



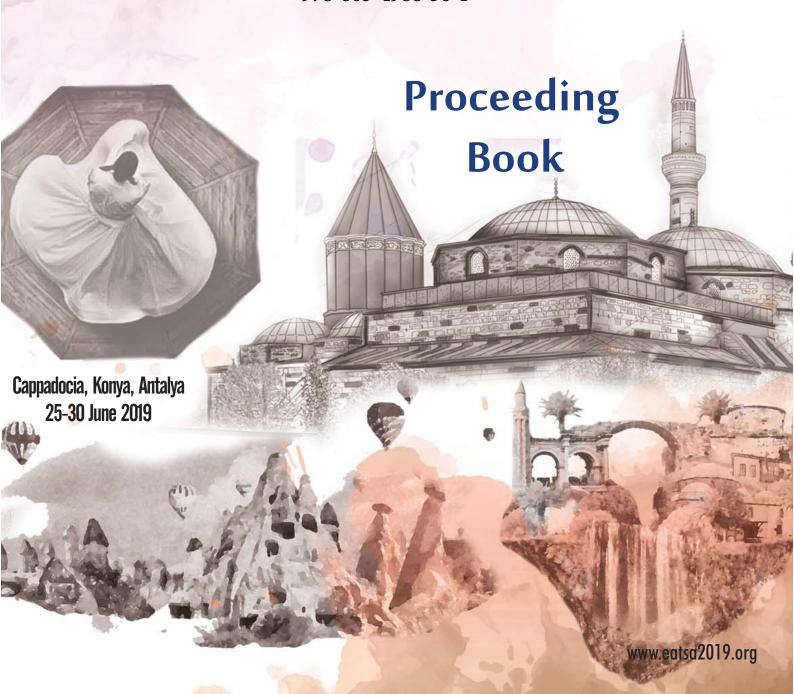


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Building Competitive Advantage of Euro Asian Tourism

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25 - 30 JUNE 2019



Welcome to the EATSA Conference 2019!

"Building Competitive Advantage of Euro-Asian Tourism"

The 5th Annual Conference of EATSA — Euro-Asia Tourism Studies Association, that will take place in Turkey, June 25th-30th 2019, is an international forum for researchers, academic and industry experts to exchange information regarding advances in the state of the art and application of tourism, hospitality and leisure management in the region of Euro-Asia.

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HOST AND VENUE

Necmettin Erbakan University (Dedeman Hotel), KONYA

Akdeniz University, ANTALYA



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The Role of Budapest's Roman Heritage in Urban Tourism Development

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Abstract

The outer frontier of the Roman Pannonia province lies in the Carpathian Basin along the Danube. This heritage, as Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Ripa Pannonica in Hungary, was submitted in 2009 on the Hungarian World Heritage tentative list. Due to the physical obstacle of the Danube, hardly any man-made obstacles needed to be built: consequently, the site mainly takes shape on regional planners' and educated potential visitors' mental maps, a virtual product of their collective historic awareness. Based on expert interviews, questionnaire survey, site visits, and content analysis of planning documents and promotional materials, the paper assesses the role of the Roman heritage in the urban tourism development strategy of Budapest, analyse the existing stakeholder networks and identify the problems in their operation, in order to gain a clearer picture of the tourism potential of this project. In addition, the interpretation and visitor management techniques used at selected sites of the Ripa Pannonica are also investigated, with special emphasis on their contribution to awareness-building, and their effectiveness and efficiency in visitor experience creation.

Keywords: Roman Heritage, Budapest, Urban Tourism, Heritage Tourism





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Abstract

The outer frontier of the Roman Pannonia province lies in the Carpathian Basin along the Danube. This heritage, as Frontiers of the Roman Empire – Ripa Pannonica in Hungary, was submitted in 2009 on the Hungarian World Heritage tentative list. Due to the physical obstacle of the Danube, hardly any manmade obstacles needed to be built: consequently, the site mainly takes shape on regional planners' and educated potential visitors' mental maps, a virtual product of their collective historic awareness.

Based on expert interviews, questionnaire survey, site visits, and content analysis of planning documents and promotional materials, the paper assesses the role of the Roman heritage in the urban tourism development strategy of Budapest, analyse the existing stakeholder networks and identify the problems in their operation, in order to gain a clearer picture of the tourism potential of this project. In addition, the interpretation and visitor management techniques used at selected sites of the Ripa Pannonica are also investigated, with special emphasis on their contribution to awarenessbuilding, and their effectiveness and efficiency in visitor experience creation.

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Introduction

The *Limes*, the border line of the Roman Empire at its greatest extent in the 2nd century AD, followed the line of the River Danube in the Carpathian Basin. Today an important part of this heritage is located in Budapest, the capital of Hungary. However, in the current tourist product of Budapest the Roman heritage sites are not particularly highlighted: they are not featured among the top 10 attractions by the Budapest Festival and Tourism Centre, the city's official organisation for tourism, culture and marketing [1], not mentioned among the top sights in Budapest by Lonely Planet [2], not listed among the 15 must-visit attractions by Culture Trip [3], and not included in the Budapest Top 10 list on visitbudapest.travel, a site that claims to be an "insider's guide" that helps visitors "explore Budapest & Hungary beyond the traditional tourist routes" [4]. The only reference to the city's Roman heritage on these sites - the first ones listed by google when searching for "visit Budapest" appears on visitbudapest.travel's Top 10 for History Buffs list where one of the suggestions is to "set foot on part of the Ancient Roman Empire in Aquincum" (however, the description of the site is factually inaccurate at various points).

The relatively low perceived touristic value of these heritage resources, as demonstrated by the above



sites, seems to be slightly surprising in the light that the heritage of the ancient Roman Limes, as Frontiers of the Roman Empire - Ripa Pannonica in Hungary, was submitted in 2009 on the Hungarian World Heritage tentative list by the Secretariat of the Hungarian World Heritage Commission and the National Office of Cultural Heritage, as an extension to the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site [5]. And while the proposed site as a whole mainly takes shape on regional planners' and educated potential visitors' mental maps, a virtual product of their collective historic awareness as a consequence of the physical obstacle of the Danube, the majority of the most significant Roman heritage assets are to be found in Budapest, predominantly in the district of Óbuda, but there are also visible remains in the city centre and in the southern part of Buda (Figure 1) [6].

In recent years, although major efforts have been made to develop the heritage of the *Limes* as a cultural route, and to establish the network of stakeholders necessary to create and maintain a visible and feasible tourist product, progress has been relatively slow and difficult. Since the area along the *Limes* has been redeveloped countless times during the last 2000 years, it is an additional challenge to visualise the Roman theme as the core of the planned cultural route, as opposed to developing a non-thematic linear tourist product along the river Danube.

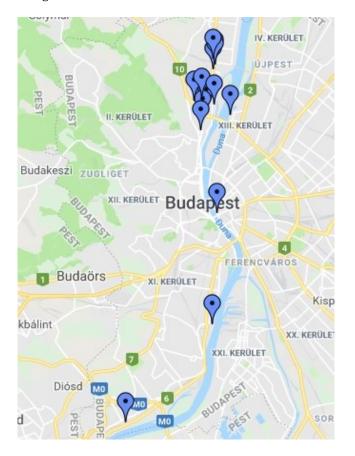


Figure 1 - Roman heritage sites in Budapest

Assets representing the Roman heritage of Budapest are in the focus of the TOURiBOOST project, an international project that aims to establish long-lasting, transnational partnerships with the mission to remodel the tourism supplydemand pattern at heritage places, to upgrade heritage-based tourism products, to promote tourism entrepreneurship in heritage tourism, to increase the competitiveness of small businesses operating in this field, and to efficiently communicate heritage places potential consumers [7].

Within the framework of the TOURiBOOST project, a survey was carried out to explore place image and cultural reputation in each Pilot Project Area, and to evaluate the status quo of cultural products and services. In addition, as a result of the stakeholder meetings held in each participating country, tourism business models were developed for the selected geolocations, mapping local expertise and knowledge. The current paper presents some of the preliminary findings of the Hungarian survey, in addition to the business models created for the five Budapest geolocations.

Roman heritage sites in Budapest

Assets representing the Roman heritage of Budapest were selected as the Hungarian geolocations of the TOURiBOOST project for various reasons. As it was mentioned before, the Ripa Pannonica, the outer frontier of Pannonia and the Roman Empire located in Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia and Serbia is a tentative World Heritage site which is being nominated for WH status in 2019 as an extension to the already existing Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site. The Hungarian Limes Association was founded in 2010 with the aim to establish and maintain a unique cultural route including Roman heritage-themed exhibitions, museums, archaeological parks and memorial places along the Pannonian Limes.

The sites of the Ripa Pannonica in Hungary lie mostly on the right bank of the Danube, including well-developed and less well-developed heritage assets located in Budapest such as military installations and civil settlement structures. The south and the west gate of the legionary fortress, the Roman baths and two amphitheatres are partly preserved and still visible. The core element of the Roman site of Budapest-Aquincum is the archaeological park which includes a large open-air space and a new museum building. It offers regular exhibitions, education programmes and a museum store with extensive information material, i.e. it is



already developed as a high quality tourist attraction. Besides the Aquincum Museum and Archaeological Park, the list of Roman remains in Budapest include, among others, the Hercules Villa, the Thermae Maiores Roman Baths Museum, the currently closed Military Town Museum, two Roman amphitheatres, the northern town wall and gate, the eastern and the southern gates of the legionary fortress, the Roman aqueduct, the ruins of a barrack block and sanctuary, and the Cella Trichora (an early Christian burial chapel) [6].

The five geolocations selected for the TOURiBOOST project in Hungary are the following:

- Inner-city Parish Church of Our Lady
- Március 15 Square
- Civil Town Amphitheatre
- Aquincum Museum and Archaeological Park
- Roman Bath Museum Thermae Majores

A particularly important element of Budapest's Roman heritage is the remains of the fort of Contra-Aquincum in downtown Budapest, partly located within the building of the Inner-city Parish Church of Our Lady, partly under the current Március 15 Square. The Roman Catholic Inner-city Parish Church is the oldest church in Budapest, its architectural and cultural heritage illustrate the 2000-year-long history of the city. The church building and the square in front of it covers a large Roman relic, a four-sided camp with dimensions of 86 by 84 meters. The Roman camp was completed in 350 AD and it was used after 375. A three-naved church, built in the 11th-12th century, occupied the place of the old command building near to the southern wall of the 4th century Roman camp. Excavations between 2014 and 2015 provided information about the Roman and medieval remains found under the church floor. In addition to the Roman heritage, the church has a rich history, making it an invaluable asset in heritage tourism development in Budapest, and it is one of the most dynamically developing managed visitor attractions in Budapest, with an active and creative tourism management team. Due to its central Pest location, the church building may serve as a focal point for the new heritage tourism product to be developed. The Roman ruins of Contra-Aquincum are exceptionally well excavated and exhibited in the 24-hour-open church building, visible both from the ground level through a glass platform and inside the lower chapel, also as a background to the liturgical and secular events organised in this unique space (Figure 2). The Church is situated in Március 15 Square, on the site of the Contra-Aquincum fort, an important historic site along the Ripa Pannonica. Although the underground remains of the fort are only partly visible (and currently not accessible) from the square, the site serves as a unique geolocation since between the northern and

southern sections of the former Roman wall, a stylized line representing the Danube river can be seen, with the names and floor plans of the Roman military garrisons in Pannonia province. The remains of Contra-Aquincum can be seen through a glass cover at the street level. Consequently, the Inner-city Parish Church and the Március 15 Square form a unique complex with a high potential in the interpretation and development of Budapest's Roman heritage.



Figure 2 – The Inner-City Parish Church and Március 15 Square (photo by Tamara Rátz)

The Civil Town amphitheatre is the smaller of Aquincum's two amphitheatres. Its remains lie beyond the northern wall of the former Roman town. The building, already in operation in the mid-2nd century, was renovated multiple times during the 3rd century. Based on its structure, the almost circular building can be classified as an earth amphitheatre that could host roughly 6-7000 spectators who could enter the partially-covered stands from a ramp on the outside. The arena, which was surrounded by a 3-metre-high wall, could be entered through a gate on either side of the east-west axis. The amphitheatre held various sporting events and gladiatorial games mixed with animal hunts. Since this building had the largest capacity in the town, it was also used for more serious public business, such as assemblies and civic festivals as well as speeches in honour of the visiting emperor. The gladiator barracks were located by the amphitheatre, where the champions of the popular games exercised and trained. Its courtyard, surrounded by a stone wall, and its tower are now below ground. On the southern side of the western gate stood a sanctuary of Nemesis, the goddess of amphitheatre games. During the excavation of the sanctuary, a fragment of the goddess's statuette was found along with a number of inscribed altars [8]. Nowadays the amphitheatre is used, occasionally, according to its original function, i.e. as an event space. Figure 3 illustrates a



special occasion: on 10 May 2019, the Hungarian tribute band Keep Floyding reconstructed the legendary *Live at Pompeii* concert of Pink Floyd from 1972.



Figure 3 – Concert in the Civil Town amphitheatre in Budapest (photo by Tamara Rátz)

Aquincum Museum and Archaeological Park, a branch of Budapest History Museum, opened its gates in 1894. The Museum's permanent exhibitions present, among others, the unique Aquincum organ, as well as mosaics, statues, tombstones and other valuable archaeological finds from the Governor's Palace.



Figure 4 – Floralia in Aquincum (photo by Tamara Rátz)

The Archaeological Park displays the remains of around a third of the Aquincum Civil Town, including the most characteristic public buildings and dozens of private houses, reflecting the town's layout during the 2nd and 3rd centuries. The Museum is the largest collection site of Roman archaeological and historical monuments of Budapest. Each year the Museum hosts a traditional Roman spring festival called Floralia, with theatre performances and gladiator shows [9] (Figure 4).

The Roman Bath Museum presents the baths of the Roman legionary fortress, the Thermae Maiores. One of the halls of the legionary fortress's baths was found in 1778, during the first archaeological excavation in Aquincum. The legionary baths were a monumental structure (120 m by 140 m) that laid at the intersection of the fortress's two main roads. The building was constructed in the 2nd century and rebuilt a number of times afterwards. The bath complex offered soldiers an exercise court (palaestra), cold, warm, and hot pools, baths, steam baths, and spacious halls with underfloor heating. Entrance to the remains is available through the pedestrian underpass at Flórián Square. Above the ruins, two two-lane overpasses were built for car traffic between Szentendrei Road and Árpád Bridge, which provide partial protection against the weather. Within the archaeological area, detailed descriptions and maps help visitors' orientation [10] (Figure 5).



Figure 5 – The Roman Bath Museum in Budapest (photo by Tamara Rátz)

Methods

Various quantitative and qualitative methods were used to evaluate the current use of the above described Roman heritage assets as current and potential tourist attractions, to explore place image and cultural reputation in each Pilot Project Area, and to evaluate the status quo of cultural products and services.

Local stakeholders were invited to fill in a questionnaire (n=15) that focused on awareness of the selected assets, their contribution to a distinctive area identity, the accessibility and competitiveness of the sites, the importance of storytelling in heritage interpretation, and the potential impacts of the TOURIBOOST project on cultural heritage consumption at local level. The questionnaires were partly filled in during personal



meetings with the respondents, and partly by email, following previous agreement of the selected stakeholders.

Following the questionnaire survey, a local stakeholder meeting was organised in Budapest in May 2019, with the participation of the following partners:

- Hungarian Tourism Agency
- Budapest Festival and Tourism Centre
- Aquincum Museum and Archaeological Park
- Inner-City Parish Church of Budapest
- Esernyős Cultural, Tourism and Information Point in Óbuda
- Hungarian Tourist Guide Association (MIE)
- Individual guides
- Individual cultural tourism experts
- Kodolányi János University

selected The participants represent the geolocations on the one hand, and tourism development authorities from national (Hungarian Tourism Agency), city (Budapest Festival and Tourism Centre) and district level (Esernyős Cultural, Tourism and Information Point in Óbuda) on the other hand. Since the aim of the TOURiBOOST project is to ensure the seamless integration of new products and services in Budapest's heritage tourism, the organisers also found it very important to involve tour guides (both MIE and individual guides) who play a key role in developing new itineraries and services in the city.

As part of the workshop's agenda, the participating stakeholders reflected on tourism in Budapest, the Roman heritage of the city, the present situation of the tourism use of the key Roman heritage assets of Óbuda, the development plans of these sites, as well as the obstacles, challenges and difficulties faced by the current users. Content analysis was performed on the information gathered during the meeting in order to better understand the key issues, and the results were used as the basis of the tourism business models that were developed for each selected geolocation.

In addition to the questionnaire survey and the content analysis of the stakeholder meeting's transcript, personal observation in the form of study visits was conducted in the five selected geolocations as well as in additional sites (the Lapidarium of the National Museum, and the porta principalis dextra, i.e. the southern gate of the legionary fortress in Flórián Square), to collect information on the current use of these assets and the interpretation and visitor management techniques applied at the sites, with special emphasis on their contribution to awareness-building as well as their effectiveness and efficiency in visitor experience creation.

Research findings

According to the survey results, the further development of Budapest's Roman heritage sites as a tourism product – either in the form of a local themed route or as part of the wider Limes project – could positively contribute to the destination's identity and its image. Interestingly, higher level of consensus could be experienced in the question of identity (100%) than in the case of image (77%), despite the fact that the Roman heritage of Aquincum and Pannonia province precedes the arrival of the Hungarian tribes to the Carpathian basin.

Figure 6 represents the most frequently mentioned words in association with the distinctive identity of the TOURiBOOST pilot project in Budapest. As demonstrated in the word cloud, it is clearly perceived as a tourism project with visitors in the centre, with the involvement and cooperation of various stakeholders, based on international expertise, using storytelling to influence the destination's image and to create an innovative, high quality attraction of the heritage of the ancient Roman Pannonia province.



Figure 6 – The distinctive identity of the TOURiBOOST Pilot Project in Budapest

However, beyond the most easily noticeable notions, further themes appear as well, colouring the overall picture. The parallel mention of "local" and "residents" refer to the fact that the improved use of Roman heritage would not only benefit visitors to the city, but also local residents could enjoy these assets as educational and recreational spaces.



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Furthermore, there are various terms associated with historical, cultural and religious "diversity" in the word cloud, such as "Mithras", "Seuso" or "Iseum", suggesting an innovative and inclusive angle to tourism developers and interpretation designers. This subject, in turn, is connected to the perceived educational aspect of the pilot project, expressed in terms such as "creation", "education", "knowledge", "MOOC", "dissemination" and "learn". The educational benefits brought about by the cooperation of universities and experts from five countries - Turkey, the Netherlands, Italy, Greece and Hungary - were considered among the most important positive impacts of the TOURiBOOST project, not only for the added value that this collaboration can generate in the field of tourism product development or in the use of storytelling in creating innovative, novel business ideas in heritage tourism, but also for the fact that tourism scholars finally joined the archaeologists and historians who have been active for a long time in researching the Roman heritage of Budapest.

According to the stakeholders, another distinctive feature of the project is its ability to connect the "past" and the "present" by meeting the challenges of the "21st century" in heritage tourism development, experience design and interpretation. Storytelling can also play a key role in this aspect, as long as the developers are able to find those stories that can bring history closer to the targeted audience's everyday life and can help potential visitors become cognitively and emotionally involved in 2000-year-old Roman heritage.

There was a general consensus (100%) among the stakeholders concerning the project's potential to provide new interpretation of existing heritage resources, to contribute to the conceptual development of new assets, and to create an optimal mix of varied attractions and activities built on the Roman heritage theme. However, only 72% of the survey participants believed that the project can result in new stories about local heritage, despite generally acknowledging the significance of storytelling in enriching national heritage (Table 1).

Table 1 – The perceived significance of storytelling (%)

	Strong	Partial	None
In cultural consumption	82	18	0
development			
In reaching a wide	73	27	0
group of consumers			
In engaging young	64	36	0
consumers			
In providing	55	45	0
uniqueness among			
global heritage assets			

In innovative heritage	73	27	0
interpretation	55	45	0
In innovative heritage consumption	33	45	U
For a business oriented	64	36	0
approach			
In enriching national	64	27	9
heritage			

The role of storytelling seems to be particularly significant in cultural consumption development, but it also seen as having a major role in reaching out to a wide range of cultural consumers – who may not all be experienced users of cultural services –, and in innovative heritage interpretation.

Additional perceived strengths of the TOURiBOOST project are its ability to stimulate the development of new cultural products and services (100% consensus), create complementarities with existing cultural products (91%), encourage regional networking among a wide range of service providers who are connected with a certain theme or operate within a geographical area, improve the reputation of a place as a cultural destination, and inspire young audiences to participate in heritage tourism and/or in heritage education (82-82%, respectively).

The overall accessibility of the selected Roman heritage sites in Budapest was perceived as adequate, although with different levels of satisfaction associated with the various aspects of the notion (Table 2).

Table 2 – Perceived accessibility of Roman heritage sites in Budapest (%)

sites in Dudapest (70)		
Aspect	Yes	No
Affordable	100	0
Easily accessible by	82	18
transport		
Available without	73	27
restrictions		
Available information,	55	45
advanced use of ICT		
Cognitively and mentally	82	18
accessible		
Emotionally accessible	82	18

As illustrated by Table 2, the availability of information, and particularly the advanced use of ICT tools in information provision and interpretation before, during and after the visit were considered as the weakest component of the overall accessibility of the selected sites, despite the fact that they key stakeholders – the Inner-city Parish Church and the Aquincum Museum and Archaeological Park – both have informative,



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multilingual websites and both are active on social media platforms.

The tourism business models (Figures 7-11), developed on the basis of the questionnaire survey, the stakeholder meeting and the study visit conducted at the sites, summarise each geolocation's key partners, activities and resources, in addition to their customer relationships and interactions, their revenues and costs, as well as the main values that they provide.

1. Who help you Key partners Budapest History Museum 3. District Municipality BFTK	What do you do Key activities Exhibitions Research Events Education	How you help Value provided Preservation Interpretation Education Interaction Knowledge dissemination	4. How you interact Customer relationships Scientific publications Guided tours Museum education	Hungarian and foreign visitors Researchers Archaeologists Volunteers (students)
Esernyős Cultural Centre MIE Archaeologists EMMI Travel agencies	Who you are and what you have Key resources Roman heritage assets Staff (archaeologists and museum personnel) Experience		6. How they know you and how you deliver Channels Website Blog Facebook Twitter Youtube	Schools Disabled people Families
8. What you give Costs Amenity bills, staff Research, publicatio Events, exhibitions	ons - organisational costs	• V	hat you get nue and benefits sistor satisfaction, attractivity eer acknowledgement poperation opportunities	

Figure 7 – Business model of Aquincum Museum and Archaeological Park

As demonstrated by the business models, there are two primary stakeholders in the project: the Aquincum Museum and Archaeological Park in Óbuda – since it is also responsible for the Roman Bath Museum and for the Civil Town Amphitheatre , and the Inner-City Parish Church of Our Lady, since the surrounding Március 15 Square is a public space that would be classified as a Roman heritage tourism asset independently, without the added value of the church's active presence in the tourism market of Budapest.

Aquincum Museum and Archaeological Park S. District Municipality	What do you do Key activities Exhibition Preservation in situ Information	3. How you help Value provided • Preservation • Education • Knowledge dissemination • Raising interest, curiosity		How you interact Customer relationships Via Aquincum Museum Guided tours	7. Who you help Customers Hungarian and foreign visitors Researchers Archaeologists
Archaeologists Tour guides Alternative tour guides	Who you are and what you have Key resources Roman heritage assets Staff (archaeologists and museum personnel) Unique location			6. How they know you and how you deliver Channels • Website • Information panels • In situ exhibition in Florián tér underpass	
8. What you give Costs Maintenance Security personnel			9. What yo Revenue at Visitor in Local int Opportu	nd benefits nterest	nent

Figure 8 - Business model of Roman Bath Museum

The Roman heritage is the fundamental asset in each case, except for the Inner-City Parish Church: although its history also started during the Roman Empire, the past 2000 years have enriched it significantly, making the Roman ruins in the lower chapel a starting point and not the culmination of the visitor experience.

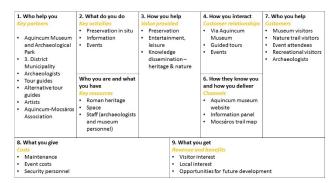


Figure 9 – Business model of Civil Town Amphitheatre

The key partners depend on the selected sites' geographical location - Óbuda or central Pest -, their involvement in the Budapest tourist market, and their association with one of the fundamental stakeholders. It shall be noted that although the five sites are conceptually connected through their association with Budapest's Roman heritage, currently there is no direct collaboration between the two groups of assets (Aquincum Museum and Archaeological Park, Roman Bath Museum and Civil Town Amphitheatre on the one hand, Inner-City Parish Church of Our Lady and Március 15 Square on the other hand). The first step in creating an allembracing network of Roman heritage sites in Budapest, enhanced by a range of supplementary cultural institutions, professional organisations and local businesses, was the TOURiBOOST stakeholder meeting held in May 2019.

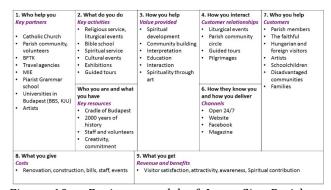


Figure 10 – Business model of Inner-City Parish Church of Our Lady

A unique value provided by the Inner-City Parish Church is spiritual development, which also enables the institution to build a strong, committed community beyond the Hungarian and international visitors. Although the remaining four geolocations are not religious sites, The permanent exhibition of the Aquincum Museum includes a reconstructed Mithras shrine, testament of a hidden and mysterious cult, which might be the starting point of storytelling in the field of spiritual diversity.



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Figure 11 - Business model of Március 15 Square

The uniqueness of Március 15 Square lies in the fact that it is a central public space open for everyone, without the type of management that the other geolocations enjoy. However, the story of the square is inextricably linked to that of the Inner-City Parish Church, both preserving the ruins of the Contra-Aquincum fort. The scale of the square makes it possible to represent, in a stylized way, the total length of the Ripa Pannonica and its fortifications and settlements, thus providing an ideal starting point for understanding the – hopefully – future World Heritage.

Conclusions

This paper is a preliminary attempt to analyse the potential impacts of the TOURiBOOST project, its significance in heritage tourism development in Budapest, the interrelationships of the various stakeholders representing the city's Roman heritage, and their perceptions and expectations concerning the benefits of the project.

Based on the research results discussed in the paper, the project undoubtedly has the potential to contribute to the diversity of local tourism supply, and can stimulate and encourage cooperation among local stakeholders. The knowledge and experiences brought into this international cooperation by the project partners have the potential introduce new business models based on customer proactive insights, stakeholder engagement and key experiences. During the collaboration process it needs to be ensured that the project initiatives fit within the existing system of development plans and proposals, in order to complement the local programmes and not compete with them.

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