TOURISM ROUTES: MATERIAL HERITAGE OF PORTUGUESE ORIGIN IN MOROCCO AND GOA

1. Introduction

Routes are an integral part of our lives. Presently, created or adapted as tourism routes of many sorts, these itineraries, which may vary from a simple urban trail to a vast intercontinental journey, are one of the key elements of tourism development throughout the world. This chapter attempts to make a preliminary discussion of the spatial configuration of tourism routes, based upon existing literature and on empirical observations, using various international and national examples. Furthermore, it applies two of these models to the cases of military heritage of Portuguese origin in Morocco and Goa, India. The analysis is supported by fieldwork conducted in Goa in 2008, and in Morocco, especially during 2010 and 2011.

2. Routes and Roots

The human body has not been made to travel at speeds that exceed much more than 30 kilometres per hour. This is roughly the maximum speed a human can run (in 2009 Usain Bolt set the world record of the 200 meters at a speed of 10.44 meters per second, or 37.5 km/hour), and the
limit velocity at which our skull can absorb impacts without fatal injuries¹. So, while our anatomy has evolved into a design that adapts comfortably to travel by walking and running, high speeds and the technologies that often accompany them are still foreign to our bodies. Two simple examples of these limitations are the dehydration our body suffers when we spend too many hours inside a plane at high altitudes, or the effects from jet lag, simply because we cross time zones too quickly. Humans’ settlement history has started long ago, and the overwhelming majority of contemporary societies is now rooted in particular places, being physically bounded to relatively restricted spaces. Nevertheless, society as a whole moves towards routing and is becoming increasingly restless and mobile. Travel is gradually more an integral part of the postmodern ‘new world order of mobility’ (Clifford 1997:1). With the massification of pleasure travel (even if confined to a part of the world’s population), an increasing number of people travels regularly, participating in these flows or scapes as Arjun Appadurai calls them (Appadurai 1996). The whole world seems to be on the move: from journalists to migrants and refugees, from tourists to movie and sport stars, from military to missionaries of all kinds. Apparently, for many people the world has no borders. At the same time, nomads are world minorities who often become the objects of the tourist gaze (Sarmento and Etemaddar 2009). Tourists travel great lengths to see or to have brief and superficial contacts with nomad indigenous people.

Routes are journeys that imply movement, some form of spatial progress, passing through various elements, attracting millions of tourists. As Sarmento and Henriques (2009: 285) put it, ‘routeing is in fact something inherent to tourism since tourism is inescapably ‘kinaesthetic’’. Routes are spatial geometries, and may vary from relatively short walking or cycling trails in a city, to longer motorized route itineraries in rural settings or intercontinental journeys, such as the Silk Road. What all these tourist routes have in common is the cultural consumption along the

¹ Mortality rates resulting from run-over accidents increase dramatically when they exceed 30 km/hour: 5% at 32 km/h; 45% at 48 km/h; 85% at 64 km/h and 100% at speeds over 80 km/hour.