

Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
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# Cultural Routes ACADEMIC WORKSHOP

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ABSTRACT COMPILATION



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Organised by the The European Institute of Cultural Routes in cooperation with the University network for Cultural Routes Studies



## ABSTRACT COMPILATION

### SESSION 1: REDEFINING CULTURAL ROUTES: EXPLORING DYNAMIC NARRATIVES OF RELIGIOUS HERITAGE AND CULTURAL ASSETS

#### ***CULTURAL HERITAGE REINTERPRETED. ENHANCING HISTORIC CEMETERIES FOR THE FUTURE***

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**Abstract:** Traditionally considered places of grief and remembrance, historic cemeteries are now emerging as dynamic assets and multi-layered sites of cultural significance. They unfold as canvases where architectural and artistic richness frames the ever-changing rituals connected to mortality and commemoration. We encounter clear challenges when contemplating their future and recognizing the roles they fulfil, along with their potential in urban contexts and society. Cemeteries embody a cultural heritage that is currently undergoing substantial transformations and reinterpretations, necessitating innovative strategies for enhancement. Within the context of this workshop, we would like to showcase some results of the 2022 Politecnico di Torino-DIST Teaching Project, "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe: Cultural Heritage Landscape and Tourism". It engaged students in reflecting on the CoE's Significant Cemeteries Route, inspiring new interpretations and projects in cultural and artistic practices, cultural tourism, and sustainable cultural development. Focused on the Monumental Cemetery of Turin and the Certosa Cemetery of Bologna (members of the Association of Significant Cemeteries in Europe -ASCE), these projects explore diverse research perspectives, addressing critical questions: What interpretive meanings does this cultural heritage encompass, and how can these values be effectively shared and enhanced? Among the interpretations, several noteworthy emerge. The re-evaluation of the primary role of cemeteries as spiritual and cultural tourism destinations unlocks the variety of pathways these sites can offer, including interactive and multisensory options. Recognizing their eco-systemic and environmental significance stressed their importance as green spaces. Beyond physical attributes, they also have the potential to foster collective experiences, creativity, ephemeral performances, dynamic artistic events, and cultural education. Furthermore, the interpretations reveal their role as vibrant social spaces where both real and virtual communities converge, offering valuable perspectives on their evolving cultural relevance in the digital age. These interpretations have contributed to significant project proposals, some of which we will illustrate as examples.

*S. Beltramo (ed.). Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe: Cultural Heritage, Landscape and Tourism. DIST Teaching Project, Politecnico di Torino, Torino 2022, ISBN (ebook): 978-88-85745-86-5*

## VERNACULAR RELIGIOSITY AND CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

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**Abstract:** This presentation delves into the nexus of vernacular religiosity and pilgrimage, focusing on the first cultural route of Camino. Vernacular religion, the lived and diverse expression of religiosity within society, extends beyond doctrinal confines to encompass a rich tapestry of religious expressions. Pilgrimage, as a dynamic arena, provides a fertile ground for the manifestation of diverse religious experiences. While vernacular religiosity has received substantial scholarly attention in recent years, limited research has explored its dynamics within pilgrimage, particularly along the Santiago route. This presentation aims to address this gap by reframing discussions on pilgrims' motivations and experiences through the nuanced lens of vernacular religiosity.

Motivations and experiences of Santiago pilgrims have been the subject of scholarly debate, yet the role of vernacular religiosity in shaping these aspects remains underexplored. Leveraging ongoing interviews with Camino-experienced individuals, this research will focus on providing insights into the interplay between vernacular religiosity and pilgrimage. The presentation promises to unveil the first glimpses of this intersection and lay the foundation for future research trajectories. Anticipated outcomes of this research that is still in initial stages include a deeper understanding of the diverse religious expressions interwoven within the pilgrimage experience. By situating vernacular religiosity at the core of this sacred journey, the presentation offers some initial insights, fostering appreciation for the multifaceted nature of religious experiences during pilgrimage. Attendees are invited to engage in a dialogue on potential avenues for further research, marking the beginning of an exploration into this dynamic intersection of lived religion and sacred journeys.

## **SOCIO-CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR MOBILITIES AND LOCAL REALITIES ALONG A EUROPEAN PILGRIMAGE ROUTE**

*Leonardo Porcelloni*

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the modern phenomena of pilgrimage and tourism along the Via Francigena, a European Cultural Route, which has developed substantially since the early 2000s. This is associated with the growth of slow tourism and has had a significant socio-economic and cultural impact in the territories crossed, especially in rural areas. Nowadays pilgrimage becomes a common thread between cultures of various countries and covers an important segment of international tourism. Therefore, pilgrimage is also a major industry that is difficult to clearly separate from tourism. In the context of the European Cultural Routes, this becomes a potential local development opportunity that also determines challenges to be taken into account. In this way, while the focus is on the complex and heterogeneous flow of individuals linked to the experience of pilgrimage on the Via Francigena, a further question characterising this study is: what socio-cultural impact does it have on the rural communities it passes through? From the broad consideration of mobilities and in particular on the Via Francigena at its European dimension, two inter-regional case study areas in central-northern Italy between Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, and Lazio were identified. Here, the survey was structured in three methodological stages: quantitative (questionnaires), qualitative (interviews), "itinerant" ethnography. The main actors in the sample identified are pilgrims (outsiders), more generally travellers along the itinerary, and those who live along the Via Francigena on a permanent basis (insiders), especially hosts, absorbing the values of transit through their participation. Of the pilgrimage experience, the spectrum of motivations lying behind the journey was considered, especially looking at the therapeutic dimension of pilgrimage, it also reflects on the insiders involved. Virtuous revitalisation processes undertaken within the rural communities involved were taken into account arguing that, beyond the tourist logics, pilgrimage constitutes itself a paradigm. At the same time, these routes have demonstrated a fragmented and highly articulated identity. Therefore, while this heterogeneity can be seen as an asset, it also means an equally complicated decoding that results in a rich tourist segmentation and in a fragile reality that a pilgrimage itinerary entails.

*This proposal is the result of a peer-reviewed journal paper (Porcelloni, L., 2021. Pilgrimage and hospitality along the via Francigena: revitalisation of rural areas and therapeutic mobilities. «Turismo e Psicologia», 14.1, Padova University Press, pp. 69-82), other conference papers, and the PhD Thesis (Porcelloni, L., A Cultural Geography of Via Francigena: Historical and Modern Mobilities Along a European Cultural Route, supervised by Prof. Charles Watkins and Prof. Ross Balzaretto, University of Nottingham, October 2023).*

## TRANSHUMANCE TRAILS IN THE ERA OF EXPERIENCE-BASED TOURISM

*Mona Mariacristina*

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**Abstract:** The research is based on new guidelines established by the Italian Culture Ministry to provide tools for managing intangible cultural heritage for Italian Superintendencies and local institutions. The study explores the role of anthropologists in safeguarding the landscape, assessing the impact of the Guidelines for Intangible Heritage, and examining the best practices of local organizations. The research focuses on including a transhumance trail in the Basilicata region, located in the south of Italy, to the Cultural Routes list of the Council of Europe. This addition resulted in several modifications, such as the emergence of new traditional practices and the identification of transhumance as an opportunity for sustainable and profitable business ventures, besides ecological and sustainable activities. Podolica, the oldest breed in the world, is the primary subject of transhumance in Basilicata. The breeding system is an ancestral practice that involves a human-animal symbiosis and requires a deep understanding of the ecosystem and the efficient use of natural resources. My research aims to explore the living heritage of transhumance in Basilicata. In fact, the phenomenon persists and engages many farmers, while political institutions focus their efforts on historical memory and the preservation of traditional animal paths. It is common to study ancient traces and commemorate ancestral practices as prehistoric survivals. Nevertheless, substantial numbers of animals cross the region, overcoming obstacles and challenging routes and following a largely unknown new transhumance route. The study will employ qualitative methods, including unstructured interviews, participant observation, and comparative systems. The investigation shall focus primarily on the outcomes of the heritageisation of the transhumance route, as well as the transhumance process as a tourist experience. Furthermore, this study will examine the inherent benefits associated with the practice of transhumance in terms of circular economy, sustainable development, and the production of high-quality food.

*Thesis work, unpublished.*

## **SESSION 2: A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ALONG CULTURAL ROUTES**

### **FROM SITE TO DESTINATION - ROLE OF CULTURAL ROUTES IN THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE: THE IRON AGE DANUBE ROUTE IN THE POŽEGA VALLEY (CROATIA)**

*Marta Rakvin and*

*Jacqueline Balen*

**Abstract:** Archaeological heritage hides a huge potential for the development of sustainable cultural tourism. Presented in the right way, archaeological heritage can be transformed into a sustainable cultural resource capable of creating added value to the communities who live in its vicinity. The concept of sustainable management of cultural heritage, that has been successfully developing during recent decades, is an enhancement in care and protection of monuments. It became apparent that, in addition to its cultural and touristic potential, archaeological cultural heritage holds a considerable potential in creating economic value for the local communities. In order to fulfil these goals, presentation and interpretation of archaeological heritage play key roles in successful connection of the movable archaeological heritage, usually kept in museums, with places where they came from, i.e., archaeological sites. In this sense, by providing the context for objects and sites, archaeological landscapes are recognized as a fundamental factor for understanding the (pre)history of a certain region, the formation of its cultural identity, and the challenges for its transformation into a successful cultural tourism destination. In 2021, the Iron Age Danube Route was certified as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, a programme recognized for its understanding, promotion, and preservation of cultural heritage. One of the key aspects of the Route's work relates to regions where Iron Age monuments are located, and especially to the local communities, often unaware of the value the heritage in their vicinity holds. In this respect, the Route acts as a platform that facilitates collaboration between researchers, heritage institutions, tourism experts, local authorities and other stakeholders. In this paper, we will present one approach to its sustainable management through a case study of the Požega Valley.

*Published scientific paper at the conference (1.08), peer reviewed [https://museum-mb.si/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/MuseoEurope\\_2023.pdf](https://museum-mb.si/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/MuseoEurope_2023.pdf)*

## THE BYZANTINE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

*Roberta Alberotanza  
Francesco Calabrò  
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### **Abstract:**

"The Byzantine Cultural Landscape," is a project promoted by LABOREM (Mediterranea University of Reggio Calabria), involving scholars from Malaga University, Messina University, Thessaloniki University, Tirana University, the National Conservation Centre in Skopje, MiC Regional Superintendencies/Secretariats, Local Authorities, museums and associations, including ICOMOS. The project aims to unveil the Byzantine material and immaterial heritage of the inland areas of some Mediterranean countries. This cultural root delves into villages, defensive systems, monastic settlements, and diverse rites and traditions, shaping the essence of the Byzantine era. Beyond a mere exploration of historical artefacts, it's an immersive journey into the heart of a cultural landscape resilient against the sands of time. The project's ambitious but fundamental objectives include promoting cultural development through place-based policy and cultural tourism. Embarking on this journey, we recognize the significance of the Byzantine traces into inner areas, today characterized by undertourism, seeking to breathe life into overlooked gems preserving the key to our shared history. The meticulously outlined roadmap, from project object identification, meaningful community involvement and itinerary construction, to application dossier, represents a collaborative effort bridging academia, heritage preservation, and community engagement. Initiatives such as the "NMP International Scientific Symposium" and the research project "Integrated Strategies for Communication and Management of Byzantine-Norman Heritage in Calabria" mark significant progress. This project is not just a roadmap: it is a commitment to unveil the layers of history which bind us together as a global community, a journey through time to understand how the traces of that historical period are still current and influence the cultural panorama of the territories involved, reminding us that the past is the foundation on which we build our future.

*State of the art research reports*

## TRACING THE PAST AND UNDERSTANDING THE PRESENT THROUGH COUNCIL OF EUROPE LANDSCAPES: THE IDENTITY OF THE MODERN EXPLORER

*Marzia Liuzza*

*PhD Student, University of Padua and Ca'Foscari University of Venice (Italy)*

**Abstract:** Exploring the landscape of the Council of Europe's Routes not only allows us to uncover European history but also provides a comprehensive understanding of the contemporary context. The network of landscapes serves as a connection among diverse nations, integrating tangible and intangible resources, cultural identities, and values. Their enhancement, underlined by the European Landscape Convention and the Faro Convention, plays a strategic role in cultural, social, political, and economic development. Today we can consider the landscape as a valuable means of communicating cultural heritage of inestimable value to European tourists. The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe act as models for transnational communication and promote sustainable, ethical, social and intergenerational tourism. The landscape valorises European cultural heritage as a legacy that celebrates cultural diversity and enables the interpretation of a common history and the discovery of Europe's multiple identities beyond a Eurocentric view based solely on economic interests. These itineraries are of crucial importance for the preservation and valorisation of a past that nevertheless retains an essential significance for understanding the present. In this historical moment, the cultural heritage of European itineraries teaches us that the meeting of different cultures is inherently enriching. The valorisation of local communities is a key element that contributes to sustainable and quality tourism that respects both the territory and the communities and promotes positive coexistence among heterogeneous cultures. The global impact of Covid-19 has triggered a new awareness of the value of territories and led to more reflective and higher quality forms of tourism. Who is the tourist travelling these routes today? By exploring the function of landscapes, I want to present a new model of the traveller, with specific characteristics and needs for which the landscape plays a central role, and compared to the tourist who chooses mass tourism experiences to highlight differences and commonalities.

*The article partly reflects the work I am doing for my PhD and partly is based on a previously published article on the Council of Europe's Itineraries in the journal of studies, research and training 'Tourism and Psychology' of the University of Padua.*



## **STRATEGIC DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE ROUTE OF ST. OLAV'S WAYS**

*Irene Burdisso, Joey Yim Ping Chan, Marie Lerho, Sameera Rodrigo  
(Master's students in Tourism Studies, Mid Sweden University, Sweden)*

**Abstract:** This project focuses on St. Olav's Ways (S:t Olavsleden) – the northernmost pilgrimage network of routes in the world, all leading to the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim in Norway, the final burial place of King Olaf II Haraldsson, the Saint. The aim of the project was to suggest development directions for this route from a tourist experience perspective, focusing on its Swedish segment (starting at Selånger). The 16<sup>th</sup> century Reformation has put an end to once thriving Scandinavian pilgrimage tradition, but it has seen a recent revival as a multidimensional tourist experience. There are currently significant efforts on behalf of local municipalities and DMOs to develop this route as a tourist attraction. The number of tourists is on the rise, the majority of whom do not embark on this route for religious reasons. While religion will forever be an integral component of S:t Olavsleden, this project aimed to diversify the product offers on the route in order to attract a wider spectrum of tourists in the long run. The data for this project was gathered during a field work in the spring of 2023, and is based on observations, stakeholder interviews, photographic and document analysis. This project discusses three potential experiential themes for S:t Olavsleden, which are considered compatible with its environmental, historical, cultural and local characteristics: (a) a route for promoting peace and human rights; (b) a route for celebrating the gastronomy of Scandinavia; (c) a route for those seeking spiritual retreat from the modern world. While the geography covered by the route is mostly comprised of sparsely populated northern regions in Scandinavia, this project also covers strategies to enhance symbiotic development of the route and the rural areas, particularly by encouraging the engagement, as well as active participation and contribution of local lifestyle entrepreneurs, while simultaneously preserving and sustaining localism.

*Project report*

## **SESSION 3: CULTURAL ROUTES FOR ALL: DIGITALIZATION AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR AN INCLUSIVE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE**

### **PILGRIMAGE TOURISM, ACCESSIBILITY AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN WESTERN COUNTRIES. THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA AND THE VIA FRANCIGENA FOR ALL**

*Anna Trono*

*Professor, Department of Cultural Heritage, University of Salento, Lecce, Italy*

*Valentina Castronuovo*

*PhD Economic-Political Geography, Italy*

**Abstract:** Western Pilgrimage Routes are renowned worldwide for their beauty, diversity and historical significance. Millions of people visit them every year but many others feel unwelcome due to physical barriers and inadequate services, which can prevent people with sensory or physical disabilities from accessing them. This limitation affects 60 million European citizens and over 300 million potential international tourists with specific needs. The aim of this paper is to show how Pilgrimage Routes can be an example of tourism for everyone, in particular for users with sensory disabilities (blind and vision-impaired). Given the overload of visual stimuli in today's world, this objective may appear highly ambitious. Nevertheless, visual culture does not depend on the images themselves but the multi-level representation of the experience. The in-depth analysis will begin by looking at the European intervention framework, especially the strategies and measures by which the European Commission seeks to boost accessible tourism. Using a qualitative methodology, the study explores the objectives of certain initiatives (with their associated activities) that are helping to make Pilgrimage Routes real community experiences by improving tourist accessibility for the blind and vision-impaired. Starting from the experience of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela in Spain and the Via Francigena in Italy, the research will examine good practices in Europe in order to provide useful information for planning sustainable and resilient tourism for all.

*Chapter. Published. Trono A. Castronuovo V. (2023). Pilgrimage Tourism, Accessibility and Local Communities in Western Countries. The Camino de Santiago de Compostela and the via Francigena for All. In Prozano R.N., Cheer J.M., Santos X.M. (Eds.), Host Communities and Pilgrimage Tourism. Asia and beyond, Springer Nature, Singapore, pp. 143-161.*

## DIGITALISATION IN THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

*Rubén C. Lois-González<sup>1</sup> and Xosé Somoza-Medina<sup>2</sup>*

*1 University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain. 2 University of León, Spain*

**Abstract:** The Camino de Santiago (Saint James Way) was considered in 1987 by the Council of Europe as the first European cultural route. Since then, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from all over the world have walked through the traditional cultural landscapes of this corner of Europe seeking their own personal journey, an experience of introspection that, at least in theory, demands disconnecting from the world. The pandemic caused by COVID-19 has meant the greatest crisis in tourism in contemporary times, especially in mass destinations, revitalizing by contrast other forms and tourist places, such as cultural routes. From the political objective of economic and social recovery, public administrations are promoting the digitalization and use of new technologies in the dissemination and management of the Camino de Santiago as a cultural and tourist product. According to all the plans and projects planned, in the next years not only the mobile device will be a tool to help carry out the Way, it will become essential to achieve a completely satisfactory experience.

*Conference paper presented in the 2022 International Symposium "New Metropolitan Perspectives", held in the Mediterranean University in Reggio Calabria, Italy.*

*Lois-González, R.C., Somoza-Medina, X. (2022). The Necessary Digital Update of the Camino de Santiago. In: Calabrò, F., Della Spina, L., Piñeira Mantiñán, M.J. (eds) New Metropolitan Perspectives. NMP 2022. Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems, vol 482, 268-277. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06825-6\\_26](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-06825-6_26)*

## **DIGITAL SUBSTITUTES OF IMPRESSIONIST COLLECTIONS. A SCENOGRAPHY STRATEGY FROM TWO-HOUSE-MUSEUMS LOCATED ON THE BANKS OF THE SEINE RIVER (FRANCE)**

*Isabelle Brianso*

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**Abstract:** The Impressionist movement spanned just under a century, from the mid-19th to the early 20th century. This movement brought together more than 300 European artists, some of whose fame (Monet, Sisley, Renoir, etc.) overshadowed the names of lesser-known artists from Europe to Russia. These artists' colonies also left their mark on a wide variety of artistic sites in the Paris region, including painters' houses (Giverny, Argenteuil, etc.), *ginguettes* (*cafés*) on the banks of the Seine (Chatou) and ordinary urban sites undergoing industrial change at the end of the 19th century (Chatou, Argenteuil). For example, the Maison Fournaise in Chatou was a famous *ginguette* on the banks of the Seine during the Impressionist period, where Auguste Renoir (1854-1919) painted his famous *Déjeuner des canotiers* (1880). This hotel-restaurant was best known to the locals as a convivial and sociable place frequented by Impressionist artists, writers and painters, who met there in search of light, colour and water to paint their pictures. Although the Maison Fournaise now houses collections of paintings from this period, the paintings of the Impressionist masters are not on display, like the *Déjeuner des canotiers*. This masterpiece was acquired in 1924 by an American couple with the aim of creating the first museum of modern art in Washington. Similarly, the Maison Impressionniste in Argenteuil bears witness to the stay of Claude Monet (1840-1926) and his family in this small town on the banks of the Seine, between town and country. Claude Monet painted some major artistic works there. In 2003, the town of Argenteuil acquired this holiday home, both to renovate it and to offer visitors a digital scenography to bring the works of the Impressionist master (back) to life. The museum opened its doors (2022) with an artistic, sensory and immersive ambience composed mainly of digital substitutes to recreate Claude Monet's creative and pictorial universe. Thus, in this contribution we question digital substitutes in the museum-visit experience as doubles to the original works (Tardy, 2015; de Bideran, 2015) based on a study of corpus (observation, semiotic approach, inquiry) composed by two house museums in Île-de-France. Our research questions are as follows: how do digital substitutes re-examine the relationship with 'authentic' original works? Do they produce qualitative emotions for visitors? Do these digital substitutes constitute a scenographic dynamic for Impressionist house museums without masterpieces?

*Conference with publication (article) in proceedings (December 2023).*

## **THE APPROPRIATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES BY CULTURAL ROUTES: NETWORKING, VISIBILITY AND ANALYSIS OF TERRITORIAL IMPACTS**

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Independent consultant, Spain*

**Abstract:** The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe offer to new technologies numerous fields of application. This contribution aims to analyse the importance of these resources for the routes. We want to determine how the networks use them and to what extent. We propose the development of a system of indicators to determine the external and internal digital communication of itineraries and the use of new technologies to measure the satisfaction of the tourist experience and its impact on the territory. For itineraries, the introduction of new technologies is essential. To understand its true implication, it is necessary to examine what practices characterize this sector and how the different members of the network implement systems to exchange information and a showcase to publicize the route. The aim is to analyse the role of ICT in itineraries throughout the travel cycle (before, during and after). In recent years, new technologies have played an important role in the preparation of tourist visits. We want to look at how the route generates content based on visitor needs. During the visit, new forms of digital representations can improve the tourist experience. After the trip, tourists use new technologies such as social networks to share their experiences, make recommendations and evaluate the destination. These new tools also offer many possibilities for the cultural routes which can improve services, quality, management, and the decision-making process. A cultural route is formed by different nodes. Each node has several of its own resources but also depends on the resources of the other nodes that are part of the network. The interaction of nodes is essential for the proper functioning of the network and ultimately the route. Although it can be difficult to implement, networking appears to be a solution for cultural routes. ICT and these new forms of collaborative work can help in this process.

*Unpublished article.*

## SESSION 4: ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND SHAPING THE FUTURE OF CULTURAL ROUTES THROUGH COOPERATION AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

### **TOWARDS A EUROPEAN GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK FOR PILGRIMAGE ROUTES: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Maria Laura Gasparini<sup>1</sup>  
and José A. Cortés Vázquez<sup>2</sup>*

**Abstract:** Pilgrimage is arguably the forerunner of modern tourism and is gaining renewed momentum, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond its religious and spiritual dimensions, pilgrimage is a cross-cutting phenomenon, contributing to several European policy priorities, including cultural heritage enhancement, intercultural dialogue and economic development. While pilgrimage routes can be drivers for rural regeneration and territorial cohesion, their potential is hindered by a lack of coordination and policy alignment among the stakeholders involved at interregional and transnational levels, resulting in a far from homogeneous experience for the pilgrims. In this context, the H2020 project rurAllure set the objective of fostering cultural cooperation and sustainable tourism in the proximity of six European historic pilgrimage routes: The Ways of Saint James, the pilgrimage routes to Rome (Via Francigena, Romea Strata and Via Romea Germanica), the Saint Olav Ways in Scandinavia and the Way of Mary to Șumuleu Ciuc/Csíksomlyó. Its ultimate goal is to create a network of institutions where relevant stakeholders can work at all levels to develop an ecosystem of pilgrimage routes as sustainable transnational cultural and economic assets. The paper presents the results of the participatory process followed towards the creation of this network of institutions, consisting of 1) mapping the existing policies and governance frameworks related to pilgrimage in seven European countries (Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain), 2) identifying gaps between regions and opportunities for cooperation, 3) developing and validating a set of policy recommendations through a Delphi survey, and finally 4) testing whether these recommendations fit well in EU politics through a roundtable with EU policymakers. Initial findings suggest that a multi-level coordination framework, such as the one envisaged through the rurAllure cooperation network, is suitable to unlock pilgrimage potential for socio-economic development and territorial cohesion.

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## **BEST MED OPEN PLATFORM: CHALLENGES OF DIGITISING INDICATORS OF CULTURAL ROUTES SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

*Maja Turnšek, Katja Kokot  
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**Abstract:** As one of outputs of the Interreg BESTMED project, University of Maribor was responsible for creation of the BESTMED Open Platform. This is an online tool to measure compliance with the criteria of sustainable tourism development of cultural routes in accordance with the MED S&C Path Model of sustainable management of cultural routes. The platform aims to present basic data for a specific route (name, description, route type, gallery, contacts, route location, etc.), provide the values of selected Eurostat indicators on culture and tourism in Europe (numeric and graphic representation of data) and visualise and benchmark the results of the self-assessment by cultural routes managers. The paper presents the platform functionalities and discusses the numerous challenges of data collection in relation to sustainable management of cultural routes, both from practical and critical perspective on data driven policy-making.

*Conference paper, not yet published*

## THE MODEL OF CULTURAL ROUTES AS TOURISM PRODUCTS

NAGY, Katalin

*tourism expert, master lecturer, University of Miskolc, Faculty of Economics, Marketing and Tourism Institute, Hungary*

### **Abstract:**

A cultural route can be one of the best practices for the preservation and development of cultural heritage. It can also be a tool for tourism development, especially at certain phases of a destination life circle or in underdeveloped areas, as well as a new marketing tool to promote a territory.

However, cultural routes are basically cultural products, with a certain cultural theme in its focus.

This paper presents a tourism product model for cultural routes. The basis of the research is a series of expert interviews and a structured online questionnaire survey. The TEAM-In model is based on existing (tourism) product models, which are summarized in a systematic literature review, especially on Lewitt (1981), Smith (1994) and Kotler-Keller (2006). The model is constructed with the tools of Grounded Theory, according to the Strauss and Corbin (1990) methods. 321 elements were first reduced into 30 categories, then into 12 categories, and finally into 4 main categories, which form the base of the model.

The TEAM-In model consists of five layers: Theme, Environment, location, Authenticity, Multi-services, and Involvement, participation. Further characteristics of 'services' are defined by factor analysis of the survey questions. The nature of services can be naturally varied according to the central cultural product (theme, heritage), but the elements can be grouped and filled with different content.

The model can serve as a tool for route development, especially in the case of tourism product development, which is also a requirement among the certification criteria. Further research is carried out on tourism product development and cooperation models for cultural routes.

*Part of a PhD thesis, it has been partly published in Hungarian in 2017 (not the final version of the model)*



## **PROPOSING METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING CULTURAL ROUTES**

*Zouni Georgia  
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**Abstract:** Cultural heritage is recognized as the fourth pillar of sustainable development by the United Nations, providing a critical link between socioeconomic development, environmental protection, and overall societal well-being. It serves as a cohesive thread weaving through the three traditional pillars, fostering multi-level and multi-dimensional progress within local communities. This pivotal role positions cultural heritage as the core of social integration and cultural strengthening. This study delves into the development of cultural routes, offering a strategic methodology to connect the diverse elements of cultural and natural assets at various geographic scales—local, regional, national, and international. By leveraging cultural routes, it seeks to optimize the synergistic potential of these assets for the benefit of local societies and global diplomacy. Drawing from a comprehensive review of pertinent literature and articles, this document examines the methodological frameworks employed by notable organizations, including the Council of Europe's cultural route planning project and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). It dissects the concepts, perspectives, and stages of these projects to extract their valuable insights. The analysis reveals that an enhanced and more comprehensive methodology can be developed by merging elements from both the Council of Europe's and ICOMOS' approaches. This synthesized approach not only optimizes the potential for cultural and natural asset utilization but also ensures a more holistic and inclusive approach to cultural route development. By connecting the wealth of cultural and natural assets at various levels, these routes facilitate the preservation of cultural heritage, promote economic growth, and strengthen social bonds. The methodology presented here is a robust foundation for harnessing the true potential of cultural routes in achieving sustainable development goals while fostering international cooperation and cultural exchange.