

**Rethinking (local, regional, national, European and world) intangible heritage**

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Fig. 1 – *The Way by the coast* © MFLambert

**“The Route: the New Way to Santiago Compostela following the seascape”**  
**WALK THE ROUTE: ONESELF, AESTHETICS AND LANDSCAPE**

“Silhouettes cut out against the landscape. Architectural images standing out on the horizon. People and places you want to find after the next turn.”<sup>1</sup>

“The walker is, in many respects, a primitive man, just as the nomad is more primitive than the peasant.”<sup>2</sup>

The research project “The New Way towards Santiago Compostela” is being held since 2016. As for a field methodology the researchers decided to test this new path, crossing their experience with the knowledges mainly concerning aesthetic [**Walkscapes** - **Francesco Careri**] and theories of landscape, cultural anthropology and studies on movement and performance.

At present, undertaking a route towards Santiago is a process of walking and traveling. The meaning of travel involves introspection, through the persistence of self-archiving, which is established aiming the steady conquest of the Way.

At the beginning of this century, another *path* of the Route arose from the outline of consecutive groups of Walkers [prefer to use this term, not only pilgrims decide to undertake the *Way*]. This **New Route of the Way** towards Santiago in Portuguese territory is chosen not only because the

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<sup>1</sup> Nelson Brissac Peixoto – “Miragens”, *Cenários em ruínas – a realidade imaginária contemporânea*, Lisbon, Gradiva, 2010, p.137

<sup>2</sup> Herman Hesse, *El caminhante*, BCN, Brugera Libro Amigo, 1978, p.9

distance involved. Thus, the transfiguring conception of the Way results from a "spontaneous action" of people, similar to what happened at its origin. From and through Portugal were established three different historically Routes. One of the most highlighted topics that fulfill personal experience of this **new route** concerns the fact that this route runs parallel to the coastline. The walker enjoys the privilege of a unique contact with the land/seascape. The dominant aesthetic unfolds along the sinuosity of the coast, following the lines of the dunes, the rocks, as though the massive or flat sand or clay.

"I found in life only one or two people who understood the art of walking, that is, the art of walking and that they had a special talent for wandering."<sup>3</sup>

"The Route also awakens the imaginary by emerging in its own writing."<sup>4</sup>

«The shadow: I have not heard you speak for so long; I would like to give you the opportunity. The traveler: Speaks: where? And who? It seems that I hear myself talking, only that with a weaker voice than mine is already."<sup>5</sup>

"C'è un solo viaggio possibile: quello che facciamo nel nostro mondo interiore. Non credo che si possa viaggiare di più nel nostro pianeta. Così come non credo che si viaggi per tornare. L'uomo non può tornare mai allo stesso punto da cui è partito, perché, nel frattempo, lui stesso è cambiato."<sup>6</sup>

You can think that it might concerns, be connected with the universe of a certain *Travel Literature (Litterature di Viaggio)*. That it regards those writings that seduce most of us. Those that won't be travelling soon or even the ones who don't dare to throw themselves into the unknown. But even those who refuse to travel, like to participate on the journeys described and shared by the most authentic travelers and spread worldwide in presence of notebooks, drawings or other visual documents that seldom complete the editions of travel literature - in the old times it was engravings and prints.

A famous philosopher who has been researching and writing about these subjects, the Italian author Attilio Brilli emphasizes:

"Parlare di letterature di viaggio vuol dire narrare storie di viaggiatori che narrano storie di uomini, di sentimenti, di luoghi, di paesaggio e delle loro trasformazioni, e naturalmente di sé stesse."<sup>7</sup>

Those who walk the St. James's Way, paraphrasing Nietzsche when he established five levels for differentiating travellers, may achieve the supreme stage, correspondingly, "... there are some men of superior strength who necessarily end up exhibiting in the light of day, all that they saw, after having lived and assimilated; they then relive their journeys in works and deeds on returning home."<sup>8</sup>

The travel concept closely associates with that of education, culture and the construction of identity, in an inseparable and generous triad. The concept of walking, in turn,

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<sup>3</sup> Henry David Thoreau, *Caminhada*, Lisbon, Antígona, 2013, p.15

<sup>4</sup> Patrick Fraysse, Sabine Roux and Caroline Courbieres, "La Route comme mémoire», *Perspectivas em Ciências de Informação*, vol.14, Número Especial, 2009, p.93

<sup>5</sup> Nietzsche, *Le Voyageur et son ombre*, Paris, Ed. Mercure de France, 1902, p. 216 In <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k5533615g> ( accessed March 2018)

<sup>6</sup> Andrej Arsen'vico Tarkovskij, *Tempo di viaggio*, 1983 In <http://majoranafascitelliblog.altervista.org/2017/06/02/viaggio-metafora-della-vita-un-excursus-nella-storia-della-letteratura/> Filme disponível em <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdBOthoiHsg>

<sup>7</sup> Attilio Brilli, *Gli ultimi viaggiatore*, Bologna, Ed. Il Mulino, 2018, p.7

<sup>8</sup> Nietzsche, *Le Voyageur et son ombre*, p. 146

involves all these three terms and in conjunction with resilience. It is said that resilience serves as an aggregator, as a catalyst for the others. At present, undertaking any of the Camino de Santiago routes represents a process of walking and traveling. The meaning of travel encapsulates interiority, introspection, through the persistence of self-archiving, which is as incessant as it is established by the gradual and ongoing conquest of the Way.

The weighted choice, by walkers, of one of the Santiago Way routes among those that cross Portuguese territory does not only result from the extension or the distance involved. Such choices stem from several singular motivations that converge and attribute preference to one of them. As I noticed at the beginning this century, the transfiguring conception of the Way became repeated as a result of the "spontaneous actions" of people, similar to that which happened with the origins of the three historically established Routes. One such cause, which I think is meaningful, considering the stipulation of this new Way of Saint James, depends upon the development of the once new footbridges, hence since *circa* 2007 – concerning the socio cultural determinations of local politics – this new *Way* begins in Porto, by the Cathedral and descends towards the river Douro reaching the sea, the beachline of Foz do Douro, then Matosinhos, Leça da Palmeira...on and on... almost 200 kms up to the border with Spain (Galicia).

On the one hand, although this new route is already summarily mapped (and available online), on the other hand, it is still able to reveal ever more unexpected aspects given the continuing lack of "formal" or "official" infrastructures that can be enjoyed along the other three Portuguese paths.

«The Route, as an abstraction, is an archetype, symbol, ritual, obsession, rêverie, emblem...From this prodigious reservoir of metaphors, we will not litter.»<sup>9</sup>

One of the topics highlighted in excerpts is the personal fulfilment from this new route through the continuous accompaniment of a route that runs parallel to the coastline, enjoying unique contact with the surrounding landscape. The dominant aesthetic unfolds along the sinuous twisting of the coastline, over dunes, rocks, undulating or flat, expanses of sand and earth.

The urge to undertake travel, journeys and/or pilgrimages corresponds to an age-old substance in humans. Maybe there's a link between, I mean it might be equivalent to the "inner necessity" for creation (recalling W. Kandinsky): "We feel an absolute need to move, rather, to move in a specific direction. A double necessity, therefore: to be on the way and to know where."<sup>10</sup> As D. H. Lawrence recalled in his book *Sea and Sardinia* (1921).

Those who decide to intercept the walk, fulfil premises that in themselves reunite variable goals. However, those who walk take the initiative to set their current environment aside, striving to satisfy their auspices - and gifts - that favour them: through perseverance, tenacity and conviction. They are moved by impulse, departing from any *polis*, attributing to themselves a role of gregarious differentiator. They are no longer engaged in the construction of some ideal city, as the ancients intended in their epic writings... Their personal assumptions, in the societal context, are guided by the consciousness of solitude - which is both increased and distended. Not only rewarding but necessary and reverberating along the way: "Walking is a method of re-enchanting duration and space."<sup>11</sup>

Within this single, specific duration, silence is often a longed-for condition; in the knowledge of how many walkers prefer to be alone, a kind of ultimate conquerors of

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<sup>9</sup> Régis Debray, "Rhapsodie pour la Route", *Les cahiers de médiologie* 1996/2 (N° 2), p. 10

<sup>10</sup> D.H. Lawrence, *Sea and Sardinia* (1921) cited by Paul Theroux, *A Arte da Viagem*, Lisbon, Quetzal, 2011, p. 15

<sup>11</sup> David Le Breton, *Éloge de la marche*, Paris, Métailié, 2000, p. 19

themselves: "Walking, in the context of the contemporary world may evoke a form of nostalgia or resistance."<sup>12</sup>

Walking can represent the most visceral form of survival whenever communities or individuals are exposed to adverse environments or catastrophes. Then, facing such drastic situations, the community must take off and get away in a shared displacement in a search for less harmful conditions. In this case, the walk becomes an inexorable exodus. Such marches imply dreadful migrations shorn of the illusion of walking; the act becomes peremptory, lacking any form of freely deliberated resolution. In this research and text, we instead consider a more grateful, rewarding walk. Walking the *Way* is instead an existential experience, and not a sentence imposed by any corporate tyranny; it expects that the longing and the distance are of intentional observance.

«Time itself is a traveler without rest, observes Bashô watching the seasons and the days go by.»<sup>13</sup> (Quoted by David le Breton)

The idea of walking presupposes a temporary or prolonged withdrawal from contact with one's closest intimates, whether by intention or by self-motivation: hermits, ascetics, thinkers, philosophers and poets have all assumed this design. All these characters populate the history of the walk as well as integrating the different legends of the universal mythologies. In this context, those paths were most frequently initiatory. Throughout the history of mankind, such an idea would extend to very other different contexts.

Henri-David Thoreau established a philosophical, ideological, societal and anthropological concept of walking, which has been celebrated for over two centuries. His *Art of Walking* remains timeless, projecting our expectations and I consider it applicable, at least within a certain perspective, to the walkers of Santiago as we see throughout this research.

The [artistic and] aesthetic walk concept allows for one application to be transposed to others, qualifying them, in their literal and / or metaphorical meaning. Recall the configuration of the concept of Aesthetics Walks / *Walkscapes* as Francesco Careri entitled it, when he referred to a practice encompassing three different stages throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and that highlighted practices carried out during the transition periods:

- from Dadaism to Surrealism (1921/1924);
- from the International Lyricist to the Situationist International (1956/1957);
- from Minimalism to Land Art (1966/1967);
- and after, more recently... at the present time we know of several artists which assume the aim of aesthetic walk - *walkscape*, considering different assumptions...

In this context, the concept very often refers to experiences in urban or semi-urban topographies, whether or not associated with artistic and sociocultural purposes. This *New Way* towards Santiago traverses nature following the landscape - the seascape, mostly constituting a *human-scape* in search of an [almost] ultimate meaningful way of being as a fulfilled [being] person.

The opportunity to walk also brings together, in its disparate instances and functions, the ludic dimension, the lean pleasure of its achievement, promulgated as an artistic dimension. On the one hand, walking today enables the "construction", the "re-invention" of landscapes at a slow speed, and contrary to the characteristics of our contemporary way of living. It implies, on the other hand, the accumulation of the most capital meanings, underlying the arguments of the authors quoted above, among others (and also as common sense for

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<sup>12</sup> David Le Breton, *Éloge de la marche*, Paris, Métailié, 2000, p. 14

<sup>13</sup> David Le Breton, *Éloge de la marche*, Paris, Métailié, 2000, p. 23.

some persons). Today, as for an artist, as for the perspective of a walker of this *New Way* focus in the midst of an introspective act of deconstructive visioning (and while aiming for a better way of being), and within the context of a most qualifying aesthetic of a human way of life in cities that are far too absorbent.

In accordance with these terms, just how do you access the distended time of "making the way"? The mastery of the body must be sustained by the best conditions, in agreement with the desire to "hurry", in order to overcome the distance. What precedes the realization of the walk-pilgrimage-path is multiple. It is not possible here to detect all of the causes that, in reality, are as numerous as the walkers who decide on them. However, the features that I designate as "common denominators" - and which also govern certain acts - might also be identified.

The walk - apparently - without any destination encapsulates a historical background in European culture and philosophy and the thought systems sustained the **second** half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century promoted a certain reconversion in the format (and intention) of aesthetic actions and artistic situations. The lineage of the *Walkscapes* derives from JJ Rousseau's reflections embodied in the *Reveries of a Lonely Walker* (1777), William Hazlitt in *On going a Journey* (1822) or Henry Thoreau in *Walking* (1862), preceding the worldly *Revêries* of Charles Baudelaire in *Painter of Life Modern* (1859), Guillaume Apollinaire in *Flâneur des deux rives* (1918) and Walter Benjamin in *Paris, Capitale du XIXe siècle* (1939), among other authors. I must also mention: Robert Walzer, *Der Spaziergang* (1985), W. Sebald, *Le Promeneur Solitaire, Remembering Robert Walzer* (2000)...and also Bernardo Soares, *Book of Disquiet*...

Indeed, Thoreau had already emphasized the need to walk as a condition for the greatest well-being of the person; the importance of enjoying the outdoors, of feeling the sun and experiencing nature. Almost beatific ideas, we might think, bearing the indices of an argumentation and a meaningful sensitivity that many had termed utopian in a deprecating connotation. It is known that evoking the act of walking very often, implies an idealizing vision, which transposes (and locates) the walker in the bosom of nature, although such actions in contemporary times are often drawn in urban settings or in combinations with natural scenarios.

Despite the connotations that determine the kind walk you're in, spite of the goal that has decided it, safeguarding its scopes or purposes, let us consider what I appointed as "common denominators": presume an **awareness of the place of departure**, how those who decide to achieve the *Way* must decide on the **timeline of arrival** even while the route itself might assume so many and so likely deviations. Furthermore, the **memory of the walk** must (and will) prevail, thereby extending the time that it really lasted. It therefore lacks maintenance, preserved in some external medium so its memory might be shared with those whom were unable to embark on the same walk... and never obliterating the **inner capacity of walkers to sustain some kind of file agglomerating their mental images**.

Prior to the appearance of the photograph, travel, hiking and expedition records were secured by designers, artists or amateurs, who would thus perpetuate the images of that seen. These records were established as inventories in the case of scientific ventures. However, even in the case of undertaking personal paths, whether for self-formation or inner gathering, not only artists were striving for some strategy to guarantee the memory in order to share this as an intersubjective document with others. Sometimes I see some walkers along the beach line of Foz do Douro. Most of them while walking look at the seascape, but they don't stop to take any picture, to photograph. Some others, yes they do it. They take their time, even seat at a terrace to have a coffee or eat. It depends on the person, of course.

Describing that experienced reaches beyond the realms of the visual and reason even though scientific requirements can be summoned and the most commonly desired registers are objective: there is always a degree of contamination, subsidized by the unique emotion of walking the path. The landscape, the route walked, everything changes in the post-events.

The world welcomes the journey, the landscape and the utopia, all gathered into the walk. The world, wrote Gloria Moure in the text published in the *On the Road* exhibition catalogue, could only be global and contingent: "The world is, therefore, an immense landscape where the empirical and the mental intertwine inevitably. The human being is not a separate observer who configures this landscape, but rather focuses on it, in order to appreciate it, measure it and know it. The landscape condition is therefore a transcendental condition or rather it is the authentic human condition."<sup>14</sup>

There is a horizon to explore, defined and unsuspected paths, a vastness that might be both located and accessed - in a self-made act - as a place, pondering intersections of landscapes that can be taken in different percentages, according to the recipient's capacity for interiorization (an analogy to the aesthetic reception of the work of art). This impulse, arising from the intention and decision to exploit, is appropriately proportioned to the balance and the ability to fulfil this "destiny" - either as a "**fatum**" or, in the most literal sense, meaning some specific location that is the desired destination.

"Exploring is delightful to look forward to and back upon, but it is not comfortable at the time, unless it be of such an easy nature as not to deserve the name."<sup>15</sup>



Fig. 2 – *The Way by the coast* © MFLambert

To locate ***I-self as oneself*** implies the definition of a place, both physically and mentally. This means finalizing or periodizing (temporarily) an interruption of the wandering; maintaining the nomadism of thought and action as the plural knowledge of mobility promotes a genuine aesthetic education - that is supposed to arise. Through the "foreign" gaze you see more "of what surrounds us, alerted to aspects that we sometimes overlook or do not emphasize. The other teaches us to see what is of the self ... or, at some moments in the history of thought and creation, served as a model, I wanted to be a model but it was something new, existing in the possible difference of escape." The paradigm of the fugue walk is transversal to many walkers, taking as its emblem poets and philosophers as pointed out by Frédéric Gros: "I see in Rimbaud the sense of walking as escaping."<sup>16</sup>

Walkers, while lingering on their course, belong a little longer to each place they pass by, either when crossing and through excerpts of nature or through footbridges and the overlapping small settlements. They are thus able to see with greater dignity and become assertive in the details that will be long fixed in memory; associating things seen with their

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<sup>14</sup> Gloria Moure, *On the Road*, Santiago de Compostela, Xunta de Galicia, 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Butler, *Erewhon or Over the Range*, Chapter IV in <http://www.booksshouldbefree.com/download/text/Erewhon-by-Samuel-Butler.txt> (accessed January 2018)

<sup>16</sup> Frédéric Gros, *Caminhar, uma filosofia*, São Paulo, éEdições, 2010, p.57

scents, perceiving almost imperceptible sounds, along with the sinuosity of the soil; all those details that only concentration on oneself allows one to delve into the space in which one moves.

The tendency, in the near slowness of the step, retains the images that - concatenated in the *Way* whenever desired both pictorially and photographically - probing the past, inevitably dissolved by the rhythmic and irreversible steps. What is on the *Way* is to be looked at, to be seen; and requiring more than aesthetic and/or decontaminated enjoyment. "Suspending" the requirement to think within boundaries leads to a stream of thoughts and reasons: there is room for contemplation. Just remember the famous solitary walkers, elected by W. Sebald in *The Solitary Walker, in memory of Robert Walzer*: Johann Peter Hebel, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Edward Mörike, Gottfried Keller, Robert Walser and Jan Peter Tripp. And all the others who stand out: Arthur Rimbaud, Nietzsche, Walt Whitman, H. Thoreau and some of those who were influenced by R. Walser: Stefan Zweig, Franz Kafka, Walter Benjamin, Hermann Hesse and Robert Musil. That is not to forget the poetics of Charles Baudelaire, Guillaume Apollinaire and, in the Portuguese case, the essential reference to Bernardo Soares / the Fernando Pessoa *orthonym*, beyond his other heteronyms.

The landscape is, very intensely, a visual matter, which is given to be visible, however this must be assumed as not only the order of the aesthetic. As Jean-Marc Besse pointed out, from the authors who preceded him, the landscape must be attended, summoning a plethora of scientific knowledge and methodological requirements. In this context, here we cross into the terrain of what is, in addition to being a conceptual and aesthetic matter, a case of direct approximation, moving scholars into their own places to apprehend the qualitative and characteristic features of that which is available to be seen (and set) under the complicity of different disciplinary gnosiologies.

In this approach to the landscape during the process of the *Way* [the *Walk*] – the object of study and psycho-affective object mobilized in the order of the drive - the right to subjectivity always exerts itself. Being aware of all that is absorbed in a state of availability (when an epistemological or investigative but experiential intention is not necessarily exercised), and only then, in an analytical and reflexive phase, then the repercussion of the collective construct attributed to the visibility of the landscape, identifies all the valences capable of being a reason for sharing. The landscape wanders, instituting itself as an inward journey, as a "sequel" in a post-hike period.

The landscapes absorbed during the Path will therefore in a certain way remain, in a ceaseless alertness, with the concept of identity in becoming plural being in favour of self-knowledge and sharing.



Fig. 3 – *The Way by the coast* © MFLambert

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