

## Inclusive valorisation model foR Controversial cultural hEritage in the Mediterranean Harbours and beyond

**Acronym:** CIRCE

**Lead institution:** UNIMC (Università degli studi di Macerata)

**Lead researcher:** Dr. sc. Giuseppe Capriotti

**Partner institutions:**

UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DI MACERATA (UNIMC); UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE EDUCACION A DISTANCIA (UNED); UNIVERSITA DEGLI STUDI DI GENOVA (UNIGE); UNIVERSITE DE TUNIS; APPRODI SRL; GROUPEMENT PROFESSIONNEL DE LA MEDINA (MDINTI); CROATIAN ASSOCIATION OF VISUAL ARTISTS SPLIT (HULU Split); FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF SPLIT

**Project timeframe:** January 2026. – January 2030.

**The project's total budget:** 846.690,00 EURO

**Project goals:**

In today's multicultural societies, controversial cultural heritage often provokes debates due to its links to historical conflicts, marginalized communities and contested narratives. It includes monuments, artworks and intangible heritage that depict racialized, marginalized, gendered and religious groups. Controversial cultural heritage is threatened by misrepresentation, under-representation and even outright erasure, and is also at risk from a lack of consistent strategies for its recognition, interpretation and management, particularly in the European context. The CIRCE project responds to this challenge by developing an interdisciplinary and co-created model that promotes inclusive and participatory approaches to the management of controversial cultural heritage. While debates on controversial cultural heritage often focus on colonial and totalitarian monuments, CIRCE extends the analysis to the medieval and early modern periods, with an emphasis on Jewish, Muslim and black histories in the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean regions. Case studies include contested or neglected cultural heritage in Italy, Spain, Croatia, Tunisia and Kenya. The project recognizes the role of migration and global power relations in shaping contemporary heritage debates and highlights the need to collaborate with African partners to decentralize perspectives. CIRCE is structured around three research objectives: 1. to develop a framework for the identification and interpretation of controversial cultural heritage; 2. to co-create tools for its valorization (including a multilingual glossary and an Atlas of Controversial Cultural Heritage); 3. to implement training programs for professionals in the field of cultural heritage and tourism, including a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) and guidelines for cultural institutions. By adopting a participatory and decolonial approach, CIRCE seeks to transform controversial cultural heritage from a source of division into a shared cultural resource that fosters inclusion and dialogue. Through artistic collaboration and community engagement, the project promotes new ways of storytelling and visualizing heritage, ensuring its responsible preservation and meaningful rewriting in the context of global change.

**Members of the project team from FHSS:**

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