

SUSTAINABLE AND QUALITY TOURISM ALONG SAINT MARTIN OF TOURS ROUTE IN THE RURAL AREA OF PAVIA.

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Summary

Between the end of the first millennium and the beginning of the second, the practice of pilgrimage took on increasing importance (Cohen, 1992) and Via Francigena, Camino de Santiago and other routes became channels of communication for the realization of the cultural unit that characterized Europe in the Middle Ages (Dallari, Trono, 2006). Although in recent centuries routes to sacred sites begun to lessen in their importance, due to the advanced secularization of time that remodelled lifestyle patterns, visions and perspectives, in the last few decades the changes taking place in the tourist sector have given new models of holiday and people rediscover spiritual historical and cultural meanings. From 1987 the EU programme "Crossroads of Europe (COE)" listed 29 cultural itineraries and the Council of Europe stated that "there has been a significant growth in religious tourism in recent years, particularly with a resurgence of pilgrimage to important shrines and a growth in more general spiritual tourism" and "the religious motive often means that pilgrims travel along specific routes to visit a number of shrines or even to complete lengthy itineraries" (Morazzoni, Boiocchi, 2013). The aim of our paper is to contribute to the analysis of the methods for promoting sustainable and quality tourism along European Cultural Routes. In particular, the study will focus on a specific religious itinerary, the Saint Martin of Tours Route, and territory, the North-Italian rural area around Pavia. The city was recognized in 2012 by European Commission as an example of Crossroads in cultural and religious routes and will attend in 2015 the presidency of the European Cultural Route of Saint Martin of Tours. The methodology of the research bases on a descriptive approach in the fields of human and tourism geography, with an emphasis on the concepts of territory and landscape, local systems and networks, using a deductive reasoning (Dematteis and Governa, 2005; Raffestin, 2005). The study will use data collected by internet surveys and by interviews to representatives of local operator that carry on marketing projects. As result, we will try to identify traditional and innovative marketing systems about Saint Martin of Tours Route for promoting the touristic products and their possible implementation in connection with the event Milan Expo 2015, which will be only 40 km far from Pavia and its surrounding.

Keywords: European Cultural Route, touristic product, marketing, Pavia

Introduction: context and a synthetic literature review

The religion plays an important role in our world; it is not only a factor of importance for understanding conflict between nations (see the current situation in the Middle East Medio Orient), but also in people's daily activities. Much literature (Bailey and Sood, 1993; Krausz, 1972; Lupfer and Wald, 1985; Lupfer et al., 1992; McDaniel and Burnett, 1990; Walter, 2002; Wilkes et al., 1986) suggests that religion is a fundamental part of culture and is linked to many aspects of our life and behaviour (Poria et al., 2003). Pilgrimage is an important aspect of the world's major religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity) and one of the religious and cultural phenomena most common to human society (Collins-Kreiner, 2010a). Journeys to sacred sites were important in classical times, in Middle Age and in the modern societies. It is not a new experience; in fact, religion has long been an integral motive for undertaking journeys and usually considered the oldest form of non-economic travel (Timothy and Olsen, 2006). Reflecting on the importance of pilgrimage as one of the oldest forms of tourism (Digance, 2006; Jackowski and Smith, 1992), much of literature (Cohen, 1979, 1992, 1998; Collins-Kreiner and Kliot, 2000; Digance, 2006; MacCannell, 1973; Raj and Morpeth, 2007; Rinschede, 1992; Smith, 1992; Timothy and Olsen, 2006 Turner and Turner, 1969, 1978; Turner, 1973; Urry 2001; Vukonic', 1996, 2002) explores their definitions and the similarities and the differences between contemporary religious tourism and pilgrimage (Sharpley and Jepson, 2011). On the other hand, more attention has been paid to what may be referred to as tourism as religion. In contemporary secular societies the tourism is a particular use of leisure time and a regular secular ritual that acts as a counterpoint to everyday life and work, in particular religious tourism is a journey to search the source of spiritual meaning or cultural and ethereal refreshment (Sharpley and Jepson, 2011). However, it is difficult to understand the difference between the "true" pilgrim following his faith and the secular pilgrim seeking meaning or knowledge. Pilgrimage and tourism may be theorized as "two parallel, interchangeable lanes" (Smith, 1992)¹ following different quests — the religious and the secular. Tourists may travel either lane or "switch between them, depending on personal need or motivation" (Sharpley and Jepson, 2011). According to UWTO (2012), motivational is one of broad thematic categories, which may identify to explain cultural tourism (the other are: tourism-derived, experiential and operational). The term "cul-

¹ The author identifies tourism and pilgrimage as opposite ends on a continuum of travel; the polarities on the axis label as sacred vs. secular and between the extremities lie almost infinite possible sacred-secular combinations, with the central area called "religious tourism".

tural tourism” refers to that segment of the tourism industry that places special emphasis on heritage and cultural attractions. These attractions are various, and include performances, museums, displays, archaeological sites, religious practices and so on. The cultural tourism holds the full range of experiences visitors can undertake to learn by a particular destination: its lifestyle, its heritage, its arts and so on.

Therefore, the concept of cultural tourism is very complex. There is, in literature, a long debate about its definition and conceptualization (Hall and Zeppel, 1990; ICOMOS, 1997; McKercher and Hilary, 2002; Mieczkowski, 1995; Nuryanti, 1996; Richards, 1996, 1997, 2005, 2007; Silberberg, 1995; Timothy Dallen and Boyd, 2007; UNWTO, 2012). In general it is the movement which involves people in the exploration or the experience of the diverse ways of life of other people, reflecting all the social customs, religious traditions, or intellectual ideas of their cultural heritage”. In the cultural tourism, it is possible to recognise different market niches. One of these is the religious tourism or pilgrimage. The tourism products and activities that derive from are the visit religious sites and locations with or without spiritual meaning (Csapo, 2012).

Therefore, it is possible to consider religious tourism as a part of cultural tourism. Nolan and Nolan (1989) state religious tourism with the individual’s quest for shrines and locales where, in lieu of piety, includes the experience of the sense of identity with sites of historical and cultural meaning. (Nolan and Nolan, 1992). Cultural tourists can visit churches or sacred places just like religious tourists. According to our point of view, this is the link between pilgrimage (religious tourism) and the cultural one. It is important to stress that, in this article, the terms pilgrimages and religious tourism will use interchangeably, because without a specific survey it is not possible to know the personal needs of the visitor in a religious place. The aim of present contribution is to investigate on the analysis of religious (cultural) tourism, through the study of a faith and cultural route.

Methods and purpose

This article explores, with a descriptive approach in the fields of human and tourism geography, the phenomenon of modern-day Christian pilgrimage and cultural tourism, with the analysis of a cultural and faith route. To accomplish our task we used a methodology based on a deductive reasoning and gave a particularly emphasis on the concepts of territory, landscape and *Heritage*². The geographical research on tourism

² For further details, see: Dematteis and Governa, 2005; Harvey 1969; Lounsbury and Andrich, 1986; Lozato-Giotart, 2008; Raffestin, 2005; Turri, 2002; Vallega 2003.

makes more attention to the mobility and to the “territories”. According to Collins-Kreiner (2010b), the pilgrimages (and cultural-religious tourism, too) have powerful political, economic, social and cultural implications, and even affect global trade and health, because it is one population mobility, which creates other form of “motilities” such as trade, cultural exchanges, political integration and spread of illnesses and epidemics. Another important feature concerning the religion that is not a “deterritorialized” form. It is possible to have an important personal experience of contact with the divine through experiencing the physical location. For example, John Paul II³ wrote that the sacred space is “where the encounter with the divine may be experienced more intensely than it would normally be in the vastness of the Cosmo”. In other words, pilgrimage to the places where Christ lived is a personal experience of contact with Him through experiencing the physical location of Jesus’ life and death. One of the most common form of pilgrimage are the “faith itineraries” those towards Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago. They were places of mass pilgrimage in the Middle Ages. These types of pilgrimage, spontaneously and unorganized, led people from towns and the countryside to go to the holy place and back, by foot and without any facilities (Ferrario, 2010). The trails that pilgrims follow did not always correspond to actual roads, but to the movements of travellers of the past across the land and it was possible to recognize certain main arterial routes. For example the pilgrims heading for Rome travelled along the Via Romea those hoping to cross the Frankish territories (modern day France and Germany) followed the Via Francigena⁴. The pilgrim can be find many extraordinary places of worship that still bear traces of the spiritual and cultural experiences of Saints. On the road, which are located convents, churches and abbeys, the visitor have the opportunity to experience many of a country’s most important heritage sites. After several centuries of decline, the number of pilgrims is nowadays increasing and this growth has been striking because it does not link to develop availability of modern transportation, for more and more pilgrims travel there on foot, horseback or bicycle⁵ (Reader, 2007).

This way, so, the routes are not only a faith vocation, but also they have a cultural value. The concept of cultural itineraries has based on

³ In his “Letter Concerning Pilgrimage to the Places Linked to the History of Salvation” (1999).

⁴ An important evidence is that wrote by Bishop Sigeric, that told his journey, from Canterbury to Rome (to receive the “pallium” or Episcopal investiture), in the tenth century. He describe with detail the different legs of the journey and the places visited. investiture

⁵ The authorities at Santiago give a certificate who have travelled at least 100 kilometres to Santiago on foot or by horse, or 200 kilometres by bicycle.

the connection between tourism and culture and on role the relational of both cultural elements and their tourism fruition (Dallari, Mariotti, 2011; Trono 2012). They are as new wide-ranging cultural assets linking diverse and homogeneous components of the tangible and imperceptible cultural heritage and related to contiguous or far apart territories to create a knowledge system (Mariotti, 2012; ICOMOS, 2005).

Itineraries could be on various elements: food & wine, nature, culture or religion and they enable a linear enjoyment of the space in terms of its physical and immaterial components. Therefore, their historic, artistic, naturalistic and religious interest represents the validation of a different model of cultural tourism. The cultural routes involve exciting journeys that go beyond traditional circuits, making it possible to rediscover the most authentic cultural roots in the sharing of a common heritage (Rizzo et al. 2013). The cultural itineraries are also the important elements in territorial conservation and the instruments to give to tourists “new experiences”, to promote a sustainable tourism, to create links between different territories, to increase the local heritage and so on. Their develop and promotion could be guarantee by projects of local, national and international authorities. In particular, this article tries to study the Route of Saint Martin of Tours, as a physical location that could be important for religious interpreting “places” and their evolution. Furthermore, it can consider a privileged witness to collective memory and depository for symbolic, historical and artistic values.

The European Cultural Routes of Saint Martin of Tours

The Route of Saint Martin of Tours is one of the Cultural Routes certified by the Council of Europe (CoE) as a cultural, educational heritage and tourism co-operation project to contribute the transnational promotion and the diffusion of the understanding and respect of common European values (Berti, 2013:3). The Cultural Routes programme comprises 29 certified Routes with many more in the making, which cover more than 70 countries, some of them on the African and Asian continents (Council of Europe, 2012a). EU Routes have different geographical coverage and different themes: they follow the steps of pilgrims and traders to Santiago or Rome or in the middle of Europe (Pilgrimage routes: The Santiago De Compostela Pilgrim Routes, *Via Francigena*, Route of Saint Olav Ways; Religious heritage routes: Cluniac Sites in Europe, Casadean Sites, Transromanica, European Cemeteries Route; European history: *Via Regia*), they walk through vineyards or olives landscapes from the south of Europe and Caucasus to the Mediterranean basin (Routes of intangible heritage: *Iter Vitis*, Olive Tree Routes) or they rediscover the travels of famous musicians (European Mozart

Ways) (Berti, 2013). The Saint Martin of Tours Route follows the steps of the Saint and passes through the North-Italian territory. Martin was born in 316 in Pannonia (Hungary today) and raised by pagan parents in Pavia (Italy); conscripted as a soldier into the Roman army, he stationed in Amiens (France), had the revelation of faith and converted to Christianity after sharing half his cloak to give to a poor dying of cold (Judic, 2012). In 356, he left the army in Worms (Germany), travelled through Europe and founded the Abbey of Ligugé (France) first monastery of the West. Kidnapped by Tourangeaux who made their bishop in 371, he founded the monastery of Marmoutier near Tours (France) and the first rural churches of Gaul, while criss-crossing a part of Europe (Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Spain). Martin died in 397 in Candes (France) and buried on 11th November in Tours (<http://www.saintmartindetours.eu/>).

The memory of St. Martin inscribes tangibly and intangibly in the lands of Europe since the 4th century: almost 3700 monuments are dedicated to him in France, more than 500 in Spain, 700 in Italy and 350 in Hungary, whilst 12 cathedrals in Europe are named after him. In Canterbury, the first Anglican Church bears his name and he was patron of the kings of France and many other European countries for almost 1000 years. While tangible side of the memory links to history, archaeology, culture, and arts, the intangibly connect with its myths, rites, legends, beliefs and traditions and is still very much alive in many regions through songs, sayings, culinary and agricultural traditions (<http://www.culture-routes.lu/>). The dimension of sharing a collective value of Europe is at the heart of the itinerary that connect the cities and places in which the Saint lived and worked in Hungary (Szombathely), Italy (Pavia, Milan and Isle of Gallinara near Albenga), France (Tours, Ligugé and Candes) and Germany (Trier and Worms). The Cultural Route includes also large cities with major architectural treasures devoted to venerating him (among others: Bratislava in Slovakia, Utrecht in Netherlands and Mainz in Germany) (see Fig.1).

According to Denu (Council of Europe, 2012b), the fundamental characteristic to Saint Martin of Tours Route, and to all the European Cultural Routes, is the authentic experience that offers to visitors, regardless their age, origin or social status. This route is a complex combination of culture, history, tangible and intangible heritage and its wealth of themes and places weave a rich tapestry depicting towns, villages and countryside and crossing its waterways. The Saint Martin of Tours Route, as each other EU Routes, is a territorial cultural project based, according to Lajarge and Roux (2007), on the “virtuous circle” resource/project/territory. These elements are interrelated between each other, because territories exist through projects developed coherently with current resources. In the same way, projects are able to generate new resources for

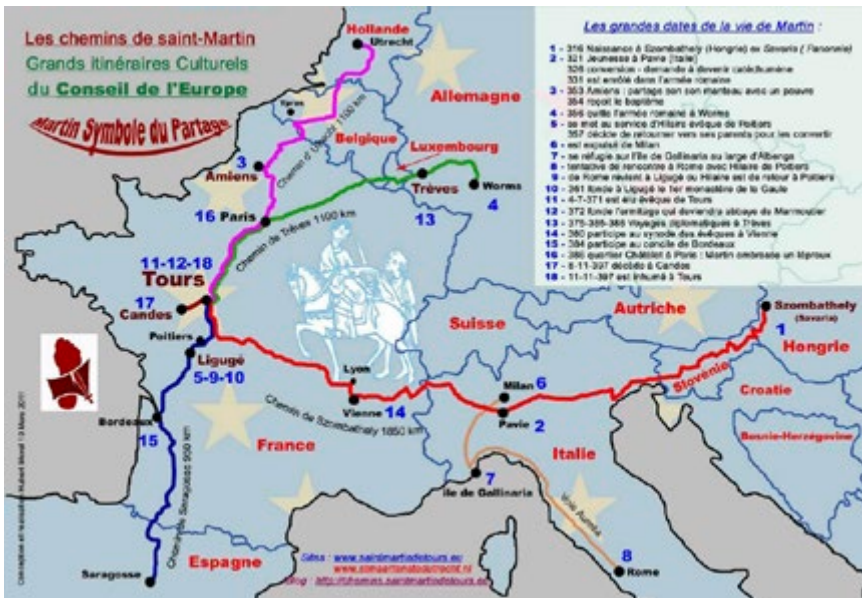


Fig. 1. The European Cultural Routes of Saint Martin of Tours.

Source: <http://lechemindutrecht.blogspot.it/p/la-carte-de-lensemble-des-chemins-vers-html>

the territory. For this reason, as Cerutti and Dioli stated (2014), cultural routes, and in particular pilgrimage and religious itineraries, have become to all intent and purposes a “tourism product” to which authorities and private operators devote their full attention.

Findings about promoting sustainable and quality tourism along Saint Martin of Tours Route in the rural area of Pavia

The Mission of Saint Martin of Tours presented in 2002 a proposal for a cultural route to the European Institute of Cultural Routes, who integrated this itinerary into the programme and formally certificated it as a “Major Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” in September 2005, at the opening of the European Cultural Centre of Saint Martin of Tours (<http://www.culture-routes.lu>).

The itinerary enlighten different aspects of the figure of St. Martin: his life and European route, the heritage linked to his cult and the symbol of sharing that he embodies. The city of Pavia is an important point in the Route of the Saint, who spent his childhood in this Italian city. To underline this key role of this place, the European Commission recog-

nized in 2012 Pavia as an example of Crossroads in cultural and religious routes and the city will attend in 2015 the presidency of the European Cultural Route of Saint Martin of Tours.

The European Cultural Centre connected to the Route is actively working, not only to promote the specific itinerary, but also towards the development of trans-national routes and the networking of sites of significant Martinian heritage. This work of cooperation depends on the evaluation of this European heritage and research into the traditions and folklore linked to the European cult of Saint Martin. Scientists and schools are brought together by this approach, which looks to raise the awareness of younger generations. A network of Martinian towns and territories has been created and connecting cultural structures are being put in place in cities as Pavia (Italy), Szombathely (Hungary) and Lubljana (Slovenia) and also in countries as Croatia, the Netherlands and Belgium. Three major routes are being established connecting Tours with Saint Martin's region of birth in Hungary, via Italy; with Luxembourg and Trier, via Paris; and finally with Zaragoza, via Ligugé and Bordeaux (<http://www.culture-routes.lu>). Thanks to a plan for European signposting, since 2005 the routes are marked out using milestones reminiscent of those that existed along the Roman roads during the time of St. Martin (see Fig.2). Furthermore, a bronze ornament named "The Footprint of St. Martin" (Fig.2) is placed on the monuments dedicated to him or linked to his story. The European plan to shed light on the heritage dedicated to St. Martin proposes a common system of lighting in the different European countries, based on a breakdown of the colours associated with St. Martin in European iconography (<http://www.culture-routes.lu>).



Fig. 2. Milestones marking the route (left) and "The Footprint of St. Martin" (right)

Source: <http://www.culture-routes.lu/>

Regarding in specific the city of Pavia, we noted the city is an important centre for the EU promotion of cooperation and exchange in Cultural Route and for the raising of the awareness of the potential for a sustainable and quality kind of tourism. In 2012 the European Commission, in collaboration with the Council of Europe and the European Institute of Cultural Routes, chose the Italian city to held the first edition of the “Crossroads of Europe–Cultural and religious routes event” (the second was in Toulouse–France and the third in Ferrol–Spain). In Pavia, the initiative focused on the stimulation of interest in the pilgrimage routes and awareness about the need for sustainable tourism that respects the environment, culture and traditions. The event had information booths, exhibitions, audio–visual competitions, cultural meetings and gastronomic tastings. In addition, special events for tourism actors, as small businesses or tour operators, were B2B meetings, guided tours, info sessions and briefings.

In December 2013, the Municipality of Pavia proposed the event “Crossroads of Europe. Pavia one year later” to discuss and promote the relaunch of cultural and religious routes. In addition to conference sessions, the initiative held readings of English texts, theatrical performances and lectures, guided tours of the city (in Italian and in English), classical music concerts and art openings. The Department of Culture, Tourism and territorial Marketing of the Municipality inaugurated in 2012 a Cultural Centre named “Crossroads of Europe”, that aims to be a reference



Fig. 3. Homepage of website “St. Martin Route in Pavia and in Europe”

Source: <http://www.sanmartinoapavia.it/ITA/Homepage.asp>

point for paths of faith and culture associations, a place to store materials about routes, to design projects, to hold conferences, meetings, workshops and seminars. The Centre holds the operative unit for European associations of Saint Martin of Tours Route and also for “*Vie Francigene*”, and “*TransRomanica*” and is the legal headquarter of the Association “*Via Augustina*” (certified by Council of Europe). Furthermore, during the last years, the Municipality launched a specific website dedicated to the role of the city in the Saint Martin of Tours Route (Fig. 3). The site proposes the projects to enhance the memory of the Saint, his journey and his bond to Pavia.

The website proposes also information about the initiative that the Municipality carries on: audio-visual competitions, readings of poems, theatrical performances, classical music concerts, sommelier meetings and special events involving babies named Martin. In particular the public administration of the city launched a didactic project named “*San Martino, bambino pavese*” (St. Martin, child from Pavia) that aims to involve all schoolchildren by the release of a brochure about the important steps in the life of the Saint and the production of multimedia documentation for the website. Another interesting project is the artistic expressions competition named “*Martino personaggio europeo: concorso per giovani talenti nella pittura, scultura, fotografia e video*” (Martin European character: competition for young talents in painting, sculpture, photo and video). The competition aimed at selecting the works of young artists on a symbol of sharing and solidarity and the participation was limited to all young people, students of schools and academies of art, from European Union countries, aged between 14 and 30 years. Through this project, the Municipality of Pavia intends to promote and encourage, by any means, the potential of young artists in all areas in which it manifests their creativity.

Discussion and conclusions

As so far outlined and, by taking into account the topic of this brief article, we can suggest a few interesting points. St. Martin was a man of the church and a symbol of mercy and forgiveness, which he left us with, by sharing his coat. It is from this symbol, linked to a reflection of the fundamentals of the idea of sharing, that the Route was created and is implemented (<http://www.culture-routes.lu>). The importance of the Saint Martin of Tours Route is growing year by year, not only on the part of the public authorities, but also on private actors. Individuals and groups profuse fundamental kind of energy and commitment that, once the idea of the project is born, are necessary to bring the physical infrastructure into existence: to rehabilitate paths and trails, set up visitor centres, erect signposting, restore and explain heritage items, exchange

know how with likeminded projects. All of these things present opportunities for local development, which in turn creates jobs and economic activity regionally. The story of St. Martin of Tours is intrinsically linked to the history of the European continent, and there are therefore many connections between this route and other European paths. The problems associated with the development and interpretation of religious heritage are hence the same as, for example, those faced by the pilgrimage routes or the Roman art routes. Furthermore, some cultural routes meet and cut through each other, especially at Pavia. In the city cross their paths five ways of faith certified by CeO: The Saint Martin of Tours Route, *Via Francigena*, The Transromanica – The Romanesque Routes of European Heritage, the Cluniac Sites in Europe, the Casadean Sites (also named *Casa Dei Sites* or *La Chaise-Dieu Sites*) and the noteworthy way called *Via Augustina*. The CoE recognised the European Cultural Routes (ESSnet-Culture, 2012) as a way to encourage cultural co-operation among EU Countries and as a tool to pursue the European identity in its unity and its diversity (Ashwort, 1997, 2008; Coccia, 2012; Cocco, 2012; ISNART, ONT, 2006; Manente and Furlan, 2002; Nappi, 1998; ONT, 2009; Richards, 2011; Toscanelli, 2010). These Cultural Routes are also important because they can be compared to complex territorial networks. According to Giuseppe Dematteis, a well-known Italian geographer, the centres of the network with different dimensions and hierarchy levels operate in a complementary manner and contribute, through long-time processes of historic and identity stratification (which are integrated in the regions) to trace and draw landscapes as they are perceived today (Dematteis and Bonavero, 1997). Berti (2013) states that this reticular model on the urban dynamics and the so-called “multipolar networks” can be transferred into the case of cultural routes. This model underline the role of each pole of the itinerary, according to the relation developed with the theme of the route and with the meaning, it has both at the local and at the European level. Assimilating each itinerary to a territorial network allows also to reading different levels of existing relations between route and territories involved in the project and recognise the linchpins and the functional connections between elements and context. As Dematteis (Dematteis and Bonavero, 1997) theorises, Cultural route as a network can produce and recompose internal links for local populations, through relationship-wise forms of negotiation, solidarity, economic coalition. These connections include different stakeholders, from residents to institutions, from local to international and European level. According to this thesis, the city of Pavia, as a part of such network, plays an interesting role especially if, in less than 50 km far away, will hold the EXPO (in Milan, in Lombardy, the same Region as Pavia). This event will happen from 1st May to 31st October 2015 and tourism experts predict wide numbers of flows, about 20 mil-

lion of visitors (Assolombarda, 2013). The theme chosen is for Milan is “Feeding the planet. Energy for life” and the world universal exhibition could represent an opportunity for Pavia, which is located only 40 km far from the site (less than 50 minutes by car). The city (in particular its authorities and private operators) have to be ready to attract visitors, that could be interested in discovering cities rich of religious and cultural values, healthy lifestyles and culinary traditions. EXPO and the other cited project about the Saint Martin of Tours Route could enhance a successful development of cultural and religious tourism if local partners and the other European partners of the Cultural Itineraries will be able to promote a sustainable and quality tourism, proposing forms of compatible improvement of the emergencies of the territory.

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Authors Contribution

This paper is the result of the combined efforts of the authors. C. Ferrario wrote sections 1, 2 and R. Afferni sections 3, 4, 5.