

A PILGRIMAGE COMMUNICATION PERSPECTIVE ON THE SACRED WAYS OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE

Svitlana Panchenko

Ph.D. in Cultural Studies, Associate Professor, Doctoral Student, Institute of Journalism
of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine
e-mail: dolga100@ukr.net, orcid.org/0000-0001-8010-8318

Summary

The purpose of this paper is to examine the meaning and prospects of pilgrimage communication on the example of the sacred paths of St Mary Magdalene. To recreate the saint's pilgrimage routes from the physical path to virtual travel, and to find out the significance of Mary Magdalene's figure in art through virtual pilgrimage. In the author's opinion, pilgrimage as a social and communicative institution has a communicative perspective in the dichotomy of «self-Other», so it inspired the author to work and move along sacred paths in this direction. The communicative method focused on intercultural communication between pilgrims during their journeys to the relics of the saint, and intercultural communication is also traced in the planning of such sacred journeys through the media and the Internet. The tourismological method allowed us to consider and analyse the established 222 km long route in 10 stages, which shows pilgrims the spiritual significance and necessity of such routes in relation to other saints. The cultural method made it possible to analyse the figure of St Mary Magdalene through such a powerful cultural tool as art, immersing us in biblical stories through paintings and conveying the emotions of the saint through the atmosphere and images that transported us to the time of the birth of Christianity thanks to painting. Using the religious studies method, the authors examined the significance of St Mary Magdalene for pilgrims after her death, namely the pilgrimage routes to the saint's relics through elaborate sacred routes

Key words: St Mary Magdalene, pilgrimage routes, shrines, communication links, virtual pilgrimage, the socio-cultural space.

DOI <https://doi.org/10.23856/6607>

1. Introduction

Pilgrimages to the shrines of Mary Magdalene are quite common in the world and are of great communication interest to pilgrims. The image of Mary Magdalene is represented in the socio-cultural space. Therefore, the interest in this biblical figure is quite high. Let's try to make a virtual journey through the pilgrimage sites of St Mary Magdalene, as well as to consider the socio-cultural spheres in which the saint is most reflected. In the article, the author analyses the significance of pilgrimage shrines dedicated to Mary Magdalene from the point of view of the Christian tradition and, at the same time, the transformation of pilgrimage routes according to the requirements of the times. It is necessary to consider the most visited pilgrimage shrines in the world and analyse the paths leading to them as a symbol of free and tolerant communication between pilgrims. The article examines the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur pilgrimage route as a combined hike-pilgrimage in the footsteps of St Mary Magdalene, which runs from Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer to Saint Maximin. The 222-kilometre

route in 10 stages reveals the main Christian sites and sacred monuments, as well as the exceptional landscapes that the Saint crossed during her biblical journey through Provence. We propose to consider these ten stages of the journey, as well as to analyse the significance of the spiritual image of Mary Magdalene in various spheres of culture and art, which will allow us to understand the importance of biblical images and saints in today's transformed world in terms of the communication component.

Mary Magdalene travelled with Jesus and was one of his closest followers, and she witnessed his crucifixion and burial. She was the first to see the resurrection of Jesus. Mary Magdalene is mentioned by name twelve times in the canonical Gospels, more than the other apostles and more than any other single woman in the Gospels. A series of studies rethink basic approaches to pilgrimage traditions in Western tradition (Bailey, 2023; Raj, Griffin, 2015a, 2015b).

Mary Magdalene's surname comes from the name of the town of Magdala, a fishing village on the Sea of Galilee. Mary Magdalene was one of the women who travelled with Jesus and helped support his ministry «out of her own resources», which indicates that she was probably a relatively well-to-do woman, a point that has been much debated in theological circles (Ristine 2013).

Mary Magdalene is a central figure in later Gnostic Christian writings, including the Gospel of Mary, which many scholars attribute to Mary Magdalene. These texts portray Mary Magdalene as an apostle (Apostle (Greek: *ἀπόστολος* from *ἀποστέλλω* – to send) – a messenger), as Jesus' closest and most beloved disciple and the only one who truly understood his teachings (<http://blyzhchedoboga.com.ua>).

The inaccurate portrayal of Mary Magdalene as a harlot began after a series of sermons delivered in 581 AD. Pope Gregory I-st identified Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany and the unnamed 'sinful woman' who anoints Jesus' feet, in the Gospel of Luke. This false portrayal of Mary Magdalene caused considerable controversy in the years leading up to the Reformation, and some Protestant leaders rejected it.

Sophisticated Western Europe medieval legends describe the wealth and beauty of Mary Magdalene and her supposed voyage to the Gallo-Roman port centre of Marseille, in modern southern France. During the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church continued to use Mary Magdalene as a symbol of repentance. However, in 1969, Pope Paul VI removed the false image of Mary Magdalene from the general Roman calendar.

Nevertheless, the misconception of Mary Magdalene as a former harlot has been promoted by the Catholic Church for almost 1400 years and has survived in popular culture. Mary Magdalene is considered a saint by the Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican and Lutheran churches. Some other Protestant churches honour her as a heroine of the faith (<https://joyofmuseums.com/museums/->).

The figure of St Mary Magdalene is mentioned in all four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. This demonstrates the importance of this figure in biblical stories and legends. Therefore, we consider it necessary to recall how this saint appears in the Gospels of the New Testament. In the Gospel of Matthew, Mary Magdalene is mentioned as follows: «There were also many women who were watching from a distance, and who had come from Galilee to follow Jesus and serve him. Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. And Mary Magdalene and another Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb (Matthew 26:13). And on the next day, which was Friday, the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate and said: «Sir, we have remembered that this deceiver, while he was still alive, said, 'I will rise again in three days'. Now it came to

pass on the Sabbath, at the dawn of the first day of the week, that Mary Magdalene and another Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an Angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and coming down, rolled away the stone from the tomb and sat on it. His form was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow» (*Mathew, 27:56, 61; Mathew, 28:1-3*).

In the Gospel of Mark, the figure of Saint Mary is mentioned as follows: «There were women watching from a distance, among them Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger, and mother of Joses, and Salome, who, as He was in Galilee, followed him and ministered to him, and many others who had come with him to Jerusalem. And Mary Magdalene and Mary of Josiah were watching where He was laid. When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and Mary of James and Salome bought some spices to go and anoint Jesus. And very early, on the first day after the Sabbath, they came to the tomb as soon as the sun was up, and said to themselves, «Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb? But Jesus, having risen early on the first day of the week, appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and told those who were with Him, who were weeping and wailing» (*Mark, 15:40-41,47; Mark, 16:1-3;9-11*).

The Gospel of Luke mentions Mary Magdalene as follows: «And it came to pass after these things, that He went about the cities and villages, preaching and announcing the kingdom of God, and the twelve with Him, and some women whom he had healed of evil spirits and of diseases: Mary, called Magdalene, out of whom seven demons had gone out; and Johanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's governor; and Susanna, and many others who served him for their own good. And when they came back from the tomb, they told the eleven and all the others about all these things. These were Magdalene, Mary, and Johanna, and Mary of James, and others with them, who told the apostles of these things. And their words seemed to them to be lying, and they did not believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb, and stooping down, saw only the cloths lying there, and went to his room, wondering what had happened» (*Luke, 8:13; Luke, 24: 9-12*).

The Gospel of John mentions Mary Magdalene as follows: «Now Jesus' mother and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene, were standing by the cross. Jesus, seeing his mother and the disciple standing there, whom He loved, said to his mother: Woman, behold, this is your son. Then he said to the disciple, «This is your mother. And from that time the disciple took her to himself. On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early, while it was still dark, to the tomb and saw that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb. She ran and came to Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, «They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him. Mary Magdalene came to tell the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that He had told her these things. And when it was evening on that day, the first of the week, and the doors where the disciples were assembled were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, «Peace be with you.» And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet and his ribs. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord» (*John, 19:25-27; 20:1-2; 18-20*).

2. The image of St Mary Magdalene in the Holy Gospels

All of the Gospel writers agree that Mary Magdalene was the first to learn of the Resurrection of Christ and it was she who brought the Good News to the disciples. According to Bernardo Estrada, professor from Rome: «This is the only woman whose name appears

in all four Gospels, the Apostle John mentions the Virgin Mary as the Mother of Christ, but does not call her by name, while Mary Magdalene is called in full. Her key role is that she was the first eyewitness of the Resurrection and the first to tell the disciples about it (*Clark, et al., 1998: 169-190*).

Mary became a favourite saint of the Middle Ages, her life became a bestseller, and she is also the patron saint of gardening and gardeners. She is depicted in a famous painting by Titian, El Greco depicted Mary as a repentant woman looking up into the sky. According to the legend, she travelled from Jerusalem to pagan Rome, and when many people did not believe in the Resurrection of the Lord, she said: «I have seen the Lord, He has spoken to me». With this sermon, she travelled all over Italy, and according to legend and tradition, she reached the Roman Emperor Tiberius.

Mary continued her preaching in Rome until the arrival of the Apostle Paul and for two years after his departure. The Apostle Paul mentions Mary in his Letter to the Romans that she was a person who laboured hard for us. Historians say that later Mary settled in Ephesus, where the Virgin Mary and John the Theologian lived, and where she died.

It was from Ephesus that the veneration of Mary began on 22 July according to the Julian calendar, the feast of Mary Magdalene. Until the sixth century, Christians came to the Tomb of Mary. According to Sergei Nikishin, Archpriest from Paris: «In the East, they say she was in Ephesus, and in the West, they said she was in the South of France.» In 869, the Byzantine Emperor Leo the Philosopher ordered the transfer of the imperishable relics of St Mary Magdalene from Ephesus to Constantinople, to the Church of St Lazarus. It is believed that during the Crusades they were transported to Rome, where they were kept in the church of St John Lateran. Later, the church was consecrated in the name of St Mary Magdalene.

According to the Latin version, during the persecution of Christians, Mary Magdalene, Martha, and their brother Lazarus, fleeing persecution, reached the south of France, Provence, where they were thrown ashore at the mouth of the Rhone, near Arles, in a town now called Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. Pilgrimage versions of this fact are divided (*Mykytka, 2018*).

The relics of St Mary are kept near Marseille, and the French believe that it was Mary who led their nation to Christianity. Weddings take place in the Saint-Madeline Church (Paris), where she is the patron saint of marriages. This temple was built on the site where she was worshipped in the XII century. In Provence, in the mountains of Mustier-Saint-Marie, pilgrims from all over the world visit the grotto where the saint hid from the world and prayed (*Doll, 2006: 305-406*).

Mary Magdalene went to preach in Marseilles. To confirm this version, the Cluny Museum has a 15th-century painting attributed to King René of Provence (he is generally credited with many paintings), 'St Mary Magdalene Preaching the Word of God in Marseilles'.

Then Mary settled in a «grotto of solitude» among the rocky cliffs near the village of Saint-Baume. Here she preached the teachings of Jesus Christ, and died. Nowadays, the Grotto of Mary Magdalene on the territory of the Dominican monastery attracts many pilgrims (*Collins-Kreiner, 2018: 8-17*).

In the middle of the 13th century, Dominican monks discovered the relics of Mary Magdalene in an old crypt in the town of Saint-Maxime-la-Saint-Beauce. The relics were recognized as genuine by the miracles that emanated from them. Already in 1297, a majestic basilica in honor of the saint was built here. The relics were transferred to a richly decorated casket. But it was these riches that were encroached upon during the French Revolution. The tomb was looted. Today, the head of Mary Magdalene is kept in the lower crypt.

In honour of Saint Mary Magdalene, revered as an educator of Gaul and Franconia, many churches and chapels were built in various regions of southern France in the early Middle Ages. The majestic basilica, founded in 1096 in Veselas, is also remembered for the call of Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux to the Second Crusade. It was here in 1146 that he called on King Louis VII, Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, knights and people to march to the East to protect Christian relics.

The cult of Mary Magdalene was especially widespread in the town of Rennes-lesChateaux in the province of Languedoc, where a large church built in her honour was decorated with magnificent frescoes of the saint's life.

3. In the footsteps of St Mary Magdalene (French pilgrimage route)

Stage 1. From Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer to Salin-de-Giraud

«Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her» (*Matthew 26:13*).

Pilgrims wishing to follow the paths of the Camargue will be delighted with the 222-kilometre route, which follows the route of the Sainte-Marie-Madeleine. This first stage takes place in the heart of the Camargue Regional Nature Park, between ponds and other wetlands (*Brock, 2002: 43-52*).

Route.

Length: 30.4 km

Ascent: 45 m – Descent: 45 m Passage time: 7 hrs. 30 min.

Difficulty level: not too difficult

Route: landscape and terrain

You will be walking on relatively easy terrain, on pleasant green paths. You will start from Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer and walk along ponds, marshes and lagoons. You'll pass the *Etang de Bataille* before reaching the path that forms the boundary between the *Etangs du Fangasse* and *Galabert*. There are many opportunities to observe the flora and fauna of the Camargue at its best. You'll stop in *Salin-de-Giraud*, a village near *Arles* famous for its salt. If you want to shorten this stage, you can choose an alternative route that will allow you to relax in one of the farmhouses located northeast of *Etang du Fangassier*.

Must-see sights to visit

Before leaving *Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer*, visit the church of *Notre-Dame-de-la-Mer*. This fortified Romanesque building dates back to the 10th century and houses the relics of Marie Jacobé, Marie Salomé and Marie Sara in the crypt. Many pilgrims stop here. After immersing yourself in the history of *Sainte-Marie-Madeleine*, take the opportunity to visit the *Salin de Giraud* salt mine. Salt is collected and stored here all year round, forming amazing mounds (In the Footsteps:st.1). A bike ride will take you on a fascinating journey through the heart of the Camargue Regional Nature Park. Colourful landscapes form a unique patchwork and wildlife is abundant. You can follow the pink flamingos that nest in the area.

Stage 2. From Salin-de-Giraud to Fos-sur-Mer

«As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them» (*Luke 7:38*).

After travelling through the salt marshes, you will leave Camargue to meet new horizons in the footsteps of St Mary Magdalene. This stage, alternating between land and water, crosses the beautiful *Port Saint Louis du Rhône*.

Route.

Stage length: 10.6 km

Duration: 3 hrs. 00 mins.

Ascent: 24 m – Descent: 39 m

Difficulty level: easy

Route: landscape and relief

Leave Salin de Giraud and head for the Bac de Barcarin ferry. The crossing takes 5 minutes and makes this stage feel like an amazing adventure. When you reach *Port Saint Louis du Rhône* and its famous *Tour Saint-Louis* tower overlooking the Rhône, walk along the river and then take a bus (lines 1 or 2) to Fos-sur-Mer (bus stop Douane in Port Saint Louis du Rhône and Vallins in Fos-sur-Mer). Today's route ends at the Etang de l'Estomac in Fos-sur-Mer.

Must-see sights to visit

If you love all things curious, don't miss a visit to the Tour Saint-Louis Tower in *Port Saint Louis du Rhône*. This tower houses a fascinating ornithological collection and also hosts temporary exhibitions. If you prefer the sea, then during the Camargue tour you will definitely want to relax on the city's three beaches, especially on the main one – Place Napoleon: Place Napoleon is decorated with 10 km of golden sands. (In the Footsteps:st.2). Stop to admire the kite surfers riding the rough waves and watch the mouth of the Grand Rhône river. Fishermen, shellfish farmers and other mariners are also an integral part of this wild world.

Stage 3. From Fos-sur-Mer to Martigues

«Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven – as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little» (*Luke 7:47*).

A new stage of the route dedicated to St Mary Magdalene takes you from Fos-sur-Mer to Martigues on the Mediterranean coast. The route passes through the Martigues region, discovering its religious heritage. Marseille is fast approaching.

Route.

Length: 24.6 km

Ascent: 460 m – Descent: 455 m Passage time: 6 hrs. 00 min.

Difficulty level: not very difficult

Route: landscape and relief

Leaving *Fos*, you pass ponds, the Castillon National Forest and the Pourra Regional Nature Reserve. After the church of Saint-Maitre-le-Rempard and the Cadéraou balcony, you will reach the shore of the Etang de Berre. Take a walk along the Figueroa beach. Then you take a bus along the coast, cross the Caronte Canal and reach the heart of Martigues, a city built on the sea.

Must-see sights

After the natural landscapes, Martigues boasts a rich religious heritage that invites you to visit or pray. Take a stroll through the Provençal town and stop by the Eglise Sainte Marie-Madeleine church. Located in the Île district, this building was erected in 1680 and boasts a magnificent two-storey facade. The sculptural decoration of the Virgin and Child deserves special attention. The *Chapelle Notre-Dame-des-Marins* (Our Lady of the Sailors Chapel), dedicated to sailors, has an *ex-voto* offering (an Italian word for an object offered as a gift to a deity (in Christian times, to God, Virgin Mary, saint) for grace received or a vow fulfilled) and a magnificent silver Madonna (In the Footsteps: st.3).

Stage 4. From Martigues to Carry-le-Rouet

«The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out» (Luke 8:2).

Your journey in the footsteps of St Mary Magdalene continues on Mediterranean soil. A large part of the route runs along wild coastlines, buried in camouflage of exceptional colours against the turquoise blue waters. Welcome to an invigorating breath of sea air.

Route

Length: 27.6 km

Ascent: 630 m – Descent: 643 m Duration: 9 hrs. 00 min.

Difficulty level: not too difficult

Must-see sights

After discovering Martigue and its treasures on the St Mary Magdalene Trail, you cross the country's interior to reach the sea. You'll pass through the *Wallonne du Mistral* before reaching the *Path of the Guides*. Be prepared for a steep climb. After you pass the Chapel of St Croix, you will have uninterrupted views of the seafront. Continue along the Côte d'Azur to the charming port of *Sausset-les-Pins*. One last push and you will arrive in *Carry-le-Rouet* on the Cap Roussset beach. In La Gatasse, if you want to increase your time on the coast, you can choose an alternative route that will take you past the military remains, Bonnier Bay, Pointe de Carreau, Cape Couronne and St Croix beach (Vidal-González, 2023).

Must-see attractions

Treat yourself to a well-deserved dip in the sea by crossing the *Plage de Sainte-Croix de Martigues*, crowned by the chapel of the same name. The water here is crystal clear, and the beach is hidden in a cosy little bay. There is plenty to do in Carry-le-Rouet. The *Parc Marin de la Côte Bleue* marine park offers many exciting snorkelling routes that reveal our thriving underwater plant and animal life – all you need is a mask, fins and snorkel (In the Footsteps: st.4). We love the atmosphere of these unassuming little Mediterranean ports, nestled between cliffs and bathed in pink light at sunset.

Stage 5. From Carry-le-Rouet to Marseille L'Estaque

«Martha, Martha», the Lord answered, «you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed – or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her» (Luke 10: 41-42).

Head out in the morning from Carry-le-Rouet to the *Chemin des Eaux Salées* (Saltwater Trail) for a rather athletic hike along the Côte d'Azur (Botella-Carrubi, 2019). After the chapel, go down to the water and walk in the rhythm of the waves lapping at the shore. A little further on, you will reach the Calanques du Puy trail and then the Redonna trail. The sea air offers a pleasant coolness. After Port-de-Grand-Méjean, the trail heads uphill and adjoins the *Calanques de Niolon fjord*. At Grand-Méjean, you can choose an alternative route that takes you through the hinterland of Ensues-la-Redonnaise, the plain of Souy and the plateau du Medecin. Take in the magnificent views of the Bay of Marseille and the Friulian Islands. Next on your route are the Collet de Figueroa and the Vallon de l'Establon, before crossing the Plage de Corbières beach and arriving in Marseille's Estac quarter.

Route.

Length: 20 km

Ascent: 1034 m – Descent: 1021 m Duration: 7 hours.

Difficulty level: quite difficult

Must-see sights

The first thing that will interest you is the *Chapelle du Rouet*. Located on the cape of Cap de la Vieille, this 17th-century chapel is guarded by a statue of the Virgin Mary breastfeeding a

baby. After the Second World War, the chapel almost fell into ruins, but was saved by dedicated locals who worked tirelessly to restore this priceless little piece of heritage. A few kilometres further on, the Calank des Aux Salets fjord resembles a wild and unspoilt paradise (In the Footsteps: st.5). Take the time to admire the beautiful views and relax a little... You'll also notice a viaduct (an architectural monument) crossing the landscape. When you arrive in Marseille, the *Plage de Corbières* beach offers the perfect place to unwind after a long day on the coastal footpaths.

Stage 6. From Marseille L'Estaque to Marseille City Centre (Saint-Victor)

«When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, «Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died» (*John 11: 32*).

You start from l'Estaque and its charming little port. This Marseille hike starts at the Marseille Provence Métropole. Then you follow the path from Saint-Antoine to Saint-Joseph. You will then pass the Saint-Madeline fountain and one of Marseille's Catholic churches, Notre Dame du Mont Carmel in Les Aigalades. The sea appears at the side of the road, and then you set off to explore the city, passing the Cathédrale de la Major. Climb Mount des Accoules and walk around the Old Port before reaching Saint-Victor and its abbey (*The International Journal: 2022*).

Route

Length: 20 km

Ascent: 469 m – Descent: 483 m Duration: 5 hours.

Difficulty level: not too difficult

Must-see sights

You will have a magnificent panoramic view of the Grotte Hermitage Aigalades, the place where, according to legend, Mary Magdalene took refuge with her relatives. A visit to Marseille by way of Mary Magdalene will lead you to the Abbey of Saint Victor. The altar dedicated to the saint is located in a crypt carved in the rock (In the Footsteps:st.6). This exceptional place invites prayer and contemplation.

Stage 7. From Marseille City Centre to Marseille La Barasse

«Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume» (*John 12:3*).

A 100% stopover in Fosse. Your footsteps will take you through the colourful, lively neighbourhoods of this Provencal town, where the sea air dries the laundry on the windows.

Enjoy a wonderful day in the footsteps of Mary Magdalene.

Route.

Length: 16.5 km

Ascent: 339 m – Descent: 384 m Passage time: 4 hours.

Difficulty level: fairly easy

In recent study (*Judák, 2022*) has described the first place to visit as the famous "good mother": *the Basilica of Notre-Dame de la Garde*. A monumental cathedral that dominates the city and offers a breath-taking panorama of the sea and surrounding mountains. The popular and colourful Noailles district has a large daily market and boutiques. This lively, multicultural neighbourhood consists of numerous narrow streets and Ottoman-style buildings. At the north-eastern end of Canebius, the *Eglise des Réformés*, a building as tall as Notre Dame de Paris, stands in all its splendour and whiteness. Finally, the *Chapel of Notre Dame de Nazareth* invites you to meditation and prayer. Go to the choir to admire the gilded wooden statue of the Virgin Mary from the 17th century.

You will start this tour in the heart of Marseille. After Saint-Victor Abbey, climb the stairs to Pierre Puiget's garden and walk up *rue Canebier* to the church of *Sainte-Marie-Madeleine des Chartreux* (In the Footsteps:st.7). You'll pass through the Blancard district and bypass the Saint-Pierre cemetery. In Saint-Loup, you'll cross the Yuvon River to get to Valbarel. Then you'll follow steep paths and passages to Saint-Cyr Park and the Notre Dame de Nazareth Chapel. Follow the Pic Foch trail to the Barasses district.

Stage 8. From Marseille La Barasse to Gémenos

«Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene» (*John 19:25*).

On the previous stage of your journey, you explored Marseille. Now you'll leave the city and travel through the landscapes so dear to Marcel Pagnol, between the Garlaban and Sainte-Baume hills, full of the timeless charm of the deepest Provence.

You depart from the Marseille district of *La Barasse*. This day of hiking in Provence will start beautifully (under sunny skies, of course). It has been noted (*Damari, 2016*), soon you will pass through La Candolle, La Mille and then the Vallon de Llouinan. From here you can enjoy a beautiful panorama of rocky massifs and the Vallon de la Barasse, where Saint Marie-Madeleine undoubtedly spent several centuries. We leave behind the chapel of Notre Dame de Nazareth. The sea is very close: try to catch a glimpse of Cap Canaille! After the Escourtin Valley, you will rejoin the *Marseille Provence Métropole* after the Escourtin Valley. After crossing the Aubagne, take the road des Petits-Mellets and the road *Chemin de Saint-Jean-deGarguier*. Then there is a direct road to Gémenos, where you will stay. If you want to walk through La Barasse, there is an alternative route from La Pennes-sur-Guevonne that will allow you to stay in an urban environment. From Saint-Jean-de-Gargier, an alternative route takes you a little slower to the Plan d'Op.

Route.

Length: 25 km

Ascent: 846 m – Descent: 915 m Passage time: 6 hrs. 15 min.

Difficulty level: fairly difficult

Surrounded by rugged landscapes, Aubagne has a charming charm that was well described by the most famous Provençal writer Marcel Pagnol. To visit Aubagne is to stroll through the narrow streets and perhaps hear the accents of the locals in the echo. Visit the SaintSauveur church, a fine example of the evolution of church art, built on the basis of a Romanesque chapel from the 12th century. Admire the 17th-century Virgin and Child and the monumental organ. The Chapelle des Pénitents Blancs, a symbol of the exponential growth of the fraternities in the 18th century, has been completely restored. Here, the local Aubagne stone has been hewn and worked in the most beautiful way. The Chapel of the Blessed completes your spiritual tour. Baroque in style, it can only be seen from the outside (In the Footsteps :st.8). The world of Pagnol and Provence can be discovered in Pagnol's Petit World, his birthplace, and in the Village des Santons.

Stage 9. From Gémenos to Plan d'Aups

He asked her, «Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?». Thinking he was the gardener, she said, «Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him». Jesus said to her, «Mary». She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, «Rabboni!» (which means «Teacher») (*John 20, 15-16*).

Now that you've crossed the Massif du Garlaban, you'll see another mountain range: The Massif de la Sainte-Baume. This stage promises to delight pilgrims, as it leads to a sacred place – the cave where St Mary Magdalene lived her last years as a hermit.

You set off from Gemenos on the same path as Saint Mary Magdalene. The trail passes through vegetation similar to that of the other stages, with some alpine influences in the Saint-Baume Regional Nature Park (<https://provence-alpes-cotedazur.com/en-plan-daups/>).

Pass by the stream du Foges and enjoy the freshness of the exceptional natural environment of the Saint-Baume massif, which is the backdrop for this hike. After crossing the Col du Fauge, you will find yourself back in the mountains. Keep the chapel of Saint-Pillon in sight, and shortly after the pass you will see the chapels of Parisienne. Beyond the Pas de la Cabrette, the grotto of St Mary Magdalene awaits you. The magnificent forest opens its arms and you arrive at the Hostellerie. The Saint-Pillon chapel offers a 360° panoramic view stretching from the Mediterranean to the Alps.

Route

Length: 19 km

Ascent: 1245 m – Descent: 717 m Duration: 6 hrs. 20 min.

Difficulty level: fairly difficult

The natural scenery along this route is rich, as is the cultural and religious heritage. Stroll through the narrow streets of Gémenos, a town full of atmosphere, with its 16th-century castle and, above all, the Abbey of Saint-Pont. The highlight of the scene is undoubtedly the grotto of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine in the Plan d'Aups forest, which has been visited by more than 40 sovereigns from Saint Louis (1254) to Louis XVI (1660), thanks to the Kings' Paths from the basilica (In the Footsteps:st.9). Catholics flock here in droves, as the saint is believed to have lived here for the last 30 years of her life. This must-see place in Vary is a natural corner and a spiritual sanctuary of great beauty.

Stage 10. From Plan d'Aups to Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume

Jesus said, «Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, «I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God» (John 20:17).

After yesterday's unique spiritual experience, your journey will continue in the Sainte-Baume hills. The author (*Bernstein, 2018*) has stated, that this stage will lead you to the capital of the region, Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume, and the final destination of your journey in the footsteps of Saint Mary Magdalene.

The route of this hike in the Sainte-Baume starts from the Hostellerie and soon follows the Chemin des Roys. As you make your way through the undergrowth, you will feel a pleasant coolness that will help you to exhaust yourself. A little further on, the Chemin de l'Orge gives way to the Chemin de Ménarguette. Admire the typically Mediterranean vegetation of the SaintBaume Regional Nature Park. What a great way to visit Provence! Then follow the canal to the Caumon Aqueduct. You arrive at the famous Basilica of Saint Mary Magdalene in SaintMaximin-la-Sainte-Baume.

Route.

Length: 28 km

Ascent: 1008 m – Descent: 638 m Duration: 7 hours.

Difficulty level: quite difficult

The Saint-Jaume church, founded in Plan d'Op around the fifth century, is worth a visit (In the Footsteps:st.10). It testifies to the religious past of the region. The Basilica of St Mary Magdalene in Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume, the last stop on this spiritual route, will impress you with its gigantic size: 73 metres long, 43 metres wide and 29 metres high. This monumental structure houses the relics of St Mary Magdalene, including her skull.



Photo 1. Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume basilica: Sainte-Marie-Madeleine basilica of Gothic style. Source: www.france-voyage.com/tourism1

4. The significance of the image of Saint Mary Magdalene in painting

Mary Magdalene inspired artists to create masterpieces. There are about 20 world-famous paintings by great artists of the Classicist and Renaissance periods depicting the saint. The great masters of painting dedicated their works to Magdalene, and each of them embodied something different in her image. Mary Magdalene was a favourite subject for both artists and the public, because she was an ideal model of the search for virtue and renunciation of earthly pleasures (*Phillips, 2018*). Let us consider some of them.



Photo 2. Diego Velázquez's Christ in the House of Martha and Mary, 1618. Source: muzei-mira.com/l

This religious painting depicts an episode from the Gospel of Luke, when Christ stops at the house of Martha and Mary. The painting was completed in 1618 during Velázquez's Seville period, shortly after he finished his studies with Pacheco. The painting depicts Mary listening to Christ while Martha prepares food for him. The painting encourages contemplation rather than action, suggesting that Mary represents contemplatives who worship without distraction, while Martha represents those who devote themselves to work and labour. It is noteworthy that the women are depicted as active participants in this religious scene – Marta is preparing the

food, while Maria listens attentively instead of helping her sister prepare the food. Interestingly, the woman in the foreground, who is crushing garlic in a mortar, symbolises Lent or a fasting day. Despite its mysteriousness, Christ in the House of Martha and Mary has become the subject of iconographic analysis over time. Although scholars are unable to accurately interpret its mysterious elements, such as the objects hanging on the wall or the figures depicted in the background, it still remains one of Velázquez's most beautiful paintings to survive to this day (www.artchive.com).

The maid is pounding garlic in a mortar, while other ingredients are scattered on the table: fish, eggs, red pepper and a ceramic jug, probably containing olive oil. The older woman points to the woman, as if to give her instructions or to reproach her for working too hard, or she draws our attention to the figures in the background.

The scene depicted in the upper right corner is taken from the New Testament (*Luke 10: 38-42*). As Mary sits at the feet of Jesus listening to Him, her sister Martha complains that she should not be left alone to serve the meal. Jesus replies: "Mary has taken the good portion that should not be taken from her". We see the painting through an opening, although it could also be read as a reflection in a mirror or a painting hanging on a wall. The figures in the foreground, dressed in modern clothes, could be depicted as Martha and Mary of the last days (www.nationalgallery.org.uk).



Photo 3. El Greco, 1577. Penance of Mary Magdalene».

Source: www.wikiart.org/ru/el-greko1577

«Penance of Mary Magdalene» (www.wikiart.org/ru/el-greko1577) is a 1577 painting by El Greco depicting Mary Magdalene, created during his first period in Toledo, and shows the great influence of Titian on the artist's work at the time. It is now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest. The painting depicts Mary Magdalene as a hermit in the desert, surrounded by overgrown ivy, which symbolises eternal life through penance. Her folded arms and upward-facing eyes direct the viewer's attention to heaven and salvation. El Greco drew inspiration from the Bible for this work, which depicts Mary Magdalene's repentance through her posture and facial expressions. In addition, ominous dark clouds hang over her as a reminder of God's judgement and punishment if one does not repent. A skull lies at Magdalene's feet, alluding to

mortality and symbolising the transience of human life. The dawn landscape, bathed in cold, pale moonlight tones, is a subtle echo of the radiating experience of spiritual catharsis (www.artchive.com/artwork).



Photo 4. Caravaggio's Martha and Mary Magdalene, 1598.

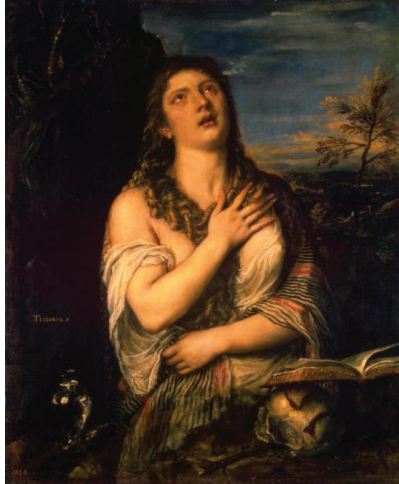
Source: dia.org/collection/-36204

In 1598, Caravaggio created 'Martha and Mary Magdalene' (also known as 'The Conversion of Magdalene'). According to a will dated 1606, the painting was originally purchased by one of Caravaggio's patrons, Ottavio Costa. The painting *Martha and Mary Magdalene*, painted in oil and tempera on canvas, is believed to depict the exact moment of Mary Magdalene's atonement. She is leaning against a convex mirror that reflects the lighted window behind her sister Martha. The two women appear to be in deep conversation, while Martha, who is in the shadows, counts on her fingers. Traditionally, scholars agree that the painting «*Martha and Mary Magdalene*» depicts the moment of the Conversion of Mary Magdalene (Nicolaidis, 2018).

However, if we compare this painting with Caravaggio's 1597 painting «*Penance of Mary Magdalene*», where the identification of Mary's atonement is obvious, the moment depicted in *Martha and Mary Magdalene* is quite different. This article argues that the *Martha and Mary Magdalene* of 1598 does not depict the scene of Mary's atonement, but the moment after it. Caravaggio depicts Mary after the atonement in order to convey two types of Christian beliefs of the Counter-Reformation: good deeds and spiritual love, which are represented by the two women in the painting. It is through the study of the formal and iconographic elements of the painting and other paintings of the Magdalene against the backdrop of the Counter-Reformation that a new interpretation emerges (digitalcommons.odu.edu/).

Titian was one of those artists who depicted the Magdalene as a symbol of redemption. In two iconic works, he shows Magdalene repenting. The viewer sees the moment from the Gospel when Magdalene realises her sinful life and weeps, looking up to heaven. Titian's first *Magdalene* was painted in 1531, and then he returned to it 30 years later (kulturologia.ru/blogs/).

The Penitent Magdalene was the most frequently commissioned subject for Titian and the most successful in his oeuvre. The demand for paintings of the saint was high for over forty years, during which the artist repeatedly subtly changed and altered the composition – perhaps in the pursuit of perfection, or perhaps simply to provide patrons with his own individual version of the plot. The study of «*The Penitent Magdalene*» by Titian has been the subject of much scholarly research (blog.dorotheum.com/).



**Photo 5. Titian «Repentance of Mary Magdalene», 1565.
Source: www.artbible.info/art/html**



**Photo 6. Francesco Furini's Mary Magdalene, 1630-1635.
Source: www.alamyimages.fr/photost**

Francesco Furini studied painting in Florence under Christofano Allori and was well connected to the Medici court. He excelled in depicting female heroines and saints, who were given a look of melancholic contemplation. It was the overall emotional colouring and skilfully painted sfumato that attracted great attention to his work and followers who learnt to paint from his works. Mary Magdalene is crying tears of regret for her sinful life. This saint is symbolised by a pot of peace. It is a reminder of the event described in the Gospels, when at a feast at Simon's house, Mary washed Christ's feet with her tears, and then anointed and wiped them with her hair.



Photo 7. Georges de Latour, Magdalene with a Smoky Candle, 1638-1640.

Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art9>

In de Latour's painting, Mary Magdalene sits in front of a table, completely absorbed in her thoughts. Her right hand rests on her skull, her legs are bare, and her white shirt reveals her bare shoulders. Mary Magdalene's body is enveloped in mysterious darkness, and her face is illuminated only by a candle. The lamp not only creates an atmosphere of movement, but is also an element that hints at the fragility of human life. Thanks to this light source, we can see books and attributes that characterise the Passion of Christ and the transience of life. Here is a wooden cross and a bloody whip. The skull is Golgotha, the place of Christ's crucifixion. The hand caressing the skull also has a meaning: it reflects the theme of death. The flames and the skull together represent the transience and irreversibility of time. Thus, all the elements of the painting refer to the themes of repentance and trials sent by God (<https://kulturologia./>).

With its extraordinary contrasts of candlelight and shadow, reduced geometry, and meditative mood, this painting is an example of La Tour's painting at its most accomplished and characteristic. These visual qualities were a powerful counterweight to the typical pomp and showiness of Baroque painting. A native of the Duchy of Lorraine in eastern modern France, Georges de Latour was indebted to Caravaggian painting, but he sought even more simplified forms. The tranquil atmosphere of this painting perfectly matches the subject, Mary Magdalene, who has given up bodily pleasures for a life of penance and reflection. She is depicted with a mirror, a symbol of vanity; a skull, an emblem of mortal life; and a candle, which probably indicates her spiritual enlightenment (<https://www.metmuseum9>).

Looking at this work, the viewer does not immediately recognise St Magdalene in the heroine. She is depicted as a beauty with long golden hair in the Pre-Raphaelite style. Interestingly, Sandys specialised in the girded figures of beautiful and fatal women. Sandys' meticulous attention to detail is typical of the Pre-Raphaelite school. Sandys's images of female beauty are iconic depictions of charming and mysterious women, representing his unique style. The heroine is depicted almost in profile. The background is dark green with English ornamentation. The heroine is holding a vessel with legs (her main attribute), and her shoulders are covered with a red and green shawl with floral ornaments. This image of Magdalene stands out from the rest of the paintings. Mary Magdalene is considered a saint in the Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran churches. Some other Protestant churches honour her as a heroine of the faith. Mary Magdalene is the only figure from the Bible that Sandys ever painted, and he gave Magdalene a powerful and sensual appearance (<https://joyofmuseums.com/>).



Photo 8. Mary Magdalene by Frederic Sandys, 1858-1860.

Source: <https://joyofmuseums.com/>

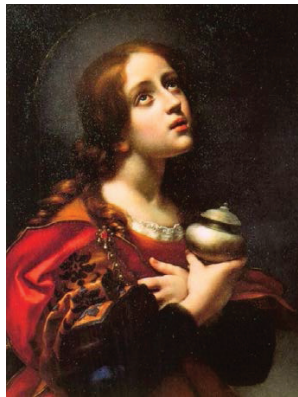


Photo 9. Carlo Dolci «Penance of Mary Magdalene», 1670.

Source: <https://data.fitzmuseum.4>

The repentance of St Mary Magdalene is a traditional theme, especially popular in seventeenth-century Italian art. In the painting by Carlo Dolci, Magdalene is depicted with her hair down, her right hand on her chest, and the palm of her left hand raised up and resting on an open book. Her traditional attribute, the pot of oil with which she came to anoint Christ, is depicted in the right foreground among the rocks. By the way, the loose hair and the pot are a reference to the Gospel of Luke (7:37-8). The scripture describes a sinful woman who anointed the feet of Christ, washed them with her tears and wiped them with her long hair. Carlo Dolci was a deeply devout man and became famous for his emotional rendering of religious subjects and his meticulous description of details. Mary Magdalene was his most frequently depicted heroine (*Beavis, 2013: 145-154*).



Photo 10. The Transfiguration of Mary Magdalene (Repentance of Mary Magdalene) by Artemisia Gentileschi, 1615-1616. Source: <https://www.uffizi.n>

Artemisia Gentileschi was the first woman artist to join the Florentine Academy, and she painted the image of the touching Magdalene in 1616 (<https://www.uffizi.n>). It was the Medici family commission. Gentileschi's heroine is dressed in a yellow dress with lace and sits among luxurious silk and velvet. One of Magdalene's hands is clasped to her chest, and the other to the mirror that showed her who she was before God. Her eyes are now fully open and long for freedom, Christ, and light. Mary Magdalene does not cease to be beautiful when she turns to Christ, but this beauty is no longer for enrichment. It is for the glorification of the Lord, who loves her more than anyone else ever could. Artemisia Gentileschi wanted to tell the story of this difficult journey by depicting a young woman with loose hair, wrapped in a luxurious yellow silk dress, holding a mirror, a symbol of vanity, with the inscription «Optimam partem elegit» («You have chosen the best»), namely, the virtue) at a distance from her. A beam of intense light illuminates the figure on the right, demonstrating a technique that Artemisia may have learned from studying Caravaggio's work in Rome, and conveys a sense of drama that envelops the subject. The human and professional parable of Artemisia Gentileschi, an extraordinary artist and energetic woman, is fascinating because she is considered a harbinger of female talent, gifted with a unique character and willpower. It was this talent that allowed her, when she arrived in Florence from Rome at a very young age, to enter the Florence Academy of Art and Design, learn to read, write, play a musical instrument and become part of the cultural world in every sense (<https://www.uffizi.n>).

5. Prayer to St Mary Magdalene in the context of sacred communication during pilgrimage

O holy myrrh-bearer and all-merited disciple of Christ, Mary Magdalene! To you, as a faithful and powerful Lord intercessor for us, sinners and unworthy, we now diligently resort and pray in the humility of our hearts.

In your life you suffered terrible wiles of the devil, but by the grace of Christ you were delivered from them, and by your prayers you deliver us from the nets of the devil, so that in

all our lives we may always serve the one Holy Lord God faithfully in deed, word, thought and secret thoughts of our hearts, as we have promised Him.

You loved the sweetest Lord Jesus above all earthly goods, and therefore you walked well through your life, and by His divine teaching and grace not only nourished your soul, but also led many people from the darkness of the pagans to Christ, who is a wonderful light; knowing this, we ask you: «Ask us from Christ God for the grace that enlightens and sanctifies, so that, inspired by it, we may succeed in faith and piety, in deeds of love and selflessness, and may we strive with inspiration to serve our neighbours in their spiritual and physical needs, remembering the example of your love for humanity».

O holy Mary, you lived your life on earth with vigour by the grace of God and departed peacefully to the heavenly abodes, pray to Christ the Saviour that through your prayers He may grant us to make our journey through this valley of weeping without hindrance and to end our lives in peace and repentance, and so, having lived in holiness on earth, we may attain to eternal blessed life in heaven, and there, with you and all the saints, we will always praise the Undivided Trinity and sing the praises of the One Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen. (<https://patriarchia.org.ua/molytva-do-svyatoyi-mariyi-magdalyny/>).

6. The figure of St Mary Magdalene in cinema

Since Saint Mary Magdalene was considered the first exorcist, and Jesus cast out seven demons from her, as described in the Gospel of Luke, cinema also did not stand aside, and a number of films were made about this personality, in which Mary Magdalene was portrayed from different angles, both as a saint and as a simple woman with ordinary life problems and feelings.

The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out (*Luke 8:2*).

A recent study (*Panchenko, et al. 2023*) stated examples of films about Mary Magdalene: «Mary Magdalene» (2000), Germany, Italy; «Magdalene: Deliverance from Shame» (2007), USA; «Mary Magdalene» (2018), «The Woman in Red: The True Story of Mary Magdalene» (2017), documentary series «The Apostles» (5 episodes) (2015), Israel; The Bible: Courage (10th episode), (2013), USA; a multi-part television series about the life of Christ and the apostles «The Chosen» (2017-2020), USA.

The purpose of these feature films, of course, is the biblical retellings of the New Testament, the Good News about the deeds of the Apostles led by Jesus Christ, the main Apostle-messenger of God, and St Mary Magdalene fills these films with high spiritual content and hope for salvation and the possibility of an ordinary worldly person to reach sacred heights, but for this you need to work on yourself and your spiritual life (<https://velychliviv.com/>).

7. Conclusions

In the article, the author examined the pilgrimage routes of St Mary Magdalene in terms of the transformation of the route from its historical significance as a physical path to the means of modern types of communication through virtual travel, and recreated the 222 km long French route consisting of 10 sacred stages to the final destination of the Cathedral of St Mary Magdalene, where the relics are located (*Norton, 2009*).

The author (*Panchenko, S. et al., 2022*) emphasises that the creative search led to art, in particular painting, in which Mary Magdalene was often depicted by prominent artists and these works of art were accompanied by secrets, legends, codes, and later literary masterpieces were

created, which were transformed into modern cinema on sacred themes. It also testifies to an artistic pilgrimage to cultural works and world masterpieces.

The figure of St Mary Magdalene is full of secrets, ambiguous legends, and ambiguous conclusions, which is why it is quite interesting and mysterious for all time, as people are always looking for subtext, reading between the lines and coming up with their own versions, and this is the mystery of the legendary biblical heroine Mary Magdalene. That is why a number of documentaries and fiction films have been released in which Mary Magdalene is the main character, and this gives the authors hope for further research on the analysis of films about Mary Magdalene and legends from the New Testament in the context of contemporary cinema as Christian communication.

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