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Editorial: Pilgrimage-Induced Transformations: The 12th Annual International Religious Tourism & Pilgrimage Conference in Braga

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Editorial: Pilgrimage-Induced Transformations: The 12th Annual International Religious Tourism & Pilgrimage Conference in Braga

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Certainly, we might risk saying that IRTP'21 was the most challenging conference in the history of IRTP conferences. Due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, it was postponed twice, and, consequently, the number of participants was significantly low. However, 57 authors participated online and in person, presenting 35 papers. A novelty at this conference was the Master's session, in which 11 Masters student presented 6 papers on original research developed for the conference mainly focussing on the role of ICT in pilgrimage.

This Special Issue includes nine conference papers, which contain a number of overlapping themes including a focus on the commodification of pilgrimage and transformations induced by pilgrimage.

The first paper by **Shin Yasuda** entitled *Mapping Pilgrimage in the Marketplace: Social Contexts of Bisnis Hajj dan Umroh in Indonesia* notes that modern pilgrimages face the market forces of transforming religious landscapes in sacred spaces, and the spread of

Figure 1: View of Braga



Photo by Razaq Raj

Figure 2: Hard Working Delegates



Photo by Darius Liutikas

religious commodities and services in the field. Within this context, the author examines how the commodification of Islam is transforming the social context of religious tours and creates new economic and social relations in Indonesia. Despite the mass commercialisation of pilgrimage tours resulting from government intervention, the paper reveals that these religious private tours still preserve their distinctive quality from mass market products by the central character of the pilgrimage master (the Ustaz) as the tour leader.

Pedro Azevedo in his paper (*Ways of Saint James in the Interior North of Portugal: An Analysis of Touristic Routes*) analyses the transformation of the Ways of Saint James in the interior north of Portugal into tourist-cultural routes. This process contributes to the diversification of the destinations along the Ways, which in turn creates a bridge between religious tourism and sustainable development. Furthermore, the Ways of Saint James provide employment opportunities and stimulate small business establishment. This is also discussed by **Mariana Oliveira** and **Goretti Silva** in their case study analysis of the Alto Minho region in Portugal (*Pilgrimage Routes as Opportunities for Local Development: The Case of The Way of St. James in the Alto Minho Region,*

Portugal). Their results reveal that despite the pandemic, the Ways recovered faster than other tourism products in the region.

Dorothy Lane highlights the complexity of modern Sikh pilgrimage and discusses the driving factors behind them in her paper - *'Unlikely Adventures' in Sacred and Secular Space: India and the Sikh Diaspora.*

Table 1: Previous IRTP Conferences
2003 – Fátima, Portugal
2009 – Nazaré, Portugal
2011 – New Norcia, Australia
2012 – Maynooth, Ireland
2013 – Malta
2014 – Veszprém, Hungary
2015 – Girona, Spain
2016 – Konya, Turkey
2017 – Armeno, Italy
2018 – Santiago de Compostela, Spain
2019 – Belgrade, Serbia
2021 – Braga, Portugal

Figure 3: Delegates Admiring Local Festive Decorations



Photo by Darius Liutikas

These factors include the worldwide spread of the Sikh diaspora; the historic traditions of pilgrimage in the Indian subcontinent; the Sikh independence initiatives; and of course, the secular and tourist components of pilgrimage.

Noel Buttigieg & Dane Munro present a case of which explores the ‘incarcerated pilgrimage’ of two Quaker nuns, Ms Catherine Evans and Ms Sarah Cheevers in the context of the Quakers movement in Malta. Their paper *Peregrinatio Interrupta: An Eclectic Success of a Failed Pilgrimage*, explores how a confined pilgrimage transformed their mission into a missionary-pilgrimage experience.

In their offering entitled *Religious Celebrations and Tradition: The Case of ‘Panigiras’ in Sifnos Island*, Polyxeni Moira, Dimitrios Mylonopoulos and Eleni Synagridi discuss a combination of religious and spiritual rituals connected with tradition in an interesting paper. This work provides an insight into the way that a community on one of the Greek Islands holds every year, a celebration in honour of its Patron Saint. The variety of

the activities that are held are interesting to understand and to look into, as a means of community identity. This also offers a unique insight into a traditional religious activity.

Carla Silva, José Luís Abrantes, Manuel Reis and Cláudia Seabra explore the various religious and spiritual experiences of pilgrims in their study. The authors discuss the attachment that pilgrims have with sacred places via the results of interviews and surveys at Fatima. The conclusions of their paper (*Exploring Memorable Sacred Tourism Experiences and Place Attachment*) are well presented and provide a basis for further studies in other areas.

The paper *Fearless Women Travellers: Religion and More* by Antonietta Ivona and Donatella Privitera presents a variety of accounts of pilgrims, providing information on the difficulties that women in particular faced in the past. Of the chronicles that exist, few accounts penned by women have survived. This is an interesting study as it discusses various women pilgrims, carrying out their own type of pilgrimage, for different reasons, covering a range of time periods.

Fátima Matos da Silva, Isabel Borges and Marta Arreiol write about the universality of the Camino di Santiago which has led to various other regions forming part of this important and ancient pilgrimage route, making sure that they all offer the best facilities. Their paper (*Universal Accessibility on the Portuguese Coastal Way to Santiago in Porto Municipality*) focuses on how the Municipality of Porto has taken on board the importance of providing accessibility to all, which has led to an increase of visitors on this particular stretch of the route. The results of this paper provide a good working hypothesis for other such projects.

Figure 4: Delegates and Organisers at Conference in Braga



Photo by Anna Zammit