors (*pastoralities* “from outside”). There are thus as many *pastoralities*, or representations of pastoral activities and their role in the territories, as there are different actors. Understood in this way, *pastorality* can only be used in its plural form and it is by clearly defining these different *pastoralities* that we will be able to reconcile the different issues affecting pastoral areas.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ARBOS PH., 1923.- *La vie pastorale dans les Alpes françaises. Étude de géographie humaine*, Thèse, Paris, Armand Colin.
- CALMETTES A., 2010.- « Pastoralisme et territoire en Belledonne : analyse au regard de la ressource territoriale dans le territoire pastoral de Belledonne », Mémoire de Master Ingénierie du développement territorial, Grenoble, Institut de Géographie Alpine – Université Joseph Fourier.
- COURNIL P.-J., 2010.- « Contribution pour une économie alpestre ressourcee », Mémoire de Diplôme de Recherche Technologique en développement territorial, Grenoble, Université Joseph Fourier, Institut de Géographie Alpine, UMR PACTE-Territoires.
- GAGNOL L., à paraître 2014.- « Les recompositions du nomadisme ». Chapitre thématique de l'Atlas – Perspectives ouest-africaines : les espaces saharo-sahéliens, série « Les Cahiers de l'Afrique de l'Ouest », CSAO/OCDE.
- GALLAIS J., 1975.- « Pasteurs et paysans du Gourma. La condition sahélienne », Bordeaux, CEGET-CNRS Éd.
- RETAILLÉ D., 1989.- « Le destin du pastoralisme nomade en Afrique », *L'Information géographique*, 53-3, pp. 103-115.

NOTES

1. And following him, Denis Retaillé (1989) and Laurent Gagnol (2014).
-

AUTHORS

CORALIE MOUNET

CNRS, Laboratoire Pacte UMR 5194, Grenoble,
coralie.mounet@ujf-grenoble.fr

OLIVIER TURQUIN

Associate researcher to Pacte