

# 16<sup>th</sup> Annual International Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage (IRTP) Conference

## University of Palermo, Sicily, Italy

### Overall Programme

Wed	11.00-14.30	Registration <b>BUILDING ENTRANCE</b>	13.00-14.00	Meet the Publishers: Chat with Kevin, Razaq & Carlos about publishing in books / journal. <b>Room no 1</b>
	14.30-16.00	<b>Opening of Conference / Welcome Session – Room no 1</b> Giovanni Ruggieri, Kevin Griffin, Razaq Raj, Carlos Fernandes and Conference Organising Committee  Prof. Marcantonio Ruisi Director Department of Economics, Management and Statistics Science - DSEAS - Palermo University		
	16.15-17.00	<b>Keynote Speaker 1: Darius Liutikas ~ Room no 1~</b> Chaired by Carlos Fernandes		
	17.00-18.00	<b>Round Table Discussion ~ Room no 1~</b> Exploring How Artificial Intelligence is Transforming Pilgrim Journeys and Addressing Sector Challenges ~ Chaired by Kevin Griffin		
	18.00-19.00	<b>Welcome Reception</b> Networking with friends and Colleagues		
	20.00-22.00	<b>Dinner (Paid by Delegates)</b>		
Thurs  26th	9.00-9.30	<b>Registration, arrival / morning coffee / mingle</b>		
	9.30-11.00	<b>Session A: Room no 1</b> Chair: <i>Danijel Pavlovic</i>	<b>Session B: Room no 2</b> Chair: <i>Tomasz Duda</i>	
	11.00-11.30	Coffee		
	11.30-13.00	<b>Session C: Room no 1</b> Chair: <i>Kiran Shinde</i>	<b>Session D: Room no 2</b> Chair: <i>Stephen F Haller</i>	
	13.00-14.30	<b>Lunch</b>		
	14.30-15.30	<b>Round Table Discussion ~ Room no 1~</b> Transforming Sacred Travel: The Complex Landscape of Religious Tourism Today ~ Chaired by Razaq Raj		
	15.30-16.30	<b>Session E: Room no 1</b> Chair: <i>Md. Javed Kawsar</i>	<b>Session F: Room no 2</b> Chair: <i>Rossana Salerno</i>	
	16.30-16.45	Coffee, Networking with friends and Colleagues		
	16.45-17.30	<b>Keynote Speaker 2: Paolo Giuseppe Caucci von Saucken ~ Room no 1~</b> Chaired by Giovanni Ruggieri		
	17.30-19.00	<b>Sightseeing / Walking Tour of City Palermo</b>		
20.00	<b>Dinner (Paid by Delegates)</b>			
Friday	9.30-11.00	<b>Session G: Room no 1</b> Chair: <i>Polyxeni Moira</i>	<b>Session H: Room no 2</b> Chair: <i>Nour Farra Haddad</i>	
	11.00-11.15	Coffee		
	11.15-12.00	<b>Keynote Speaker 3: ~ Goretti Silva ~ Room no 1~</b> Chaired by Carlos Fernandes		
	12.00-13.30	<b>Session I: Room no 1</b> Chair: <i>Shin Yasuda</i>	<b>Session J: Room no 2</b> Chair: <i>Antonietta Ivona</i>	
	13.30-14.30	<b>Lunch</b>		
	14.30-16.00	<b>Session K: Room no 1</b> Chair: <i>Silvia Aulet</i>	<b>Session L: Room no 2</b> Chair: <i>Dino Bozonelos</i>	
	16.00-16.30	Coffee		
	16.00-16.30	<b>Closing ceremony – Presentation IRTP conference 2026</b> Razaq Raj, Kevin Griffin, Carlos Fernandes and Giovanni Ruggieri, <b>Room no 1</b>		
20.00 -23.00	<b>Gala Dinner ~</b> including <i>Institute for Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage (IRTP) Annual Awards &amp; Conference Best Paper Awards</i>			
Sat 28th	09.30-16.00	<b>Fieldtrip: Please insert field trip information</b> Depart at <b>09:30</b> . Depart Return time <b>16:00</b> (approximate).		

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**University of Palermo, Sicily, Italy**

**26 June**  
**09.30-11.00**

**Session A: Room 1**

**Preserving the Sacred: Combating Vandalism in Religious Monuments**

Polyxeni Moira

University Of West Attica, Greece

**Motivations for Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage: Spirituality or Modern Tourism**

Razaq Raj, Kevin Griffin

Leeds Beckett University, United Kingdom, TU Dublin, Ireland

**Faith, Culture, and Transformation: A Case Study of Visitors to the Tumane Monastery**

Marija Bratic, Danijel Pavlovic

University of Nis, Serbia, Academy of Hospitality, Tourism and Welleness, Belgrade, Serbia

**Religious Tourism and Religiosity Among Generation Z from a Postsecular Context**

Elzbieta Bilaska-wodecka, Justyna Liro

Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland

**26 June**  
**09.30-11.00**

**Session B: Room 2**

## **Integrating Spirituality and Culture in Visitor Experience: The Case of the Cathedral of Barcelona**

Silvia Aulet, Anna Vilanova

University of Girona, Spain, Cathedral of Barcelona, Spain

## **Local governance and community regeneration: A case study in the North Portugal**

Carlos Fernandes, Isilda Leitão

Polytechnic University of Viana do Castelo, Portugal, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal

## **Tourism Asset Management in Religious Cities: A Study of Religious Resources in Japanese Sacred Sites**

Shin Yasuda

Takasaki City University of Economics, Japan

## **Transforming the Sacred Space into a Historical Place: The Case of Paco Cemetery in Manila, Philippines**

Jerome Ong

University of the Philippines, Manila

**26 June**  
**11.30-13.00**

**Session C: Room 1**

**Critical Reflection on the Specificity and Coherence in Portugal of Processions and Pilgrimages as Religious Practices**

Adalberto Dias de Carvalho

ISCET - Instituto Superior de Ciências Empresariais e do Turismo, Portugal

**Generation Z Tour Guiding Performance with Tourists from the Three Abrahamic Religions**

Vitor Ambrósio, Carlos Santos

ESHTE and CiTUR, Estoril, Portugal

**From Ritual to Heritage: Mountain Pilgrimages and The Transmission of Practices in Corsica**

Angelina Antonetti

Università Di Corsica Pasquale Paoli, France

**Rewriting Pilgrimage Narrative for a Young Audience in Love from Mecca to Medina**

Dorothy Lane

Luther College, Regina, Canada

**26 June**  
**11.30-13.00**

**Session D: Room 2**

### **Sacred Tattoos and Pilgrimage Tourism as Spiritual identity**

Rossana Salerno  
University of Palermo, Italy

### **Montserrat: A Millennium of Faith, Pilgrimage, and Cultural Heritage**

Silvia Aulet, Dolors Vidal  
University of Girona, Spain

### **Impact of Tourism on Corsican's Religion**

Pierre-François Marchiani  
University of Corsica, France

### **Sacred Steps: Walking, Religion, and the Path to Peace**

Francesca Benna  
University of La Sapienza, Italy

**26 June**  
**15.30-16.30**

**Session E: Room 1**

**Revisiting the Bocaue Pagoda Tragedy in the Philippines: Personal Reflections and Lessons Learned Thirty Years After**

Katherine Arceta

University of the Philippines, Philippines

**KILLING BALI (Part II)**

Pierre Fournie

Gustave Eiffel university, France

**Developing a Model for Religious Tourism Governance: Comparing the Soumela Monasteries in Turkey and Greece**

Dino Bozonelos, Nuray Turker

California State University, USA, Karabuk University, Turkey

**26 June**  
**15.30-16.30**

**Session F: Room 2**

### **Hermitage and Digital Storytelling: A Case Study for Sustainable Visitorship**

Antonio Lenzo

Università della Svizzera Italiana, Italy

### **How Accessible is Hajj and Umrah for Deaf pilgrims**

Jabar Yaqub

Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

### **From Religious Sites to Cinematographic Sets. The Symbolism of Religious Cultural Heritage in the Italian Serie “Lolita Lo Bosco”.**

Antonietta Ivona, Lucrezia Lopez

Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, Spain, Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro, Italy

**27 June**  
**09.30-11.00**

**Session G: Room 1**

### **Virtual Religious Tourism - An Agenda for Future Research in the "AI Revolution"**

Eleanor O'Keeffe

Ada Lovelace Institute, United Kingdom

### **Religious Tourism Experiences, Heritage and Digitalization: An Italian Case Study**

Donatella Privitera

University of Catania, Italy

### **Islam and the European Migratory Context: City Policies in Managing Religious Sites and the Muslim Diaspora**

Roberta Ricucci

University of Turin, Italy

### **Unveiling the Potential: Exploring the Role of Waqf in Catalysing Islamic Religious Tourism Growth**

Tariq Elhadary, Razaq Raj

Istanbul Nisantasi University, Turkey, Leeds Beckett University, UK

**27 June**  
**09.30-11.00**

**Session H: Room 2**

**‘Clothesure’: How a Pilgrim’s Clothes Can Become ‘Sacred’ and Contribute to Narrative Identity**

Stephen F Haller

Wilfrid University, Canada

**The Exploration of Tourists’ Motivation of Religious Sites Visitation in Destinations Less Popular in Religious Tourism**

Po Man Tse

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

**The “Tradition” of the Torchlight Procession of Solferino (Fiaccolata Di Solferino)**

Mara Dissegna

UNIPA/ DREST/ IRS-FBK, Italy

**Developing Faith Based Visitation for Malta a Pilot Project for a Quality Tourism Experience**

Julian Zarb

University of Wales (London)

**27 June**  
**11.30-13.00**

**Session I: Room 1**

### **Territorial development and religious tourism: A Bibliometric Analysis**

Salvatore Iannolino

University of Palermo, Italy

### **Managing and Promoting a Religious Route: A Pilot Project Experience in Sicily (Italy) - The Itinerarium Rosaliae**

Susanna Gristina

Kòrai - Territorio, Sviluppo e Cultura - Scarl i.s. ETS, Italy

### **Monastic Botanical Gardens: Medicinal Plants, Cultural Heritage, and Tourist Routes**

Dimitrios Mylonopoulos, Polyxeni Moira

University Of West Attica, Greece

### **A New Era of Empowerment: Muslim Women's Solo Religious Travel to Saudi Arabia after Vision 2030's Groundbreaking Reforms**

Ola Naim Omar Ismail Hajjaj

University of Palermo, Italy

**27 June**  
**11.30-13.00**

**Session J: Room 2**

**Virtual Reality and Multifaith Pilgrimage: Assessing the Impact of VR Technology on Religious Tourism Across Different Traditions**

Md. Javed Kawsar, Rashed Khan  
Salford of University, UK

**The Pilgrimage of Philotheus and the Icon of Jesus in the synagogue in Tiberias**

Hagay Dvir  
Tel-Hai College, Israel

**The Use of AI-Based Eye Trackers in Catholic Sanctuaries: A Possible Contribution to the Study of Pilgrimage Experiences**

Marco Papasidero  
University of Palermo, Italy

**Regenerating Responsible Tourism - Conceptual Framework in Context of Religious and Spiritual Destinations**

Tomasz Duda, Anna Gardzinska  
University of Szczecin, Poland

**27 June**  
**14.30-16.00**

**Session K: Room 1**

## **Understanding The Role of Constraints in a Religious Destination - a Text-Mining Approach**

Ariadna Gassiot Melian, Silvia Aulet Serrallonga  
Universitat de Girona, Spain

## **A Pilgrimage Site as a Votive Offering: The Cases of the Giant Statues of Mar Charbel in Faraya And Hammana (Lebanon)**

Nour Farra Haddad  
Lebanese University, Lebanon

## **Religious Tourism in A Key Textual Perspective: Spiritual Authenticity and Cultural Heritage**

Ninfa Pagano, Walter Spezzano  
University of Palermo, Italy

## **Family Pilgrimage to Rome for the Jubilee Year**

Kevin Griffin, Fr. Patrick Donnelly  
Technological University Dublin, Independent Researcher

**27 June**  
**14.30-16.00**

**Session L: Room 2**

**Modern Day Saints and the Production of Contemporary Pilgrimage Sites:  
Analysis of Padre Pio of San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy and Sai Baba of Shirdi, India.**

Kiran Shinde

La Trobe University

**The Bountiful: Mormon Tourism on Islamic Land? Examining LDS Church  
members intentions toward Arabia**

Kristel Kessler

Modern College of Business and Science, Oman

**Do Religious Travels Transform Visitors and Affect Their Psychological Well-  
Being? A Study on Turkish Pilgrims Visiting Mecca**

Nuray Turker, Sibel Ayyildiz

Karabuk University, Turkey

**Sacred or Sold? Balancing Spirituality and Commercialisation in Pilgrimage and  
Faith-based Tourism**

Tadeja Jere Jakulin, Dane Munro

University of Primorska, Slovenia, University of Malta, Malta