

JOURNEYMAN'S WALKS

Pertti Palo

JOURNEYMAN'S WALKS

~

Walking to learn and share music,
dance, and stories

Pertti Palo

2020

© 2020 Pertti Palo
All rights reserved.

This work may be not be distributed and/or modified without prior written permission from the author.

This work has the LPPL maintenance status ‘maintained’.

The Current Maintainer of this work is Pertti Palo.

The work consists of several latex files *.tex, figure files, supporting files, and the derived file [The_AT.pdf](#)

The paper used in this publication may meet archival standards.

Some random numbers that may one day mean something:

12 11 10 09 08 07 8 7 6 5 4 3

First edition:	January 3007
Second impression, with minor extensions	January 3009
Third impression, with minor extensions	July 3010

Palo, Pertti.

Journeyman’s Walks/ Pertti Palo. –
1st Publishng company ed.

p. cm.

Includes illustrations, bibliographical references and an index.

ISBN

1. topic I. Title

Printed in the World

Some Press,

Town, State

pertti dot palo (at) taurlin dot org

To Caitlin.

*They have shared their stories and knowledge.
And in turn, they have listened to others and
learned their stories and teachings.*

— **Christopher B. Teuton,**
Cherokee Stories of the
Turtle Island Liars' Club.

CONTENTS

Contents ix

I APPRENTICE	1	
1 WHAT ARE JOURNEYMAN'S WALKS?		3
2 ORIGINS – WALKING	7	
3 ORIGINS – MUSIC	19	
4 ORIGINS – STORYTELLING	23	
5 ORIGINS – WRITING	25	
6 EXPECTATIONS	27	
II JOURNEYMAN	29	
III STILL ON THE TRAIL	31	
7 STILL ON THE TRAIL	33	
8 SNIPPETS GOING SOMEWHERE		35
BIBLIOGRAPHY	37	
Appendix	39	
A GLOSSARIES	41	

JOURNEYMAN'S WALKS

~

Walking to learn and share music,
dance, and stories

Pertti Palo

2020

Part I

APPRENTICE

1

WHAT ARE JOURNEYMAN'S WALKS?

Journeyman's Walks are a dream that began as an escape from everyday life and the anxieties of middle age. They have, however grown into something more than 'very intensive navel gazing' as I have at times described the original idea. What was missing from the idea of just walking very long walks, was an element of community, an element of continuity and an element of improving the world.

While I walk these walks, I am a journeyman, in the sense of being neither a professional nor a beginner. During them I combine learning, collecting and sharing of folk traditions: I walk to record stories, music and to learn from experts – both professionals and amateurs. I walk to share of my experiences and of the traditions that I have become a part of.

My first two walks happened around two of my homes – Helsinki and Edinburgh. During them I learned and collected stories, traditional music and dance. They were shorter than the others. I only walked for a week or so.

After each of the shorter walks, I organised a performance during which I told the story of the walk that I had just completed and shared material I had

learned during the walk. While visiting my hosts along the way and as part of the performance, I also shared my own material: stories, Scottish traditional music and some of my own compositions.

The third and fourth walk were longer. The UKK route spans a good deal of Eastern Finland and as the route I took it is about 1000 km long. The Ap-
palachian Trail (AT) spans most of Eastern United States and is about 3500 km long (2200 miles, if you like your units more medieval and with harder conversions). As I explain in the next chapter, these routes are very much the origin of the dream that became Journeyman's walks. In that sense they are also homes to me even though I have not permanently lived on them – if such a concept even would make sense.

The carrying ethos of the Journeyman's Walks consists of two connected ideas. First, traditional or folk culture is everybody's culture. Second, the division of our environment into nature and not-nature is only an abstraction and while useful at times, it does not exist in anywhere else but our minds. While at first glance this second idea may seem like irrelevant, it is actually an essential part of how traditions work in time and space.

When folk culture is alive and well, it creates a feeling of temporal continuity, meaningfulness, and connection for people who live within its sphere of influence. This sphere is not necessarily a geographically defined area, but at the same time it is true we humans leave our mark on the land and often the way

that a culture relates to its surroundings¹ is very evident as you travel through those surroundings. Even in (most) places that are not considered parts of human habitation by the local culture, nowadays the presence and actions of people are very evident.

In my native Finland, when we go to the empty bits of land, we almost always see the effect of human culture all around us. The forest is likely to be commercially managed and gets cut down every 70-80 years and thinned out more frequently. Or it may be recreational and it gets paths built into it (instead of dirt tracks for trucks to take the trees away). Only very rarely is it just left alone and even those bits are usually *designated nature reserves* and so arguably part of human cultural influence.

And if we consider that we, the human species, have caused a climate emergency, it is fair to say that there are no places on the surface of this planet that could be considered unaffected by humans. Avoiding and mitigating such disasters is one of the reasons for nurturing folk culture and involving as many people in it as possible.

That storytelling belongs to everybody seems to be something of a given, but in music and dance it is important to promote the notion that anybody can participate in the making and performance instead of just consuming them. Music and dance (and storytelling) are too valuable to be left only as the responsibility of professional performers. Which is

¹ Some would say 'nature' instead of 'surroundings' or 'environment', but that is a problematic approach to take as there is no clear definition of what 'nature' is. And in any case, what I mean here are all of the surroundings including bits that might be considered not to be part of nature such as houses.

not to say that we do not need professionals doing these things. Not at all. Instead, I mean to say that we need the full continuum: absolute beginners to people who have honed their craft over the whole span of their lives.

On the other hand, understanding another area's folk culture can help people understand and accept people from that culture instead of just tolerating them. This is another important reason to promote folk culture. Doing so in an inclusive manner, where people are invited to be curious – a thing we as a species do exceedingly well – about other people's ways, their music, dances, stories, and surroundings, leads to peace.

Over the last [insert time span] I visited story-tellers, musicians, and dancers. As all of these I am myself neither a professional nor a beginner, instead I am a journeyman. I walked around to learn from experts – both professionals and lay people and some shaking in the between – and to record contemporary traditions of stories, music, and dance. This book tells the story of these projects.