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Struttura della rivista:

Parte I

SEZIONI

Antropologia culturale
Diritto canonico
Diritti confessionali

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Sociologia delle religioni e teologia
Storia delle istituzioni religiose

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Parte II

SETTORI RESPONSABILI

Giurisprudenza e legislazione amministrativa
Giurisprudenza e legislazione canonica
Giurisprudenza e legislazione civile

*Giurisprudenza e legislazione costituzionale
e comunitaria*

Giurisprudenza e legislazione internazionale
Giurisprudenza e legislazione penale
Giurisprudenza e legislazione tributaria

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L. Barbieri, Raffaele Santoro,
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G. Chiara, R. Pascali, C.M. Pettinato
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V. Maiello
A. Guarino, F. Vecchi

Parte III

SETTORI

*Lecture, recensioni, schede,
segnalazioni bibliografiche*

RESPONSABILI

M. Tedeschi

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First notes on the study of the legislation on cultural heritage of the Western Balkans and the implementation of the UNESCO Conventions.

The identity role of religious cultural heritage: a proposal for their tourism valorization.

FEDERICA BOTTI

1. The goal of research

The regulation that deals with the management of cultural heritage is in continuous evolution because it must increasingly be measured with the lack of resources that in the past came almost exclusively from the general tax system or by using patronage of some private individuals.

Cultural assets, taken as a whole as a proper asset of the territory, nowadays must not only be valued for conservation purposes, but economically promoted to find on the market the resources necessary for their conservation, restoration and development.

That is the reason why the legislation of cultural heritage is evolving in the direction of identifying management tools that enhance the ability to impact and the economic significance.

The cultural theme parks become the new model of economic, administrative and legal management of these assets.

They consist of parts of territories characterized by different combinations of natural and human elements that illustrate the evolution of local communities. The cultural heritage contained in them becomes a shared cultural heritage, that is not always limited to the national territory, but which goes beyond the political borders of the States.

The identification of this shared cultural heritage traces not only the morphological and ethnographic characteristics of the territory, but also the relationship with the religious affiliations of the population.

One of the backbones of the management of the Western Balkans territory consists of the Via Egnatia from which branches off the roads into the

surrounding territory, involved in the cultural and religious dissemination that characterizes it.

It follows that it is possible to identify an area that gravitates around Lake Ohrid, as a driving cultural center for theological studies and the development of the Macedonian, Bulgarian and Serbian-Croatian language; the role of the Orthodox monasteries mostly located in Kosovo; the characteristics of the settlements of Turkish and Ottoman populations that characterize the center of Albania.

Thus, an area that was traditionally neglected, gains importance and significance, being today at the attention of a tourism that favors the rediscovery of the territory and the ancient communication streets of the Balkan area.

This paper, therefore, through a study of the history, culture, religion and legislation of the populations of the western Balkan area, seeks to highlight the topic of interstate collaboration and the need to enhance the religious heritage, also identified by UNESCO, by creating religious cultural parks.

2. The peculiarities of the UNESCO heritage of the Western Balkans

The cultural heritage of the Western Balkans presents its own characteristics which are valued by the categories used by UNESCO. Significant is the presence of archaeological sites of the classical period, especially following the route of the Via Egnatia¹. Certainly, important centers are the National Museum “Onufri” in Berat, where is preserved a beautiful collection of one hundred medieval icons is kept. The museum is located in the old quarter of the castle, which overlooks the city and where are also seven medieval churches recently restored and finally accessible by tourists and Voskopoja with its five basilicas and a monastery of the southern town which should be declared a “protected area”, as is already the case for Korça and Apollonia.

This heritage is affected by Islamic penetration, not only for the obvious and significant presence of some religious monuments, but especially for the characterization of some urban settlements and fortifications.

We intend to refer to Kalaja and the castle of Gjirokastër in Albania and, while, going to Kosovo, the Defterdar Mosque, or still, the monastery of Decan head of the Patriarchate of Pec and the ancient Albanian houses

¹ ANNIE TUBADJI and PETER NIJKAMP, *Cultural Corridors: An Analysis of Persistence in Impactson Local Development*. A Neo-Weberian Perspective on South-East Europe, 2015, in http://martin.falk.wifo.ac.at/fileadmin/homepage_falk/files/Manuscript_SEE_CC_20150727.pdf, accessed 26 December 2017.

present there are a reason of interest.

Different considerations are to be made for the cultural and architectural heritage of Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Compared to these countries, in many cases the problem is the incomplete execution of the repair of war damage. Other considerations could be made as we go towards Macedonia meeting the architectural complex of Ohrid and the Islamic heritage presented in particular by the Mosque of Tetovo. However, the originality of this heritage is given mainly by the immaterial, made up of the traditions, the singing, the music, the costumes, as well as showing us the legislation of these countries dedicated to the protection of cultural heritage and that takes into account the recent European legislation as well as its criteria made by UNESCO to highlight the importance of these goods. This redefinition of values and contents certainly has an impact in stimulating tourism and investments in the sector, assessed through careful examination of the territory and the specific cultural and religious activities².

Of cultural heritage we can't leave out connotations of religious interest, either because used as places of worship or because instrumental to the celebration of worship and holidays.

The importance of said interest, however, is not derived solely from the property or ecclesiastical patrons, but mostly from the sensitivity of large sections of the population to the meanings and transcendental values that such property express on the intentions of their authors and asylum.

Enhancement, there is no doubt, necessarily passes by the promotion of cultural heritage where the religious element, for the reasons set out above, becomes a distinguishing feature of a form of ad hoc tourism, i.e. religious tourism.

This new frontier of tourism is booming, in contrast to the current crisis of tourism to the Middle East due to the war, and provides to the devotees interesting offers to reach the most prestigious destinations. Even the travel agencies are specializing and gathering information in order to best satisfy every type of request, both for individuals and for organized groups by providing appropriate offers (eg. Medjugorje).

The legitimacy of tourism to the destinations of cult or strong spirituality was in 1987 when the Council of Europe has recognized the importance of religious and spiritual paths such as cultural vehicles paramount. Furthermore analyzing the data provided by the World Trade Organization we can ascertain the weight that the religious tourism now plays in the world economy.

² ANNA PIERSANTI, *Il turismo religioso nei borghi*, in *Rivista di Scienze del Turismo*, n. 2, luglio – dicembre 2014, pp. 75-90.

According to the latest data from the religious tourism it involves more than 300 million people a year with a turnover of about \$18 billion (WTO 2012).

The cultural heritage of the Western Balkan countries through the work of the various legislations coordination could now proceed through cultural corridors already naturally present in those territories³.

On the path, the tourist chooses a destination that has a religious connotation, a sanctuary, a convent, a place that has a mystical meaning, not led by his confession but rather by his citizenship in a tourist movement connoted in the modern sense. Doing so a link is created between the past and the present, where the goals of the traditional pilgrimage, have become destinations of tourist movement characterized most of the time in a cultural sense, or ethical/social, or natural/health-conscious.

This vision is not only proper to Christianity, but it is inherent to the feel of those populations.

Proof of this is the wide spread in those territories of brotherhoods, the most famous of which is certainly the Bektashi, whose monuments are scattered in this area. Most of these are mausoleums that are dedicated to eminent religious figures that make up a spiritual point of reference. On the other hand this brotherhood is known for having translated the myth of the journey to Mecca in what every man naturally runs during their lives.

In the theological vision of this fraternity life is indeed a journey, the proof is that they built their houses of worship (teçqe) every six hours on foot march where the pilgrim could find shelter and then continue the journey⁴.

The best-known trails are the ones that bring real Mount Tomorri, where the traveler could find God rediscovering himself as proof of the omnipresence of the Divine.

Starting from this premise and from the close connection between religion and cultural heritage, I will analyze the legislation issued by the countries belonging to the Western Balkans and the valuation which is given to the goods of religious interest.

It has to be checked if this legislation, in accordance to the guidelines suggested by UNESCO, result sufficient not only to protect, but to enhance this cultural basin.

³ RĂZVAN THEODORESCU, *Itinerarii medievale*, București, Editura Meridiane, 1979; *Cultural Corridors of South East Europe*, in https://seecorridors.eu/?w_l=2, 2016, accessed 30 December 2017.

⁴ FRANCESCO ROTONDO, FRANCESCO SELICATO, VERA MARIN, JOSEFINA LOPEZ GALDEANO (ed. by), *Cultural Territorial Systems. Landscape and Cultural Heritage as a Key to Sustainable and Local Development in Eastern Europe*, Springer, New York, London, 2016.

3. Analysis of legislation on cultural heritage in the Western Balkan countries

Laws on cultural heritage arise from the need to protect the cultural heritage of each State.

In an area bordering the East and the West, with perennially mobile borders due to wars, looting, destruction and damage perpetrated against material goods, the need arose to enact legislation for the protection of cultural heritage.

This was worth it both for Western Europe, whose protection legislation develops - even internationally⁵ - especially on the occasion of the Napoleonic looting and the two world conflicts, and for the Eastern one⁶.

The legislation on the protection of cultural heritage of Serbia, Bosnia - Herzegovina, Kosovo and Montenegro follows similar paths. I refer to the "politics of urbicide"⁷, which occurred during the wars that led to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, which damaged, destroyed and looted cities. The proof is that the legislation on the protection of cultural heritage is rewritten after those events⁸.

Albania and Macedonia, on the other hand, follow two distinct paths.

While in Macedonia the war destructions have been contained and therefore they have not been the prodromal event to the emanation of a legislation in matter, the same can not be said when, in 2008, the new law on the

⁵ The idea of creating an international movement to protect heritage was born after World War II. In the Convention on the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage of 1972, two separate movements converge: the first focused on the protection of cultural sites, the other on the protection of nature.

⁶ FEDERICO LENZERINI, *La distruzione intenzionale del patrimonio culturale come strumento di umiliazione dell'identità dei popoli*, in LAUSO, ZAGATO (a cura di) *Le identità culturali nei recenti strumenti Unesco. Un approccio nuovo alla costruzione della pace?*, CEDAM, Milano, 2008, pp. 3-25.

⁷ FRANCESCO MAZZUCHELLI, *Urbicidio*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 2010.

⁸ The Croatian law on cultural heritage is from 1999, but it has been revised several times, see from last: *Zastupnički dom hrvatskoga državnog sabora*, 98/2015, in <http://licodu.cois.it/?p=6009>. The Kosovar law on cultural heritage is from 2006. See: *O kulturnom nasledju, Zakon in* <http://licodu.cois.it/?p=7988>. *The Macedonian Law on the protection of cultural heritage. Zakon za zaštitna na kulturnoto nasledstvo*, Сл. Весник на Република Македонија, entered into force on 10 January 2005. The Montenegrin law of 1994, issued at the time of the union with Serbia, was amended in 2010, see: *O zaštiti kulturnih dobara*, <http://licodu.cois.it/?p=6084>. The Serbian law was instead innovated in 2011, see: *O kulturnim dobrima*, *Zakon*, n. 52, in <http://licodu.cois.it/?p=6200>. A separate argument should be made for Bosnia which, in addition to national law, refers to some cantonal provisions, see the law on the protection of cultural heritage, *O zaštiti kulturne baštine*, of November 2008, which among its sources cites the cantonal constitution of Sarajevo of 2005. As regards Albania, the current law remains immune to the changes and remains "frozen" to 2003. See the law for cultural heritage, *Per trashegimine kulturore*, in <http://licodu.cois.it/?p=357>, *A bill presented in 2014 is still today at the center of a lively debate*.

religious denominations was adopted⁹. With it there has been great uncertainty in the ownership of the cultural heritage of religious confessions.

This law, in fact, has attributed to a single denomination for each religious community, the civil juridical personality and therefore the ownership of ecclesiastical (cultural) assets.

The result was the attribution of all Orthodox heritage to the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Macedonia, subtracted in this way from the Patriarchate of Ohrid, which belongs to the Serbian Orthodox Church; and the attribution of Tetovo teqes, originally Bektachi heritage, to the Islamic Religious Community (IRC).

This way of working has created a great confusion on the attribution of ownership of cultural heritage, putting the protection and conservation of it at risk.

For Albania, however, the problem presents itself in a different way. The People's Republic of Albania has claimed all its private and religious cultural heritage. Regarding cultural heritage, especially religious, the communist regime, in the name of State atheism, has changed the use of confiscated assets, destroyed many buildings of worship and abandoned many other negligence.

Thus, to the need to protect heritage, there is the need - which we also find present in other countries of the area - to adapt the legislative production in force on this subject, to international and especially Union legislation.

This represents a necessary step in order to be able to have access to the United Europe, as well as being a sign of belonging to an international community that appreciates and protects the goods of universal importance, exceptional and representative of cultural diversities and natural resources.

The adhesion in fact to the UNESCO Conventions¹⁰ and to the guidelines contained therein, he traced the road of States towards the process of adjusting national legislative production to the model elaborated by international law. From an examination of the various laws that have been approved by the countries of this area in the last fifteen years, there is therefore a progressive and increasingly marked effort to coordinate with international regulations.

⁹ Закон, за правната положба на црква, верска заедница и религиозна група, Основен текст на законот ("Службен весник на Република Македонија", бр.113/2007), in <http://licodu.cois.it/?p=5363>

¹⁰ In addition to the aforementioned Convention on the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, UNESCO closes the circle of measures to protect, safeguard, preserve, promote and enhance the World Cultural Heritage by promoting the Conventions on Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and on Protection and the promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions.

If this process often resolves itself into a foolish repetition of the international norms in the single legal systems, the process that accompanies, or should accompany, the coordination between the different States of the area that share a common cultural heritage is more laborious. To the point that, in the matter of protection of cultural heritage, it would perhaps be desirable to adopt a courageous, generally federalist policy, which favors local autonomy, but which takes away the nationalist logic of shared cultural heritage.

The cultural heritage of the Western Balkans often, in fact, expands beyond national borders. This is the case with Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo¹¹ and of Macedonia which, before the break-up of the Yugoslavian federation, shared a common cultural heritage, now separated because of the new frontiers that these States gave themselves. There are also those who say that the territories inhabited by the Arbëreshë communities in Calabria and Sicily should be included in this area¹².

Consider also the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia which has undergone strong cultural influences present in its cultural heritage especially religious, by Greece and Bulgaria, but above all by Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro and Albania in regard to cultural heritage of Islamic origin.

Or, again, think of Albania that shares and claims a common cultural basin as well as with Kosovo, also with Macedonia and Montenegro.

This shared heritage highlights a “mobility of borders” and makes the need for regulatory coordination ever more urgent by the various national legislators, so that the shared cultural heritage will find a regulation and a participatory protection by several interested countries.

From a comparison between the different laws protecting cultural heritage in a hypothetical synoptic framework, shows that they all have a Head First, dedicated to the definition of the object of the law.

This is a definitional scheme that circumscribes the field of applicability of the rules, typical of the laws on the subject and which is affected by the implementation of the guidelines dictated by international conventions and Union policies.

¹¹ Moreover, Kosovo, a region with Albanian majority, seems to be passionately linked to the history and culture of the Serbian and Albanian peoples, rather than to the socio-economic structure of the entire former Federation. See MAURIZIO CERMEL, *Stato nazionale e diritti delle minoranze nelle nuove costituzioni di alcuni paesi dell'Europa balcanica*, in LAUSO ZAGATO (a cura di) *Le identità culturali nei recenti strumenti Unesco*, cit., p. 269.

¹² Proof of this is the presence in the current Albanian government of the “Ministry of State for the Diaspora” which will deal with the status of Albanians in neighboring countries and will try to increase the link and cooperation with the Albanian government.

Only Kosovo also proceeds with defining distinctions in the Second Chapter, while the other countries devote their attention to listing the categories of cultural heritage with reference to national cultural heritage, distinguishing between movable and immovable property.

The list of cultural assets of the Macedonian law is wider, which introduces here the notion of spiritual cultural heritage that reflects the political, religious, anthropological and historical cultural traditions of the country as a function of identity.

The use of this category shifts the attention of the Macedonian legislator on the protection of tradition, music of singing and superstitions, understood as an identity phenomenon. See the content of the articles of the 2005 Macedonian law currently in force, relating to spiritual goods (art. 23), to folklore (art. 24); to the language (art. 25); to toponyms (art. 26).

Then the cultural heritage is delimited, distinguishing between particular and significant cultural heritage.

In all the Balkan laws, the scope of the protection of these assets is defined with reference to their patrimonial nature, circumscribing the extent and the limits of protection, the modalities with which to establish it and the conditions under which this protection is lost.

It is also noted that a feature common to all the legal systems is the establishment of an institute that deals with the organization and protection of cultural heritage. For it are also defined its powers of verification and inspection.

The trend followed is that of merging the skills into a single body, which will then be the task of the national legislator to specify the functioning from an administrative point of view¹³. This provision may be laid down in the law or by separate legislative provision.

Of particular interest is the concept of “temporary” and “preventive” protection, present in the legislation of Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Croatia and “previous”, as in Serbia, which concerns the adoption of an urgent procedure aimed at protecting cultural heritage, for example in the case of new discoveries.

The different rights and obligations of the owners of the assets, then establish the characteristics of the protection sector by sector (archaeological excavations, etc.), also defining the measures to be taken in case of accidental discoveries or new discoveries.

In this regard, the criterion of temporary or temporary protection of such

¹³ This is the path chosen by the Albanian legislator in the bill under discussion, a choice that has caused considerable controversy to the point of delaying the approval of the provision.

assets is specified, which guarantees the possibility of responding to emergency needs.

In all the laws in force the different phases and the steps from a temporary or temporary protection to full and definitive protection are well defined.

There are therefore activities of direct and indirect protection through the extension of public control to these assets. Some laws, such as that of Croatia and Macedonia, focus on the temporary protection of assets in the event of armed conflict or natural disasters, defining an emergency procedure that also applies to spiritual goods and mobile cultural heritage. The breadth of protection goes as far as environmental protection and pollution prevention.

The analyzed laws then go on to define the possibility of expropriation for reasons of public utility and dictate the rules for the protection of cultural heritage from an organizational point of view.

The managers of the various services are thus identified to implement the protection. Particular attention is paid by some laws to the return of the stolen material, depending on whether it was transferred to a Union country or to another country.

The object of protection is also cultural landscapes and mobile heritage, as well as spiritual cultural heritage. In this way the concept of cultural good is widened.

These central parts of the laws of different countries contain the regulation of very different specific cases that must be examined in detail. They define both the particular protection accorded to some goods and the role and function of private individuals - both as owners of the assets and as persons responsible for their custody and / or conservation. Some laws contain rules on the financing of cultural heritage protection activities.

All the laws examined conclude with the provision of sanctions, classifiable on the basis of the use made of pecuniary penalties, with the repeal of the previous rules and with the reorganization of the relevant legislation.

The comparative examination of these measures shows that there is already a common corpus on which to work to arrive at necessary moments of coordination of the respective laws.

4. The adaptation to the specific concepts of the legislation dictated by UNESCO in the bill on cultural heritage in question in Albania

They said that the Albanian cultural heritage for the long years of the communist regime was left in a state of neglect due to lack of resources.

Therefore today the need not only to protect it, but also to identify it, catalog it and restore it becomes imperative. This task can only be done by the State.

The presence of control bodies on the conservation of existing cultural heritage has not always been effective. This is attributable, on the one hand, to the lack of an inventory of cultural heritage, especially furniture (frescoes, statues, paintings, what is part of the iconostasis of religious buildings, etc.), which makes it impossible to identify the heritage to protect and helps to fuel the scourge of theft.

On the other, the problem of the lack of certainty of ownership that prevented the application of strict building and urban planning regulations. This has led to wild abusive that has contributed to damaging the existing cultural heritage (think for example to the desirable removal of all the walls that surround the amphitheater of Durres, carried out in violation of the laws, or the reassignment of the right to ownership of buildings of worship and of the goods they contain to subjects other than the original “owners” who have not only converted them to another use, but sometimes destroyed them).

This state of the art is even worse as a result of the signing of the UNESCO Conventions by Albania. With them, the country adds, and undertakes to achieve further objectives, that the complex situation that exists makes it difficult to reach.

The Albanian bill on the protection of cultural heritage, in fact, makes its own the category of cultural landscape, which ranges from those landscapes modeled deliberately by man, up to those, modeled by atmospheric agents and natural events¹⁴. But this protection, for the problems outlined above, will hardly be able to be effective, at least until the legislator decides to tackle and resolve issues related to building permits and property rights¹⁵.

Moreover, also the signing of the *Convention* on the protection of the un-

¹⁴ The definition is derived from the UNESCO Operational Guidelines of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

¹⁵ It is no coincidence that the bill under discussion contains a series of rules for the modification of urban planning legislation, of the civil code, of the penal code and above all of administrative rules. *Trashëgiminë kulturore dhe muzetë*, bill presented by the Minister of Cultural Heritage and currently still under discussion, available for consultation in: <http://www.drejtësia.gov.al/al/dokumente/legjislacioni/mendime-mbi-projekt-aktet-e-ministrive-te-linjes/projektligji-per-trasbegimine-kulturore-dhe-muzete> The draft law provides for the coordination of its contents with the previous legislation and presents itself as implementing Articles 121-123 of the Constitution, where it is established that each ratified international agreement is part of the internal legal system, after being published in the “Official Gazette” of the Republic of Albania. Concretely, these are the UNESCO conventions to which Albania adheres: *Convention on the protection of the underwater cultural heritage* (2009); *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2006); *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (2007); *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (2002).

derwater cultural heritage, which requires the Albanian State to achieve the objectives of protection and protection of that part of the territory, it does nothing but increase the performances to be achieved in a situation that is still extremely precarious in terms of protection of cultural heritage, and the consequent distortion of available resources to be allocated.

5. Cultural goods of religious interest to be enhanced

The UNESCO attention regarding the Western Balkans has focused on natural sites and tried to enhance the urban architectural structures, as well as the archaeological sites. And even in the Western Balkans, there are numerous sites characterized as a religious interest in relation to the particular history of the confessions in the area.

These sites have had a poor appreciation also because of the political events starting from the middle of the twentieth century, characterized by a reduction of the religious phenomenon due to the suppression of religious denominations and the spread of State atheism.

Paradoxically, this denial phase of the religious phenomenon has led, once fallen the socialist democracy regimes, to a renewed focus on the religious phenomenon, meant as an identifier with regard to the land and to the revival of the identity value of such assets.

They are, therefore, to be considered important and significant, not so much and not only for their architectural and artistic merits, but because around them has been built a significant presence of communities which in turn produced the characteristic features of the area.

This is the complex case of the monasteries in Kosovo¹⁶, and those around Ohrid, thanks to which the Slavic identity was built and especially that of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The subsequent layering of different religious communities allows today the rise, alongside Christian churches that were many times transformed into mosques or Islamic religious structures, of the

¹⁶ As exemplified by the case of Visoki Dečani, the great monastery of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo, 12 kilometers south of the town of Peć. Its catholicon, dedicated to Christ Pantocrator is constructed of red-purple marble blocks, yellow and onyx and was built by master builders under the guidance of the Franciscan friar Vito from Kotor. The monastery is the largest medieval church in the Balkans, was founded in 1330 and houses the remains of the king of Serbia Stefan Decanski. His famous paintings include about a thousand portraits and recover all the major episodes of the New Testament. The catholicon contains the original fourteenth century wooden iconostasis, the throne of hegumen and the carved sarcophagus of King Stephen. In 2004 the monastery has joined the list of UNESCO World Heritage needs of the United Nations Protection and KFOR.

tombs belonging to Muslim brotherhoods on the esplanade near the Church of St. Clement. Certainly, all of these sites that present this characteristics should be revised and brought into a system in order to draw specific inter-religious cultural routes¹⁷.

The difficulty of this design is the fact that the architectural remains and the locations of these presences are scattered today among States (Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia) whose political relations are not among the best, but, instead, would be necessary to coordinate their legislation on the protection and management of cultural heritage, perhaps identifying the “basin authorities” or “cultural districts” administratively managed in a unified and coordinated way by standards that can only be interstate or fruit for coordination between the national law and the result of international cooperation conducted in the name of common interests.

It is noteworthy that, in addition to its undoubted historical value, this area also has a current force of attraction in terms of religious practice and cultural activities. It involves the people, calling to them a religious tourism, made not only of reconstruction needs, but also aimed at a real intercultural trip with religious needs.

5.1. The cultural heritage left by the Ottoman Empire...

The Balkans and the Western Balkans in particular, are characterized by the existence of a well-established Muslim presence, which takes on the character of the ottomanism.

It is a historical and cultural category, sometimes poorly defined, and yet full of special interest, because it summarizes the artistic-cultural religious and ethnic forms taken by the people who received a strong characterization because of their belonging to the Muslim religion. Their local roots produced natural habitat transformations with architectural features that are peculiar (for example the small village mosque with a single minaret, around which they develop the activities of the community)¹⁸.

The greater cultural adaptability of the Ottoman Islamism allowed to absorb previous religious and cultural experiences of these territories, enriching the offer of the Islamism, which is peculiar here because it's an European

¹⁷ TODOR KRESTEV, *Cultural routes of South East Europe*, in https://www.seecorridors.eu/filebank/file_272.pdf, accessed 26 December 2017.

¹⁸ GIOVANNI CIMBALO, *Le confraternite islamiche nei Balcani: un modello di Islam europeo plurale*, in *Daimon. Annuario di diritto comparato delle religioni*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2009, pp. 225-245.

type, marked by the acceptance of secularism with regard to the civil institutions and by the separation from them and also capable of coexistence with other faiths. Understanding this cultural humus is the instrument through which to approach and include in the recovery and conservation activity, carried out by UNESCO, experiences of entire urban areas in which these components are present, giving significant motivation to effective reconstruction of the heritage of humanity that is precisely the goal of UNESCO.

The adoption of the UNESCO guidelines is one of the ways to identify cultural parks, homogeneous areas at local level, in regard to which significantly expand the protection, also through the promotion, right through the structure of the cultural tourist park, the journey and the review of these places that do not go only preserved, but lived.

5.2. ...from Hellenic and Roman culture

Such a territorial reconnaissance can not overlook the presence of an area in which the Hellenic culture is dominant, which commits indelibly with an orthodoxy type directly related to the activities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The roots of this presence are known and are even found within pre-Christian archeological finds and breed in centuries to come to more recent times. The architecture of the churches suffers from it, the widespread presence on the territory of small houses of worship which not infrequently were placed under the management of monasteries, some of which like the one of Ardenices near Lushnjë are well preserved and still survive today¹⁹. It is also a rich legacy of intangible items ranging from costumes, dance, singing and providing an insight into these territories, where the allocation of an area to UNESCO heritage appears to be a natural choice, and certainly deserving to be pursued carefully and with accurate coherence.

In this case, once again, you need the intelligence to enhance a number of sites already identified as a result of the greek-roman presence, to lead them to a system and see that, along the ridges of communication, such as the Via Egnatia, are located some gems, some cultural deposits that mark the path

¹⁹ The monastery, which is located at Km 1 of the Via Egnatia, was built by the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus II Palaeologus in 1282, after the victory against the Angevins in the Siege of Berat. In this monastery, in 1451, it was celebrated the marriage of Skanderbeg, Albania's national hero, with Andronika Arianiti. In 1780, the same monastery has given life to a theological school in preparing clerics in Greek Orthodoxy. It had an important library with 32,000 volumes that went completely burned in a fire in 1932. The church of Santa Maria, inside the monastery, contains frescoes of Kostandin brothers and Athanas Zografi.

of civilization, and which represent the stages of that ideal trip that brought Rome to Byzantium to the discovery of the East, distributing in the crossed areas testimonies of civilization, of cultural and religious allegiances that still characterize this part of the world.

5.3. ...and of the two coasts

Commonly, when addressing the issue of protection of cultural heritage, the landscape and the natural environment will certainly fall into this category. From this point of view, due to its characteristics, the Adriatic-Ionian coast is certainly worthwhile in many of its points, of special protection²⁰. However, this area is also characterized by a significant and unifying presence of the culture, the architecture, the structure of the institutions, the economic and commercial role that was typical of the Venetian Republic. It is a deep and meaningful presence that drew towns and cities, who built trade routes, civil statutes, religious institutions.

A significant bridge of the Church of the West to the East that gave life to cultural and religious presences that have gone up in the deepest inland territories²¹. Even this heritage, consisting of artifacts, from buildings, from logistic and territorial structures, by legal institutions and religious facilities, deserves special attention, but it should also be handled by an interstate structure capable of coordinating the interventions on the territories of the riparian countries by building cultural paths, reconstructions of events, the review of religious and experiential places that strongly characterized this territory²².

The need in this case is to study history to understand the different spatial distribution of the communities, the different afferents, the possible co-existence policies, in the name of a common cultural heritage that, instead of being a divisive factor, becomes testimony of a wealth that's cultural, political and religious.

²⁰ SONIA PISTIDDA, *Territori resilienti: Il patrimonio culturale come opportunità per i paesi del Sud-Est europeo*, Altralinea edizioni, Firenze, 2015.

²¹ One example is the Ostrog monastery of the Serbian Orthodox Church placed against a vertical rock wall on the cliff of Ostroska Greda, in Montenegro, which dominates the Bjelopavlici plain. The monastery is dedicated to Saint Basil of Ostrog.

²² ISABELLA DE PAZ, *La tutela dei beni culturali nei Paesi dell'Est Europeo*, in GIOVANNI COFRANCESCO (a cura di), *I beni culturali. Profili di diritto internazionale e comparato*, Ins-Edit, Genova, 1999.

6. *Religious cultural parks. A proposal to increase religious tourism as well*

Today there are different types of “park” (cultural, literary and thematic). These are places not defined by boundaries or physical limits, but rather by cultural boundaries, making them places for the discovery of the territory, its history and the people who live it²³.

In line with what has already operated through the identification of UNESCO sites, the creation of Cultural Religious Parks may further promote, restore and enhance the intangible heritage, liturgical, historical, artistic, architectural, museum of the Western Balkan area²⁴.

This action may be particularly important for a tourist use, promotional and cultural and can be realized through the adoption of a coordinated strategy integrated the of religious heritage also historical, artistic, architectural, museum, receptive of one or more religions confessions²⁵.

The enhancement of a system rooted in a territory, able to relate parish communities, monasteries, shrines, lay associations, will allow the promotion of aggregated and receptive areas, the rediscovery of ancient pilgrim routes and the increase of disparate cultural initiatives.

The creation of Cultural Religious Parks could allow to channel the attention on those assets which in themselves are not polarized, but are nonetheless important to the history of cities, widespread and deeply rooted in the territory.

On the other hand, the legislation on cultural heritage and the uniform role played by the signing of the UNESCO Conventions and the indications coming from the European Union already constitute a base from which to start that work of coordination and common management of areas territories sharing the same cultural heritage. The road is already traced, all you need to do is follow it. Have a good trip.

²³ GIUSEPPE ROCCA, *Dal prototurismo al turismo globale. Momenti, percorsi di ricerca, casi di studio*, Giappichelli, Torino, 2013.

²⁴ IRENE SALERNO, ANGELO QUARTA (a cura di), *Rivista di Scienze del Turismo. Ambiente cultura diritto economia*, Anno V, n. 2, luglio-dicembre 2014, *passim*.

²⁵ Cfr. LUCA BARALDI, ANDREA PIGNATTI, *Il patrimonio culturale di interesse religioso. Sfide e opportunità tra scena italiana e orizzonte internazionale*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2017, p. 30.