Editorial

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In this thematic issue of *Studia Universitatis Hereditati* (year 5, Nr. 1, 2017), we are raising a number of issues related to cultural heritage and cultural tourism. When these discussions were taking place, we were wondering what was the situation in the field of combining the protection and promotion of cultural heritage and tourism. We were interested in how they interact with each other, how they work and grow, what are the possible traps and obstacles and how to overcome them in creative cooperation, especially for the benefit and interest of the public.

In the first issue of year 5 we are reaching deep into both areas, researching specific themes. The contributions are related to underwater heritage and its promotion in the field of tourism, as well as heritage-based tourist products. This is why this theme issue is titled UNDERWATER HERITAGE AND TOURISM.

Underwater cultural heritage offers a tremendous potential. It is most accessible to experts exploring it with the intent to further scientific research of human past as well as educate the public. Unfortunately, it often remains hidden and inaccessible for the broader public due to its specific location, the result of which is its absence from common knowledge. Information about it is often available only in museums, while its exploration *in situ* offers additional contents to recreational activities, particularly diving programmes, enriching the existing or developing new products of cultural tourism, experiential experience, and ultimately positively impacting

the sustainable development of individual destinations.

With the collected papers we tried to highlight the numerous possibilities offered by the underwater cultural heritage. The contributions address several aspects of the underwater cultural heritage, such as: international and national legal frameworks, development and protection options and strategies, various aspects of promotion, integration of underwater heritage into cultural tourism products, marketing of cultural heritage, analysis of target audience and potential users of products, which include the underwater cultural heritage and the examples of the existing good practices. Through these topics, the existing and potential obstacles and proposals for solving them are presented.

Most published articles were originally presented at the international conference in Koper, which concluded the international project ATAS - Ancient Traps of the Adriatic Sea. The project was co-financed by EASME (*Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises of the European Commission*) within the framework of *Implementation of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Work 2015* on the theme of *Thematic touristic routes on underwater cultural heritage*. It was carried out by the staff of the Institute of Archaeology and Heritage at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Primorska, the associated member of the UNESCO UNITWIN Network for Underwater Heritage, which manages the Simonov zal-

iv Archaeological Park in Izola. By publishing these contributions, we wish to give the interested public an insight into the current situation and possibilities as well as facilitate the work in the field of public awareness on the importance of underwater cultural heritage with its integration into the offer of cultural tourism.

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