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an international perspective

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Edited by:
CARMINE GAMBARDILLA
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**Development and preservation in large cities:
an international perspective**
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Cultural Heritage Tourism in Italy and France: compare and contrast

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The key concepts of cultural network, tourist district and a local community's involvement in the planning process – focusing on the discovery of the *genius loci* – are the basis of management strategies in the best practices for the sites of excellence worldwide. This is not true for Italy, with 47 World Heritage properties (the country with the largest number of sites), lost the highest percentage of foreign visitors in the last thirty years, since tourism started to have a significant impact on the global economy worldwide. Data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 2011), shows that Italy ranks fifth as a tourist destination with 43.6 million international arrivals after France, the United States, China and Spain. Since 1980, Italy lost 3.2 per cent of international arrivals, which is the highest percentage among those of the top twenty tourist destinations in the world. However, what impresses most is the gap what has been created between Italy and France in the period under consideration, or since the brand UNESCO has had a significant impact on the movement of visitor flows interested in cultural tourism¹. The difference in the number of foreign tourists, in fact, has increased from eight to forty million. In the same period, since the explosion of mass tourism, Italy has doubled the number of visitors, while China, for example, rose from 3.5 million to 55.7 million visitors per year. With regard to the revenue related to the tourism economy, and with reference to the year 2011, the United States ranks first place with 116.3 billion dollars, while Italy, after Spain and France,

¹ UNWTO. *World Tourism Barometer*. Madrid, United Nation World Tourist Organization Publishing, 2011.

² *Ibidem*.

³ Sateriale Gaetano. *C'è Stata Un'epoca, Forse ...* In Siti. Anno quarto, numero quattro, ottobre/dicembre 2008. Ferrara, Associazione Italiana Città e Siti Patrimonio Mondiale UNESCO, 2008.

⁴ Sateriale Gaetano. *Un Patrimonio Che Vale Una Fortuna*. In Siti. Anno quarto, numero due, aprile/giugno 2008. Ferrara, Associazione Italiana Città e Siti Patrimonio Mondiale UNESCO, 2008.

⁵ Donnat Olivier. *Les pratiques culturelles des Français*. Enquête 1997. Paris, La Documentation française, 1998.

⁶ Greffe Xavier. *Economie de la propriété artistique*. Paris, Economica, 2005.

⁷ Fleury Laurent. *Sociologie de la culture et des pratique culturelle*. Paris, A. Colin, 2008.

⁸ Greffe Xavier, Pflieger Sylvie ... *op. cit.* ; Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication. « Le budget du ministère chargé des Affaires culturelles de 1960 à 1985. » Développement culturel, n. 67, octobre 1986.

⁹ Vourc'h Anne. *Protection, Management and Sustainable Development: The "Grans Site de France" Experience*. In Gambardella Carmine. *Less/More*. In the proceedings X

ranked fourth with 42.9 billion dollars². The data suggest that the promotion and enhancement of landscape and cultural heritage is not adequately developed, especially taking into account the global scenario that is particularly complex and capable of providing infinite offers to meet many needs. It is therefore clear that the tourist attractions, and more specifically the Italian heritage, are not capable of generating economic flows compared to its potential. The economic, social and environmental impact related to the proper management of cultural heritage and landscape has not been fully understood. This also includes tourism promotion strategies related to different spatial scales and different actors involved in the process. Confirming this view, we observe that the cost of Culture represents a percentage lower than seven per cent in the total annual budget of an Italian family. This percentage is lower than the European average of nine percent, and that of Great Britain, which is the highest in the old continent with twelve percent³.

The major reasons for such a limited number of tourists, in relation to the expectations and potential, could, inter alia, include: lack of price competitiveness linked to tourist services compared to other foreign destinations, the fragmentation of the tourist offer, the limited use of funds to promote the area, the limited use of the Internet by Italian tour operators (one out of three people books holidays on-line), the quality of tourist



services that often are not up to required standards, and the inability to organize events of international visibility⁴.

The situation in France is different where culture, over the centuries, has affirmed itself in the policies adopted, as the most important tool for achieving a comprehensive development, including social and economic, which ensures the quality of life of every individual⁵. It is a State duty for all to be able to access culture, as provided by the French Constitution. This is also the main objective of the Ministry of Culture, which foresees: making accessible to the widest possible public the works of art, primarily national ones; to encourage the creation of works of art and stimulate the spirit that enriches them (*décret n. 59-889 du 24 juillet 1959*).⁶

In fact, creation is a cornerstone of French cultural policy, with it being expressed through two main actions. The first appears to support the artists in their training, assuring a support system in the absence of work, protecting intellectual property and facilitating access to internal and external market. The second is materialized with the support of business through numerous public commissions, specific tax and financial measures as well as the creation of specific places for exhibitions and events⁷. The main role of the State is recorded in the investment for culture with funding in this economic sector: with a budget of 2.816 billion Euro announced in the national budget for culture in 2009 - and an increase of 2.4 per cent more compared



International Forum of Studies "Le Vie dei Mercanti". Napoli, La Scuola di Pitagora, 2012.

¹⁰ Added value is defined as the difference between the proceeds from the sale and the amount paid for the purchase of raw materials and semi-finished products used in the production process.

¹¹ Messager Michel, Ruiz Gérard, Warnet Claude. *Le poids économique et social du tourisme*. Conseil national du tourisme de France, section de l'économie touristique, 2010.

¹² Hervé Novelli, ministre en charge du tourisme en France, in Michèle Sani, «Convention culture/tourisme : bientôt des paradors «à la française»», sur tourmag.com, Samedi 7 Novembre 2009. The seven most visited monuments, cited in the article, are: le Mont Saint-Michel, l'Arc de Triomphe, la Sainte Chapelle, le Panthéon, les tours de Notre-Dame de Paris, la Conciergerie, le château et les remparts de Carcassonne. The three museums are the Louvre, Orsay et Versailles.

¹³ Initiative endorsed by the Council of Europe in 1991 at the suggestion of Jack Lang, the French Minister of Culture from 1981 to 1986 and again from 1988 to 1993.

Capri, via Krupp (photo by Alessandro Ciabrone).

Paris, Hôtel de Ville (photo by Alessandro Ciabrone).

to 2008 - investments in culture have increased almost continuously over the last twenty five years⁸. Close links unite political and cultural tourism in France, which with eighty-two million international arrivals, is the most visited country in the world. The concentration of natural and cultural heritage is high in the Country, forming the basis for a tourist economy, which represents 6.2 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).⁹ The added value¹⁰ of tourism in France, as a percentage of GDP, is higher than that of other sectors which contribute decisively to the national economy. The total tourist income in the country in 2009 was 84.7 billion euro. The value added of 41.6 billion euro, exceeding the energy and agriculture (30 billion respectively), agro-food industry (25.7 billion) and automotive (11.2 billion). Due to its nature, as a sector of services, tourism is a major generator of employment, with an average annual growth of twenty-seven thousand employees over the past ten years¹¹. Particular attention is drawn to the policies relating to cultural tourism initiatives such as, for example, the Convention of the National Council on Tourism with the Ministry of Culture, signed on April 18th, 2008, which seeks to establish cooperation in land management, development of cultural resources and local products. The aim is to adapt the cultural offer to continuing developments in tourist demand and specific needs, such as the creation of the brand "*Tourisme et Handicap*", which allows for the labeled sites to be visited by the disabled. The field of cultural tourism has opened new perspectives in order to respond to market needs. The visit to the most emblematic and visited historic sites in France, no longer meets sufficiently and exclusively tourists, who ask and seek monuments and sites that are an expression of a minor heritage. Moreover, they ask for high profile cultural events. In order to meet these growing demands, the Convention "*Culture tourisme*" between the Ministry of Culture and the State Secretariat for Tourism was signed in November 2009. The Convention's main objective is to encourage innovation and practices of tourism development focused on monumental heritage, in order to differentiate the tourist routes and avoid massive flow of visitors that focus exclusively on a few properties, thanks to the organization of large events in other less promoted places. This is in view of the fact that "the greatest problem of tourism in France comes from the over-attendance of a dozen of well-known sites. Seven national monuments, in fact, achieve 2/3 of attendance at such sites, and three museums accounting for sixty percent of visitors to the national museum system"¹². In fact, these initiatives are consistent with a cultural policy already initiated that allowed for the creation of many annual festivals and events, not only in France, but throughout Europe. These include the music festival which has been held since 1982, every June 21st in all the French cities, the European Heritage Days, which since 1991, is held in the third week of September;¹³ the night of the museums, which has been held annually since May of 2005 and the film festival which is held for three days in late June.