International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage

Volume 11 | Issue 2 Article 2

12-6-2023

Nunneries and Pâtisseries: Tourists' Gastronomic Experiences at Sacred Sites

Diolinda Ramírez-Gutiérrez
Universidad de La Laguna, dioli.rg@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijrtp

Part of the Food Studies Commons, and the Tourism and Travel Commons

Recommended Citation

Ramírez-Gutiérrez, Diolinda (2023) "Nunneries and Pâtisseries: Tourists' Gastronomic Experiences at Sacred Sites," *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*: Vol. 11: Iss. 2, Article 2.
doi:https://doi.org/10.21427/D77P-PK30
Available at: https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijrtp/vol11/iss2/2

Creative Commons License

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License.

Nunneries and Pâtisseries: Tourists’ Gastronomic Experiences at Sacred Sites

Cover Page Footnote

Foot Note: Partial results of this research were presented as a poster at the XI International Congress on Religion in Society held in Cordoba in June 2021. Acknowledgements For Sister "Joy", that anonymous nun who, without knowing it, with her smile and her cupcakes, inspired this research. To my friend Beatriz for helping me to believe that writing on this subject was possible. To my thesis directors for their advice.

This academic paper is available in International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage: https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijrtp/vol11/iss2/2

© International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage
ISSN : 2009-7379
Available at: http://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijrtp/ Volume 11(ii) 2023

Nunneries and Pâtisseries: Tourists' Gastronomic Experiences at Sacred Sites

Diolinda Ramírez-Gutiérrez
Instituto Universitario de Investigación Social y Turismo, Universidad de La Laguna (ULL)
alu0100807479@ull.edu.es

This work traces the experiences spontaneously expressed by travellers who stop at convents throughout Spain to admire their cultural heritage and also to taste their typical pastries. The aim of this study is to analyse the dialectical relationship between the sacred and the profane in heritage and its tourism context, through content analysis and the narrative generated in a social network for tourists. The initial hypothesis is based on possible cultural differences in the characterisation of the experience of visiting these sacred spaces where pastries have been consumed and in the existence of a differentiated pattern association between different levels: values, types of content, narration of events and activation of cultural heritage. The results show the possibilities of the dialectic relationship with gastronomy through which sacred-touristic-heritage sites (nunneries) can be re-adapted to the twenty-first century without losing an iota of spiritual efficiency and emphasising their sustainability.

Key Words: secularisation, social media, tourist communication, cultural heritage, sustainability

Introduction

Tourist activity related to visiting cultural heritage sites, especially sacred sites, has posed challenges and questions related to conflicts of use, sacred-secular communication, the prior knowledge or background of the tourist, as well as his or her diversity of motivation, etc. for theoretical reflection and from various disciplines. The aforementioned discussions are reactivated when we add eating to the processes related to the visit.

This work is interested in listening, from the inside, to the experiences expressed by travellers who stop at convents throughout Spain to admire the cultural heritage provided by these environments and taste the nunneries' pastries, so famous in our country, among many other motivations. These comments are offered by the visitors spontaneously and to other potential travellers through the TripAdvisor social network.

The tradition of convent baking in Spain is rooted in the visitor's imagination as much as the importance of lay participation in the sustainability of religious life and charity. In today's societies that define themselves as highly secularised, these values of the more traditional imaginary may have been substituted, displaced or reinterpreted. The aim of this study is to characterise, at different levels of analysis, the lived experiences, the feelings expressed, what is interpreted as happening during the visit (values) and which aspects of the presented cultural heritage are activated.

Through mixed research techniques in the context of grounded theory, this paper proposes a search for answers, but above all, the expansion of these questions through the unobstructed testimonies of visitors, the review of relevant documentation with the current vision of female cloistered spaces and some exploratory statistical evidence. The results obtained allow us not only to address the narratives of consumers of the sacred, the reconversion of the associated heritage values, but also to understand to what extent the gastronomic experience is an effective mode of communication of symbolic value and, an effective model of profit-making activity for minority female collectives that need to be now, more than ever, sustainable, as they themselves declare.

The initial hypothesis of this study derives from a common question in the literature on monastic academic analysis: are sacred values transferred through food? The results obtained show how the aestheticisation of the experience and the relevance of the hand-crafted aspect

give way to other more intangible and symbolic values that are key both in a memorable gastronomic experience and in the search for effective tourist communication.

Theoretical Framework

Tourism at Sacred Sites to Generate Memories

The volume of academic literature generated on the relationship between tourism and religiosity is so large that in this paper we have restricted the frame of reference to a number of specific aspects: religious souvenirs, commentaries on sacred heritage sites, conflict in use of spaces, and consumption of sacred foods. Specifically, the chosen analytical perspective will be based on what the reviewed literature provides us in common on these aspects.

The academic literature on these touristified activities is as wide-ranging geographically as it is varied thematically. Literature in anthropological studies range from titles that have become classics, for example, Tin Edensor on the Taj Mahal, to recent works such as that of Crispin Paine on the relationship of leisure spaces, such as amusement parks, with divinity. Some authors consider that the main perspective that has governed the academic literature within tourism and leisure-religion studies is that of management and marketing: consumer motivations but also commodification and conflict of use (e.g. Olsen, 2003; Canoves, Romagosa, Romero & Priestley, 2012; Drule, Chiş, Băcilă & Ciornea, 2012; Lin Lin & Pei-Chuan Mao, 2015; Moira, Mylonopoulos & Parasxi, 2019).

Studies concerning the relationship between food and spirituality in tourism settings have been prolific in characterisations, as exhaustively reviewed by Ron and Timothy in their 2013 work. However, to the best of the author's knowledge, studies on the sacred within the tourist experience (already noted by Andriotis, 2009) or spiritual edutainment (Ron & Timothy, 2013) are scarce. An exception might be the work carried out by Chaim Noy (2008, 2015, 2017, among others) on audience engagement in Judaism-related museums and the work of David W. Scott and his team (2014; Scott & Stout, 2012) and Elizabeth Carnegie (2009) on the conflict of uses. However, it is possible to argue that these works focus more on 'asking' the right questions about this relationship than on exploring it.

In addition, the author has found, in the works reviewed, a special attention on certain segments of the public or tourist activity analysed: pilgrims, religious tourists, confessional tourists, etc. In this sense, research that takes as a reference tourist comments on a specialised social network has the limitation, but also the advantage, of approaching an audience that would have been assumed to be more 'general' because of the lack of socio-demographic data.

The lack of these socio-demographic data, prevents us from making an analysis by audience segment and thus, forces the research to focus on theoretical concepts that lie beyond them: authenticity, the hybridisation of spaces, the condition of religious souvenirs and the different categorisations of the intellectual and emotional experience linked to the consumption of sacred spaces.

In terms of authenticity, classical conceptions, such as Wang's (1999) or existential authenticity, where authenticity does not depend on objects or their level of commercialisation (Andriotis, 2009:80), are relevant, as are performative experiences as a disposition that the visitor must bring with them and which depends on the characteristics of the emblematic or heterogeneous enclave site (Edensor, 2000:341). The notion accidentally discovered by Cameron and Gatewood (2012, 219) of noumenal experience as an invitation to contact the sacredness of heritage as a strong emotional and magical connection with objects of socio-cultural relevance is also worthy of consideration. The last concept related to authenticity of experience considered in this paper is the somewhat innovative reintroduction of the restorative capacity of well-being in contact with cultural heritage by Packer's team (2014) when he emphasises, using a background of environmental theory, the human need to explore the perspective of refuge as a reduction of obstacles and distractions, when exploring visits to botanical gardens but also museums.

Involved with authenticity is the concept of the souvenir or memento of the visit, a tangible aspect, especially important when dealing with a gastronomic souvenir. Works on religious souvenirs are extensive and, most of the time, related to large and iconic religious centres. Here, we take some dimensions that seem to us to apply to the generation of a souvenir within the whole of an

experience, which is in principle less emblematic, such as a cloistered convent in Spanish cities of different dimensions and tourist importance. The idea of the commercial exploitation of religion and the polysemy of meanings that can be gathered through objects, which travellers carry as souvenirs for family and friends, led Moira *et al*. (2019) to coin the term pseudoreligious souvenirs to refer to the binomial: the possibility or complete impossibility of cooperation between religious life and the needs of lay people who travel for tourism (p. 102). The authors note that there is little work on how religious communities generate consumer goods based on a legitimate interest (p. 101). Like the previous authors, Olsen (2006) considers religion as a socio-cultural heritage that is strongly recognised by tourists. Lin *et al*. (2015) extend this line of religion as social heritage by highlighting three dimensions common to the memories which tourists carry from their trips: those that are sensory, symbolic and utilitarian. Sacred spaces are, nowadays, tourist attractions for believer and non-believer travellers. Travel to sacred spaces is a main factor of sacralisation of cultural landscape where religious, historic and touristic meanings co-exist in a dialectic tension (Blonner, 2021; Sołjan & Liro, 2021,).

The last concept involved in the interaction studied could be defined as perspectives of sacredness that have much to do with another concept: that of reciprocity. Levi and Krocher, (2012) consider that tourists perceive religious sites as the most sacred for three fundamental reasons: the behavioural difference, the emotional anchoring with the place depending on the religious tradition from which one comes and the definitions or identities represented by the space itself (p. 917-18). For Canoves *et al*. (2012) the difficulty lies not so much in perception as in knowing the motivation, as these spaces are usually transformed and have multiple functions (p.293). For these authors, the religious act in tourist activity must be shaped by popular emotion (received) and identity processes (granted). For Andriotis (2009), from his phenomenological perspective, the meanings elaborated in religious sites are essential and involve, in his opinion: devotion, authentic or traditional ways of life and the nature of this secularised way of life, as achieving cohesion, relaxation and even positive self-censorship of habitual behaviours. From an anthropological point of view, Sbardella (2014) and Novo (2016) suggest that all these concepts must be combined with respect for a unique, differentiated and often misunderstood way of life outside the walls. The need for understanding is, therefore, reciprocal and communication is the key tool. Social media and the qualitative analysis of their content provide, in this sense, the possibility of approaching this unclassifiable, spontaneous reciprocity, possibly *in situ* rather than using other more intrusive research techniques or where the observer must get involved or remain completely outside the contexts of religious communities, as is often required (Andriotis, 2009; Aguilar, 2019, Sbardella, 2104).

Gastronomic Experience and Cultural Communication.

In the last decade we have moved from having a fragmentary, case-based corpus on tourism experience and gastronomy, to having the beginning of conceptual elaboration as suggested by the recently published *The Routledge Handbook of Gastronomic Tourism* and *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Experience Management and Marketing*, both published between 2019-2020.

However, this section does not intend to provide an exhaustive review of the case studies or the methods used to analyse these experiences, which combine both tangible and intangible elements of the cultural heritage of both the host society and the society of origin. We will not examine the two manuals mentioned above, leaving it up to the reader's judgement to delve into 'we are what we eat and we eat other people's culture', at least for sure, while sightseeing, which are already commonplace in this literature.

Visits to sacred spaces with the motivation of a tourist include interpersonal, host and guest, historic, cultural and gastronomy activities (Huang, Pearce, Guo & Shen, 2019; Iliev, 2020; López & Ramírez, 2020; Zarb, 2020; Jurado & Granados ,2021). In this section, we will focus on concepts linked to communication between the establishment and the visitor through the gastronomic offer. First, this is at a conceptual level and then, at the level of empirical knowledge through case studies.

What eating says about us is stated by Hall and Sharples (2003) and Richards (2002) in distinct tones: the former

referring to socio-cultural variables and the latter more to authenticity, all being discussed in the previous section. Other authors consider eating as exploration and curiosity about culture (Hall & Mitchell, 2004; Long, 2004). Scarpato (2002) focuses on the capacity to generate discourses of gastronomy supported by the case studies of Timothy and Ron (2013) who found that the gastronomic experience is the most mentioned part and capable of generating the most hedonistic effects, as well as the most negative ones. In this sense currently, Everett (2019) and Hall (2019) have noted how the focus of studies on gastronomic experiences in tourism has grown from seeing these as marketing or consumer goods to their critical analysis.

There is another important shift in scholarship on the subject that the authors note at the conceptual level. Much more important than offering novelty and exoticism is striving for effective communication (Henderson, 2009). Based on effective communication between author-food-consumer, authors such as Hall *et al*. (2004), Timothy *et al*. (2013), Gyimòthy (2017), Poulain, (2007), among others, suggest that gastronomic tourism is a source of value generation. In fact, Scarpato (2002:96) and later, Gyimòthy (2017:1203-4) introduce the term hybrid gastronomic imagination to refer to different strategies for generating memories that replace more traditional dichotomies such as, rural / urban, global / local, with other hybrid forms of value such as authenticity, emotion, exo-aestheticisation beyond heritage values (2017), as well as, participation in reinventing culinary traditions (Avieli, 2013).

In terms of reflections from empirical cases regarding effective communication between taster and provider, the perspective of food as a communicative vehicle of culture is interesting (Hussain, Lema & Agrusa, 2012:80), a vehicle which, of course, is not neutral, but requires greater or lesser involvement by the taster and which will depend on variables related to their state of mind and security (Caber, Yilmaz, Kiliçarslan & Öztürk, 2018). That effective communication between taster and provider is not neutral extends to other qualifiers, such as negotiable and interpretable qualifiers related to initiation of the taster (de la Barre & Brouder, 2013:216). Hjalager and Corigliano (2000), in a now classic work, point out that this process of effective communication is also a two-way process. The increased awareness promoted by the maker can have repercussions on a reinterpretation of tradition (2000:291). In 2009, Sims identified the process of communication with a process of adaptability to the symbolic demand of the tasters (p. 334).

More recently, adaptability related to communication has been reframed by authors such as Mynttinen, Logrén, Särkkä-Tirkkonen and Rautiainen (2015), Losekoot and Korby (2019), Chen and Wu (2019) and Sørensen, Fuglsang, Sundbo and Jensen (2020). These authors consider the communication process not only as being diverse and adaptive but as co-creative and the result of a traveller's motivation that can diversify (2015:463), being the result of the reinforcement or non-reinforcement of the taster's beliefs and preconceptions (2019:53) and, finally, as the result of a web of new relationships that are generated in space-time and between specific agents (2019). More recently, a case study in Asia, links patisserie with the gastronomic experience as a key factor in the tourism experience. In Mediterranean areas, cuisine-tourism and cultural heritage have an almost tautological relationship (wine traditions, the Mediterranean diet as world heritage etc.).

The aim of this study is to gain an understanding of the efficiency of communication of the sacred-profane image of nunneries' pâtisseries (Hernández León, 2008; Abad, 2011, Sánchez La Torre, 2013). This aim will follow the most basic rules of grounded theory and the phenomenological approach (e.g. Andriotis, 2009; Willson, McIntosh & Zahra, 2013) using narrative and content analysis as its fundamental techniques, not confronting them but complementing them. Software and statistical tools will provide some robustness to the analysis of the comments on the encounter described.

Method

The empirical model adapted in this study, combined with the principles of grounded theory (data-driven theory) and phenomenology (bracketing theory when analysing data), hopes to contribute to different debates that remain open in the academic literature concerning experience of the sacred in leisure contexts. Some of them are related to conflicts in using spaces, the coexistence between the sacred, profane and touristic services, problems of

communication, the relationship between the tangible and intangible experience of tasting and its relation to individual beliefs.

Specific Objective and Starting Hypotheses

The objective proposed in this work is related to the aim of assessing the communication efficacy between the secular (touristic in this work) and sacred world through the analysis of online expression of pâtisserie / gastronomy experiences in sacred heritage sites.

The initial hypotheses are two:

1) The suggestion of food consumption at sacred sites that emphasises spiritual more than material or secular values (content analysis). This is outlined in the first subheading of the theoretical framework.
2) That users, coming from countries with differentiated Catholic geography, have a different perception of this relation between material, secular and sacred values. This is outlined in the second subheading of the theoretical framework.

Sample

Criteria of Information Selection

Seven Spanish female cloistered convents were taken into consideration from among the possible profiles, following two criteria: a. the popularity evidenced on the social network because of the large or small number of comments and; b. the notable content susceptible of being recognised as cultural heritage as the commentators leave a record of it in their photos.

In order to retreive the profiles of convents, the expression 'dulces+conventos' and translations in different languages such as English and Portuguese were introduced into the integrated search engine of the website.

331 comments were collected between 17 and 24 May 2019, discarding from each of the 7 selected profiles those that did not allude to baking (see the proportions and the popularity of each convent in Figure 1).

Comments that were not written in languages such as French, English, Portuguese, Italian and Spanish were translated using the automatic translation tool integrated into the website. Twenty-two different countries of origin were counted among the authors of the comments, although Spain is by far the country with the highest number of comments (49.5%).

Figure 1: Representativeness of the Sample

PLACES	OPINIONS	MENTIONS
MÁLAGA	46	45.6%
SORIA	39	97.4%
EXTREMADURA	32	87.5%
SEVILLA	42	97.6%
SALAMANCA	281	44.1%
MALLORCA	71	67.6%
CARMONA	75	41.3%

Prepared by the Authors

Criteria of Data Theoretical Grouping (level 05)

The geography of the distribution of Catholicism in the world for 2020 shows that there are countries with a Catholic tradition that are secularising (Spain, France, Portugal and Poland). In the cases of Australia, Ireland, Chile and the United States, Catholicism is in crisis. Whereas, Brazil, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Angola and Uganda have experienced a real resurgence of religiosity (Johnson, 2020).

Extrapolating this geography to the cases studied, three groups are made based on country of origin (as mentioned in the social network user profile). Thus, the comments will be grouped into

Secularised Traditional Catholic Countries such as Spain, Portugal, Italy and France

Crisis Catholic Countries such as United States, Australia and Ireland

Rising Catholic Countries such as Brazil

These classifications will be used in order to test hypothesis 2. This hypothesis is supported not only by the map provided by Johnson (2020) but also by the result expressed by Levi and Krocher, (2012:925) on the notable commercial use of religion, especially among Western believers.

Table 1: Distribution of Comments in Geographical Context

Comment	Countries	n
Secularised Traditional Catholic Countries	Spain	164
	Portugal	7
	France	15
	Italy	14
Catholic Countries in Crisis	United States	14
	Australia	2
	Ireland	1
Rising Catholic Countries	Brazil	8
Total		**225**

However, it is important to note that this theoretical clustering makes the boundary of the results transparent, as the clusters do not include countries for which there are no data in Johnson's map of Christianity (2000). Therefore only 225 comments are analysed in the theoretical grouping (Distribution in Table 1). To ensure rigour, the data obtained for each country (Table 1) will be compared with the rest. This will avoid the assumption of clustering beyond its theoretical scope.

Techniques and Instruments

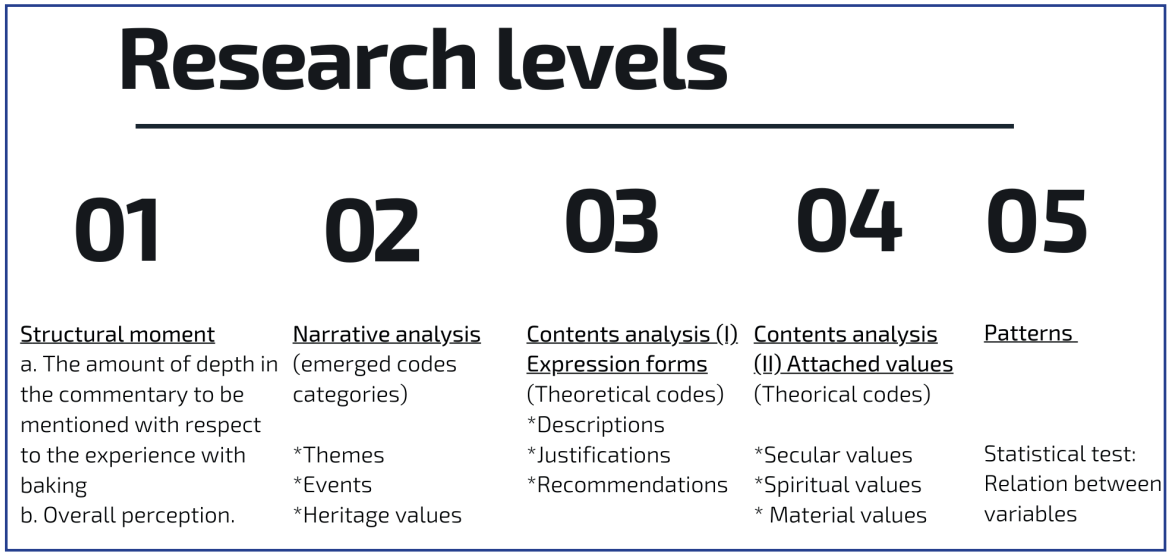
In this work, content analysis techniques will be combined with narrative analysis techniques. Both techniques allow a certain quantification of data obtained from the analysis of the information and with it the application of exploratory statistical calculation techniques to delve into the content and interpretation of the realities and activities expressed. In this sense, several levels of analysis are applied in this work from an interpretative point of view, ranging from more concrete to more abstract form (See Figure 2).

For levels 01 and 02, emergent codes were used until saturation and reduction of categories according to an already standardised procedure of textual analysis. Theoretical codes were used for levels 03 and 04 as are described in Figures 3 and 4. For the recording and subsequent horizontalisation of the data, this study was aided by content analysis software (Atlas.ti version 9 for Mac), which reduces possible interpretative bias. In addition, data visualisation tools, such as word clouds and percentages, were used to process the (quantifiable) data obtained.

For level 05, the chi-square and Fisher test of association of qualitative variables were applied between the *forms of expression* and the attached values (N=331). The rest of the statistical procedure was applied to one part of the sample as is shown above (n= 225). These included specific tests for homogeneity of samples according to the nature of the variable.

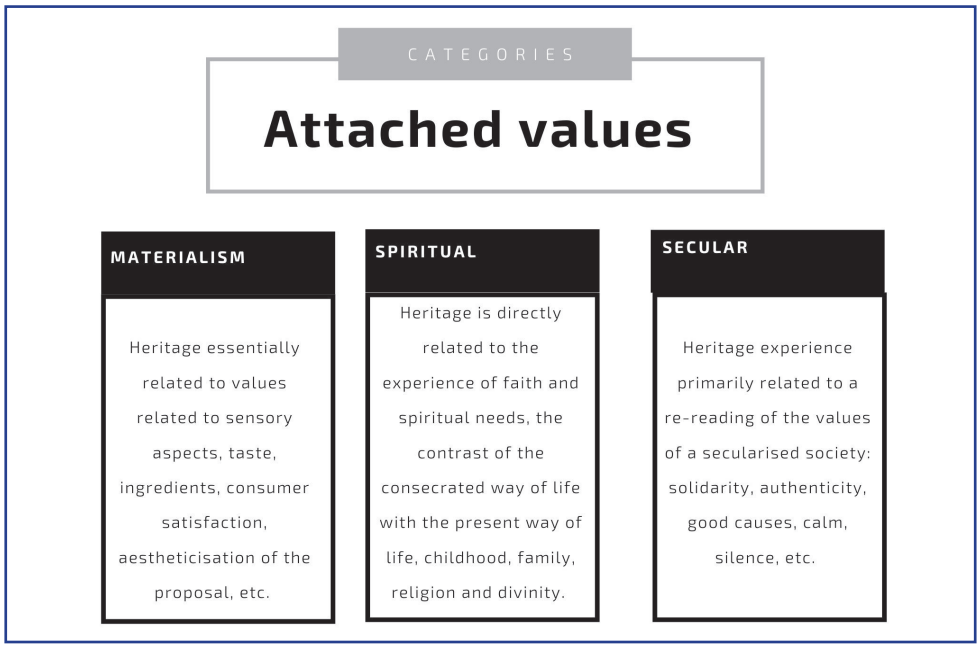
1) The results for the structural moment, the *forms of expression* and the *values attached* were expressed as dichotomous variables. The tests used were the Fischer and Chi-square tests.

Figure 2: Structure of Comments Analysis



Prepared by the Authors

Figure 3: Categories Applied in Content Analysis Level 03



Prepared by the Authors

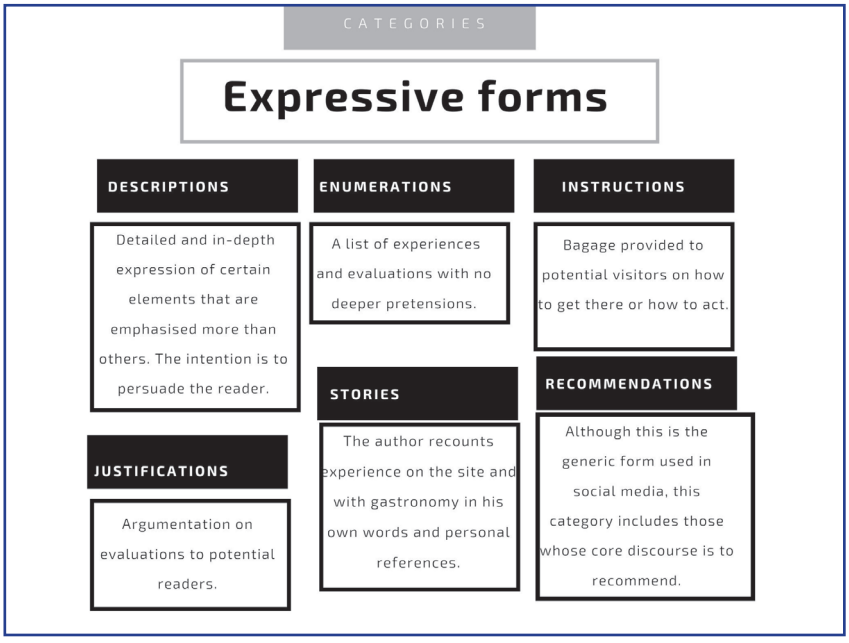
2) The results for mentions of *themes, events and heritage values* were expressed as quantitative variables. The test used was the K-Kolmogorov test for independent samples.

The aim of these tests is not to predict behaviours, but to make an in-depth study of the relationships between the information obtained.

Results

In order to examine the characteristics and potential of communication between tourists and the religious world, a double inductive-deductive perspective has been followed in this article. (Figure 2).

Figure 4: Categories Applied in Content Analysis Level 04



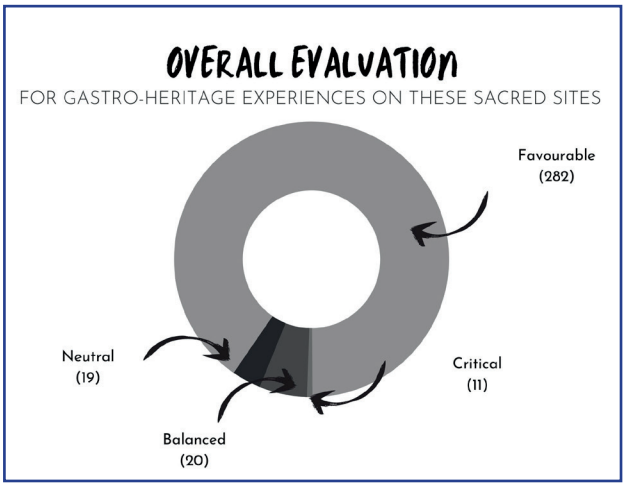
Prepared by the Authors

Analysing the Structural Moment: Deducing Times.

In the analysis of overall perception of the visit (Figure 5) as presented to potential tourists through the comments, the favourable consideration of the experience clearly dominates.

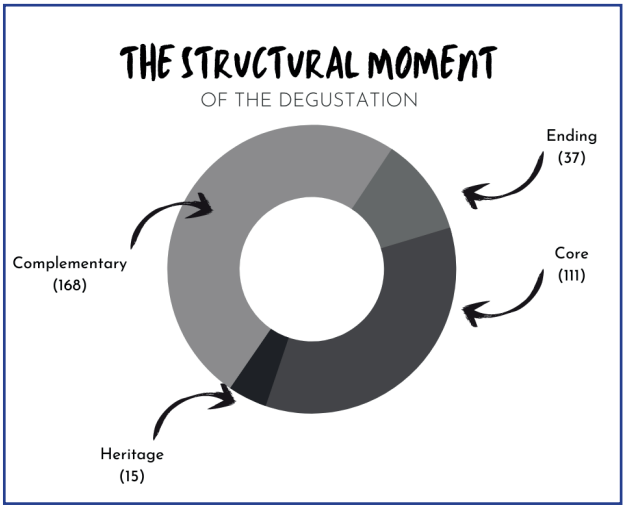
Observing the weight given to the tasting of the confectionery in the post-visit narrative (Figure 6), it is shown that it is primarily complementary of the visit (50.7%) and that only in one third (35.5%) of the opinions is it unclear. In no case could it be said that the cultural heritage experience overlaps with the tasting experience.

Figure 5: Overall Assessment of Comments



Prepared by the Authors

Figure 6: Weight of Comments for Gastronomy



Prepared by the Authors

Narrative Analysis: Inductive Codes and Reduction of Categories.

The narrative analysis establishes a series of thematic cores, perceived heritage values and expressed experiences. First, the themes identified (Figure 7) as the most repeated emerging categories, then the reduction in categories, can be organised into six primary groups of category reduction:

- characteristics
  - of the visit,
  - of the place,
  - of the residents,
  - of the confectionery,
- the personal connection or visit agenda, and
- the marketing or sales process.

Thus, 33.7% of the mentions correspond to the characterisation of the places (decoration, architectural elements, works of art, locations, etc.); 23.3% are mentions of the confectionery and its characteristics. The characteristics of the visit (itineraries, information and management) represent 15.6% of the mentions and mentions of buying and selling confectionery (choices and recommendations) account for 11%. The remaining groups are represented by less than 10% of the mentions.

Second, the most frequent events reported by visitors represent 10% of the mentions of events, showing a considerable diversity identified in the accounts. The most frequent events relate to the opportunity for experiences (activities and interests 7.8%) but also to tangible elements (historical-artistical objects 7.3%) such as the cloister (7%) and the lathe / 'el torno' (4.9%) or the variety of sweets available (5%). Figure 8 represents the diversity of events identified.

Third, the most frequent heritage values, which are activated on comments (Figure 9), can be grouped together into five categories:

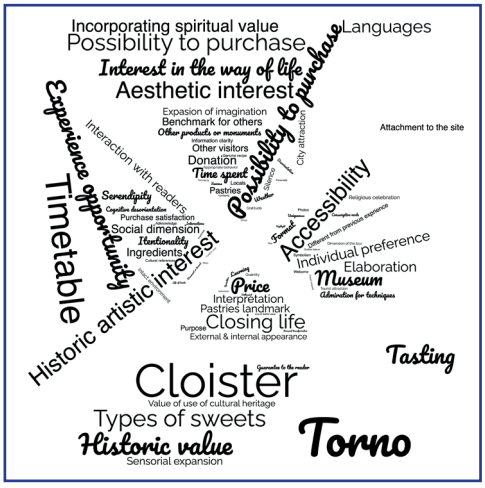
One of them is related to recognition of the importance of the confectionery itself (quality, exceptionality, relevance and similar characteristics 42.3%);

Next is the authorship and artisanal nature of the sweets (in both senses characterising the convent residents as much as the confectionery product 13.8%);

Figure 7: Thematic Cores

Prepared by the Authors

Figure 8: Lived Experience/Episode Cores



Prepared by the Authors

Figure 9: Most Represented Added-values for Culinary and Cultural Heritage

Prepared by the Authors

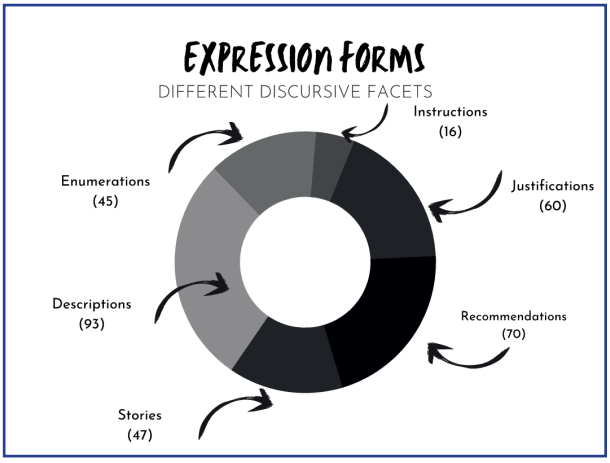
Next, the sensory value of tasting (8.7%);

the iconic and exceptional character of the place within the travel itinerary (8.7%) and;

the evaluation of the cost-benefits offered (4.2%) also appear among the most frequent values.

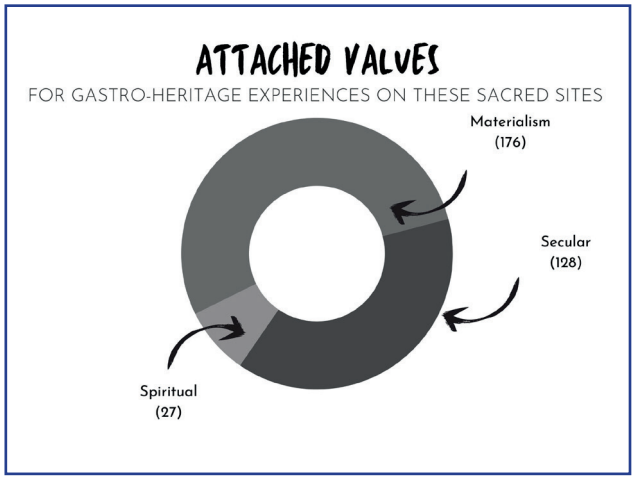
It seems relevant to note how the sensual and the tangible aspects, the characteristics of the spaces and their management, occupy equally important roles at different narrative analysis levels, how the conflicts of secular-religious use go unnoticed among visitors, and how the artistic-cultural heritage occupies an important place among the perceived value besides the pure pastry tasting.

Figure 10: Distribution of Type of Discourses on Comments



Prepared by the Authors

Figure 11: Presence of Sacred or Other Values in Comments



Prepared by the Authors.

Content Analysis: Expressive Forms.

The content analysis represents, methodologically, a level of greater abstraction by the researcher, although it is still based on the data. In this sense, both the analysis of the expressive forms (Figure 10) and that of the categories given (Figure 11) evaluate the commentary without breaking down its units of meaning, as in the previous section.

The most frequently recognised by the authors are descriptive discourses (see 10) amounting to 28.1%. The form of recommendation, which is to be expected in social networks, occupies almost a third of the submissions analysed (21.1%), although this competes with justifications (18.1%).

Content Analysis: Deductive Codes and Values.

This global vision of represented values complements the previous one and offers interesting conclusions about the potential for communication between the two worlds or ways of life analysed through exchange activities.

The more materialistic aspects (sensory, aesthetic, ingredients) are the most representative in the sample (52.2% - see Figure 11), followed by secular considerations or re-readings that the lived experience provokes on current societal values - e.g. solidarity (38.7%). Strictly spiritual values - relating to the transformation of oneself and the world - are much less prominent in the comments (8.1%).

Pattern Evaluation

In general, there are no significant correlations between the forms of expression and spiritual, material, or secular values between 331 comments.

Statistical tests have allowed us to look for patterns and relationships between groups of visitors that were established theoretically (see 'Sample', n=225[1]). The groups of visitors according to religious geography show that there is only a significant difference between those from Spain and the rest of the comments for the use of *instructions* as forms of expression (x^2= 4.053, p-value=0.044). However, no expected differences were found between the representativeness of secular, material, and secular values. As for the nuclear weight of the pastries, significant differences were found between comments coming from Spaniards and those that were not of Spanish origin (x^2=5.412, p-value=0.0020), as well as, when consumption was highlighted at the end of the comment (x^2=5.419, p-value= 0.020).

Are there differences at the narrative level? For this purpose, the number of mentions per thematic core, episode and value were subjected to the same statistical tests. The results reveal that there are no statistically significant differences in the groups of values attributed to cultural heritage. However, regarding the themes, the comparison of samples was homogeneous except for mentions of the characteristics of the place (Spain (Z=2.219, p-value= 0) and Brazil (Z=1.675, p-value=0.007)) and references to the characteristics of the visit (itineraries and management - Spain - Z=1.381, p-value=0.044). As for the group of events or experiences, significant differences between samples were found for mentions related to tangible elements related to accessibility (Spain Z=1.563, p=0.015).

Discussion and Conclusions

The results obtained from the analysis of the qualitative information and its subsequent quantification (use of mixed techniques) will allow us to argue, to deepen our understanding of how communication between the sacred life and profane world is, or can be effective through the use of taste.

The starting hypotheses had to do with finding different levels of understanding of the experience according to the over- or under-estimation of tangible and intangible values linked to the religious-touristic-gastronomic experience and according to the background of the prescribers determined, as argued, through the geography map of Catholicism 2020. Both are partially answered by the results obtained.

First, the results for describing the sample of comments reflect that the experience with the gastronomic proposal (nuns' patisseries) is, at least in half of the cases, complementary to the visit to the place where the

1 For Ireland statistical test is not possible because of the low number of comments.

consecrated life takes place. Most of the visitors have a satisfactory ultimate experience and describe and provide recommendations to their potential readers. This point is relevant if one considers that one does not need sacred sites to experience spiritual values (Huang *et al*., 2020), and furthermore, if one considers that the experience of travelling for tourism to a sacred space may be motivated by collective religious understanding or experience, or simply for recreational reasons (Caber, Drori, Albayrak & Herstein, 2021).

Content Analysis reveals that the weight given to material and secular values is predominant in the way visitors-consumers perceive them, and that the spiritual factor is relegated to an anecdotal level. Moreover, the detailed narrative analysis reveals mentions of intangible heritage values in 19.9% of reviews; intangible thematic cores in 9.5% of mentions and references to intangible events in 11% of mentions. These results could be related to a phenomenon associated with tourism and religious activities in XX and XXI centuries. The religious centres are becoming multifuncional spaces in which different service spaces could coexist. Moreover, nowadays, there is a religious tourist practice concerning tradition, which considers religious resources as consumer and recreative goods (Packer *et al*., 2014; Sołjan *et al*., 2021).

The Content Analysis also suggests that there are differences between groups of visitor-tasters according to their background in their use of the expression *instructions* and differences in the *core* status of the experience with the baking tradition, which we might assume. However, there are no differences in the supremacy of *spiritual values*. The narrative analysis allows us to further deepen the partial positive observation of both initial hypotheses. The reduction of categories referring to the value placed on religious-gastronomic experience is close to the proposal previously suggested by Lin *et al*. (2015) and Olsen (2003), except for the symbolic aspect. The iconic characteristics of the site seem to replace its symbolic potential. In this way, classical notions of existential authenticity (Wang, 2000) and noumenal experience (Cameron and Gatewood, 2013) are, at the very least, reframed.

There is something between intentions and magic that turns icons into stories (not decoded as in Dicks, 2000 or the creation of exploitable myths as in Woodside, Cruickshank & Dehuang, 2005). When comparing the sample by background, we will not be surprised to find significant differences in recognising the character of the residents and their pâtisserie transformation. However, it is surprising not to find differences in other aspects of communication, such as those related to the site like icon or sensory registers.

Among the themes mentioned, it is surprising to find differences not among those that refer to personal connection (performative potential -Edensor, 2000), but among those that have more to do strictly with the cultural-gastronomic offer.

In terms of episodes, those of a tangible nature are the most frequently mentioned, despite the enormous weight of sensory values. However, the differences between the groups are reduced to tangible elements related to accessibility.

In the light of the results, the weight given to the singular character of the gastronomic experience encountered is indisputable, both in the experience expressed on the tourist visit and in its communication with other potential visitors. This raises the possibility of taking greater advantage of this resource. The literature suggests two paths: symbolic adaptability (Sims, 2009) and the hybridisation or co-creation of this potential (Mynttinen *et al*., 2015; Losekoot & Korby 2019; Chen & Wu, 2019; Sørensen *et al*., 2020, etc.).

In recent years we have become increasingly aware, not only through academic means (Novo, 2016; UNWTO, 2014) but also through the press (Aguilar, 2019), and other mass media, of professional initiatives that act as intermediaries between the convents and the street, but the '*in situ*' experience, in the spaces analysed, seems irreplaceable: (a) given the important complementary weight that other attractions of the place or its inhabitants have in the comments, and (b) how the values related to other elements of the environment and the experience are highlighted. Thus, religion today remains an important source of social value creation (Romanelli, Gazzola, Grechi & Pollice, 2021). On the other hand, it cannot be overlooked that, as a tourism activity, visiting sacred sites is a development activity whose impacts, sustainable or

not, influences local authorities, religious authorities, residents and visitors alike (Jurado *et al*., 2021; Sołjan *et al*, 2021).

That the unfavourable comments, or those establishing a positive-negative balance, are so few in the sample could be an element that gives new perspectives / solutions to the debate on whether and how to 'open' convents or to 'preserve' and 'respect' (and what such a significant religious way of life means in this century).

Although the expressive form in a medium such as TripAdvisor may be marked by the character of a recommendation, the *description* (where the author establishes personal priorities) as well as the *justification* (where the visitor deliberately reasons his / her evaluations) are no less important.

That spiritual values, or the perception of profound change, come last may lead us to think about the much talked about problem of communication between sacred life and that of the profane. However, at the research level, we are interested in delving into the secular aspects that seem to show the communicative perspective of the outsiders (their demands and requirements). The good reception of the gastronomic product is undeniable, but it is necessary to investigate more about its underestimated symbolic potential.

In general, the results obtained in the statistical test allow us to consider: (a) the need to further explore, through deeper levels of narrative analysis (see Figure 2) how the differences in the supremacy of secular and material values are detected, and (b) why spiritual values that, *a priori*, we might think are differentiated, are not. On the first point, secular values are very much related to the sense of the individual and not to the community (Andriotis, 2009) so that the secular and material in terms of possession or appropriation could merge. That there is no significant difference in the perception of spiritual values is consistent with the supremacy of the importance of the tangible aspects of heritage.

In short, it has only been possible to partially test the hypotheses, although, for economic activity, there are some questions that require further study using other techniques, such as: trying to understand the reasons for giving or not giving nuclear value to the pastisserie-gastronomic experience. Whether it is the cultural proximity, the lack of interpretative elements, or whether it is due, in another order of things, to the weight that the heritage site exerts on the attraction of visitors. This work brings to the literature on religious souvenirs and gastronomic imagination a way of approaching experiences that combines the best of qualitative (phenomenology) and quantitative (grounded theory) approaches and reveals the existence not only of a public that does not conflict with the uses of religious heritage, but is also willing to be a prescriber. At the research level, it is interested to delve into the secular aspects that seem to show the communicative perspective of the outsiders (their demands and requirements). The positive reception of the gastronomic product is undeniable, but it is necessary to investigate more about its undervalued symbolic potential.

This provides the cloistered communities studied with a comfort zone, a potential of sacredness to be exploited and to be sure to make it targetable, in the difficult challenge of overcoming the vocation crisis by 'opening doors', because, unwittingly or unknowingly, this potential occurs and generates synergies that are worth listening to.

Note

Previous results of this research were presented at the XXI International Congress on Religion in Society held in Cordoba in June 2020.

References

Abad Zardoya, C. (2011) Entre ascesis y gula: imaginario de la gastronomía monástica conventual, *Argensola: Revista de Ciencias Sociales del Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses*, (121), pp. 313–344.

Andriotis, K. (2009) Sacred site experience: A Phenomenological Study, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36(1), pp. 64–84. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2008.10.003.

Avieli, N. (2013) What is 'Local Food?' Dynamic culinary heritage in the World Heritage Site of Hoi An, Vietnam, *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 8(2–3), pp. 120–132. doi:10.1080/1743873X.2013.767812.

Blonner, A. (2021) 'Blurred Boundaries between Secular Memory and Sacred Space in Religious Tourism: Cases of Mormon and Unification Faiths', in *Sacred Sites and Sacred Stories Across Cultures*. Springer, pp. 163–190.

Caber, M., Yilmaz, G., Kiliçarslan, D., and Öztürk, A. (2018) The effects of tour guide performance and food involvement on food neophobia and local food consumption intention, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *30*(3), 1472-1491. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-02-2017-0080

Caber, M., Drori, N., Albayrak, T., and Herstein, R. (2021) Social media usage behaviours of religious tourists: The cases of the Vatican, Mecca, and Jerusalem, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *23*(5), 816-831. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2444

Cameron, C. and Gatewood, J.B. (2012) The numen experience in heritage tourism, in Smith, L., Waterton, E., and Watson, S., *The Cultural Moment in Tourism*. Routledge.

Canoves, G., Romagosa, F., Romero, A., and Priestley, G. (2012) Religious tourism and sacred places in Spain: Old practices, new forms of tourism, *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology*, *2*, 282-298. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJTA.2012.052537

Carnegie, E. (2009) Catalysts for change? Museums of religion in a pluralist society, *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion*, 6(2), pp. 157–169. doi:10.1080/14766080902819058.

Chen, Y.S. and Wu, S.T. (2019) Social networking practices of Viennese coffeehouse culture and intangible heritage tourism, *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 17(2), pp. 186–207. doi:10.1080/14766825.2017.1400037.

de la Barre, S. and Brouder, P. (2013) Consuming stories: placing food in the Arctic tourism experience, *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 8(2–3), pp. 213–223. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/1743873X.2013.767811.

Dicks, B. (2016) Encoding and Decoding the People: Circuits of Communication at a Local Heritage Museum, *European Journal of Communication* [Preprint]. doi:10.1177/0267323100015001003.

Dixit, S.K. (2019) *The Routledge Handbook of Gastronomic Tourism*. Routledge.

Dixit, S.K. (2020) *The Routledge Handbook of Tourism Experience Management and Marketing*. Routledge.

Drule, A.M., Chiş, A., Băcilă, M.F. and Ciornea, R. (2012) A New Perspective of Non-Religious Motivations of Visitors to Sacred Sites: Evidence From Romania, *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *62*, 431-435. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.070

Edensor, T. (2000) Staging tourism: Tourists as performers, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(2), pp. 322–344. doi:http://dx.doi.org.accedys2.bbtk.ull.es/10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00082-1.

Everett, S. (2019) Theoretical turns through tourism taste-scapes: the evolution of food tourism research, *Research in Hospitality Management*, 9(1), pp. 3–12. doi:10.1080/22243534.2019.1653589.

Gyimóthy, S. (2017) The reinvention of terroir in Danish food place promotion, *European Planning Studies*, 25(7), pp. 1200–1216. doi:10.1080/09654313.2017.1281229.

Hall, C.M. (2019) Improving the recipe for culinary and food tourism? The need for a new menu, *Tourism Recreation Research*, 0(0), pp. 1–4. doi:10.1080/02508281.2019.1694243.

Hall, C.M. and Mitchell, R. (2005) Gastronomic tourism: Comparing food and wine tourism experiences, in Novelli, M. (ed.) *Niche Tourism*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, pp. 73–88. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-7506-6133-1.50014-7 (Accessed: 23 July 2014).

Hall, C.M. and Sharples, L. (2003) The consumption of experiences or the experience of consumption? An introduction to the tourism of taste, in Hall, C.M. *et al*. (eds) *Food Tourism Around The World*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, pp. 1–24. Available at: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B978075065503350004X (Accessed: 21 January 2015).

Henderson, J.C. (2009) Food tourism reviewed.', *British Food Journal*, 111(4), pp. 317–326. doi:10.1108/00070700910951470.

Hernández León, E. (2008) Sweets and cloisters. An approach to the analysis of Sevillian convents. In Martín Pradas, A.. (coord.) *Actas de las VI Jornadas de protección del patrimonio de Écija*. 'Patrimonio inmaterial de Ecija II, costumbres, artesanía y tradiciones culinarias', Asociación de amigos de Ecija. (p.149-162).

Hjalager, A.M. and Corigliano, M.A. (2000) Food for tourists--determinants of an image, *The International Journal of Tourism Research*, 2(4), pp. 281–293. doi:https://doi.org/10.1002/1522-1970(200007/08)2:4%3C281::AID-JTR228%3E3.0.CO;2-Y.

Huang, K., Pearce, P., Guo, Q., and Shen, S. (2020) Visitors' spiritual values and relevant influencing factors in religious tourism destinations, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *22*(3), 314-324. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2337

Hussain, Z., Lema, J. and Agrusa, J. (2012) Enhancing the Cultural Tourism Experience Through Gastronomy in the Maldives, *Journal of Tourism Challenges and Trends*, 5(2), pp. 71–83.

I Congreso Internacional Patrimonio religioso y turismo: tipos, tendencias y desafíos - Elche (España), 26 – 28 noviembre 2014 / I International Congress Religious heritage and tourism: types, trends and challenges - Elche, Spain, 26–28 November 2014 (2014). UNWTON. Available at: https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/epdf/10.18111/9789284416684 (Accessed: 2 February 2021).

Iliev, D. (2020) The evolution of religious tourism: Concept, segmentation and development of new identities, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 45, pp. 131–140. doi:10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.07.012.

Jonhson, T.M. (2020) Catholicism Worldwide, *Gordon Conwell*, April. Available at: https://www.gordonconwell.edu/blog/catholicism-worldwide/ (Accessed: 27 March 2021).

Jurado Rivas, C. and Granados Claver, M. (2021) Patrimonial-religious tourism and natural spaces: coexistence and competition, *Journal of Tourism and Heritage Research*, 4(33), pp. 59–69.

Levi, D. and Kocher, S. (2013) Perception of Sacredness at Heritage Religious Sites, *Environment and Behavior*, 45(7), pp. 912–930. doi:10.1177/0013916512445803.

Lin, L. and Mao, P.C. (2015) Food for memories and culture – A content analysis study of food specialties and souvenirs, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 22, pp. 19–29. doi:10.1016/j.jhtm.2014.12.001.

Long, L.M. (2004) Introduction, in Long, L.M. (ed.) *Culinary Tourism*. University Press of Kentucky, pp. 1–19.

López García, J.J. and Ramírez Villapando, R. (2021) Temple of San Antonio de Padua: tourist promoter of religious heritage, *Journal of Tourism and Heritage Research*, 4(1), pp. 289–308.

Losekoot, E. and Hornby, J. (2019) What is the future of foreign food experiences?, *Research in Hospitality Management*, 9(1), pp. 49–54. doi:10.1080/22243534.2019.1653603.

Mynttinen, S., Logrén, J., Särkkä-Tirkkonen, M., and Rautiainen, T. (2015) Perceptions of food and its locality among Russian tourists in the South Savo region of Finland, *Tourism Management*, *48*, 455-466. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2014.12.010

Moira, P., Mylonopoulos, D. and Parasxi, A. (2019) Preserving traveller's memory in religious destinations, *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, 7(2). doi:https://doi.org/10.21427/ercj-j216.

Novo Málvarez, M. (2016) *Los conventos de clausura del centro histórico de Palma. Potencialidades y nuevos usos vinculados a la gestión del patrimonio cultural.* Universitat de les Illes Balears.

Noy, C. (2008) Pages as Stages: A Performance Approach to Visitor Books, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(2), pp. 509–528. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2008.02.005.

Noy, C. (2015) Thank You for Dying for Our Country: Commemorative Texts and Performances in Jerusalem. In *Thank You for Dying for Our Country*. Oxford University Press.

Noy, C. (2017) Participatory Media and Discourse in Heritage Museums: Co-constructing the Public Sphere?, *Communication, Culture and Critique*, 10(2), pp. 280–301. doi:10.1111/cccr.12160.

Olsen, D.H. (2003) Heritage, Tourism, and the Commodification of Religion, *Tourism Recreation Research*, 28(3), pp. 99–104. doi:10.1080/02508281.2003.11081422.

Olsen, DH (2006) Management issues for religious heritage attractions, in *Tourism, Religion, and Spiritual Journeys, ISBN 0-415-35445-5,* Routledge, pp. 104–118.

Packer, J. (2014) Visitors' restorative experiences in museum and botanic garden environments, in Filep, S. and Pearce, P.L. (eds) *Tourist Experience and Fulfilment: Insight from Positive Psychology*. Routledge, pp. 202–222.

Paine, C. (2019) *Gods and rollercoasters: religion in theme parks worldwide*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Poulain, J.P. (2007) Los patrimonios gastronómicos y sus valorizaciones turísticas, in Tresserras, J. and Medina, X. (eds) *Patrimonio gastronómico y turismo cultural en el Mediterráneo*. Barcelona (Colección Ibertur-Turismo cultural), pp. 39–71.

Richards, G. (2002) Gastronomy: an essential ingredient in tourism production and consumption?, in Hjalager, AM and Richards, G (eds) *Tourism and gastronomy*. Routledge, pp. 3–20.

Romanelli, M., Gazzola, P., Grechi, D., and Pollice, F. (2021) Towards a sustainability-oriented religious tourism, *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, *38*(3), 386-396. https://doi.org/10.1002/sres.2791

Ron, A.S. and Timothy, D.J. (2013) The land of milk and honey: Biblical foods, heritage and Holy Land tourism, *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 8(2–3), pp. 234–247.

Sbardella, F. (2014) Ethnography of cloistered life: Field work into silence, in *Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion*. Brill Academic Publishers, pp. 55–70. doi:10.1163/9789004283503_005.

Scarpato, R. (2002) Gastronomy as a tourist product: the perspective of gastronomy studies' in Hjalager, A.M. and Richards, G. (eds) *Tourism and Gastronomy*. London: Routledge, pp. 51–70.

Scott, D.W. (2014) Dinosaurs on Noah's Ark? Multi-Media Narratives and Natural Science Museum Discourse at the Creation Museum in Kentucky, *Journal of Media & Religion*, 13(4), pp. 226–243. doi:10.1080/15348423.2014.971570.

Scott, D.W. and Stout, D. (2012) A Date with Science and Religion: An Analysis of the Encoding and Decoding Practices at the Dead Sea Scrolls Exhibit in Charlotte, North Carolina, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 29(1), pp. 27–44. doi:10.1080/15295036.2010.517777.

Sims, R. (2009) Food, place and authenticity: local food and the sustainable tourism experience, *Journal of sustainable tourism*, 17(3), pp. 321–336. doi:10.1080/09669580802359293.

Sołjan, I. and Liro, J. (2021) Religious Tourism's Impact on City Space: Service Zones around Sanctuaries, *Religions*, 12(3), p. 165. doi:10.3390/rel12030165.

Sørensen, F., Fuglsang, L., Sundbo, J., and Jensen, J.F. (2020) 'Tourism practices and experience value creation: The case of a themed attraction restaurant', *Tourist Studies*, https://doi.org/10.1177/1468797619899347

Sánchez Aguilar, R.A. (2019) Clausura: radical feminism. Madrid: Freshbook, Creo S.L.

Sánchez La Torre, M. (2013) Intangible heritage and pastry shops: the pastisserie of the monastery of the Discalced Carmelite nuns of Úbeda (Jaén). in, El Patrimonio Inmaterial de la Cultura Cristiana. San Lorenzo del Escorial:(p.601-618). ISBN: 978-84-15659-13-6.

Timothy, D.J. and Ron, A.S. (2013) Understanding heritage cuisines and tourism: identity, image, authenticity, and change, *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 8(2–3), pp. 99–104. doi:10.1080/1743873X.2013.767818.

Wang, N. (1999) Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience.', *Annals of tourism research*, 26(2), pp. 349–370. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(98)00103-0.

Willson, G.B., McIntosh, A.J. and Zahra, A.L. (2013) Tourism and spirituality: A phenomenological analysis, *Annals of Tourism Research,* 42:150–168. doi:10.1016/j.annals.2013.01.016.

Woodside, A.G., Cruickshank, B.F. and Dehuang, N. (2007) Stories visitors tell about Italian cities as destination icons, *Tourism Management*, 28(1), pp. 162–174. doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2005.10.026.

Zarb, J. (2020) 'How Religious Tourism and Pilgrimages Can be Beneficial to Communities', *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, 8(2). doi:https://doi.org/10.21427/j6j5-5459.

Access to TripAdvisor Comments:

Convento de Belén (Antequera):

https://bit.ly/39kR1E0

Convento de las Hermanas Clarisas de Santa Isabel (Medinaceli):

https://bit.ly/2QyzvFN

Convento de Santa Clara (Llerana)

https://bit.ly/3vXLcWO

Convento de Santa Ines (Sevilla):

https://bit.ly/31n3fYD

Convento de las Dueñas (Salamanca):

https://bit.ly/39mYBOF

Convento de Santa Clara (Palma de Mallorca):

https://bit.ly/3tXgdZc

Convento de Santa Clara (Carmona):

https://bit.ly/3tXYBfN