Reflections on the development of the associative cultural landscapes concept

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Abstract

This set of three unpublished papers written by Professor Isabel McBryde in the 1990s provides valuable insights into the evolution of associative cultural landscapes, cultural routes and intangible cultural heritage. By both looking back to the evolution of cultural routes and looking forward to contemporary practice the papers demonstrate the extent to which global heritage practice has been greatly enriched by McBryde’s work.

The first paper ‘Australian World Heritage Sites Implications for listing of Australian Cultural Landscapes’ proved to be revolutionary when McBryde presented it at the 1992 UNESCO Expert Meeting on Cultural Landscapes, held at La Petite Pierre, France. It was radical in demonstrating how European concepts of monumental heritage were not appropriate for Australian World Heritage Sites. By providing new and far-reaching perspectives on associative cultural landscapes new definitions and criteria were created.

The second paper, ‘Travelling a storied landscape: trade routes, song lines and heritage’ was an invited discussion paper McBryde sent to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre Expert Meeting on ‘Itineraries as Cultural Heritage’, held in Madrid in 1994. She recognised the World Heritage listing of the pilgrim route of Camino de Santiago de Compostela as a significant conceptual change. Using the Pukardu Hill Red Ochre Expeditions as a case study McBryde demonstrated how the route is similarly embedded in the spiritual and ritual, with trading systems and traditions, and yet belongs to a very different cultural context to the Western Christian concept of pilgrimage.

The final paper ‘Storied Landscapes: the long distance exchange networks of the Cooper/Lake Eyre Basin as cultural landscape’ is an abridged version of the discussion paper written for an Australian Heritage Commission work shop on cultural landscapes, held in Canberra in 1995. The outcomes of this workshop were a contribution to the Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Associative Cultural Landscapes held at the Sydney Opera House and Jenolan Caves, Blue Mountains, NSW, Australia, 27-29 April 1995. McBryde’s paper is seminal in considering the associational, symbolic values of cultural landscapes and identifying that exchange routes and social and spiritual journeys differ in having a distinctive character and components.

McBryde recognised the necessity to include the concept of associational cultural landscapes, to distinguish cultural routes and to identify intangible cultural heritage. She understood that their inclusion would enrich the World Heritage List and make it more representative of global heritage.
Part 1: Cultural Landscapes in 1992: Memories of La Petite Pierre

Presentation to the UNESCO Expert Meeting on Cultural Landscapes
Held at La Petite Pierre near Strasbourg, France.
23-26 October 1992: Australia’s World Heritage Sites: Implications for Listing of Australian Cultural Landscapes

Introduction and Explanation January 2013

To submit for publication a paper prepared over twenty years ago may seem curious; indeed even unnecessary. I concede these points. But present it, with diffidence, as having historical interest given its context and the importance of the issues implicit in the discussions and outcomes from that context. The 1992 context was a small meeting of experts held in an upper room of the castle dominating the village of La Petite Pierre in the beautiful North Vosges Regional National Park near Strasbourg, Western France.

The meeting was convened by UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre, bringing together a range of professionals whose work centred on landscape studies. They came from Britain, Western Europe, Sri Lanka, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Its purpose was to report to the World Heritage Committee on definitions and criteria for categories under which cultural landscapes could be nominated for World Heritage Listing. David Forsyth attended as an Australian government representative.

The group was to report to the World Heritage Committee for its meeting in December 1992. Our meeting was chaired by Henry Cleere, ICOMOS Adviser on cultural values and assessment of nominated places to the World Heritage Centre in Paris. The Deputy Director attended. Also from the Centre were staff members with particular expertise in the area: Mechtild Rössler, and Sarah Titchen, then on leave from her research at the ANU on the concept of Outstanding Universal Value. These two made valuable contributions.

Currently there is increasing interest in the matters discussed and reported on from the La Petite Pierre meeting. There is also much general interest voiced by students and heritage professionals in World Heritage Listing as the Convention has recently celebrated its fortieth year. How have its Operational Guidelines been used and/or refined during that long period? Some have even questioned the ultimate value of World Heritage Listing. Others have been researching the development of the associational cultural landscape categories and their criteria, which came into use after 1992, greatly expanding the values accepted for assessment of nominated places.

The definitions and criteria proposed to the World Heritage Committee in the report from the meeting at La Petite Pierre were radical. They represented a distinct movement away from the monumental, material or archaeological focus of previous definitions for categories by bringing into play associated non-material values. These could include beliefs, traditions, also activities often continuing over time, even contemporary. It was a move towards much of what we are now comfortable referring to as ‘Intangible Heritage’. My paper argued for recognition and inclusion of such associational values in the definitions and criteria. So the meeting at La Petite Pierre has interest to those concerned with the evolution of ‘the Intangible’ in heritage evaluation.

The argument of my paper, somewhat unexpected to many participants, was that the current definitions and criteria were inappropriate for the cultural landscape heritage of much of the world. This applied particularly to the State Parties in whose once colonial lands many major heritage places belonged to, or were created by, their Indigenous societies – e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States.

The supportive response to my argument from members of the group who came from Canada (Dr Susan Buggey, then historian for Parks Canada), Sri Lanka (Dr Bandaranayake, cultural heritage expert) and New Zealand (Bing Lucas, IUCN Advisor to the World Heritage Committee on natural values with strong concerns for Maori communities and their heritage) ensured strong discussion which Henry Cleere encouraged. From this emerged new perspectives and the creation of new definitions and criteria. These could provide appropriate assessment of
the wide range of cultural and social values held by many places, and their significance, for different reasons to different sectors of society.

Soon after their formal acceptance Sarah Titchen began collaborative work with the Maori custodians of New Zealand’s Mount Tongariro. This was to develop a cultural landscape nomination for World Heritage Listing. The Mount Tongariro area had already been listed for its natural values. But on presentation and acceptance of the new nomination it became the first place to be listed also as a cultural landscape for its social and spiritual values under the new associational criteria developed at La Petite Pierre. Uluru Kata Tjuta in Australia soon followed.

Presentation to the October 1992 meeting at La Petite Pierre. Each state party’s participant was invited to introduce their country’s cultural heritage.

Australia is an island continent the size of North America’s United States. Given its extent, its geology and topography and its latitudinal position, it offers landscapes of great diversity. These range from the monsoonal scarps and wetlands of the tropical north, as in Arnhem Land, through the east coast’s sub-tropical and temperate rain forests to the once glaciated uplands of Tasmania. These surround a desert core of sandridges and chenopod shrublands, edged by extensive grassland and savannah woodlands. Much of the continent is sparsely occupied; many settlements are isolated even today. The ‘tyranny of distance’ is still a vital factor in Australian human geography. The cultural record of this island continent is diverse and spans some 50,000 years at least. Before the European colonial settlement from Britain in 1788 all areas of the continent had been occupied over long periods by Aboriginal hunter-gatherer societies. Those of the recent past are characterised by an intense spiritual relationship to the land. This spiritual relationship with its ‘country’ was essential to the life of each society. It is maintained and celebrated in the passing on of stories of the Dreamtime ancestral beings who created the land and established the rules of human life within it. It is maintained also in the holding of ceremonies. Maintaining the landscape of group territories and places within it was a traditional duty enjoined by the Dreamtime beings. Thus the group territory was often a ‘managed’ landscape, with use of fire as the tool. For each group it was an important social obligation to care for the resources of the landscape, such as stone quarries, important trees or yam fields.

The nature of the land, its environments and their resources, and its great distances, have shaped the personality of Australia’s history, whether of hunter-gatherer, colonial or post-colonial societies. The ‘tyranny of distance’ has been a valuable interpretive concept in historical studies since it was first proposed by Geoffrey Blainey decades ago.

The question of cultural landscapes is therefore an important one. The theme has recently become of considerable interest to several disciplines. The relationships between human societies and the natural environment are seen as major questions in Australian archaeology (both prehistoric and historic), for anthropologists and for human geographers. From the research of archaeologists and anthropologists has come awareness that many seemingly natural landscapes are in fact the results of careful long-term management. Australia by 1992 had nine listed World Heritage Areas. Three of these are listed formally for their important cultural values as well as their natural values. These are:

- Kakadu National Park  
  (In Arnhem Land – in the Northern monsoonal belt)
- The Willandra Lakes Region  
  (In the arid lands of Western New South Wales)
- The Tasmanian Wilderness Area  
  (The rainforest and alpine uplands of South Western Tasmania)

To these we should add Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park (Ayers Rock and the Olgas in Central Australia). It was nominated for its natural values but held important cultural values in the ongoing traditional life of local Aboriginal communities. All four places are also cultural landscapes, or incorporate cultural landscapes of the past. They represent important aspects of the interaction between human culture and the natural environment.
Some general points may be made about these four places:

1. All are cultural landscapes or incorporate cultural landscapes though they were not nominated as such. Three of them were nominated as displaying both cultural and natural values worthy of World Heritage status. They also displayed significant interaction between the natural environment and human society, in the past and the present. This interaction may be economic, but also religious and symbolic. It is significant that for both Kakadu and Uluru Kata Tjuta there is cultural continuity in this interaction.

2. All these Australian World Heritage sites involve extensive tracts of land.
   - Kakadu – over 1 million hectares
   - Willandra Lakes Region – 600,000 hectares
   - Uluru Kata Tjuta – 132,566 hectares
   - Tasmanian Wilderness – 1 million hectares

   If size is regarded a necessary characteristic of the cultural landscape these places have no difficulty in qualifying.

3. Three were inscribed for their prehistoric (archaeological) or Aboriginal cultural record – especially the place’s scientific values for our knowledge of the past (Willandra Lakes and Tasmania) or as exemplifying Aboriginal achievement in ongoing cultural traditions (the rock art of Kakadu).

4. The nominations for these places stressed the scientific values, and the contribution to world prehistory or knowledge of the evolution of the natural environment (geomorphic processes as at the Willandra Lakes). However cultural continuity and values are important aspects for Kakadu and also for Uluru Kata Tjuta.

5. These aspects raise questions of the social, scientific and symbolic values of various kinds held by these places for different groups within present Australian society.

   (i) That a number of such places still hold important values for Aboriginal people in ongoing traditional life (Kakadu, Uluru Kata Tjuta) is significant. It illustrates important linkages of direct, continuing, tradition that bind communities to their land (‘country’). Williams and Mununggurr comment thus on the Yolngu territory of Arnhem Land (in R. Layton (ed). Who needs the past? Indigenous values and archaeology, 1989: 77, 79).

   …there are for Yolngu means of understanding the past and the significance of the past in the present. These means exist in the tangible manifestations of the spirit-beings who travelled through Yolngu lands and waters and by their words and deeds, bestowed land on the Yolngu.

   …the Yolngu landscape is saturated with signs that bear meanings that are still immensely important… .

   (ii) The older cultural landscapes of the Willandra Lakes and South West Tasmania may be categorised as ‘relict cultural landscapes’, archaeological signifiers of past land-use systems. However these also hold symbolic values for present Aboriginal people. They are symbols of cultural continuity over many millennia. The 40,000 year old radio carbon dates for occupation layers in the Lake Mungo lunette were significant in Land Rights arguments of the 1970s and 1980s. So that place holds great power. Mungo, and Kutikina Cave in South Western Tasmania both also represent for many Indigenous people Aboriginal survival of the last 200 years of dispossession, as well as cultural continuity with a pre-European past.

   Kakadu as well holds similar values symbolic of the survival of Aboriginal groups (such as the Yolngu); survival as political, social and spiritual entities. It is relevant here that both Kakadu and Uluru Kata Tjuta are on legally designated Aboriginal land. Their management is by cooperative arrangements between the Aboriginal communities and the Australian National Parks and Wildlife Service.
6. It is intriguing that Australia’s places nominated to date on cultural criteria are all symbolic of Aboriginal cultural achievements. What does this imply about Australian perceptions of national cultural identity, and their expression in the choice of nominations for World Heritage Listing? These places are all of unquestioned universal significance. Yet there are also important historic eighteenth century and nineteenth century places and cultural landscapes that relate to global historic themes or to universal historic processes important for nominated places from other states party to the Convention. For example:

- Fremantle might represent the great ports and the sea transport networks of nineteenth century European colonial and commercial expansion.
- Victoria’s gold mining landscapes can be seen as relating to the world-wide gold rushes of the mid nineteenth century.
- Australia could offer many cultural landscapes to illustrate colonial frontier settlement and expansion as part of an historical process of world significance.
- Norfolk Island and Port Arthur in Tasmania are representative of the eighteenth century and nineteenth century convict systems significant for world history.
- Communication systems such as the long distance telegraph lines spanning the continent, minimising the ‘tyranny of distance’.

These features of Australia’s World Heritage cultural sites that are also, in my view, cultural landscapes, raise a number of issues crucial to the theme of this meeting, which focuses on definitions and criteria for cultural landscapes in World Heritage contexts.

There are however special characteristics which the current criteria set out in the present Operational Guidelines may not accommodate well. They make the preparation of nominations, as well as their acceptance by the World Heritage Committee, difficult. For example the cultural record for both historic and archaeological (Aboriginal) landscapes in Australia may be expressed in a series of inter-connected diverse sites or places. Together these constitute a total entity, such as a land-use, ceremonial or settlement system. In South Western Tasmania between 30,000 and 12,000 years ago there was such a land-use system, now represented by a network of archaeological sites. Each component of this network in itself may not display outstanding features. However, the totality of places in the network does, constituting a system of land-use. It also, of course, represents a relict cultural landscape.

So the stress in the currently available criteria used for assessment on monuments, buildings and specific sites/places poses problems for the assessment of such cultural landscapes, characteristic of Australia’s cultural record. One should also stress that for other regions with predominantly hunter-gatherer archaeological heritage such interconnected systems of sites may constitute the major cultural heritage. Consideration of categories accommodating serial sites, or series of sites/places constituting a viable entity, as well as accommodating individual monuments or groups of structures will certainly help resolve this problem.

So emphasis on monuments, sites and groups of buildings in the current criteria is a constraint. In English terminology the word ‘place’ would seem more appropriate to the Australian situation. It is the one adopted by the Australian Heritage Commission for its Register of the National Estate, and by Australia ICOMOS for its *Burra Charter*. It is a term particularly useful for landscapes, being neutral in regard to both extent and to natural or cultural values.

Further problems arise for the Australian cultural landscapes as well as for individual sites/places in the need to accommodate more effectively values that may be social, symbolic or spiritual (i.e. ‘associational’ in the terminology proposed by Henry Cleere at this meeting). Present criteria do not allow for an expression of the essential significance as perceived by the relevant societies involved. Indeed they could even be seen to be denying this in not accommodating it.

Within Australian cultural landscapes recorded by anthropologists and linguists (e.g. Strehlow, Hercus, Myers) many unmodified natural features hold important cultural values. They constitute sacred places, or places that embody the social and spiritual relationships between Aboriginal people and their land or with the creating ancestral beings. This intense relationship was well
expressed in the statement from Mununggur on Yolngu country quoted earlier. M. Tricaud’s paper to the meeting has acknowledged the issues raised by such sites; it is good to see them being addressed.

Definition of boundaries for places nominated for listing is an essential part of the nomination process. Yet where the values are predominantly social or symbolic, such definition poses problems. Establishing boundaries for entities whose limits are a matter of cultural perception rather than physical demarcation is problematic. For example, how do we define geographical limits for the line of a Dreaming Track (i.e. ‘songline’)? Or of the significant exchange linkages that created continent-wide networks? The Lake Eyre/Cooper Basin trade routes form some of the most extensive exchange networks in the hunter – gatherer world. Such a complex entity could be seen as an achievement of universal significance. Yet its physical expression rests on the distribution of rare raw materials, dispersed archaeological sites marking a possible ‘trade route’ and the source areas (e.g. ochre and stone quarries) for the items traded at the line’s nodes or exchange centres? Its ultimate reality is as a mental or social construct.

The wording of some criteria within those currently used seems to limit the ‘universality’ of their application. This is especially so where it in fact would exclude places for which there is cultural continuity with the archaeological past. For example the stress in paragraph 24 (a) iii of the Operational Guidelines on properties relating to ‘civilizations which have disappeared’ (UNESCO 1992: 5). Where ‘traditional human settlements’ are referred to the emphasis is on those that are ‘vulnerable’. This could be seen as extremely offensive, as denying the cultural integrity of those whose living traditions are rooted in the past. It is important that cultural continuity be explicitly recognised and accommodated in criteria if these are to be globally applicable as they should be if we are to consider World Heritage as encompassing the world’s heritage.
Continuity for historic places of the nineteenth century is also ill-accommodated. For example in Paragraph 29 of the Guidelines, where the reference to ‘the impact of the industrial era’ would exclude consideration of their cultural values in past, present or continuous contexts (UNESCO 1992: 6.)

It is vital that criteria for World Heritage listing are universally applicable on a world-wide basis. It is also vital that they accommodate cultural continuity, ongoing cultural processes, and living traditions across all cultural records. The stress on the ‘vulnerable’ or the past (‘disappeared’ or the ‘irreversibly’ damaged) would seem to render this difficult, if not impossible.

In conclusion some brief comments on the question of Indicative Lists may be relevant. For some time to 1992, for administrative/political reasons, Australia has not prepared an Indicative List to submit to ICOMOS International. In effect this meant that no cultural nominations could be prepared as such, for Australia would not meet ICOMOS requirements for assessment. The situation is now (1991-1992) under review in both the Department of the Environment’s Protected Areas Section and the Australian Heritage Commission. A recent study for the Department by Domicelj, Halliday and James investigated the question of conceptual frameworks for assessing World Heritage values as a way of opening up the debate. The study, entitled Australia’s cultural estates: conceptual frameworks for the assessment of Australia’s cultural properties against World Heritage Criteria, n.d. [1992], explored the problems of selection as well as those of assessing values. How to arrive at an Indicative List? Or how to assess a nomination so that those ‘truly outstanding examples’ emerged rather than an ‘ad hoc’ list of everyone’s favourite places? The approach explored in the study was a processual one, a thematic approach. Themes of universal significance were identified, then places examined for their representativeness or uniqueness in relation to those themes. For example, the body of rock art sites in Kakadu (a major feature of the Kakadu National Park’s cultural landscape), are usually assessed in scientific terms or in terms of aesthetic values, with all the inherent problems of subjective evaluation and cross-cultural perceptions that this involves. Adopting the thematic approach, Kakadu’s rock art could be assessed in relation to a theme of universal significance – artistic systems and symbolic systems, a theme which also has universal application. It also accommodates parameters such as aesthetic achievement and creative genius, in the cultural context of this particular body of art and its existence as part of living tradition.

Such thematic approaches can provide useful frameworks for assessment against criteria already established in the Operational Guidelines. However the study also raised questions similar to those raised in this paper. They concerned the problems contingent on an emphasis on monuments, buildings, and sites and the need to develop ways to accommodate symbolic and social values, cultural continuity and sites that may be linear or involve a series of discrete but related components. The need to address the criteria in relation to cultural landscapes was also discussed. Such questions are matters of concern to Australian heritage bodies. We welcome the opportunity of raising them with the World Heritage Centre, also IUCN and ICOMOS advisors to the World Heritage Committee at this meeting.

Part 2: Linked Places – Cultural routes, trade routes, song lines and Heritage.

Travelling a Storied Landscape: Trade Routes, Song Lines and Heritage


In presenting Camino de Compostela for World Heritage Listing Spain made an important statement about the relationships between human culture, human history and the landscape. It marks significant changes in concepts of heritage and heritage places. These have been debated over the last few years in meetings of the World Heritage Committee, and also in World Heritage Centre and ICOMOS initiated gatherings of experts. What is expressed in the listing of a route of pilgrimage goes beyond that encapsulated in the ‘serial site’, whose inclusion as a category of cultural place in itself acknowledged an important conceptual change. It was especially significant for sites of non-Western, non-urban cultures of the indigenous peoples of the New World, of the Pacific and Australasia.
In Australia such changes are particularly welcome. They allow consideration of a range of places significant to our Indigenous and colonial cultures previously ill-accommodated by the criteria in the World Heritage Committee’s Guidelines. These include, from Aboriginal cultural contexts, the routes of travel of the ancestral beings that criss-cross the continent, often referred to as Dreaming Tracks or Story Lines. They are celebrated in song cycles such as the Urumbula myth (Native Cat Song Cycle) of the Lower Southern Aranda people whose route and associated places run from Port Augusta in the south to near Alice Springs in the centre of the continent. Also relevant are the extensive networks of exchange linkages that also criss-cross the continent, and indeed often follow the story lines. These joined groups many thousands of kilometres apart in social, ceremonial and economic alliances. Material goods, stories and knowledge were also thus distributed across vast distances.

From the historical period, also dominated by the challenge of Australia’s vast distances, we have many significant routes and extended lines of related sites, all components of the one entity. These include long distance stock routes such as the Canning Stock Route of northern Western Australia, telegraph lines such as that linking Adelaide to Darwin and ultimately to the European and Asian worlds, or that crossing the Nullarbor Plain linking eastern and western Australia. Around the coastal periphery of the continent strings of light stations created safer conditions for sea travel and transport (Blair 1992).

**Context: Story lines, Exchange and the ‘Chain of Connection’**

Some of these Australian examples may prove relevant to the discussions at this meeting which celebrates the listing of the Pilgrim Route of the Camino de Compostela. I choose one from Aboriginal Australia, not only because that is my area of research interest, but because it provides an interesting comparative element of a route that is embedded in the spiritual and the ritual, but belongs to a very different cultural context. Complex long distance exchange and social, ceremonial linkages are a feature of Aboriginal Australia. The island continent is overlain by a matrix of such networks, often continent-wide, binding individuals and societies.

The routes along which people and goods move, were and are, traditionally ordained in the lines of travel of the ancestral beings when, in what is referred to as The Dreaming or The Dreamtime, they created land and its features, and also established the law governing human actions within them. These lines of travel, often called Dreaming Tracks, or if associated with particular mythology or song cycles, Story Lines, Song Lines. The ancestral presence and power is maintained by ceremony and by singing the stories of the Dreamtime events at the relevant locations, those places of power. This also maintains and disseminates cultural knowledge of the routes, their distant components and the geography of the landscape (Strehlow 1965, 1970; Myers 1987; and Potezny 1996). So, as Myers stresses, the land, like its people, is made of stories, not atoms.

The Urumbula song cycle and its route is an example. One 900 kilometre long part of this route is and its associated places, are the subject of an Eastern and Lower Southern Aranda song cycle (the Urumbula or Native Cat story – see Strehlow 1965, 1970). This song cycle crosses the country of several distinct groups, linking Annewara (northern Port Augusta) with distant centres on the north-western fringes of the Simpson Desert. Each group would care for their sections of the route and its significant places, and at these sing the appropriate parts of the song. These would be in the Arandic language, not that of the local area, even when celebrating a feature located at Port Augusta, an area in which the Punkala language was spoken (according to Strehlow, 1970: 94-95 – though it is now regarded as an area of the Nukunu language – Hercus pers. comment, November 1994). Strehlow (1965, 1970) cites several similarly extended song cycles rooted in places and the routes between, as does Myers (1987: 61-64). Myers stresses that these routes, and their stories, illustrate how the Dreaming and landscape (‘country’) relate, and how ‘country’ is a continuous entity. These stories are ‘punctuated by place’, and relations in space. The narrative also ‘emphasises the motivations and appropriate relations between people ‘from one country’ (sharing), the geographical expanse of such relations, and the violent consequences of failing to respect the rights of others’ (Myers 1987: 61). The practical wisdom of such a law in harsh, uncertain desert environments need not be laboured.
The extent of these storylines and exchange networks is measured in thousands of kilometres. They are among the world’s most extensive system of human communication among hunter-gather societies. Their significance, however, lies not only in their extent and our anthropological construction of this, but also in the social importance accorded them by Aboriginal people.

**A Case Study: Pukardu Hill Red Ochre Expeditions**

Goods moved across these landscapes through personal/individual transactions at nodes in the exchange networks, those special meeting or ceremonial centres where groups came together for social, political or ritual events. Some items, however, were acquired through special expeditions to their source, such as the cakes of red ochre from the famous quarry at Pukardu Hill near Parachilna in the Flinders Ranges. Pukardu Hill lies at the southern extremity of a complex exchange network running through the Lake Eyre/Cooper Basin in Eastern Central Australia. It spans the continent, linking the Gulf of Carpentaria with the southern oceans.

This case study is an interesting one in the context of Camino de Compostela. To collect ochre from Pukardu Hill was also to make a ritual, ceremonial journey. Those making it were specially chosen parties of senior men and young men still undergoing their training in the law and ceremonial life. The route taken was prescribed by convention, also the camping places along it, where ceremonies would be held.

Among the Dieri speakers of the Lower Cooper Creek this journey took place each year in late winter, members of the party (the ‘Bookartoo men’) being chosen in July or August. This of
course ensured that the expedition was made when conditions along the harsh desert route of over 500 kilometres would be optimal. The journey took several months. Their route followed the Strzelecki Creek and then the eastern slope of the Ranges before turning west near Blinman to Pukardu Hill. Their neighbours to the east, the Yandruwunta people, also took this route. The Wongkumara of north-western New South Wales travelled to Pukardu Hill for ochre as well, following the Yandama and Callabonna Creeks to the eastern flanks of the Ranges. Knowledge of Wongkumara expeditions has come to us from senior man George Dutton, also Cecil Ebsworth (Jeremy Beckett pers. comment; Beckett worked with George Dutton over many years – see Beckett 1958, for Cecil Ebsworth’s life pers. comment Luise Hercus; Cecil Ebsworth pers. comment to writer, February 1991). Groups living to the north west of the Ranges also made special journeys along designated routes down the western slopes of the Ranges. These were the Wangkangurru of the Simpson Desert and the Arabana who held country south of the Desert.

The records of their journeys come from Mick McLean Irinjili, senior Wangkangurru man from the Simpson Desert. His father was a member of one of the last expeditions from this area to Pukardu Hill in the 1880s. Both Mick McLean Irinjili and Jimmy Russell (Wanga-mirri) shared their experiences and knowledge with the linguist Luise Hercus in the 1960s and 1970s. They stressed the importance of the Red Ochre Expeditions and the significance of the ochre from that quarry (Hercus pers. comment).

Jimmy Russell belonged to a Wangkangurru group of the Kallakoopah Creek on the eastern side of the Simpson Desert. In the time of his youth in the early decades of the twentieth century the ochre trade was under severe pressure as disruptive to pastoral activities. Also most Wangkangurru had by then left the desert. (For a history of the ochre expeditions see Jones 1978). In about 1920 Jimmy Russell was a member of a group of Dieri and Yandruwunta men who travelled from the Desert via Marree to Pukardu Hill. On this journey, he learnt the song of those returning from Pukardu Hill and in 1976 sang it for Luise Hercus:

They sing the Pukardu song … for setting out and returning. They sing the song of Pukardu Hill, they sing it for a long time.

It matches the song recorded by Gason, a mounted police officer in the Lake Eyre region in the 1870s who wrote of the Dieri expeditions to the Flinders for ochre (Gason 1879: 282). This is testimony to the power of oral tradition and to the prestige of the ochre expeditions and their members.

All these groups could obtain ochre in their own territories from local sources (Horne and Aiston 1924: 34). However, that from Pukardu Hill was especially valued. It was used for decorating bodies and equipment for the great inter-group ceremonies, while some was reserved as a prized good for important exchange transactions at such meetings. Having been brought hundreds of kilometres from the Flinders Ranges to Cooper Creek or the Simpson Desert it might be taken an equal distance to exchange centres such as Goyder Lagoon or Boulija and from there travel even further. The term ‘yarnparnu’ was used for the prized Pukardu ochre, that from the small local sources which lacked its symbolic values was called ‘Arkapa’ by the Arabana and Wangkangurru, and ‘karku’ by the Dieri and speakers of languages to the south of Lake Eyre.

The expedition itself involved careful preparation. Messengers carrying specially incised batons were sent ahead to advise the owners of the quarry that ochre was required. Mick McLean Irinjili and Jimmy Russell described it to Luise Hercus, drawing on their memories of talks with older senior men when young themselves, and on their own experience. Goods were carried to exchange for the red ochre: black pigment (manganese), boomerangs, spears, firestick wood, down feathers, nets, and sometimes grass seed in bags. ‘They came on foot, from far away, from beyond, they came from the sandhill country … carrying big fighting boomerangs’ (Jimmy Russell to Luise Hercus). The journey had its own rituals. The Bookartoo men always followed the same route, and carried special seed cakes called malhiri for ceremonial meetings with other Aborigines on the way. Their bodies appropriately painted, they performed the songs and dances specific to the particular places as they travelled.
At Pukardu Hill they fashioned round cakes from the soft quarried ochre and ‘baked’m like a damper’ (Mick McLean Irinjili). These carefully prepared cakes were then carried on the long journey north, each man taking a load of up to thirty kilograms. Their return to the prearranged campsite in their own country was the occasion for formal reception and ceremonies. Those who had remained behind prepared elaborately; huts were built, the men made head-dresses for the ceremony and the women special seed cakes to feed the participants. The ceremonies were often associated with that called the mindari. This was an important element in the ritual life of Lake Eyre groups, and associated with emu mythology (Elkin 1934: 187-9). The roles of ancestral emu beings in some of the creation stories for Pukardu ochre deposits will be discussed later.

Reverence for the Pukardu Hill ochre has been recorded among all Aboriginal groups of the Lake Eyre/Cooper area; the rare qualities of its colour may to a great extent account for this. It is a brilliant, shimmering, deep violet-hued red. In many parts of northern and central Australia such shimmering brilliance is considered symbolic of life and wellbeing. It is associated with, and can even represent or bestow, ancestral power; hence its importance in art and ceremonial. Morphy (1989) has analysed this and the concept of biryun (shimmering brilliance) recorded among the Arnhem Land people as significant by anthropologist Donald Thomson in his unpublished field notes in the late 1930s.

Pukardu Hill itself is a place of great traditional significance to local people and to those of the Cooper, Lake Eyre and the Simpson Desert as well as north-western New South Wales. Among all these Lake Eyre groups there is a considerable body of mythology explaining its formation. The journeys to Pukardu were part of the ceremonial life of those who traded for its ochre, associated with song and ritual performance en route and on return. Its symbolic values are paramount, derived from the place and also the importance of the journey itself. They are certainly not derived from any rarity value, though the colour is certainly distinct. Ochre is readily obtainable in the local territory of those who travelled to Pukardu Hill.

These Lake Eyre groups also all maintained stories of the creation of these ochre deposits in a distant southern country. These stories often involve ancestral beings who have links with, or travelled through, their own lands. Some of these stories were recorded early in the twentieth century by George Aiston who lived in Dieri country for many years and was a serious student of Aboriginal culture. He tells us (Horne and Aiston 1924; Elkin 1934):

"In the old days, before men were, there lived in this valley a jecko lizard. Adno-artina was his name. Every day this lizard would climb a big rock and would sing aloud so that all could hear: 'Come out and fight, come out and fight'.

Now the big dog Marindi came past that way, and hearing the challenge, he bounded up the dry creek bed yelling all the way: 'I am come, I am come'.

Adno-artina had a look at the dog. He saw beneath his sharp pricked ears the enormous fangs. He saw the huge bulk over which the white tip of his tail waved, and the more he looked the less he liked the prospect of combat. 'I will fight you later' he said. 'Later you will make a feast for my pups', returned the dog, as he curled himself up at the foot of the rock.

Now, like all jecko lizards, Adno-artina sees best when it is dark. So as the sun went down he tied a hair string around the root of his tail to make him fight better, for then his courage could not run into his tail. It was now dark, for when the sun goes down the darkness springs out. He crept to the ground and once more rang forth his challenge. 'Come out and fight'.

Marindi the dog leapt up and tried to catch Ando-artina by the back of the neck and shake the life out of him. But the lizard ran in low beneath the terrible fighting teeth. He seized the dog by the throat and hung on. In vain Marindi shook him and scratched at him with his claws. The sharp teeth sank in and in, until at last the red blood spurted out. And so from that time on all jeckoes — now a puny face compared with their ancestor — have a constriction around the root of their tails."
The blood of Marindi the dog dyed the rocks on the bank of the creek, and from this the red ochre is obtained to this day.

The little creek became the Mecca, not only of the Kooiannie, but also the Dieri, the Wongkonguru, the Ngameni and the Yaurorka tribes. There only could the real dog’s blood ochre be obtained, and none other should be used...

In the 1930s anthropologist A. P. Elkin during his periods of field work with the Lake Eyre groups commonly encountered emu myths related to the Parachilna ochre. He has left us an important record which I quote at length (Elkin 1934: 187-189).

I learned bits of it (the emu myth) here and there. Thus some Yauarawaka men near Birdsville said that the emus started from the Mulligan in south-west Queensland and travelled south, dancing. Near Apamana they were joined by two other emus, itikaru and tjapara, who accompanied them to Cuttapirie, where they were killed (Elkin 1934).

Some Yantruanta informants said the two emus, a male and a female (in some versions there were four of the birds), called Tukurendja, were feeding around Cuttabelbo water-hole and Kunapururu, about twenty-five miles (40 kilometres) down the Cooper from Innaminka Station. A man and a woman were travelling not far off, the woman looking for grass seed to grind, and the man hunting and make for his next camp at the Kudriemitchie water-hole. His dogs started the emus and chased them south-west and around the western side of the Flinders Ranges to Parachilna, where the emus went into the hill and were changed into a deposit of red ochre. A steep hill standing by itself near Parachilna is the female dog.

I obtained another version from an old Dieri man whose patrilineal cult-totem is pandjini, an emu mura-mura who ‘made’ red ochre; this old man spoke for himself and his father and others of his country at Lake Peragundi as all ‘red ochre mob’. His myth was that five dogs chased from two mindari water-holes near Innamincka past Murnpeowie, across to Stuart’s Creek and down to Port Augusta, where it went in the ground for a time, but after a while it came up again and travelled north to Parachilna, where it went into the ground altogether, and gave rise to the deposit of red ochre in the vicinity.

The Arabana version is slightly different, for though emus are chased by dogs, yet the ochre is said to be associated with one of the latter, rather than with the former. But I may only have received a fragmentary account. It runs as follows:

Two wild dogs chased some emus from Kalburugwa, a small salt lake near William Creek in Arabana country, to a cave at Beltana, where one of the dogs, a female, gave birth to pups. The blood associated with this event caused the local deposit of red ochre. The two dogs then sang. The male dog had a white mark down its forehead and around its neck. The dogs, changed to stone, can now be seen at this cave. It is said to be very dangerous to touch the female dog: in fact to do so would cause the world to come down. No women, not even if this be their cult-totem, can enter the cave, though one informant said that women with this cult-totem know the songs; such a woman plays a string game during the singing.

This brings us the important point that the emu myth and ceremony are associated with red ochre, more especially the red ochre deposit at Parachilna. The ochre owes its colour to the blood of the emu (woruwidji), and as red ochre plays such an important part in native ceremonial life, we can understand why both the emu and red ochre should form the theme of so many myths. Further, the expedition to the red ochre deposit gives point to that part of the ceremony in which the red ochre men come into the ground carrying the emu’s ‘heart’, a stone completely wrapped up in string. There men either are, or represent, those who have been on the expedition are returning with the treasured ochre, and are received in a mindari ceremony. For this is just what happened. The Yantruwantana men, for example, made the long four hundred miles journey to Parachilna, where they painted themselves with the ochre and moulded lumps for bringing home. On their return, a red ochre corroboree, the mindari, was held to commemorate the event. This may explain the sexual intercourse, which expresses the state of social excitement and pleasure experienced at the return of the expedition.
If then, we keep in mind the myths and ceremonies concerning the emu in this north-eastern corner of South Australia, we see that the one set of myths explains the red ochre deposits at Parachilna and the possibility of increasing emu...and provides the sanction both for the *mindari* festival on the return of the red ochre expedition, and also for the emu increase ceremony.

The stories of the emu and the creation of Pukardu Hill ochre were passed across the generations. In 1968 Mick McLean Irinjili, Jimmy Russell and Murtee Johnnie could talk of it to linguist Luise Hercus. Both men remembered ‘Crooked-Foot Peter’ (Aboriginal name Thalkanguyu), whose version of the story is in Aiston’s account:

> The ancestral emu walk about there and go down south then, the dogs been chase ‘m then. He goes right down to Parachilna, further than that, to Point Pearce. Turn ‘m back then and comes back this way and chase ‘m all the way to Parachilna then, that *Pukardu pithi* (quarry), kill ‘m there. Those same two dogs from Cowarie are in all the history, all the *Mindari* history. They go as far as the Nukunu crowd and the Point Pearce mob. People from the Peterborough side (Ngadjuri) come in it too. (Luise Hercus – transcripts of recorded conversations with Mick McLean Irinjili, Lake Eyre fieldwork, 20 January, 1968).

**Routes of the Red Ochre Expeditions as Heritage: Implications for Definition, Assessment and Management of World Heritage Places**

The routes of the red ochre expeditions and associated places are clearly of major significance. To Aboriginal societies they are places of power, important for their links to the plane of being of the Dreamtime, and so acquiring vital spiritual values. They also hold significance for the human activities associated in the historical, remembered past. These may range from the ritual to the social, from the collective to the individual, but nonetheless contribute to the heritage quality. A number of aspects are relevant if we are to consider such routes as heritage places.

1. The significance of these routes and places will be complex. First, they comprise a total system and its component elements. These elements will include places, distinct locations or sites on the route, and then the line of the route itself, a mental construct relating to landscape and tradition as well as places. Some of these places have associated physical, archaeological, testimony, others have not. All will have an associated story and traditional knowledge.

2. The significance will have further complexity derived from its differing values as perceived by different groups – within Australia’s pluralist society. The significance of these routes and associated places and stories will be distinct for:
   - Those Aboriginal people who are traditional owners and custodians of the site or their associated knowledge and stories.
   - The wider Aboriginal community concerned for the maintenance of such examples of Aboriginal culture in general.
   - The importance of these routes and places as providing a record of significant aspects of Aboriginal culture for archaeologists, linguists, and anthropologists, as well as for the heritage managers and concerned public.

3. Acquiring the relevant materials to document and assess the significance of such routes may prove a challenging exercise. It will require detailed work involving the Aboriginal custodians of the relevant sections of the route and its associated places. Such documentation can only proceed with the full approval of the traditional owners and their advice. Working with them will be anthropologists, archaeologists, linguists and ethnohistorians to piece together the often fragmented archaeological, linguistic and historical evidence. Locating and identifying the appropriate custodians in itself can be a long consultative process.

4. Definition of the entity itself will raise questions because of its linear, serial nature. Does the significant entity consist of the places along the route, seen as a ‘serial site’ with component physical manifestations, or is it the line of travel? Does the route exist on the ground in a physical sense or does it exist as a mental construct in the mind of the participants? How
is knowledge of this line across the landscape maintained and transmitted in the creating culture? If the entity is to be defined as a distinct line, how is it mapped? How is it located on the ground, and made to accommodate the needs of heritage managers in spatial terms? How do we establish its boundaries?

5. In approaching such entities in term of management, or of documenting their significance, we must recognize that information about many of the places may, for cultural reasons, be restricted (Myers 1987: 64). They may be places of special sanctity to certain groups within Aboriginal society. So it may not be possible to share the knowledge of their ‘meanings’ and associations, nor to record the stories that encapsulate these. There may also be a reluctance to have them publicly declared heritage sites, or their locations made known, even if the confidentiality of traditional knowledge can be assured. These aspects of cross-cultural heritage management require sensitivity in developing programs of registration, documentation and management. However, in many countries where a major component of the cultural environment belongs to an Indigenous minority, successful programs are being developed.

6. Management of such routes as ‘heritage places’ will make complex demands. The issues raised above must be addressed and sensitively handled. At all stages there must be involvement of the relevant groups within the creating culture. Consultation and consent are vital.

Given the extent of such routes in landscapes such as those of Australia, there will be multiple custodial Aboriginal groups to consult and involve. As the routes cross extensive landscapes, other non-Aboriginal groups within Australian society must also be part of the process of devising appropriate management, as well as those experienced in heritage management and the relevant scientific experts. They may also cross the boundaries of differing governmental jurisdictions. Further, they may cross areas reserved for modern economic land use. Consultation and negotiation will be essential for protection and management.

The complexity of the heritage assessment and management for such routes across a storied landscape will match the complexity of their roles in Aboriginal society, past and present. Yet to incorporate them into the realm of protected and recognised heritage, such routes (which hold vital importance for their creating cultures) will enrich our national heritage making it more representative. Further their importance merits recognition as global heritage in the World Heritage Convention’s List of places of outstanding universal cultural value.

Part 3: Storied Landscapes: the long-distance exchange networks of the Cooper/Lake Eyre Basin as Cultural Landscape

Discussion paper for the workshop on Cultural Landscapes Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra, February 1995

To consider cultural landscapes as encompassing the associational, symbolic landscape as well as those more clearly documented in the archaeological record offers significant perspectives on human perceptions of the spatial universe. Such perceptions shape cognitive landscapes and they may find expression in stories that encapsulate their meanings. The anthropologist Fred Myers, after long-term field work with the Pintupi people of Central Australia spoke of their landscape as ‘a series of stories’; ‘the land is made of stories, not atoms’ (Myers 1986: 49). Salman Rushdie after his introduction to Central Australia travelling with Bruce Chatwin, asked ‘how could writers fail to love a world which has been mapped by stories?’ (Rushdie 1992: 232).

These comments by anthropologist and novelist stress the associational values of landscapes, their symbolic power in the various levels of meaning that may be imposed like a new overlying grid on the networks of land use and settlement systems. They derive from experience of Central Australian Aboriginal culture. As a case study of cognitive, associational landscapes in this part of Australia, the discussion will focus on the exchange linkages across the landscapes of the Cooper/Lake Eyre Basin. In this part of Central Australia, a network of local and long-distance exchanges links individuals and groups from the Gulf of Carpentaria in the north to
Spencer’s Gulf in the south, and ultimately, to the north-western extremes of the continent and Cape York in the north-east to the Nullarbor Plain, the continent’s southern rim.

Environmentally Cooper/Lake Eyre is desert country with low diversity and low abundance of resources, with an uncertain climate characterised by harsh extremes. So one would predict the need for trading links to provide raw materials and also to ensure the support of others and access to their resources in times of stress. The ethno-historical records, as well as the archaeology suggest that social aspects are as vital as the ecological and the economic in driving this extensive exchange system. How else do we explain exchange of like for like, or the distribution of materials over immense distances to areas in which functional equivalents are already available? Here many levels of meaning must be involved, for objects and for places.

The linkages in the ‘chain of connection’ (Edward Eyre’s term for Aboriginal trading networks – Mulvaney 1976) are complex and extensive. Yet, the various groups involved seem to have an awareness of the whole system, the sources of various good exchanged, and from which directions they have travelled. Their direct and intimate personal knowledge may be limited to one or two links in the whole chain. Yet they are aware of the chain in its entirety, and know its associated story lines and songs. The nodes in the network where exchange transactions occur may also be important social or ceremonial meeting places (e.g. Goyders Lagoon). The routes along which people or goods move may be traditionally established, often following the lines of travel of creator ancestors, celebrated in story, song and ceremony.

Both goods and people cover vast distances, thousands of kilometres. These goods often hold significant symbolic or social values beyond the economic or technological. These may derive from their place of origin, from the repute of their makers, or their past history if they be items of material culture. This symbolic value may drive the extended exchange lines as much as local rarity of the raw materials and supply and demand pressures. Goods and other items may move not only in ‘down the line’ transactions through the nodes of the network, but also by being sought in long-distance expeditions. It is not only material items that move along the lines. There are joined by information, songs and dances such as the Wanji Wanji and Mudlunga. Historical records and personal memories of Aboriginal men such as Mick McLean and Ben Murray (Hercus 1980; Kimber 1990) have documented the travels of the Mudlunga at the turn of the century through the Lake Eyre Basin. Performed at The Peake near Oodnadatta in 1902, it reaches Ucumba on the Nullarbor near The Head of the Bight in 1916 when its arrival and performance was recorded by Daisy Bates.

Among the material items were hatchet heads, grindstones and ochres. Hatchet heads of hard rock from the eastern volcanics near Mt Isa and Cloncurry travelled thousands of kilometres into the arid lands with few outcrops of suitable material for such heavy duty tools. Grindstones were also exchanged over long distances from such famous quarries as the Wadla Wadlyu near Reaphook Hill in the Flinders Ranges (McBryde 1993). Examples of grindstones quarried from that site have been recovered from sites near Boulia in far-north Queensland. Red ochre from Pukardu Hill in the Flinders was most prized, and a major item even in areas well served by local outcrops of red ochre.

Another significant item of supreme value was the narcotic pituri prepared from the leaves of *Duboisia Hopwoodii* by the groups on the Mulligan at the north-easterm margins of the Simpson Desert (see Watson 1983). This plant is widespread in arid Australia, as are *Nicotiana* species. However, the people of the Mulligan had perfected the art of its preparation to a consistent and powerful drug. Their product was especially sought. Groups from the south made long journeys to the Mulligan or meeting places along the Lake Eyre trade route to acquire it.

The places from which these goods come, and the meeting places where they are exchanged are linked to stories. These are celebrated in their recounting and singing of songs and performance of dances. So, place is inseparable from story and tradition. The traditions carried in these songs and stories are powerful. The meanings held by the material items and the significance of their source locations are explained and maintained over time in these stories. They also map the symbolic and geographical world of the long-distance exchange transactions. Myers records
that for the Pintupi such stories constitute a ‘changing political charter of who and what are identified at various levels’ (Myers 1986: 59-61).

For most important source areas, such as stone outcrops or ochre deposits, there are creation stories, for example, the grindstone quarries on Anna Creek (Paltiri piti) and Reaphook Hill (Wadla Wadlyu) (McBryde 1993). Often different groups will have different stories about the same place, for example, the various creation stories relating to the famous ochre deposits at Pukardu Hill (McBryde 1987). Goods moved across the landscape through exchanges at meeting places. But they may also be acquired and travel as a result of long-distance expeditions. Examples include the expeditions to the Mulligan in the northern Simpson Desert for pituri or those to Pukardu Hill in the Flinders Ranges for red ochre (Jones 1984). The Dieri travelled 500 kilometres southwards from the Cooper along the eastern flank of the Flinders to reach Pukardu Hill, and the Wangkangurru and Arabana travelled similar distances along the western slopes. These long journeys were undertaken each winter by specially chosen men. It was an important journey of ceremonial significance along a traditionally ordained route. Ceremonies were held at specific established sites along the way, singing the appropriate stories for each place.

This practice has elements reminiscent of the Western, Christian concept of a pilgrimage. Spain has recently nominated for World Heritage listing such a pilgrimage route – Camino de Compostela. To do so marked a significant change in the concepts of heritage, and what constitutes a heritage place. This line of travel was also extended, and crossed the ‘country’ of distinct societies. So, questions arise about how we envisage these routes as heritage, or the exchange networks and their various components as heritage places. Do they form a total system constituting an associational cultural landscape? Does the line of travel of the Red Ochre Men (the Buckartoo Men chosen to undertake the arduous journey to Pukardu Hill) constitute a route comparable to Camino de Compostela in its associated spiritual and historical values from the remembered past? The networks and their nodes, the lines of communication and the route followed, form economic, social and spiritual planes of meaning, with significance at many levels. They intersect or overlie other systems of land-use and settlement that may also constitute cultural landscapes. However, they have a character and components that are distinct. They are complex in comprising places and the line of route linking them, itself a mental construct relating landscape, tradition and place.
Acknowledgements

In considering heritage issues relevant to this paper, I have been grateful over many years for discussions with Sharon Sullivan and Sarah Titchen, also for the exchange of ideas by letter with Susan Buggey in Canada. Throughout my research in the Lake Eyre region I have been much indebted to Luise Hercus for her generosity in sharing a deep knowledge of its lands, its people and their languages. I also received seminal advice from Isobel White on anthropological perspectives.

During field work in the Lake Eyre Basin senior Aboriginal men, Ben Murray, Arthur Warren, Chippy Flash, Willy Harris and Jimmy Russell were supportive guides to the area’s landscapes and their traditions. Pearl Mackenzie and Cecil Ebsworth also shared ideas and local information. This paper draws on materials from my long-term research in the area published from an ethnohistorical perspective in Aboriginal History (Volume 24, 2000) with the permission of the Editorial Board for that journal. The maps presenting my research in its landscape contexts were expertly re-drawn for publication by Joan Goodrum and Winifred Mumford.

My thanks to the editorial team of Historic Environment for the opportunity to present my memories to their readership.

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