

*AlmaTourism, a new interdisciplinary scientific  
journal in the field of Tourism, Culture and  
Territorial Development for a Common Future*

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In my capacity as editorial director, I am pleased to introduce AlmaTourism, the first journal of tourism released by Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna, the most ancient University in the world. The branch seated in Rimini has been committed for over 50 years to implementing a wide range of education and research activities devoted to the ever growing international field of tourism sector.

The electronic journal will be initially published every six months by the Campus Branch of Rimini and the Advanced School of Tourism Sciences. It aspires to become an innovative and international platform (i.e. open source) for studies and researches concerned with cultural heritage, tourism and development. The journal is available in both English and native language. Thanks to the net of academic and scientific relationships established both in Italy and abroad, the branch of Rimini can rely upon a national and international advisory board. In this important and ambitious task, it's a great honour for me to have the support of the above mentioned board, made up of prestigious academic personalities and distinguished experts dealing with different disciplinary and operative fields. Moreover, a qualified list of referees will ensure a strict selection and review of the papers submitted, thus supporting the quick integration of Almatourism within a prestigious international frame distinguished by a significant impact factor.

The aim of the Journal is the development of multidisciplinary tourism studies, in order to enhance the convergence and the integration of different disciplines concerned with the tourism sector. Moreover, it aims the improvement of strategic tools of cross-fertilisation for the dissemination of research and academic results at the international scale, with special attention to the Neo-Latin and Mediterranean culture.

AlmaTourism is particularly inclined to publish articles focused on tourism-related issues within a “heritage perspective” and an innovative cross-cutting point of view, both at the theoretical and practical level. The project thus targets publications from all fields of study linked with tourism such as geography, history, economics, law, political sciences, management, marketing, mathematics, statistics, information technologies, anthropology, sociology, psychology, environment studies. More generally, any research activity conducted in the social and human sciences area is invited to take part in the project.

In order to define the multitude of components and products which a community's heritage is made of, it is crucial to address two strategic issues which underlie a scientific reflection on tourism within a disciplinary perspective:

1. the relationship between tourism and cultural heritage in an economic perspective, in which institutional skills, managerial capabilities, and rigorous, deductive ways of reasoning play a crucial role;
2. the relationship between tourism and cultural heritage in a geographic and historic perspective, in which the geographical and historical sedimentations of places, as well as the evolution of the socio-economic system from a territorial point of view are more relevant, and theoretical inductive reasoning prevails. This approach is also related to effective relationships with the stakeholders through quali-quantitative economic, financial, social, and environmental tools.

The N. 0 issue of *AlmaTourism* has thus the main focus on tourism, culture and territorial development seen from an interdisciplinary perspective. As a matter of fact, the main theme of the N. 0 issue is centred on the economic implications arising from the correlation between tourism and cultural heritage, considering also the humanistic perspective. This approach can be viewed as an introduction to theories, subjects and research methods with which the Journal is concerned. In the first editorial decisions, my intention as a director was to emphasize few essential paradigms which are at the core of both contents and research activities. Such approach will determine either at the theoretical and practical level the orientation of the upcoming issues of *AlmaTourism*. The focus on tourism's wide sphere of influence thus enables to highlight the impact produced on geography, economy, history and law, as it clearly emerges from the essays published in the journal's current issue. If tourism and geography are closely intertwined, and geography can deliver a wide range of knowledge and interpretations with respect to the environment visited (see Giacomo Corna Pellegrini), in the same way tourism can change geography, since it holds the potential to induce modifications in the attitudes and habits of both local communities and tourists. At the same time, on the threshold of the third millennium, we are able to assert that tourism is a true (de facto) discipline, since there is a community of scholars especially dealing with tourism studies (see Guido Candela and Paolo Figini suggest). Although assessing whether tourism is a scientific discipline or not is a quite more complex task, we can assume that tourism is a genre discipline and species discipline. This contribution emerges both as a pattern and an encouragement suitable to enhance further reflection, in order to continue this fundamental theoretical debate within different disciplines.

However, there is a general consensus on considering tourism as a discipline involving different sciences with different methodologies, such as economy and history. When associated with tour operators, these disciplines may produce “good” results both in practical and operative terms (see Paolo Sorcinelli). In this sense, it is easy to understand how tour operators are tempted to neglect historic authenticity in order to obtain a short term income (authenticity or commodification?), thus triggering a long term international debate on this issue, which is crucial to historical tourism. At the same time, the connection linking the theoretical and practical elements with reference to the multidisciplinary in tourism studies stands out when introducing law issues (see Marcella Gola). Such issues require a steady reflection as well as a comparison at the national and international scale. In the new global scenario, the analysis of relationships linking law and tourism is extended to the main themes of the social and economical reality, also implying a proper international debate among scholars. The launch of AlmaTourism is meant to provide a contribution to this aim. It aspires to enhance the circulation of research studies within the scientific context, also encouraging the participation of scholars and experts specializing in several disciplines throughout the world.

The sections include notes and reports, laboratory, observatory, biography and autobiography. They are integral part of a complex editorial project, having objects, innovation and creativity as top-priorities. In the globalization era, the potential of tourism development with reference to the performance of a given territory can be viewed, for example, as a privileged indicator of the international openness. The same applies to the constant attention placed by the legislator on the legal protection of the environment.

Research projects currently in progress and having few stages already completed are especially favoured. “The route of Hannibal” is an inter-cultural laboratory with the aim of training activities, culture and development within the Mediterranean area. It is a project activity as well as a part of experimentation and methodological patterns. The project is linked with the European Institution for Cultural Itineraries and to the UNESCO/UNITWIN net “Culture, Tourism, Development”. It is also a well-established heritage of the Cultural Itinerary “The Phoenician Route”. In a similar way, the scientific and practical stimulations originating from the laboratory activities play a significant role within the multitude of analytical and operative guidelines which stem from this wide conceptual frame. This is especially true when special emphasis is placed on international collaborations, as it happens for the “China-Eu School of Law”, supported by the European Union jointly with China. Another examples are provided by the Hellenic Society “Elliniki Eteira”, created to foster development and protect the Cultural Heritage in Greece, and by the Intensive Programme “Marketing and Management Strategies in Small and Medium Sized (Family) Hotels”, which took place at the Faculty of Economics, University of Bologna, Rimini Branch, in 2008 and at University of Gerona in 2009. The latter is an Erasmus Programme supporting activities with innovative approaches for the tourism industry.

The hint according to which “Tourism, culture and territorial development” can find in AlmaTourism a multidisciplinary platform study is also confirmed by bibliographical information, future events and biographies. These sections provide examples of lives and studies conducted by personalities devoted to “tourism”. These are useful to understand how tourism can be analysed. Indeed, tourism is an extremely complex phenomenon, to the extent that it cannot be defined with exactness, not even with a complex and dynamic paradigm. This conclusion emerges from the dialogue and comparison among managers and assistants at AlmaTourism, as a result of their international research activities carried out within different scientific disciplines. Tourism is a too complex and dynamic phenomenon, also including a wide range of typologies which are increasingly involving both academic and non-academic communities throughout the world. The only convergence point consists in interpreting tourism as a social, economic and above all cultural factor useful to support the development targets set out for the new Millennium. This is the approach we intend to adopt, having a fully participated ethical platform as a reference point.

With respect to this passionate participation, a special thank goes to all those who have taken part in the implementation of the AlmaTourism, project, namely the editor coordinator, Daniela Calanca, assistants editor Maria Francesco Barbini, Cristina Bernini, Riccardo Campione, Massimiliano Castellani, Anna Cicchetti, Alessia Mariotti, Maurizio Mussoni, Emanuela Presutti, Emanuela Randon, Laura Vici (journal manager) and Lorenzo Zirulia; last but not least, the information team including Luca Baroncini and Marina Chiarini. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Director of the Advanced School of Tourism Sciences Marcella Gola, Professors Guido Candela and Paolo Sorcinelli and the Director of the Scientific and Didactic Pole of Rimini, Giorgio Cantelli Forti, for supporting the project.

As the editorial director I would finally like to remember that AlmaTourism will appreciate any research contribution, with particular reference to young scholars, who are invited and encouraged to present the results of their own research activities.