Landscape Valorization and Rural Tourism Development: An Application for the Promotion of the Lauretana Way in Tuscany Region

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**Abstract.** Europe has in its walkable landscape a pillar of its cultural identity (Steiner et al., 2006) and Italy, where the Way of Saint James and the Way of Jerusalem are superimposed on the itinerary of the Via Francigena, holds a prime position. Italy has a network of 44 routes (Cammini) recognized by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism (MiBACT, 2016) for their historical-cultural interest. Whilst following, in most cases, ancient pilgrimage routes, these itineraries are not strictly related only to religious tourism that has its main motivation in visiting religious sites such as shrines, convents, churches, abbeys, hermitages and sacred places. They are doubtless an attraction for their religious essence, but they have often great artistic and historic value. It could be the main driver of sustainable socio-economic and cultural development of many rural areas (Makuc, 2015). The tourism generated along the cultural itineraries can be considered rural tourism, in its widest acceptation. The rural tourism, fostering the discovery of wine and food, agriculture, and typical handicraft, becomes a great potential for a wide range economic development and represents that form of tourism that today takes the name of “experiential tourism”.

The objective of this work is to provide tools for reading landscape and developing experiential knowledge, with particular reference to historical and traditional rural landscapes of slow-travelling cultural itineraries to encourage their landscape and economic enhancement. The case study presented is the Tuscan segment of the ancient Via Lauretana that mainly goes through the Siena countryside. The main output is an application for smartphones and tablets designed to narrate the landscape as well as to provide the practical and experiential exploration of the territory. The app intends to connect insiders and outsiders, architects/actors and users/spectators of the landscape, inhabitants and pilgrims. In this way the experience of the cultural roads could be transformed, for travellers, in an opportunity for a cultural growth and for residents in an economic chance.