



Capacity Building for Religious Heritage Conservation and Management

Vocational Learning Tools and Methods of the *ALTERheritage* Project



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Greeting

Dear partners and friends!

This report is an occasion to reflect on some of the key achievements of *ALTER-heritage*, a European funded project which showed the potential to raise considerable awareness of the value of participation in conserving cultural and religious heritage and generating lasting impact.

I am proud of what we have achieved together. It's by sharing that we really learn. It is your enthusiasm and your strong experience that has been your hallmark.

Religious heritage plays a key role in the identity of many millions of people, providing not only a system of belief but also a sense of belonging. It also can act as a spur for social action. It reminds us of the responsibilities we have beyond ourselves.

I would like to congratulate all those who have played a part: every partner who has contributed to this great achievement of immense benefit for religious heritage conservation, management, regeneration and tourism.

It is clear that many challenges lie ahead and a lot remains to be done, but I am confident that we have laid the groundwork, that we have established certain tools, working methods, guidelines and a framework at a European level. I therefore express my gratitude to the Lifelong Learning LEONARDO programme of General Directorate Education and Culture of the European Commission which allowed us to establish this successful partnership.

I hope that Europe can grab the opportunities which were generated by this project – long into the future.

Olivier de Rohan Chabot

President





1 Religious Heritage Preservation – a European Challenge

History has left us with innumerable different places of worship in Europe, often displaying the very highest quality of architecture as well as visual art. Churches, temples, synagogues and other places of worship are records of our shared European history, displaying artistic, architectural and social currents that transcend our modern-day borders. They are also invaluable economic, social and cultural resources that need to be preserved, used and interpreted for the benefit of local communities and the wider society alike.



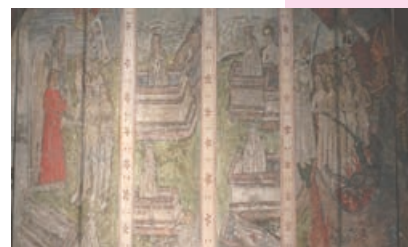
Though the specific circumstances in Europe vary greatly, a rising number of countries and denominations experience diminishing congregations. This jeopardises the available funding to maintain and conserve this type of heritage. Thousands of places of worship across Europe are under-used or already considered redundant in urban areas as well as in the countryside. Many of them risk demolition or being sold and privatised during the coming decade. Others are not able to cover the costs incurred by the waves of tourists flocking to their monumental buildings. Losing this heritage will not only mean an irreversible large-scale loss to the community of a particularly meaningful heritage, but will also stand as a missed opportunity for economic growth and fostering social cohesion.



Most professionals charged with looking after this heritage are architects, art historians and conservationists who have little experience of the entrepreneurial side of regenerating the buildings. Conversely, the companies ready to invest in this type of property often lack an understanding of the specific cultural and heritage values and the potential of religious heritage. Moreover, local decision-makers, administrators and regulators lack access to international examples of successful projects, which could inspire appropriate solutions. International exchange of experiences to support innovative, respectful and ground-breaking solutions is particularly important in this field where both religious and secular presuppositions affect what is possible, allowed and acceptable for places of worship.

There are numerous European players that are developing methods, guidelines and tools for subtle and complex conservation and management of religious heritage, designed to build the capacity of the relevant professionals. They are being launched locally and nationally, but are often challenged to reach European impact.

This document is intended to help all those looking to develop their capacity to manage religious heritage. It gives an introduction to the ALTER*heritage* project activities and outcomes and to the toolkits presented by each partner. You will find basic information in the information-boxes, please contact FRH or any of the partners directly for more details.



2

ALTERheritage – Looking for European Answers

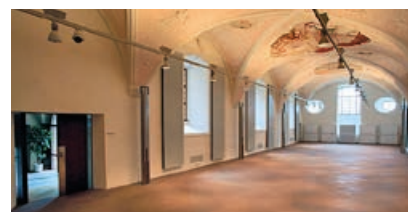
The LEONARDO funded ALTER*heritage* project was a response to Europe's clear need to build expertise through an interdisciplinary and international approach to developing practicable learning tools for sustainable conservation and management of religious heritage. The project was the first international project lead by Future for Religious Heritage (FRH) with European Commission funding. When its concept took form in 2012, the then one year old network was exploring ways in which it could support its members to make full use of each other's' expertise.

The project format was developed to ensure equal responsibilities between the partners, which supports networking and relationship building. FRH was lead partner, co-ordinating the fundraising, programme of events and the communication around it. The project consisted of a series of seminars hosted by each of the partners in their home country. They presented guidelines, learning tools or methods that they had developed to conserve religious heritage buildings and objects, and the international colleagues assessed how the material could be adapted to their own circumstances. The method of evaluation was through online forms before and after the seminars, as well as reflective discussions during the events.

The results of the project show a large and highly valuable number of outcomes, including many that were not foreseen, and which depend on relationship-building in order to generate. The project delivered the predicted outcomes such as an online resource available on the FRH website (www.frh-europe.org/projects/alterheritage) for all those interested in using the material. Other outcomes that were not foreseen include a students' placement programme, a coordinated lobbying strategy for pilgrimage routes, a training programme on extended use, and an international working group on movable religious heritage. During the project duration partnerships were created and four project proposals were submitted for European funding. Most of these spin-off initiatives were not developed during the formal programme, but over informal opportunities to discuss. The variety of unforeseen outcomes and the way they took form is likely a result of the diversity in circumstances in Europe, under which religious heritage players operate.

The recommendation of the project partners is to continue to develop a combination of online resources and in-person exchange opportunities. The online resources should be clearly indexed with contact information for further questions. The meeting opportunities should range between large and small clusters, around topics that invite cross-sectorial exchange.

ALTER*heritage* promoted and supported academically well anchored, high quality tools that can build the capacity of vocational learning in the field across Europe. The results will support future production of new learning tools on religious heritage conservation, management and regeneration in Europe.



3

The ALTER*heritage* Partnership

The ALTER*heritage* partnership represented charities, small businesses, governmental departments, church academic institutions from across Europe. It was formed of FRH members who joined forces to help follow the networks' strategy to grow through project development. The outcomes of the project were to support decision-making within FRH on how to support its members' peer-to-peer learning. For the included universities the strong inclusion of students was of high value in order to raise their awareness for the European dimension of the topic and open research opportunities and exchange of knowledge. The heritage representatives and small businesses used the chance to present their good practice and discuss experiences in order to learn from each other and get support through knowledge transfer.

The project partnership was very diverse, was a big advantage as learning from different perspectives added value to existing expertise. The common factor was the development of concepts on how to preserve religious heritage in their national contexts. ALTER*heritage* explored these and assessed how the knowledge could be transferred to other settings with different circumstances.



FRH was the instigator and coordinating partner of the consortium. Created in 2011, it is the only European network of charities, governmental, religious and university departments, that work to protect religious heritage buildings across Europe. It is a not for profit, non-religious organization open to all peoples. The aims of the network are to:

- + **Promote Europe's** rich religious heritage, which is a shared resource for cultural, social and economic development.
- + **Raise awareness** of the threats facing Europe's religious heritage.
- + Provide a **communication platform** for those working to protect Europe's religious heritage.
- + **Share expertise and experience** on common challenges as well as promote successful national or regional initiatives at a European level.
- + Identify areas where a Europe-wide response is appropriate and **influence policy-makers** on behalf of our members.



UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG

The Department of Conservation at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden runs seven different university programs in conservation, as well as PhD education and research in the same field. The department is also engaged in vocational training and further education, as well as in public outreach.



media k GmbH is a German institution specializing in cultural tourism in rural areas, specifically for cultural heritage monuments with a religious background. It supports stakeholders of church communities and other local players to develop economically relevant activities on local and regional level in order to implement an integrated approach for cultural tourism, including pilgrimage travels and spiritual tourism.



ALTERheritage partners at kick-off meeting October 2013 in Brussels

The Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation, University of Leuven (Belgium), has more than 35 years of experience in training, research and consulting in the field of the preservation of the built heritage. Its founder, the late Professor Raymond Lemaire, was one of the founders of ICOMOS and one of the authors of the Venice Charter that established the doctrine for the conservation of the architectural and urban heritage (1964). He was a well-known advisor to the European Union, the Council of Europe and UNESCO. The Centre hosts the UNESCO chair on Preventive Conservation, Monitoring and Maintenance.

KU LEUVEN

The **Churches Conservation Trust** (CCT) is the national charity protecting historic churches at risk in England. The Trust saved over 340 beautiful buildings in England which attract more than 1.5 million visitors a year. With CCT help and with local support they are kept open and in use – living once again at the heart of their communities. All churches vested in the Trust by the Church of England are listed, mostly grade one (the highest national level of protection), and some are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.



The **Sociedad Regional de Cultura y Deporte, S. L.** is a branch of the Government of Cantabria, Spain. It has through the department “Año Jubilar Lebaniego” as its main target: creation, promotion, restoration and maintenance of the historical, religious, cultural and natural heritage of the region of Cantabria.



Museum Catharijneconvent is the national museum and knowledge center for Christian art, culture and history in the Netherlands. The permanent collection of museum Catharijneconvent comprises unique historical and art-historical exhibits ranging from the early mediaeval period to the 21st century. This collection offers an insight into the Christian art and cultural history of the Netherlands and its influence on Dutch society. The museum has a department that draws up inventories and assesses the value of religious objects in churches and convents in the Netherlands.



The consortium was complemented by Silent Partners*

- + Centrum voor Religieuze Kunst en Cultuur vzw in Belgium
- + ICOMOS International Training Committee
- + ICCROM
- + Svenska kyrkan/Church of Sweden
- + Protestant church of Hessen – Nassau in Germany
- + Parish of Dittelsheim in Germany
- + Parish of Alsheim in Germany
- + Monastery of the Dominicans in Worms in Germany
- + Parish of the Herrgottskirche in Creglingen in Germany
- + KADOC, Documentation and Research Centre on Religious Culture and Society in Belgium
- + De Monumentenwacht in the Netherlands
- + The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands

* “Silent partners” in the ALTERheritage project were institutions of high relevance for the overall topic, which were chosen by the partners. The “silent partners” were continuously kept in the communication loop and their expertise and advice was a valuable source for the project outcome.



Seminar at Geertekerkerk, Utrecht

4 Tools and Methods



THE NETHERLANDS Guidelines on Handling Redundant Objects from Religious Heritage Buildings

Toolbox: Guidelines on Ways of Dealing with Religious Objects

Intended for: religious heritage stakeholders, churches, museums

Available: Please see page 22

Contact: Marc de Beyer
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To raise awareness of the threats facing Europe's religious movable heritage and to share expertise and experience on the common challenges faced all over Europe, FRH, Museum Catharijneconvent and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands organised a seminar on movable religious heritage. The event was supported by the Mondriaan Fonds, the City of Utrecht, and through the ALTER*heritage* project. The seminar offered the chance to listen 25 speakers from 11 countries and to meet some of the 130 delegates from 16 countries – European experts on church buildings and religious objects.

Museum Catharijneconvent

In 2010, Museum Catharijneconvent – the national museum for Christian art and culture in the Netherlands – took the initiative to devise fundamental solutions to the challenge with evaluation of religious heritage objects, in cooperation with various partners. These efforts culminated in the publication of the Guidelines on Ways of Dealing with Religious Objects that was presented at the seminar.

MARC DE BEYER



“The past few years the ALTER*heritage* partners met to share knowledge and learn from each other. Because we met in person on a regular basis we got to know each other and became true colleagues. This meant that we were able to initiate several projects.”



The Programme

The first day's morning sessions, held in the medieval Geertekerkerk, were led by Crispin Truman, (CEO of the Churches Conservation Trust, UK). Keynote speeches were by Dr. Justin Kroesen (Assist. Professor of Art History of Christianity of University of Groningen) and Oddbjørn Sørmoen (Director of the Department of Church Buildings and Heritage Administration in the KA Association for Employers in the Church of Norway and church-related NGOs). The situation regarding the closing of churches and the fate of their religious objects in various European countries was outlined in six short presentations.



Site visit at re-used church "De Duif", Amsterdam



Site visit at Portuguese synagogue, Amsterdam

In the afternoon parallel sessions were held. One dealt with "Conservation and Collection Management", another with "Theft and Protection" and the third with "Raising Awareness". Among other subjects, lectures were on endangered churches in Brandenburg (B. Janowski, Germany), on interiors and movable religious heritage in The Netherlands (E. Koldewij, The Netherlands), on issues relating to artefacts in museums (V. Minucciani, Italy), on movable heritage in English churches (P. Aiers, United Kingdom), on ecclesiastical furniture as a challenge for heritage preservation (J. Hansson, Sweden) and on selection issues of religious heritage at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (J. Des Rochers, Canada).



Day two gave delegates the opportunity to visit several Dutch churches in Amsterdam. Under the leadership of Tessa Luger of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands and Marc de Beyer from the Museum Catharijneconvent, assisted by other group leaders, the delegates assessed the current religious, artistic, historical and cultural value of furnishings and artefacts in the Church of St. Augustine, due to close its doors a few weeks after the seminar. For these assessments the Guidelines on Ways of Dealing with Religious Objects were used. After this exercise, delegates were taken by bus to visit other religious sites such as the hidden church Our Lord in the Attic and the Portuguese Synagogue. The guidelines have been published in English in 2012 by the Museum Catharijneconvent.

The seminar took place on November 04–05, 2013
at Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht/The Netherlands

Participants: 130 delegates of 16 European countries

Link: www.frh-europe.org/utrecht-2013



Site visit of ALTERheritage seminar at "All Souls", Bolton



UNITED KINGDOM **Tools to Build Projects for Extending the Use of Religious Heritage Buildings**

Toolbox: Business Planning Toolkit

Intended for: religious heritage stakeholders, regional planners, volunteer & community groups

Available: Please see page 22

Contact: Sarah Robinson
srobinson@theccct.org.uk



Europe has a magnificent legacy of historic buildings which adds grace and elegance to our townscapes, countryside and built environment. The buildings often have a real resonance with the local community and provide a valued link to the past. However, with their original purpose in severe decline many beautiful historic buildings now stand underused whilst others are being lost through redevelopment or vandalism, putting at risk hundreds of buildings that have helped define local history and identity.

In the United Kingdom, as a result of this, communities are coming together to form action groups, local campaigns and charitable bodies to try and reverse this worrying decline. Local people are well placed to develop suitable ideas for new uses for redundant historic buildings but they can be new to some or all of the technical processes involved in translating these ideas into a workable proposal that will both suit the space and ensure a viable future.

The Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) set up a Regeneration taskforce in 2007, a specialist team within the Trust to place historic churches at the heart of community lead regeneration. The taskforce has worked hard since then to deliver new uses in partnership with local communities and organisations at a number of Trust churches, becoming a catalyst for community renewal.

In partnership with The Princes Regeneration Trust the CCT produced a **Business Planning Toolkit** for anyone to use in planning and delivering a regeneration project. The guide explains how to make a strong business case for your heritage regeneration project. Understanding and setting out exactly how you are going to regenerate your historic building, how much this work will cost and how the building will be used when the work is finished, is key to the success of any project. The guide covers the areas which everyone involved in a heritage regeneration project should consider in order to ensure that their project is sustainable in the long-term and therefore able to access financial support. It was this Business Planning Toolkit that was the focus for the Alterheritage seminar hosted by the CCT in March 2014.

CRISPIN TRUMAN



“Our experience shows that if we can engage the wider community, new audiences and partners in a use and understanding of the building which has meaning for them, we can transform an underused and endangered historic church into a well-conserved, valued and sustainable asset which is back at the heart of the community. I think that the business planning toolkit will help others to repeat the same success even in very challenging cases of heritage at risk.”





Site visit to All Souls, Bolton

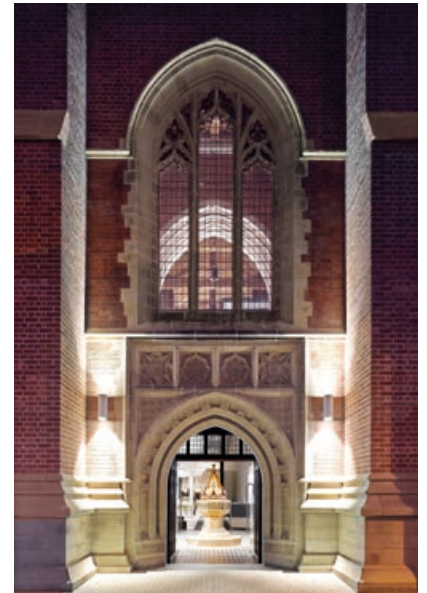
Delegates were made familiar with the over-riding principles of the toolkit using CCT examples of regeneration projects which included both urban and rural churches, but it was brought to life by a site visit to our flagship regeneration project at All Souls, Bolton, Manchester. This vast Victorian brick church, Grade II* listed, was built by the most prolific architects of the 19th century Gothic Revival in the North West of England. The church was closed and vested in the CCT in 1980. And since then it has been subjected to continuous attacks of vandalism and theft. All Souls Bolton, an independent social enterprise, was set up to provide a new lease of life for the church through heritage, enterprise and community activity, and to work with the CCT and local community to achieve this. Delegates were able to see the repair works to the existing church, as well as steelwork for the new insertions forming new spaces within the building. Delegates also heard about the CCT's volunteering programme which is essential to sustaining the future of our collection of churches when revenue funding is at stake.

Can this toolkit be used within the rest of Europe? The CCT certainly believe so; the universal principles – understanding your asset, market research, considering options, financial rigour and a great deal of creativity – are relevant to any regeneration project for religious heritage buildings of any age. Indeed the CCT regeneration team is scheduled to present the Business Planning Toolkit at a workshop for the Diocese of Lund, Sweden, in Autumn 2015.

The seminar took place on 13–14 March 2014 in Manchester, England

Participants: 49 experts from seven European countries
(22 Alterheritage partners)

Link: www.visitchurches.org.uk



All Souls, Bolton



All Souls, Bolton



ALTERheritage delegates in Gothenburg



SWEDEN **Templates for the Evaluation Process of Religious Heritage Buildings when Facing Redundancy**

Toolbox: Evaluation of churches facing redundancy

Intended for: Religious heritage stakeholders

Available: Please see page 22

Contact: Ola Wetterberg
ola.wetterberg@conservation.gu.se



Guidelines were produced by the Church of Sweden to identify and help manage cultural heritage within churches. It is a flexible tool that supports the development and use of cultural heritage as a resource for congregations and communities. It will also support the Church of Sweden when analysing consequences and prioritising heritage values and buildings in the longer perspective.

The aim is to support Sweden's churches as active, accessible and welcoming places for all people and coming generations. It corresponds to the national political aims to conserve, use and develop cultural heritage. It will develop knowledge about, and commitment to, management of tangible and intangible cultural heritage within churches. It will also help making heritage-assessment documents more relevant for decision-makers in the episcopates and congregations, and increase their influence in the management of cultural heritage in churches. Cultural heritage values should be clearly identified and evaluated, and their development potential in the congregation should be assessed. They should be broadly contextualised to give tangible and intangible values equal importance.

To introduce the partners to the model and help them assess its practicability abroad, it was applied to a case-study, which was discussed in small groups during an ALTERheritage workshop.

The Chapel of Sjoutnäset was the object, a wooden building from 1914 is located in north-west Sweden. This part of the country is very sparsely populated though the landscape is rich with lakes, mountains and deep forests. Its inherent values include the landscape, historic significance in the national romantic style, the wooden material and structure, and its secular and spiritual Sami heritage.

OLA WETTERBERG



"ALTERheritage has widened our knowledge of the European situation for religious heritage, given us an invaluable network in a number of countries, and deeper insight into a different contemporary approaches and tools. The ALTERheritage has been of great importance to our research."



The questions raised by the ALTERheritage partners pointed at international differences between state-church relations, funding and protection of religious heritage. These can make direct transferral of evaluation methods such as the one presented difficult. Certain elements are nonetheless, very useful to help inform new developments. It was recognized that there are several different models for this process across Europe, and that they should be gathered to help inform new initiatives.

The meeting offered the hosts an important opportunity to discuss current research results and formulate new relevant research questions concerning the present situation and the future for the religious heritage. It also reminded them that un-



Site visit at Johanneskyrkan, Gothenburg



Site visit at Domkyrkan, Gothenburg

spoiled nature, remoteness, solitude and silence, could be important values for regenerating a church that is threatened with abandonment.

The workshop resulted in an opportunity for deeper collaboration between a few ALTER*heritage* partners, aiming to develop pilot business plans for at least two redundant churches in Sweden.

The seminar programme featured presentations by Henrik Lindblad (Senior Cultural Heritage Advisor of the Church of Sweden), who presented the Swedish legislation and funding systems.

Heikki Ranta, conservation officer at the Swedish Church diocese of Lund, and Inge Bredin, chaplain of the Church of Sweden exemplified the situation with case-studies. The seminar also explored the idea of "heritagisation" of churches, and the move from spiritual towards cultural appreciation of their architecture, art and sculptures. Eva Löfgren, associate professor at the University of Gothenburg, presented the study "Churches for Sale", which is a pilot under the project "Old churches, new values". Magdalena Hillström, assistant professor at the University of Linköping, studies the concept of "museumisation" of the churches on a physical, legal, professional, conceptual and technical level.

To summarise the situation in Sweden, Henrik Lindblad presented a comparative study of several European countries. The number of redundant church buildings is low in Sweden compared with other parts of Europe and the church buildings and cemeteries are comparatively well maintained. The forecast however, is a move towards the situation in the rest of Europe with redundant buildings, financial challenges and a category of cultural heritage that stands at risk of being lost to new generations.



Sjoetnåset church, Sweden

The seminar took place on 11–12 June 2014 in Gothenburg/Sweden

Participants: 33 delegates gathered in Gothenburg, representing 6 European countries

Link: <http://conservation.gu.se/english/research/rhit>



Participants of the symposium, October 2014



GERMANY Preserving Religious Heritage and Use in Cultural Tourism

Toolbox: Religious heritage and cultural tourism

Intended for: religious heritage stakeholders, tourism representatives

Available: www.media-k.eu

Contact: Karin Drda-Kühn
info@media-k.eu



How can religious sites specifically in rural areas be protected and used in order to preserve them in a sustainable way? And what kind of role can cultural tourism play? These questions were devoted to a symposium at Bronnbach Monastery (Germany) with experts from Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Great Britain and Spain.

Using the example of the conference venue, the Bronnbach monastery in the Tauber river valley, it could be convincingly demonstrated how sites of religious heritage have to be positioned in a future orientated way. The 12th century Cistercian monastery was transferred in 1984 to the Main-Tauber-Kreis, a local authority. Since then, the spacious monastery developed into a national center which accommodates institutions of religion, culture and heritage preservation: an active Catholic order (“Missionaries of the Holy Family”), the Fraunhofer Institute for Silicate Research (ISC), the International Centre for Cultural Heritage Protection and Conservation Research (IZKK), the archive union Main-Tauber and a rural heritage museum characterize the utilization concept.

“Respect, protect, revive – religious heritage sites and cultural tourism in rural areas” was the title of the symposium. Spiritual tourism is considered part of cultural tourism and can play an important role in preserving religious sites. Good examples were presented for the integration of volunteers in the preservation of churches, the initiation of cultural tourism networks and initiatives such as the cycle paths churches.

KARIN DRDA-KÜHN



“Tourism can play a crucial role in unlocking new potential for religious heritage sites, specifically in rural areas. It seems that the main success factor is the integrated approach which ties resources of many different stakeholders.”



Since 2011 the so called KIRA network brings together stakeholders of culture, tourism, economy and administration in order to develop services for visitors. Pirka Grönwaldt (Association Culture & Work) showed by the outcome of a data analysis that churches and religious sites are in the top 3 of touristic cutting themes for locals as well as visitors of the region of north Baden-Württemberg. Reverend Heike Kuhn (Baden State Church) talked about the experiences with the “cycle path churches”. These churches are linked to cycle paths and tourist attractions and reach in this way new target groups – a clear win-win situation for the churches as well as tourism.



Bronnbach monastery (Tauber valley)



Medieval cloister at Bronnbach monastery

Rebecca Rees from the Churches Conservation Trust reported on British experience in creating networks for the preservation of religious sites in rural areas. Madeleine Sultán Sjöqvist of the Swedish University of Uppsala reported on examples of religious pluralism and its impact on the preservation of churches. New ways to churches in North and South Holland are found on waterways, reported Lilian Grootswagers from European non-profit network “Future for Religious Heritage”. Karin Drda-Kühn (media k GmbH) argued in her contribution for including heritage other than Christian like Jewish sites (synagogues and cemeteries) in utilization concepts in order to reflect the European cultural and intellectual history in tourism.

There was agreement among the experts that sustainable utilization concepts for cultural tourism require bringing together different people, skills and financial resources. Representatives from churches, tourism, local and regional economy, local administration, monument conservation and citizens are the core stakeholders. All agreed on the need for more communication about good examples for economic preservation, efficient management and the conservative care of religious sites. Experience shows that there are inspiring solutions in many European countries, all of which we can benefit from.

The symposium took place 26–28 October 2014 in Bronnbach monastery (Germany).

Cooperation partners: Association Culture & Work (Bad Mergentheim), Bronnbach Monastery, IZKK – International Centre for Cultural Heritage Protection and Conservation Research (Bronnbach)

Participants: 30 experts from seven European countries

Documentation: www.media-k.eu/meeting-taubertal.html



Venue at Bronnbach monastery orangery (18th century)



ALTERheritage delegates in Potes, Cantabria



SPAIN Pilgrimage Routes as Facilitators for Religious Heritage

Toolbox: Volunteer Programme at Pilgrimage Routes

Intended for: religious heritage stakeholders at pilgrimage routes, regional planners

Available: Please see page 22

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Cantabria as a region in the North of Spain has a responsibility, leading along with Asturias, País Vasco, La Rioja and undoubtedly Galicia, to bring the North Pilgrimage Way to Santiago to life again: El Camino del Norte.

Raising awareness amongst the public and all the local stakeholders on the necessity of safeguarding the religious heritage is of crucial relevance. Additionally, the Government of Cantabria has also the task to rescue its own pilgrimage way, the Camino Lebaniego de Santo Toribio, from the past and revive its treasures. This is about a way of pilgrimage that a Pope, Julius II, recognized with a special Bull, and which has a genuine architectural heritage from the early Middle Age hidden between the Picos de Europa mountains. Somehow, this heritage is prone to be forgotten, due to the isolation of its location and the threatening exodus of this rural area's population to urban areas, which is a situation shared with many European countries. Moreover, these precious and vulnerable buildings lack purpose today, since they are no longer in use for religious services.

The revitalisation of the Camino Lebaniego de Santo Toribio along with the Camino del Norte will bring together the spirit of rediscovering local and regional roots. It is a way of going beyond the stones, allowing locals as well as visitors to discover the intangible heritage that lies underneath. Here, the symbiosis of tangible and intangible religious heritage becomes visible again. The Camino revitalises religious buildings and as a counterpart these churches act as markers of the authenticity of the pilgrimage route itself, once very present in Europe.

PILAR BAHAMONDE



“Europe is made of many local heritages: tangible and intangible ones; and the architectural religious heritage is the most important physical marker of them all. It reminds us of the richness of our culture and of European entity itself. ALTERheritage helped us all to understand our European commonalities and values anchored in our religious heritage.”



Cantabria has 1,200 religious buildings, of all of them only two are not secularised. The old church of San Vicente de Potes is one of the two. Owned by the Government of Cantabria it is now converted into a Pilgrims Office and Cultural Centre for local Art and Culture. It was the outstanding venue of the ALTERheritage congress. All the delegates came to understand and experience the task the old church carries on its shoulders raising awareness of the intangible heritage of the region. At the same time, the church serves as an example for protecting national and European heritage. The meeting was a special occasion to discuss the intention to include the Camino Lebaniego de Santo Toribio, part of the North Way of Saint James of Compostela, in the FRH Religiana project as both of them are appointed today



Site visit to Santa María la Real de Piasca



New use for medieval church of Potes as conference center

by ICOMOS as suitable to be listed World Heritage by UNESCO. The delegates took an opportunity to walk along the Camino, experiencing the same route many others did in former times; another time, another age, but sharing the same spirit.

Olivier de Rohan Chabot, president of FRH, made a statement during this congress, which was liked and understood as a genuine and pristine point of view: “Religious Heritage is the biggest museum in Europe and it is a responsibility of everyone to care for it”. Undoubtedly, it is a task for every citizen to assimilate and be aware that it matters, therefore to raise awareness to preserve it.

The SRECD of the Government of Cantabria has benefited a lot from its partners in the *ALTERheritage* project. As a concrete outcome SRECD started to implement the volunteer program of CCT (UK) adapting it to Cantabrian circumstances and needs. In Cantabria religious architecture is understood as a physical landmark, as a reminder of the richness of its own heritage involved in the history of Europe. The Intangible European Heritage helps to understand national and European roots, explains and justifies what we are today and will be tomorrow.

The presence of all the delegates in Cantabria, FRH and all the work done during *ALTERheritage* project puts our Cantabrian religious heritage on the map again and in our minds, this is everyone’s contribution. Helping locals to acknowledge the importance of the intangible heritage, by using buildings that have helped define local history and identity is going to be a future task. As is, helping Europeans to understand another piece of Europe’s history, which explains why we all are today what we are.

The meeting took place on 19–21 March 2015 in Potes and Santillana del Mar in Cantabria/Spain

Participants: 30 delegates joined the meeting, representing six European countries

Link: www.frh-europe.org/extending-the-pilgrimage-a-journey-between-tangible-and-intangible-religious-heritage/



ALTERheritage partners in front of St. Pieter's Church in Leuven



BELGIUM / FLANDERS Religious Heritage Conservation: Education and Management

Toolbox: Education & management of religious heritage conservation

Intended for: Students, religious heritage stakeholders and managers

Available: Please see page 22

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The last ALTERheritage meeting took place in Leuven on 15 and 16 June 2015 and was organised by the Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation (RLICC), University of Leuven, together with its two 'silent partners', the Centre for Religious Art and Culture (CRKC) and KADOC Documentation and Research Centre on Religion, Culture and Society. Educational and management aspects of conservation were the focus of the meeting.

Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation, University of Leuven

On 15 June, RLICC organised at the Arenberg Castle a conference on educational and management aspects of conservation. RLICC provides an international and interdisciplinary advanced master programme in conservation of monuments and sites that includes religious heritage, management and preventive conservation of heritage. Prof. Koen Van Balen, holder of the UNESCO Chair on Preventive Conservation, Monitoring and Maintenance welcomed the audience composed of twenty ALTERheritage partners and about forty students and alumni. Prof. Thomas Coomans presented five complementary keys for understanding religious built heritage (construction, style, iconography, use, meaning). Prof. Sven Sterken focused on the specific issue of heritagizing post war churches. Two RLICC students, Eva Weyns and Valérie Vermandel, explained how courses, projects, internships, and contribution to ALTERheritage developed their skills and knowledge on religious heritage. Aziliz Vandesande, PhD student at RLICC, introduced to educating on preventive conservation. Zeljka Knezevic, head of the university's Monument Division, explained how the university uses and manages its 140 listed historic buildings, especially the former religious buildings, which include the Great Beguinage (World Heritage since 1998) and the Library of Sciences in a former medieval monastery (Rafael Moneo 2000). Jan Jaspers and Dimitri Strevens from CRKC explained the policy and the tools developed by the Flemish region for the management of parish churches in Flanders (see further). Martine Van den Bergen presented "Open Churches", a NGO valorising the heritage of more than 300 churches in Belgium, including education programs for

THOMAS COOMANS



"The dramatic and generation related church conservation issue requires a shift from a sacred heritage belonging to a few to a broad shared cultural heritage. A change of mentalities, based on understanding the cultural and historical meaning of church heritage is indispensable."





Site visit to exhibition space at KADOC – Centre for Religion, Society and Culture, Leuven



Converted into the university library: the former convent of Celestines, Leuven

the broad public. This stimulating conference concluded with stressing the essential role of academia in defining methodologies, transmitting expertise on heritage prevention and management, educating the actors of tomorrow, and contributing to the indispensable change of mentalities about religious heritage in a double bottom-up end top-down dynamic.

After the conference, *ALTERheritage* visited several religious heritage sites in Leuven: the gothic collegiate church of St. Peter (its belfry tower is World Heritage, 1999), the Great Beguinage and its church (World Heritage, 1998), the romanesque St Lambert Chapel, the baroque church of St Michael, the pilgrimage church of St Antony and the tomb of saint Father Damien, the University library of Sciences (former convent of Celestines). The meeting ended with a visit of KADOC Documentation and Research Center on Religion, Culture and Society. The *ALTERheritage* group also was welcomed on the City Hall of Leuven by Sir Dirk Vansina, the alderman for heritage and tourism.

CRKC: an Integrated Approach for Local Parish Churches Plans

Redundancy of Catholic parish churches is a recent social and political issue in Belgium. After a series of conferences with all parties involved – Catholic church, municipalities, governmental agencies of internal affairs and heritage – the Flemish government invited in 2011 the Catholic Church and the municipalities to establish a plan for the future use of parish churches for each of the Flemish towns. The Centre for Religious Art and Culture (CRKC) was asked to assist parishes and municipalities in this planning process by providing basic information, designing road maps for the planning process, and giving information about good practices for extended or new uses of churches.

ALTERheritage visited the historic Abbey of Park and was introduced to the “parish churches plan”. In 2012–13, CRKC collected basic information about the 1786 Catholic parishes in Flanders: historical and heritage data and descriptions, urban and social context of the building, actual and future use of the church for worship, present other uses, and possibilities to organize a secondary or new use (online databank: www.crkc.be).

The Centre for Religious Art and Culture

Toolbox: Parish Churches Plan (Flanders)

Intended for: Parishes, municipalities

Available: road maps for planning process, database (<http://hww.crkc.be>)

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Conclusions and Future Needs



Altar angel at Bronnbach monastery

The ALTER*heritage* partnership went through a two-fold experience during the implementation of the project: At the beginning the differences in dealing with endangered religious sites in European countries were very obvious due to the great variety of circumstances in legal systems (e.g. public or private status), financial support structures, heritage policies, management structures and cultural differences. The thinking and analysis from which activities take their form needed in-depth examination in order to understand the historic background and on-going challenges in different European countries.

After 24 months of close co-operation and intense exchange similar issues and common challenges have become much clearer owing to a real understanding about the consequences of negligence of religious heritage sites, primarily due to dechristianisation, lack of funds and decreasing parishes in many European countries. The partnership learned that the many differences are also the wealth of European religious heritage, but tools and methodologies are urgently needed in order to maintain this richness. What is needed is a strong bottom up movement since no European society can cope with the challenges alone, so we should strive to do it all together.

Education as Crucial Element

The exchange of examples in six European countries broadened understanding and areas of knowledge, which the partnership wants to share through this publication. Therefore all the tools and methodologies are identified in toolboxes in order to encourage their Europe-wide application: The “Guidelines on Ways of Dealing with Religious Objects” of the Museum Catharijneconvent, the Churches Conservation Trust’s “Business Planning Toolkit” and the model for evaluating redundant churches of the University of Gothenburg are good examples of relevant tools. Methodologies like the integrated approach in the involvement of local stakeholders in religious tourism, shown by media k GmbH, or awareness raising activities and the inclusion of volunteers in the valorisation of old pilgrimage routes as implemented by the government of Cantabria encourage local communities in their activities.

ALTER*heritage* strongly benefited from the inclusion of two university partners, the Gothenburg University and the Catholic University of Leuven with the Raymond Le-maire International Centre for Conservation. It came out of a crucial understanding that the management of religious heritage sites needs integrated knowledge in conservation as well as sensitivity for the spirit of the places, stakeholder involvement, regional and local planning. ALTER*heritage* promotes and supports academically well-founded, high quality tools and methodologies that can build the capacity of vocational learning in the field across Europe. The results will support the future production of new learning tools on religious heritage conservation, management and regeneration in Europe.

LILIAN GROOTWAGERS:

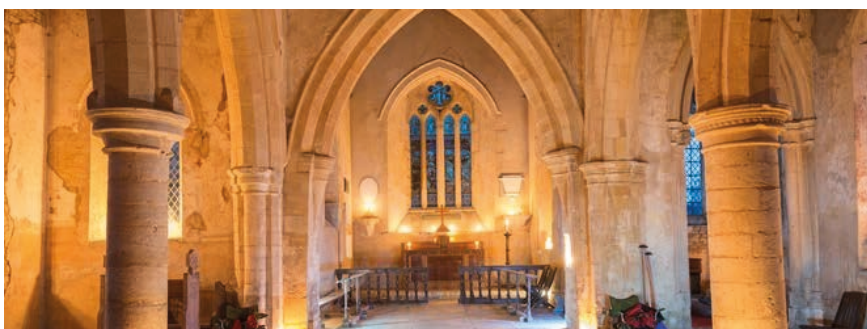


”It was very inspiring to learn so many different approaches and explore how creative solutions are developed everywhere around Europe.”



Tools for Heritage Preservation

The ALTER*heritage* partnership is strongly convinced that the tools and methodologies presented in this brochure are applicable to all heritage not only to religious heritage. However, Eu-



Extraordinary accommodation for cultural tourism: All Saint's Church in Aldwinckle (England)

European societies are facing a far-reaching generation shift in the perception and use of religious heritage sites. Though people in many countries are losing their commitment to the churches as an institution, they still feel strongly connected to historic buildings like churches and religious sites as part of their cultural identity. Here education becomes key to seeking answers to the question how (religious) heritage can manage the shift to a “heritage of people”. Education is becoming the most important tool in order to develop a new “methodology of dialogue”.

The transfer potential of the identified tools and methodologies is regarded of high value for heritage operators Europe-wide. The partnership is committed to sharing those tools in university education, applied education and vocational training for stakeholders of all kind who are interested in heritage preservation as well as identity building based on religious sites.

Heritage for “New Europeans”

The other question often raised in the *ALTERheritage* project was, how to encourage people with no Christian background to get involved. These “new Europeans” with migrant backgrounds share other religious faiths. It will be a future challenge for European countries with dominantly Christian traditions to include them in their heritage. *ALTERheritage* found many inspiring examples that show how it could work, but this process is still at the very beginning. The way forward is to really learn from these examples and benefit from their success. Sharing such knowledge is imperative to avoid re-inventing the wheel and to help the field benefit from the advances that can only be made through cooperative work.

Access to Tools and Methodologies

The project partnership concludes that online availability of nationally produced tools or methods can be very useful, though they come to best practice in combination with building relationships and in-person exchange. The outcomes of *ALTERheritage*, where elements of guidelines and processes are shared, show how such exchange supports a gradual process of transformation to make tools, methodologies and experiences more applicable in other national settings.

There has been substantial benefit from *ALTERheritage* for the partners and silent partners, as well as their learners. Apart from its educational task with the different partners and stakeholders, the project also subtly and involuntarily helped other people to change their point of view about heritage, drawing for the first time in their minds a line, which disassociates religion and religious heritage itself, paving the ground for future social cooperation. The recommendation of the project partners is to continue to develop a combination of online resources and in-person exchange opportunities. The Future for Religious Heritage network is encouraged to act as communicator, operator, champion and creative facilitator.

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Links to Tools & Methods

Interested in additional information about partners, tools and methods on a European level?

Project Documentation:

www.frh-europe.org/de/projects/alterheritage/

Guidelines on Ways of Dealing With Religious Objects:

https://www.catharijneconvent.nl/media/medialibrary/2015/06/Guidelines_dealing_with_religious_objects_.pdf

The CCT Business Planning Toolkit:

www.visitchurches.org.uk/regenerationtaskforce/Businessplankit

Evaluation of Churches Facing Redundancy:

www.svenskakyrkan.se/kyrkaochsamhalle/rapporter-kyrkoantikvarisk-ersattning

Religious Heritage and Cultural Tourism:

www.media-k.eu/alterheritage.html

Volunteer Programme at Pilgrimage Routes:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Centro-de-Estudios-Lebaniegos/720529551338545>

Education and Management of Religious Heritage Conservation:

<http://sprecomah.eu/rlicc/> and <http://precomos.org/>

Parish Churches Plan (Flanders):

<http://hww.crkc.be>

KADOC

(religious archives and libraries in Leuven / Belgium, of international relevance)

kadoc.kuleuven.be/english



www.facebook.com/ALTERheritage



www.youtube.com/channel/UCy1Sm2_EEOpFYSPF_CsIFXg



Exhibition at KADOC – Centre for Religion, Society and Culture, Leuven

7 Acknowledgements



Library at Abbey of Park, Leuven

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