



Cultural Route development based on Intangible Heritage: Mythology, Poetry, Performing and Visual Arts of 'Argonautica'

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Type of best practice

Cooperation between Museums and Heritage sites

Keywords

Cultural Route, Intangible Heritage, Sustainable Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Smart Tourism, Mythology, Poetry, Literature, Visual Arts

A European Cultural Route of the Argonautica, based on intangible heritage of mythology, traditions, ancient theatre, poetry and literature, as well as visual and performing arts in several countries along the Argonautica Route. The Argonautica tells the myth of the voyage to retrieve the Golden Fleece.

Organisation in charge of best practice

Argonautica Network

Location

Greece, Georgia, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, France

Dates

2019 - Ongoing

Description

Cultural Routes (CRs) of Council of Europe (CoE) are pioneers in initiatives concerning European cultural integration and European identity. They involve Cultural Heritage as a strong link of European nations, linking Culture with Tourism.

CR is a route which includes two or more countries or regions and is organized on a theme whose historical, artistic or social interest is European, either according to the geographical route's features it follows or according to its nature and/or significance. The route is based on multitude of features which present European culture as a whole, and it includes destinations rich in historic associations.

Most existing Cultural Routes are mainly based on tangible heritage, such as castles, monuments, products, places of worship, archeological sites, spas, cemeteries, etc.





Cultural Routes based almost exclusively on intangible heritage is an innovation, particularly based on: Mythology, Poetry and Visual arts.

The Argonautic expedition dating back to 1200 BC is the oldest legendary long-distance maritime journey in the world ever, covering several countries, seas, rivers, cities, places, referred to:

- in ancient Greek theatre tragedy *Medea* by Euripides, in 4th century BC
- in poetry '*Argonautica*' by Apollonius Rhodius 250 BC, Orpheus 6th century BC and Pindar
- depicted at paintings and frescos of the Renaissance, also in modern art.

'The Return of the Argonauts' as a CoE Candidate Cultural Route is hence developed.

The mission of Jason and the Argonauts from Iolcos, present day City of Volos in Greece, to Colchis, present day Kutaisi in Georgia, to bring back the golden fleece has inspired several works of art, including poetry, literature, pottery, theatre, opera, painting, sculpture, cinema, documentaries, music and publications.

Although a lot of attention has been given to the outbound journey from Iolcos to Colchis, the return journey of the Argonauts has not been given the exposure it deserves. This is despite the fact that the return journey accounted for over three quarters of the overall journey.

The return of the Argonauts has left a cultural footprint in several places: Jason is considered to be the founder of Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia, and *Argonautica* is celebrated at the Dalmatian coast, Istria peninsula, in Croatia, as well as in Marseille in the south of France.





ARGONAUTICA NETWORK



European Cultural Route

European Cultural Tourism Network

Certificate of Award



Transnational Thematic Tourism Products 3rd Prize:

'Argonauts' return' – a transnational cultural tourism route based on intangible heritage of mythology, poetry, literature, performing and visual arts
by the Argonautica Network, Greece



Links

<https://www.argonautica-network.eu>



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101004545.



Resources needed

Human resources to prepare the submission as a candidate route to Council of Europe. A network association must be formed involving national, regional and local authorities, Tourism Boards, Destination Management Organisations, Universities and research Institutes, relevant cultural NGOs and citizens.

Challenges encountered

There are several alternative versions of the return journey, such as by: Apollonius Rhodius Argonautica, Orphic Argonautica, Pindar, Herodotus of Heraclea, Hecataeus of Miletus, Timaeus, Judith Bacon, Henrietta Merz (based on Jason Colavito's book "Jason and the Argonauts through the Ages", 2014).

Evidence of success

The 'Return of the Argonauts' Candidate Cultural Route has been presented at the Cultural Routes Training Academy of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg in June 2016. It was also presented at the 9th European Cultural Tourism Conference in Guimaraes, Portugal in September 2016. There has been a lot of interest from several countries. The result is an innovative Cultural Route Network that develops sustainable cultural tourism based on intangible heritage, as a candidate for certification by the Council of Europe. This project received the 3rd prize in the ECTN Awards 'Destination of Sustainable Cultural Tourism 2019', in the category 'Transnational Thematic Tourism Products', by a joint jury with Europa Nostra and European Travel Commission.

Potential for transfer

The mission of Jason and the Argonauts to bring back the 'golden fleece' has inspired several works of art, including poetry, literature, pottery, theatre, painting, sculpture, cinema, documentaries, music and publications. Although a lot of attention has been given to the onward journey from Iolkos to Colchis, the return journey of the Argonauts has not been given the exposure it deserves. This is despite that the return journey is more than three quarters of the overall journey. The return of the Argonauts has left a cultural footprint in several places: Jason is considered to be the founder of Ljubljana, capital of Slovenia and Argonautica is celebrated at the Dalmatian coast in Croatia, as well as in Marseille south of France. Alternative routes of the return journey involve several countries and seas. The 'Return of the Argonauts' cultural route development forms a very good basis for learning about intangible cultural heritage and for transfer to other regions and cities.

Further Information

<https://argonautica-network.eu>

