Promoting Culture and Heritage through a Route of Fairy Tales in France

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Abstract

French and German tales have been influenced by stories of the Bible, Greco-Roman myths, and medieval legends. All these stories are in constant evolution and are adapted to the language and culture of each country that produces them. This study will discuss the value in cultural tourism of stories and storytelling. In Germany, people are nowadays promoting their culture and heritage through 'The German Fairy Tale Route', a 600 kilometers long tourist attraction established in 1975, from Hanau to Bremen. Most places on the route are associated with the Grimm brothers' life and their collection of tales, such as the town of Alsfeld, known for its House of Little Red Riding Hood and Sababurg Castle, referred to as the Sleeping Beauty Castle. It would be economically and culturally valuable to open such a route in France. Even though some French castles such as Ussé and Breteuil are already marketing their connection to Perrault and his stories, there is no French route of fairy tales. This study proposes therefore to open such a route and presents historical information on the life of Charles Perrault and on a number of French castles associated with his tales.

Keywords: French fairy tales, Perrault, French castles, German route of fairy tales



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Introduction

Even though various studies have been published on the historical evolution of fairy tales and their meaning, there is very little research on how they are used or can be used to promote cultural tourism. Research assists understandings of these tales with a view to helping attract more visitors in the countries where they were written and published, such as in France and Germany.

According to Zipes (2015, online version):

Literary fairy tales are culturally marked: they are informed by the writers, their respective cultures, and the socio-historical context in which the narratives are created. Only by considering these factors can one point to the particular Italian, French, German, or English affiliations of a tale. Basically, fairy tales have a paradoxical disposition that accounts for their particularity: they contain 'universal' motifs and components that writers borrow consciously and unconsciously from other cultures in an endeavor to imbue their symbolical stories with very 'specific' commentaries on morals, mores, and manners.

Charles Perrault (1628-1703) modified the traditional folklore to fit his audience; that is, the French aristocrats (Lydie, 2007). Like most writers, he was looking for recognition in the literary salons. During the second part of the 17th century, it was fashionable to be a 'précieux'. Préciosité (preciosity) was a notable literary movement that enjoyed witty conversation and the retelling of fairy tales in salons opened by rich and educated ladies, such as Madeleine de Scudéry (1607-1701), Madame de La Fayette (1634-1693), and la Marquise de Lambert (1647-1733). Perrault's great success was to be able to retell folktales by defending morality and adding 'moralités' aimed at the education of adolescents about to marry, which is the ultimate goal in fairy tales as successful heroes always wed their soulmate, and by using precious vocabulary to respect the requirements of the salons (Lydie, 2007). Of course, Perrault, who was forced to retire after the death of his patron Colbert, also spent more time with his children and wrote these stories to entertain them (Collinet, 1981).

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Brothers Grimm had a different purpose. The German-born American academic Maria Tatar (1945) writes that the brothers' goal was to preserve the collected tales as something uniquely German at a time of French occupation; that is, during and after the invasion of the Holy Roman Empire by Napoleon's French Empire (Grimm, Tatar, & Byatt, 2004).

The German Fairy Tale Route

The Brothers Grimm, Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786–1859), were German academics, philologists, and authors, who collected and published folk tales, such as *Cinderella*, *The Frog Prince*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Rapunzel*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Snow White*. Their first collection, *Children's and Household Tales*, was published in 1812.

The German Fairy Tale Route or Märchenstraße is a tourist attraction established in 1975. The route begins in the south with Hanau, the birthplace of the Grimm brothers. The 600 kilometers long route ends in Bremen, which is associated with The Town Musicians of Bremen. According to a blog at itinerariesnow.com, the best period to travel on the route is from April to October; it takes around a week.



Picture 1: The German Fairy Tale Route website, English version (source: http://www.deutsche-maerchenstrasse.com/en/?lang=en_US)

Among the most interesting places to visit on the route:

- The brothers were born at No. 1 Paradeplatz, now called Freiheitsplatz in Hanau (Hesse) and spent their formative years there. Syrius Eberle (1844-1903) was a German sculptor and art professor, who designed a sculpture of Brothers Grimm in Hanau (the formal unveiling of the monument took place in 1896).
- The childhood home of the Grimm brothers is in Steinau (Hesse); they lived there until 1796, when their father Phillip died. The brothers left Steinau and their family in 1798 and went to school at the Friedrichs gymnasium in Kassel. There is a fairytale fountain, a puppet theatre and a castle in Steinau.
- Kassel, called the "Capital of the German Fairy Tale Route". The brothers Grimm spent most of their lives in this city located on the Fulda River in northern Hesse. Their fairy tales were compiled there, edited and later translated into 160 languages. The city notably houses a Museum of the Brothers Grimm (known as Grimmwelt Kassel).
- The brothers studied in Marburg, a university town in Hesse. A tower in Amönau near Marburg is called Rapunzel's Tower. The Grimm Brothers' story is an adaptation of *Rapunzel* by Friedrich Schulz (1790), which is and adaptation of *Persinette* by Charlotte-Rose de Caumont de La Force (1698).
- Reinhardswald is a range of hills in the district of Kassel; the area is notably famous for Sababurg Castle, dating from the 14th century and known as the

- Castle of *Sleeping Beauty*. As to Disneyland's Sleeping Beauty Castle, it is notably based on Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria.
- The route also includes sites associated with people who inspired the brothers and told them ancient tales, such as Baunatal (birthplace of Dorothea Viehmann, a German storyteller) and Schauenburger Märchenwache, a museum dedicated to Marie Hassenpflug (an educated woman of French Huguenot ancestry) and J. F. Krause.

The 200th anniversary of *Children's and Household Tales* was observed in 2012-2013 in Germany with a series of open-air festivals, exhibits, and performances related to the Brothers Grimm and fairy tales.



Picture 2: The German Fairy Tale Route (source: http://www.deutschemaerchenstrasse.com/assets/prospekte/unesco-welterbe-dms.pdf)

How to Develop a French Route?

The first step to develop a French route of fairy tales is to learn about Charles Perrault's life and work. The second step is to search for places associated with his collection of fairy tales. The third step is to think about the most convenient way to

travel on a route of tales, probably from the north to the south of France; the departure point and the arrival point should be close to an airport or a TGV (French high speed train) station. Of course, visitors could choose to travel on the entire route or on some specific sections. In Germany as well as in France, many sites are listed on the UNESCO heritage list, which considerably increases the touristic attraction of some of the cultural sites on the proposed route.

Perrault's life and work

Charles Perrault (1628-1703) was born in a bourgeois family, the seventh child of Pierre Perrault and Paquette Le Clerc. In 1636, Charles began studies at the College of Beauvais, a private secondary school in the Rue Saint-Jean-de-Beauvais in Paris. In 1643, he left school with his companion, Beaurain, to pursue study independently for three or four years. On July 27, 1651, he was granted a degree in law from the University of Orléans. When he was 26, he became the clerk of his brother Pierre, receiver-general in Paris. Charles political career really began in 1663 when he was appointed secretary of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, a position he won after writing a poem that pleased the all-powerful Minister of Finances of Louis XIV, Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683).

Perrault's political ascension is impressive: he not only took part in the foundation of the Academy of Sciences and the restoration of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, but was also elected to the French Academy (1671). Moreover, in 1672, he got elected Chancellor of the Academy. Colbert even made Perrault General Controller of Buildings, a new position created especially for him. The public servant under Louis XIV had a more difficult private life as the woman he married in 1672, Marie Guichon, passed away in 1678 after giving birth to a daughter. Charles was left alone to raise his daughter as well as three sons. After Colbert forced him to retire from public service in 1682, he dedicated his life to his children and began to write "fairy tales", an expression first coined by Madame d'Aulnoy, who termed her books *Les Contes des Fées* (Tales of Fairies) in the 1690s.

The three verse tales written by Charles were published under his own name. In 1691, he published *La Marquise de Salusses ou la Patience de Griselidis* (The Marquise of Salusses, or the Patience of Griselidis), which was read at the Académie française; in 1693, *Les Souhaits ridicules* (The Ridiculous Wishes), dedicated to Philis de la Charce (1645-1703), a famous heroine honored by Louis XIV; Peau d'Âne (Donkey Skin) was published in 1694.

Contrary to the verse tales, the prose tales were published under the name of his last son, Pierre Perrault Darmancourt, born in 1678. Armancourt was the name of a property that Charles bought for his son. It is difficult to be sure why Perrault did not write under his own name. He probably thought that he would be violently criticized, as fairy tales were not a recognized genre at that time. Perrault was involved in the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes (Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns)*, which divided the 'Ancients', that is, writers and thinkers who believed the literature of Antiquity could not be surpassed, and the 'Moderns', those like Perrault, who were

convinced that the literature of Le Siècle de Louis le Grand (The Century of Louis the Great, title of Perrault book published in 1687) was superior. The 1695 manuscript entitled Les Contes de ma mère l'Oye (Tales of Mother Goose) pre-empts the Brothers Grimm, and includes the prose tales of La Belle au bois dormant (Sleeping Beauty in the Woods), Le Petit chaperon rouge (Little Red Riding Hood), La Barbe bleue (Bluebeard), Le Maître chat ou le chat botté (The Master Cat, or Puss in Boots), and Les Fées (The Fairies; Montoneri, 2013). The 1697 book entitled Histoires ou contes du temps passé (Stories or Tales of Times Past) contains the previous tales plus three new ones: Cendrillon ou La Petite pantoufle de verre (Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper), Riquet à la Houppe (Riquet with the Tuft), and Le Petit Poucet (Little Tom Thumb).

Places associated with Perrault and his family

When Charles became First Commissioner of Royal buildings in 1665, he appointed his brother Claude architect of the east range of the Louvre (construction: 1665-1680); Claude also constructed the Observatory of Paris. Because these places are closely associated with Charles and his brothers, they could be added as sites to visit on the French route of fairy tales.

Observatoire de Paris

The Observatory of Paris is one of the largest astronomical centers in the world. It is situated on the Left Bank of the Seine in central Paris. The architect of the Observatory was Claude Perrault (1613-1688). The building was completed in 1671. Claude was a brilliant architect, but also an author, a physician and an anatomist. He notably obtained the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of Paris.

Le Louvre

A committee including Louis Le Vau, Charles Le Brun, and Claude Perrault, began to work on the east façade of the Louvre in 1668. The definitive design of the façade is attributed to Perrault, who even won over Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), who came to France to join the competition. This work is considered a masterpiece of French Architectural Classicism, clearly influenced by Roman architect Vitruvius (circa 80-15 BC). Claude Perrault made an acclaimed translation of the ten books of Vitruvius into French (1673).

In 1669, Perrault advised the Louis XIV of France to build thirty-nine fountains, each one representing a fable written by renowned Greek fabulist and story teller Aesop (c. 620-564 BC) in the gardens of Versailles. A hedge maze was built in 1672 near the Orangerie. Each fountain was dedicated to one of Aesop's fables and water jets were spurting from the animals' mouths. Perrault wrote a guidebook for the labyrinth that was finished in 1677. It was a success and the garden became quickly famous, in France and abroad. Sadly, Louis XVI removed the labyrinth in 1778 and replaced it with an English-style garden.

The Castles Connected to Perrault's Fairy Tales

Château d'Ussé

Château d'Ussé is situated west of Azay-le-Rideau, close to the River Loire, in the Indre-et-Loire department. It was originally built around 1,000 AD by Viking warrior Gelduin I. During the Hundred Years War, the fortress was owned by Charles VII's captain, Jean V de Bueil (1406–1477); called le Fléau des Anglais 'plague of the English'. Later, the castle's new owner was Louis Bernin de Valentinay (1627-1709), Louis XIV's Controller-General of Finances. Louis was well-connected and married well, none other than the daughter of the Maréchal de Vauban (1633-1707), the foremost military engineer of the 17th century, who made alterations to the terraces at Ussé in 1664. Le Nôtre (1613-1700), who designed the gardens at Versailles, was responsible for the creation of the park and the gardens at Ussé. Charles Perrault visited the castle several times and is said to have been inspired by the magical atmosphere and the incredible architecture. Later, many other famous Frenchmen visited the castle, such as Voltaire and Chateaubriand (Info Tours, 2016).

Ussé was classified as an historical monument in 1931. Nowadays, Casimir de Blacas d'Aulps, the 7th Duke of Blacas, is the owner of the castle. Since 2000, Ussé is part of the area of the Loire Valley between Sully-sur-Loire and Chalonnes, which has been added to UNESCO World Heritage List (UNESCO, 2000). There are around 50 mannequins in the castles, many along the sentry walk and in specially decorated rooms which illustrate scenes from Sleeping Beauty, such as when she pricks her finger on the spindle and when she is awoken by Prince Charming. The castle takes full advantage of its connection to Perrault and Sleeping Beauty. Interestingly, the mannequins obviously resemble the characters as depicted in Disney's 16th animated feature film (1959), which was based on Perrault's fairy tale, even though there are many differences: in the movie, the princess is named 'Aurora' (Latin for 'dawn'), as in the original Tchaikovsky ballet (1890). In Perrault's version, Aurora is the name of the princess's daughter. The original wicked nameless fairy godmother became a wicked witch and was named Maleficent in Disney's movie.



Picture 3: Ussé's official website (source: http://www.chateaudusse.fr/belle-au-bois-dormant/?lang=en)

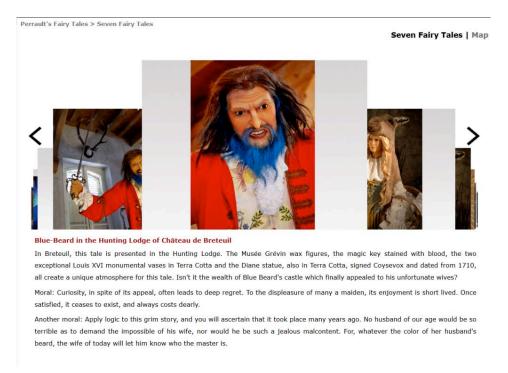


Picture 4: Illustrated eBook with pictures of the fairy tale (source: http://www.chateaudusse.fr/belle-au-bois-dormant/?lang=en)

Château de Breteuil

Château de Breteuil is situated in the Vallée de Chevreuse in Choisel, Yvelines department, 20 kms from Versailles. It was built at the beginning of the 17th century (1604-1610). Henri-François de Breteuil (born in 1943), the 10th Marquis, is the current owner of the castle, which was open to the public in 1969. In an interview given to the oldest national daily paper in France, Le Figaro (2015), the marquis said his father wanted to sell the château, which would have become a luxury hotel. Henri-

François and his mother refused and asked for French Minister of Cultural Affairs André Malraux's help to list the site as an historical monument (1973). According to Henri-François, his father said: 'Tu fais la plus grande erreur de ta vie.' (You just made the biggest mistake of your life; Le Figaro, 2015). Keeping and saving the family castle became a crusade, which lasted for more than two decades. Nowadays, the château is not only a family estate, but a successful business: it welcomes more than 100,000 visitors per year. The castle highlights the connection of Henri-François's family to Perrault and his collection of tales. Perrault worked for Louis Nicolas Le Tonnelier de Breteuil (1648–1728), finance minister for Louis XIV. There are fifteen 'Puss in Boots' automatons on the property, created by designers Janie and Armand Langlois. In the outbuildings, there are wax figures illustrating scenes from seven of Perrault's tales, such as Blue Beard, Cinderella, Puss in Boots, etc. Among the 50 waxwork figures from the Musée Grévin are not only fairy tales characters, but also world renowned people associated with the Breteuil family and the castle, such as Marie-Antoinette, Louis XVI, and Marcel Proust. The château is also introducing the life of mathematician Émilie du Châtelet (1706-1749), Louis de Breteuil's daughter. She was the first woman to have a scientific paper published by the Academy and she was, among other things, famous for her translation of Newton's *Principia* into French.



Picture 5: Illustrated webpage with pictures of wax figures of the Blue Beard, Donkey Skin and other fairy tales characters (source: http://www.breteuil.fr/en/Perrault-Fairy-Tales/seven-fairy-tales.html)

Château de Tiffauges

Château de Tiffauges is situated in the French commune of Tiffauges in the Vendée department. The donjon, the gate tower, the walls and the chapel were built by the powerful Viscounts de Thouars in the 12th century as a formidable stronghold because of its strategic position and design. Gilles de Rais (1404-1440), often called Barbe Bleue, was once the owner of the château. The character of Bluebeard derives from legends related to historical individuals, notably the Breton nobleman and later selfconfessed serial killer, Gilles de Rais. He became infamous because of his obsession with alchemy and because he was found guilty of the murder of many children. When he was around 10 years old, his mother became ill and died and his father was killed whilst hunting. Later, he married his own cousin, Catherine de Thouars (Tiffauges belonged to the Thouars). Gilles was a commander in the French royal army between 1427 and 1435. He became famous for bravery on the battlefield, but began to show signs of brutality. In 1429, he met 17-year-old Joan of Arc and followed her to Orléans with the blessing of The Dauphin ("heir to the French throne": Charles VII, King of France from 1422 to 1461). Gilles was probably in love with Joan and shared her deep piety. He notably contributed to the building of many churches and one cathedral. He was surely shocked and heartbroken when she was burnt at the stake in 1431, even though he was appointed Marshal of France and became richer than ever because of his role during various battles that finally led to French victory. In September 1440, he was arrested at Machecoul and indicted on 34 counts of murder, conjuring up demons and 'vices against nature'. Gilles notably admitted the murder of children, but denied the charge of devil worship. However, he seemed to have been fascinated with the ocult, learnt alchemy, and tried to make gold. He was executed on 26th of October 1440 at Nantes. The place was later left abandoned in ruins. During the 19th century, the castle became known as the 'château de Barbe Bleue' (Blue Beard's castle). It is now owned by the Conseil Général of Vendée, which helped revive the past by hosting a series of spectacles in relation with the Middle Ages and the story of Blue Beard. There is notably a 30-minutes spectacle entitled 'Gilles de Rais, l'Ombre et la Lumière' (Darkness and Light), telling the story of this fascinating and scary character. Incredibly, Gilles spent his fortune in lavish entertainment and even produced a theatrical spectacle called 'The Mystery of the Siege of Orleans'.

Châteaux d'Oiron et de Crazannes

Château d'Oiron is located in Oiron, in the Deux-Sèvres département. King Charles VII (reign: 1422-1461) gave the domain and forest of Oiron to Guillaume Gouffier (1488-1525), governor of Touraine and tutor of King Francis I. Guillaume's nephew, Claude Gouffier (1501-1570), Master of the King's Stables, served as the model for Charles Perrault's "Marquis de Carabas" in his story, *Puss in Boots*. Perrault made a few allusions to famous people, such as Pierre-Paul Riquet (1609-1680), the nobleman and engineer responsible for the construction of the Canal du Midi, one of the great feats of the 17th century. He is of course remembered as 'Riquet with the Tuft' (Riquet à la Houppe), the main character in one of the tales published by Perrault in 1697. As to Claude Gouffier, he was a famous book collector and patron of the arts. In the *Puss in Boots* tale, the young boy is sometimes called 'marquis' and

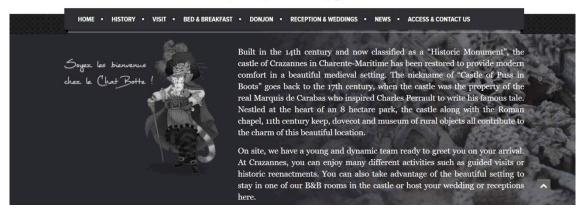
sometimes 'comte' (Perrault, 2006, 137). Is it an error? Claude was granted knighthood in 1533, created comte de Maulevrier in 1542, marquis de Boisy in 1564 and comte de Caravaz. He was also created duc de Roannais in 1556 (Chenaye-Aubert, 1774, 324). Perrault got probably confused by all of Gouffier's titles. Some sources say that Claude was Marquis de Boisy and Caravaz (Hewitt and Martin, 1931) and others that he was Marquis de Boisy and comte de Caravaz (Bunel, 2011). According to Zvereva (2005), the Marquisate of Boisy and the Barony of Roannais became a duchy in 1566, but Caravaz is not mentioned. Later, the castle was sold to Madame de Montespan (1640-1707), Louis XIV's mistress; she spent the rest of her life in the castle and restored it. Château d'Oiron was ransacked during the French Revolution and then left in ruins. During the 20th century, the French State listed the castle as an historical monument (1923), and then the Ministry of Culture converted it into a museum. Château d'Oiron is now public property; it notably houses a Cabinet of Wonder (Cabinet of Curiosities), containing scientific and zoological artifacts, as well as a wax figure of Claude Gouffier himself.

Château de Crazannes

Château de Crazannes is situated in the town of Crazannes, Charente-Maritime, on the southwestern coast of France. A fortress was first built in the 11th century. The dungeon and the Romanesque chapel still remain to this day. A 'modern' castle was built on the site of the fortress during the 14th century. Many famous people came to the castle, including Edward of Woodstock, called the Black Prince (1330-1676) and the prodigious patron of the arts, French king Francis 1 (reign: 1515-1547). The castle was owned by various families, including the family of the 'Marquis de Carabas'. Since the 17th century. Crazannes is known as the castle of *Puss in Boots* because it belonged to the Gouffier family (the sister of Louis Acarie de la Rousselière, who owned Crazannes, married Jules Gouffier). At the beginning of the 20th century, the chateau was in ruins, but Roger Chaudruc decided to buy it and in 1903, it was listed as an historical monument. More recently, following the divorce of the last owners, Hervé Pasté de Rochefort and his wife Hélène, the castle was sold to new owner in 2010 for one million three hundred euro. Jean-Pierre Giambiasi and his wife Marie-Claude intend to preserve the heritage by restoring the chateau. Crazannes is still open to the public; it also welcomes guest as a bed and breakfast: there are five rooms, including a 'room of Puss in Boots', a family suite for 4 persons.







Picture 6: Illustrated webpage of Crazannes with mention of *Puss in Boots* (source: http://www.crazannes.com)

According to Crazannes's website (see picture 6 above), Jules Gouffier was the inspiration for Perrault's tale, but it is certainly a mistake. Jules (born in 1636) was comte of Passavant, but not of Caravaz (Moréri, 1759, 296).

Filming Locations Connected to Perrault's Tales

Historical movies are often shot in French castles, notably adaptations of French fairytales, such as *Cinderella* and *Donkey Skin*.

Château du Plessis-Bourré

Château du Plessis-Bourré is situated in the Loire Valley, in the commune of Écuillé (Maine-et-Loire department). Jean Bourré (1424-1506), Finance Minister to King Louis XI (reign: 1461-1483), built the castle in 1472. Henry Vaïsse became the castle's owner in 1911. It was listed as an historical monument in 1931. The château became the property of Francois Reille-Soult, Duke of Dalmatie, in 1956. Being part of the Loire valley, it was added to the UNESCO heritage list in 2000. Since 2010, Aymeric d'Anthenaise and Jean-François Reille-Soult de Dalmatie are the managers. The famous French director Jacques Demy (1931-1990; French New Wave; director of The Umbrellas of Cherbourg in 1964 and The Young Girls of Rochefort in 1967) filmed Peau d'Âne (Donkey Skin) at Plessis-Bourré in 1970. In 1694, Perrault published a collection of verse tales, including *Peau d'Âne*. The tale was dedicated to the marquise de Lambert (1647-1733), because Perrault was frequenting her literary salon. The movie is an adaptation of Perrault's story, starring Catherine Deneuve and Jean Marais. According to Hill (2005), Demy was fascinated by Perrault's tale and began to write a script in 1962. His movie contains many references to Jean Cocteau's Beauty and the Beast (1946), also starring Jean Marais. Live actors were famously used to portray human statues. Many other movies were filmed at Plessis-Bourré, such as Le Bossu (On Guard, with Daniel Auteuil in 1997) and The Princess of Montpensier (with Mélanie Thierry and Lambert Wilson in 2010).

Château de Hautefort

Château de Hautefort is situated in Hautefort, in the department of Dordogne. The medieval fortress owned by Guy de Lastours, around the year 1000, was transformed into a castle in the 17th century by the Lords of Hautefort. French style gardens and an English style park were added during the 19th century. The industrialist Bertrand Artigues bought the castle in 1890, but when he died, the place was left in ruins. Baron Henry de Bastard became the new owner in 1929. After a terrible fire in 1968, the château was restored. 1998 movie *Ever After*, inspired by *Cinderella* was shot at Hautefort and in Dordogne. Interestingly, the movie begins with the Brothers Grimm visiting Château de Hautefort to meet with a Grande Dame (Jeanne Moreau) who tells them the 'true' story of Cinderella, that is, the story of her ancestor from the 16th century, Danielle de Barbarac (Drew Barrymore). The Dame shows the two brothers her glass slipper. In the movie, Prince Henry, son of King Francis I, saves Leonardo da Vinci (and the Mona Lisa) from robbers. Château de Fénelon and Château de Beynac (Dordogne) are also filmed in the movie.

Conclusion

The author wrote a working paper in French years ago on French fairy tales and castles. It was never published; however, it is available online (Montoneri, 2011). The present study is an opportunity to resume my work, to develop it, and to update it. Hopefully, the idea to create a French route of fairytales won't be lost. To bring it to fruition, one would have to contact the owners of all the places related to Charles Perrault and his tales. It would be culturally and financially valuable to open such a route, but the success of this enterprise would also require the involvement of the Ministry of Culture. This research can only give suggestions and information on places worth adding to the route. Of course, many others could be added.

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