



**Politecnico
di Torino**

Honors Thesis

Master's degree Architecture Heritage Preservation and Enhancement

Las Rutas de las iglesias y los navegantes del XXI siglo

Project for new slow-mobility cultural itineraries among the churches of the Chiloé archipelago.

Tutor/Correlator

**Morezzi Emanuele
Lorenzo Gerolamo Berg Costa**

Candidate

Aglio Matteo

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Sailing through the Chiloé Archipelago reveals the prominent presence of Chiloti church bell towers amidst the natural landscape, serving as navigational landmarks. Despite the transformative impact of automobiles on local mobility, these architectural structures persist as iconic symbols for residents, embodying cultural and landscape references.



Figura 1 View of the church of Lingua from the Lancha

The inception of Chiloti churches can be traced back to the *Misión circular*, an evangelization system initiated by the Jesuit order in the 17th century and perpetuated by Franciscan missionaries from Ocopa. Additionally, the Franciscans of the New Reformed Roman Province sustained this system throughout the 19th century. These architectural embodiments signify the profound evolution of *Huilliche* culture over centuries, both technically and socially, influenced by European contributions brought by missionaries and colonists. This process of transculturation gave rise to the Chiloti Communities, a social framework characterized by mutual support in labor and religious life, overseen by the *Fiscal*.

Contemporary observation reveals that the current state of Chiloé's churches is a result of amalgamation of cultural influences that revolutionized local construction techniques. Serving as exemplars, they embody the virtuous models conceived by

the Escuela chilota de arquitectura religiosa en madera during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. From the latter half of the 20th century onwards, the significance of Chiloé's churches has experienced exponential growth, capturing the imagination of both the public, eager to explore this architectural heritage, and the scholarly community. This surge in importance culminated in the designation of the church of Achao as a National Historic Monument in 1951. Fifty years later, in 1999, sixteen of these architectural masterpieces achieved recognition on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

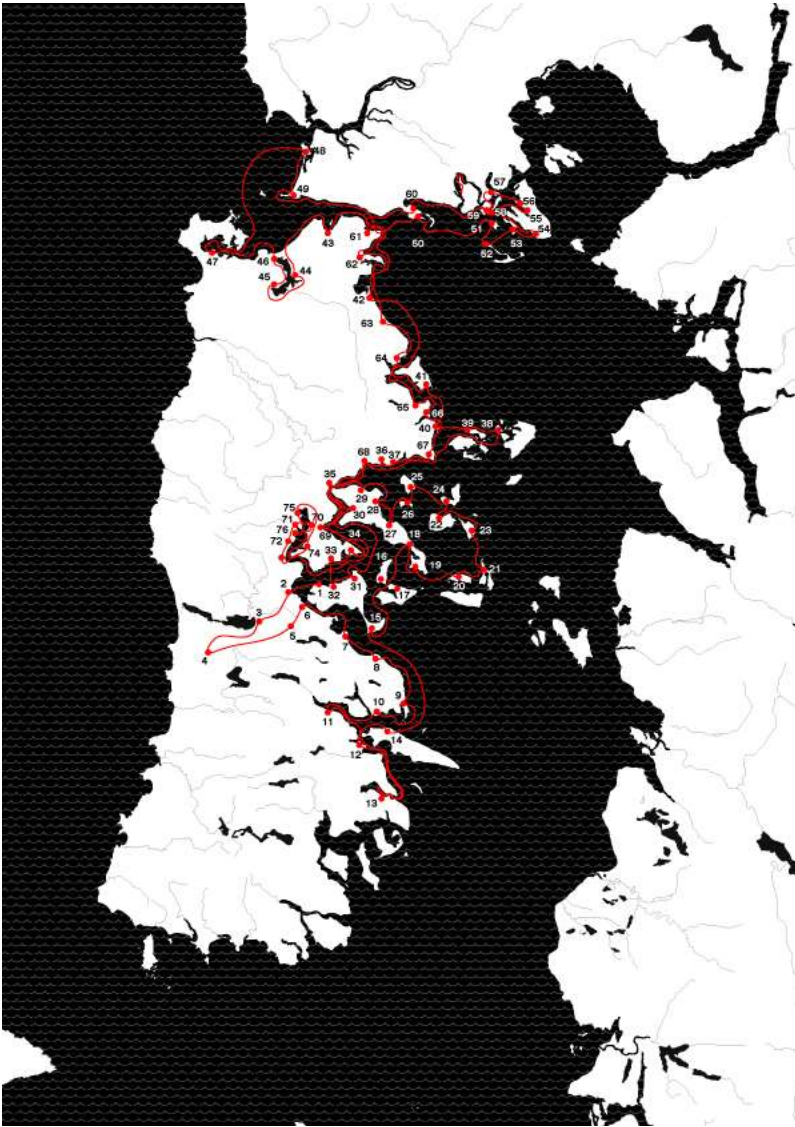


Figura 2 Map of the *Misión Circular* of 1783. Map revised from: Tampe Maldonado E. - *Tres siglos de misiones en Chiloé*, Santiago de Chile, Editorial Salesiana, 1981

The surge in cultural tourism, propelled by the prestige of World Heritage Site designation and seasonal tourism dynamics, has triggered conflicts involving communities, local administrations, and tourism entities due to an influx of visitors exceeding reception capacities. This persisting issue is exacerbated by the

absence of a provincial-level organization that, confronted with a heritage of extreme fragility characterized by intangible aspects, delegates tourism management to local entities such as parishes or communities. Consequently, this situation poses evident challenges in terms of communication and heritage preservation.

In response to the identified challenges during the analysis phase, the project aims to present a more sustainable approach to exploring the archipelago. This involves reducing the burden on tourist centers in the region and introducing a narrative strategy. Through three cycling routes mirroring the circular mission stages, the project seeks to unveil the natural and cultural heritage of the archipelago, reviving the historical connection with the sea. Strategically positioned structures along the routes serve to support travelers and assist residents during unfavorable weather conditions. The focal point of the project is the involvement of communities, representing the authentic heritage of the archipelago as guardians of traditions and collective memories. The proposal advocates for their direct participation in heritage communication, transforming them into both witnesses of Chiloti culture and guides within their communities.

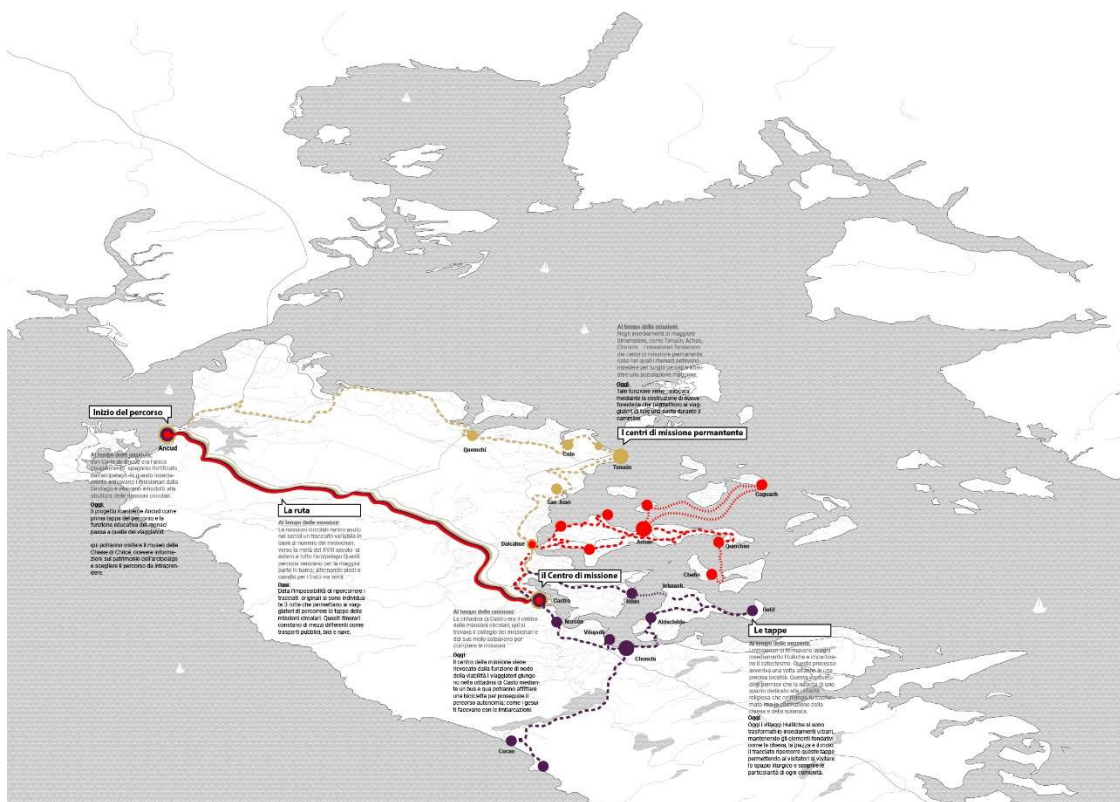


Figura 3 Three routes of slow mobility

