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Landscape protection, tourism and transport history in one!

The changes in our environment which have been going on for centuries have finally led to a situation in which the traditional elements of our cultural landscape are being subjected to ever greater threat.

So it has become necessary to provide an inventory of these endangered species in order to provide a basis for area planning in the future, e.g. to protect ancient routes still visible. However, there is no intention here to provide a "landscape museum"; the aim would

rather be to bring the old routes back to life and to provide them with a new use suitable to modern times, for example setting them up as cultural history walks to enrich the supply of tourism facilities. In the last few years the IVS (see box) has been performing the valuable service of bringing these ancient routes to the attention of the public. A few years ago the Council of Europe defined a number of such routes as "a cultural heritage of the first order", and this should be taken as an important sign of

Inventory of Historical Transport Routes in Switzerland (IVS)

The IVS is a federal inventory which has been set up by the Federal Office for the Environment, Forests and the Landscape in application of the Federal Law on the Protection of Nature and the Landscape. It provides a comprehensive stock-taking of our historical transport routes, as well as an overview of the history of transport in Switzerland. Contact address: IVS, Finkenhubelweg, CH-3013 Berne, Tel. 41 31 64 86 64.

the greatly increased sense of responsibility which we must all have for these historical transport routes in our midst. ■

Pilgrims ways: the way is also the goal!

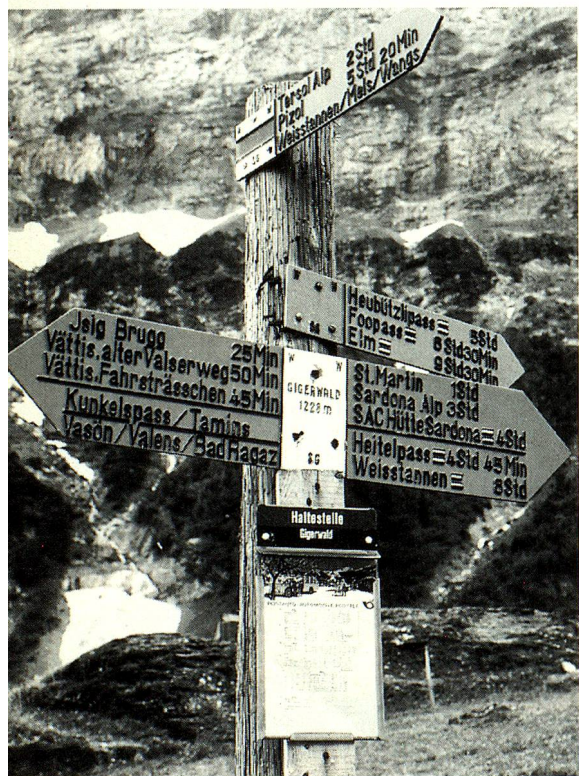
In recent times the great pilgrim routes of the past have rivalled Roman roads in interest and attraction. In our hectic life they provide symbols of feelings and associations linked to values which have long since crumbled away – a unique mixture of curiosity, independence, the search for spiritual, religious or cor-

poral salvation, challenge, longing for distant climes, desires for travel and adventure. The preliminary work which has been carried out over many years on the IVS project "The ways of St. James through Switzerland" have shown above all that it is not possible to speak of a single pilgrims' way crossing straight through the territory of Switzerland. We must rather think in terms of a network of ways, which had one or two fixed points like Einsiedeln but which then spread out once more in the nature of a spider's web.

In the old days just as today, there existed a whole variety of reasons for undertaking a pilgrimage. Some were based on a desire to receive help in a concrete emergency, some on the instruction to undertake a pilgrimage in order to expiate some great sin. Desire for adventure and sometimes even the wish to earn money – you could hire yourself out as a pilgrim to undertake a holy journey on behalf of someone else – were often important motives. But in many cases a pilgrimage was quite simply the expression of the eternal search of mankind for inner salvation. Who knows not the text of the famous "Song of Beresina": "Our life is like the jour-

ney of a wanderer through the night...?" The concept of the pilgrimage was indeed often linked to the arduous journey through life, whose desirable and liberating end could be reached only in paradise. Salvation was not attainable in this world, although the way to the great beyond (the ultimate goal of the pilgrimage) was also part of the way to paradise and had both a holy and a healing effect on the pilgrim. The journey of every pilgrim was that of an individual on his own road to self-knowledge and self-experience. Along his way the pilgrim overcame the great barriers of distance and danger finally to attain his geographical goal. But in tune with this was also the conquest of inner barriers. With every step along the road he came nearer to his own destiny. It was his own way towards paradise that he was treading – a way which, as we all know too well, is rarely a straight line.

*Texts: Hans Schüpbach
IVS Press Office* ■



Walser Ways are now walkers' ways: a cross-ways in Canton St. Gall. (Photo: SNTO).

Inheritance

in Switzerland:

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Inventory

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