

**How does Tourism, as a Globalized Social Phenomenon,
Interfere with the Current Processes of Heritagization in the
Mediterranean Area?**

From Grand Tour by European aristocrats in the XVIIIth century to mass-tourism thanks to paid leaves and democratisation of means of transportation in the XXth century, tourism gradually became a global phenomenon. If Europe is the first destination in the world for international tourists in 2017, some insular and coastal regions constitute a major element to explain this assertion. All around the year, with a peak during summer months, the Mediterranean area is among favourite holiday's destinations. This specific interest on Mediterranean shores follows the idealistic model of sea, sand and sun. It is thanks to this heliotropism that in 2015, Mediterranean countries welcomed 350 million of visitors, making it the most visited region in the world. Tourists thus come to the Mediterranean with expectations about weather, food, cultural sites... Expectations which are perceived by the hosting environment.

How does tourism influence Mediterranean heritage processes?

Tourists' expectations and corresponding touristic offers are major heritage's co-creators. As tourists come with an idea of what they would like to discover, they will come across cultural items which will be perceived through this expectative lens. Beyond these pre-constructed ideas, tourists tend to shape the offer by reacting in various ways to a cultural object or a local custom. In Sicily for instance, Moors heads ceramics can be found in any locality on the island, not only in Palermo where the myth took place, nor in Caltagirone known for its secular ceramic craftsmanship. This is a result of specific touristic interests, leading to an adaptation of the offer, often quite far from the local traditions.

In other cases, local populations even adopt the new tradition. A clear example can be the selection of some traditional non-Balinese dances during Bali's carnival: those dances weren't part of the Balinese tradition, but as tourists enjoyed them more than others, they gradually took more time during the festivity, and more space in Balinese population's traditions. To explain this integration with a Mediterranean example, we could also address Syracuse heritage, which was oriented toward the Greek period, even though Syracuse also has many architectural layers: medieval, baroque... As a distinction from Val di Noto city chain which is a UNESCO site for the late baroque cities rebuilding after the 1693 earthquake, Syracuse chose to focus and build its image on antique heritage.

Those examples highlight how tourism can encourage heritage(re)creation processes. Surely, the tourism industry is also a way of getting incomes for the host population thanks to tourists' cultural interests or demands. Although (re)shaping heritage products, tourism thus allows them to be preserved and protected.



On the other hand, tourism can negatively impact heritagisation processes. We will explain this situation by using two elements: UNESCO labelling ambivalent process, and touristic experiences' standardisation caused by cruising companies.

In 1972 after the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, UNESCO created a list of major heritage sites which should be looked after. This inventory generated a higher level of attention when curating heritage objects, as well as it declared publicly which elements had a primordial existence in humanity. Thus, it encouraged cultural tourism in UNESCO sites. But some sites cannot survive to a massive frequentation, because of a lack of maintenance policies, or the fragile nature of the site. The Old City of Jerusalem is on the endangered sites list of UNESCO since 1982 for these reasons: tourism, urban planning projects and no legislation on conservation. Another example of a heritage site endangered by tourism is the city of Venice, which is slowly getting lower as millions of visitors walk in everyday throughout the year. This city is also the symbol of UNESCO labelling ambivalence as it is a one-day destination for thousands of visitors coming from the sea.

In the Mediterranean, the cruising industry grew by 400% between 1990 and 2008. With 10,5 million beds, Mediterranean cruise-ships constitute 15% of the world cruising industry. This industry shaped sea-land interfaces' facilities, as Maltese port of Valetta which built a tourism-related port in order to balance its declassified shipping port. Although such constructions give urban regeneration perspectives, it often implies social displacement and environmental degradations of heritage sites.



Tourism has a double impact on heritagisation processes, as it is both the initiator and main threat on heritage sustainability. Although local communities develop handling strategies, the overcrowding of some heritage sites inexorably leads to endangering both sites and their population. As tourism remains one of the major economic resource in the Mediterranean basin, it is urgent to set a new model of sustainable tourism, able to meet both parties' needs.

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