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CONTENTS

- 9 Ancient Tourism: Can modern concepts be applied to Ancient contexts?
Silviu ANGHEL
- 31 Discontentment with modern life: the influence on tourism
Gregory WILLSON, Martin MACCARTHY
- 47 The impact of the Santiago pilgrimage way on rural Spain. The case of the French Way (Northern Spain)
András Bence SZERB, Márta BAKUCZ, F.J. MARTÍNEZ-CORTIJO
- 64 The role of calvaries in Hungarian religious tourism
Zsuzsanna MIKHÁZI, Attila CSEMEZ, Klaudia MÁTÉ, Ágnes SALLAY
- 93 The interconnectedness of personal spirituality and tourism experiences
Gregory WILLSON, Usep SUHUD

FOREWORD

Religious tourism is a very complex phenomenon, difficult to approach and understand from a scientific perspective. The place of religion in society is changing continuously, and many variations exist worldwide. It could bring people together, but it could also divide. It could give a sense of community, but it could also lead to conflict. Religion is a topic of continuous debate from many perspectives.

Religion moves people, both in an abstract way, as well as in a physical way. Delphi, Istanbul, Jerusalem, Mecca, Rome, Santiago de Compostela, Stonehenge are only some examples of famous places, visited by millions of people due to their special connection with various religions and beliefs. The visitors are not always religiously connected with those places.

The present issue of the *Journal of Tourism Challenges and Trends* investigates some of the aspects of religious tourism. The perspective approached is dynamic, analyzing religious tourism from the ancient world to the current evolution within the modern society. All articles included in this volume present religious tourism as a multifaceted spiritual endeavor, shaping both individuals and societies.

Alexandra Zbucea

Guest editor

ANCIENT TOURISM: CAN MODERN CONCEPTS BE APPLIED TO ANCIENT CONTEXTS?

*Silviu ANGHEL**

Abstract. *The present paper asks whether one can apply the modern concept of tourism to Greek, Roman or Western Medieval societies. It analyses records left by ancient visitors, graffiti, travel records and memoirs, based on several current definitions of tourism in sociological and psychological studies. It argues that most definitions of modern tourism are only formulated with contemporary society in mind. Those definitions that stress the experience of the tourist are the ones best applicable to ancient evidence. It also argues that many of these ancient authors of traveling literature were willing to immerse themselves in a foreign place, to experience the uniqueness of surroundings and people other than their own. Although literary records represent only the intellectual elite, there is some evidence that the rest of the population, the silent majority, was capable of similar experiences. Furthermore, medieval theological notions that pilgrimage should be separated from light traveling, i.e. tourism, should be seen as artificial and inapplicable to the historical record. For the ancient tourist both light and serious, both religious and pleasurable to the eyes visits were present in equal measure.*

Keywords. *the concept of tourism; light versus serious tourism; ancient tourism; ancient travelers; pilgrimage.*

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DISCONTENTMENT WITH MODERN LIFE: THE INFLUENCE ON TOURISM

Gregory WILLSON^{}, Martin MacCARTHY^{**}*

Abstract. *Many people in modern society are searching for greater meaning in their lives. Modern issues such as excessive materialism, secularism, stress, global warming and terrorism have led people to search for additional meaning in their tourism experiences. This paper explores how discontentment with modern life may influence upon an individual's travel decisions and experiences. Through conducting multiple interviews with eleven tourists over an eighteen months period, this paper explores how the frustrations of modern life influenced the travel decisions and experiences of tourists engaging in travel with Hands up Holidays, a tourism operator marketing them as offering meaningful travel. This paper evidences that tourism experiences can be used as a ward against and relief from the negativities of modern life. In this way, tourism can be viewed as a potential antidote against anxiety and depression caused by the stressors of modern living.*

Keywords. *Materialism; secularism; meaningful; personal; tourism.*

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THE IMPACT OF THE SANTIAGO PILGRIMAGE WAY ON RURAL SPAIN. THE CASE OF THE FRENCH WAY (NORTHERN SPAIN)

András Bence SZERB^{*}, Márta BAKUCZ^{}, F.J. MARTÍNEZ-CORTIJO^{***}**

Abstract. *The purpose of this study is to examine the impacts on the rural development of historic, thematic routes. Our paper concentrates on the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Specifically, we look at the most important of the routes - known as "The French Way" - which traverses Northern Spain. We focus the research on how the pilgrimage fits into rural life in 21st century Spain, on the particular features of the journey and on how travelers, service providers and the clergy relate to the Way. Our research is based on in-depth interviews with seven people during the 31 days of the pilgrimage in the summer of 2014. These interviews were conducted with two quite different groups of people - with a variety of religious parties and with owners of restaurants, bars, shops and accommodation as service providers. The results of both our primary and secondary research led us to conclude that this specific thematic route includes features that contribute positively to the rural areas and encourage the rural population to maintain and preserve their values.*

Keywords: *pilgrimage; rural development; rural tourism; thematic route.*

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THE ROLE OF CALVARIES IN HUNGARIAN RELIGIOUS TOURISM

**Zsuzsanna MIKHÁZI^{*}, Attila CSEMEZ^{*}, Klaudia MÁTÉ^{*},
Ágnes SALLAY^{*}**

Abstract. *The importance of religious tourism is noticeably increasing in today's Hungary. Religious tourism is one of the earliest forms of travel, it includes people, believer or not, visiting religious sites but not as a place of worship, rather for their cultural, historical, or artistic value. The majority of attractions is built heritage, which is present in almost the entire country. We refined the borders of our sample area: it includes 70 settlements on the Balaton Uplands. We organized the religious values of the selected area by historical era, and then we created a graph to summarize the settlements in which religious buildings appeared early and remained in the later eras. Beyond the level of raising awareness, we are convinced that religious monuments are underrepresented compared to their past importance. The religious monuments, in addition to making our history come alive; also show how developed society was at a particular point. Churches and monasteries are mementos from medieval Hungary, showing its level of economic, societal, and cultural development. Presenting them in both periods unsuitable for bathing in the summer, and as an extension to the main holiday season would be crucial.*

Keywords: *religious tourism; Balaton Uplands; calvaries.*

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THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF PERSONAL SPIRITUALITY AND TOURISM EXPERIENCES

Gregory WILLSON^{}, Usep SUHUD^{**}*

Abstract. *A number of scholars have acknowledged the power of tourism to assist individuals in finding meaning and purpose in their lives. More recently, studies have proffered that tourism experiences may be imbued with personal spiritual significance. Indeed, transcendence and connectedness are considered to be at the heart of most definitions of religious and spiritual tourism. Less scholarly attention has been focused specifically on the concepts of transcendence and connectedness through tourism, excluding from the niche of religious pilgrimage. Through applying phenomenological principles, in-depth relationships were built with eleven individuals who, through engagement in travel with Hands up Holidays, a luxury tour provider, experienced transcendence, connectedness, and personal healing. The paper concludes by arguing that even amongst individuals that are non-religious, transcendence and connectedness are potentially powerful experiences that can be gained through tourism activities.*

Keywords: *Connectedness; transcendence; spirituality; tourism; religion.*

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