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Cultural Routes and religious heritage: The multiple dynamics of a crossed category in a tourism context

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Peer-reviewed article

Introduction

- 1 Pilgrim routes and places of worship have shaped human and trade movements throughout European history. In the 21st century, some of these geographical traces (route, trail, via/way) have been transformed into Cultural Routes with Council of Europe labels (Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes) or outstanding sites with multiple properties (Cluniac Sites, Cistercian abbeys, Jewish heritage) visited by many travellers, traders, and pilgrims since the Middle Ages. This polymorphous cultural and religious heritage has led to the creation of a network of European sites which now attracts a variety of types of visitor who explore them in whole or in part. Thus the paths of domestic and international rambblers, travellers, pilgrims, lay people and locals intersect on these routes spanning an area from northern Scotland to the eastern Balkans. For them, this is not only a territorial tourism development project, but also a cultural, social and intimate way of experiencing a landscape.
- 2 This area of study is nevertheless difficult to grasp in research terms, despite the scientific interest which it has sparked in the human and social sciences in recent

years. Recent research at the disciplinary crossroads of cultural geography (Gravari-Barbas, 2015), landscape (Berti, 2012) and information and communications science (Severo, 2018; Gaillard, 2018; Briano and Rigat, 2019) explores the tourism dynamics at work and the new mobilisations, experiments, and heritage awareness initiatives organised by networks of stakeholders. These stakeholders operate directly in an area, singly or in communities using a variety of practices and participatory, sociotechnical and online digital tools (Facebook, Instagram). It should be noted that most research focusing on Cultural Routes is based on a reflexive normative position (Council of Europe) as a shifting heritage category which should be re-evaluated using a systemic approach. A theoretical framework such as actor-network theory (Severo, 2019) casts a fresh light on the study of complexity operating at the heart of Cultural Routes.

- 3 Thus, within the framework of this article, our aim is to explore on the one hand the overlapping and ambiguous contours of Cultural Routes based on religious heritage elements in Europe and, on the other hand, the construction of communities of stakeholders in a tourism context. Our research questions will be based on thinking addressing both terminological and procedural approaches and the dynamics observed in a corpus of committed stakeholders. How can this ambiguous heritage category be classified? What communications strategies are favoured by Cultural Routes to drive network heritagisation? How do communities of stakeholders apply tourism development to Cultural Routes with religious values? We have addressed these questions using a qualitative method, semantic and semiotic investigation, in order to understand the dynamics of the stakeholders involved, using a corpus of certified Cultural Routes.

I. Cultural Routes and religious heritage: the ambiguous shape of a heritage category in Europe

- 4 As mentioned above, Council of Europe Cultural Routes¹ have been the focus of recent scientific interest in the field of heritage and tourism studies, although they have been part of the cultural history of European states since World War Two. According to Eleonora Berti (2015b) they have a shifting definition as the word “route”

“[...] should not be understood purely in terms of the physical meaning ‘path’; it is used in a broader more conceptual sense to refer to a network of sites or geographical zones with a common theme, which can take different forms depending on the ‘identity’ of each place.” (Berti, 2015b, p. 14)

- 5 The term “route” fits into the broader approach of a network within the European space and extends beyond the geographical outline of the trail or road; it should be interpreted in line with the heritage category identified in 2008:

“[...] Cultural Routes as a new concept or category does not conflict nor overlap with other categories or types of cultural properties—monuments, cities, cultural landscapes, industrial heritage, etc.—that may exist within the orbit of a given Cultural Route. It simply includes them within a joint system which enhances their significance. This integrated, interdisciplinary and shared framework creates new relationships among them by means of an innovative scientific perspective that provides a multilateral, more complete, and more accurate vision of history. [...]” (Icomos, 2008)

- 6 These definitions proposed by Icomos provide the conceptual framework for this object, but the definition of the term “route” is still mired in interpretative complexity.

We should note that we are dealing with a cultural object in its own right with, moreover, its own characteristic features relating to tourist mobility which have already been studied by researchers in the tourism field. The terms “road”, “trail”, “path”, “circuit” and “route” all have specific historical, geographic and technical features which have been the subject of numerous research studies in the human and social sciences, and even evaluations by public and private organisations operating in the tourism field. Thus, according to Bourdeau and Marcotte (2015), a path can be defined as a narrow public thoroughfare, unlike a trail, whose form is more akin to a journey or itinerary. Of the forty Cultural Routes² certified by the Council of Europe according to six thematic criteria,³ we can observe that the terms “route” or “trail” are regularly highlighted by bodies applying for certification, such as the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes or the Iron Curtain Trail.

- 7 In order to investigate this observation in greater depth, we shall analyse the thematic names⁴ used in 2020 on the Council of Europe website to describe the forty certified Cultural Routes. This simple investigation will reveal that the terminology splits into two semantic patterns: the physical feature in geographical terms such as a route or way, and a dynamic arrangement associated with the image of a network. The results of this investigation are shown below.

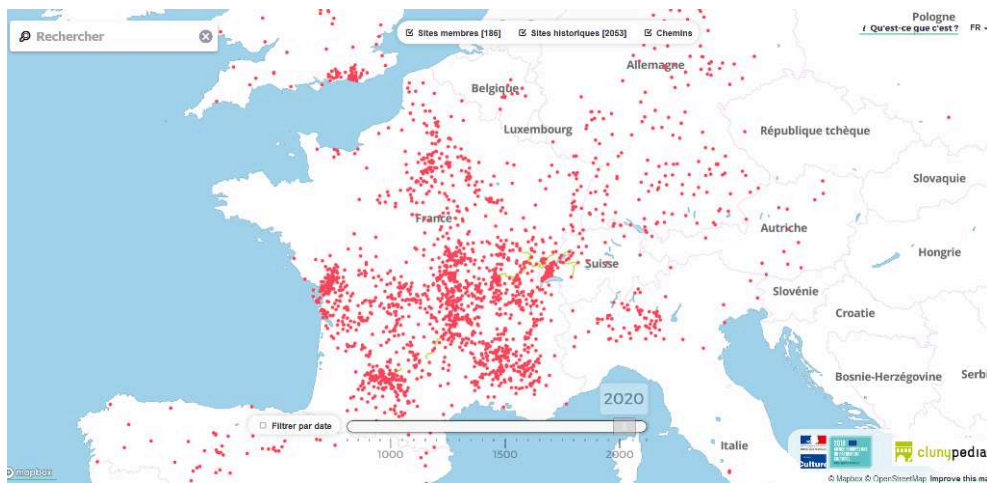
Document 1: Terms most frequently used to define a Cultural Route (CR) certified by the Council of Europe in 2020

Word	Certified Cultural Route (CR)
Route	22 CRs contain the word “route”. Example: European Route of Cistercian Abbeys
Itinerary	0 CRs contain the word “itinerary”
Way or Via	Six CRs contain the word “way” or “via”. Example: Via Francigena
-	Four CRs do not contain any geographical term. Example: ATRIUM
Trail	Three CRs contain the word “trail”. Example: Iron Curtain Trail
Destination	Two CRs contain the word “destination”. Example: Destination Napoleon
Footsteps	One CR contains the word “footsteps”. Example: In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson
Network	One CR contains the word “network”. Example: Réseau Art Nouveau Network
Site	One CR contains the term “site”. Example: Cluniac Sites in Europe

- 8 According to the table above, the terms “route”, “itinerary”, “way / Via” and “trail” occur most frequently. This correlates with Cultural Routes associated with pilgrim ways such as the Via Francigena, or which feature religious heritage focusing on a particular community, such as the European Route of Jewish Heritage.
- 9 The word “network” only occurs once in the table even though the concept of Cultural Routes is associated with a dynamic process initiated by a network. Our argument is based on the results of an exploratory survey carried out by the Council of Europe in 2012 focusing on certified Cultural Routes or routes embarking on the certification process. Participants were asked a simple question⁵ to explore their own perception of a Cultural Route based on their experience on the ground. Thus, in response to this question, several routes which are responsible for pilgrim ways reflect a dynamic initiated by the network rather than a tourism-centred approach. In this context, the network lead⁶ for the Saint Martin of Tours Route (certified in 2005) believes that a route “is ‘a cultural path’ on which different identities can meet to build a network of shared values together [...]” (Berti, 2015b, p. 18). Similarly, the Via Francigena (certified in 1994) adopts the idea of a route spanning several European countries as a shared European identity, but takes it to the next level. The Via Francigena network lead believes that a Cultural Route is “a constantly active network [which] fosters historical research and interactions between different stakeholders [...]” (Berti, 2015b, p. 18). In a similar vein, Brianso and Pianezza (2020) show in their article on cultural experiences that Council of Europe Cultural Routes operate according to a process of networked heritagisation, driven by the operational aspects of projects and initiatives because stakeholders on a given route identify, inventory and then heritagize objects, values and knowledge by means of a network. This then becomes the linchpin of routes based on two dynamics: firstly, a “virtual” dynamic using communications tools developed by the Routes themselves, such as a Facebook page or *Clunypedia*,⁷ the digital encyclopaedia of Cluny and Cluniac sites, and secondly, a “tangible” dynamic. This latter dynamic brings together collections of religious objects, walking trails or a map of connected heritage sites disseminated by members and their organisations (museums, non-profit associations, tourist information offices, etc.). We believe it is important to specify this contextual definition in order to frame the scope of our research as a cultural, tourism, and social product which is the fruit of pan-European thinking, and to study it from the perspective of heritagisation of sites and routes associated with religion. In other words, this section attempts to understand the shape of this heritage and tourism production around religion on a European scale.
- 10 We therefore decided to create a corpus of Cultural Routes certified by the Council of Europe which fits into this dynamic of the touristification of religion. Only a handful of the forty Cultural Routes certified in 2020 by the Council of Europe met our brief. We identified two groups of Cultural Routes which were relevant to our study:
- Twelve⁸ routes, which explicitly refer to themselves as pilgrimage routes, religious walking trails under the aegis of a saint, religious community or place, or which reference a religion. This group is the primary corpus.
 - Six⁹ routes which do not at first glance have a religious dimension, but which on closer examination feature historic monuments which attract religious tourism, such as the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle on the Via Charlemagne Cultural Route or the Mosque-Cathedral of Cordoba on the Routes of El legado andalusí.

- 11 Our primary corpus comprises any “route”, “trail”, “path” or “via/way” whose religious aspect is clearly flagged thematically in one of two ways: either directly in the name of the route, such as the Cluniac Sites in Europe, or in the description presented on the official Council of Europe website, such as the Transromanica certified route. We decided to focus on this group of routes in order to explore their unique features and underlying tensions based on a specific classification.
- 12 Cultural Routes have already been classified by various authors, notably Eleonora Berti (2015b) who identifies three main categories (territorial routes; linear routes; networked routes) to which Marie Gaillard (2017) adds a further two categories: routes of sites, and combined routes. These two modes of classifications proposed by Berti (2015b) and Gaillard (2017) are relevant to certified Cultural Routes as a whole, but present several weaknesses when applied to Cultural Routes associated with religious heritage due to the diversity of elements associated with both categories. We propose two classification typologies for our research corpus: firstly, a category which we call “mixed”, which refers to Cultural Routes which have non-homogenous and dispersed religious heritage elements (sites, monuments, cultural venues, all types of heritage traces) across the European space, which can nevertheless be connected in the form of a structured network such as a database. This type of structure is the equivalent of a data inventory operated by stakeholders responsible for the route in a unifying and participatory approach which leverages both members and network leads. For example the *Clunypedia* tool is a digital encyclopaedia of Cluniac sites in the form of an open portal structured around a project, a map, and three visit apps for mobile devices which are all available to users (Briano, 2018). The map of Cluniac sites below shows this network of non-homogenous geolocalized heritage data dispersed across Europe, with Cluny Abbey as the epicentre of religious heritage:

Document 2: *Clunypedia* map developed by the Cluniac Sites in Europe certified Cultural Route



European Federation of Cluniac Sites (FESC)

- 13 We propose a second classification in relation to our research corpus which we shall call “identity-based”. This highlights Cultural Routes whose identity refers to the theme of common values relating to religious heritage in the European space as a whole, to a pilgrimage route, religion, saint or religious community, and features explicit semantic cues (Saint-Martin of Tours Route, European Route of Jewish

Heritage). We observe that of the twelve routes making up our research corpus only three¹⁰ do not fit into this identity-based category as the name selected to describe the route is not sufficiently explicit. In other words, the choice of name does not have an explicit identity signature associated with a religious theme, even if it contains religious values. In this respect, Via Francigena was excluded from the “identity-based” classification as we do not believe that the name of the route is sufficiently unambiguous, even though it is an ancient pilgrim way.¹¹ However, our typology requires a greater degree of nuance when our “identity-based” classification is set alongside the logo used as a visual medium for the creation of a religious identity as a symbolic space for negotiation. In an article devoted to images (logos) for Cultural Routes, Marie Gaillard (2018) analyses the iconic construction of the Via Francigena based on two identity markers in the graphic depicting it: on the one hand, a territorial identity with a religious value and, on the other, a European identity. These two identity-based aspects have slowly begun to engage in dialogue over the course of the history of this Cultural Route which was certified in 1994. It should be noted that the visual aspect and identity of the Via Francigena is embedded principally in the traces of Italian communes across history and the iconic image of the pilgrim from the cathedral of San Donnino di Fidenza (Italy).

Document 3: AEFV logo



Via Francigena

Document 4: AEFV and Council of Europe logos



Via Francigena

- 14 These two aspects are not obvious to the uninitiated in the name Via Francigena; the opposite is true for the Saint Martin of Tours Route, although not everybody is familiar with Saint Martin's name or his attributes. Similarly, Gaillard identifies what she calls "the pictogram war" based on two examples: the Via Francigena and Saint Martin of Tours. In 2011, the Council of Europe produced a set of logos without any meaningful consultation with the Cultural Route network leads concerned. The tensions sparked by the institutional depictions (Council of Europe) and those created by civil society were unambiguous. The two Cultural Routes rejected the images suggested to them: the dome of St Peter's Basilica in Rome to represent the Via Francigena instead of the figure of a pilgrim, and the outline of a bishop to represent the Saint Martin of Tours Route instead of the saint himself with his attributes (horse, cloak, and a poor man's hand).
- 15 Anecdotal aspects aside, identity is a sensitive subject for routes, which must not be constructed along stereotypical lines. We believe that the creation of a typology helps to bring definition to the ambiguous parameters of this cultural object, although certain aspects still require finessing and integration (term, logo). Yet each Cultural Route seems to convey a cultural and European identity which is meaningful to its members. They belong to a human community with religious values which has its roots in intimacy rather than an administrative body, as is highlighted by Brianso and Pianezza (2020) in their survey of members of the European Federation of Cluniac Sites (FESC).¹² FESC members compare it to an extended family whose members form a heritage family. In the following section, we shall study community-building on the routes in our corpus, based on heritage elements with a religious theme.

II. Building communities with religious and heritage values in a tourism context

- 16 Tourism development of Cultural Routes is based on the ideology of sustainable tourism in the territories through which they pass and the communities which bring input in the form of sociocultural participation. These communities can, however, become a breeding ground for tension, as is highlighted by Yoel Mansfeld (2015). He identifies a seedbed for potential friction in the positivist landscape of "community-focused policies based on supposed community participation, which are not in actual fact representative of general attitudes towards the repercussions of tourism" (Mansfeld, 2015, p. 76). The author emphasises the fact that the involvement of communities cannot be taken for granted and is based on a strategic, plural and complex network which is shaped by economic and sociocultural factors and quality of life. Yet the very success of

cultural routes is rooted in community involvement in the sense of full recognition of local communities as full stakeholders. Cultural Route stakeholders fit into this cultural, geographic, touristic and social landscape in which inter-relational dynamics are in play. In other words, heterogeneous Cultural Route stakeholders play a key role in raising awareness, although the study of these routes presents genuine methodological difficulties in terms of analysing their social, cultural and spatial dynamics. Some researchers (Van der Duim and Ren, 2007; Arnaboldi and Spiller, 2011; Severo, 2019) employ concepts such as actor-network theory to describe all the stakeholders of this object (local communities) in terms of a flow of connections between stakeholders without any *a priori* hierarchisation, i.e. without making any distinction between tourists, inhabitants or members of these networks. In the sociology field, actor-network theory¹³ goes a step further by placing human and non-human actors and forms of heritage, facilitation resources and signage on an equal footing (Masson and Prévot, 2018) in the study of complex sociocultural territories. Marta Severo (2019) posits an interdisciplinary approach based on the multi-stakeholder model to study Cultural Routes which, according to her, are not abstract objects but social phenomena orchestrated by micro-dynamics. The concept of a stakeholder still needs to be qualified despite diverse approaches.

- 17 We therefore propose to examine two forms of stakeholder community involved in tourism development of Cultural Routes with religious values in order to more clearly define the shifting contours of the object of study: firstly, digital communities of stakeholders in communications and tourism networks and, secondly, heritage communities of members. However, first of all we must define what we mean by stakeholders and communities through this cultural object. We do not believe that there is a single type of stakeholder, but rather a number of stakeholders who form a fairly dense socio-economic web mainly comprising cultural institutions (museums, libraries, universities, etc.) and voluntary sector associations which collaborate on a one-off or regular basis with the network lead of the route in question. However, institutions are no substitute for the individual stakeholder who operates on their own scale on Cultural Routes, most often as a member or volunteer. This very diverse web of collective and individual stakeholders forms a composite community involved in Cultural Route activities and projects which extend beyond the responsibilities of managers (network leads). In this context, the social aspect is not tangential but is in fact the expression of belonging to a community for members whose mechanisms for sociability (voluntary sector, federative, participatory) have already been highlighted by Hervé Glevarec and Guy Saez (2002) in their volume *Le patrimoine saisi par les associations*. We will illustrate this community involvement via two forms of communities of stakeholders (digital and members) working on the tourism development of territories, trails and religious sites based on Cultural Routes from our primary corpus, namely the Via Francigena and Cluniac Sites in Europe. Firstly, we were interested in Facebook as a media space for the creation of a documentary and institutional tourism narrative by diverse stakeholders “*who are involved in raising the profile of the route, in ways of following it and, by the same token, awareness of it as a common heritage, cultural and European asset*” (Tardy and Gaillard, 2018, p. 264). This socio-digital medium allows us to observe the textual, iconic and symbolic traces left by stakeholders who are key influencers (individual and collective) for Cultural Routes. In other words, this mechanism is an editorial mediation communications tool which

presents, in words and pictures, communities which create representations of our research object.

- 18 Let us take the example of the Via Francigena, which posts a semi-continuous stream of non-hierarchised information on its Facebook page. This data has a common strand of referring to the route, whatever the nature of the content. We can find posts with very varied text and visual content from the press (local, Italian and international) and activities and projects implemented by the European Via Francigena Association (AEVF). These posts are then commented on by a community of some 60,021¹⁴ online subscribers. In addition, there are photographs taken by visitors which are stored in dedicated spaces, and information relating to past and forthcoming events in many languages – in short, an eclectic mix of resources which shape the everyday digital life of this Facebook page and its virtual community. Semantic analysis of this very varied content allows us to pinpoint three categories of stakeholders/key influencers operating in the tourism context on a European scale or orchestrating this socio-technical network to construct their identity or associate themselves with the values promoted by the Via Francigena. These three stakeholder/key influencers are: firstly, the network lead who represents the administrative and management function of the Cultural Route; secondly the stakeholder-walker who is none other than the figure of the pilgrim walker, and lastly, the Facebook subscriber-stakeholder. These three types of stakeholder form a group of three communities which must not be set in opposition to each other, but considered as a complex, dynamic living inter-connected system in which it is not possible to study one element without taking the other two into consideration. A press article posted on the Via Francigena Facebook page illustrates this systemic approach. The AEVF posted an article from *La Stampa*¹⁵ about the impact of Covid-19 on the trails of the Via Francigena, a flourishing tourism sector. This information-sharing by the network lead prompted nine comments and five “shares” on the Facebook page from the other two groups. The walker-pilgrim feels affected by this information in terms of their identity as a walker, while also commenting on the health situation: “[...] *the virus is not putting off ‘tourists’, just pilgrims [...] the evidence seems to be clear-cut: fewer pilgrims, more tourists.*” (Facebook subscriber). The Facebook page therefore appears to be a multi-stakeholder space for authentic social communication which connects actors without challenging the legitimacy of one vis-a-vis the other two.
- 19 Nevertheless, the pilgrim-walker figure remains central to the practise of rambling tourism as they promote the strong values associated with taking part in this activity. A tourism survey¹⁶ (2019) carried out among a representative population sample reveals that the profile of the rambler covers a wide spread of people ranging in age from 30 to 60-plus years, who are often retired (42.1%) and interested in environmental issues. Tardy and Gaillard (2018) stress that the walker-pilgrim is the *raison d’être* of the Via Francigena, appearing systematically in the AEVF logo as a lone figure in motion with attributes (knapsack, staff, cloak), conveying the idea of an “*experience of identity-building through walking*” (Tardy and Gaillard, 2018, p. 268) modelled on the walker-pilgrims on the Camino of Santiago de Compostela. This stakeholder-walker community or family shares a number of common values which can be compared to the motives for being a member of another Cultural Route: Cluniac Sites in Europe. A member of this route is a social stakeholder with an interest in the heritage cause and must therefore be considered an agent, i.e. an individual who has taken the initiative to get involved, in a voluntary sector or professional capacity with the aim of promoting this religious

heritage. In short, they are a committed and campaigning stakeholder with a variety of motives which are analysed by Brianso and Pianezza (2019). Firstly, the member stakeholder aims to cultivate what they call a “family ethos” in the Cluniac monastic order, then to forge links between people or institutions to share knowledge around common interests focusing on a Cluniac community, and lastly to work to raise its visibility using a network as operational means of communication around the heritagisation project. They are also involved in the cultural and tourist activities offered by the network lead in order to strengthen their sense of belonging to the Cluniac community which provides opportunities to visit sites (public and private) in France and Europe, which they believe to be exceptional. In short, they are an informed member who takes part in cultural tourism on a Cultural Route with religious heritage, and considers themselves to be a member of a brotherhood and not a tourist. Brianso and Pianezza (2019) highlight the fact that “*the terminology used in interviews refers to other members as ‘cousins’ [...] conjures up a genealogical model emphasising the depiction of the network as a focal point for a shared Cluniac identity*” (Brianso and Pianezza, 2020, 167). This heritage “family” corresponds to the prescriptive guidelines of the Council of Europe, notably the Faro Convention (2005) as regards the notion of heritage community which “*is made up of people who ascribe value to the specific aspects of cultural heritage which they desire [...]*.” In other words, citizen and European construction of the notion of heritage built by and for Cultural Routes. This mobilisation, be it individual or collective, is carried out in the social arena in order to generate debate and heritage awareness which is meaningful for the community of stakeholders whose roots lie in citizens’ ability to provide a counterbalance to learned expertise.

Conclusion: a heritage category with multiple dynamics

- 20 This article demonstrates the ambiguous contours of a heritage category (Cultural Route) which presents research complexities not only in terms of definition, but also conceptually and methodologically, despite the interest which it attracts at the interdisciplinary crossroads of the human and social sciences. We began by defining and then classifying Cultural Routes with a religious heritage which was explicit (terminological approach) and polymorphous (database) according to 2-strand typology (mixed, community-based). This new classification supplements forms which already exist or are being framed (Berti, 2015b; Gaillard, 2017) whilst avoiding a stereotypical approach to the object of study. Several authors state that Cultural Routes can be studied as complex social phenomena, i.e. as a living, heterogenous and interconnected system based on composite elements of European heritage and a web of non-homogenous stakeholders traveling around Europe on trails, ways and routes. These multiple stakeholders coordinate multiple communities, which in turn drive multi-faceted (digital, volunteering) and multi-connected participation in the social and media space based on dynamics structured into networks (Facebook, members) which work to raise awareness of Cultural Routes and promote tourism development. We posit that these “multiple” elements observed at the heart of Cultural Routes are a noteworthy characteristic of networked heritagisation on a European scale.
- 21 Lastly, this article could bring greater methodological depth to the systemic analysis of the principal corpus. Semantic and semiotic analysis was used to examine Cultural

Routes featuring religious heritage, but other empirical data revealing affinities with actor-network theory could be included, notably non-human stakeholders such as signage. This type of *in situ* facilitation tool would feed into an in-depth study of the dynamics of marking itineraries (trail, way, route) involving human and non-human stakeholders using actor-network theory. We believe that this systemic approach offers more qualitative avenues for the study of the complexity of this cultural and social object.

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NOTES

1. Resolution CM/Res(2013)66 defines a Cultural Route as "a cultural, educational heritage and tourism co-operation project aiming at the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series of itineraries based on a historic route, a cultural concept, figure or phenomenon with a transnational importance and significance for the understanding and respect of common European values."

2. In 2020, forty Cultural Routes were certified by the Council of Europe: Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes (1987); The Hansa (1991); Viking Route (1993); Via Francigena (1994); Routes of El legado andalusí

(1997); Phoenicians' Route (2003); Iron Route in the Pyrenees (2003); European Mozart Ways (2004); European Route of Jewish Heritage (2004); Saint Martin of Tours Route (2005); Cluniac Sites in Europe (2005); Routes of the Olive Tree (2005); Via regia (2005); Transromanica (2007); Iter Vitis Route (2009); European Route of Cistercian Abbeys (2010); European Cemeteries Route (2010); Prehistoric Rock Art Trails (2010); European Route of Historic Thermal Towns (2010); Route of Saint Olav Ways (2010); European Route of Ceramics (2012); European Route of Megalithic Culture (2013); Huguenot and Waldensian Trail (2013); Atrium (2014); Réseau Art Nouveau Network (2014); Via Hapsburg (2014); Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route (2015); European Routes of Emperor Charles V (2015); Destination Napoleon (2015); In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson (2015); Fortified Towns of the Grande Region (2016); Impressionisms Routes (2018); Via Charlemagne (2018); European Route of Industrial Heritage (2019); Iron

Curtain Trail (2019); Le Corbusier Destinations: Architectural Promenades (2019); Liberation Route Europe (2019); Routes of Reformation (2019); European Route of Historic Gardens (2020); Via Romea Germanica (2020).

3. The six thematic criteria of Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 are: “(1) the theme must be representative of European values and common to at least three countries of Europe; (2) the theme must be researched and developed by groups of multidisciplinary experts from different regions of Europe so as to ensure that the activities and projects which illustrate it are based on consensus; (3) the theme must be illustrative of European memory, history and heritage and contribute to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe; (4) the theme must lend itself to cultural and educational exchanges for young people and hence be in line with the Council of Europe’s ideas and concerns in these fields; (5) the theme must permit the development of initiatives and exemplary and innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development; (6) the theme must lend itself to the development of tourist products in partnership with tourist agencies and operators aimed at different publics, including school groups.”

4. <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/cultural-routes/by-theme>

5. The question asked was: “According to you, and from your own experience, what is a Council of Europe Cultural Route?”

6. A network lead is the administrative management structure coordinating a Cultural Route. For example, the network lead for Cluniac Sites in Europe is the European Federation of Cluniac Sites (www.sitesclunisiens.org).

7. <http://clunypedia.com/map>

8. The twelve Cultural Routes (primary corpus): Santiago de Compostela Routes; Via Francigena; European Route of Jewish Heritage; Saint-Martin of Tours Route; Cluniac Sites in Europe; Transromanica; European Route of Cistercian Abbeys; European Cemeteries Route; Route of Saint Olav Ways; Huguenot and Waldensian Trail; Routes of Reformation; Via Romea Germanica.

9. The six Cultural Routes (secondary corpus): Routes of El legado andalusí; Via Regia; Via Hapsburg; Réseau Art Nouveau Network; Via Charlemagne; Le Corbusier Destinations: Architectural Promenades.

10. Via Francigena; Transromanica; Via Romea Germanica.

11. The Via Francigena is a medieval pilgrimage route from the town of Canterbury (Kent) in the south of England to Rome. It passes through England, France, Switzerland and Italy along almost 3,200 km of ancient trails.

12. Qualitative survey (questionnaire, interview) conducted with a sample of members of the European Federation of Cluniac Sites (FESC) during their AGM (24-25 April 2019) in Italy. The FESC (network lead) is responsible for the management and administration of the Cultural Route “Cluniac Sites in Europe”.

13. Actor-Network Theory (ANT).

14. Data captured on 8 March 2021.

15. Italian-language article ‘Il virus non ferma i turisti lungo la Via Francigena, ma è rivoluzione-ostelli’ published 3 March 2021.

16. Collectif, (2020), *La clientèle de randonnée pédestre itinérante. Profil de consommateurs et attentes-enquête 2019*. Étude Doubs Tourisme / Grandes traversées du Jura.

ABSTRACTS

Since 1987, geographical traces (route, trail, via/way) of the Middle Ages have been transformed into Cultural Routes certified by the Council of Europe. These routes were once frequented by European travellers and pilgrims, but now attract a variety of walkers with diverse profiles (local inhabitants, pilgrim-walkers, tourist-ramblers) forming multiple communities with social, religious and heritage values. These communities of stakeholders operate in a tourism context via network-based dynamics, using participatory, socio-technical and digital tools to build their cultural, visual and European identity. They therefore play a central role in the recognition of this cultural object as a recent heritage category at the disciplinary crossroads of cultural geography, landscape and communication processes. This article examines a corpus of certified Cultural Routes with religious values using a qualitative methodology to classify them (typological approach) and analyse them (systemic approach).

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Keywords: cultural route, council of Europe, networks, digital community, community of members, pilgrim way

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