

Walking Pathways: The heritage that crosses the Strait of Gibraltar

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Abstract

The paper is about the study of heritage as a space of socio-cultural, economic and political crossroads between locations from the south of Spain and the north of Morocco. It is based on the experiences and practices developed during the process of the 'International Planning Preservation Workshop. Gaucín--Granada-- Tetouan. Pathways' organized in 2013 by the interdisciplinary research group 'Aedificatio'. The aim of the Workshop was to experience and learn from the historical, natural and cultural heritage at both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar. To explore these initially separated locations, the participants in the Workshop looked at the legacy of the so-called Al-Andalus, a territory created after the Arabs crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and spanned their civilization from the eight to the fifteenth century in the south of the Iberian peninsula. It was the departure point to foster collaborations, teaching and practices in different locations between international experts and students from disciplines such as architecture, urban, environmental and cultural studies. The Workshop itself and the relations within it became a space to reflect on the role of 'pathways' as an asset within the historical, geographical and experiential study of three locations: Gaucín, Granada and Tetouan. This paper will examine my role as social anthropologist in the Workshop and the methodological dimension that I proposed and put in practice through collaborations with the participants. Using walking as a method to understand the relationship between the heritage embedded in the memory of cities and towns and the everyday life became the way to explore the embodiment of places through movement and gathering of information within the temporality of walking. Then the experience and production of particular walking routes led to general considerations linking the three locations through comparisons, contrasts and reflections on those walking experiences.