

New Tourism in the 21st Century

New Tourism in the 21st Century:
Culture, the City, Nature and Spirituality

Edited by

Rubén C. Lois-González, Xosé M. Santos-Solla
and Pilar Taboada-de-Zuñiga

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P U B L I S H I N G

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This book first published 2014

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-5892-7, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-5892-2

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CHAPTER ONE

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS ROUTES: A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Tourism is growing and the way in which people take their holidays is also changing. Travellers are more aware now of the importance of their free time and are more selective in their choice of holiday: they demand greater value, more experiences and higher levels of quality. The duration of holiday trips is shorter but people are taking them more frequently over the course of the year. There is also a tendency to organise independent holidays, outside the package deals offered by tour operators. There is a preference for physically and intellectually active holidays, with a growing demand not only for recreational activities, sport and adventure, but also for knowledge of the history, culture and environment of the places being visited. New types of tourism that are more closely linked to culture, nature, health, religion, etc., are growing three times faster than more traditional forms. In the wake of this, numerous thematic tourist routes have been set up, based on food and wine, nature, culture and religion (e.g. the pilgrims' road to Santiago de Compostela, the Via Francigena, etc.). Cultural tourism is one of the most popular and fastest growing sectors, within which religious tourism is growing rapidly, despite being highly complex and fragmentary in its implementation and despite the management issues linked to the various and sometimes incompatible interests that are associated with it. Not the least of these is the highly diversified variety of players, public and private, secular and ecclesiastical, who consider themselves to be responsible for managing the sector and

seek to benefit from it. Following a theoretical approach to the concepts of cultural and religious tourism, this paper analyses its features and recent tendencies, stressing its role as an important factor in local development with reference to specific European stories.

Key words: Heritage, cultural and religious tourism, routes, management, regional development.

1. Introduction

Cultural tourism is a growing sector, with an increasingly rich and differentiated range of products and services, which not only enables tourists to improve their knowledge via the traditional cultural journey based on visits to museums and places of historic and architectural interest, but also enables them to establish a form of empathy with the places and populations they visit. Since the 1980s, traditional cultural tourism has proved to be of limited economic value, both for the tourist destinations themselves, which have seen the progressive erosion of their cultural idiosyncrasies and characteristic social structures, and for the increasingly sophisticated tourists, who demand high levels of information and empathy with the local population. More successful is travel as an educational, social, emotional and participatory experience for the tourist, who seeks to 'live' the place he or she is visiting, get to know the people who inhabit it, understand their culture and buy their products. This is a form of creative tourism based more on interaction with the region than on the cultural contextualisation of the visits. It is a journey that enables involvement in authentic and genuine experiences and participatory interaction with the region's artistic expressions, cultural heritage and characteristic products (handicraft, agriculture and food). In addition, it entails contact with the residents and the creative flow of their living culture (Richards and Wilson, 2006; 2008; Richards, 2011).

One of the most popular forms of cultural tourism practised today is religious heritage tourism, of interest above all to the modern tourist seeking cultural and experiential enrichment (Timothy, Boyd, 2003; San Martín, Rodríguez del Bosque, 2008).

Religious is a term that has long been discussed and debated in the tourism literature; differing conceptualisations and usages have been put forward, resulting in a number of academic articles on the subject in recent years. The early but important theoretical works (for example by Turner, 1973; Cohen, 1979; Nolan, Nolan, 1992; Vukonić, 1996) have been followed by an extensive literature focusing on the reasons for religious tourism, the types of tourist-pilgrim and their dichotomous characteristics

(Cohen, 1992; Hitrec, 1990; Smith, 1992; Barber, 1993; Stoddard, 1997; Poças Santos, 2003; Singh, 2005; Digance, 2006; Mustonen, 2006; Sesana, 2006; Ambrosio, 2007; Blackwell, 2007; Griffin, 2007; Shinde, 2007; Ron, 2009; Alecu, 2010; Collins-Kreiner, 2010; della Dora, 2012). Worthy of note in this regard are the studies of their behaviour and experiences (Collins-Kreiner & Klot, 2000; Poria, Butler, Airey, 2003; Hughes, Bond, Ballantyne, 2013; Lopez, 2013). Then there are studies of the environmental and economic impact of religious tourism (see in Trono, 2012), with reference to recreational activities, accommodation and services (Poças Santos, 2000; Abreu, 2005; Brayley, 2009; Gray, Winton, 2009; Schmude, 2009; Rizzello, Trono, 2013) and into its impact on religious sites, structures and ceremonies (Gray and Winton, 2009; Herrero, Sanz, Devesa, 200; Razak, 2009; Serrallonga, 2009). Research has also been conducted into the capacity to manage the phenomenon (Shackley, 2002; Brayley, 2010; Lo Presti, Petrillo, 2010). There have also been some notable case studies of visits to holy places (e.g. those described in: Raj and Morpeth, 2007; Timothy & Olsen, 2006; Trono, 2009; 2012).

Visits to holy places are now frequently associated with the demand for routes of religious interest that allow the traveller to experience ancient pilgrimage routes, but also to satisfy emotional and intellectual needs, in the search for culture, authenticity and spirituality. Indeed, cultural tourism, linked to ancient devotional routes, generates flows associated with the new needs of society, increasingly anxious to combine physical well-being with spiritual equilibrium and serenity. It also provides opportunities to experience different cultures, to socialise and to establish relationships of trust and friendship with the communities visited. Combining harmoniously with the environmental context and attentive to regional assets, cultural routes generate new and alternative types of tourism such as religious tourism, eco-tourism, slow tourism, food-and-wine tourism, wellness tourism and health tourism. It is above all rural and marginal areas that are affected, gaining fame and benefits from the promotion of local products and the development of services and commercial activities.

This more than justifies the recent popularity of religious itineraries. These are now the subject of discussions and planning among associations, societies, foundations and organisations both public and private, secular and religious, on all geographical scales. Displaying a hitherto unusual interest in hagiography, there is a proliferation of proposals for religious itineraries with the reconstruction of ancient pilgrims routes. Not always scientifically rigorous and reliable, these are often caught between idealised

constructs and reality, apologies, historical narratives and fanciful rewritings of history.

After setting out a speculative approach to the concepts of religious/spiritual tourism and cultural routes, this paper analyses their characteristics and recent tendencies with particular reference to cultural itineraries associated with ancient historical/pilgrimage routes, highlighting their role as a key factor in local development, with reference to a European case of study.

2. From cultural tourism to spiritual heritage tourism

With regard to the theoretical interpretative models proposed by researchers and the tourism industry, inclined to label the tourist in accordance with the logic of the market, there is much debate over the exact meaning of the terms 'culture' and 'cultural heritage' and thus 'cultural tourism' itself (McKercher and Du Cros, 2002; Belluso, 2012).

Cultural tourism indicating a process that includes not just visits to sites, monuments and museums, but also the way of experiencing the places visited (Richards, 1996; 2001). Indeed, as Smith argues (Smith, 2009:16), *'definitions are broadening and change all the time'*. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) describes it as the movement of people for mainly cultural purposes, including participation in a plurality of events and activities (festivals, music, theatre, shows, visits to ancient farms, gastronomy and tasting typical local products, tours, visits to historic and religious monuments, archaeological areas, exhibitions, museums, courses, conferences, etc.). The WTO attributes two meanings to it. The first concerns movement prompted by purely cultural motives, the enjoyment of cultural heritage items such as archaeological sites, historic cities, museums, monuments, etc. The second is much more inclusive, encompassing all forms of mobility that aim to satisfy the need for diversity, the desire for knowledge and human curiosity, elevating the educational level of the travellers and increasing their knowledge via the experience of the encounter. Cultural tourism thus includes all cultural attractions, from historic monuments to handicraft, artefacts, music and dance festivals, the street life of various cultures, the distinctive lifestyles of indigenous populations and the new generation of attractions based on 'popular' culture in the context of local cultural heritage. This is in line with the new demand for holidays which, in contrast to the industrial tourism of the 'four Ss' (sun, sea, sand and sex), require the 'three Es' (excitement, education, entertainment) and are aimed at the discovery of a location's nature, history and culture. The tourist takes an active part in the

cultural and economic dynamics of the community he or she is visiting, and the community seeks to connect the visitors new' requirements and new sensitivity with the region's distinctive cultural and productive expressions, even where these lie outside the traditional set of tourism products and services on offer.

The new 'traveller' desires a holiday that enables participatory interaction with local artistic expressions, cultural heritage and characteristic local products and facilitates contact with the residents and the creative flow of local culture; in other words a holiday that enables involvement in authentic and genuine experiences. Cultural tourism also places particular attention on the atmosphere, evocativeness and human context of the visited places (Nuryanti, 1996; Poria, Butler, Airey, 2003; Weaver, 2011). It thus entails focusing on the attractive capacity of *heritage*, by which is meant monuments, works of art, cultural traditions and past and present landscapes as a motive for interest in the past. To these may be added a series of items and principles which the community sees as part of their identity in terms of their history and culture (Herbert, 1995; Palmer, 1999).

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), considers heritage to be a broad concept that includes both material cultural heritage (such as landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments) and intangible cultural heritage, such as cuisine, past and present cultural practices, knowledge and life experiences (ICOMOS 1999). When seeking to identify a society's intangible cultural heritage, it can be difficult to make a selection from among the legacy of the past. The criteria for choice, whether imposed or shared, assume the adoption of a system of values that changes over time, space and within the society itself. Indeed, Fowler (in Timothy and Boyd, 2003: 2) stresses that "*the past per se, but perhaps not that part of its produce which we call heritage, is emotionally neutral. It is neither exciting nor dull, good or bad, worthwhile nor worthless without our intercession*".

What nations or communities consider to be heritage – whether symbols, icons or even myths and legends – becomes 'our' heritage when we recognise it as the expression of collective identity. Highly significant here is the observation made by Zimmermann as long ago as 1951: "resources are not, they become" (see in Timothy and Boyd, 2003: 7), in the sense that they physically exist as 'neutral stuff' but become resources only when it is perceived that they have a value for society at large and a use value is attributed to them. The term heritage indicates not only the historic, natural and built environment, but also every aspect of material culture, the intellectual inheritance and cultural identity. Heritage tourism

is thus a journey of interest for history, local culture, atmosphere, the locations of a 'distant' past, albeit filtered by the human context of the tourist, i.e. by the symbolic universe that forms the background to the biography of each of us, which Timothy and Boyd describe as the '*experiential heritage environment*' (2003:7). It is this tourism which enables the tourist to fulfil their 'dream' of an encounter with the 'places' of local culture, which provide the link to its history, traditions and rituals and which guarantees its sustainability and accessibility (Lozato-Giotart, 2008). It is the conserved and protected cultural landscape but it is also the impact that the product of heritage has on the wider region. It is the way in which local resources and attractions are managed, interpreted and provided to the tourist. Indeed, it should not be forgotten that the product of heritage tourism and its commercialisation are modelled and influenced by the tourist's choices, and the latter are conditioned by the product and by the ways in which it is provided (Timothy and Boyd, 2003:7-8).

Combining harmoniously with the environmental context and attentive to regional assets, heritage tourism fits in well with other forms of tourism (environmental, day-trip, religious) and also affects marginal areas, relatively unknown destinations and places with a more limited range of cultural icons of interest to tourists, which feel the need to create new products and attractions to capture the attention of lovers of culture (Richards & Wilson, 2006).

Animated by curiosity and the desire for knowledge, the tourist seeks to discover the nature and the artistic and cultural heritage of the *other*, in what also entails the spiritual discovery of oneself.

When applied to routes towards places of religious interest in particular, this type of tourism deserves the appellative *spiritual*, this term being more 'inclusive' and perhaps more suitable for spelling out the motives of the many contemporary 'wayfarers' who are characterised by a 'less dogmatic' and more 'general spirituality' (Tinacci Mossello, 2014). Indeed, the secularisation of European culture has undermined the idealised historic image of the pious Christian pilgrim of the Middle Ages who travelled for ascetic, penitential or judicial reasons (Cardini, 1996; Lavarini, 1997; Sumption, 1999; Vantaggiato, 2010).

Furthermore, if we exclude journeys undertaken for explicitly religious reasons, which take various forms ('devotion to a saint', 'penitence', 'fulfilment of a vow', 'religious sacrifice' Kaelber, 2006:58; Palmer, Begley, 2012:73; Rizzello, 2012), today's spiritual journeys are more often about self discovery, to which may be added the desire to learn about a destination's culture and identity, explore nature or go on day trips to

specific locations, with reference to the historic, social and economic heritage of the places being visited (Berti, 2012).

This does not mean that the contemporary model lacks any analogy with the ancient wayfarer; indeed, such analogies remain in the form of spiritual values and the “forms of mobility”, including a preference for ‘*travelling on foot and proceeding in contact with the earth, without facilitating structures, without mediation*’ (Bartolomei, 2009: 210). What *has changed* however is the overall purpose of travelling, which has shifted from an essentially religious endeavour to a ‘search for meaning’, in which the *journey becomes experience*. The main motive is *spirituality* as a form of emotional involvement, a search for authenticity, for self-fulfilment, but also for well-being understood as harmony, joy and knowledge, and, by extension, longevity and health. Travellers with no confessional traditions are drawn by the need for self discovery and inner serenity, which enable them to face their daily existence with greater confidence and wisdom (Barber, 1993). The new pilgrim is motivated by an emotional reawakening and a desire to get away from their daily life, by the search for a sensation of physical, mental and spiritual ‘well-being’. As Olsen argues: ‘*What distinguishes the tourist from a faith traveller is the mindset, the spirit in which the journey is undertaken*’ (Olsen, 2013:22). In an era in which products and services seem to increasingly resemble each other, the *spiritual journey* is a good way to fulfil the needs of the *new tourism*, linked to the new needs of society, interested in combining spiritual equilibrium and serenity with the person's physical needs and well-being (Sharma, 2013). The spiritual traveller seeks opportunities for travel as an educational, social, participatory and emotional experience that enables them to understand the ‘deep’ characteristics of places. This implies a society that rejects standardised holidays and seeks new events, ideas and activities linked to nature and thematic routes.

In this view, the historic routes of the pilgrims of centuries past, retraced by modern wayfarers, take on a different meaning. It is not so much a question of ancient roads, understood as physical structures with a historic and archaeological value, but of *roads as experiences*; then as now they tread the *Viae consulares*, but with different objectives. Indeed, it is amazing how today those ancient routes are once again being travelled by a growing number of people, who in most cases could barely be described as pilgrims but are rather in search of the ancient meanings of travel. ‘*In German there is a significant semantic difference between ‘gehen’ (go) and ‘wandern’ (wander) [The latter] indicates travelling towards a destination that is distant and beyond one's normal environment; reaching it means reaching oneself, or at least this is the hope*’ (Tinacci Mossello, 2014).

This image of the modern traveller closes any tiresome and obsolete debate about the pilgrim-tourist dichotomy and the possible comparison between the medieval Christian pilgrim and the current modern tourist (Collins-Kreiner, 2009). This was always a rather shaky comparison, as Olsen stresses, not just because of the difference in travelling times and socio-economic situations, but also the reference to absolute and abstract types of journey and traveller (i.e. 'pilgrim' and 'tourist'). '*Typologies*' – continues Olsen with reference to Edensor – ‘

“can identify regularities, but should be conceived as describing different tourist practice rather than types of people, as roles adopted rather than social categories made manifest’ [...] individual and social identities within the context of religious tourism are dynamic, fluid, and are negotiable and changing depending on people’s circumstances, context, and place. Tourism is, therefore, neither just a quest for authenticity nor just the pursuit of pleasure. Rather, through tourism, individual and social identities, which are inherently multiple and unstable, are constantly negotiated, whether this negotiation is conscious and purposeful or not” (Olsen, 2010: 850).

All the definitions of pilgrim and the distinctions of the pilgrim-tourist figure indicated over time by the extensive literature, are thus valid for classifying the various contemporary pilgrimage sub-markets but say little about the stratification of the meanings of pilgrimage and tourism in the modern era. In a melting pot of motivations (religious and secular) that justify travel, the use of the term *pilgrim* to describe the modern traveller can thus only be used in a metaphorical sense to indicate tourists who see their journey as an opportunity for constructing identity and for spiritual and cultural enrichment. It is useful above all to study their socio-economic status, behaviours, motivations, sentiments and perceptions in order to provide a range of tourist products and services that are adapted to the demand and to achieve optimal regional planning (Collins-Kreiner & Kliot, 2000; Dallari, 2009). Places and cultural routes of religious interest become products (cultural and economic) and an instrument of strategic regional marketing that involves various players. These include both public and private stakeholders who consider visitors as clients with whom to establish interaction by helping them to enjoy an experience that interests them, involves them emotionally and enables them to establish an indelible bond with the place being visited.

3. Cultural routes

Considered an ‘important’ cultural product, useful for making good economic use of all forms of cultural heritage present in a region, cultural itineraries have become extraordinarily successful. They link up with ancient trails (used for pilgrimage, commerce, shipping, etc.), that once served as conduits for the dissemination of culture and knowledge.

There is a growing body of literature dedicated to its historical aspects, its benefits and other features (Hardy, 2003; Schmude, Trono, 2003; Baldacci, 2006; Trono, Rizzello, Ruppi, 2008; Majdoub, 2010; (Mariotti, Dallari, 2011; Mariotti, 2012; Ferreira, 2012; Rizzo, Trono; Belluso, 2013; Beltramo, 2013;) and there is also growing interest on the part of public and private sector organisations, and justifiably so. Cultural itineraries represent an innovative way of using a region’s resources. They meet the need to ‘reunite’ and ‘recontextualise’ many aspects of cultural heritage items, which over time have lost their original unity, the links to their region of birth and the functions for which they were created in the first place (Baldacci, 2006:12).

A cultural itinerary is composed of two main elements: the ‘road’ and the ‘landscape’. It is not an ideal geometric line linking two or more geometric points: it is a combination of routes between stages (nodes), linked by segments, characterised by a unifying cultural theme that gives meaning to the itinerary and draws the interest of the tourist (Baldacci, 2006:27). Based entirely or in part on already existing paths, cultural itineraries can be travelled linearly, or sometimes in grid or spiral fashion, along a road composed of historic lines of communication and above all of heritage elements associated with it that reflect interrelationships and shared influences that have persisted over time between different cultural groups (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004; Lourens, 2007; Ramirez, 2011; Zabbini, 2012). Another constitutive and essential part of the itinerary is the landscape, which belongs to humanity and is hence primary cultural heritage. The itinerary enables the tourist to access that ‘ancient palimpsest’, that unique text, written and rewritten in the course of time, which is the landscape system, and to decode it and interpret it, grasping its environmental, historic and cultural meaning and experiencing it deeply, even in its economic dimensions (Scazzosi, 1999:10).

The itinerary is not only what binds together the essential components of the physical and anthropic landscape (nature, artistic, architectural and archaeological heritage, rural settlements, crops, etc.). It also gathers gastronomic and wine-making traditions, ancient professions, handicraft and typical local products, traditional festivities and local folklore and

traditional religious rites, creating a new system of knowledge. It is a mental process based on the identification of elements already existing or to be created. It can thus be the result of a historical analysis, but also planned from scratch). Its value lies in the capacity to bring together, particularly in less developed and marginalised regions, a number of factors of attraction which, considered separately, would seem insignificant, of little interest and unable to induce tourists to invest time and money in the place. In addition, it makes it possible to guarantee respect for the cultural integrity and sustainable development of the region.

The itinerary is also evidence of interactive movements of people and continuous and reciprocal exchanges of goods, ideas and values between the peoples who have come into contact along that itinerary over the years. It is the result of evolutionary processes and the expression of the mutual enrichment of different cultures, able to interactively and dynamically integrate historic connections, heritage and intercultural relations (ICOMOS, 2005). It highlights the rich diversity of contributions to cultural heritage and points to a new model of conservation that sees cultural values as a shared resource without borders. However it also requires a common commitment to conserve it so that it may be passed down to future generations. It thus encourages forms of partnership and cooperation. Its success consequently depends both on the ability to activate shared and common initiatives that promote and disseminate the culture and specific features of the regions involved, and on the ability to manage a source of enrichment and growth for a humanity that is free of cultural and social prejudice. Thus conceived, the itinerary can offer tourists 'new opportunities for growth in the era of low-employment' and at the same time facilitate a better combination of investment in infrastructure and human capital in the host regions. Cultural itineraries are thus an important factor in sustainable regional planning, the focus of public intervention strategies and funding, which however also whets the appetite of speculators and opportunists.

By means of the LEADER+ Programme (2000-2006), aimed at the development of rural environments and marginal areas, the European Union sees them as promoters of knowledge of localities and local cultures, able to project an area's image above all for tourism purposes. A great many highly varied itineraries have been created, some based on nature, others on food-and-wine (such as the '*strade del gusto*'), traditions, transhumance, cycle tours, etc. In the Charter on Cultural Routes, ICOMOS recognises their role as the 'setting for a culture of peace based on the ties of shared history as well as the tolerance, respect, and appreciation for cultural diversity that characterize the communities involved'. It considers

them ‘interactive, dynamic, and evolving processes of human intercultural links that reflect the rich diversity of the contributions of different peoples to cultural heritage’; they introduce ‘a model for a new ethics of conservation that considers these values as a common heritage that goes beyond national borders, and which requires joint efforts’. It certifies itineraries and promotes them as a useful tool for understanding and communication between peoples, considering them to be a valid instrument for cooperation in the conservation of heritage and an important ‘resource for sustainable social and economic development’ (ICOMOS, 2005).

The Council of Europe cites them as a useful instrument of dialogue, intercultural cooperation and consolidation of European identity. In 1987 it activated the Council of Europe Cultural Routes programme aimed at promotion of European cultural heritage (including for tourism purposes), linking seventy nations distributed across four continents (Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe).

Table 1-1. The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

1987 - Santiago De Compostela Pilgrim Routes	2007 - Transromanica
1990 - European Mozart Ways	2009 - Iter Vitis
1992 - Hanseatic Sites and Monuments	2010 - European Route of Cistercian abbeys
- Heinrich Schickhardt Route	- European Cemeteries Route
- Viking Routes (confirmed in 2012)	- Prehistoric Rock Art Trail
1994 - Via Francigena	- European Route of Historical Thermal Towns
- Phoenicians’ Route	- Route of Saint Olav Ways
1995 - Vauban and Wenzel Routes	2012 - Casadean Sites
1997 - Routes of El Legado Andalusi	- European Route of Ceramics
2004 - Iron Route in the Pyrenees	2013 - Huguenot and Waldensian trail
- Cluniac Sites in Europe	- European Route of Megalithic Culture
- European Route of Jewish Heritage	
2005 - Saint Martin of Tours Route	
- Routes of the Olive Tree	
- Via Regia	

The Council of Europe recognises the function of cultural itineraries in facilitating mediation and dialogue, intercultural cooperation, the consolidation of European ‘citizenship’, as expressed via knowledge of its languages, history and the civilisation of European peoples but it also

considers them to be a concrete demonstration of the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe, which are diversity, European cultural identity, dialogue, and cultural exchange and enrichment (Berti, 2012). The programme promotes an itinerary or a series of itineraries linked to a historic route, a cultural concept, a person or a phenomenon of transnational importance and meaning that is essential for the understanding and respect of common European values: it considers the itinerary's effects in terms of consolidation of European identity, dissemination of European cultures, promotion of intercultural dialogue and reciprocal understanding (Nagy, 2012; Beltramo, 2013). Also important is the theme of remembrance suggested by the routes identified in certain symbolic places, whether they be archaeological or industrial sites, historic parks or significant cemeteries.

Of particular importance are the thematic itineraries that seek to reconstruct routes rich in variants, commercial arteries for certain products (iron, vineyards, olives, etc.) or ancient lines of communication, but a good number (a fifth of the total) are based on pilgrimage and/or religious themes (see Table 1). The latter are highly popular because they enable a new self-referential approach to religious heritage, linking it more closely to the regional context (see for example the Camino de Santiago, the Via Francigena). Rather than their historic value they are visited more for their psychological and spiritual dimensions: travelling along a route of cultural and religious interest makes it possible to enjoy an experience, to open oneself up to a spiritual dimension, today in demand more than ever from an increasingly complex society that seeks in the religious and the mystic a point of reference for their lives.

Itineraries favour the perpetuation of modern society's 'free time myth', which psychologists link to the myth of 'Oedipus', understood as the research for one's identity, in physical contact with the natural environment, or to the 'golden age', in the sense of a return to one's origins in the desire for authenticity, or to the myth of the 'desert', as an escape from all the chaotic and artificial elements of the urban landscape (Antonioli, Corigliano, 1999). To the jaded eye of modern human beings, the varied and multiple paths of the past seem like myths and legends. And yet, by reminding us of the effort spent in reaching something more, something beyond, understood as a conquest and an achievement, these paths remain in our historical consciousness, recalling a past that has generated wisdom and giving us hope for survival in a tumultuous and uncertain future (Mazza, 2009). Travel becomes a search perceived as an adventure – not only in space but also in time – not so much in the future, which holds less and less appeal for us, as in the past (Tinacci Mossello,

2014). Those who travel these routes are historically and culturally enriched; they are pervaded with a calm sense of nostalgia for a heroic past, which they imagine as ideally perfect but know to be irredeemably lost (except in their imagination), sceptical regarding a sustainable future for which the present offers little promise or guarantee.

4. Cultural itineraries as an opportunity for regional development

Cultural itineraries are considered a useful tool for understanding and communication between peoples, valid for enhancing cooperation in the conservation of heritage, but also, and above all, an important resource for social and economic development.

Their value lies in the capacity to bring together various factors of attraction which, considered separately, would seem insignificant, of little interest and unable to induce tourists to invest time and money in the place. The cultural itinerary is understood as a systemic process involving a multiplicity of players, activities, resources and skills, based on distinctive features such as the landscape and cultural heritage in their broadest senses, becoming a factor of regional development. Indeed, itineraries highlight the differences and idiosyncrasies of the various areas they pass through but, at the same time, they bring them together by means of a common theme. Their success is down to the value of the historic events that animate them, the wealth of cultural achievements that justify them and the possibilities they provide for generating development in the areas they pass through. They integrate cultural and economic motives, and are able to fuel creative and innovative processes, favouring the development of the entire local economic system (Mariotti, 2012; Trono, 2012; Beltramo, 2013).

They are being proposed as a new category of heritage and an innovative, complex and multidimensional tool for tourism development that creates new business opportunities via the development of complementary products and services (Greffé, 1994; Meyer 2004; Rogerson 2007; Trono, 2009), enabling a more even distribution of the income from tourism among the various local economic players.

Following a well-defined theme, the itinerary integrates heritage resources localised in a point and/or an area (nodes) or aligned along an axis (lines) in a systemic interaction of cultural, economic and social elements (Timothy and Boyd, 2003). Linking the main tourist attraction nodes to intermediate localities and small towns to those of larger dimensions, the itinerary thus encompasses rural areas with less important

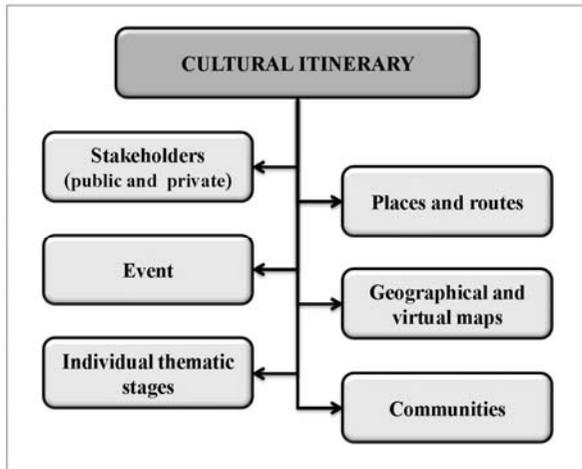
functions but a diversified range of products and services, giving life to networks and grids on a regional and transnational scale. Like any other network, this also consists of “*variable inter weavings*” of nodes and segments and ‘*delineates a concert of agreements and power relationships between the elements (i.e. nodes and segments), convergences and divergences*’, functioning as a system where ‘*each element is not just an element in itself, but an element that underpins the value of the whole*” (Capineri, 1996: 24).

The use of the grid metaphor makes it possible to configure the structure of the itinerary (lines and nodes), but also to decipher its underlying organisation. Analysing the development of the itinerary and the network that forms around it entails considering variables that are both endogenous (structural characteristics and the details of how services are produced and how the is network managed) and exogenous (environment, demand, administrations). It entails making reference to the milieu, i.e. the various groupings of specific non-reproducible resources (economic, social, cultural and environmental in the broadest sense). This means understanding the relationships between the players (public and private, companies and institutional and scientific organisations) that interact with the shared aim of promoting tourism development (Zabbini, 2007:26).

An important characteristic of the itinerary is the complexity of its content, subjects and activities, from the identification of the theme to the planning and marking out of the route, the choice of events, the management of the network by a composite group of public and private organisations, experts and institutional representatives (as well as qualified service providers), all interested in being part of the itinerary (see Fig.1-1).

The places and routes create the value of the itinerary and delimit the route, enabling the creation of maps (including virtual maps), useful for visitors. When creating the system, the various participants involved in the agreements and synergistic interaction also become responsible for the functioning and development of the itinerary and its support networks, and are thus the makers of their own logic of governance: the various stakeholders and local communities are committed to cooperating in a productive exchange of experiences. The host community, which benefits economically, plays a fundamental role in the transmission of values and traditions, enabling the tourist to enjoy a unique and unrepeatable experience, which can be enriched with various events. The presence of individual thematic stages makes it possible to pay proper attention to all the cultural heritage items, some of which would otherwise risk not being fully valued within a particularly extensive route.

Fig. 1-1. Elements of the cultural itinerary



Of special importance is the choice of promotional strategies that encourage the development of partnerships between the public and private sectors, associations and local communities; that strengthen participation and the ability to act on a local level; that guarantee quality control and the effectiveness of the goods and services on offer; and lastly, that analyse and assess the cultural and economic results in quantitative and qualitative terms.

In order to survive, the route must create and maintain the connection between society, culture and environment, prompting the visitor to respect the principle of sustainability. It must connect the places of interest with other factors, i.e. with the economic and cultural panorama that characterises the route, involving the local administration, but also diversifying the goods and services on offer. In the creation of a cultural route it is important to consider the regional qualities of the places being visited; to study the traveller/tourist's perception of these and the meaning that he or she attributes to them. It is necessary to have a clear strategy for optimal organisation not only of the supply of regional resources but also of the environmental and socio-economic. It is a good idea to produce an adequate strategy considering the heterogeneous and complex environments through which the itinerary passes, activating a process that binds together the regions involved in a dynamic and healthy combination of competition and cooperation. There are three essential coordination factors: the market, the bureaucratic hierarchy and the network (Thompson *et al.*, 1991). The

first two entail time and formal agreements. For the latter the cooperation agreements can also be based on informal understandings, unwritten rules, words of honour, trust and collaborative arrangements, which often regulate the functioning of networks.

5. New proposals for cultural and religious itineraries and the case of The Ways to Jerusalem: Maritime Cultural and Pilgrimage Routes

The success of the cultural itinerary of the Santiago De Compostela Pilgrim Routes, which in 1987 inaugurated the Council of Europe's cultural itineraries programme, has prompted requests for recognition from other proposed routes that combine cultural, economic and religious/spiritual motifs. For example, the European Routes of Emperor Charles V join European regions with cultural and natural heritage and activities and celebrations linked to the Emperor Charles V, a key figure of the European Renaissance (16th century), open to a public seeking to learn about the history of European society. Of an essentially economic character are the Chocolate Routes, a Eurochocolate itinerary passing through seven countries of the European Union promoting tourist-cultural routes linked by the common thread of chocolate, joining European places and countries with the aim of boosting the associated economic activities in terms of hotel and catering services in the districts involved, which over time have maintained high standards of chocolate-making: Italy, Austria, Spain, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, each with its specific 'historic' places. Of cultural and spiritual interest is *The Ways to Jerusalem: Maritime Cultural and Pilgrimage Routes*, an itinerary in preparation based on an 'intercultural' and 'intergenerational' journey, understood as a 'complex cultural item'. It is modelled on the routes indicated in the ancient accounts of soldiers, pilgrims and merchants and is composed of two routes calling at ports on the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea (currently the Adriatic, extending westwards in the future), leading to Jaffa, Acre and Jerusalem. The Routes thus highlight the role of the sea – or rather the interdependence of land and sea – in European history. Indeed, European identity lies in the maritime and coastal origins of its civilisation and in its constant openness towards the rest of the world (Dematteis, 19979). The link with the Orient is the Black Sea. Here the Crimean peninsula was the first systematic commercial and cultural meeting point between the nomadic peoples of eastern Europe and navigators from Ancient Greece, Rome and subsequently the Venetian Empire. By the 13th century Venice's commercial reach extended from the

Pillars of Hercules to Cyprus, from North Africa to Muslim Syria, from Damascus and Aleppo to Armenia, and into the Black Sea (Lozzi Gallo, 2014). The Gateway to Europe, the West, the Atlantic Ocean and indeed the entire world is thus the Mediterranean. Its civilisation alone was able to achieve universality. And it is from this civilisation, rather than from the physical environment, that the human communities and their respective regions appear to derive their individuality. Despite divisions and conflicts, the circulation of ideas and the shared experience of events have forged a unique and glorious civilisation in which the Sea has been the unifying factor of a world composed of the sentiments and reciprocal influences of the peoples who have developed around it and have acquired a common identity. The 'Sea between Lands', the 'closed sea', the Mediterranean has tied its fortunes and its civilisation precisely to this seeming closure to communication with the outside world (Trono, 2013). The future of Europe lies precisely in its ability to invest in the cultural resources of these two Seas, crucibles of religions, peoples and cultures but also the heart of economic and political interests.

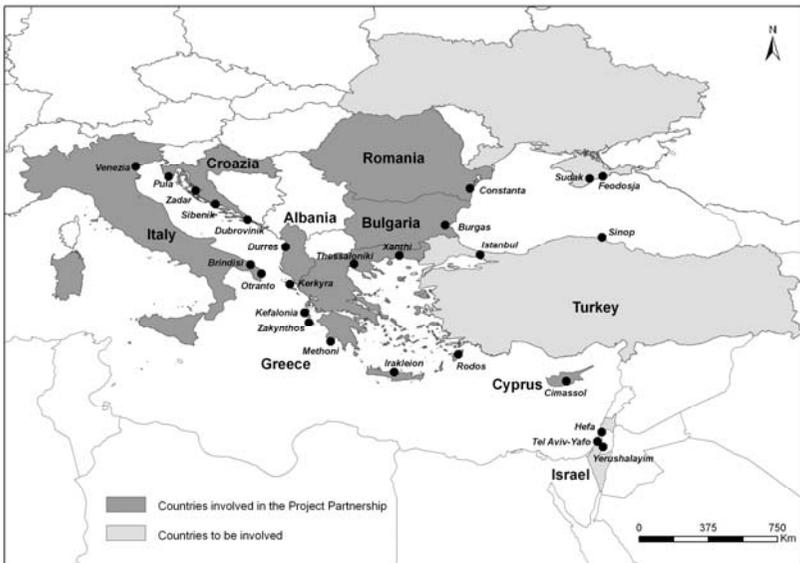
5.1 Elements of heritage and cultural values

The Way to Jerusalem: Maritime Cultural and Pilgrimage Routes is based on two historic maritime routes: one in the eastern Mediterranean (from the North-West, the Adriatic Route) starting in Venice and running down the Adriatic Sea with stops in Pula, Zadar, Šibenik, Dubrovnik, Durres, interfacing in the southern Adriatic with the flows from terrestrial routes which, from the Alps led down through Italy to Brindisi and Durres; the Route continued along the coast of Greece calling at Corfu, Corfu, Kefalonia, Zakynthos, Methoni, Heraklion, Rhodes, Galab, Cyprus, Jaffa and Jerusalem.

The second itinerary follows the maritime route (from the North-East) in the Black Sea, heavily used as a commercial artery, but also taken by pilgrims. Channelling flows from the Slavic world, for example Russia, it includes stops at Feodosia, an important Genoese colony on the Crimean peninsula (thus starting point of many commercial routes, including one headed towards Syria and then to Jerusalem), Costanza, Burgas, Xanthi, Sinope, Constantinople, Crete, Cyprus and Jerusalem (Fig. 1-2). Thus the itinerary involves Croatia, Albania, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Armenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Israel, linking the countries of central and south-eastern Europe with those of the Mediterranean and showing the historic and cultural relations that link them to each other, though their precise geopolitical and economic contexts may differ. Focusing on their

maritime and coastal origins, key to the identity of European civilisation, helps to recover the memories and values of the cultural heritage of the coastal regions of the Black and Mediterranean Seas, generating a fantastic itinerary that follows the ancient routes of adventurous and nostalgic travellers towards Jerusalem (Houben, Vetere, 2006). To this longed-for religious destination, also a centre of exchange and commerce, we seek to re-attribute the ancient etymological meaning of ‘City of Peace’. There are numerous stops in ancient and prestigious ports, brief visits to Unesco sites and short excursions to rural areas of the hinterland.

Fig. 1- 2. Sites of interest along “The Ways to Jerusalem: Maritime Cultural and Pilgrimage Routes”



5.2 Partnership and action

The itinerary activates numerous cultural initiatives, shared by a composite international network. It enjoys the consensus of about fifty public and private organisations, cultural, social and environmentalist associations, travel agencies and municipalities.

The creation of public-private partnerships on various regional levels makes it possible to adopt a solid participatory approach linking regional and transnational networks. The aim is to achieve a plurality of objectives,

from the dissemination and sharing of scientific research (via conferences, workshops, seminars, publications) to the implementation of initiatives, activities and cultural projects designed to raise awareness of common cultural heritage and improve the capacity of already existing networks. To this end, specific marketing strategies have been introduced in the local business communities, improving the capacity for innovation and competitiveness of small to medium sized companies. Innovative joint activities are envisaged, with a view to the introduction of new ideas, products and services (educational programmes and specific training courses). Enjoying broad international consensus, it thus entails a set of measures that can be summarised in five areas of interest (see Fig. 1-3).

Fig. 1-3. Areas of interest of “The Ways to Jerusalem: Maritime Cultural and Pilgrimage Routes”



The first envisages measures designed to develop a programme of historic, cultural and artistic research from the Middle Ages up until the modern and contemporary periods, emphasising those aspects (art, culture, the classical view of Europe) that have held European society together during the medieval and modern periods despite religious intransigence and territorial aggression.

The second field promotes the safeguard and dissemination of European cultural heritage, activating joint initiatives for management, use and social growth. It supports understanding and cohesion between the peoples of the Mediterranean and Black Seas, emphasising the aspects that

can help overcome the religious, political and social conflicts that have afflicted (and continue to afflict) Europe in the modern and contemporary periods.

The third line of activities envisages cultural, recreational, social, educational and tourism initiatives, favouring cultural and educational exchange, placing particular emphasis on relations between young people from different regions and countries. It includes exchange and cultural activities programmes for groups of students.

The fourth area of interest encourages the development and adoption of measures designed to promote social awareness of contemporary cultural and artistic activities among the members of a consortium/association of cooperation and exchange with other consortia/associations, paying special attention to those aimed at the institution of cultural itineraries and those who have already obtained the recognition of the Council of Europe.

The fifth area activates initiatives that are useful for developing sustainable tourism products to improve the quality of life of the host population, create employment, deseasonalise tourism, and improve policies for the safeguard and conservation of cultural heritage. This requires promotion of local and regional cultural resources by prompting the municipalities and regional administrations involved to implement high quality tourism-cultural services and products. In this context the proposed products will have distinctive features exemplifying the local cultural identity.

The itinerary considers travel to be an emotional, educational, social and participatory experience for the tourist, who is sensitive to cultural heritage but also to local products (food, drink, artistic handicraft). It develops new forms of tourism, today highly popular and growing fast. For example, cultural heritage tourism in Zadar and the Unesco site of Burgas; historical memory tourism in Cefalonia; spiritual tourism in the monasteries of Xanthi; health and food-and-wine tourism in the rural areas of the Salento peninsula; day-trips in the area of Durres.

5.3 Planning and development strategies of the itinerary

On the operational level, the project proposal is configured as a process of cultural building, based on three elements - resource/project/territory - closely interrelated with each other (Berti, 2013).

Every cultural/religious route project is organised on the basis of each individual country involved, in four distinct and complementary phases.

The phases underlie the following strategic objectives:

- Identification of the itinerary, and places and local routes within it
- Selection and characterisation of the routes and individual thematic staging posts
- Executive planning of the routes and the events to be organised
- Creation of the 'tourism-cultural products' and the relative promotion and management plan.

Phases 1 and 2 follow a fundamentally historical and scientific methodology, while the approach followed in phases 3 and 4 is of the integrated type. Indeed, it applies a logic of overall promotion of the regions affected by the routes, taking account of the 'system' of assets and related resources.

The strategy that guides the entire project follows the 'bottom up' model and is organised with reference to a sequence of priorities whose aims are functional to the development and maintenance of the following complementary sub-processes: to trigger and accompany concrete forms of cooperation between the players and resources of the regions involved; to activate organic and unitary processes of rational exploitation and promotion, aimed at strengthening relationships between the various cultures of the countries involved in the itinerary; to guarantee the management of the routes within the itinerary and promote the landscape, European cultural values and the 'tourism-cultural' products that are common to the regions of the itinerary; to coordinate, animate and implement the network of relations that governs the itinerary's promotion plan.

The final result is the advancement of knowledge of the region, the landscape and cultural heritage, considered as functional resources and integral parts of the travel experience and the cultural milieu of the communities, while guaranteeing their safeguard and rational economic exploitation. To this end, the countries crossed by the itinerary are involved in a dense network of relationships with local stakeholders involving educational, cultural and professional exchanges designed to guarantee sustainable development on intragenerational and intergenerational levels, on a transcontinental scale.

6. Concluding Comments—Opportunities and challenges for Sustainable Management of Cultural/ Religious Routes

It has been pointed out that cultural and religious itineraries play the important role of highlighting the meanings of the roads travelled and places visited, seeing them as the founding elements of a common identity,

constructed by means of multiple historic, cultural and economic interrelations. Indeed, they express, by virtue of the choice of theme, their intrinsic cultural and spiritual dimensions and can be used to promote understanding, equality and respect for different cultures. In a European scenario dominated by economic pressures, social tensions and the difficulty of political dialogue, cultural itineraries constitute a valid instrument for understanding and sharing common values, maintaining respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of human beings and encouraging democratic and shared participation (governance) in the activities conducted.

The differences between places, which constitute one of the most important factors motivating tourism itself, can be either emphasised or diminished, in the sharing of a common model of construction and management of the itinerary.

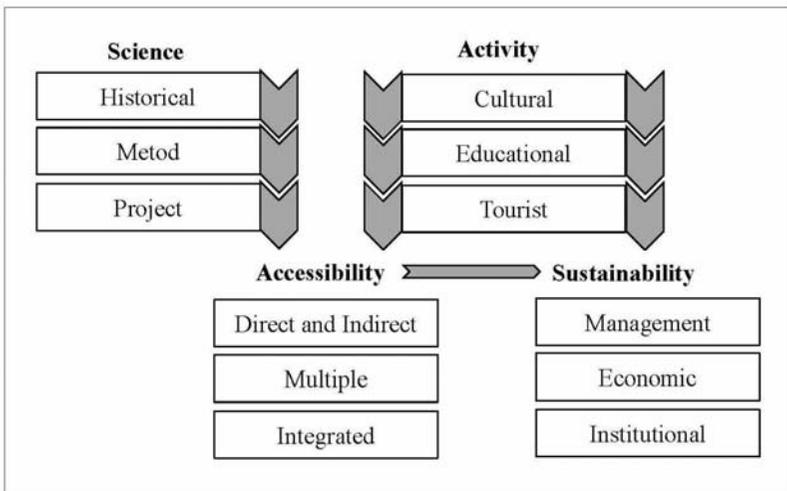
It has been pointed out, with reference to *The Ways to Jerusalem: Maritime Cultural and Pilgrimage Routes*, that the cultural itinerary may constitute an important element of cohesion and unity: by following an approach that regards the Seas (Mediterranean and Black) as a single motif linking seemingly different peoples, *The Ways to Jerusalem* aims to foster cultural and educational initiatives, based on respect for (and promotion of) a heritage that is exceptionally rich in ancient, consolidated culture and customs (including exchanges and contacts), which are however supported by local codes of values that can never be taken for granted and are frequently in conflict. *The Ways to Jerusalem*, like all cultural itineraries, identifies in the historic and scientific motif and its associated activities a logic of fulfilling the overall potential of the affected regions, taking account of the 'system' of assets and resources present in them with a view to managerial, economic and institutional sustainability (see Fig. 1-4).

In a socio-economic key, cultural-religious routes can accompany and accelerate local development (including infrastructure) and, in more general terms, the renewal of the regions through which they pass. In addition, concerning the content that animates them, they can also activate processes of co-evolution and sharing of regional spaces, facilitating the development of complex relational networks and even projecting the regions and the players involved beyond the local confines.

Thus for various reasons they constitute a complex and ambitious regional project that generates added value and guarantees success (see, for example, some best practices in Piedmont region, Beltramo, 2013; the 'Via Francigena Mountain Itineraries' in Piacenza Valleys, in the north of Italy, Cerutti, Dioli, 2013). Their broad regional scale is enhanced by other important variables such as research (theoretical and in the field), the

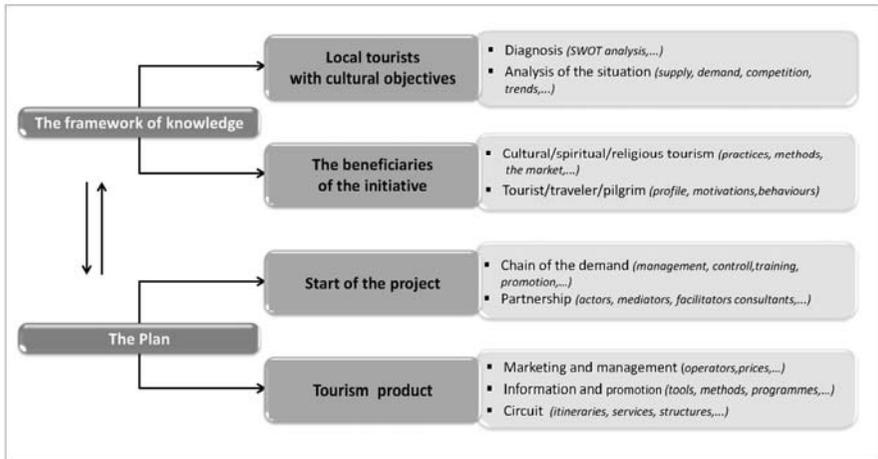
presence of a fully-fledged technical and scientific committee, the recourse to innovative technologies and of course assets in terms of landscape and heritage. Of fundamental importance is the network of alliances that are created on numerous levels of government between public and private players. It is the network that enables governance of the itinerary, as does a good conceptual foundation of the itinerary – based on a multidisciplinary approach – and its democratic management, guaranteeing the sharing of the theme among all components of the network. Last but not least of the requirements is secure funding to guarantee the activities and the survival of the route.

Fig. 1-4. Strategic objectives of the project. Assumptions and constraints



Thus planned, the itinerary requires an effective development, management and promotion strategy, taking account of its implications in terms of tourism sector planning and the other economic activities. The potential of the places and regions on the route of the itinerary, the needs of the target clientele, the commitment and the capacity in terms of supply of each partner and the entire tourist product promotion system (circuit, information and promotion, marketing and management) all need to be considered and assessed (see Fig. 1-5).

Fig. 1-5. Development, management and promotion strategy of the itinerary



The final result is the development of a tourism that Tinacci Mossello calls ‘aware’, which in this case takes on explicitly cultural content and makes protagonists of both hosts and guests. ‘It is a tourism which from the point of view of the ‘tourists’ recovers the value of slowness, of acquiring knowledge – of both the context and oneself. From the point of view of the suppliers and providers it aims to go beyond the purely economic or productive aspects of the sector and assume the role of providers and suppliers in a ‘social’ sense, starting with the cultural identity of the host regions and peoples, whose awareness has been raised thanks to contact with aware tourists on the demand side. This leads to a virtuous circle of awareness, satisfaction and well-being on both sides of the hospitality equation’. As Tinacci Mossello argues, ‘*Well-organised and well-managed, cultural itineraries can activate this circuit, creating a relationship of positive feedback between demand and supply, a condition and a sign of a sustainable regional tourism system, i.e. one that is capable of lasting and evolving positively over time*’ (Tinacci Mossello, 2014).