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# Linking the Pilgrimage Experience to Best Practice: The lessons of the RECVLTIVATUR project

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## **Linking the Pilgrimage Experience to Best Practice: The lessons of the RECULTIVATUR project**

**Alan Clarke & Ágnes Raffay**

### **Abstract**

This paper will focus on the early findings of the RECULTIVATUR project, a SEE funded partnership which is exploring the inclusion of religious-related cultural values in the planning and development processes of urban centres, systems of settlements and surrounding rural areas. The 15 partners have contributed 35 case studies based on the religious tourism in their areas and the University of Pannonia have been responsible for collating and conducting the initial analysis of these cases. Here we will focus on pilgrimage and the linkages which have emerged from these examples regarding other cultural and heritage tourism experiences. Our analysis of the cases reveals several examples of good practice in grounding pilgrimage not only in purely religious value systems but within the broader cultural and heritage tourism systems.

The purpose of this paper will be to elaborate an analytical framework for the further investigation of other religious tourism offers, both within and without the current project, which will help to optimise the value of the developments of religious tourism not only in religious communities but also in tourism communities and host communities in a non-conflictual way. The best practices that have been identified highlight the benefits of including a wide variety of stakeholders in a holistic way, recognising not only the legitimacy of religious values but also the contribution of economic and wider social values.

**Key Words:** best practice; RECULTIVATUR; religious value; commercial value.

**Introduction** RECULTIVATUR is a South East Europe (SEE) funded partnership which is exploring the inclusion of religious-related cultural values in the planning and development processes of urban centres, systems of settlements and surrounding rural areas. The project aims to use the religious thematic cultural values within the SEE territories (see Figure 1) jointly with local assets, human resources, infrastructures and services to develop a religious tourism able to create new job opportunities and generate additional incomes.

The project is tasked to develop a tool for decision-makers and stakeholders that will be known as the SEE Religious Tourism Model. The model will provide step by step guidance to:

- identify the religious cultural potential of an area, analysing, assessing and capitalizing previous experiences;
- identify synergies with other projects;
- address the relevant stakeholders;
- develop ideas in order to use the religious cultural assets to develop the region;
- better manage these assets;
- find funding opportunities in order to realise an area's proposals;
- create sustainable solutions.

The partnership promises that the project will offer equal opportunities for all religions within the SEE Programme Area; the project also aims to promote inter-religious communications and a better understanding and acceptance of each other's beliefs. In practice this has been difficult to realise, largely due to the overwhelming Christian (admittedly of different sorts) bias of the membership and their networks. However in the second phase of the project, which began in the autumn of 2012, these issues are addressed directly through the creation of Religious Tourism Development Agencies (RTDAs).

Figure 1: The South East Europe area defined



### RECVLTIVATUR aims

The project aims to create a Religious Heritage catalogue and analyses of development potentials. The project is making available a comprehensive GIS database for future initiations via a project website. Also, individual visitors will be able to navigate in this database and search for destinations of their interest using a professional search tool. A stakeholder database will be set up, which will identify all important players of the sector: decision makers, business actors and religious organizations.

Secondly, the research will develop a Common Model of Religious Tourism. 35 case studies will be evaluated by three themes:

- the Potential value of local Religious Cultural Heritages;
- the Youth skills and population attitudes and;
- touristic services linkages.

This assessment will produce a selected set of best practices/ successful experiences with a high degree of repeatability and generalisation that have a likelihood of being transferred and are the basis for the joint Guidelines to develop a Religious Tourism Model. The comparative analysis of proposed guidelines and feedback from this evaluation participatory process will produce the Common Model of Religious Tourism, the purpose of which is to provide guidance to bodies and organisations for necessary actions associated with the development of a religious tourism able to create new job opportunities and generate additional incomes.

([www.recultivatur.eu](http://www.recultivatur.eu) )

Following this development of a model, Pilot Actions will be undertaken in the form of establishing Religious Tourism Development Agencies. Based on the findings of the stakeholder analyses, demonstration areas in 4 countries will be selected to test the findings of the development model. Applying the Guidelines of the Common Model of Religious Tourism, Pilot Religious Tourism Development Agencies will be set up in order to implement cultural religious tourism products on selected sites.

Internationalization and Marketing Promotion of SEE religious tourism products is the fourth aim of the project. The RT Associations will design and develop a Marketing plan, adopt a Brand and realize Promotion Media about the project and certified RT products.

### **Partners**

The partners have been drawn from across the region and include Chambers of Commerce, Regional Development Agencies, Business Development Consultancies, Tourism Operators and two Universities (See Table 1, below) These 15 partners have contributed 35 case studies based on religious tourism in their local areas and the University of Pannonia has been responsible for collating and conducting the initial analysis of these cases, which we draw on here as the basis for this paper.

Table 1: RECULTIVATUR Partners

Chamber of Commerce and Industry Xanthi	Lanciano Municipality
Mid-Pannon Regional Development Company	Burgas Regional Tourist Association
North-East Regional Development Agency	University of Pannonia
BCCI, Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Region of Central Macedonia
Region of East Macedonia and Thrace	Cope
Business Service Centre of Government of Zenica-Doboj Canton	Municipality of Veržej
INFORMEST - Service and Documentation Centre for International Economic Cooperation	Harghita County Council
Department of Heritage, Arts and History (DHAH).University of Salento (Lecce)	

### Religious tourism and pilgrimage research

The field of religious tourism research has produced many varied definitions of the subject, its extent and its content. In undertaking this research with the various partners, we began with simple statements about religious tourism such as the notion that

this is the way of tourism, when people travel alone or in groups because of beliefs. It can be only a friendly leisure aim (World Religious Tourism Association, N.D <sup>1</sup>)

A further definition which appealed to members of the network was:

Pilgrimage is a prayerful journey which has different purposes - spiritual search, glorifying of the saint, penitence, thankfulness for the life, and so on. In the deepest thought – the main purpose of pilgrimage is to meet God (rough translation of *The pilgrim way of John Paul II* – discussed at piligrimukelias, N.D.)

The simple classification of Beresnevičius (2003, p. 97) resonated well with the partners, that a pilgrimage is a 'religiously motivated journey which takes more than one day and one night'. However we recognise in this work that the figure of the pilgrim is 'not a modern invention; it is as old as Christianity, but modernity gave it a

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of its initial use by the RECULTIVATUR research project, this definition was posted at [www.WRTAreligioustravel.com](http://www.WRTAreligioustravel.com). However that website is now inactive and redirects to a blog by the original author.

new prominence and a seminally novel twist' (Bauman, 1996 p. 1). Now pilgrimage is mostly conceivable as an extreme form of religious tourism, although they (religion and tourism) may also be considered two different phenomena.

Some authors and organizations are analysing differences between religious tourists and pilgrimage. The following paragraph by Collins-Kreiner and Kliot synthesis much of this current reflection:

Pilgrimage is a cultural phenomenon which has attracted the attention of cultural geographers who have long tried to define their object of study. They have done this first by referring, at least implicitly, to culture as superorganic and, more recently, by theorising culture as a terrain, realm, level, domain, medium or system of signification. The power of culture resides in its ability to be used to describe, label or carve out activities (such as pilgrimage) into entities, so that they can be named an attribute of a people (Mitchell, 1995). Pilgrimage can be seen as part of the field of 'Geography of Religions' which investigates the connections between culture and the land with a special emphasis on the religious component (Sopher, 1967). In recent years, researchers from many disciplines have studied pilgrimage: historians, theologians, sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists and geographers (Vukonic, 1996). Thus it can be clearly viewed as an inter-disciplinary field. (Collins Kreiner and Kliot, 2000 p. 61)

Cohen in 1979, proposed a continuum distinguishing between five types of tourist experience. It is based on the place and significance of tourist experience in the total world-view of tourists: their relationship to a perceived 'centre' and the location of that centre in relation to the society in which the tourist lives. One cannot describe 'the tourist' as a 'general type' (Cohen, 1979:180). More contemporary research deals with the complicated relationship between pilgrimage and tourism, including economic, political, social, psychological, emotional, and other aspects.

Representative of this research are Eade's (1992) article which describes the interaction between pilgrims and tourists at Lourdes; Rinschede (1992) who develops a typology of tourist uses of pilgrimage sites; Vukonic's book (1996) about the connection between tourism and religion; and the Nolans (1989, 1992) who introduced a three-tier typology of sites:

Religious Tourism’ with the individual’s quest for shrines and locales where, in lieu of piety, the visitors seek to experience the sense of identity with sites of historical and cultural meaning (Nolan and Nolan, 1989, p.70).

Debating the relationship between tourism and pilgrimage has been an on-going debate, at least since 1300 when Pope Boniface the VIII sought to alter the balance between the sacred and the profane (Vukonic, 1998). Previously pilgrimages to Rome had necessitated thirty days of continuous indulgences in the Basilica but he amended this to fifteen days with the other fifteen days to be spent with ‘the other and profane pleasures’ of Rome. For the Jubilee of that year, he also ensured that the Vatican controlled the food and accommodation markets – unfortunately we can find no direct reference to souvenirs – but it demonstrates that the strict division of the sacred and the profane as expressed in the division between non-material experience and consumption was already being queried in practice.

From these definitions, various continua have been proposed. One of the most frequently used comes from Smith (1992) (Figure 2) where the pilgrim is

**Figure 2: The way from pilgrimage to tourism**

PILGRIMAGE		RELIGIOUS TOURISM		TOURISM
A	B	C	D	E
Sacred				Secular
Theoretical knowledge				
A) Pilgrim; B) Pilgrim>Tourist; C) Pilgrim=Tourist; D) Pilgrim<Tourist; E) Secular tourist				

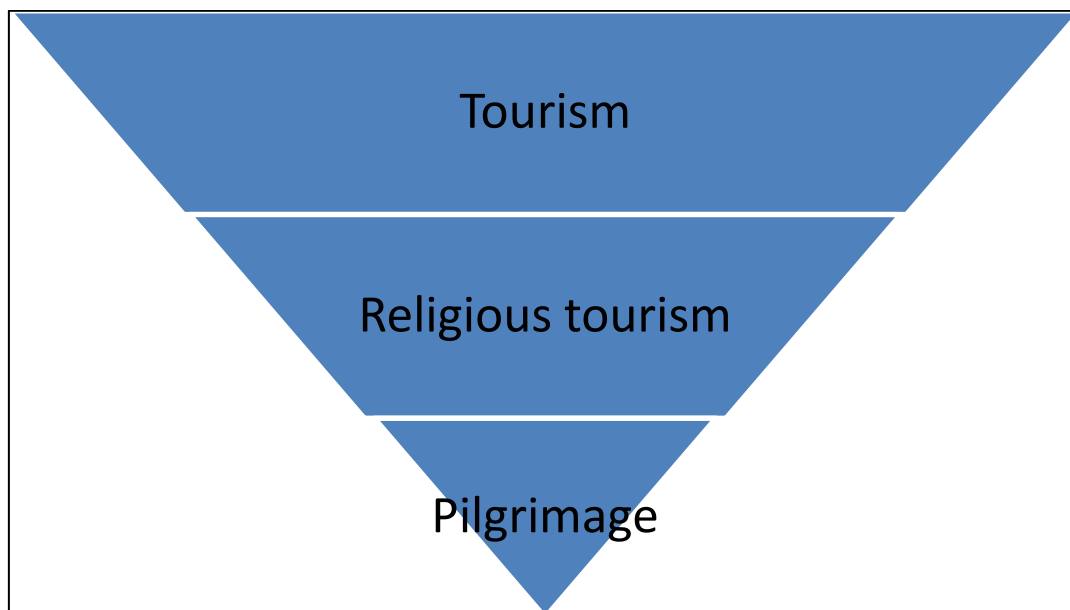
**Source: Smith (1992).**

distinguished from the secular tourist. From those descriptions it turns out, that for pilgrims the main aim of the pilgrimage is to be with God - they have spiritual aims. Religious tourists may undertake the religious journey just for educational purposes. They do not have the sole aim to be with their God. They can visit churches or sacred places just like tourists. Smith suggests that pilgrimage and tourism can be linked through religious tourism and from that clearly concludes that pilgrimages are not the same as just simple tourism.

### **The differences between pilgrims and religious tourists**

RECULTIVATUR has begun to see that there is more integration within the religious tourism sector than the continua would seem to suggest. Our analysis of the cases revealed several examples of good practice in grounding pilgrimage not only in purely religious value systems but within the broader cultural and heritage tourism systems. The very things which define the act and experience of pilgrimage are actually the integral defining elements of religious tourism (and are of course experienced in different ways by tourists who happen to pick up on them casually as well). For this reason we suggest that the core importance of the elements of the pilgrimage in fact form the base on which the whole religious tourism enterprise is founded (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: The essential integration of pilgrimage in religious tourism**



Therefore there are several tourist experiences which will help in the understanding of the phenomena of pilgrimage. Five main modes are defined, presenting the spectrum between the experiences of the tourist as a traveller in pursuit of 'mere' pleasure and that of the modern pilgrim in quest of meaning at someone else's centre of worship. Cohen, (1979:183), classifies them as the 'Recreational mode', the 'Diversionary mode', the 'Experiential mode', the 'Experimental mode' and the 'Existential mode'. This also raises the opportunity to note other forms of pilgrimage



which can be recognised which do not depend upon religions for their value or their definition – for instance, the visits to Graceland by fans of Elvis Presley (Reader and Walter, 1993). Liutikas (2009) identified four types:

- Religious pilgrimages;
- Pilgrimages related with national identity;
- Cultural identity journeys;
- Sports fans journeys.

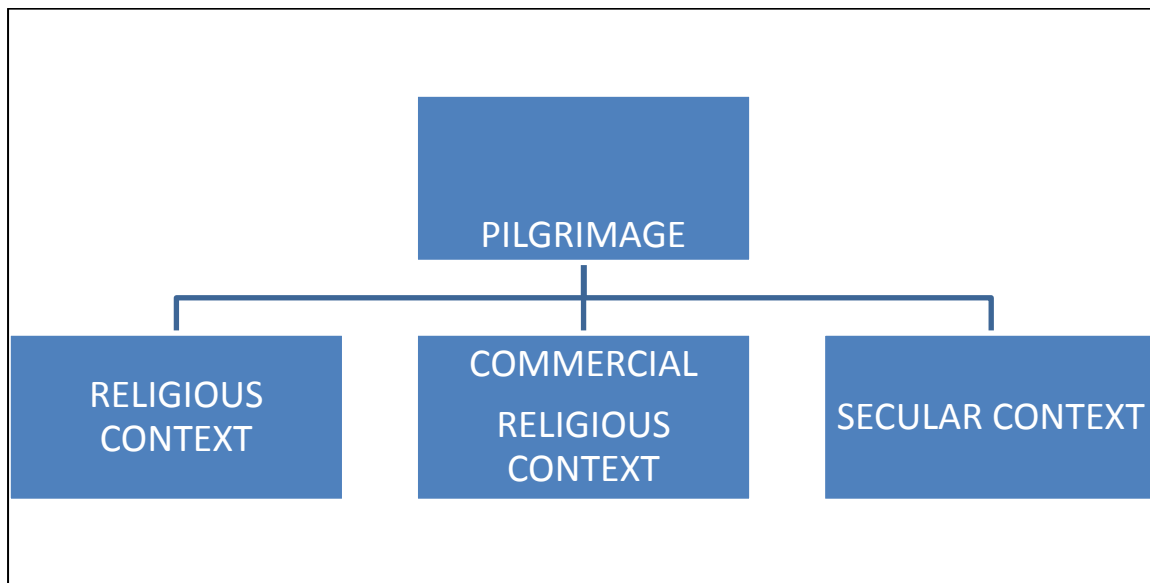
**Figure 4: The main aims and points of pilgrimage**

	Religious pilgrimage	Pilgrimage, related with national identity	Cultural identity trips	The trips of sport fans
The geographical aim of the trip	Saint places: related with the origin of religion; the centres of religion; related with the places where saints or prophets were living, the places where they died; monasteries etc.	National monuments; The birth or living places of politicians, public figures, their graves; places of famous battles; conferences and etc.	The birth places and graves of famous artists, musicians; their most famous works; museums of art and architecture and etc.	Sport events (Olympic games, world championships, performances of famous sportsmen)
Main points of the trip	Structure; rituals; devotion; sense of community; self-denial; deprivation during the journey.	Sense of community; rituals; consumerism.	Sense of community; rituals; consumerism.	Sense of community; rituals; consumerism; self-denial.
The ways of travelling	On foot; various vehicles.	Various vehicles.	Various vehicles.	Various vehicles.

**Source: Liutikas ( 2009)**

Examining these types, (Figure 4), it is clear to see some of the main differences between the types of pilgrimages outlined. Yet there are significant similarities in the reification of the central object of the pilgrimage. Where the value comes from for the pilgrim can be seen to derive from different and specific cultural value systems. Some would argue that the other value systems are less 'serious' or less valuable than the value systems found in their religion but we would argue that is a judgement that can properly only be made by the pilgrims themselves. Our sharing of their beliefs does not intrinsically make them worth more than others we do not share, as

the pilgrims will have defined, as they have always defined and defended, the right of their beliefs to others who challenge them.



**Figure 5: Exploring the contexts of Pilgrimage**

The purpose of this paper is to elaborate an analytical framework for the further investigation of religious tourism offers, both within and without the current project, which will help to optimise the value of the developments of religious tourism not only in the religious communities but also in the tourism communities and the host communities in a non-conflictual way. Figure 5 sets out the dimensions for exploring the contexts of Pilgrimage, considering the influences from the religious context and the secular context but also recognising the situations in which there is the possibility of a commercially informed religious context. The best practices that have been identified highlight the benefits of the inclusion of a wide variety of stakeholders in a holistic way, recognising not only the legitimacy of religious values but also the contribution of economic and wider social values.

#### **Recultivatur case study: The pilgrimage from Macerata to Loreto**

The birth of the walking pilgrimage from Macerata to Loreto (see Figure 6) occurred spontaneously, in 1978, by the will of a religion teacher who wanted to engage his students in the experience of this journey. In the following years the scope of the project expanded due to the interest that religious communities and believers

showed towards the pilgrimage. Thus, the paths of Loreto leading to the House of Loreto have become more and more popular.

**Figure 6: Profile of The pilgrimage from Macerata to Loreto**

Location:	Marche Region, the municipalities of Loreto and Macerata.
Partnership:	Comunione e Liberazione, Diocese of Loreto, Diocese of Macerata
Main source of funding:	Private resources and donations
Significance:	Religious and tourism: Loreto ancient path.
Objectives:	A Loreto road management, development and promotion project
Target audience:	Pilgrims and tourists

While the event was created spontaneously, soon after its origins, Comunione e Liberazione implemented a project for the promotion and enhancement of the path of Loreto in agreement with the Diocese of Macerata and Loreto. The communication activities were undertaken through advertising on the religious institutions' portals, through the publication of articles in religious and tourist magazines and on the occasion of meetings and events. The results of this are significant: the number of participants in the event has now reached 80,000 people.

The funds that are annually allocated to the organization of this project are minimal. The sponsors are the Bank Foundation of the Province of Macerata, Intesa San Paolo, Clementoni and Frassasi. However, the event is sustained by an entry fee (10 €) and through private donations. Its existence is largely made possible due to the great contribution of volunteers who provide support both to the organization of and during the event.

Learnings from this event which can be utilised by other religious tourism projects come through the creation of a portal dedicated to the event, available in many languages, structured into several sections: descriptive contents, user services, news, photo gallery, forums and witnesses; extra content (brochures, magazines) for free download.

In the town of Macerata there are 3 hotels and more than 50 restaurants and bars; in Loreto there are 17 Hotels, 1 farmhouse, 2 cottages, 7 bed & breakfasts, 6 hostels, 31 restaurants and pubs.

The means of reaching the Stadium Helvia Recina of Macerata (starting point of the pilgrimage) are different: by train (the link between the railway station and the stadium is serviced by shuttle bus, provided by the municipality); by plane; by car (the arrival in the city by private car is allowed until 16:30, then there is a ban on cars); by bus (the urban network connects the entire city while another network serves extra-urban locations and the surrounding municipalities).



**Source: [www.recultivatur.eu](http://www.recultivatur.eu)**

Within the Macerata to Loreto Pilgrimage project, several events and publications have been developed:

- The 'Lamp of Peace' from Rome to Loreto, an event that precedes the start of the Macerata to Loreto pilgrimage;

- the ‘Bonfire for Coming’ or the Feast of ‘The Coming’ event held on the night between 9 and 10 December;
- the publication of the ‘Bulletin of Friends of the Pilgrimage’, print magazine that can be requested for free or downloaded from the official website;
- An historical exhibition about the pilgrimage from Macerata to Loreto titled ‘Pilgrims, not tramps!’

The evaluation of the project is positive because it is a successful initiative that achieves great results in terms of large number of pilgrims, even though a significant underlying organizational structure is not present. With these limits we can however speak of a project which is repeatable and adaptable to the promotion of local interests and religious paths. Project sustainability is mainly ensured by the large number of paying members and by the involvement of many volunteers organizing and managing the event. This type of event/pilgrimage, which has a short duration given the fact it takes place once a year within a few hours (overnight), while drawing a huge number of pilgrims, does not cause a big impact in the Macerata tourist system. In the city and in its surroundings a wide range of accommodation (hotels, restaurants) is available, sufficient to ensure the necessary services to the pilgrims who need to stay for one day, during the pilgrimage. The town of Loreto is already a destination for many pilgrims throughout the year and this event has effectively been added to all the others.

We draw attention to the way that this pilgrimage has emerged from a popular feeling that there could be value and meaning in the Macerata to Loreto journey. It is not an appeal to a long standing tradition but is a very recent, modern addition to the spiritual calendar in Northern Italy. This is worth noting because this part of the world is not short of pilgrimage routes and religious celebrations but there was evidently an emergent niche for this new pilgrimage.

Management of the pilgrimage will be the subject of further research as one of the popular local views is that there is no management of the event, which, if it was true, would be close to miraculous in itself. More than 80,000 participants, transportation, catering and accommodation do not just organise themselves and therefore it must be recognised that there is effective management of this pilgrimage. The fact that it is undertaken by volunteers makes it even more interesting as the challenges of managing volunteers are well recognised.

There is novelty in running the pilgrimage and we feel this is significant as it ties in to the spread of the 'fun run', half marathon and marathon competitions that have proliferated around the world. We are reliably informed that this 'pilgrimage' is not competitive and people run for faith. However we are also informed that it is not entirely unknown for the pilgrims themselves to set their stop watches in Macerata and compare times in Loreto. We are very interested in these overlaps of elements of value that appear from outside the religious cultural definitions and whether they add to the experience or detract from it.

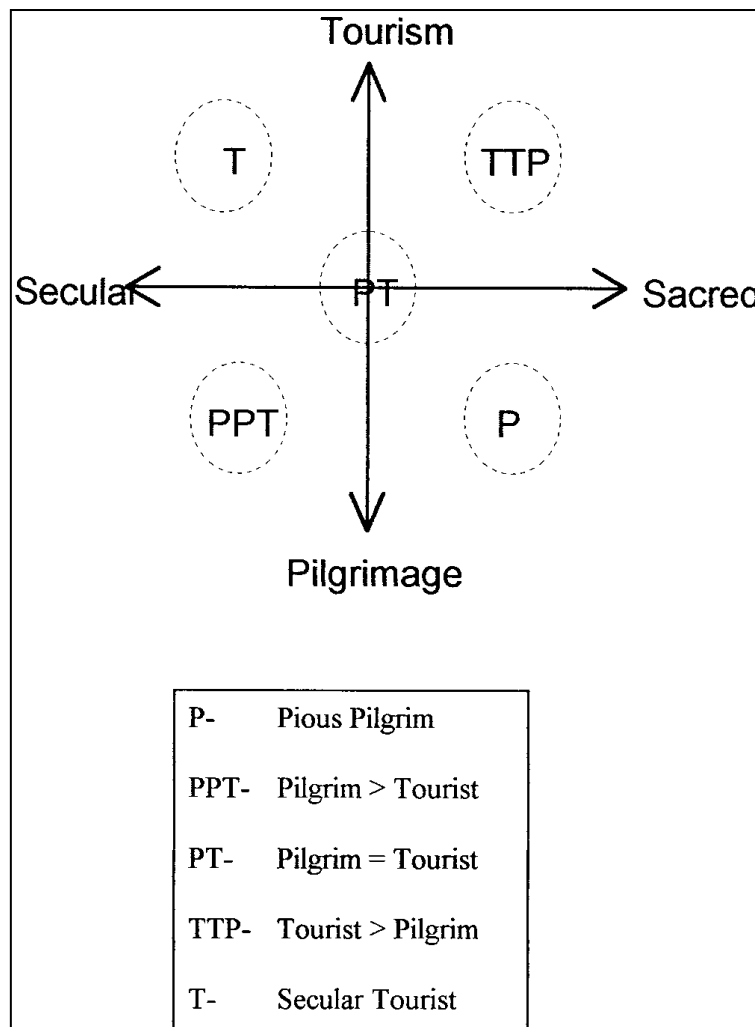
One of the RECULTIVATUR partners runs the neighbouring region's religious tourism in a project known as 'Faith and Culture' in the Abruzzo, which features the 'Way of the Apostle Thomas'. Although this has a much more 'professionalised' sense of management, they have sought linkages beyond the religious community. The pilgrimage route is managed centrally and marked regularly by formal standardised signposts but this management has also seen the value in linking into local suppliers of other sources of value. There are close links with the producers of olive oil, wine - the Montepulciano d'Abruzzo - and accommodation providers. Opportunities for linkages to the Macerata experience exist and need to be explored more fully.

### **The tourism-pilgrimage axis**

Our researches have highlighted the significance of the linkages between the religious experience and the touristic interest in these sites and events. If we probe this relationship further we can highlight different positions within the nexus of pilgrimage/tourism for different participants. Collins-Kreiner and Kliot (2000) used their research to explore the behaviour of pilgrims along the continuum from pilgrim to secular. One of their main conclusions relates to the existence of this continuum upon which the features characterising pilgrims can be ranked and this is complicated by a gap analysis of where the pilgrim's perception sits against a definition of reality, creating another continua between astonishment and disappointment. This matrix is composed of secularism versus sacredness and tourism versus pilgrimage.

The major pilgrimage motivation for Roman Catholics was identified as the need to gain inspiration and strengthen belief. Collins-Kreiner and Kliot (2000) observed that these pilgrims visited the Holy Land in order to get closer to their belief and strengthen their faith in a way that will enable them to continue their life back home with new energy and a feeling of purpose. The research observed that the significance of their visit was derived from the awareness of Jesus' inspiring 'presence' at the sites. At the same time, the pilgrims are certain that this awareness will make them more conscious of the spiritual aspect of life (Bowman, 1991). It is, in fact, crucial for them to visit the site itself and to understand the meaning of what happened there. Roman Catholics perceive themselves as pure pilgrims who concentrate on the religious aspects of a visit and disregard the touristic ones.

**Figure 6: The discrepancy between the pilgrim's perception and reality**



**Source: Collins-Kreiner and Kliot (2000)**

This fact was observed by the researchers who noted that in the placing of Roman Catholic pilgrims closer to the religious edge of the continuum scale of pilgrimage and tourism. Practically, their attitude is illustrated by their lack of interest in taking part in secular activities; in ignoring the touristic aspect of pilgrimage; in undeveloped tourist facilities and not blending holiness and secularism during the pilgrimage itself. Protestants believe in direct contact between the believer and the Bible. That is why, for these visitors, building a church at a site seems to harm its authentic atmosphere (Bowman, 1991). They want to 'feel Jesus', directly and not by means of intermediaries. They prefer simple places, such as the Sea of Galilee and its surroundings, to religious and artificial sites such as churches and buildings built at the different sites, because they believe in the spiritual aspect of the pilgrimage and not in the physical aspect. In addition, they are interested in different non-religious activities, in visiting sites which combine religion and history, and in getting to know Israel and its residents. This is why they are classified as being closer to the tourist edge of the pilgrim-tourist continuum and to the prototype of the 'Religious Tourist' more than to the pure profile of a 'Pilgrim'. Protestants do not ignore the tourist aspect of pilgrimage, such as different tourist facilities at the sites, the mixing of cultural and sporting activities with religious activities, or secular visits to secular and non-Christian sites. Therefore, they are classified as religious tourists and are ranked in the middle of the axis.

The location of each pilgrim on the scale is personal and subjective and between the extremities can be found an almost infinite sacred-secular combinations. According to Smith (1992), these positions try to reflect the multiple and changing motivations of the traveller whose interests and activities may switch from tourist to pilgrim and vice versa, without the individual even being aware of the change.

Collins-Kreiner and Kliot (2000) also confirm Cohen's findings from 1992 that pilgrimage and tourism differ in terms of the direction of the journey undertaken. The pilgrims' motives were seen to be to undergo an experience which will add meaning to their life. They leave their periphery in order to find a centre which will offer them a stronger belief and a new world. The pilgrim and the 'pilgrim-tourist' peregrinate toward their socio-cultural centre, while the traveller and the 'traveller-tourist' move in



the opposite direction. The participants in this study were described as pilgrims and 'pilgrim-tourists' because they travelled from their periphery towards their centre:

'On the whole, pilgrims do tend to complain about the touristic and commercialised nature of sites and of their lack of authenticity. Interesting differences in this respect were found between Protestants and Roman Catholics, regardless of their country of origin. While the Roman Catholics complained about the crowded sites and the noise and dirt in places such as Nazareth, Tiberias and Kafr Kana, the Protestants complained about the lack of authentic feeling at sites, such as at the Baptism site of the Yardenit; the construction of new churches at the ancient sites, for example, Capernaum' (Collins-Kreiner and Kliot, 2000: 60 -61)

### **RECULTIVATUR and benchmarking best practice**

In this section we would like to introduce the model we have developed from our analysis of the case studies that were submitted by our partners. We explored the cases and sought to evaluate their contributions to the development of religious tourism. The following proposal emerged from this analysis and we are continuing to develop this into a generic model for the sustainable development of religious tourism.

**Figure 7: RECULTIVATUR Benchmarking Criteria**

	SUSTAINABILITY	
RELIGIOUS	ACCESSIBLE	SECULAR
AUTHENTICITY	CONNECTIVITY	AWARENESS
FOCUS	INVOLVEMENT	DIVERSITY

Our work in reviewing the case studies has led through an iterative process to the proposal of a best practice template. This is presented in Figure 7, where it is possible to demonstrate that the development of pilgrimage and religious tourism should pay heed to the four central concepts of sustainability, accessibility, connectivity and involvement. Sustainability was a fundamental evaluation criterion as we are committed to the concept and practice of sustainability in tourism development. The development of resources with future generations in mind sits

easily with the core values of religious heritage as there is often seen to be a long term view of the significance of religious values that are being promoted in the past, present and future. It is the bottom line of the RECULTIVATUR project that no development should be undertaken which is not sustainable.

The criterion of accessibility is constructed differently within the different forms of religious tourism. Pilgrims enter the experience with greater expectations, greater knowledge and greater awareness of the religious values and these need to be recognised in the way that they are invited to and welcomed into the experience. This cannot be assumed for other tourists, whether religious tourists, cultural tourists or secular tourists. Therefore the context has to be constructed differently for these visitors with different knowledges and different expectations.

Connections speak to the way the offer can be made meaningful to the different types of tourism. Pilgrims are defined as seeking authentic experiences, tailored to their own expectations of faith and belief. For religious tourists there is seen to be a greater need to connect with more flexible interpretation and guidance to ensure that the experience develops a degree of awareness for the visitors of the core religious values.

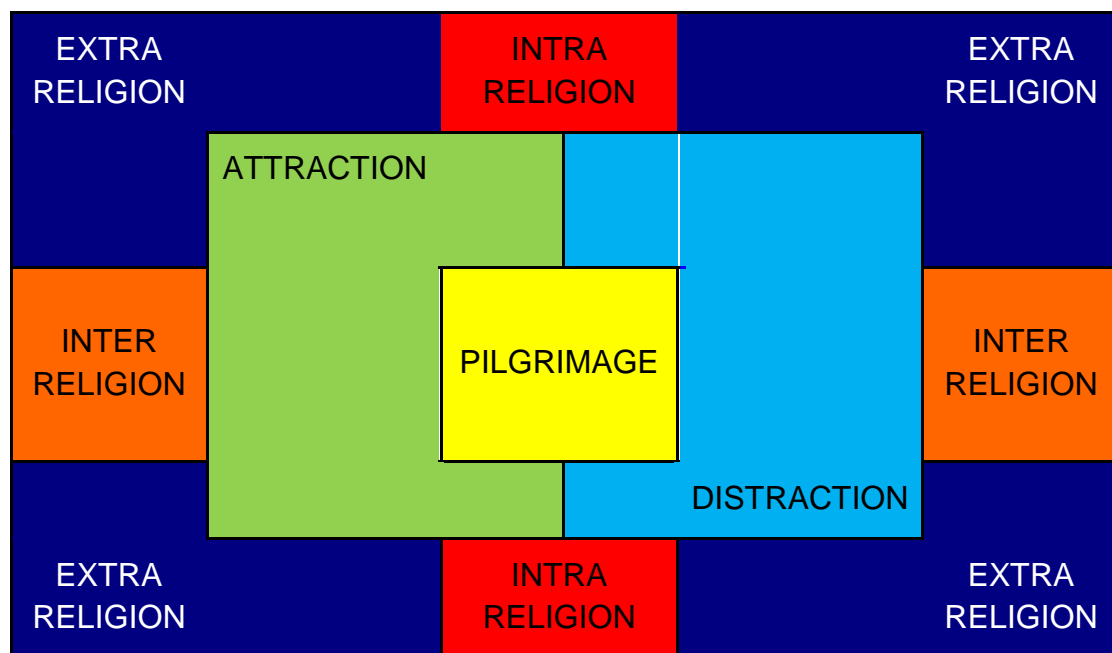
Finally we see involvement addressing the ways in which pilgrims, religious tourists, cultural tourists and secular tourists can find meaning within the experiences. The definitions of pilgrimage activity led us to the sense of focus where the attention is centred on the core of the religious system. To appeal to a wider audience of tourists, there has to be a recognition of the diversity needed to produce meaning for this more varied audience. Diversity becomes an important aspect of religious tourism development as it creates further points of engagement for the tourists with the religious experiences on offer. This framework then allows for the elaboration of guidelines for promoting a best practice model for the development of religious tourism. To do this, we have to look at issues of transferability from specific examples to general practice.

**Conclusions**

The RECULTIVATUR project has developed a model of best practice that is primarily focussed on a more general concept of religious tourism but has also focussed on the ways to develop pilgrimage in the future. We have reviewed both the literature and case study accounts submitted by our partners to determine an account of best practice. This has led us to make suggestions about the best ways to move forward.

Focussing on Pilgrimage, we believe that the core practices that are enshrined in pilgrimage can be enhanced by linkage to other elements from the tourism system. However it appears that not all elements of the tourism system constitute an additional benefit. Therefore we propose a model (see Figure 8) where pilgrimage is surrounded by the notion of attraction, which is derived from the concept familiar to tourism researchers with amenities, attractions and accommodation included. However we would also suggest that some of these attractions may actually not be motivators for pilgrims and therefore we want to introduce the idea of distraction as an important factor in this explanation. Distractions are those parts of the wider tourism system that do not directly address the core concerns at the heart of the quest of the pilgrims.

**Figure 9: Centring on Pilgrimage – extended connection**



Our research suggests that the factors influencing the development of religious tourism will be drawn from three identifiably different sources. We have identified:

- intra-religious – the factors that are developed from within the religious values of the pilgrims' core value system
- inter-religious – the factors which can be identified from the best practices of other religions, in order to develop the experience at the heart of the pilgrimage
- extra-religious – these factors come from 'without' the religious value systems that are central to the pilgrims' belief systems, mostly drawing on the sense of development from the tourism industry and represent the wider context in which religious tourism can be developed.

Our project suggests that the way forward for pilgrimage will focus on the issues surrounding 'authenticity', and we accept that this concept is itself difficult to specify in this context. There are particular issues that need to be articulated here about the ideas of re-creating the experience and the commercialisation of those contexts. The debates surrounding pilgrimage suggested that pilgrims were a distinct category with a distinct purpose and a discrete sense of the experience involved but we can see that there are opportunities to develop their integration with secular tourism rather than segregation. As long as the core values are observed and protected, there are potential opportunities for bringing the sense of pilgrimage into the experience domains of other types of tourism. The model proposed suggests that there are possibilities to develop religious tourism without destroying the core of the pilgrimage experience.

We have grown accustomed to the idea that pilgrims are concerned with non-material and non-economic elements of the experience. It is possible to see that there are absences in how pilgrims are defined outside the terms of the consumption relationships to be found in other forms of tourism. This may no longer be the case as we can find evidence of the commercialisation of even the pilgrimage experience. There are examples of pilgrimage certification and the recognition that this certification itself is part of the valorisation of the experience.

There are opportunities to promote linkages between pilgrims and the other aspects of tourism development, especially those which cluster around the promotion of religious values within that tourism development. We will continue to explore these linkages whilst respecting the concerns for sustainability, authenticity, involvement and connectivity. The pilot projects to be developed in the second phase of RECULTIVATUR will attempt to explore and develop these concepts and we will continue to report on our developments.

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