**ATLAS Cultural Tourism Research Group Report 2020**

**Greg Richards**

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The ATLAS Cultural Tourism Group has been operating since 1991, and the main activity of the group has been the development of the ATLAS Cultural Tourism Research Project. This project largely centres on surveys of visitors to cultural sites and events, and over the almost 30-year life span of the project we have collected more than 50,000 visitor surveys from sites on five continents.

In 2020 the main activities of the group have focussed on the development of a new wave of cultural tourism surveys. A revised version of the basic version of the cultural tourism questionnaire was developed, which kept many of the features of the previous version but added a few new elements. These included revised questions on information sources, experience outcomes and perceived authenticity. As in previous rounds of the research, the questionnaire has been designed in a modular format, which makes it easier for participants to add their own questions at different points in the questionnaire.

In contrast to previous research rounds the questionnaire will also be available in paper and digital format. A version of the survey is available on Qualtrics, so that visitors can be offered a digital version of the survey on a mobile device for face-to-face interviews or offered a survey link to complete post visit. This also provides a potential solution to the problem of interviewing visitors during the Covid-19 pandemic, because visitors can also be sent a link via email, removing the need for personal interviews. This enables research to be conducted using the mailing lists of cultural sites and events, so that even when sites are not open to the public the views of those who have visited in the past can be gathered.

As in previous years the surveys are available in different language versions. We currently have English, French and Portuguese versions in both paper and digital format. We also have different versions of these questionnaires available for interviews on site or using a mailing list. As in the past, all participating institutions will be able to use their own data for research and publication purposes. Participants can also make use of data from other sites to enable comparative research. The conditions for the use of the data are set out in a data agreement that is signed by all participants.

At the time of writing we have participating institutions from Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Ghana, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Serbia and the UK. The largest number of participating institutions come from Portugal, where national research director Carlos Fernandes from Viana do Castelo is planning to attain national coverage with the surveys.

This year will provide a particularly challenging environment for data collection, but it should also give some very illuminating results in relation to the effects of the pandemic on cultural tourism. Tourism to cultural sites and events has been hit not only by travel restrictions, but also by closures of cultural institutions, or restrictions on visitor numbers for those that have re-opened. We are interested in gauging the extent to which restrictions and safety measures have an impact on the experience of cultural tourism, and it will be interesting to see how the survey results change over the coming months and years.

The Cultural Tourism Group has also been involved in the organisation of the Special Interest Group Meeting on Festival Cities and Cultural Tourism, planned to be held in Edinburgh in October 2020. Due to the pandemic this meeting will take place largely online, although there are plans for some members of the group to come together in Edinburgh for a panel session. This will be shared online with ATLAS members on October 22nd, together with the paper presentations from members of the Cultural Tourism and Events Groups. A publication is planned from this meeting, which will add to the already considerable range of ATLAS Cultural Tourism publications.

The group is also planning g to meet physically during a special track at the ATLAS Annual Conference in Prague in September 2021. During this meeting finalised papers from the Edinburgh meeting will be presented, together with now contributions on the theme of Festival Cities and Cultural Tourism from delegates to the Prague conference.

For more information on group activities, please see the dedicated page on the ATLAS website, or consult the resources available for download on Academia (<https://independent.academia.edu/gregrichards/ATLAS-Cultural-Tourism-Project>) or Researchgate (<https://www.researchgate.net/project/Cultural-Tourism-4>). If you are interested in joining the Cultural Tourism Research Project, please contact Greg Richards (Richards.g@buas.nl).