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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL,  
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CONVENTION CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE  
WORLD CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE

WORLD HERITAGE COMMITTEE

Eighteenth session  
Phuket, Thailand

12-17 December 1994

Report on the Expert Meeting on Routes as a Part of our Cultural  
Heritage (Madrid, Spain, November 1994)

# **ROUTES AS PART OF OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE**

## **REPORT ON THE MEETING OF EXPERTS**

**MADRID 24-25 NOVEMBER 1994**

### **1. AIM OF THE MEETING**

When the Pilgrim's Route to Santiago de Compostela was added to the World Heritage list in Cartagena in 1993, Spain announced its intention of bringing together experts to discuss the question of "cultural routes" in more depth.

The World Heritage Committee Board approved this initiative at its meeting held in July 1994 in Paris.

The following conclusions of the meeting of experts which took place in Madrid on 24 and 25 November 1994 are submitted to the World Heritage Committee and the Director General of UNESCO for their consideration.

### **2. A RICH AND FERTILE CONCEPT FOR TODAY'S WORLD**

a). The concept of heritage routes is shown to be a rich and fertile one, offering a privileged framework in which mutual understanding, a plural approach to history and a culture of peace can all operate. It is based on population movement, encounters and dialogue, cultural exchanges and cross-fertilization, taking place both in space and time.

b). The nature of the concept is open, dynamic and evocative, bringing together the conclusions of the global strategic study striving to improve the recognition within Heritage "of the economic, social, symbolic and philosophical dimensions and constant and countless interactions with the natural environment in all its diversity".

### 3. A WIDE RANGE OF INITIATIVES

a). The experts noted numerous initiatives based on the idea of movement and dialogue. They are being carried out by UNESCO (e.g. the Silk Route and the slave route), the Council of Europe (European cultural routes) and by other groups and organisations.

b). These initiatives fall within the scope of a global vision of exchanges, which includes material, cultural and spiritual ones, combining tangible and intangible elements, culture and nature.

c). The acceptance of these cultural heritage routes leads to research work on the importance of the exchanges they have generated, prompts study expeditions, opens up the way for cultural tourism and - another very important aspect - public awareness programmes and youth training schemes.

d). The protection and promotion of these cultural heritage routes require skilled management and, more particularly, careful control of the level of tourism affecting them, as well as the participation of the inhabitants living in the lands over which the routes cross. Reference is also made to a land planning policy within a framework of lasting development.

e). The experts recommend that the World Heritage Committee and the Director General of UNESCO ask countries to implement this new approach, on a nationwide, regionwide and worldwide basis.

### 4. INCLUSION OF CULTURAL ROUTES AS PART OF WORLD HERITAGE

a). The requirement to hold exceptional universal worth should be recalled.

b). The concept of heritage routes:

- is based on the dynamics of movement and the idea of exchanges, with continuity in space and time;

- refers to a whole, where the route has a worth over and above the sum of the elements making it up and through which it gains its cultural SIGNIFICANCE;

- highlights exchange and dialogue between countries or between regions;

- is multi-dimensional, with different aspects developing and adding to its prime purpose which may be religious, commercial, administrative or otherwise.

c). A heritage route may be considered as a specific, dynamic type of cultural landscape, just as recent debates have led to their acceptance within the Operational Guidelines.

d). The identification of a heritage route is based on a collection of strengths and tangible elements, testimony to the significance of the route itself (see reference document

in annex 3).

e). The authenticity test is to be applied on the grounds of its significance and other elements making up the heritage route.

It will take into account the duration of the route, and perhaps how often it is used nowadays, as well as the legitimate wishes for development of peoples affected.

These points will be considered within the natural framework of the route and its intangible and symbolic dimensions.

f). The experts propose the following addition to the Operational Guidelines. The new paragraph would follow paragraph 40. This proposal is put forward at the same time as the suggestions made by the other meeting of experts held in Canada on the question of canals.

#### PROPOSED NEW PARAGRAPH

**A heritage route is composed of tangible elements of which the cultural significance comes from exchanges and a multi-dimensional dialogue across countries or regions, and that illustrate the interaction of movement, along the route, in space and time.**

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#### Annexes

- 1 - Meeting Agenda.
- 2 - List of participants.
- 3 - Reference note on identification criteria.

**Reunión de expertos internacionales  
sobre "Los Itinerarios como Patrimonio Cultural"  
ICOMOS internacional - Ministerio de Cultura  
Madrid, 24/26 de Noviembre de 1994**

Lugar: Sala de Prensa. Ministerio de Cultura. Plaza del Rey. Madrid.

**Jueves 24 de Noviembre.**

9.30 . Palabras de bienvenida de **Carmen Alborch**, Ministra de Cultura  
. Presentación a cargo de **Jesús Viñuales**, Director General de Bellas  
Artes y Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales.

10 . Introducción al coloquio. **Carmen Añón**, Presidenta del Comité  
Consultivo del ICOMOS. Coordinadora general de la reunión.

**PRIMERA SESION** Presidencia: **Felipe Garín**, Coordinador del ICRBC Ministerio  
de Cultura.  
Coordinación: **Mechtild Rössler**, Centro del Patrimonio  
Mundial.

11 . **Jean Louis Luxen**, Secretario General de ICOMOS. *Los Itinerarios  
y el Patrimonio: actualidad de la problemática.*  
. **Regina Durighello**, *Los Itinerarios y la Convención de París.*

12.30 - 14 Ponencias y debate:

. **Félix Benito**, ICRBC Ministerio de Cultura. *El Camino de Santiago.*  
. **Doudou Dienne**, Director de la División de proyectos interculturales  
UNESCO. *Rutas de la Seda, de los Esclavos, del Hierro en Africa y  
de la Fe.*

## SEGUNDA SESION

Presidencia: **Felipe Garín**, Coordinador del ICRBC Ministerio de Cultura.

Coordinación: **Doudou Diene**, Director de la División de proyectos interculturales UNESCO.

16 - 19

Ponencias y debate:

. **Michel Thomas-Penette**, Consejero del Programa de Itinerarios Culturales del Consejo de Europa. *El Programa de Itinerarios Culturales del Consejo de Europa*

. **Mechtild Rössler**, Centro del Patrimonio Mundial. *Paisaje cultural y canales en el cuadro del Patrimonio Mundial.*

. **Blaine Cliver**, Servicio Nacional de Parques USA. *Historic transportation corridors.*

. **Lambert Messan**, Embajador del Niger en la UNESCO. *Los itinerarios como Patrimonio Cultural. Africa.*

**Viernes 25 de Noviembre**

## TERCERA SESION

Presidencia: **María Mariné**, Subdirectora General de Monumentos y Arqueología. ICRBC Ministerio de Cultura

Coordinación: **Azedine Beschaouch**, UNESCO.

9.30 - 11

. **Zach Watson Rice**, Arquitecto. USA. *From Keowee to Charleston: Remnants of the Cherokee Indian Trading Path*

## CUARTA SESION

Presidencia: **María Mariné**, Subdirectora General de Monumentos y Arqueología. ICRBC Ministerio de Cultura

Coordinación: **Félix Benito**, ICRBC Ministerio de Cultura.

11.30 -14

. Discusión y debate: *Los Itinerarios. Concepto y naturaleza. Criterios de identificación y delimitación. Encuadre normativo. Puesta en valor. Los Itinerarios y el Patrimonio Mundial.*

**QUINTA SESION**

Presidencia: **María Mariné**, Subdirectora General de Monumentos y Arqueología. ICRBC Ministerio de Cultura  
Coordinación: **Alvaro Gómez Ferrer**, Presidente de ICOMOS-España

16 -17  
*Las*

Conferencia: **Luis Vicente Elías**, Fundación Caja Rural de la Rioja.  
*vías pecuarias en España.*

17.15 - 18.30

Debate de conclusiones y propuestas

18.30

Clausura por **Jesús Viñuales**, Director General de Bellas Artes, Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales.

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Cena ofrecida por el Ministerio de Cultura

**Sábado 26 de Noviembre**

Visita: Ciudad de Toledo / Museo del Prado

**Reunión de expertos internacionales  
sobre "Los Itinerarios como Patrimonio Cultural"  
ICOMOS internacional - Ministerio de Cultura  
Madrid, 24/26 de Noviembre de 1994**

**LISTA DE PARTICIPANTES**

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. **Michel Thomas-Penette**, Consejero del Programa de Itinerarios Culturales del Consejo de Europa.  
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Ministerio de Cultura de España:

**Jesús Viñuales**, Director General de Bellas Artes y Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales. Ministerio de Cultura.

**Felipe Garín**, Coordinador del Instituto de Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales. Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales.

**María Mariné**, Subdirectora General de Monumentos y Arqueología del Instituto de Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales.

**María Dolores Fernández-Posse**. Subdirección General de Monumentos y Arqueología del Instituto de Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales.

### **3. IDENTIFICATION AND DELIMITATION CRITERIA**

The World Heritage Conference's acknowledgement of the concept of routes is an important step forward on the path to recognition of the diverse nature of mankind's heritage. One specific merit of such a step is that it will mean nomadic communities can now aspire to gain a degree of cultural recognition which was previously only open to sedentary peoples. This is particularly important in all those areas of the world (Africa, Asia, America) where the level of productivity (poor and uncertain) offered by the natural environment means that its natural resources cannot be exploited on a continued and long-lasting basis and effectively prevents man from establishing a permanent presence there. These areas cover vast (between 30 and 40%) expanses of the three continents and the human communities affected are many and varied (Moors, Touareg, Teda, Peul, etc. in Africa). With this new situation, these nomadic peoples may gain recognition for the role that they have played. This does not only include their development of adapted strategies for the temporary exploitation of resources which have only limited availability (and thus cannot be used on a permanent basis) but also the knowledge they have acquired about an area and a masterly command of routes, linking up sedentary communities. They play a part in this either by providing experts (guides), by ensuring the logistical elements required (beasts of burden, caravan personnel), or by guaranteeing the safety of the convoys (nomadic communities are often the first societies to have developed their economy based on services and not on the primary sector).

#### **1. Typology: defining elements**

From waggon trains to the mechanised rallies seen in the twentieth century, countless kinds of spatio-temporal routes have made their mark on mankind throughout its prehistory and history. Nevertheless, these routes do not all have the same cultural heritage worth (in this context, cultural is used as opposed to natural, to mean anything produced by man and not just limited to cultural manifestations in the narrow sense of the term as exemplified by art, literature and architecture).

The cultural worth of a route can be measured both by the dynamics (commercial, philosophical, religious) which it may have generated or favoured (transfer of goods, knowledge, know-how) and by the symbolic significance it represents for anyone using it (or for anyone who may have used it, or for anyone referring to it).

There are so many different kinds of routes that some type of classification needs to be established to ensure a better understanding of the subject. Without conducting any specific research the following are some examples of routes which regularly come up in our daily lives: the Odyssey, the silk route, the salt route, the rum trade route, the spice trade route, the waggon trail, the pilgrim's way to Santiago de Compostela, the hadji pilgrimage to Mecca, the slave route, intercontinental rallies, the crusades, Hannibal's alpine crossing, Napoleon's route, and Roman ways.

These different examples given above can immediately be divided up into religious events (pilgrimages, crusades), trade activities (silk, salt, spices), military campaigns (crusades, Napoleon's route, Hannibal's alpine crossing), sports events (the rum race, Paris-Peking rally, Paris-Dakar rally), etc.

It is also possible to pick out those routes which describe specific moments or events in history (taking place just once but leaving their mark: the Odyssey, the Russian campaign) and those which are regular routes (repeated time and time again over centuries and millennia).

Some of the routes can be classified as having strengthened cohesion and exchanges between different peoples (silk, salt, pilgrimages) and others clearly signified aggression and imperialism (slaves, crusades, etc.).

Some routes have a universal worth, whereas the scope of impact of others is more limited (national or local).

Within the context of World Heritage, our idea is to consider routes as a social phenomenon (time needs to go by before any of mankind's creations actually become part of cultural heritage and not simply something in fashion or representing a particular moment or event in history) rather than as an expression of one particular exceptional incident or moment. Even if they did make an impression at the time, routes like Hannibal's trek from North Africa to Rome, crossing the Alps on the way, or the route followed by Napoleon (from the

island of Elba to Paris) cannot fall under this category. The same can be said about modern-day events that can be likened to treks: early twentieth century intercontinental races and other mechanised rallies (Paris-Peking, Paris-Dakar, etc). They cannot be regarded either as a cultural practice or as having a notable diachronic cultural or commercial effect. They are really just technological tests and/or sporting feats, even if they do generate passion and considerable financial income at a given moment in time.

We intend to consider routes which combine **exchanges and journeys** and exclude those which are limited to representing a **physical way used for travelling**: Roman ways would not be classified under this idea of routes although they could still be included on the basis of their architectural or technological interest (for instance).

We could propose considering a route as having exceptional universal cultural heritage worth on the basis of its:

**spatial characteristics** - the length and diversity (varying) of a route reflect the interest of the exchange and the complexity of the links that it maintains (or maintained).

**temporal characteristics** - how long it has been in existence and the frequency of use, which could be multiannual, annual, seasonal. It must have established its identity through diachronic practice over sufficient time to leave its imprint on mankind.

**cultural characteristics** - the fact that it includes cross-cultural aspects (or effects), e.g. it links remote ethnic and cultural groups and fosters their mutual progress through exchange. Its capacity to bring together different peoples.

**role or purpose** - the fact that it has been used to exchange spiritual goods (religious or philosophical) or basic necessities for the survival of communities or has contributed to their development (trade in foodstuffs, minerals, manufactured goods, etc.).

The criteria set out above certainly enable us to distinguish different categories of routes, but beyond these categories it is also necessary for the use of a route to have had some kind of repercussion for civilisation, even if (or when) any exchanges produced now no longer take place or have been modified. The Silk Route, to quote an example, has not lost its cultural heritage worth simply because ships have taken over from caravans in the transport of silks.

On the contrary, this very fact has granted a mythological or symbolic value to the route which it never acquired simply through its material use, turning it into an almost legendary phenomenon.

## **2. Material nature:**

Any site considered part of World Heritage must be perfectly identified for it to take advantage of suitable protection and development measures which may be implemented as a result. A route, therefore must be correctly identified together with any important heritage components linked to it.

### *Delimiting the route*

It is important (if only for the record) to accurately define the routes followed: recognised overland routes, river and sea routes. The many and substantial modifications mankind has made to the environment over recent decades have meant that this task is not as simple as it may seem on the surface. To take an example, it is not so easy to accurately retrace the 17th century caravan routes used in Anatolia, despite the rather detailed documentation which does exist (e.g. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's texts).

Political events (wars, coup d'états, diplomatic hazards) or natural disasters (floods, droughts) have wrought great changes on routes and this is something we should realise and take into account.

### *Identifying important heritage components*

Throughout history, up to the twentieth century, journeys included:

concentration points (departure, arrival);

lodging places (on overland journeys there are often reception points every 40 km) (caravanserais, hostels etc);

watering holes (for animals and men, such as wells, springs and fountains);

compulsory passing places: fords, bridges, mountain passes, ports, etc.

All of these components which marked out the routes have consequently left architectural remains or signs on the landscape. We should acknowledge these different elements and protect them by incorporating them into the description of the site forming part of our Heritage.

Furthermore, every long journey needed some kind of specific organisation beforehand (caravan leader, travel and protection agreements), experts to take part (guides, navigators), and documents to be held (safe-conducts, passports, visas, bills of exchange, etc.).

It is important too for us to compile documentation on all these services which enabled the journey to take place along the route.

Another original feature of routes, compared with any other category of site forming part of World Heritage, is certainly the fact that they are not limited to the elements making up their material nature (the physical way itself). We have to add to this aspect specific interactions between human groups over and beyond political barriers. This does not only include the objects, products, or the results of direct exchange (i.e. elements researched and declared as such, e.g. silk), themselves, but also any indirect, subsequent products, which often have had more important cultural consequences, such as the introduction of Buddhism into China. Consequently, the acceptance of routes as part of World Heritage should generate significant and varied research work in this field to bring out all their different dimensions and the impact they may have had on the peoples and cultures involved.

Such work may also lead to the preparation and implementation of the strategy to signpost the site as part of World Heritage: route boards, specific milestones, gateways to entrance and exit points or to important crossroads, etc.

### *Routes and natural heritage*

Owing to their importance, certain routes have had an impact on natural resources, on the landscape or countryside (deforestation, track erosion), which should be noted in an inventory and taken into account.

In fact, some routes have really only been able to develop because the ecosystems crossed allowed travel to take place (by providing resources). It would be useful to consider the present condition of this natural heritage and to preserve the elements which even now may still indicate the conditions of usage which existed when these routes were in intensive use.

### **3. Inventory method:**

If we consider that one of the strengths of routes lies in their capacity to bring together communities and to facilitate exchanges inventories should be set up on a regional basis, aided by existing core elements in the field of human sciences in the regions under consideration [e.g, in the arid African region: Dakar (IFAN), Niamey (IRSH)]. A working group should be set up in each region to consider this concept and to take stock of available knowledge in this field. In certain cases, we will discover that existing knowledge deserves to be researched in greater depth. This concept may then usefully help to develop theses and to train those experts working on this heritage category.

### **4. Delimitation criteria:**

[I have problems differentiating identification criteria and delimitation criteria.] Three categories of criteria could be used to delimit a route: spatial and temporal criteria to establish its exact material nature and cultural criteria to define the effects and consequences arising from its use.

#### *Spatial criteria*

the route followed, sites, monuments, constructions, buildings, ways, area of influence.

#### *Temporal criteria*

its beginning, end, frequency of use; intensity of use and variations

### *Cultural criteria*

Impact. The purpose of the route and its limits, meaning the type of exchange (spiritual or material). Its impact on mankind's memory or experience (introduction of new practices). The volume and the nature of the exchanges (men, goods, technologies).

#### **5. Submission procedures:**

Routes constitute original cultural heritage (concepts) in their definition and their material nature. Most routes with a universal heritage value are spread over several countries. Consequently, it is important to set out the procedures for submitting this new type of site for inclusion as part of World Heritage.

The most desirable method is for the relevant request to be made with the agreement of all the countries concerned which would make a joint application. However, the inherent risk in this procedure is that it may be blocked by differences in appraisal of priorities, for a particular country may believe it is more urgent to submit a site that is wholly located in its national territory than to collaborate on the recognition of a route.

In the case of transnational routes, the problem of legislation (management, protection, ownership, financial aid) will also arise.

Can we imagine registration requests being made, for example, by a country anxious to preserve a particular route crossing its territory without all the other countries concerned participating in the initiative? Would total acceptance of the route only take place as and when the other countries concerned subscribed to the application?