religions

Special Issue Reprint

Material Culture and Religion

Perspectives over Time

Edited by
Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges and Helena Albuquerque

mdpi.com/journal/religions

MDPI

Material Culture and Religion: Perspectives over Time

Material Culture and Religion: Perspectives over Time

Editors

Fátima Matos Silva
Isabel Borges
Helena Albuquerque

MDPI

Basel • Beijing • Wuhan • Barcelona • Belgrade • Novi Sad • Cluj • Manchester

Editors
Fátima Matos Silva
Portucalense University
Porto, Portugal

Isabel Borges
Instituto Europeu de Estudos Superiores
Fafe, Portugal

Helena Albuquerque
Portucalense University
Porto, Portugal

Editorial Office
MDPI
St. Alban-Anlage 66
4052 Basel, Switzerland

This is a reprint of articles from the Special Issue published online in the open access journal *Religions* (ISSN 2077-1444) (available at: https://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions/special_issues/Religion_Culture).

For citation purposes, cite each article independently as indicated on the article page online and as indicated below:

Lastname, Firstname, Firstname Lastname, and Firstname Lastname. Article Title. *Journal Name* **Year**, *Volume Number*, Page Range.

ISBN 978-3-0365-8924-4 (Hbk)
ISBN 978-3-0365-8925-1 (PDF)
doi.org/10.3390/books978-3-0365-8925-1

Cover image courtesy of Sofia Matos Silva

Contents

About the Editors

Fátima Matos Silva

Fátima Matos Silva earned her Ph.D. from the University of Granada in 2008. Since 1988, she has been developing her professional activity at the Portucalense University (Porto, Portugal) as a researcher, professor, and coordinator of cycles of studies, integrating several advisory bodies into the institution. She has directed and collaborated on diversified research projects, both nationally and internationally, and is currently an integrated member of the REMIT and CITCEM - FCT R&D units. She has directed multiple archaeological excavations, conducted environmental and heritage impact studies, and researched spatial planning, sustainable development, and universal accessibility to cultural heritage, particularly for the Santiago Way, among others. In addition, she has organised bibliographic editions, scientific and cultural events, exhibitions, and museological programs, among other cultural actions. The author of several books, she also has published (individually and in partnership) more than 80 articles and book chapters on diverse heritage themes. Her expertise lies in the field of the Humanities and Social Sciences, with a focus on archaeology; cultural heritage; preventive conservation; heritage management, spatial planning, and sustainable development; impacts and threats to cultural heritage; heritage interpretation and enhancement; museology; universal accessibility; accessibility of heritage; cultural tourism; religious and accessible tourism; and pilgrimages.

Isabel Borges

Isabel Borges holds a Ph.D. in Tourism, Leisure, and Culture from the University of Coimbra and a Diploma in Advanced Studies in the same scientific area. She worked for 15 years in the wine tourism industry, developing projects related to hospitality and tourism. She is a coordinator professor and Dean at the IEES (Instituto Europeu de Estudos Superiores). Her research interests are mainly centred on religious material culture, religious tourism, cultural tourism, pilgrimages, cultural heritage, heritage interpretation and enhancement, universal accessibility tourism and development, and wine tourism, having already published several papers in those areas.

Helena Albuquerque

Helena Albuquerque is an Associated Professor in the Department of Tourism, Heritage, and Culture and a member of the REMIT research unit (Research on Economics, Management, and Information Technologies) of Portucalense University (Portugal). She also collaborates with the GOVCOPP (Research Unit on Governance, Competitiveness, and Public Policies) of Aveiro University, Portugal. She has participated in research projects in the areas of sustainable tourism, environmental conservation, research management and climate change, wine tourism, and cultural heritage. Her main research interests are sustainable tourism, geographic information systems applied to tourism, nature tourism, wine tourism, and territorial sustainable management.

Preface

This Special Issue is devoted to Material Culture and Religion: Perspectives over Time. It includes works from several researchers from different areas, focusing on the study of this theme and exploring investigations of the various forms of expression of religiosity through material culture.

Due to their longstanding commitments to religious tourism and material culture, the editors of this Special Issue were invited to assemble a collection of papers that showcased the different approaches to the theme, enriching the scientific literature on material culture and religion.

Across the papers, the authors tackle several important issues such as (i)"Determining the Characteristics of Faith-Themed Routes in Order to Receive an International Certificate: Studies on St. Paul's Travels", a proposal on St. Paul's Route to be certified by international organizations; (ii) "Pilgrimages on the Portuguese Way to Santiago de Compostela: Evolution and Motivations", based on the study of the evolution of pilgrimages on the Santiago Way, highlighting the Portuguese Way to Santiago—the Central Portuguese Way and Coastal Portuguese Way; (iii) "Cross-Cultural Encounters: Religious Motifs in Lattimo Glass from China to Italy", highlighting the crucial role of influential religious imagery in the formation of cross-cultural communication; (iv) "Visual Communication and Evangelizing Art in the Temple of San Francisco of La Paz", evidencing how interior architecture is used for communication purposes; (v) "A Transition Period Ritual of the Karay Turks: Death", an important turning point for some cultures; (vi) "The Development and Modern Transformation of Material Culture in the Worship of Mazu", which studies the development of material culture in the cult of the popular goddess Mazu; (vii) "Paradisi porta—An Iconographic Analysis of Mary as a Humanity's Mediator in the Light of Medieval Liturgical Hymns", highlighting the rich doctrinal meanings underlying the textual and iconic designation of the Virgin Mary as the gate of Heaven; (viii) "Gold, Skin, and Body: Chinese Buddha Statues Are Constantly Being Shaped and Stripped", typical examples of cultural communication and integration between different civilisations; (ix) "Ecclesiastical Museums and the Pontifical Letter on Its Pastoral Functions", evaluating how the Letter remains actualised and adapted to contemporaneity in addition to the challenges and transformations now faced by museums; (x) "Two Pre-Islamic Places of Worship in the Tourism Landscape of the UAE", identifying challenges for achieving an appropriate integration with conditioning supply factors; (xi) "Performativity of the Memory of Religious Places through Sound and Image", explores and deepens the confluence between sound and image, linking and relating concepts; (xii) "Trade and the Mosque: An Investigation of Commercial Activities and Mosques in Antalya with Spatial, Legal and Functional Recommendations", discussing the functionality of mosques; and (xiii) "Interpretation of Funerary Spaces in Roman Times: Insights from a Nucleus of Braga, NW Iberian Peninsula", contextualising the funerary and religious architecture of the city, highlighting its relevance.

More than one author wrote these 13 papers, and it is usual for a paper to be written by authors collaborating with different or multiple affiliations. So, the authors' geographical distribution is varied: 30 authors are from eight different countries (Portugal, Turkey, Spain, China, Italy, Bolivia, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates).

More inspiringly, the papers are also compelling examples of deep research, enriching the production of the scientific literature with different approaches to the theme of this Special Issue.

The Guest Editors wish to thank the authors for their contributions and for their commitment to improving their work, as well as the reviewers for their time and effort in analysing and providing important comments and corrections, and last but not least, the editorial staff for efficiently managing the review and publication process. We hope that the selected publications will have a lasting impact

on the scientific community and will motivate other researchers to pursue these themes and their scientific goals.

Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges, and Helena Albuquerque
Editors

religions

MDPI

Article

Interpretation of Funerary Spaces in Roman Times: Insights from a Nucleus of Braga, NW Iberian Peninsula

Cristina Braga [1], Jorge Ribeiro [2,*], Luis Fontes [2] and Ana Fragata [3,*]

[1] ERA Arqueologia S.A., Rua Padre Cruz nº26, 4050-219 Porto, Portugal; cristinabraga@era-arqueologia.pt
[2] Lab2PT/IN2PAST, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Minho, Campus de Gualtar, 4710-057 Braga, Portugal; lfontes@uaum.uminho.pt
[3] GeoBioTec, Geosciences Department, University of Aveiro, Campus de Santiago, 3810-193 Aveiro, Portugal
* Correspondence: jribeiro@uaum.uminho.pt (J.R.); afragata@ua.pt (A.F.)

Abstract: The funerary/cult archeological nucleus of Rua do Raio (Braga, in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula) was discovered between 2007 and 2009, under the excavation works of a necropolis of *Bracara Augusta*. This building exhibits a set of particularities that confirms its archeological importance. It is a construction dating from the middle of the 1st century AD, subject to two reforms, one in the second half of the 1st century AD and another in the 2nd century AD, with a trapezoidal shape and comprising ten rectangular tanks rendered with *opus signinum* mortars. It shows a unique architectural configuration in the city, as well as in the Portuguese territory, and the space is under musealization, together with a set of graves identified in the same archeological intervention. The present investigation contextualizes the funerary and religious architecture of the city. Its description is presented, highlighting its relevance, and an interpretative possibility is formulated.

Keywords: archeology; Roman times; Hispania; *Bracara Augusta*; funerary buildings; funerary practices

Citation: Braga, Cristina, Jorge Ribeiro, Luis Fontes, and Ana Fragata. 2023. Interpretation of Funerary Spaces in Roman Times: Insights from a Nucleus of Braga, NW Iberian Peninsula. *Religions* 14: 1185. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14091185

Academic Editors: Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges and Helena Albuquerque

Received: 1 July 2023
Revised: 11 September 2023
Accepted: 13 September 2023
Published: 17 September 2023

1. Introduction

The archeological nucleus of "Rua do Raio" was identified during an archeological intervention carried out in Braga, between 2007 and 2009, in the Post Office block (CTT) denominated "N.A.2", directed by the Archeology Unit of the University of Minho (UAUM), under the urban rehabilitation of the CTT building (Martins et al. 2010). The work carried out allowed the exhumation of several notable archeological remains, including a necropolis area associated with a road that connected *Bracara Augusta* to *Asturica Augusta* and with a glass workshop. The N.A.2 (Building R05) occupies an area of roughly 200 m^2, in the southeastern part of this CTT block. The collected data point to its foundation in the beginning of the 1st century AD, in the northeast of the ancient Roman city, followed by two reforms in the second half of the 1st century AD and in the 2nd century AD. The building was abandoned in the 3rd century AD.

This funerary/cult building is a remarkable construction, without any parallel in the city, is part of the city's oldest archeological remains. Its scientific and patrimonial value led to an in situ preservation and later to a musealization process and integration in the new construction, which is still in progress.

Its function is still unknown; however, the "Idolo Fountain" (*Fonte do Ídolo* in Portuguese) (Garrido Elena et al. 2008; Tranoy 1981) in its vicinity, which is an important Romanized indigenous sanctuary, and its enclosure in a necropolis area, suggests a connection to funerary or cultic practices.

This work is structured in three parts: in the first part, an archeological framework of the subject under analysis is carried out, with a focus on the components of funerary and religious architecture; the second part emphasizes the built sequence transformation of

the building under analysis (N.A.2 or Building R05); the third part focuses on the N.A.2 construction process, architecture, materials, function, and musealization process.

2. Archeological Setting: *Bracara Augusta*, Necropolises, Religious Buildings, and Sanctuaries

The city of *Bracara Augusta* corresponds to a planned urban space created by the emperor Augustus in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula (Figure 1), after the Cantabrian Wars at the end of the 1st century BC (Le Roux 1994; de Sande Lemos 2002; Martins and Carvalho 2017; Rodríguez Colmenero 1996). The characteristics of the city have been revealed by dozens of excavations carried out since the 1970s, under the *Bracara Augusta* Project (Martins et al. 2020). Thus, the works carried out and published reveal that it was an important administrative, economic and political center in the Roman period, being the capital of *conventus* in the high empire period and, later, at the end of the 3rd century, becoming the capital of the new province of *Gallaecia*, under the domain of the Emperor Diocletian (Martins and Carvalho 2010; Martins et al. 2020; Morais 2009, 2010).

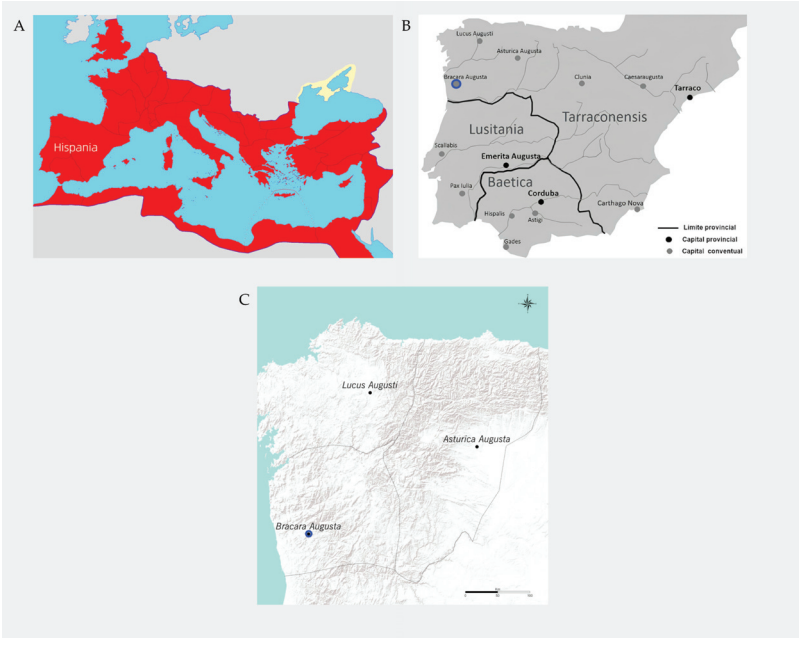


Figure 1. (**A**) Location of Hispania in the Roman world and (**B**,**C**) *Bracara Augusta* in Hispania and in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula (Braga 2018).

In the city of Braga, there are several necropolis spaces (Figure 2). As usual, in Roman cities, these spaces were located outside the walls of the cities, near the main or the secondary roads. In the city, there is the Maximinos necropolis (Via XX and XVI), the Rodovia necropolis (*Via Bracara Augusta—Emerita Augusta*), the Campo da Vinha *nuclei* (Via XIX/XVIII), and the necropolis of Via XVII (Via *Bracara Augusta—Asturica Augusta*), where the intervention area of the former Post Office block (CTT), under the present investigation is located, including the archeological nucleus of Dr. Gonçalo Sampaio street and the nucleus of Cangosta da Palha (Braga and Martins 2015; Vaz et al. 2021, and references therein) (Figure 1). The investigation of Braga's Roman necropolis has been recorded over the last nearly 40 years of archeological excavations in the city, under the *Bracara Augusta* Project (Martins 2014; Martins and Carvalho 2017; do Carmo Ribeiro 2008) from the Archeology Unit of the University of Minho (UAUM). These excavations led to several

scientific works. One (Martins and Delgado 1989–1990) was dedicated to the funerary rituals, and the others investigated a necropolis nucleus of Via XVII, the city's funerary rituals and sepulchral spaces, and the rituals, uses, and funerary landscapes of the Via XVII necropolis (Braga 2018); and the ceramics of this nucleus (Morais et al. 2013b) from the 1st century AD, and the funerary topography of the Via XVII necropolis in Late Antiquity and the rituals and funerary spaces of *Bracara Augusta* (Braga and Martins 2015).

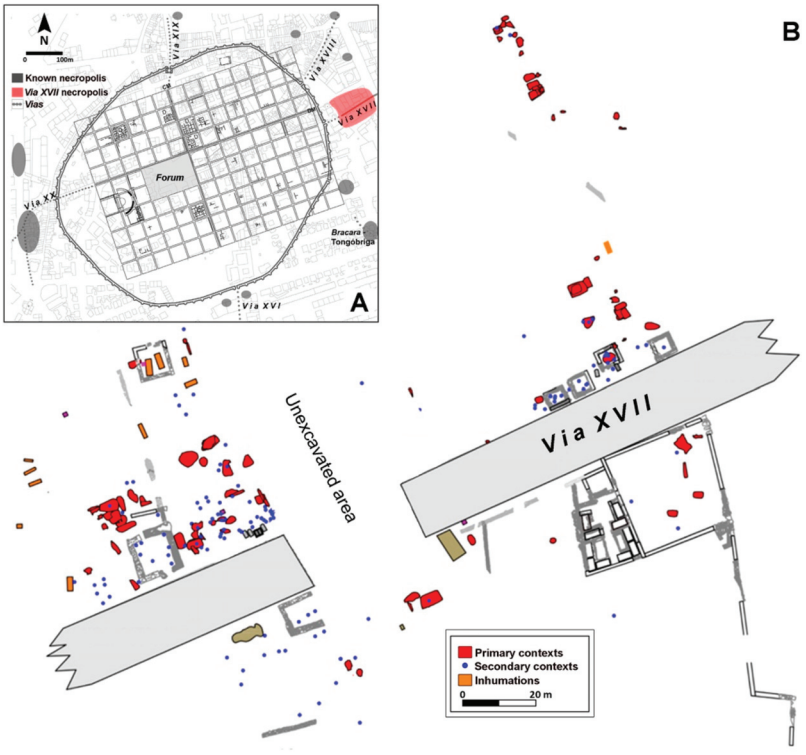


Figure 2. (**A**) Location of the necropolises and the excavation in the plan of *Bracara Augusta* and (**B**) detailed plan of the Via XVII necropolis excavation (Adapted from (Vaz et al. 2021)).

As in other Roman cities, the built space of *Bracara Augusta* shows several religious buildings and sanctuaries, although in most cases only partial remains were found. The *Fonte do Ídolo* stands out, monumentalized in Roman times, and dedicated to *Nabia*, a deity associated with water, fertility, and nature (Garrido Elena et al. 2008; Martins et al. 2012a). Another sanctuary, possibly a *fanum*, composed of a cylindrical column-shaped altar and engraved with the word *sacrum*, was discovered in the peripheric area of the city, in the context of construction, together with clay building materials (Carvalho et al. 2006; Morais 2010). It is also important to mention the city *forum*, indicated on the map of Braunio (Morais 2010; Morais et al. 2013a; do Carmo Ribeiro 2008) from the 16th century and linked to a set of monumental architectural elements (Martins et al. 2012a; Ribeiro 2018), with some of those elements assumed to belong to the religious buildings. Under Braga's Cathedral, another building was identified with a religious function identified by an inscription dedicated to *Isis Augusta* by a priestess of the imperial cult, *Lucrecia Fida*, which may reveal the existence of a temple dedicated to the oriental divinity (Martins et al. 2012a; Morais 2009–2010). In addition to the elements, monuments dedicated to the imperial cult are also documented, namely to Augustus, including a set of three pedestals of statues, of which only one was preserved (Martins et al. 2012a).

The *Fonte do Ídolo* (Martins et al. 2012b), due to the connection that it seems to have with the site under investigation, deserves special attention. It is a rock sanctuary located northeast of *Bracara Augusta*, which represents a monumentalized version of a *locus sacer* where water worship took place before Roman occupation. This monument dedicated to the indigenous goddess *Nabia* is carved with inscriptions and high-relief figurines. In the 1st century AD, the sanctuary was converted into a Roman monument, probably built by *Celicus Fronto*, whose name is engraved on the rock outcrop. In Flavian times this space was refurbished by descendants of *Celicus Fronto*. In the surrounding area of this sanctuary, Roman plumbing and reservoirs possibly fed by the fountain were found. There are several theories related to *Fonte do Ídolo*, although all agree that this space was a sanctuary dedicated to water divinity.

3. The Main Phases of the Necropolis Occupation

The occupation of this necropolis under analysis, in the ancient world, was between the Bronze Age and the Suevo-Visigothic period. Indeed, the first occupation is documented by a tomb from the Bronze Age. Then, in the period before the reign of Augustus, the several ditches opened in the rock substrate and the existence of a dirt road were eventually related to a previous plan of the construction of Via XVII, built in the beginning of the 1st century AD. In the same period, and associated with it, the necropolis was implemented. In the middle of the 1st century AD, N.A.2 (Building R05, Figure 3) was built and subject to a first remodeling in the second half of the same century, with its internal compartmentalization. During the following century, the building benefited from a second reform, where a new compartmentalized space was built. During the second half of the 3rd century AD and the beginning of the 4th century AD, this necropolis space was less used, probably due to the existence of other burial areas in the city. The abandonment of N.A.2, as a funerary space, was in the 4th or 5th centuries AD, when a glass workshop was built on top of it. Between the 5th and 7th centuries AD, this entire area was no longer used as a necropolis.

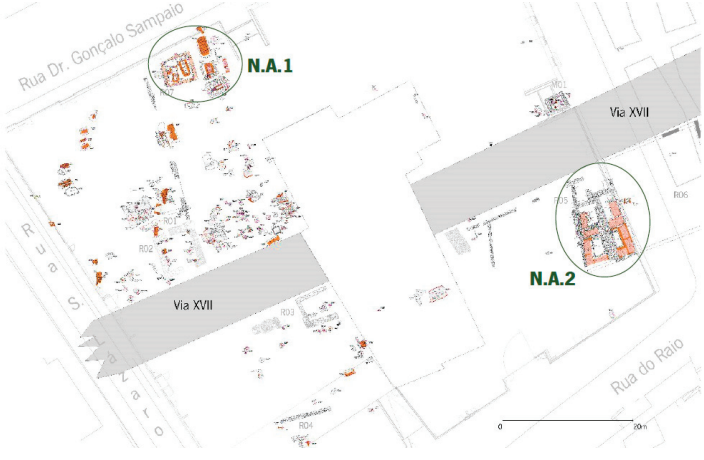


Figure 3. Location of N.A.2 (Building R05).

4. The Constructive Process of the N.A.2 in the Necropolis

4.1. The Main Phases of Occupation

The N.A.2 was built in the middle of the 1st century AD (Phase I), having benefited from two reforms (Phases II and III); at the end of the 2nd century AD it was abandoned (Braga 2018).

4.1.1. Phase I

As already noted, the N.A.2 began to be built in the middle of the 1st century AD. At this stage (Phase I) and from a constructive point of view, only the outer walls constructed from granite stone, with a poorly carved shape, and the interstices filled with sandy soil and fine grave, were identified. The base of the perimeter wall made of small-sized granite stone was also recognized (although with some constructive lacunae), next to the west limit of the building (Figure 4A).

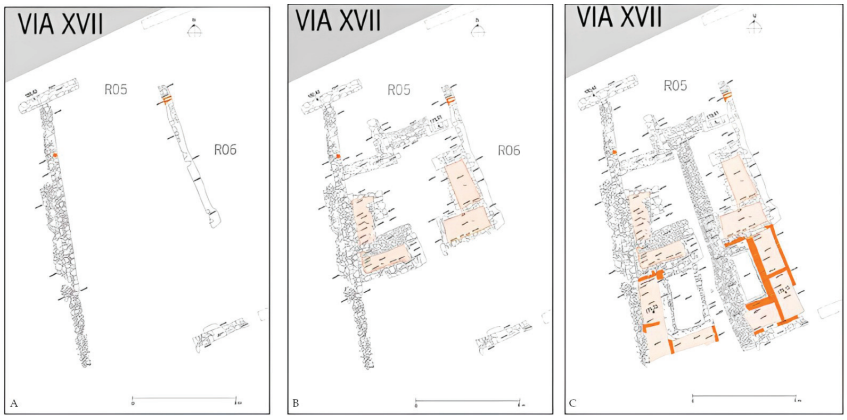


Figure 4. Evolution of N.A.2 reforms throughout (**A**) Phase I; (**B**) Phase II; (**C**) Phase III.

4.1.2. Phase II

In the second half of the 1st century AD (Phase II), the building experienced the first internal compartmentation via the construction of four compartments made of granite stone masonry with a rectangular shape and coated with *opus signinum* mortar (Figure 4B).

4.1.3. Phase III

The documented new reform of the N.A.2 in the 2nd century AD (Phase III) refers to the reformulation of the space, which was previously open, located to the south of the building. In this phase, six more compartments were constructed, replicating the model of the previous phase but with some constructive differences, and particularly the use of clay materials (bricks) for the execution of the walls. On both sides of the north–south dividing wall, a perfect symmetry was observed (Figure 4C).

4.2. Description of the Building (Architecture and Materials)

The archeological works documented the existence of a workshop associated with the glassmaking activity, where the walls were removed revealing the existence of a previous construction. Several compartments coated with *opus signinum* were recognized, ordered according to a west wall that was about 13 m long and oriented north/northwest.

The extension of the excavation works to the east limit made it possible to identify new compartments similar to those initially recovered, showing the presence of a cohesive building, with internal compartmentalization revealing a relative symmetry limited by two walls (east and west), with a wall at its northern limit oriented east/west and parallel to Via XVII (Figure 4C).

The N.A.2 is located on the south part of this necropolis area, on the south side of the road, and was built in close connection with the necropolis, from where the access to the N.A.2 takes place. On the opposite side of the road, there is a set of mausoleums.

Regarding its shape, the N.A.2 has an asymmetrical trapezoidal configuration with its internal structure organized around a central axis, and materialized through a wall oriented north-northeast/south-southwest. This is only perceptible by the existence of foundation

of the wall, which separates two areas with perfectly symmetrical compartments (Figure 5). These compartments configure a kind of unit having similar dimensions and constructive solutions, although with different orientations. These are ten watertight units coated with *opus signinum* mortars, lowered to the circulation quota, located at 179.91 m.

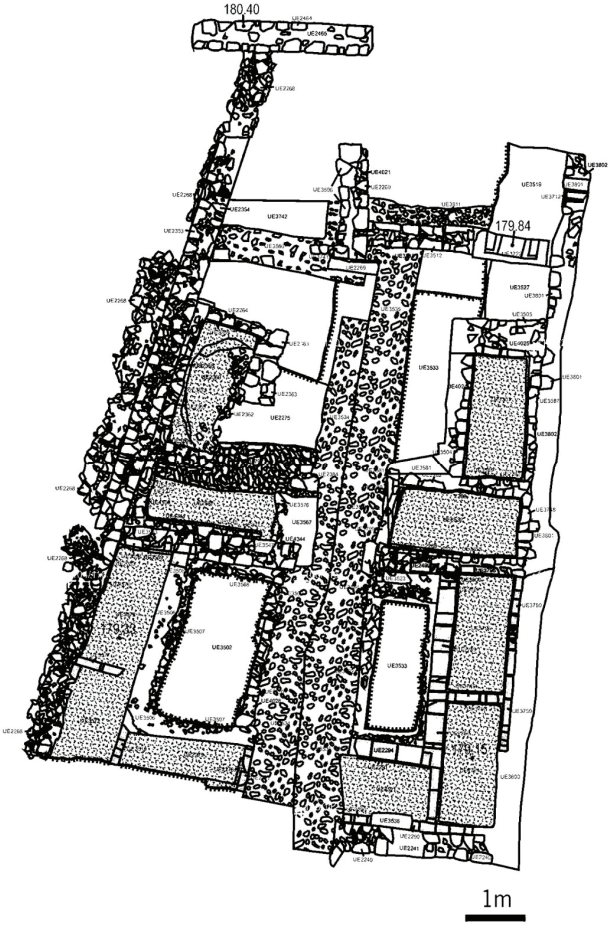


Figure 5. Plan of the trapezoidal N.A.2 (Building R05) under musealization.

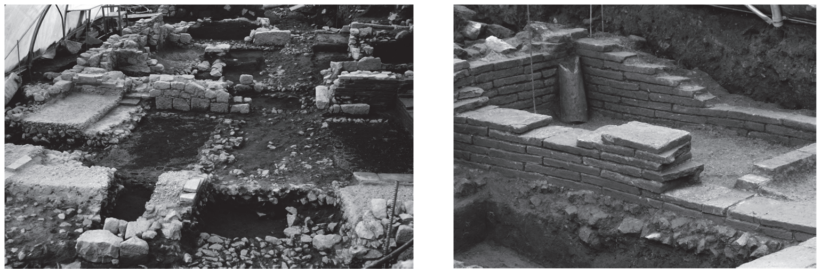
The N.A.2 has a maximum length of 14.22 m, and a width of 8.62 m on the south side and around 6 m on the north side. The compartments have very similar dimensions, varying between 2.10 × 0.90 m and 2.05 × 1.00 m, and were observed to be differently preserved in terms of height. The best-preserved compartment, located on the east side of the building, is about 0.80 m high. The walls and the pavement of all the compartments are coated with *opus signinum*.

The interior of the building can be divided into three distinct spaces, which we call the northern sector, the central sector, and the southern sector.

The access to the building was from the road, through the northern sector of the building. It is limited by the large wall that marked the south side of the road and presents a particular organization, composed of two contiguous compartments with different dimensions, which complete the main body of the building. In this area, a granite threshold was exhumed, confirming the circulation level inside the building, estimated to be at 179.90 m.

The central sector of the building is tight and made up of four compartments, configuring very homogeneous spaces, of about 2/2.15 m in length and 0.96/1.05 m in width, with two compartments on each side, forming an L due to its arrangement. Those compartments abutting to the lateral walls have their major axis oriented to the north/northwest, with the east/west-oriented ones located to the south. In this sector, there is also an open central space, around which the compartments are organized. These compartments show different conservation state and different construction systems. Those located on the east side are better preserved, and the one located on the north side has a maximum wall height of about 0.80 m and is completely covered with well-preserved *opus signinum* mortars. The heights of the base of the compartments, whose lowest quota is at 179.15 m, are 0.76 m below the level of the entrance threshold, which indicates that they were below the circulation level. Regarding the building materials, this sector does not use bricks in internal walls but rather irregular granite stone masonry. At the base, the *opus signinum* coating mortars cover a preparatory level formed by material comprising small stones.

The space located in the south of the building seems to be structured around a central open area. This space has six compartments, three on the east side and three on the west side, organized in an L shape. In fact, on both sides there is a succession of two contiguous spaces, with the major axis (2.10 m) oriented north/northeast, leaning against the lateral walls. Two others, lined up by the south wall of the building and oriented east/west, complete the set and define a narrow circulation corridor of around 1.12 m. In this space, the divisions of the compartments were executed with brick masonry, and the internal walls were made with the same material (Figure 6A). *Lydion* bricks were used with layers of yellowish mortar. The conservation state is variable, with the eastern receptacles have higher walls, something that is related to the construction of the craft space over the N.A.2, whose constructive impact focused on the west area. In any case, the quality of the *opus signinum* mortars that covers the bottom of the compartments is technically very good, showing a complex preparation that is still well preserved (Figure 6B).



(**A**) (**B**)

Figure 6. South view of the N.A.2 (**A**) at the end of the archeological excavation; (**B**) perspective of the compartments on the east side of the building.

As can be seen from the restored floor plan of the building and the description above, its organization, despite the asymmetry of its east and west walls, sets up an interior space designed and structured in a symmetrical way. On the other hand, the building seems to be part of a large enclosure, limited on the north side by the wall delimiting the road; this is blocked by another structure having a northwest orientation, identified next to the CTT block. The area between the building and the wall seems to configure a large open space, without other buildings, and with an undetermined function.

4.3. The Function of N.A.2

The data available for the interpretation of the N.A.2 consist of elements resulting from the archeological excavation process and do not allow the attribution of a function. A possible hypothesis could be its use as a craft space; however, in fact, none of the

compartments showed any element that suggests the existence of drainage or water entry, or even provided residual traces related to a possible use of this nature. Other hypotheses could be assumed, considering the structure of the building, its proximity to the *Fonte do Ídolo*, and the adjacent funerary structures, which suggest the possible association with funerary or cultic practices although, until now, with an undefined nature. It is pertinent to remember that this large area began to be structured at a time coincident with the first monumentalization project of *Fonte do Ídolo*, which is located 63 m south of Via XVII. It is possible to assume, therefore, that the emergence of the first forms of appropriation of the funerary space may have been triggered together with the monumentalization program of the sanctuary (Garrido Elena et al. 2008). The importance attributed to the water in this area of the city seems to have also been relevant to other structures possibly related to it, such as the archeological remains identified in the "Granjinhos area" located nearby, which included a heated tank and a heating system for channels dug in the bedrock (Martins and Ribeiro 2012). Certainly, there are no structures parallel to this funerary structure known in Braga.

Thus, we do not exclude the hypothesis that the building could be related to performance tributes and commemoration rituals related to the practice of cremation. There is a difficulty in finding parallels (e.g., similar structures) and the clear attribution of the structure's function. The existing parallel is only from a constructive point of view.

Despite the difficulties in ascribing a clear function to the building, it is important that some parallels are documented, although with different chronology and construction typology. One of the parallel cases is the necropolises of Cadiz, where structures with rectangular morphologies, covered with *opus signinum* mortars, were exhumed. Here, these structures, defined as "swimming pools", are located outside the walls in the middle of the funerary space, and are mostly built in an isolated form, and in some cases associated with conduits and wells. They feature a staggered access system, located at the ends of the box, with dimensions that reach a length of 4 m by a width of 1 m. These structures date from a precise chronological period between the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, and disappeared in the imperial era. These spaces are linked to purification cults of individuals after funeral ceremonies, and this typology of buildings is related to Cadiz tradition and associated with lustral rituals, strongly influenced by the funerary patterns of Oriental and Late-Punic nature (Villedary y Mariñas and Gómez Fernández 2010).

4.4. The Musealization Project of the N.A.2

The characteristics of the N.A.2 enclosure, and its uniqueness, state of preservation, and construction chronology, which bring it closer to the moment of the foundation of *Bracara Augusta*, led the scientific direction of the archeological works to assume the importance of its conservation in situ, for later musealization, as it constitutes an architectural construction with unique features.

The enclosure was properly protected to proceed with the excavation works for the ongoing musealization project. With the redefinition of the architectural design of the shopping center, it was possible to delimit and integrate the N.A.2 site into a closed and protected space (Figure 7).

Figure 7. The perspective of the N.A.2 (Building R05) ruins.

5. Conclusions

The N.A.2 was built in the middle of the 1st century AD in one of the largest necropolises of *Bracara Augusta*, which was one of the conventual capitals of the province of *Tarraconensis*. It was discovered under a major archeological intervention work carried out between 2007 and 2009 in the city of Braga. The enclosure was remodeled twice, in the second half of the 1st century AD and in the 2nd century AD. The trapezoidal building is located immediately to the southeast of the Roman road that leads to *Asturica Augusta*, and has an NW–SE alignment. The building's final plan is structured around a dividing wall, configuring symmetrical spaces in which five watertight tanks with *opus signinum* coating were inserted on each side of it, creating a total of ten compartments. In the 3rd century AD, the N.A.2 was abandoned, and an artisan space for glass production was built.

Its unique character, its location in a necropolis area, and its construction near *Fonte do Ídolo* (an indigenous sanctuary of worship and adoration) indicate a possible funerary use or cult that needs to be investigated. The uniqueness of N.A.2, its state of conservation, and the chronology of its construction in the first decades of the life of the Roman city motivated its in situ preservation and the definition of a musealization project, which is still in progress, to make it more accessible and visitable.

The in-depth study of N.A.2, in parallel with the analysis of other similar spaces identified elsewhere in the Iberian Peninsula, still needs to be conducted to refine this first investigation, especially regarding the function of this space.

Concerning the constructive and material aspects of this building, studies are currently ongoing regarding the chemical and mineralogical characterization of the mortars using X-ray diffraction (XRD), X-ray fluorescence (XRF), and scanning electron microscopy (SEM) of the walls, as well as the coatings made with *opus signinum*. These studies are being performed by a multidisciplinary team from the University of Minho and the University of Aveiro, and show some similar aspects to other preserved archeological sets (N.A.1) in *Bracara Augusta*, a burial area of the Via XVII necropolis, which consists of five burial graves, and a rectangular enclosure (Figure 3), and is also in the process of musealization (Fragata et al. 2021; Ribeiro 2013).

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, C.B., J.R., L.F. and A.F.; methodology, C.B., L.F., J.R. and A.F.; validation, C.B., J.R. and A.F.; formal analyses, J.R. and A.F.; investigation, C.B., J.R., L.F. and A.F.; writing—original draft preparation, C.B., J.R., L.F. and A.F.; writing—review and editing, C.B., J.R. and A.F.; supervision, C.B., J.R. and A.F. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was supported by the Landscape, Heritage and Territory Laboratory (Lab2PT), Ref. UIDB/04509/2020, financed by national funds (PIDDAC) through the FCT/MCTES, and the GeoBioSciences, GeoTechnologies and GeoEngineering Research Centre (GeoBioTec), Ref. UIDB/04035/2020, funded by FCT and FEDER funds through the Operational Program Competitiveness Factors COMPETE and by national funds (OE), through FCT in the scope of the framework contract foreseen in the numbers 4, 5 and 6 of the article 23, of the Decree-Law 57/2016, of August 29, changed by Law 57/2017, of July 19.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: The authors are grateful to Liberdade Street Fashion Shopping Centre—Cuman and Wakefield, and especially to its manager José Alberto Martins, for facilitating the access to the funerary nucleus, to the Archaeology Unit of University of Minho (UAUM), for the technical assistance.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

Braga, Cristina. 2018. Morte, Memória e Identidade: Uma Análise das Práticas Funerárias de *Bracara Augusta* (Death, Memory and Identity: Analyses of Funerary Practices in *Bracara Augusta*). Ph.D. thesis, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal. Available online: https://hdl.handle.net/1822/59044 (accessed on 29 May 2023).

Braga, Cristina, and Manuela Martins. 2015. *Bracara Augusta*: Rituais e espaços funerários (*Bracara Augusta*: Rituals and funerary spaces). *Férvedes* 8: 301–10.

Carvalho, Helena, José de Encarnação, Manuela Martins, and Armandino Cunha. 2006. Altar romano encontrado em Braga (Roman altar found in Braga). *Forum* 40: 31–41. Available online: http://hdl.handle.netI1822/9250 (accessed on 29 May 2023).

de Sande Lemos, Francisco. 2002. *Bracara Augusta*—A grande plataforma viária do Noroeste da Hispania. *Forum* 31: 95–127. Available online: https://revistas.uminho.pt/index.php/forum/article/view/2240/2388 (accessed on 6 June 2023).

do Carmo Ribeiro, Maria. 2008. Braga Entre a época Romana e a Idade Moderna. Uma Metodologia de Análise para a Leitura da Evolução do EspaçO Urbano (Braga between Roman Times and Modern Age. An Analysis Methodology for Reading the Evolution of Urban Landscape). Ph.D. thesis, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal. Available online: https://hdl.handle.net/1822/8113 (accessed on 7 June 2023).

Fragata, Ana, Carla Candeias, Jorge Ribeiro, Cristina Braga, Luis Fontes, Ana Velosa, and Fernando Rocha. 2021. Archaeological and Chemical Investigation on Mortars and Bricks from a Necropolis in Braga, Northwest of Portugal, Braga, Portugal. *Materials* 14: 6290. [CrossRef] [PubMed]

Garrido Elena, Ana, Ricardo Mar, and Manuela Martins. 2008. A Fonte do Ídolo: Análise, interpretação e reconstituição do santuário. In *Bracara Augusta—Escavaçoes Arqueologicas 4*. Braga: Unidade de Arqueologia da Universidade do Minho. 73p.

Le Roux, Patrick. 1994. *Bracara Augusta*: Ville latine (*Bracara Augusta*: Latin city). *Trabalhos de Antropologia e Etnologia* 34: 229–41.

Martins, Manuela. 2014. Projeto de *Bracara Augusta*: 38 anos de Descoberta e Estudo de uma Cidade Romana. *Ciências e Técnicas do Património* XIII: 159–69. Available online: https://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/12988.pdf (accessed on 15 May 2023).

Martins, Manuela, and Helena Carvalho. 2010. *Bracara Augusta* and the changing rural landscape. In *Changing Landscapes: The impact of Roman towns in the Western Mediterranean. Paper presented at the International Colloquium, Castelo de Vide—Marvão, Portugal, 15–17 May 2008*. Edited by Cristina Corsi and Frank Vermeulen. Bologna: Ante Quem, pp. 281–98.

Martins, Manuela, and Helena Carvalho. 2017. Roman city of *Bracara Augusta* (*Hispania Citerior Tarraconensis*): Urbanism and territory occupation. *Agri Centuriati: An International Journal of Landscape Archaeology* 14: 79–98.

Martins, Manuela, and Manuela Delgado. 1989–1990. As necrópoles de *Bracara Augusta*. *Cadernos de Arqueologia série II* 6–7: 41–187.

Martins, Manuela, and Maria do Carmo Ribeiro. 2012. Gestão e uso da água em *Bracara Augusta*: Uma abordagem preliminar. In *Caminhos da Água, Paisagens e usos na longa duração*. Edited by Manuela Martins, Isabel Vaz de Freitas and Maria Isabel Del Val Valdivieso. Porto: CITCEM, pp. 9–52.

Martins, Manuela, Cristina Braga, Fernanda Magalhães, and Jorge Ribeiro. 2020. Constructing identities within the periphery of the Roman Empire: North-west Hispania. In *Rome and Barbaricum. Contributions to the I Colóquio Internacional Evolução da Paisagem Urbana: Economia e Sociedade, Braga, Portugal, Archaeology and History of Interaction in European Protohistory*. Edited by Roxana-Gabriela Curcă, Alexander Rubel, Robin Symonds and Hans-Ulrich Voß. Oxford: Archaeopress, pp. 135–54.

Martins, Manuela, Jorge Ribeiro, Fernanda Magalhães, and Cristina Braga. 2012a. Urbanismo e arquitetura de *Bracara Augusta*. Sociedade, economia e lazer. In *Evolução da paisagem Urbana. Sociedade e Economia*. Paper presented at I Colóquio Internacional Evolução da Paisagem Urbana: Economia e Sociedade, Braga, Portugal, May 5–6.

Martins, Manuela, José Meireles, Maria do Carmo Ribeiro, Fernanda Magalhães, and Cristina Braga. 2012b. The water in the city of Braga from Roman Times to the Modern Age. In *Water shapes. Strategie di valorizzazione del patrimonio culturale legato all'acqua*. Edited by Heleni Porfyriou and Laura Genovese. Roma: Palombi Editori, pp. 65–80.

Martins, Manuela, Luís Fontes, Cristina Braga, José Braga, Fernanda Magalhães, and José Sendas. 2010. Salvamento de *Bracara Augusta*. Quarteirão dos CTT (BRA 08–09 CTT). Final Report, Archaeological works of U.A.U.M./Memórias, N.° 1. p. 1313. Available online: https://repositorium.sdum.uminho.pt/handle/1822/10141 (accessed on 15 May 2023).

Morais, Rui. 2009. *Self-Sufficiency and Trade in Bracara Augusta during the Early Empire. A Contribution to the Economic Study of the City*. Oxford: BAR Publishing, p. 340.

Morais, Rui. 2009–2010. Uma mulher singular em *Bracara Augusta*. *Forum* 44–45: 121–33. Available online: https://revistas.uminho.pt/index.php/forum/article/download/1909/2073/2298 (accessed on 20 May 2023).

Morais, Rui. 2010. *Bracara Augusta*. Braga: Edição da Câmara Municipal de Braga, p. 206.
Morais, Rui, Adolfo Fernández Fernández, and Cristina Braga. 2013a. Contextos cerámicos de la transición de Era y de la primera mitad del s. I provenientes de la necrópolis de la Vía XVII de *Bracara Augusta* (Braga, Portugal). Paper presented at Congrès International de D'Amiens—SFECAG, Amiens, France, May 9–12.
Morais, Rui, Miguel Bandeira, and Eliana Pinho. 2013b. *Itineraria Sacra. Bracara Augusta Fidelis et Antica*. Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, p. 131.
Ribeiro, Jorge. 2013. *Arquitectura romana em Bracara Augusta. Uma análise das técnicas edilícias*. Porto: Afrontamento, p. 684.
Ribeiro, Jorge. 2018. Reflexões em torno da monumentalidade de *Bracara Augusta* a partir de um conjunto de elementos arquitetónicos de grande dimensão. In *Usos do espaço no mundo antigo*. Edited by Gilvan Ventura Silva, Érica Cristhyane Morais da Silva and Belchior Monteiro Lima Neto. Vitória: GM Editora, pp. 130–59.
Rodríguez Colmenero, Antonio. 1996. Integración administrativa del Noroeste peninsular en las estructuras romanas. In *Lucus Augusti I. El amanhecer de uma ciudad*. Edited by Antonio Rodríguez Colmenero. A Coruña: Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza, pp. 301–15.
Tranoy, Alain. 1981. *La Galice Romaine—Recherches sur le nord-ouest de la péninsule ibérique dans l'Antiquité*. Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, p. 601.
Vaz, Filipe, Cristina Braga, João Tereso, Cláudia Oliveira, Lara Gonzalez Carretero, Cleia Detry, Bruno Marcos, Luis Fontes, and Manuela Martins. 2021. Food for the dead, fuel for the pyre: Symbolism and function of plant remains in provincial Roman cremation rituals in the necropolis of *Bracara Augusta* (NW Iberia). *Quaternary International* 593–94: 372–83. [CrossRef]
Villedary y Mariñas, Ana Maria, and Verónica Gómez Fernández. 2010. Captación y uso del agua en contextos funerarios y rituales. Estructuras hidráulicas en la necrópolis de Cádiz (siglos III a.C.—I d.C.). In *Aqvam perdvcendam curavit: Captación, uso y administración del agua en las ciudades de la Bética y el Occidente romano*. Edited by Lázaro Lagóstena Barrios, José Luis Cañizar Palacios and Lluís Pons Pujol. Cádiz: Universidad de Cádiz, pp. 511–32. Available online: https://www.academia.edu/1449580/Captaci%C3%B3n_y_uso_del_agua_en_contextos_funerarios_y_rituales._Estructuras_hidr%C3%A1ulicas_en_la_necr%C3%B3polis_de_C%C3%A1diz_2010_ (accessed on 15 June 2023).

religions

MDPI

Article

Determining the Characteristics of Faith-Themed Routes in Order to Receive an International Certificate: Studies on St. Paul's Travels

Meryem Elif Çelebi Karakök

Department of Architecture, Akdeniz University, Antalya 38000, Türkiye; elifcelebi@akdeniz.edu.tr

Abstract: The religious journeys of humanity and their components are now recognized as cultural heritage values. UNESCO, WHC, ICOMOS, CIIC, and COE are organizations that actively work and issue international certificates for the protection, promotion, and survival of religious routes. These organizations have certified 14 faith-based routes as of 2023. A route's certification is critical since it allows the route to be recognized globally and accessible to international tourism. However, each institution has its own set of requirements to obtain these certificates. When all religious cultures are examined, 14 routes are insufficient to explain the phenomenon of religion to today's people. For this reason, it is beneficial to increase the current number by re-activating the religious routes that have affected large masses. Many countries apply every year to obtain certificates from these organizations with various route studies. However, many applications are rejected as insufficient. Therefore, the goal of this study is to determine the effective criteria for religious routes to receive international certification. In this regard, St. Paul's Route stands out for its extensive geography spanning 12 countries and international potential. St. Paul is regarded as the most important figure in the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Anatolia and Europe. However, the St. Paul Routes being implemented do not meet the criteria of the any certificates. But the authentic St. Paul Route has the potential to receive certification from all organizations. In this research, the criteria required for the St. Paul Route to be certified by international organizations were investigated. A certified St. Paul Route will benefit many issues, including inter-religious dialogue between 12 countries, international cooperation, world peace, and sustainable tourism. It is thought to be an exemplary route with these features.

Keywords: faith-themed routes; St. Paul's route; cultural route certificates; cultural route certificate criteria

Citation: Çelebi Karakök, Meryem Elif. 2023. Determining the Characteristics of Faith-Themed Routes in Order to Receive an International Certificate: Studies on St. Paul's Travels. *Religions* 14: 1097. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14091097

Academic Editors: Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges and Helena Albuquerque

Received: 28 June 2023
Revised: 3 August 2023
Accepted: 17 August 2023
Published: 24 August 2023

1. Introduction

Religion has always existed in human life, as evidenced by Göbeklitepe (Magli 2016) dated to 10,000 B.C., Gantija (Sparavigna 2016) dated to 5500 B.C., and Stonehenge (Pearson et al. 2007) dated to 2300 B.C. Mankind has written hymns for their religious beliefs, created musical instruments, danced, sewed clothes, performed rituals, sacrificed, fought to the death, built magnificent structures, and traveled long and difficult distances. All of humanity's religious activities and products are now recognized as important components of cultural heritage's tangible and intangible values. As a consequence, religious heritage values have to be protected and preserved (UNESCO 2003).

UNESCO, the World Heritage Committee (WHC), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and the International Committee on Cultural Routes (CIIC) are among the important organizations actively working on the protection, promotion, and survival of cultural heritage. They work on identifying, documenting, maintaining, and transferring cultural heritage elements to cultural routes, including religious heritage. The Council of Europe (COE), which has a similar mission, gives greater visibility to routes related to religious people and religious buildings. COE is the international organization

that organizes the most faith-themed routes; as of 2023, 12 of the 48 cultural routes are religious-themed (COE-CR 2023). UNESCO and WHC, as well as ICOMOS and CIIC, support route studies, nevertheless not as effectively as COE. Religious routes comprise four of the six cultural routes designated by UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee. Only two of these routes differ from the COE route list (UNESCO and WHC 2023). Only one of ICOMOS and CIIC's four cultural routes is religious, and it is also on the COE's list (ICOMOS and CIIC 2023). These organizations award certificates to routes that meet their criteria. A route's certification is critical since it allows the route to be recognized globally and makes it accessible to international tourism. In this case, the world has only 14 internationally certificated religious routes. These routes continue the historical cycle by introducing the tangible and intangible religious legacy into current society through sustainable tourism.

On the other hand, when all religious cultures worldwide are examined, it is considered that the 14 routes are insufficient to convey the phenomenon of religion to people today. Therefore, there is a need to increase the current number by re-activating the religious routes that have affected large masses. Many countries apply every year to obtain certificates from these organizations with various route studies. However, many applications are rejected as insufficient. Therefore, the goal of this study is to determine the effective criteria for religious routes to receive international certification. In this regard, the St. Paul's Travels Route, which Greece and Turkey work on individually, draws attention in the new religious route planning paradigm. St. Paul, who traveled to spread Christianity in the first century A.C., made four missionary trips. He is regarded as the most influential figure in the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Anatolia and then to Europe. Many churches in the Middle East, Turkey, and numerous European countries were constructed in his honor (IPDCT n.d.).

A cultural route is defined by the Council of Europe as the development of a travel route, a historical journey, a cultural concept, figure, or phenomenon of international importance for understanding Europe's common values and its transformation into a cultural, educational, heritage, and tourism cooperation project (COE-AR 2018). The UNESCO Cultural Heritage Committee accepted the concept of the cultural route in 1994, defining it as "the path/trace of the heritage consisting of concrete elements, where the cultural importance arising from the exchange and multidimensional dialogue between countries and regions is seen temporally and spatially along the route" (UNESCO and WHC 1994). ICOMOS defines the cultural route as an interactive and dynamic representation of different peoples' rich intercultural diversity and contributions to cultural heritage (ICOMOS 2008).

The transnational importance and richness of its historical, cultural, religious, geographical, and anthropological findings show that the St. Paul's Travels route has the criteria to be certified by these organizations. The route of St. Paul is a clear and detailed account of how Christianity spread from Asia to Europe. In order to fully comprehend the purpose, narrative, objectives, and implications of St. Paul's journeys, a reorganization to include all stops is necessary. To date, due to political and economic factors, the execution of St. Paul's travels has not been comprehensive and authentic. Greece's proposal includes Greece, Southern Cyprus, Italy, and Spain, where St. Paul may or may not have visited. According to belief, St. Paul visited Syria and many other parts of Turkey, but Syria cannot be visited today due to sociopolitical reasons. However, this does not explain why Turkey excludes St. Paul's stops from its scope (Baniotopoulou 2016). The St. Paul's Route in Turkey, on the other hand, runs for 500 km from Antalya's Perge Ancient City to Isparta's Antioch Ancient City. It is organized and implemented as a small local-route trip by a small Christian non-governmental organization in Antalya (CRS 2012). Consequently, neither route implementation has found St. Paul's route's true value and meaning.

The St. Paul's Route depicts the missionary journeys as narrated in the Bible. It holds religious, historical, and authenticity value. The four different travel routes it includes, as well as their actual stops, should be explained. All historical, geographical, religious, architectural, tangible, and intangible cultural data should be accurately transmitted to

current and future generations. The current practices are carried out in a deceptive manner. For example, a tourist who follows the route suggested by Greece will believe that St. Paul only traveled within the European continent, whereas a tourist who follows the route in Turkey will believe that St. Paul only walked 500 km in Turkey. This situation can cause alarming and funny situations in society.

However, because the majority of the European population is already Christian, the memories of St. Paul and the religious buildings built in his honor are preserved. The main issue is being addressed in Turkey and the Middle Eastern countries. In Turkey, for example, churches have been built in the name of St. Paul. Nevertheless, these churches are no longer in use because they lack a congregation. There are also church structures that were built recently and have historical and architectural value. The vast majority of these churches do not have a congregation. A significant portion of the churches are owned by Greece. Yet, Turkey and Greece face political challenges in restoring and utilizing these churches. Therefore, these churches had been abandoned and were on the verge of collapsing. As a result of St. Paul's efforts to spread his religion, these churches can be included in the cultural route, opened for use, re-functioned, and thus passed on to future generations. One of the goals of cultural routes is to protect all types of cultural heritage in the surrounding area. Another of the goals of cultural routes is to provide economic benefit and employment to the communities where they stop. The global economic crisis will be beneficial to the people at these stops because it will raise awareness about cultural heritage protection and develop their protective instinct. Since St. Paul visited 12 different countries on four separate trips, the inclusion of all these countries on the route will make St. Paul's Route richer, interesting, and instructive. More importantly, it will foster tolerance, mutual understanding, and feelings of peace among nations, peoples, and religions; it will fortify cultural ties between the European and Asian continents.

2. Literature Review

When the literature review was conducted, there were few publications about cultural routes. According to Vada et al. (2022), there are 43 peer-reviewed articles published on cultural routes, which is insufficient to develop new routes. Furthermore, the number of academic publications on routes has decreased even more in recent years, which they attribute to the COVID-19 pandemic. When religious routes are removed from the publication list, it is obvious that the number of publications will be much lower.

It has been determined that the literature examined within the scope of this research focuses on the definition of the religious route, the reasons for its preference, the features it possesses or lacks, the opportunities it provides, or the threats it faces. They also mentioned the issues that must be considered and implemented to increase the potential of pilgrimage routes, better protect and manage them, and correct deficiencies. Pilgrimage routes are an economic, social, and spatial phenomenon, according to McGrath (1999), who attempted to define the religious route. It is the geographical experience of going to a place of worship or a holy place. According to Mahanti (2022), a religion is held by approximately 93% of the world's population. At some point in a person's life, the desire to be one with God takes precedence and drives them to visit religious sites. The divine atmosphere in these locations combines with religious structures to create an appealing environment for visitors. Temples, churches, mosques, shrines, cathedrals, gurdwaras, and synagogues are magnificent religious structures that make you feel as if you are meeting with God. In various sources, words like "faith-based discoveries, pilgrimages, and missionary journeys" are used to describe religious routes. Cultural routes are used as the top title and pilgrimage routes as the subtitle by organizations that issue international certificates. Pilgrimages are the most popular journeys around the world and have been carried out for centuries. Every year, the number of people who prefer these routes grows. According to the World Tourism Organization, the number of pilgrims to India's Haridwar has increased by 94% in the last five years; 87% to the Vatican; and 78% to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. Every year, approximately 300 to 350 million pilgrims and tourists visit certain religious sites.

Some researchers investigated why people choose religious-themed routes. According to Abbate and Di Nuovo (2013), the first reason travelers take religious routes is to be pilgrims, with the second reason being to explore or socialize. According to Wang et al. (2016), religious routes appeal to believers for two reasons: mental relaxation and cultural enjoyment. Cruz-Ruiz et al. (2020) observed a significant increase in the development of themed tourist routes; they stated that routes that combine architecture, scenery, gastronomy, and festivals are preferred. Religious routes, according to Choe et al. (2015), are also experienced by those who do not practice that religion. These visitors prefer religious routes for a variety of reasons, including learning about different cultures and lifestyles, getting away from city noise, pondering, and getting away from daily responsibilities. According to Kruger and Saayman (2016), the reasons for joining religious routes are spiritual satisfaction, inner peace, inner healing, faith discovery, community unity, personal satisfaction, and religious requirements. The route divides its travelers into three different categories: adherents, explorers, and seekers. According to Gutic et al. (2010), religious routes can also be designed to visit only one or a few religious buildings. The main motivation for such routes is the building's historical, architectural, and religious significance. Many cathedrals in Europe are considered sacred by the authorities, and visiting these structures is similar to being a pilgrim.

The themes of publications about the characteristics of religious routes can be divided into three categories: those that propose contemporary touches to the routes, those that attempt to define the components of the authenticity criteria, and those that attempt to establish their relationship with all types of cultural heritage. Shakiry (2006) suggests that the discovery of places of religious importance and the construction of quality tourism facilities in these places lead to an increase in pilgrimage tourism, but first and foremost, the beautification of the regions surrounding the pilgrimage sites and all necessary modern services, particularly the road and transportation system, should be provided. Tourist motivation is one of the most important factors to consider in faith-themed routes, according to Baibakov (2019). Aside from moral considerations, it is necessary to improve the quality of modern service, implement the appropriate pricing policy, and carefully plan advertising and information promotions. As stated by Amaro et al. (2019), since individuals from various geographies and cultures participate in pilgrimage routes, certain holy places must be visited in order to become a pilgrim, and there are prayers that must be performed. Therefore, there should be mobile phone applications that inform and guide. Given the likelihood of internet outages in rural areas, these applications should include offline functionality and the ability to use GPS for local identification. Furthermore, this application should be able to serve in multiple language groups by predicting the presence of pilgrims from various geographies and cultures. Yet again, pilgrims should provide detailed information about public services, lodging, and transportation while traveling on the route so that they are not concerned about these issues. Pilgrims will be able to focus more on spiritual and religious aspects on pilgrimage routes that offer all of these services.

Authenticity is important for pilgrims to experience holy places correctly and to feel spiritual values, according to (Kim et al. 2020), who attempt to define the components of the authenticity criterion. Some researchers have also worked on the definition of authenticity in religious pathways, explaining it through various concepts or what its components could be. Belhassen et al. (2008), for example, coined the term "theoplacity" to describe a person's devotion to a holy place based on religious belief and the spiritual connection they feel in that place. The author defined authenticity as having three components: belief, activities, and places. Wright (1965) coined the term "geopiety" to express the deep respect and devotion that people have to a certain place or geography due to their religious belief. Tuan (1976) discussed the term geopiety through the concept of authenticity, and how people perceive and make sense of religious geographical areas and places. According to Olsen and Wilkinson (2016), religious routes should be regarded as a slow travel experience since speed and dominant cultural norms diminish the spiritual value of these routes. Spiritual worth is an expression of uniqueness. The Cultural Route Assessment Model

(CREM) was created by Božić and Tomić (2016). One of the most important findings from the surveys they conducted with travelers in Serbia for the Roman Emperors Route for this model is that some parts of this heritage route were not considered authentic by the participants. Another important piece of information is the expectation that historical people and events will be supported by an interesting story. As an outcome, they argue that the authenticity of the route is defined by a real or mythological story and the places that support the story. According to Santos (2002), the uniqueness of a religious route is hidden in the primitiveness, difficulty, and distress of travel and accommodation facilities. Pilgrimages should not be built with ultramodern and comfortable facilities. Travelers who believe they will be unable to complete the entire route should begin at a convenient stop. Caton and Santos (2007) also supported this idea and stated that travelers also want to experience difficulties and reach personal maturation.

Researchers studying cultural heritage values have concentrated on the routes' tangible and intangible cultural heritage components. Naramski and Szromek (2019) proposed that cultural routes should be merged with tourism and have a strong network structure to protect cultural heritage values. As stated by Singh and Kumar (2022), intangible cultural heritage values, along with the route, temples, and other traditional structures, are important determinants of religious routes. Religious beliefs provide the spiritual meaning of religious routes' intangible cultural heritage values. Researchers explain this discourse through the natural elements that comprise the theme of India's five sacred routes, the meanings they discover in the human body, and the concepts they encounter in human life. In this regard, sacred activities, acts of worship, and sacred symbols should all be considered. On the other hand, cultural landscape is an essential component of religious routes. In this context, sacred trees, sacred public areas, sacred water sources, and sacred statues should be carefully considered in route planning.

According to Mishra (2000), religious routes are regarded as a first-rate industry all over the world. Regional development is required for job creation and the re-establishment of cultural values. As noted by Gupta (2006), pilgrimage tourism has a significant impact on socioeconomic change. Not only pilgrims but also tourists who are curious and interested in various pursuits participate in religious routes. As a result, the number of tourists taking religious pilgrimages grows rapidly each year. With the increase in tourists brought by religious routes, new professions that employ locals are emerging. Route paths with natural and cultural richness of underdeveloped countries have the potential to attract tourists seeking new and authentic experiences, according to Briednhann and Wickens (2004) and Mutana and Mukwada (2020). The fact that these countries are on international trade routes represents a significant opportunity for economic development. In accordance with Vijayanand (2012), religious routes attract new investments to its geography. Tourist income not only revitalizes the locals, but also provides the necessary funds for the protection and management of their religious centers. Many monasteries and church buildings, according to Krogmann et al. (2021), can be restored thanks to the proceeds of a pilgrimage route launched in 1993 in Slovakia. They claim that pilgrimage routes provide opportunities to restore and use religious structures.

According to some studies on the effects of tourism on religious routes, these routes and their components are vulnerable to some threats. These threats include overcrowding at the sanctuaries, the construction of too much infrastructure and superstructures in the immediate vicinity, the disappearance of open spaces, public spaces, and urban spaces, the region's excessive increase in real estate prices, and the need for locals to leave due to high costs. These include environmental pollution, the loss of a mystical atmosphere, identity issues, and conflicts between locals and tourists. In recent years, outbreaks such as the pandemic have stopped visits, posing a threat in the opposite direction of the aforementioned factors. According to Orland and Bellafiore (1990), a socio-economic threat researcher, pilgrimage tourism areas in developing countries are subject to extraordinary economic pressures and changes. Because they are considered sacred by the locals, these areas may be the last open areas of the geography where they are located. However, the

pressure of tourism and economic inputs causes the construction volume in the sanctuaries and their immediate surroundings to be excessively increased, and these areas are occupied by extremely crowded masses. As stated by Vijayanand (2012), religious routes not only generate income for the geography to which they belong, but they also raise costs. Garbage collection, water disposal, lighting, and marketing and promotion all necessitate a substantial budget. Real estate prices in the region rise, competition for land use begins, and the poor local population is sometimes forced to relocate. Given the threats to spiritual values, Hung et al. (2017) propose that conflicts between commercialization and sanctity be resolved by developing a balanced model for religious routes. Material facts should not be allowed to undermine the route's religious values and philosophy. Many touristic businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, and shops, have sprouted up near popular temples, according to Shinde (2007). This lessens the pilgrimage route's sacred atmosphere. The arrangement of religious routes with crowded tourist groups, according to Santos (2002), causes these routes to lose their religious and spiritual character. According to the research of Raj and Morpeth (2007), the Council of Europe's designation of the Santiago Pilgrimage Route as the European Cultural Route accelerated the secularization process. The conversion of local religious rituals into festivals destroys the spirit of faith. Terzić and Dogramadjieva (2022) investigated the benefits and drawbacks of bringing together racially and religiously diverse nations on a path where there had previously been disagreements. Through surveys conducted with 627 people in five different countries, they attempted to determine how the arrangement of the Ottoman Heritage Route in the Balkan countries would be received by the local people. In total, 27% of those polled responded negatively, 36% were undecided, and 37% responded positively. Therefore, careful consideration of national identities and religions in shaping cultural routes is required, as is mental preparation of local people for this route, as well as a very good international management plan and cooperation. Some researchers have recently investigated the effects of the pandemic threat, which has halted religious route travel, as it has in every sector. According to Mróz (2021), pilgrimages dropped by 90% during the first six months of the pandemic. Fear of death and feelings of refuge in religion increased interest in pilgrimage routes in the following periods. People under the age of 60 preferred to become virtual pilgrims using AR technology, while those over the age of 60 preferred to make pilgrimages on foot and with individual participation. While the number of road travelers has decreased, the number of annual pilgrims has increased. Tsironis investigated the effects of the pandemic period on St. Paul's Route in Greece, concluding that route travels, which came to a halt during the pandemic, resumed their previous speed immediately after the pandemic (Tsironis 2022). As a consequence, he stated that religious tourism, which began in ancient times and continues to exist today despite the passage of time, has proven to be resilient in the face of historical events, political fluctuations, health hazards, and security risks.

3. Decision-Making Organizations and Their Criteria for Choosing International Cultural Routes

The COE (Council of Europe), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and World Heritage Committee (WHC), and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and International Committee on Cultural Routes (CIIC) actively work on cultural routes. The cultural route topic was first mentioned by the European Union (EU) in 1964 and COE was assigned to work on this topic. COE has developed a cultural routes program, established an institute, created a website and digital map system, established a certificate system, and has now implemented 48 cultural routes through agreements with stakeholders such as tourism companies and management centers. In 1994, UNESCO and ICOMOS met and developed a program to evaluate cultural routes. UNESCO and WHC cultural routes were included in the "World Heritage List" after ICOMOS established the CIIC committee to study cultural routes and published a charter (Table 1).

Table 1. Cultural Works of International Organizations.

Cultural Routes Works of COE	
Date	**Event**
1964	European Union: Expert Group start to discuss cultural routes.
1984	Invite member states for "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme"
1990	Establishment of "European Institute of Cultural Routes-EICR"
1993	First cultural route was announced as "The Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Route"
2002	Creation of "A Common Heritage: Cultural Routes and Landscaping" web portal.
2010	The Enlarged Partial Agreement on cultural routes (EPA) established
2012	Published "The Colmar Declaration"
2012	Established "Crossroads of Europe" which has established cooperation with tourism companies, authorities, and other relevant stakeholders.
Cultural Routes Works of UNESCO, WHC and ICOMOS and CIIC Partnership	
1994	UNESCO and ICOMOS announce "Part of Our Cultural Heritage: Cultural Routes"
1998	ICOMOS establish the "The International Committee of Cultural Routes (CIIC)"
2005	UNESCO and WHC announce cultural routes as a part of World Heritage List
2008	ICOMOS publish "Charter on Cultural Routes"

COE, UNESCO and WHC, ICOMOS and CIIC have conducted research to define the concept of cultural route and its criteria (Table 2). The purpose of the COE's European Cultural Routes Program (COE-CR 1987) is to demonstrate the common and living cultural heritage of Europe's various countries and cultures through travel in space and time. To be accepted into this program, a route must first obtain a "Council of Europe Cultural Routes Label" certificate. The COE has a number of criteria for obtaining this certificate (COE 2013). Cultural routes were designated as one of the four parts of the World Heritage List by UNESCO and WHC as a global heritage in continuous and numerous interactions with the environment, with strategic, symbolic, philosophical, dynamic, and evocative dimensions. It has an established criteria for accepting cultural routes into the WHL (UNESCO and WHC 1994). ICOMOS has defined cultural routes as humanity's common cultural heritage, which should be protected through collaborative efforts. It is stated that different cultural groups should serve purposes such as increasing interaction, protecting and preserving cultural heritage, and creating a social, economic, and physical environment that is sustainable. With its cultural routes charter, ICOMOS has also published its own cultural routes criteria (ICOMOS 2008).

Table 2. COE, UNESCO and WHC, ICOMOS and CIIC cultural route criteria.

COE Criteria (COE 2013)
• Being a theme that represents European values and common to at least three European countries
• Being the subject of transnational, multidisciplinary, scientific research
• Contributing to the interpretation of Europe's contemporary diversity, as well as enhancing European memory, history, and heritage
• Supporting cultural and educational exchanges for young people
• Developing innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development
• Developing touristic products for different groups

Table 2. *Cont.*

UNESCO and WHC Criteria (UNESCO and WHC 2021)
• Should meet the main criteria of the World Heritage List:
○ Outstanding Universal Values: should be one of 10 items (UNESCO and WHC 2005)
○ Authenticity: cultural values should be expressed correctly
○ Integrity: All features should be presented as a whole
○ Protection and management requirements: should be well protected and well managed
• Concepts should:
○ have movement, dynamics and continuity
○ have a value above its components and cultural elements
○ emphasize exchange and dialogue between countries or regions
○ be multidimensional in religious, commercial, administrative, or other aspects
• Identifier elements should be as follows:
○ Spatial characteristics: the length and diversity of a route should reflect the complexity of the links it maintains or sustains
○ Temporal characteristics: must have sufficient time of existence for historical identity
○ Cultural characteristics: should include cross-cultural aspects or influences, such as linking distant ethnic groups and their mutual advancement through exchange
○ Role or purpose: should reflect how communities' values are used and contributed
○ Legendary stories: should reflect mythological and symbolic values as well as realities
• A route must be properly defined, along with the important inheritance components that depend on it:
○ Route boundaries: should have properly defined spatial, temporal and cultural boundaries
○ Concentration points: start, stop, transfer, and end points should be known
ICOMOS and CIIC Criteria (ICOMOS 2008)
• Every cultural route should have uniqueness value in terms of the natural and built environment
• The temporal duration and historical significance of the various sections of the route as a whole should be considered
• It should reflect the multifaceted, ongoing, and mutual exchange of goods, ideas, information, and values between people, continents, countries, and regions.
• It should protect the affected cultures' tangible and intangible heritage values
• It should engage with the natural environment
• It should integrate historical relations with cultural characteristics
• It should promote interaction between people from various cultures or ethnic groups
• It should have cultural characteristics rooted in the traditional life of different communities
• It should have cultural practices such as common heritage elements of different communities, ritual and celebration, etc.

COE, UNESCO and WHC, ICOMOS and CIIC issued certificates to routes based on their criteria (Table 3) and published them on their websites. The cultural routes have been organized by theme by the COE. UNESCO and WHC have included their routes in the World Heritage List (WHL), which can be understood from the terms route and road. ICOMOS and CIIC routes are published on the CIIC web page with brief information and

maps. It redirects to the WHL page for detailed information. Religious routes are definitely included in the lists of all organizations. Table 3 shows religious routes in red, while other routes are in black. It is worth noting that the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, the first approved route by COE, UNESCO, and WHC, is a pilgrim route that has received certificates from all three organizations.

Table 3. COE, UNESCO and WHC, ICOMOS and CIIC cultural routes.

COE Routes (COE-CR 2023)		
Date	**Cultural Routes**	
1987	Santiago De Compostela Pilgrim Routes	Religious Route
1991	The Hansa	
1993	Viking Route	
1994	Via Francigena	Religious Route
1997	Routes of El Legado Andalusí	Religious Route
2003	Phoenicians' Route, Iron Route in the Pyrenees	
2004	European Mozart Ways	
2004	European Route of Jewish Heritage	Religious Route
2005	Saint Martin of Tours Route	Religious Route
2007	Transromanica—The Romanesque Routes of European Heritage	
2009	Iter Vitis Route	
2010	European Route of Cistercian Abbeys	Religious Route
2010	European Cemeteries Route	Religious Route
2010	Prehistoric Rock Art Trails, European Route of Historic Thermal Towns	
2010	Route of Saint Olav Ways	Religious Route
2012	European Route of Ceramics	
2013	European Route of Megalithic Culture, Huguenot and Waldensian Trail	
2014	Atrium—Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th Century In Europe's Urban Memory	
2014	Réseau Art Nouveau Network, Via Habsburg	
2015	Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route, European Routes of Emperor Charles V, Destination Napoleon, In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson	
2016	Fortified Towns of the Grande Region	
2018	Impressionisms Routes, Via Charlemagne	
2019	European Route of Industrial Heritage, Iron Curtain Trail, Le Corbusier Destinations, Liberation Route Europe	
2019	Routes of Reformation	Religious Route
2020	European Route of Historic Gardens	
2020	Via Romea Germanica	Religious Route
2021	Aeneas Route, Alvar Aalto Route—20th Century Architecture and Design	
2021	Cyril and Methodius Route	Religious Route
2021	European Route d'Artagnan, Iron Age Danube Route	
2022	Historic Cafés Route, European Fairy Tale Route, Women Writers Route	
UNESCO and WHC Cultural Routes (UNESCO and WHC 2023)		
1993	Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain	Religious Route
1998	Routes of Santiago de Compostela in France	Religious Route
2004	Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range	Religious Route
2005	Incense Route—Desert Cities in the Negev	
2012	Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem	Religious Route
2014	Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an–Tianshan Corridor	
2014	Qhapaq Ñan, Andean Road System	
ICOMOS and CIIC Cultural Routes (ICOMOS and CIIC 2023)		
2005	Route of the Incense in the Negev	
2010	Camino Real de Tierra Adentro	
2014	The Silk Road	
2014	Qhapaq Ñan or Path of the Lord	
2015	Caminos de Santiago de Compostela: French Camino and Caminos del Norte de Spain	Religious Route

4. Analysis of Certified Pilgrimage Routes

The COE, UNESCO and WHC, ICOMOS and CIIC organizations define the cultural routes for which they award certificates on their respective websites. Under various headings, these pages explain how the routes meet the certification requirements.

4.1. COE-Certified Religious Routes

The most effective and most certified COE at the international level has certified 12 religious routes. Each route has its own page on the COE's website. The criteria of the COE are explained on these pages under the headings of "theme, traveling today, heritage and council of Europe values". The theme section contains detailed information about the route's historical background, the traveling today section contains information about the partner countries, the length of the route, the mode of travel, and its widespread impact, the heritage section contains information about the route's tangible and intangible cultural heritages, and the council of Europe values section contains information about the route's significance for the European Continent (COE-CR 2023).

The theme section describes the route's history, heroes, story, and journey. The route's start and end points are specified (COE-CR 2023). The theme of the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes arose from a legend. According to legend, the body of St. James, which was brought to Spain from Jerusalem in 40 A.D. and forgotten, was discovered in the Cathedral of Santiago in the 9th century, and St. James was declared the protector of Spain. Beginning on this date, Christians began to travel to St. James' tomb (COE-SCPR 1987). The theme of Via Francigena was born from a diary. Sigeric, archbishop of Canterbury in England, was named Pope XV in A.D. 990. He traveled to Rome in order to purchase an investiture pallium from John. It records the journey's 79 stages. A pilgrimage route between England and Italy is created based on this diary (COE-VF 1994). The theme of the Routes of El Legado Andalus was inspired by religious history. The Andalusian Umayyad State, founded between the 8th and 15th centuries by individuals from the Arabian Peninsula, ruled the Iberian Peninsula of Europe. The journeys of these people, who brought Islam's faith and heritage to the European continent, have become a religious route today (COE-RELA 1997). The European Route of Jewish Heritage's theme is Jewish migration routes and heritage values. The migration movements of Jews from the Middle East to Europe, the Ottoman Empire, and America over an 18th-century span have been transformed into a religious route (COE-ERJH 2004).

All modes of transportation are available in the Traveling Today section. However, in order to feel the spiritual values on religious routes, some of the journeys are made on foot. Travelers on the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes travel by foot, bike, or horseback (COE-SCPR 1987). On foot, the Via Francigena Route rediscovers the land, history, and people (COE-VF 1994). Cruises in the Mediterranean are added to the land trips on the El Legado Andalus Routes (COE-RELA 1997). The European Route of Jewish Heritage has no restrictions on modes of transportation (COE-ERJH 2004). It is also worth noting that the routes have no distance restrictions. The longest distance on the Via Roma Germanica is about 2600 km (COE-VRG 2020), while the European Route of Jewish Heritage is 5555 km (COE-ERJH 2004). As a consequence, stops on the routes have been established, and travelers can join the route at any time. It has been noted that the routes include at least three European countries, but the total number of countries has not been determined. For example, the Via Romea Germanica has only three countries (COE-VRG 2020), and the European Route of Jewish Heritage has twenty-one (COE-ERJH 2004). Another important point is that after three European countries participate, countries from other continents can join the route as long as they are related to the theme. In El Legado Andalus Routes, three European countries joined Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan (COE-RELA 1997). Turkey and Azerbaijan have also joined the European Route of Jewish Heritage's 19 European countries (COE-ERJH 2004).

The Heritage section introduces travelers to the route's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. For the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, places of worship are added to

tangible heritage such as hospitals, lodging facilities, and bridges. Myths, legends, and songs are examples of intangible cultural heritage (COE-SCPR 1987). Traveling along the Via Francigena allows you to experience art cultures like Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque. It provides a variety of values due to its various roles as a military, commercial, and pilgrimage route. It typically runs along major thoroughfares and is surrounded by historical monuments and archaeological sites (COE-VF 1994). El Legado Routes Andalus brings to life the Andalusian Umayyad State's impressive architectural heritage, literature, art, science, gastronomy, and traditions. It creates a bond between different ethnic groups (COE-RELA 1997). The European Route of Jewish Heritage includes Jewish heritage archaeological sites, synagogues, cemeteries, neighborhoods, and memories. The route also includes archives, libraries, and museums dedicated to Jewish history (COE-ERJH 2004).

The importance of the route for the European continent is stated in the Council of Europe Values section. As an instance, the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes are both a symbol of Europe's religious history and a model of cultural cooperation (COE-SCPR 1987). The Via Francigena is a mode of communication that contributes to Europe's cultural unity. It connects the cultures of Anglo-Saxon Europe and Latin Europe (COE-VRG 2020). El Legado Andalus Routes describes the meeting of Muslim and Christian cultures (COE-RELA 1997). The European Route of Jewish Heritage enriches Jewish culture and contributes to Europe's cultural diversity (COE-ERJH 2004).

4.2. UNESCO and WHC-Certified Religious Routes

UNESCO and WHC have certified four religious routes. Each route has its own page on the UNESCO and WHC website. On these pages, there are detailed descriptions of the routes under the headings "Description, Outstanding Universal Value and Criterias, Integrity, Authenticity, Protection and Management Requirements" (UNESCO and WHC 2023).

The religious identity of the route, the destination point, the countries it covers, the length, the extent of the area, the date of the first trip, the number of years it has been used, the date of inclusion on the World Heritage List, the holy places, the architectural heritage on the route, the archaeological sites, natural areas, and landscapes are all explained in the Description section (UNESCO and WHC 2023). Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain is an extension of a network of four Christian pilgrimage routes in Northern Spain. It is approximately 1500 km long. It has a total area of 16,285.7156 hectares. The route is thought to have been used since the tomb was discovered in the 9th century. In 1993, it was inscribed on the World Heritage List. It has a rich architectural heritage that includes cathedrals, churches, hospitals, hostels, and bridges (UNESCO and WHC-SCFNS 1993).

The Outstanding Universal Value section comprises Brief Synthesis and Criteria subsections. The description section is expanded upon in Brief Synthesis. Furthermore, heritage values considered to have outstanding universal value along the route are mentioned. These values are typically associated with areas of historical, religious, art, architecture, cultural landscape, and natural heritage. For example, Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem's outstanding universal value is that it is the birthplace of Jesus. Both Christians and Muslims revere the churches in Bethlehem, the route's destination (UNESCO and WHC-BPJ 2012). Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range have extraordinary universal value because they reflect a 1200-year-old sacred mountain tradition. This tradition reflects the interaction of the religions of Shinto and Buddhism (UNESCO and WHC-SSPR 2004). Rituals, festivals, beliefs, legends, and traditions associated with the route are also important components of the route. For example, the Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range's sacred mountain tradition, Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, and Bethlehem's Christmas celebrations are considered in this context. Furthermore, the dissemination of route information, people's contributions to the socioeconomic situation, and the establishment of cultural dialogue between travelers and locals are emphasized. Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain, for

example, have fostered a cultural dialogue between travelers and locals, thereby supporting local economic and social development (UNESCO and WHC-SCFNS 1993).

The Outstanding Universal Values criteria section has ten items, and cultural routes must meet at least one of these ten. Item vi, however, is not accepted on its own; it is evaluated in conjunction with one of the other items. The Criteria section explains briefly which of the ten criteria defines the Outstanding Universal Value feature. Some of the items, ii, iii, iv, and vi, can be found on the religious routes. Criteria ii determinants are factors that facilitate the exchange of religious values, such as interreligious interaction, being the birthplace of a religious belief, a religion contributing to the development of a settlement, and encouraging other communities to come here (UNESCO and WHC 2005). Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain play an important role in the cultural exchange between the Iberian Peninsula and the European continent (UNESCO and WHC-SCFNS 1993). The Kii Mountain Range Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes is a synthesis of the East Asian religions of Shintoism and Buddhism (UNESCO and WHC-SSPR 2004). The Criterion (iii) determinants are that they are the only descriptors of a religion with its temples and rituals, or that they have witnessed the evolution of that religion over time. Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range bear witness to the evolution of Japan's religious culture over a thousand years (UNESCO and WHC-SSPR 2004). Criteria iv determinants are religious structures and religious cultural landscapes that are effective in religion development. Because religious development takes centuries, religious buildings and sanctuaries in archaeological and settlement areas are also considered determinants of this criterion. The Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain's historic buildings and residential areas (UNESCO and WHC-SCFNS 1993) and the Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range, the Kii Mountains are the 1200-year-old site of Japan's shrines and temples (UNESCO and WHC-SSPR 2004). Criteria vi is determined by its connection to a religious event, tradition, or belief of exceptional universal significance. This criterion is fulfilled by the Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain (UNESCO and WHC-SCFNS 1993), the power and influence of faith, the Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range (UNESCO and WHC-SSPR 2004), the sacred mountain tradition, the Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem (UNESCO and WHC-BPJ 2012).

The components of religious routes are defined in the Integrity section, and it is emphasized that these components should be considered as a whole. Routes, settlements, access roads, buildings, sanctuaries, sacred places, lands, landscapes, archaeological sites, affected communities, contexts, processes, mnemonic forces and symbols, traditions, beliefs, ceremonies, crafts, and cultural exchanges are all components of religious routes. In route planning, all of these elements should be considered together. There should also be a buffer zone to protect the route. For example, temples and shrines in the Kii Mountain Range, paths, Shintoism–Buddhism–Shugen Sect beliefs and interactions, cultural landscapes, and a protective buffer zone all demonstrate integrity (UNESCO and WHC-SSPR 2004). Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route includes the cave believed to be the birthplace of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem, the monastic community, the terraced lands, the ancient city and evidence of burials dating back to 2000 B.C., the main streets leading to the Church of the Nativity, religious ceremonies, traditions, workshops opening onto the streets and the protective buffer zone shows integrity (UNESCO and WHC-BPJ 2012). These buffer zones act as a protective barrier against possible dangers to preserve the values of the heritage site. Natural disasters, human activities, and industrial developments are all potential dangers. The most anticipated dangers are excessive tourism, dense construction, a rapid increase in the number of motor vehicles, insufficient parking space, environmental pollution, damage to historical buildings, and a lack of restoration.

The authenticity of the routes is determined by three different aspects in the Authenticity section: form and design, materials and substances, and use and function. The form and design of religious routes are determined by their characteristics of being a historical and real route. It should be based on a real person or event, retain historical details, and

be correctly expressed. Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain, for an instance, derive their authenticity value from the fact that their history and integrity have been preserved (UNESCO and WHC-SCFNS 1993). The primary materials and substances of religious routes are their routes, religious structures, rituals and practices. For example, the routes used in Routes of Santiago de Compostela in France (UNESCO and WHC-RSCF 1998); churches, temples, hospitals, bridges, rest stops; religious scenes and legends testify to their authenticity value. In Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range, the journeys and the tradition of building wooden structures are religious rituals and practices (UNESCO and WHC-SSPR 2004). The use and function of religious routes is related to the fact that the route and its components are still in use today. All religious routes of UNESCO and WHC are used by travelers and pilgrims today as they come from history.

The section on protection and management requirements includes the creation of protective laws and management plans. In this context, studies such as route and historical building registration, property determination, regulation of new construction conditions, natural site protection, authority determination, financial funds, maintenance periods for building and road maintenance and repair, and the creation of protective buffer zones should be carried out. Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain have been registered in the category of Historic Complex as the highest level of Cultural Interest (Bien de Interés Cultural) under the Spanish Historic Heritage Law. Crown Property owns the route, which is managed by the Jacobean Council (Consejo Jacobeo). This committee is in charge of furthering the route's promotion and cultural dissemination, preserving and restoring its historical and artistic heritage, organizing and promoting tourism, and assisting pilgrims. It is the responsibility of the municipalities through which the route passes to carry out activities such as industrial and urban growth and development, new transportation infrastructure like highways and railways, increased tourism, and pressure caused by the number of pilgrims, whilst not causing damage to the route (UNESCO and WHC-SCFNS 1993). The key principles and methodology for the conservation and management of Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range are outlined in the 2003 Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan. The buildings along the route have been designated as National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties by the Japanese Law on Cultural Property Protection. The same law designates temple and tomb areas, pilgrimage routes, and the forest landscape surrounding them as Historical Sites, Places of Natural Beauty, and Natural Monuments. Relevant religious organizations are in charge of temple and shrine protection and maintenance. The national government finances and provides technical assistance for restoration and repair projects. The academic committees report on the route's protection and management status on a regular basis (UNESCO and WHC-SSPR 2004).

4.3. ICOMOS and CIIC-Certified Religious Routes

The only ICOMOS and CIIC-Certified religious route is Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain. The ICOMOS and CIIC page of this route leads to the UNESCO and WHC page. Therefore, the route has no definition for ICOMOS and CIIC (ICOMOS and CIIC 2023).

5. Materials and Methods

The authentic St. Paul's Route and the current St. Paul's Routes were discussed as material in this research. Through literature reviews, the descriptive analysis method was used as a method.

5.1. Materials

5.1.1. St. Paul's Authentic Journeys

St. Paul was a Roman citizen, Jewish Christian missionary, and the founder of the Pavlik churches who lived from 5 to 67 A.D. The Bible refers to him as Paul. He is widely

regarded as the most influential figure in the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Anatolia and then to Europe. The Acts of the Apostles section of the New Testament in the Bible contains information on St. Paul's life and travels. St. Paul, according to the New Testament, made four different journeys (Figure 1) for missionary purposes over a period of 20 years (Baniotopoulou 2016; CRS 2012; SPMJ n.d.).

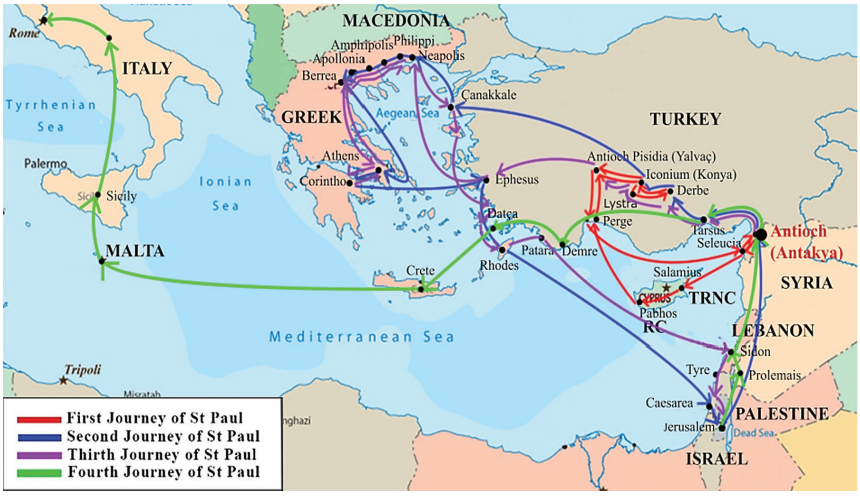


Figure 1. St. Paul journeys.

He made his first journey between the years 46 and 48 AD. He first travels by sea to Antioch (Antakya), Selecuia (Samandağ), Cyprus, and Attalia (Antalya) Marine, and then by road to Perge, Psidia Antioch (Yalvaç), and Iconium (Konya). He completes his first journey by returning to Antioch (Antakya) via the same route, without stopping in Cyprus (Baniotopoulou 2016; CRS 2012; SPMJ n.d.).

He made his Second Journey between 49 and 52 A.D. He traveled by road from Jerusalem to Antioch (Antakya), Tarsus, Iconium (Konya), Psidia Antioch (Yalvaç), and Troy (Çanakkale). He reached North Macedonia–Greece–Anatolia (Ephesus)–Rhodes Island–Syria–Jerusalem by sea from Troy (Çanakkale). Again, by road, he passed to Galatia–Phrygia–Antioch (Antakya) (Baniotopoulou 2016; CRS 2012; SPMJ n.d.).

He made his third journey between the years 53–57 A.D. He first traveled by road to Antioch (Antakya), Tarsus, Iconium (Konya), Psidia Antioch (Yalvaç), and Troy (Çanakkale). He traveled by sea to North Macedonia. He visited the cities of North Macedonia and Greece. He returned via Greece, Troy (Çanakkale), Kos Island, Rhodes Island, Kalkan, Tyre and Jerusalem (Baniotopoulou 2016; CRS 2012; SPMJ n.d.).

He made his fourth journey between 59–69 A.D. However, this is a mandatory journey. In Jerusalem, St. Paul was arrested and judged by Roman authorities. Following the trial, he was transported to Rome via Syria–Sidon–Antioch (Antakya–Tarsus–Demre–Datça–Crete Island–Malta Island–Sicily–Italy). St. Paul was imprisoned here before being executed in 64 or 67 A.D. (Baniotopoulou 2016; CRS 2012; SPMJ n.d.).

5.1.2. Currently Used St. Paul Routes

There are many St. Paul's Routes practiced today. However, one route led by Greece and another route implemented in Turkey are quite active and popular. In addition, both practices have efforts to obtain certification from international organizations. Therefore, in this study, these two routes were chosen as the current St. Paul Route applications.

St. Paul's Route of Greece

The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was formed by the tourism networks of Greece, Italy, Northern Cyprus, and Belgium. They implemented the cultural route "In the footsteps of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Nations" as a result of the Cult-RInG Interreg Europe project—Cultural Routes as Investments for Growth and Jobs, 2017–2021. They conducted numerous research and documentation studies on St. Paul's heritage in order to determine the route's content, the regions to be included in the route, the important places and touristic points. In addition, they attended various meetings, workshops, and discussions, as well as visited significant locations (EGTC 2021). Since 2006, the route has been in operation. It follows a route that includes stops in Southern Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Italy, and Spain (Figure 2). They hope to obtain a certificate for the route from the Council of Europe. They attempted to obtain a certificate from the COE with a route titled "In the Footsteps of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Nations-Cultural Route" during the 2021–2022 application period. It still does not have a certificate (Baniotopoulou 2016; CRS 2012; SPMJ n.d.).

Figure 2. St. Paul's Route of Greece.

St. Paul's Route of Turkey

The St. Paul's Route in Turkey is a 500 km long path that takes 27 days to walk between the Perge Ancient City, which is located 10 km east of Attalia (Antalya), one of Turkey's western Mediterranean coastal cities, and the Psidia Antiochia Ancient City, which is located in the Yalvaç District of the mountainous city of Isparta (Figure 3). A second branch departs from Beşkonak at the entrance to Köprülü Canyon National Park, 80 km northeast of Antalya. In the Roman ancient city of Adada, the second branch connects with the first one. The route follows Roman roads, trails, and forest roads, and in places is suitable for mountain biking. Kate Clow established this route in 2008 to bring tourism to the countryside and to give hikers an insight into the countryside by passing through the locations where St. Paul went on his first trip to Asia Minor. Accommodation is available in village houses or small pensions along the road, but camping is done in long stages in designated camping areas (CRS 2012).

5.2. Method

The goal of this study is to identify the determining criteria for religious routes to receive international certification. The St. Paul's Route, which has a lot of potential, was chosen as the research material. As research methods, in-depth literature analysis and descriptive analysis methods were used. Firstly, it was determined what types of studies on religious routes had been conducted in the literature. According to the literature review, there are book publications about cultural routes that are specific to very old dates. The concepts associated with the cultural route are generally attempted to be explained in

the books. When scientific article research was examined, it was discovered that there are generally publications on cultural routes and few publications on religious routes. The articles were mostly about tourism, the socioeconomic impacts of cultural routes, the opportunities they provide, and the risks they face. There are, however, no publications in the literature on route certification systems, certification criteria, or how to present a route. A descriptive analysis of the certification that a route can receive has been made using information gathered from the literature and certificate programs.

Figure 3. St. Paul's Route of Turkey.

This method's steps are indicated as "Determining decision makers for certification, determining of certificate criteria, researching of authentic route, researching authentic route, researching current versions of the authentic route, planning of the proposed route and eligibility analysis of the proposed route for certificate" (Figure 4). This method will determine how a route should be planned as well as which certificate programs the route can apply to.

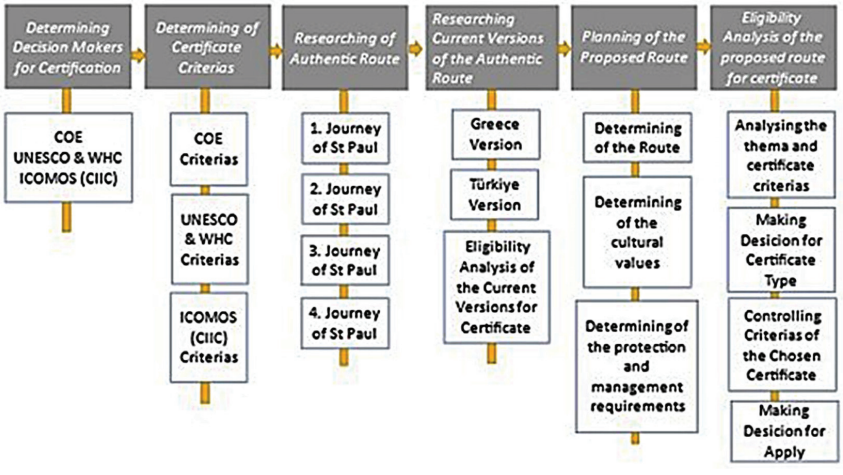


Figure 4. Flowchart of the research.

6. Conclusions and Recomendations

Cultural routes are one of the most important and current issues at the intersection of architectural conservation and tourism disciplines today. The goal of organizing a cultural route is to convey important information and values about historical roads while connecting them and presenting travel, recreation, observation, sports, entertainment, and/or discovery routes as a whole. Thus, cultural routes (CR) promote cultural heritage as humanity's common heritage and encourage the spread of cultural activities. They aid in the discovery and protection of cultural values such as historical cities and villages, architectural heritage, cultural landscape, and intangible cultural heritage, and they are also useful for evaluating natural areas in this context. They expand economic and social development opportunities, particularly in terms of job creation, by bringing movement and dynamism to the regions within its sphere of influence. The potential benefits and advantages drive cultural tourism and influence the development of sustainable tourism.

The St. Paul's Route was used to evaluate the characteristics that a religious route should have based on the results of an analysis of the criteria of the international organizations that grant certificates and the characteristics of the certified religious routes. The versions of the St. Paul's Route in use today are not of sufficient quality to receive international certification. However, when compared to the authentic St. Paul's journeys, the St. Paul's Route has the potential to meet the needs of all three decision-making organizations. For this reason, in this study, a new St. Paul Route that can receive certificates from international organizations has been suggested, based on the real stops in St. Paul's authentic journeys (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Suggested St. Paul's Route and Stops.

The authentic St. Paul's Route provides stops in 11 countries: Turkey, Greece, North Macedonia, Italy, Malta, Cyprus (northern and southern parts), Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, and Syria. It has stops in four European countries, as requested by the COE criteria: Greece, Italy, North Macedonia and Malta. All of the countries St. Paul visited were turned into a ring in this study. The longest distance on the route is 3530 km by road and 2305 km by air distance between Rome and Jerusalem. The longest distance traveled on COE pilgrimage routes is approximately 3000 km. Due to the length of the route, the St. Paul route should be designed in such a way that travelers can join the route from many stops, just like the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Route.

As the most influential person in the spread of the Christian religion to Europe, St. Paul has a special theme that represents European values. Scientific studies on St. Paul have been and continue to be conducted primarily in Greece and Turkey. Archaeological

excavations also aid religious and historical studies. It welcomes the expansion of Europe's religious memory, history, and heritage. Many archaeological and historical structures, such as churches, temples, and wells built in St. Paul's honor, can be found in the countries where he traveled. Young people can benefit from cultural and educational exchange programs. The involvement of 11 countries from two continents in this project will result in a serious cultural and educational exchange for all tourist groups. A single journey will allow them to experience European and Asian cultures, cultural transitions, and interactions. It is likely to be preferred in terms of tourism because it will bring together two different continents and various nations that have been in constant interaction throughout history. The route's cultural diversity and richness are at a level that will appeal to people of all ages and faiths. It is likely to be a model and innovative project because it will encourage historically and politically contentious countries to collaborate and contribute to peace.

We mentioned in the UNESCO and WHC criteria that it should have at least one item of outstanding universal value and that religious routes should include items ii, iv, and vi. St. Paul's Route differs from others in that it depicts the transformation of the most basic church architecture born in the Asian continent, in the Christian religion, into cathedrals in Europe, as well as a spiritual journey, as described in items ii and iv. It will also be the only route that takes tourists and pilgrims to Jerusalem, the holy city of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Another important aspect to which the route refers to item vi is that it involves conveying the beliefs, ideas, and arts of these three religions through an immersive and tactile experience. There is no need to be concerned about the route's authenticity, because St. Paul's journeys are described in detail in the Acts of the Apostles; if the route includes all of the stops described in the Bible, the information will be correctly conveyed to the participants. It is also possible to provide the integrity value: when the real stops described in the Bible, the monuments built in St. Paul's name, the areas where St. Paul preached, prayers, meditations, hymns, and stories are correctly transferred to the route, the route's integrity will be ensured. Meeting the conservation and management requirements may be the most difficult aspect of this route. The journey through 11 culturally and geographically diverse countries necessitates an excellent conservation and management strategy. The most important point is that all countries work together. Each country should establish an official institution to manage this route. This institution determines the route of the path in its own country, religious buildings to be visited, organizations such as ceremonies and celebrations, public order, location and quality of tourism facilities such as accommodation and food, the creation of buffer zones, infrastructure and transportation systems, tourist satisfaction, employment, and local people protection. Furthermore, it should assess the repair and restoration needs of the religious and architectural heritage along the route and prepare these structures for the route in a way that balances protection and use. In terms of the concept criterion, religious paths have their own core concepts. St. Paul's Route can promote international exchange and dialogue while describing the spread of Christianity that emerged in Asia to Europe.

The St. Paul's Route's distinguishing features are also very strong. The route's length and cultural diversity define the spatial character of the religious and cultural bond that remains between the two continents. The journeys made by St. Paul between 46 and 69 BC, as well as those made in his name today, show that there is enough existence for a historical identity. Its role and purpose are universal. It is at a level to demonstrate the products of Christianity in each country, as well as its interaction with societies and other monotheistic religions. The route's story will be shaped by stories about St. Paul in the Bible and among individuals. Scientific studies should be used to determine the route's boundaries and concentration points. The route should be accurate because it will convey information about a real person and events. For example, while St. Paul's Route forms a ring, travelers should be aware that the journey begins in the Tarsus District of Turkey, where St. Paul was born, and ends in Rome, where St. Paul was executed.

The ICOMOS and CIIC criteria emphasize authenticity as well. The use of the authentic environment is added to the authentic route. The authentic locations of St. Paul's Route

can also be determined using scientific research and information gathered from the local population, because he is a well-known character to almost everyone. If scientific sources can be used to determine how long St. Paul stayed in which place and what he did, how long the route will take and what can be done at each stop can be determined more clearly. Another requirement stated that continents should be the result of interactions between countries and regions. When the route is implemented in its authentic form, this feature will directly demonstrate how strong the route is as a route that spans two continents and twelve countries. ICOMOS's fourth criterion is that "affected cultures must maintain their tangible and intangible heritage values". This criterion was one of the strengths of the authentic St. Paul's Route, but it has been overlooked by the current St. Paul's Routes. First and foremost, the churches bearing the name of St. Paul should be included in the authentic route. St. Paul's Church and St. Paul's Well in Tarsus Town, Turkey, where he was born, and St. Paul's Church in Antiochia Ancient City of Isparta City, where he gave his first sermon, should be included on the route (Figure 6).

Figure 6. St. Paul Church—Isparta, Turkey; and St. Paul Church—Tarsus, Turkey.

One critical criterion is that the route generates revenue for the preservation and restoration of architectural heritage. Because the European continent is predominantly Christian, the church structures on this continent have been well preserved. However, because Islam is the dominant religion in Asian countries, many churches in these countries are neglected. Churches in various properties and borders are unable to be repaired due to political obstacles. As a consequence, St. Paul's Route could be a pioneer in the restoration of these churches with international cooperation. In Turkey, for example, there are numerous church structures dating from the ancient period to the end of the nineteenth century (Figure 7). Factors such as the deterioration of the Ottoman Empire's cosmopolitan structure at the end of World War I, the fact that the war environment and turmoil could not be overcome for a long time, and the migration of some peoples from different cultures left the churches in this geography without community, dysfunctional, and neglected. The Greek churches, in particular, were on the verge of collapse due to political, economic, and cultural issues between Greece and Turkey. İç Kale Church, Arap Evliyası Chapel, Civarda Burnu Chapel in Alanya and the Aya Georgios, Aya Yorgi, and Aya Baniya Churches in Isparta are among the religious structures in this situation. These churches were not built during St. Paul's lifetime, but they are included in the route as a result of St. Paul's efforts to spread Christianity.

It is critical to preserve the values of religious architectural heritage and intangible cultural heritage. The story of St. Paul's journeys is the route's most important intangible cultural heritage. Other elements should be researched scientifically and added to the route. ICOMOS and CIIC both value engagement with the natural environment. Other interesting natural areas discovered on the authentic route should be included in the new route. This criterion is easily met by the St. Paul's Route. In Turkey, for example, St. Paul's Route begins in Antalya's Perge Ancient City and ends in Isparta's Antiochia Ancient City. The natural areas where St. Paul actually walked are along the 500 km road between these

two stops. Travelers connect with nature and soil by camping in natural areas between these two stops. When the entire authentic route is researched, it will be possible to establish relationships with the natural and historical environments along the entire route. The St. Paul's Route already includes the criterion of encouraging interaction between people of different cultures and ethnic groups. With cultural interaction, Christianity, which originated in Asia, spread through the European continent. Except for the countries along the route, religious practices and traditions have spread across the entire European continent and other geographies since Christ. For centuries, both continents, and even the entire world, have seen Christian practices, rituals, and celebrations that are at the heart of the route.

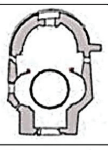
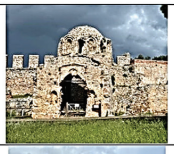
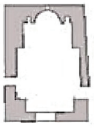
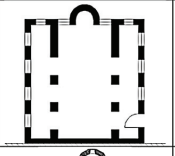
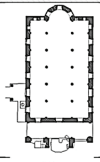
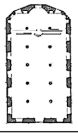
Name of Church	Construction Year	Plan	Photo
Alanya İç Kale Church	11th Century		
Alanya Arap Eviyası Chapel	11th Century		
Alanya Cilvarda Burnu Chapel	13th Century		
Isparta Aya Georgious Church	1805		
Isparta Aya Yorgi Church	1860		
Isparta Aya Baniya Church	1865		

Figure 7. Examples of churches that need restoration In Turkey.

Consequently, the St. Paul Route, like the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Route, has the potential to receive certificates from three international decision-making organizations: COE, UNESCO and WHC, and ICOMOS and CIIC. When combined with its authentic route for receiving certificates, it could be the world's second route to achieve three certificates. It can make significant contributions to the preservation and survival of architectural, religious, natural, and intangible cultural heritage across a broad geographic area, as well as to the establishment of world peace, international relations, and inter-religious dialogue.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

Abbate, Costanza S., and Santo F. Di Nuovo. 2013. Motivation and personality traits for choosing religious tourism. A research on the case of Medjugorje. *Current Issues in Tourism* 16: 501–6. [CrossRef]

Amaro, Suzanne, Paulo Alexandre O. Duarte, and Angela Isabel Lopes Antunes. 2019. Determinants of intentions to use a pil-grimage app: A cross-cultural comparison. *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 7: 4.

Baibakov, Eduard Ildarovich. 2019. Consideration of a Religious Factor When Determining the Tourist Motivation. *Revista San Gregorio* 34: 198–203. [CrossRef]

Baniotopoulou, Evdoxia. 2016. Candidate Route: In the Footsteps of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Nations—Cultural Route, Independent Expert Report 2021–2022. October. Available online: https://rm.coe.int/report-in-the-footsteps-of-saint-paul-en/1680a62898 (accessed on 21 May 2023).

Belhassen, Yaniv, Kellee Caton, and William P. Stewart. 2008. The search for authenticity in the pilgrim experience. *Annals of Tourism Research* 35: 668–89. [CrossRef]

Božić, Sanja, and Nemanja Tomić. 2016. Developing the cultural route evaluation model (CREM) and its application on the Trail of Roman Emperors, Serbia. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 17: 26–35. [CrossRef]

Briednhann, Jenny, and Eugenia Wickens. 2004. Tourism routes as a tool for the economic development of rural areas—Vibrant hope or impossible dream? *Tourism Management* 25: 71–79. [CrossRef]

Caton, Kellee, and Carla A. Santos. 2007. Heritage tourism on route 66: Deconstructing nostalgia. *Journal of Travel Research* 45: 371–86. [CrossRef]

Choe, Jaeyeon, Michael Blazey, and Ondrej Mitas. 2015. Motivations of non-Buddhists visiting Buddhist temples. *Current Issues in Tourism* 18: 70–82. [CrossRef]

COE. 2013. Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Certification. Available online: https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/certification1 (accessed on 6 March 2023).

COE-AR. 2018. Activity Report of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme, 8th Annual Advisory Forum on Cultural Routes. October 23. Available online: https://rm.coe.int/2018-cultural-routes-activity-report/16809487f9 (accessed on 6 March 2023).

COE-CR. 1987. Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme. October 23. Available online: https://www.coe.int/tr/web/cultural-routes/about (accessed on 6 March 2023).

COE-CR. 2023. Explore all Cultural Routes by Theme. Available online: https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/by-theme (accessed on 6 March 2023).

COE-ERJH. 2004. European Route of Jewish Heritage. Available online: https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-european-route-of-jewish-heritage (accessed on 6 March 2023).

COE-RELA. 1997. Routes of El Legado Andalusí. Available online: https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-routes-of-el-legado-andalusi (accessed on 6 March 2023).

COE-SCPR. 1987. Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes. Available online: https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-santiago-de-compostela-pilgrim-routes (accessed on 6 March 2023).

COE-VF. 1994. Via Francigena. Available online: https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-via-francigena (accessed on 6 March 2023).

COE-VRG. 2020. Via Romea Germanica. Available online: https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/via-romea-germanica (accessed on 6 March 2023).

CRS. 2012. Culture Routes Society, St. Paul Trail. Available online: https://cultureroutesinturkey.com/st-paul-trail/ (accessed on 6 March 2023).

Cruz-Ruiz, Elena, Gorka Zamarreño-Aramendia, and Elena Ruiz-Romero de la Cruz. 2020. Key Elements for the Design of a Wine Route. The Case of La Axarquía in Málaga (Spain). *Sustainability* 12: 9242. [CrossRef]

EGTC. 2021. In the footsteps of Saint Paul, the Apostle of the Nations—Cultural Route, Home—Bacground Part. Available online: https://stpaul-culturalroute.eu/home/background.html (accessed on 22 May 2023).

Gupta, Monisha Das. 2006. *Unruly Immigrants: Rights, Activism, and Transnational South Asian Politics in the United States*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Gutic, Jorge, Eliza Caie, and Andy Clegg. 2010. In search of heterotopia? Motivations of visitors to an English Cathedral. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 12: 750–60. [CrossRef]

Hung, Kam, Xiaotao Yang, Philipp Wassler, Dan Wang, Pearl Lin, and Zhaoping Liu. 2017. Contesting the commercialization and sanctity of religious tourism in the Shaolin Monastery, China. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 19: 145–59. [CrossRef]

ICOMOS. 2008. The Icomos Charter on Cultural Routes. October 4. Available online: http://www.icomos.org.tr/Dosyalar/ICOMOSTR_en0623812001536913379.pdf (accessed on 6 March 2023).
ICOMOS, and CIIC. 2023. International Committee on Cultural Routes, ICOMOS. Available online: https://ciicicomos.org/en/cultural-routes/ (accessed on 6 March 2023).
IPDCT. n.d. Isparta Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, St. Paul (Paulus). Available online: https://isparta.ktb.gov.tr/TR-71232/st-paul-aziz-paulus.html (accessed on 6 March 2023).
Kim, Bona, Seongseop Kim, and Brian King. 2020. Religious tourism studies: Evolution, progress, and future prospects. *Tourism Recreation Research* 45: 185–203. [CrossRef]
Krogmann, Alfread, Peter Ivanič, Hilda Kramáreková, Lucia Petrikovičová, František Petrovič, and Henrich Grežo. 2021. Cultural Tourism in Nitra, Slovakia: Overview of Current and Future Trends. *Sustainability* 13: 5181. [CrossRef]
Kruger, Martinette, and Melville Saayman. 2016. Understanding the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) pilgrims. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 18: 27–38. [CrossRef]
Magli, Giulio. 2016. Sirius and the project of the megalithic enclosures at Gobekli Tepe. *Nexus Network Journal* 18: 337–46. [CrossRef]
Mahanti, Tushar K. 2022. Religious tourism turns economic multiplier across globe. *Business Economics Magazine*, November 1. Available online: https://businesseconomics.in/religious-tourism-turns-economic-multiplier-across-globe(accessed on 6 March 2023).
McGrath, Alister E. 1999. *Christian Spirituality: An introduction*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
Mishra, Lavkush. 2000. *Religious Tourism in India*. New Delhi: Mohit Publications.
Mróz, Franciszek. 2021. The impact of COVID-19 on pilgrimages and religious tourism in Europe during the first six months of the pandemic. *Journal of Religion and Health* 60: 625–45. [CrossRef]
Mutana, Sarudzai, and Geofrey Mukwada. 2020. Can mountain route tourism work for the poor? Exploring worldviews from maluti route in the Drakensberg region of South Africa. *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 20: 18–30. [CrossRef]
Naramski, Mateusz, and Adam R. Szromek. 2019. Configuring a trust-based inter-organizational cooperation network for post-indus trial tourist organizations on a tourist route. *Sustainability* 11: 3542. [CrossRef]
Olsen, Daniel H., and Greg Wilkinson. 2016. Are fast pilgrims true pilgrims? The Shikoku pilgrimage. *Annals of Tourism Research* 61: 228–30. [CrossRef]
Orland, Brian, and Vincent J. Bellafiore. 1990. Development directions for a sacred site in India. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 19: 181–96. [CrossRef]
Pearson, Mike Parker, Ros Cleal, Peter Marshall, Stuart Needham, Josh Pollard, Colin Richards, Clive Ruggles, Alison Sheridan, Julian Thomas, Chris Tilley, and et al. 2007. The age of Stonehenge. *Antiquity* 81: 617–39. [CrossRef]
Raj, Razaq, and Nigel D. Morpeth. 2007. Introduction: Establishing linkages between religious travel and tourism. In *Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Festivals Management: An International Perspective*. Boston: CAB International, pp. 1–14.
Santos, Xosé M. 2002. Pilgrimage and tourism at Santiago de Compostela. *Tourism Recreation Research* 27: 41–50. [CrossRef]
Shakiry, Abdul Sahib. 2006. Religious Tourism: The Pivot of Tourism between Islamic Countries and Attraction of Muslim World. Islamic Tourism Prospects. Available online: http://www.islamictourism.com/Articles/articles.php?issue=34 (accessed on 6 March 2023).
Shinde, Kira N. 2007. Pilgrimage and the environment: Challenges in a pilgrimage centre. *Current Issues in Tourism* 10: 343–65. [CrossRef]
Singh, Rana P.B., and Santosh Kumar. 2022. The Sacred Nodes of Pañchakroshī Yātrā route, Varanasi (India): Spatial Perspectives, and Prospects for future. Esempi di Architettura. *International Journal of Architecture and Engineering* 9: 123–42.
Sparavigna, Amelia Carolina. 2016. The Temple Complex of Ggantija and the Major Lunar Standstill as Given by the Photographer's Ephemeris (24 August 2016). Available online: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2828614 (accessed on 6 March 2023).
SPMJ. n.d. St. Paul's Mıssıonary Journeys—The Letters of St. Paul (Acts, 13:1–21:16). Available online: http://eoc.dolf.org.hk/livingev/stpaul.htm#first (accessed on 6 March 2023).
Terzić, Aleksandra, and Elka Dogramadjieva. 2022. A cultural route for Ottoman heritage in Europe: Opportunities and challenges from the perspectives of students. *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 17: 718–36. [CrossRef]
Tsironis, Christos N. 2022. Pilgrimage and Religious Tourism in Society, in the Wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Paradigmatic Focus on 'St. Paul's Route' in the Central Macedonia Region, Greece. *Religions* 13: 887. [CrossRef]
Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1976. Geopiety: A theme in man's attachment to nature and to place. *Geographies of the Mind*, 11–39.
UNESCO. 2003. Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. October 17. Available online: https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention (accessed on 6 March 2023).
UNESCO, and WHC. 1994. Report on the Expert Meeting on Routes as a Part of our Cultural Heritage. December 17. Available online: https://whc.unesco.org/archive/routes94.htm (accessed on 6 March 2023).
UNESCO, and WHC. 2005. Outstanding Universal Value Criterias. Available online: https://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/ (accessed on 6 March 2023).
UNESCO, and WHC. 2021. Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention. Available online: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide12-en.pdf (accessed on 6 March 2023).
UNESCO, and WHC. 2023. World Heritage List. Available online: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/ (accessed on 6 March 2023).
UNESCO, and WHC-BPJ. 2012. Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem. Available online: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1433 (accessed on 6 March 2023).

UNESCO, and WHC-RSCF. 1998. Routes of Santiago de Compostela in France. Available online: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/868 (accessed on 6 March 2023).
UNESCO, and WHC-SCFNS. 1993. Routes of Santiago de Compostela: Camino Francés and Routes of Northern Spain. Available online: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/669 (accessed on 6 March 2023).
UNESCO, and WHC-SSPR. 2004. Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range. Available online: https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1142 (accessed on 6 March 2023).
Vada, Sera, Karine Dupre, and Yachen Zhang. 2022. Route tourism: A narrative literature review. *Current Issues in Tourism* 26: 879–89. [CrossRef]
Vijayanand, S. 2012. Socio-economic impacts in pilgrimage tourism. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 2: 329–43.
Wang, Wanfei, Joseph S. Chen, and Keji Huang. 2016. Religious tourist motivation in Buddhist Mountain: The case from China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 21: 57–72. [CrossRef]
Wright, John K. 1965. Scientific Change: Historical Studies in the Intellectual, Social and Technical Conditions for Scientific Discovery and Technical Invention, from Antiquity to the Present. Paper presented at the Symposium on the History of Science, Oxford, UK, July 9–15; pp. 137–39.

religions

MDPI

Article

Pilgrimages on the Portuguese Way to Santiago de Compostela: Evolution and Motivations

Fátima Matos Silva [1,2,*], José Luis Braga [3,4], Miguel Pazos Otón [5] and Isabel Borges [1,3,6]

[1] REMIT—Research on Economics, Management and Information Technologies, Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, Universidade Portucalense, 4200-072 Porto, Portugal; isabel.borges@iees.pt
[2] CITCEM—Transdisciplinary Research Centre Culture, Space and Memory, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Porto, Via Panorâmica s/n, 4150-564 Porto, Portugal
[3] CIDI-IEES—Centre for Research, Development and Innovation-European Institute of Higher Studies of Fafe, 4820-909 Fafe, Portugal; jose.braga@iees.pt
[4] CITUR—Centre for Research, Development and Innovation in Tourism, Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, 2411-901 Leiria, Portugal
[5] ANTE—Territorial Analysis Research Group, Department of Geography, University of Santiago de Compostela (USC), 15705 Santiago de Compostela, Spain; miguel.pazos.oton@usc.es
[6] CEGOT—Centre of Studies in Geography and Spatial Planning, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Department of Geography and Tourism, University of Coimbra, 3004-531 Coimbra, Portugal
* Correspondence: mfms@upt.pt

Abstract: This research paper is based on the study of the evolution of pilgrimages on the Santiago Way, highlighting the Portuguese Way to Santiago—Central Portuguese Way and Coastal Portuguese Way—which has experienced massive popularity over the years. The primary objective of this work is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the pilgrims' motivations to undertake the Santiago Way pilgrimage. A mixed methods approach is adopted based on the simultaneous use of quantitative and qualitative data. So, an analysis of secondary data, provided by the *Oficina del Peregrino de la Catedral de Santiago de Compostela* and by the Municipal Department of Cultural Heritage Management of Porto is combined with a thematic analysis of seven interviews with stakeholders of the Portuguese Way to Santiago. The findings suggest that there is an increase in cultural and sports motivations, although spiritual and religious motivations continue to have a strong presence. The ecumenical character of the Santiago Way is also proved, given the large number of pilgrims of religions other than the Catholic one, who travel these paths—the vast territories that are traversed—until reaching the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. A new paradigm still needs to be registered, perceptible in the rise of *Turigrims*, pilgrims who benefit from support services that mitigate the hardships of the way.

Keywords: Portuguese Way to Santiago; pilgrimage; motivations; religious motivations; spirituality motivations; cultural motivations; ecumenism; places of worship; religious tourism

Citation: Silva, Fátima Matos, José Luis Braga, Miguel Pazos Otón, and Isabel Borges. 2023. Pilgrimages on the Portuguese Way to Santiago de Compostela: Evolution and Motivations. *Religions* 14: 1017. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14081017

Academic Editor: Enzo Pace

Received: 30 June 2023
Revised: 3 August 2023
Accepted: 6 August 2023
Published: 8 August 2023

1. Introduction

The Santiago Way is a religious pilgrimage route with medieval origins that has become, especially in the last two decades, a religious, tourist, and cultural product with an enormous power of attraction.

It became a catalyst for the process of material construction of a pilgrimage route that has enabled the economic, social, and cultural sustainability of the different regions crossed by the different Paths. However, the aim of this article, and what motivated it, was the interest in knowing to what extent religious motivations, among many others that naturally exist, are still the basis that leads thousands of people, every year, to travel countless kilometres to reach Santiago de Compostela.

There are, undoubtedly, new types of pilgrims, with different motivations, stemming from different factors that interact with each other and lead to the concept of the pilgrim in

the most classic sense, but also as a new tourist who walks with the support of specialized companies—the "Turigrims"—or even a bicycle—the "bicygrim"—, among other cultural and/or religious tourists.

The analysis of statistical data from the *Pilgrim's Office of the Cathedral of Santiago* allows us to conclude that, in fact, religious motivations are still the driving force and also the strongest uniting factor among all types of pilgrims. However, nowadays, Santiago Way is characterized by being multi-motivational, not attending only to religious motivations (Amaro et al. 2018; Lois-González and Santos 2015).

Pilgrimage is an ancient form of mobility and a key precursor to modern tourism (Zapponi 2010). Tourism is one of the most relevant supports for the territory's sustainability, reaching a dimension that places it in a leading position among other economic activities. As it happens in many other tourist destinations, religious tourism is also one of the increasing segments in Portugal, as an economic activity and as an outcome of the movement of people. One route that has created greater dynamism, especially in the northern region of Portugal, is the Portuguese Way to Santiago, namely the Central Way and, more recently, the Coastal Way. These pilgrimage routes are the focus of this study.

Religious tourism is one of the oldest types of tourism in the world, being one of the first reasons people travel. The concept of religious tourism has been progressively transformed and updated. In fact, several studies indicate that religious tourism is a "fast-growing segment" of this industry (Griffin and Raj 2017). According to numerous definitions, religious tourism is related to "all travels outside the usual environment for religious purposes", which includes pilgrimage tours (Di Giovine and Elsner 2016, p. 722). Thus, religious tourism is a type of tourism, which includes people of faith who travel individually or in groups, for religious or spiritual purposes (Griffin and Raj 2017). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO 1995) states that religious tourism can be one of the most effective instruments to provide broad and sustainable development.

The definition of religious tourism and pilgrimage tourism may seem alike, but there are, however, some differences (Vázquez de la Torre et al. 2010). Regarding religious tourism, the most important are the places of worship; in the case of pilgrimage tourism, in addition to considering the places of worship, the connection between places is important, with the need to travel to continue the visit, which contributes to the appearance of routes, itineraries or pilgrimage circuits (Gil de Arriba 2006), among which is the *Camino de Santiago*.

Religious tourism can be understood as an activity carried out by persons who travel for religious motivations or to attend events of a religious nature. It represents an opportunity for the development of tourist activities and for the economic and social development of the locations where they were built. Even more, because religious tourists are more loyal to the destination, they visit more than traditional tourists, as they repeatedly visit the same religious place in a shorter period (Robles 2001).

Religious and spiritual motivations are, usually, the basis of pilgrimages. However, core motivation is a form of transformation that includes inner values and questions about the meaning of life (Haab 1998). As Dyas (2020) says "And yet many people, including a large number who don't have any form of religious belief, still find such places a helpful way into exploring spirituality and enriching their lives. That is not an accident, because that is, in fact, what these places are for: to make us pause, reflect, and respond" (p. 7).

Spirituality is an individual phenomenon where one recognizes the importance of directing their lives towards something immaterial that is beyond or greater than themselves, with the recognition of some dependence on a higher power that is invisible or spiritual (Carlson and Martin 1999). Spirituality is an individual practice, but it is also related to the process of expanding beliefs around the meaning of life and connection with others. Hence spirituality is related to our inner consciousness, a particular form of energizing work action (Cavanagh et al. 2001; Guillory 2000).

Religiously motivated pilgrimages include belief in God (in a Christian sense) and the practice of traditional rituals. But as Dyas (2020) states "We are fortunate to have many ways of being a pilgrim today. The majority of pilgrims have some form of spiritual

connection with the Way" (p. 8). A pilgrimage with spiritual motives is based on the idea of an unstructured, individual, and transcendental relationship (Frey 2002). Even if, experienced individually, the pilgrimage is a social process that develops interactively over time. Although the majority of pilgrims come from a Christian background, many do not practice their religion in their daily lives, or on the Santiago Way.

Based on these assumptions, in this research paper, we intend to address the issue of religious tourism and pilgrimages to Santiago, studying the Portuguese Central Way and the Coastal Way between Porto and Valença.

We also intend to contextualise the Portuguese Way to Santiago both in historical and cultural terms, analysing statistical data from the Santiago Pilgrim's Office between 2004 and 2022 in various areas, and highlighting religious motivations. We will also analyse the statistical data relating to the five-year period 2018–2022 of the pilgrims who flocked to the Chapel of *Nossa Senhora das Verdades*—Support Centre for Pilgrims on the Portuguese Way to Santiago.

Furthermore, we will triangulate the statistical quantitative data with a thematic analysis of the indicators inherent in the transcripts of semi-structured interviews carried out with stakeholders of the Portuguese Way to Santiago.

This research paper is divided into seven sections. In addition to this introduction, the methods of data collection and analysis adopted will be described. On the other hand, a review of the relevant literature will be carried out, followed by the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the results, their discussion and, finally, in the conclusion, the limits of this study and future research lines will be highlighted.

2. Materials and Methods

Regarding methodology and in view of the elaboration of the historical and theoretical framework, a bibliographic collection and a critical review of the literature on religious and cultural tourism were carried out, with special emphasis on that which relates to the pilgrims' motivations. In this context, few studies were found.

Nevertheless, the empirical contribution of this research is based on a mixed methods approach (Ramseook-Munhurrun and Durbarry 2018). The combination of methods minimises the weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative methods applied in isolation and allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the area under study. Thus, triangulating methods allow multiple methods to be used to study a single research problem. A combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques contributes to more credible and reliable information (Phillimore and Goodson 2004). Triangulation limits personal and methodological bias and increases the fidelity of the study. Mixed methods have the following virtues (Ramseook-Munhurrun and Durbarry 2018, p. 118):

(a) *provide a rich understanding of a phenomenon by combining exploratory, descriptive, and causal research designs;*
(b) *address research questions better than single-method approaches; that is, a mixed-methods approach can simultaneously answer confirmatory and exploratory questions; and*
(c) *allow development and justification of the conceptual model within one study.*

In fact, it is the research question inherent to this article—what are the push motivations that underlie the pilgrimages on the Portuguese roads to Santiago (Martínez-Roget et al. 2015)—that justifies the choice of secondary data analysis and interviews as the primary sources for this study. According to Marujo (2015), the "push" motives act as internal forces that persuade the individual to travel; they concern their internal and emotional sphere.

Thus, we chose to use secondary data that are useful for analysing long-term trends and allow hypotheses to be tested (e.g., there is a relationship between the *touristization* of the Portuguese Way to Santiago and an increase in non-religious motivation).

As De Haro et al. (2016, p. 92) state, "Interviews are used to collect data on motivations, attitudes, feelings, experiences, opinions, mental representations or life stories". Compared to a questionnaire, an interview is more flexible, has less possibility of standardisation, has greater subjectivity, has less structuring in the formulation of questions, and has a more careful choice of participants (De Haro et al. 2016).

The qualitative contribution of this research focuses on the collection and analysis of results from seven interviewees of relevant agents of the Portuguese Way to Santiago whose professional activity focuses on north-western Portugal. The participants were chosen for being experienced pilgrims and for having different connections to the Way, from innkeepers to members of Catholic organisations related to religious tourism to agents of municipal tourism organisations. The interview script contained a relatively small number of key questions, allowing the use of queries to clarify certain topics and deepen certain themes raised by the interviewees (Finn et al. 2000).

The interview script contained a relatively small number of key questions, allowing for the use of probes to clarify certain topics and elaborate on certain themes raised by interviewees (Finn et al. 2000). The people interviewed all have an intense relationship with the Portuguese Way of Saint James. In their capacity as hostel owners, academics, restorers, or simply friends of the Camiño, they carry out their professional activity and their leisure time closely linked to the phenomenon of pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela. Their different professions and occupations constitute a way of approaching the knowledge of the pilgrims' reality from different points of view, based on the performance of their professional tasks. But in addition, each of these people dedicates a good part of their free time to teaching, disseminating, and promoting the Way of Saint James, moved by a vocational force. After any given year, each of these people meets and talks with hundreds and hundreds of pilgrims, which is a kind of continuous participant observation. These people interviewed are, therefore, "intermediaries" between the pilgrims and the researchers since they transmit their experiences, perceptions, and impressions, and code them according to their own professional activity.

The analysis of the interviews followed a thematic analysis (Bryman 2012, p. 580), in which a theme refers to:

(a) *a category identified by the analyst through his/her data;*
(b) *that relates to his/her research focus (and quite possibly the research questions);*
(c) *that builds on codes identified in transcripts and/or field notes; and*
(d) *that provides the researcher with the basis for a theoretical understanding of his or her data that can make a theoretical contribution to the literature relating to the research focus.*

In parallel, the authors developed the analytical study, converting into tables the official statistics obtained by the Pilgrim's Office of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela. This study also presents statistical data collected from 2018 (date of opening of the Our Lady of Truths (*Nossa Senhora das Verdades* Chapel, Pilgrim Support Centre/Portuguese Way to Santiago in Porto) until 2022. Regarding the data presented here, there are certain constraints: (a) in the year 2020, the centre was closed from 18 April until the end of May, due to COVID-19; (b) in late September 2020, rehabilitation works were carried out on the building until 13 October; (c) on 15 January 2021 until 15 April, the chapel was closed due to COVID-19.

3. The Portuguese Way to Santiago: The Evolution of Pilgrimages

Pilgrimages are journeys made, mainly, for religious, cultural, or spiritual reasons. Ian Reader's "Pilgrimage in the Marketplace" (Reader 2014) also includes politics and/or commerce, showing that pilgrimage operates in and through the marketplace via the deployment of consumer activity, publicity, and promotion, usually involving visits to places considered sacred or important to the tradition of a particular religion or culture. They have been a common practice throughout human history, in numerous cultures and religions.

The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela is one of the oldest Christian pilgrimages, captivating thousands of people every year. The destination is the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, in Galicia, Spain, where the tomb of the apostle James the Great is located (López Gómez 2010).

The Way of Santiago was developed around the twelve century when the remains of St. James or Santiago were probably found in Santiago de Compostela (Pombo 2007). Over the centuries, it has increased as well as declined in popularity (Moreno 1992). In recent decades its growth has been exponential, continuing to be seen as a religious path, but also as a spiritual and cultural route. In 1987, it was acknowledged as the First European Cultural Itinerary.

In each Holy Year or Jacobean/Xacobean Year[1], as it is called in Galicia, there is a remarkable increase of pilgrims attracted to this religious and cultural itinerary (Balasch Blanch and Arranz 2013).

The various paths (Figure 1) are generally signposted by directional signalling in yellow arrows, painted everywhere, or by various types of scallop shells produced in diverse materials, as a result of various funding programmes.

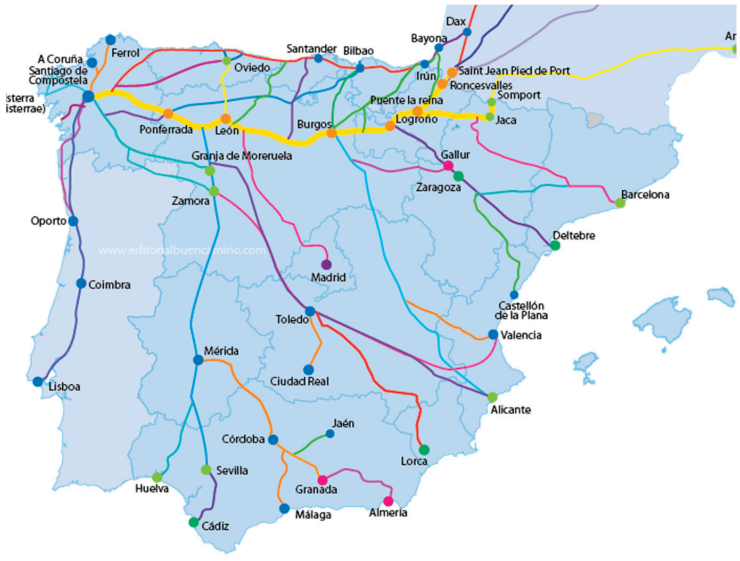


Figure 1. Map of the Ways to Santiago in Southwest Europe. Source: Mapa—Camino de Santiago. Source: Mapa—Camino de Santiago. Guía definitiva: etapas, albergues, rutas (editorialbuencamino.com, accessed on 20 January 2023).

The Portuguese Way is divided, among others, into the Coastal Portuguese Way, the Interior Portuguese Way, and the Central Portuguese Way (Figure 2). The last one is the most travelled route. Beginning in Lisbon, passing through Coimbra, Porto, and ending in the Portuguese territory at Valença do Minho.

It is worth mentioning the importance of the Central Way between Porto/Vila do Conde/Póvoa de Varzim/Barcelos/Ponte de Lima/Paredes de Coura/Valença where other routes merge, reinforcing this path as the most important of the Portuguese roads to Santiago. This route has been in great demand in recent years and is widely seen as being the main Portuguese Medieval or Central Way.

The Central Way starts primarily in Porto and is about 127 km long in Portuguese territory. It is generally a rather rough stretch, making it a rather difficult route to undertake on foot (Silva and Borges 2018).

The Coastal Way, which is 149.5 km long, is a path that starts in Porto and passes through the current municipalities of Matosinhos, Maia, Vila do Conde, Póvoa de Varzim, Esposende, Viana do Castelo, Caminha, Vila Nova de Cerveira and Valença. It is a Way that, until it reaches Galicia, always follows along the coast and the banks of the river Minho. This route is much flatter than the stretch of the Central Portuguese Way between Porto and Valença. As we will verify, it is one of the Ways of Santiago that has been rising in recent years.

There are no consistent statistics regarding the thousands of tourists and visitors, pilgrims or not, who annually travel to Santiago de Compostela by means of motorised transport—bus, car, plane, or train.

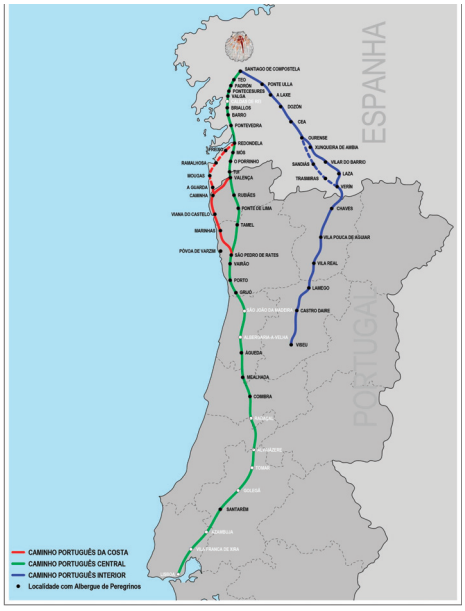


Figure 2. Portuguese Way to Santiago. Source: https://caminhosantiagoviana.pt/ (accessed on 20 January 2023).

The data analysed here exclude the vastness of the population that visits Santiago and its various cultural, religious, and other facilities that characterise the cultural heritage associated with the Ways of Santiago. The statistical data provided by the *Oficina del Peregrino* of the Cathedral only refer to the pilgrims who go there to receive the Compostela, which corresponds to only about a third of the total (Oficina del Peregrino de Santiago de Compostela n.d.).

In the celebrations of each Holy Year, as we can see in Table 1, the number of pilgrims, who have registered in the *Oficina del Peregrino*, has exceeded all expectations. Nevertheless, after the 2010 Holy Year, the growth of pilgrims has been very considerable, and in 2016 (not a Holy Year) exceeded the number of pilgrims who travelled the several routes during Holy Years.

During 2022, the number of pilgrims who arrived in Santiago was even greater than in 2019, the year in which it had reached the highest figures. Given the reduction in the restrictions related to the pandemic by COVID-19, the Xacobean Holy Year, which took place in 2021, was extended to 2022, enabling more pilgrims to enjoy the event already anticipated for 11 years.

Table 1. Evolution of pilgrims in general, pilgrims from the Portuguese Coastal and Central Ways from 2004 to 2022. Source of data: own elaboration from Pilgrim's Office statistics.

Years	Pilgrims All The Ways	Central Way	Coastal Way	Portuguese Ways-Totals
Holy Year 2004	**179,944**	**15,839**	**-**	**15.839**
2005	93,924	5507	-	5.507
2006	100,377	6467	-	6.467
2007	114,026	8110	-	8.110
2008	125,141	9770	-	9.770
2009	145,877	11,956	-	11.956
Holy Year 2010	**272,135**	**34,147**	**-**	**34.147**
2011	183,366	22,062	41 *	22.062
2012	192,488	25,628	177 *	25.628
2013	216,880	29,550	274 *	29.550
2014	237,983	35,501	268 *	35.501
2015	262,516	43,151	399 *	43.151
2016	277,854	49,538	2600	52.138
2017	301,036	59,233	7329	66.562
2018	327,374	67,820	13,839	81.659
2019	347,578	72,357	22,292	94.649
2020	54,134	10,252	2736	12,915
Holy Year 2021	**178,912**	**32,315**	**7813**	**40,128**
Holy Year 2022	**438,000**	**93,193**	**30,609**	**123,802**

Data marked with (*) correspond to starting points recorded by the authors, which geographically correspond to the Portuguese Coastal Way.

Pilgrims from all over the world have walked the dozens of routes that make up the Way, enjoyed the experience and have given back to the Way of Santiago its usual flow, reaching the number of 438,000 pilgrims, which makes 2022 the most successful Holy Year in the history of pilgrimages. Although the Way of Santiago is carried out on any day of any month, there are certain months of the year that continue to receive more pilgrims than others. Specifically, August continues to be the month with the highest number of walkers, with more than 85,000 people in 2022.

As far as the Central Portuguese Way to Santiago is concerned, and focusing on the analysis only of recent years, 2019 also exceeded all expectations. Thus, the Central Way, up to the end of December 2019, had been travelled by 72,357 pilgrims, to which must be added the figures of those who pilgrimaged along the Coastal Way (22,292), making a total of 94,640. Affected by the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in 2020, it recovered in 2021, the Holy Year, exceeding all expectations in 2022, the second Holy Year, having been covered by 123,802 pilgrims.

Regarding the Portuguese Coastal Way, we have managed to count some pilgrims by their geographical place of departure since 2011 (Table 1) but there is only the registration, at the Pilgrims' Office, since 2016 (2600 pilgrims). The number of pilgrims tripled in 2017 (7329), continuing to grow exponentially in 2018, reaching 13,839 pilgrims in 2022, almost six times more than the initial figures.

Portugal represents, at this moment, the second most important source of pilgrims. Even so, most of the walkers are not Portuguese (Figure 3). The number of pilgrims of other nationalities has been growing. Since 2017, Portuguese pilgrims have had a slight reduction compared to previous years, increasing again in 2018.

In 2022, as far as itineraries are concerned, the French Way was travelled the most by pilgrims, with 226,887, followed, as has been usual in recent years, by the Portuguese Way, with 93,193 pilgrims. Its variation closer to the coast—the Portuguese Coastal Way—grew once again, having been covered by 30,609 pilgrims, managing to surpass other routes, such as the English Way, with 24,205 pilgrims, thus placing it as the third most chosen option by pilgrims.

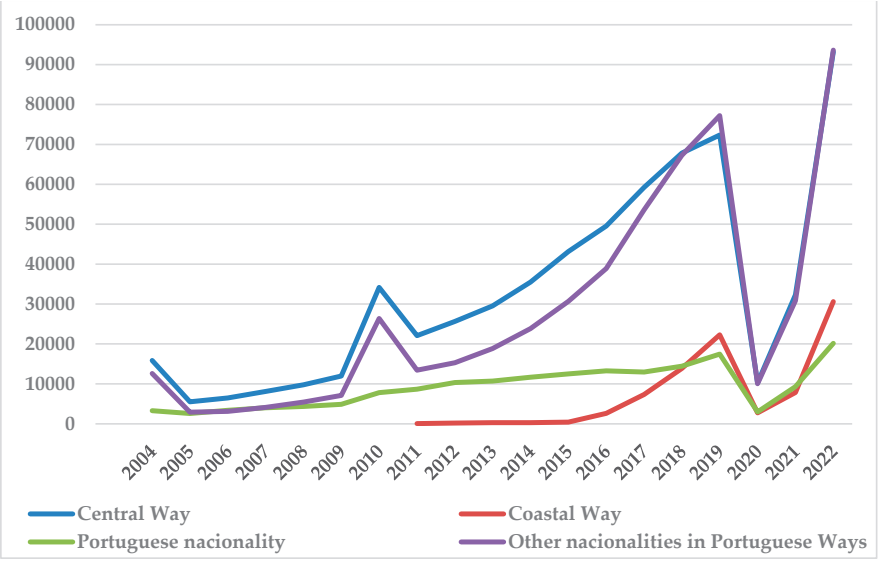


Figure 3. Evolution of the number of pilgrims on the Portuguese Coastal and Central Ways and nationalities (Portuguese and others) between 2004 and 2022. Source: own elaboration from Pilgrim's Office statistics.

Evidently, less travelled paths were also attracting people after 2022, especially the Primitive Way, with 21,360 pilgrims, and the Northern Way, with 20,866 pilgrims.

Regarding the nationalities of the pilgrims, the Way of Santiago is travelled every year by hundreds of thousands of people who come from all over the world. The Spanish nationality is still the most important among pilgrims, with a total of 239,417 in 2022. The United States was the third most represented country, with a total of 26,000 pilgrims. In second place is Italy with 27,078. These countries are followed by Germany and Portugal, with 23,212 and 20,166 pilgrims, respectively.

In the last years, the number of women pilgrims also continues to be higher than that of men. The year 2022 continues to have a very similar percentage of participants by gender. Specifically, a total of 231,461 women, 206,860 men, and 2 persons who did not wish to specify travelled the different paths.

The Way is typically completed on foot. However, it may also be completed by other means recognised as true forms of pilgrimage, such as by bicycle or on horseback. Table 2 shows that the most commonly used means of transport are on foot and bicycle, although there is also some mention of horse and wheelchair transport. There is no information about the means of transport used in each of the itineraries.

In the year 2022, a total of 414,340 pilgrims walked the Way. The second most frequent mode of transport was the bicycle, with a total of 22,863 pilgrims, followed by the horse with 545, and 127 completed it in wheelchairs. The number of "*bicygrims*" has been increasing, which indicates that this way of travelling the different Jacobean routes is becoming more and more common. In the last few years, it has also been considered the route was completed by sea/river, with 448 people.

As already mentioned, the Portuguese Coastal Way has experienced very significant growth in recent years. Given that the city has also had a very significant increase in tourist demand due to several factors, we consider that there is a very close reason for the increase of pilgrims who depart from this city, especially after 2014.

Table 2. Evolution of pilgrims according to the type of transport. Source of data: own elaboration from Pilgrim's Office statistics.

Year	On Foot	Bicycle	Horse	Wheelchair
Holy Year 2004	**156,952**	**21,260**	**1672**	**60**
2005	76,674	16,985	242	23
2006	81,783	18,289	294	11
2007	93,953	19,702	364	7
2008	103,669	21,143	290	39
2009	120,605	24,892	341	39
Holy Year 2010	**237,852**	**32,926**	**1315**	**42**
2011	153,065	29,949	341	11
2012	164,778	27,407	281	22
2013	188,191	26,646	977	66
2014	211,033	25,332	1520	98
2015	236,773	25,346	326	71
2016	254,025	23,347	342	125
2017	278,490	21,933	417	43
2018	305,655	20,774	589	209
2019	327,281	19,563	406	85
2020	49,557	4493	59	12
Holy Year 2021	**158,833**	**10,285**	**167**	**34**
Holy Year 2022	**414,340**	**22,863**	**545**	**127**

The data highlight the idea that the different Santiago Ways have been one of the engines of the economic growth of several regions. The existence of a Santiago route in the territory of a municipality, in any region, increases religious and cultural tourism, but it also increases their obligation to create sustainable conditions for pilgrims and residents.

4. Pilgrimage Motivations

The Way of Santiago is a physical journey that is made with effort, stage by stage. But it is also a spiritual journey, among other reasons, full of teachings and learning, where each person lives the Way in a different manner.

In the Middle Ages and in later times, devotees from all social classes, including royalty, peregrinate almost exclusively for religious reasons to Santiago. Nowadays, we find a considerable percentage of pilgrims and walkers who do not do it only for religious reasons, but for cultural or other motivations.

Although the pilgrims' motivations may vary, we believe that religious motivations, as proven by the statistical data, are still the main ones today.

The motivations of pilgrims to undertake the Santiago Way vary greatly among individuals. Many influences, such as cultural ones, cause people to undertake pilgrimages, and there are as many motives for pilgrimage as there are spiritual or religious needs.

Motivation is "something which commits people to a course of action, i.e., the driving force which exists in all individuals" (Raj et al. 2015, p. 109). Studies have identified different motives for religious tourism and for pilgrimages. Historically, a pilgrim was described as a person who walked to a holy place for religious motives (Rinschede 1992), a traditional pilgrimage conducted with a strong religious motivation (Shinde 2007). But, nowadays, the modern pilgrim is not necessarily motivated by religious reasons (Štefko et al. 2015) and travels for many other reasons (Oviedo et al. 2014).

Frey (1998) conducted an anthropological analysis based on the increase in the number of pilgrims since the 1980s. The author stated that the current pilgrims went to Santiago for several reasons that might change throughout the Way. She differentiated between (1) religious motives (such as the fulfilment of promises, a crisis, the renewal of faith, or praying for others), (2) spiritual motives (personal searches or inner journeys of transformation), and (3) historical and cultural motives combined. Frey, being a pilgrim of the Way, claimed

that pilgrims noted the difference between religious and spiritual motives as well as the difference between orthodoxy and personal devotion.

According to Francisco Singul (1999), there are five main motivations for walking the Santiago Ways: (i) traditional religious (devotion); (ii) cultural (medieval art, history); (iii) ecological (contemplation and enjoyment of the landscape and the natural environment); (iv) spiritual and ecumenic; and (v) personal (meditation on one's life).

For some pilgrims, walking along the Way is a way of getting to know the local culture and learning more about the history and traditions of the region. The various routes pass through several cities and towns with a vast and diverse cultural and historical heritage, which is an important tourist-cultural attraction. Walking along the Way is exciting and challenging for some pilgrims. The routes offer walkers the opportunity to experience different landscapes, terrains, and climates as well as meet people from all over the world.

For Oviedo et al. (2014), walking to Santiago is a way of finding peace, spiritual tranquillity, and spiritual growth. The journey can offer an opportunity for reflection and meditation, time to reflect on possible decision-making and changes in way of life and motivations that have gained ground relative to religious motivations. In fact, many pilgrims walk as a way of challenging themselves and testing their physical and mental limits or overcoming a personal crisis, such as a divorce or the death of a loved one.

The data provided by the Pilgrim's Office compiles only three types of motives: religious, non-religious, and religious and other unspecified. However, they are data that reflect the totality of pilgrims on the different Jacobean routes. We admit that it is possible that these general figures also characterise the motivations of the pilgrims who travelled the Portuguese Way to Santiago in the variants under study.

Analysing the data in the graph (Figure 4), we can quickly conclude that the pilgrimages made for religious or other unspecified motivations between 2004 and 2022, even considered separately, largely exceeded the number of pilgrims who made the Way without religious motivations. However, it is the type "religious or other reasons" that exceeds the other types throughout the 19 years that the statistics record, with two exceptions. These exceptions concern the Holy Years 2004 and 2010, in which the pilgrims' motivations for religious reasons largely exceeded the other comprehensive type of "religious or other motivations", especially in 2004.

In the last two Holy Years—2021 and 2022—there has been a paradigm shift whose motives are hard to find, so even though religious motivation is largely predominant, the overarching type "religious or other motivations" has surpassed stated religious motivations as the sole motive.

It would be necessary for the statistics made available by the Pilgrim's Office to be more detailed in terms of motivations in order to be able to accurately assess what has justified this change of paradigm.

One hypothetical justification has to do with the worldwide publicity that has been given to the Ways of Santiago, which has enabled a significant increase in the number of pilgrims, with different motivations, namely cultural. It also seems to us that this is a consequence of the post-pandemic phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly had an impact on the motivations of pilgrims undertaking the Santiago Way. The contemporary world was unaware of the pandemic situation and had never been restricted from going out, visiting, experiencing new situations, or contacting nature and oneself—in a word, going on a pilgrimage. The uncertainty of the future was distressing. When they had this chance, as well as the recovery of tourism at the world level, the number of pilgrims also increased exponentially, although keeping religious motivations as the priority, others also joined in.

Oviedo et al. (2014) state that, considering the complexity of the pilgrims' motivations, individuals with "various, often contrasting, motivations and expectations walk side by side" (p. 433) on the Santiago Way pilgrimage route.

There is no shortage of reasons to do the Santiago Way, even if it is a challenge for many pilgrims. Whatever the main motivation is, they are all valid because it is a unique

experience. As the journey ends, they are not the same person as at the beginning of the pilgrimage.

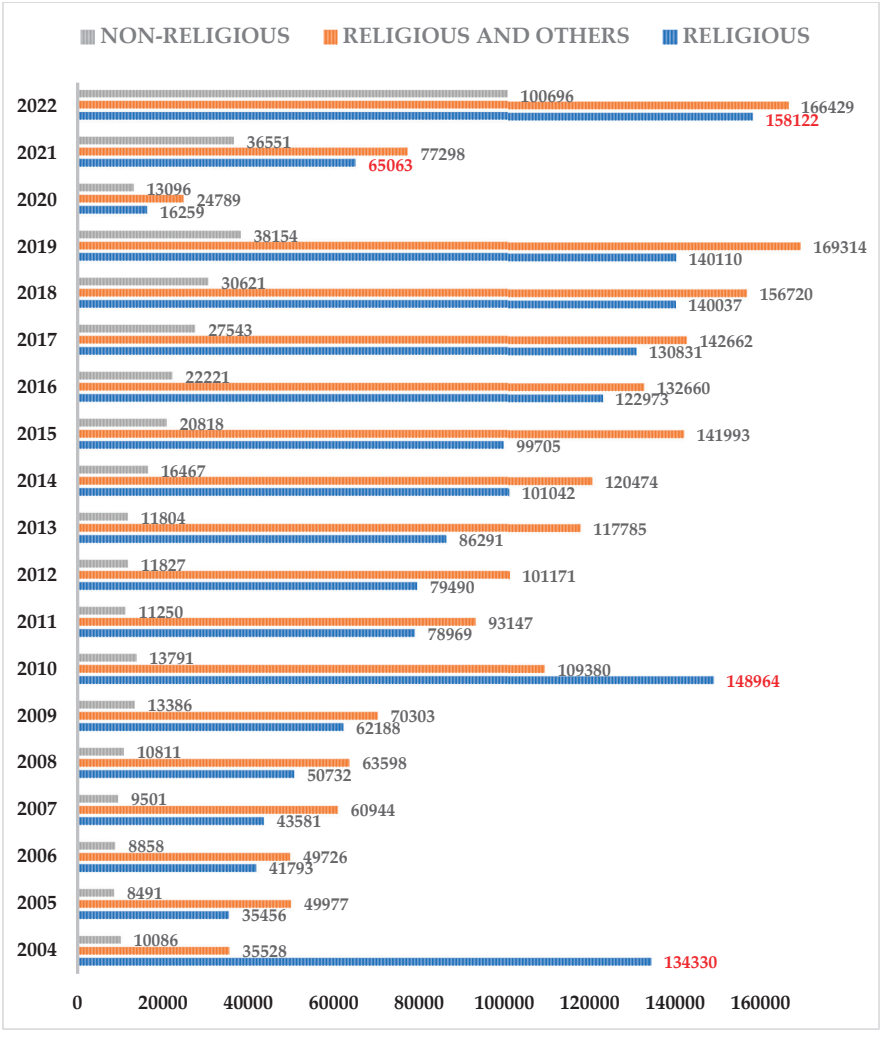


Figure 4. Evolution of pilgrims according to motivations. Source of data: own elaboration from Pilgrim's Office statistics.

5. Driving Factors for Pilgrimage Mentioned by the Interviewees

In an early phase of the *touristization* of the way, from 1993 onwards, one of the interviewees asserts that most pilgrims had religious motivations, namely those associated with the Catholic faith. According to the same participant, nowadays, more than religious factors, what is at the origin of the pilgrimage is the spiritual dimension.

The search for something higher, something inherent to the human being, the discovery of a sign, of self-knowledge, of an answer, is where this spirituality is based, considering that spirituality is a form of contemporary religiosity. This quest may be triggered by diverse factors: individuals (young or not) who are going through a sentimental problem, people who want to change professions, or even individuals who have lost loved ones. In fact, the testimonies of the interviewees corroborate the need to overcome, as already mentioned.

In turn, another interviewee, co-owner of a restaurant where many pilgrims pass, claims that the motivations are divided "half for religious reasons, half for spiritual reasons". Another interviewee, associated with a Catholic religious organisation, claims that the vast majority of pilgrims travel for a "cultural and religious motivation" and a minority for sports. An interviewee belonging to the Department of Culture and Tourism of a municipality through which one of the Portuguese itineraries passes through is of the same opinion: "There is also a sports motivation, and this is clearly also on the rise".

There is, therefore, a tendency for the sports practice and the spiritualities associated with the Way to increase as driving factors of the pilgrimage. Cultural motivation comprises spiritual motivations and is distinguished from "a purely religious dimension of faith". This cultural motivation may also have been triggered by the expansion of low-cost airlines which proliferate at the Francisco Sá Carneiro airport, which serves Porto, but also the whole northern region of Portugal and Galicia in Spain. The dimension of the various spiritualities is an individualist demand that contrasts with a collective vision of pilgrimage.

The pilgrims who move for religious reasons are not necessarily Catholic. The testimonies of the interviewees reveal that the Way is ecumenical, as one interviewee, associated with a Catholic organisation and an experienced pilgrim, says: "We actually find people of all nationalities and some more and people of different religions walking the Way of Santiago".

According to the representative of an institution devoted to the study of the Ways, "human nature has in its nature the desire to go on a pilgrimage", according to this interviewee "it has to do with our desire for transcendence". It follows that pilgrimage is an inherent dimension of the monotheistic religions (and not only...). Muslim, Jewish, Orthodox, and Protestant believers often make the journey, as well as Christian minorities from China and South Korea, or Japanese of monotheistic religion.

One participant in this study, co-owner of a restaurant located near a pilgrimage route, even has "half a dozen scallops without the cross because the Muslims come and don't want a scallop with a cross on it". And as for the Jews, he mentions: "They pass by, they even pass by with the kippah". Another interviewee, vice-president of a Catholic institution, is also emphatic in this regard when he states: "I have never done the Pilgrims' Way to Santiago with people of other religions, but I am perfectly aware that there are Buddhists, Muslims, and Hindus doing the Way to Santiago".

Still, within the Christian confession, the Orthodox and Lutherans also frequent the Way regularly. Otherwise, let us pay attention to what the representative of an institution specialising in the Portuguese Way of Santiago says: "Since 2005, Orthodox, but they were Ukrainian Orthodox, came to us and for many years the director of this pilgrimage was Doctor Iuri, professor at our Physics Faculty here". In what concerns Protestants, he adds: "There are Lutherans and there are those of Dr Pina Cabral, who was an Anglican bishop (...). He was a bishop and very interested in the ways".

An interviewee belonging to the hierarchy of a Catholic religious organisation states that he made the Way of Santiago with agnostics. He says: "I've met, I've crossed paths and I've already made the road to Santiago with people, therefore, agnostics. People without any religion. I have never walked the Camino de Santiago with people of other religions, but I am perfectly aware that there are Buddhists, there are Muslims, there are Hindus doing the one in Santiago. That I don't have the slightest doubt. As there are Catholics who will make Buddhist paths and go to India to do some paths of pilgrimage".

On the other hand, an employee of an Interactive Tourism Shop in a city located near the city of Porto refers to the existence of "secular pilgrimages". According to him, "This goes against the spirit a little bit, not to say that it goes against the spirit a lot, but it already exists". In fact, even among the hosts of the pilgrim hostels, there is the awareness that associating the Way with the Christian religion may drive away "many people that hate the Church, but that is on the Way". According to an official of an association of hostels of the Portuguese Way, the good reception of pilgrims discourages "attaching too much [the Way] to the image of the Church".

The quest on the Way of Santiago, according to the same interviewee, lies more in the journey itself and less in the arrival at the shrine, as happens in Fátima. For the pilgrim to Santiago, "the pleasure is to go, not to arrive", according to this interviewee.

In turn, the interviewee responsible for a Catholic organisation associates the increase in the number of pilgrims on the Portuguese Way, which is clearly visible in the charts and tables mentioned above, with the "overbooking of the French Way".

Since the Compostela is an indulgence, even nowadays the Way may be seen as an alternative to imprisonment due to a crime committed in the pilgrims' region of origin (Shaver-Crandell 1982). The same participant witnessed this phenomenon when he came across a group of inmates from Ourense who were on their way to Santiago as part of "their end-of-year project (...) an activity to make the Way of Santiago". The inmates were travelling during the Holy Year, which according to the same interviewee is a time of "full forgiveness of our sins". In this sense, the pilgrimage is a reaction "to the materialism of the world".

6. The Rehabilitation and Evolution of the Portuguese Coastal Way

In recent years, Portuguese regions have been developing efforts to include several Jacobean routes in their territories, promoting their certification, thus allowing the respective municipalities to stand out in the Portuguese contemporary tourism framework. However, the responsibility of these areas and the respective agents of the territory, namely the municipalities, is increased since they benefit from the potential that the routes offer them, but also require from them. Unfortunately, some of these routes do not have conditions to receive pilgrims, and others have no historical justification for being considered Jacobean routes.

The pilgrims, currently in large increasing numbers, as we mentioned, help to improve the economy of the territories they pass through, also contributing to greater visibility and notoriety of those places. Dissemination is carried out through testimonials or sharing, both in social networks and through the relationship with other pilgrims and with the communities themselves.

They also promote and disseminate not only the routes to Santiago, but also the cultural heritage and, above all, the built religious heritage. Chapels and churches associated with the Portuguese Way have been systematically subject to rehabilitation, restoration, conservation, and enhancement projects.

The most emblematic case is the Portuguese Coastal Way. This Way started to be walked in the 18th century, getting lost in time, but in recent decades, its memory has been forgotten. However, it has recently been rehabilitated, significantly increasing the number of pilgrims that walk it (as we mentioned and as we see in Table 1), after an intense campaign of promotion and the creation of accessibility in its various aspects, because of the union of ten municipalities from Porto to Valença, passing through Matosinhos, Maia, Vila do Conde, Póvoa de Varzim, Esposende, Viana do Castelo, Caminha and Vila Nova de Cerveira. As an integral part of the valorisation project, new signage equipment—directional and informative—was also implemented along the path in order to make it more uniform and fluent in its signalling.

The Portuguese Coastal Way is 149.5 km long and has 462 heritage monuments present in the 10 municipalities through which it passes. The 51 places of religious worship, churches, and chapels that we studied in terms of accessibility have been improved. At the beginning of the path, in Porto, the *Nossa Senhora das Verdades* Chapel was adapted to become the Interpretation Centre for Pilgrims of the Coastal Way. The creation of this interpretation centre helped to rehabilitate and give new use to a ruined architectural structure, now with new functionality and usefulness. In the chart in Figure 5, we can observe the evolution in the number of pilgrims according to the chosen variant of the Portuguese Way.

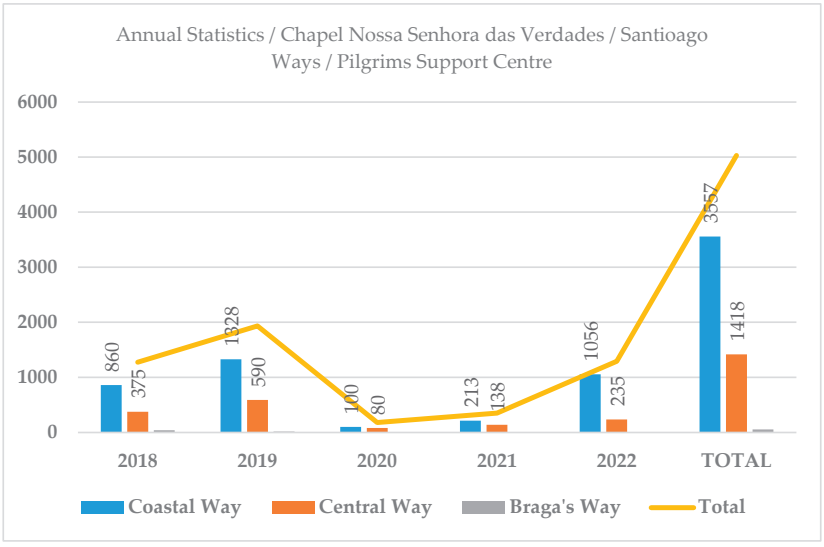


Figure 5. Evolution of the number of pilgrims according to the chosen route variations from 2018 to 2022. Source of data: Municipal Department of Cultural Heritage Management of Porto.

From the analysis of the chart in Figure 5, we can infer that the steady increase in the number of pilgrims between 2018–2022 was only interrupted by COVID-19. When the effects of the pandemic began to be overcome, the influx of tourists registered an exponential increase. There is also a predominance of the Coastal Way in all the years of the interval. These numbers differ from the statistics presented in Table 1. The demand for the Coastal Way is based on the presence of the sea, which is probably one of the pull factors for a pilgrim who does not have a purely religious motivation but a spiritual or even non-religious one. By "pull", we refer to the attractiveness of the destination (Martínez-Roget et al. 2015; Marujo 2015).

7. Conclusions

The present study sought to answer the research problem of knowing whether religious motivations still constitute the main push factors of pilgrims on the Santiago Way. The analysis of the secondary data from the Pilgrim's Office made it possible to highlight the predominance of purely religious motivations. Although there is a prevalence of religion, there is a clear tendency for motivations of a cultural, spiritual, and sports nature to gain relevance. This same perception was expressed in the testimonies of the seven stakeholders of the Portuguese Way who were the subject of the interview.

The result of the interviews also underlined the ecumenical role of the Portuguese Way of Santiago, travelled by many different pilgrims of different religions whose motivation is, above all, a spiritual character.

The emergence of "turigrims" and "bicygrims", detected in the extant literature, is supported by the quantitative and qualitative data collected. Nevertheless, religious motivations still constitute the main motive of the Jacobean pilgrimages originating in Portugal.

This study has some limitations. Firstly, the fact that many pilgrims who go to Santiago do not go to the Pilgrim's Office to receive the Compostela, which increases the authenticity of the sample. This circumstance may also influence the data collected at the *Verdades* Chapel. In relation to the qualitative data, more than 10 h of interview recordings were garnered. All of them have given rise to extensive research material which, without a doubt, will allow this investigation to continue in subsequent articles.

In any case, the qualitative data present some novelties regarding the ecumenical nature of the way and even the emergence of lay pilgrimages.

Another noteworthy aspect is the fact that the data from the Pilgrim's Office and the *Verdades* Chapel do not coincide regarding the variants of the route chosen by the pilgrims. Here we can see a preponderance of the Coastal Way, which contradicts the data from the Pilgrim's Office, where the Central Way is hegemonic.

Future research could try to explain this apparent incongruence and find out how statistics are being collected and how they can be more faithful to the motivations of the universe of pilgrims who come to Santiago de Compostela.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, F.M.S., J.L.B., M.P.O. and I.B.; methodology, F.M.S. and J.L.B.; formal analysis, F.M.S., J.L.B., M.P.O. and I.B.; investigation, F.M.S., J.L.B., M.P.O. and I.B.; data curation, F.M.S. and J.L.B.; writing—original draft preparation, F.M.S., J.L.B., M.P.O. and I.B.; writing—review and editing, F.M.S., J.L.B., M.P.O. and I.B. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest. The citizens interviewed have given their consent for their opinions to be made public, however, we have chosen to preserve their identity or to specify which institution they belong to.

Note

[1] Holy Years occur when the 25th of July (Santiago's Day), corresponds with a Sunday. The year 2021 was a Jacobean/Xacobean Year, however, given the Covid-19 pandemic, Pope Francis has also declared 2022 a Holy Year.

References

Amaro, Suzanne, Angela Antunes, and Carla Henriques. 2018. A closer look to Santiago de Compostela's pilgrims through the lens of motivations. *Tourism Management* 64: 271–80. [CrossRef]

Balasch Blanch, Enric, and Yolanda Ruiz Arranz. 2013. *Atlas Ilustrado del Camino de Santiago*. Santiago de Compostela: Editorial Susaeta.

Bryman, Alan. 2012. *Social Research Methods*, 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Carlson, Neil, and Neil Martin. 1999. *Psychology: The Science of Behaviour*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Cavanagh, Gerald, Bradley Hanson, Kirk Hanson, and Juan Hinojoso. 2001. Business Leadership and Spirituality. In *Bridging the Gap: Spirituality and Business*. Edited by A. L. Delbecq and J. J. McGee. Santa Clara: Santa Clara University.

De Haro, Fernando, Joana Serafim, Jorge Cobra, Liliana Faria, Maria Isabel Roque, Miguel Ramos, Paula Carvalho, and Raquel Costa. 2016. *Investigação em Ciências Sociais: Guia Prático do Estudante*. Lisboa: Pactor—Edições de Ciências Sociais Forenses e da Educação.

Di Giovine, Michael, and John Elsner. 2016. Pilgrimage tourism. In *Encyclopedia of Tourism*, 2nd ed. Edited by Jafar Jafari and Honggen Xiao. New York: Springer, pp. 722–24.

Dyas, Dee. 2020. Pilgrimage: Not All Rucksack and Hiking Boots. Church Times. Available online: https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/23-october/features/features/pilgrimage-not-all-rucksack-and-hiking-boots (accessed on 15 November 2022).

Finn, Mick, Martin Elliott-White, and Mike Walton. 2000. *Tourism and Leisure Research Methods: Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Frey, Nancy. 1998. *Pilgrim Stories: On and off the Road to Santiago: Journeys along an ancient way in modern Spain*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Frey, Nancy. 2002. *Santiagopilger unterwegs und danach*. Volkach/Main: Manfred Zentgraf.

Gil de Arriba, Carmen. 2006. Turismo religioso y el valor sagrado de los lugares: Simbología identitaria y patrimonialización del Monasterio de Santo Toribio de Liébana (Cantabria). *Cuadernos de Turismo* 18: 77–102.

Griffin, Kevin, and Razaq Raj. 2017. The Importance of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage: Reflecting on definitions, motives and data. *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 5: 1–9. [CrossRef]

Guillory, William. 2000. *The Living Organization: Spirituality in the Workplace*. Salt Lake City: Innovations International Inc.

Haab, Barbara. 1998. Weg und Wandlung. Zur Spiritualität heutiger Jakobspilger und -pilgerinnen. Doctoral dissertation, Zürich University, Freiburg, Schweiz.

Lois-González, Rubén, and Xosé Manuel Santos. 2015. Tourism and pilgrims on their way to Santiago. Motives, caminos and final destinations. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 13: 149–64. [CrossRef]
López Gómez, Juan Carlos. 2010. *Las Peregrinaciones Jacobeas*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
Martínez-Roget, Fidel, José Alberto Tavares Moutela, and Juan Carlos Estévez Núñez. 2015. Chaves do êxito do Turismo em Espaço Rural (TER): Evidências a partir da lealdade turística na Rede das Aldeias de Xisto. *Revista Portuguesa de Estudos Regionais* 36: 65–81, Ed. 40. [CrossRef]
Marujo, Noemi. 2015. *Turismo, Turistas e Eventos: Da Teoria à Prática*. Castelo Branco: RVJ—Editores, Lda.
Moreno, Humberto Baquero. 1992. As Peregrinações a Santiago e as Relações Entre o Norte de Portugal e a Galiza. In *I Congresso Internacional dos Caminhos Portugueses a Santiago de Compostela*. Lisboa: Editorial Távola Redonda, pp. 75–82.
Oficina del Peregrino de Santiago de Compostela. 2004 to 2022. n.d. Available online: https://oficinadelperegrino.com/estadisticas/ (accessed on 25 July 2023).
Oviedo, Luis, Scarlett de Courcier, and Miguel Farias. 2014. Rise of Pilgrims on the Camino to Santiago: Sign of Change or Religious Revival? *Review of Religious Research* 56: 433–42. [CrossRef]
Phillimore, Jenny, and Lisa Goodson, eds. 2004. *Qualitative Research in Tourism: Ontologies Epistemologies and Methodologies*. Abigdon: Routledge.
Pombo, Antón. 2007. *Guia del Camino de Santiago*. Madrid: Grupo Anaya.
Raj, Razaq, Kevin Griffin, and Robert Blackwell. 2015. Motivations for Religious Tourism, Pilgrimage, Festivals and Events. In *Religious tourism and Pilgrimage Management: An International Perspective*, 2nd ed. Edited by Razaq Raj and Griffin Kevin. Wallingford: CABI, pp. 103–17.
Ramseook-Munhurrun, Prabha, and Ramesh Durbarry. 2018. Mixed methods and triangulation. In *Research Methods for Tourism Students*. Edited by Ramesh Durbarry. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 114–20.
Reader, Ian. 2014. *Pilgrimage in the Marketplace*. London: Routledge.
Rinschede, Gisbert. 1992. Forms of religious tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research* 19: 51–67. [CrossRef]
Robles, Javier. 2001. Turismo Religioso. Alternativa de Apoyo a la Preservación del Patrimonio y Desarrollo. *Revista Bibliográfica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*. 316, 8 de octubre de 2021. Available online: https://www.ub.edu/geocrit/b3w-316.htm (accessed on 25 July 2023).
Shaver-Crandell, Annie. 1982. *The Middle Ages*. Cambridge Introduction to the History of Art Series; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, vol. 2.
Shinde, Kiran. 2007. Case study 6: Visiting sacred sites in India: Religious tourism or pilgrimage? In *Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Management: International Perspective*. Edited by Razaq Raj and Nigel Morpeth. Reading: CABI, pp. 184–97.
Silva, Maria de Fátima Matos, and Isabel Borges. 2018. Religious Tourism and Pilgrimages in the Central Portuguese Way to Santiago and the Issue of Accessibility. In *Handbook of Research on Socio-Economic Impacts of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*. Hershey: IGI Global, pp. 375–95.
Singul, Francisco. 1999. *O Caminho de Santiago: A Peregrinação Ocidental na Idade Média*. Rio de Janeiro: Editorial da UERJ.
Štefko, Róbert, Alžbeta Királ'ová, and Martin Mudrík. 2015. Strategic Marketing Communication in Pilgrimage Tourism. *Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences* 175: 423–30. [CrossRef]
UNWTO. 1995. Report on Implementation of the Organization's General Programme of Work for the Period 1994–1995—A/11/10: UNWTO General Assembly Documents: Vol 1995, No 1. Available online: e-unwto.org (accessed on 15 March 2023).
Vázquez de la Torre, María, Emilio Morales Fernández, and Leonor Pérez Naranjo. 2010. Turismo Religioso: Estudio del Camino de Santiago. *Gestión Turística*, 9–37.
Zapponi, Elena. 2010. Le pelèrinage vers Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle. *In Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 149: 73–87. [CrossRef]

religions

MDPI

Article

Cross-Cultural Encounters: Religious Motifs in Lattimo Glass from China to Italy

Xue Gong [1,*], Zhongqu Xie [2,3], Xiangyu Liu [1] and Bianca De Divitiis [4]

[1] School of Design, Jiangnan University, Wuxi 214000, China
[2] School of Mechanical Engineering, Nanjing University of Science and Technology, Nanjing 210000, China
[3] School of Mechanical Engineering, Southeast University, Nanjing 210000, China
[4] School of Humanities, Federico II University, 80100 Naples, Italy
* Correspondence: gongxueapril@gmail.com

Abstract: This paper focuses on lattimo glass, also known as milk glass, and analyzes the influence of Chinese porcelain on its creation in Venice through the study of its transmission path and revival. It also explores the role of religion in the glass trade between China and Italy from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, with a particular focus on religious iconography. By relying on previous research on the religious iconography of glass during this period and analyzing precious glass objects, this paper aims to examine the brief popularity and decline of lattimo glass as an imitation of Chinese Ming porcelain in the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries, as well as the significance and impact of religious iconography on lattimo glass during the eighteenth century. The paper approaches the process of the introduction of Chinese aesthetics in Europe during this period from three angles: the origin of lattimo glass, the cross-media imitation and innovation of Chinese religious iconography, and cultural interaction. This process highlights the crucial role of influential religious imagery in the formation of cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: lattimo glass; cross-cultural design; Venice; porcelain; Chinoiserie

Citation: Gong, Xue, Zhongqu Xie, Xiangyu Liu, and Bianca De Divitiis. 2023. Cross-Cultural Encounters: Religious Motifs in Lattimo Glass from China to Italy. *Religions* 14: 932. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14070932

Academic Editors: Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges and Helena Albuquerque

Received: 20 June 2023
Revised: 14 July 2023
Accepted: 15 July 2023
Published: 19 July 2023

1. Introduction

The production of lattimo glass, also known as porcellana or milk glass, in Venice during the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries is an intriguing subject that reflects the cross-cultural encounters between China and Italy. The term "lattimo" is of Italian origin, and Luigi Zecchin has traced its use back to the 14th century in the Latinized form "attimum" in his research (Zecchin 1963). The compositional ingredients of "attimum" were essentially the same as those of "lattimo". It was achieved by incorporating tin oxide crystals (cassiterite) to render the glass opaque or milky white (Verità 2021). While organizing visual materials on lattimo glass, it was observed that the decorative patterns of lattimo exhibit exotic characteristics.

To achieve this research objective, the paper adopts a multidisciplinary approach that incorporates historical analysis, art object analysis, comparative studies, and cross-cultural investigations. In previous studies, the interaction of Chinese and Italian glass has sparked much discussion. Firstly, there is much research on the people who contributed to this exchange of glass in a specific period, such as improvements to lattimo by Angelo Barovier in 1450 (Dorigato 1993; Francis 2008; Koleini et al. 2019; Zecchin 2020), and the use of glass within royal houses, both Eastern and Western, as a diplomatic gift (Curtis 2017, p. 14; Sun et al. 1997, vol. 1, p. 1261). Secondly, the significance of religious factors in cross-cultural contexts has been highlighted (Boyer and Ramble 2001). Thirdly, there was keen interest among academics in how the eighteenth-century re-innovation of lattimo glass in Venice (Haden 1976) challenged conventional glassmaking techniques and influenced the development of Chinese porcelain (Wood 1999). The reasons behind this cross-cultural design phenomenon relate to Chinese emperors (Hardie 2000), trade exchanges (Koleini et al.

2019), glass markets, and technological progress (Ricciardi et al. 2009). Additionally, the comparative study of porcelain and glass is also noteworthy (Burty 1869; Knothe 2010). A comparative study between porcelain and glass highlights the distinctive features and potential connections between these two mediums (Zhang 1730, pp. 139–47). Scholar Yang has studied Western influences on Qing glass in China in the eighteenth century (Yang 1983), the interaction of Eastern and Western porcelain and glass culture, and the chemical composition of Qing Dynasty glass (Yang 1990). In addition, other scholars have also addressed the dissemination of Western artifacts to China (Qisheng and Fengwen 1999), the incorporation of Western elements (Lu 2012) and influences (Curtis 1993) in Chinoiserie porcelain, and the adoption of Chinoiserie art styles (Impey 1977). However, the religious implications of lattimo glass in cross-cultural design, particularly its imitation of Chinese porcelain from the mid-15th century to the 18th century in China, have received little attention from the academic community.

This study involves a comprehensive investigation of cultural encounters and the circulation of goods, individuals, and information. It analyzes conventional printed sources, such as early travel writing from Western ministers, as well as collections of glass from museums. Data from these moderately well-known sources are supplemented with cross-cultural materials accumulated from the lattimo glass created by the Miotti family in Venice from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, and the few eighteenth-century Chinese chronicles containing descriptions of glass products utilized for exchange and cross-cultural trade with locals in China. This special collection sheds light on the relations between early Italian crafts and the cross-cultural design of China. In a bigger sense, it is conducive to better communication between the two societies.

Therefore, this paper aims to explore the influence of Chinese porcelain on the creation and development of lattimo glass, particularly focusing on the role of religious motifs in the glass trade between these two regions. Firstly, it examines the dissemination routes and revival of lattimo glass, along with the influence of Chinese porcelain on the creation and development of Venetian glass, with a specific emphasis on the role of religious motifs in the glass trade between these regions. Secondly, it investigates the imitation and innovation of religious iconography in lattimo glass, particularly during the mid-15th century to the early 16th century, reflecting Italy's interest in and emulation of Chinese porcelain through its religious decorative patterns. Lastly, this study examines the relationship between religious imagery on 18th-century Venetian glass and glassware from the Qing Dynasty in China. This study, employing a multidisciplinary approach and utilizing diverse sources, contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the cross-cultural dynamics and visual significance of religious motifs in lattimo glass as decorative elements.

2. Imitation of Chinese Porcelain: Historical Interactions of Lattimo Glass

Glass patterns, as a 'recognizable system of knowledge' (Pevsner 1964, p. 79), are craft objects influenced by different regional religions, cultures, and aesthetics in specific eras. The analysis of religious patterns in lattimo glass from a cross-cultural perspective is a revalidation of aesthetic capabilities in different regions and an effective means to examine the changes in artisanal aesthetics (Janson 1977). There is no doubt that cultural exchange between Italy and China is a highly complex issue. Glass, as a material and one of the most diverse mediums in terms of design methods and craftsmanship, vividly illustrates the role of religion in cross-cultural artistic aesthetic transformations during specific periods.

Specifically, the history of glass reflects its cross-cultural significance. Glass formed a long-distance exchange network culture as early as 1400–1100 BCE in the Mediterranean and the Nordic Bronze Age. Since the thirteenth century (Dwairy 2015, p. 73), Venice has been known worldwide for its ornate glasswork, with a multitude of glass-making factories gathered on Murano Island leading glass innovation and design. According to the latest explanation given by (Verità 2021), the applications of lattimo were relatively limited until the mid-fifteenth century as it was applied to enamels, mosaics tesserae, or blown glass. Subsequently, around 1450, the Murano glassmaker Angelo Barovier made

improvements to the design (Zecchin 1989). In the middle of the 15th century, the brothers Jacobo and Bono d'Angelo became the first producers of lattimo glass (Mentasti 1982, p. 50).

In addition, during this period, the Chinoiserie style, representing the influence of Chinese aesthetics, permeated into Europe, sparking a craze for its unique characteristics. For instance, Chinese porcelain gained immense popularity among European nobility. The popularity of Chinese porcelain in Europe during that time can be attributed to two main factors. Firstly, Europe had not yet mastered the key techniques required to produce such ceramics. Secondly, Europeans found the exotic aesthetic style of Chinese porcelain intriguing. The decorative patterns, colors, and shapes of Chinese porcelain were significant components of the distinctive Eastern style. Within the decorative patterns of Chinese porcelain, various symbols with Eastern religious significance were incorporated, which later became defining features of the Chinese aesthetic. These symbols were widely embraced throughout Europe.

Therefore, under the influence of this Chinoiserie style, lattimo glass gradually adopted its distinct opaque white appearance, with its production techniques gradually evolving towards those employed in Chinese porcelain. The lattimo glass was employed in the production of opulent blown glassware embellished with gilding and enamel (Clarke 1974). From the end of the fifteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth century, the number of records of lattimo glass grew: a vague record of "uno marsoretto de lactimo schietto" from 1496 (Levi 1895, p. 21), the lattimo work by Giovanni di Giorgio Ballarin in 1511 (Levi 1895, p. 28), a list of lattimo glass made by Ballarin in 1512 (Levi 1895, pp. 47–48), etc. Therefore, researchers can find that the manufacture of lattimo glass, gold decorations, and enamel objects reached a new height in the sixteenth century (Jo Wheeler 2010). In the sixteenth century, glass was adopted as an exquisite utensil that could be given as gifts by royal families in both the East and West. This practice facilitated the exchange of glass recipes and decorative patterns. However, the later collapse of the Republic of Venice in 1797 caused even greater difficulties for Murano's glass manufacturing industry (Alaoui et al. 2007), whereupon lattimo glass gradually became a rare item. Later, lattimo glassmaking was taken over by the Miotti and Bertolini families (Charleston 1990), who had been active in the eighteenth century. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as a result of the exchange between the East and West, the production of lattimo glass was influenced by Chinese porcelain, leading to its resurgence in popularity (Fuga 2006). This revival brought about advancements in technology and the emergence of new style patterns, making a remarkable impact on the history of cross-cultural design. Design culture and its historical significance were interpreted as innovative and cross-cultural entities, with their distinctive features transmitted through material objects such as lattimo glass.

Specifically, regarding the patterns of lattimo glass as a cross-cultural material medium, its interaction with motifs containing religious elements is primarily influenced by trade factors. The trade between the East and West can be traced back to the sixth century, when 38 Chinese potters sold their products to Japan, South Korea, and Southeast Asia together with tea and spices (Gleeson 1998) before the Chinese Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) further expanded on the maritime trade exchanges of the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) and began to produce Chinese export porcelain for the European market (Smith 2003). After this long period of cross-cultural artistic and technical exchange, Chinese porcelain entered European countries such as Italy as a commodity (Whitehouse 1972). One of the earliest records of Chinese porcelain owned by Venetians is a bochal de porzelane (bowl of porcelain) listed as belonging to the painter Jacobello del Fiore in 1439 (Alaoui et al. 2007, p. 265). Records also survive (Wilhelm 1879, vol. II, p. 230) of 30 pieces of Ming porcelain owned by Doge Francesco Foscarini in 1442. Therefore, from the mid-fifteenth century, lattimo glass opened the prologue to the interaction between China and Italy.

In the 16th century, Chinese porcelain sparked a Chinoiserie aesthetic trend in Europe. The exquisite craftsmanship of Ming Dynasty porcelain garnered great admiration from the European nobility (Chen 1964). When Chinese porcelain became available in European shops in 1580 (Hyde 1994, p. 49), it was regarded as a rare and precious luxury

item. The Medici family (1549–1609) in Italy collected a large amount of Chinese porcelain and gave it to the Dresden court as a precious gift (Eva Ströber 2006). Moreover, the French royal family, Spanish aristocrats, and several titled Europeans at that time began acquiring Chinese porcelain as a symbol of status and wealth (Lane 1961). Meanwhile, court members and wealthy businessmen encouraged Italian glass manufacturers to trade in Europe in the sixteenth century. The presence of Chinese porcelain in Venice encouraged the development of lattimo. Many Venetian glass families such as the Fratelli Toso, Salviati, and Miotti families began to show technological innovations in glassmaking, and Venice became a major European market at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Venetian glassware and maiolica began to imitate Chinoiserie styles in order to meet the needs of the market. In the early sixteenth century, Venice created Venetian alla porcellana majolica to imitate Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, which was bought by the Nuremberg and Augsburg families (Bortolotto 1981, p. 64), while Andreas Imhof commissioned Venetian alla porcellana majolica for his wedding (Lessmann 2004, pp. 236–64). More and more orders from Europe for Chinese porcelain were made during the sixteenth century, which made it appear even more rare and valuable. In addition, as a transit point for trade between the East and West, Venice began to imitate Chinese porcelain frequently, from maiolica to glass. Therefore, this love of Chinese porcelain and trade policies that encouraged innovation indirectly affected the imitation of Ming porcelain in lattimo glass. Then, as a substitute for Ming porcelain, lattimo glass began to appear as dinner utensils or gifts (Curtis 2017, p. 15). Cross-cultural creation is the process by which artists understand and recreate a specific artistic style in a specific social context, and this kind of innovation in glassware, incorporating different cultural backgrounds, is a reflection of the gradual independence of design from arts and crafts.

During the 17th century, the decorative patterns of glassware produced in Venice featured a significant presence of designs incorporating religious elements or Chinese-inspired styles, primarily influenced by the aesthetic styles of the Meissen porcelain factory and Sèvres porcelain factory. During this period, some factories in Europe gradually mastered the crucial recipe for producing porcelain and began imitating Chinese porcelain. These renowned ceramic factories enjoyed a prestigious reputation in the field of ceramic manufacturing. On the one hand, both the Meissen and Sèvres factories were inclined to incorporate religious elements, such as mythological figures and scenes from Apollo mythology, into their decorative patterns. On the other hand, these factories mass-produced Chinese-inspired porcelain or glassware, imitating Chinese ceramics in terms of decoration and technical aspects. Many of their designs incorporated elements of Chinese culture, such as flowers, birds, and figures. The aesthetic styles and techniques employed by these ceramic factories greatly influenced the emergence of religious-themed patterns in Venetian glassware, resulting in a closer resemblance between Venetian glassware and ceramic products in terms of decoration and artistic expression. Lattimo glass, as a synthesis of technology and cross-cultural art, embodies both Eastern aesthetic significance and technical expertise. Through technical emulation of decorative patterns found in Eastern art, lattimo glass demonstrates a pure acknowledgement of Chinese aesthetics. These Chinese-inspired decorative patterns often carry religious connotations in China and serve as material manifestations of the dissemination of Chinese religious elements in Europe. During this period, China was primarily influenced by Taoism and Buddhism, which frequently resulted in the presence of symbolic motifs such as birds and lotus flowers in porcelain decorations, representing purity, auspiciousness, and religious symbolism. From a cross-cultural perspective, Chinese porcelain emerged as a luxury commodity in the European market, which facilitated the imitation of Chinese porcelain by lattimo glass at the level of commercial trade (Tonini 2007). In this process of imitation, the religious elements present in Chinese porcelain were also emulated in lattimo glass. This imitation primarily served aesthetic purposes rather than religious intentions. The diversity of artistic aesthetics evoked European appreciation for exotic religious aesthetics and subsequently con-

tributed to the incorporation of Chinese religious elements in the decorative patterns of lattimo glass.

The revelation of Chinese components in lattimo glass drove a movement away from an emphasis on production towards a concern with exchange interaction, from considering the role of objects inside individual societies towards a consideration of their development between societies. The link between the image of the artifact and the objective bio-psycho-social layer is two-way (Dwairy 2015, p. 73). As lattimo glass crosses social boundaries, it is coordinated into new collections, adjusted to specific settings, and altered by those who use them, reflecting how traded objects are appropriated things. Cross-cultural design interaction is not a single historical issue but the coming together of a specific era, market, aesthetic, culture, and design style.

3. Mimicry and Innovation: Depicting Religious Motifs in Lattimo Glass

Lattimo glass starts to imitate the religious patterns of Eastern porcelain in a Europeanized fashion. It is an interesting phenomenon to imitate through different materials. Despite the evident differences between Eastern and Western religions at the time, religious motifs served as exotic decorative elements that were widely disseminated in cross-cultural contexts through the medium of color and pattern. This cross-cultural interaction greatly influenced the aesthetic tendencies of European craftsmen, who were deeply inspired by Chinese decorative styles.

Chinoiserie porcelain represented exotic social artifacts, acquired through trade and brought from distant lands by European voyagers. During the historical interactions of lattimo glass as an imitation of Chinese porcelain, the popularity of Ming porcelain, especially blue-and-white porcelain, grew rapidly in Europe. Portuguese traders were among the first to introduce these exquisite porcelain wares from China to various parts of Europe in the early sixteenth century, and later, the Dutch further expanded East-West trade from 1602. The allure of Chinese aesthetics and cultural features, combined with the curiosity of European aristocrats and collectors, gradually led to the rise of the Chinoiserie style in the eighteenth century (Honour 1962, p. 83). In the 18th century, the exoticism of Chinese aesthetics and cultural features had a profound impact on the aesthetic preferences of Europe through the extensive export of items such as ceramics, silk, and wall hangings, leading to a heightened interest in exotic styles (Porter 2010, p. 35).

Specifically, there exists a certain relationship between the innovation of religious motifs in lattimo glass and Chinese religious culture (Curtis 2017, p. 16). During the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties (1271–1912), Chinese porcelain decoration was popular, using colored motifs on white porcelain bodies (Su 2005). The colored motifs of that period included blue and white underglaze (*you xia qing hua* 釉下青花), red underglaze (*you li hong* 釉裏紅), and contrasting colors (*dou cai* 鬥彩). Kublai Khan, the khagan of the Yuan Dynasty, especially liked red, white, and cyan colors, and a large number of white porcelains have been found in the remains of kiln sites from the Yuan Dynasty. The recipe for white porcelain includes 0.1% lead oxide (PbO) and 26.46% aluminum oxide (Al_2O_3) in its glaze (Zhao 1986). According to (Zhao 1986), this is a kind of white porcelain similar to glass, called white-colored glaze (*liu li* 琉璃) during the Yuan Dynasty. During the Yuan Dynasty, the rulers of the Mongol Empire embraced Tibetan Buddhism as their religion, and the preference of Emperor Kublai Khan for red, white, and blue colors was influenced by religious factors. In Tibetan Buddhism, the color white symbolizes purity, clarity, and flawlessness, representing compassion and wisdom in Buddhist beliefs. The color blue symbolizes the power, steadfastness, and tranquility of Buddhism. According to Buddhist doctrines, red signifies the wisdom and strength of the Buddha, as well as the compassion and motivation inherent in the Buddhist faith. Therefore, under the influence of his religious beliefs, Emperor Kublai Khan tended to favor red, white, and blue colors, applying them in art, court decorations, and religious rituals. This preference also reflected the close connection and cultural exchange between the Mongol Empire and Tibetan Buddhism at that time. With the beginning of overseas trade in the Yuan Dynasty, Jingde Town (*jingdezhen* 景德鎮)

kilns began to produce porcelain for export to meet European demand (Wang 1981). The religious aesthetic of the Yuan Dynasty was also conveyed to Europe as a symbolic vehicle through the exportation of porcelain. After that, with the frequent trade during the Ming Dynasty, white porcelain with Chinoiserie aesthetics was continuously exported to Europe and other places. The Chinese-style religious aesthetic style persists. According to records, the number of pieces of Chinese porcelain trafficked by the Dutch East India Company alone reached about 150,000 between 1602 and 1682 (Chen 1997). Therefore, the effect of imitating white porcelain with lattimo glass may have a certain connection with China's preference for white porcelain, meaning Eastern and Western motifs begin to appear exotic.

The connection between the different materials can be found by comparing (Figure 1) the Chinoiserie motifs of lattimo glass in the early sixteenth century with red underglaze (*you li hong* 釉裏紅) porcelain from the Ming Dynasty.

(**A-1**) (**A-2**)

Figure 1. Comparison of lattimo glass and red underglaze (you li hong) porcelain: (**A-1**) Small Vase with a Scene of Apollo and Cyparissus' Story (1500–1510), No.F. 468, Italy, Murano, lattimo glass, H.20 cm, the State Hermitage Museum, courtesy of the State Hermitage Museum; (**A-2**) red underglaze spring vase with lotus pattern jade pot (you li hong chan zhi lian wen yu hu chun ping) (1368), Ming dynasty, China, red underglaze porcelain, H.32.5 cm. the Palace Museum, courtesy of the Palace Museum.

The lattimo pilgrim flask (A-1 in Figure 1) has completely different motifs on the front and back, with the obverse depicting the story of Apollo and Cyparissus. The lattimo pilgrim flask is a typical glass vessel that combines Chinese Buddhist ideas with ancient Greek religious concepts in Europe. According to (Clarke 1974), the motif on the obverse is very similar to a print by Benedetto Montagna (1480–1541) in Italy. The motif of Apollo and Cyparissus on the lattimo pilgrim flask emphasizes the themes of love, loss, and the transformative power of gods in Greek mythology. Furthermore, the motif on the reverse side (A-2 in Figure 1) bears a closer resemblance to an extended representation of Chinese Buddhist motifs. The flowers and leaves of the lattimo motif are decorated with red enamel instead of the blue and white of the porcelain often found in the East–West trade. This imitation of red enamel connects it to red underglaze (*you li hong* 釉裏紅) porcelain.

The red underglaze (*you li hong* 釉裏紅) porcelain was invented during the Yuan dynasty, and this style was further developed during the Hongwu (洪武) period (1368–1398) of the Ming Dynasty, with motifs including tangled lotus, tangled peony, grass, and leaves. Due to its auspicious religious connotations and its embodiment of the material dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism in China, as well as its cultural significance related to gold and wealth, red underglaze porcelain (*you li hong* 釉裏紅) gained significant popularity in the region. The A-2 in Figure 1 shows red underglaze (*you li hong* 釉裏紅) porcelain (Ming Dynasty) from the Palace Museum. The part shown in A-2 is dominated by a lotus motif with twisted branches and a supplementary curly grass motif. The motif of the tangled lo-

tus appeared after Buddhism was introduced to China (Guo and Ding 1998, pp. 7–8), and the juxtaposition of lotus petals forming a larger lotus has special religious significance. The intertwined vine and lotus motif, also known as the interlocking vine lotus pattern, is a combination of the interlocking vine motif and the lotus motif. It incorporates both the interlocking vine pattern and the lotus flower design. This motif is characterized by intertwining plant branches and leaves along with the graceful depiction of lotus flowers. The combination of these two elements represents the intertwining of wisdom and purity in Buddhist symbolism. It serves as a visual representation of the harmonious coexistence of wisdom and purity within Buddhist philosophy. The curly grass extends left and right or up and down in a wavy form, and (Guan 1992, p. 40) believes that the curly grass motif may have evolved from the combination of the cloud and honeysuckle motifs. Furthermore, the development of the honeysuckle motif was influenced by the acanthus ornament motif (Riegl 1992). The overall composition is symmetrical and neat. This kind of composition (seen in A-2), with a flower in the middle surrounded by leaf or flower patterns, is a typical composition in China. The entwined plant roots are like flowing curves, making the motif appear more dynamic. The interlocking vine motif, commonly known as the "endless knot", holds significant meaning in Buddhism. It symbolizes the boundless wisdom of Buddhism and the widespread propagation of the Dharma. The interlocking vine pattern is composed of intertwined plant branches and leaves, creating a continuous texture and pattern. The infinite loop and interplay in this design represent the concept of egolessness and the boundless nature of existence in Buddhist doctrine. The interlocking vine motif is also regarded as a symbol of auspiciousness, prosperity, and vitality, reflecting the concepts of harmony, continuity, and balance in Buddhism. This motif frequently appears in Buddhist art and architecture, such as murals, sculptures, Buddhist scriptures, and pedestal designs, adding aesthetic value and religious significance to Buddhist temples and places of worship.

Comparing A-1 and A-2, the A-1 bottle features Italian woodcut-themed stories on one side of the body, with Chinese-style religious patterns on the back (as shown in the picture). It is evident that the design of the pattern on the back of A-1 clearly imitates the decorative elements and style of A-2. This observation highlights the influence of religion in cross-cultural art. Religion transforms into an aesthetic symbol with decorative appeal, which is imitated by Italian artisans. Looking at the composition, A-1 also uses the curve of the tangled branches of the curly grass motif to connect the elements. However, the difference is that A-1 does not use a composition with a main flower in the center of the curly grass pattern, but adopts a more regular cross-shaped composition, producing a more geometric visual effect. On the two sides of the bottle of A-1, the front shows a story similar to the theme of Italian woodcuts, and the back is a Chinoiserie religious motif. It shows that although the glass manufacturers in Venice imitated the Chinoiserie style, they still added innovation to the process. The imitation and innovation of Chinese religious styles are not only evident in lattimo glass but also in contemporary home decor patterns of the same period. For example, the Comer Cupboard (A-4 in Figure 2) exemplifies this fusion of Chinese religious style within the context of European-style furniture. While maintaining the overall European furniture design, the decorative patterns on the Comer Cupboard exhibit a distinct Chinese religious aesthetic. The pattern on A-4 demonstrates the influence of Chinese Taoist religious philosophy in both composition and content. The composition emulates the scattered perspective found in traditional Chinese landscape paintings, while the decorative elements primarily feature landscapes and pavilions, capturing a sense of aesthetic beauty that reflects the implicit expression of harmony and integration between humans and nature in Chinese Taoist thought. In addition, the color of the A1 is based on red underglaze porcelain (*you li hong* 釉里红), with blue dots and gilded light around a central motif. Blue and white is the predominant color combination in European imitations of Chinese-style patterns. For example, in A-3 of Figure 2, some Chinese-inspired works also incorporate red or gold, creating a color combination of blue, white, red, and gold. This color pattern is associated with the Eastern religious aesthetic on one hand, and

with the artistic style of Imari porcelain exported from Japan to Europe on the other hand (Yuan 2005). This imitation of porcelain by glass not only reflects the transfer of technique but also has a visual exoticism. As a special material with decorative meaning, glassware was passing through a unique period in both Italy and China at that time. Design is a constantly changing activity, and from the perspective of the lattimo glass, the transfer of technology through different materials shows that design has become an independent art.

(**A-3**)

(**A-4**)

Figure 2. Contrast of scattered perspectives by Chinoiserie motifs: (**A-3**) Vaso (18th century), Bertolini or Miotti Family, Cl. VI n. 01598, Italy, Venice, lattimo glass, Museo del Vetro di Murano, courtesy of Museo del Vetro di Murano; (**A-4**) Comer Cupboard (1768–1778), Thomas Chippendale, W.24:1,2-1917. London, pine, Victoria and Albert Museum, courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/073631/comer-cupboard-chippendale-thomas-sr/. (accessed on 11 January 2023).

The design of glass vessels, under the influence of regional cultures in China, Italy, and other areas, reflects the role of inclusive innovation in themes, patterns, forms, and formulas. Glass artisans work not according to a fixed set of principles and rules, but rather create new themes, glass formulas, and pattern decorations throughout their careers to cater to market aesthetics. One important factor that contributes to the decorative differences in lattimo glass patterns is the influence of religious ideology. Based on the long-term influence of different religious thoughts, lattimo exhibits certain variations in Italy and China.

4. Cross-Cultural Exotics: Lattimo Glass and Chinese Glass in the 18th Century

Additionally, when we switch our perspective to China, we discover an interesting phenomenon: the influences and changes in glassmaking were mutual. While Chinoiserie was gaining popularity in Europe, Venetian glassmaking technology also spread to China, thereby influencing the development of Chinese glass, particularly during the eighteenth century (Zhang 1730, pp. 139–47). The production of Venetian glass is related to the close contact between the Chinese emperor and Western missionaries (Yang 1998). The technology of Venetian glass, particularly lattimo glass, influenced the innovation of Qing opaque white glass during the eighteenth century in the Qing Dynasty in China, incorporating certain Chinese elements. This part will further explore the mutual religious motifs between China and Italy, and even within the broader European context, from the perspective of lattimo glass. This influence is reciprocal, rather than unidirectional.

4.1. The Qing Dynasty's Reinvention of Italian Glass Recipes and Patterns

The prevalence of glass in the Chinese region was also influenced by East–West trade. The spread of glass to China has a history of 2500 years, with glass having other localized names in ancient China, such as *liao qi* (料器) or *liu li* (琉璃). During the Han Dynasty (in 8 CE), Roman glass appeared in China. According to archaeological discoveries when

the Jian-Yao-Miao Tombs of the Emperors were excavated in China, the objects discovered not only included Western glass bowls but also objects of cultural significance to the West. These objects proved that glassware was already an important trade item on the Maritime Silk Road as early as 266 CE. With frequent trade between the East and West, glass, as a trade item of cross-regional cultural exchange, became one of the chief items of East–West maritime trade alongside porcelain, tea, and spices during 1127–1279 (Fairbank and Goldman 1998, p. 92; Minkov and Hofstede 2012).

In 1602, the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigte Oost-Indische Compagnie, or VOC for short) was founded, quickly seizing the Portuguese trade market in East Asia and beginning to monopolize international trade. In the seventeenth century, China's Ming and Qing dynasties opened trading ports and Western missionaries went to China to preach. European Jesuits began to come to China in the second half of the sixteenth century, with missionaries like Matteo Ricci, Tang Ruowang, Kilian Stumpf, and others bringing a large amount of European scientific and technological knowledge to China and enjoying close contact with the Qing emperors. In the Qing Dynasty, Bai Jin, a Jesuit priest in China, asked for advice from the European Christian church on how to make glass products. Glass, as an imported product from Europe, was greatly admired by the emperors of the Qing Dynasty. Therefore, in 1696, missionary Kilian Stumpf, who was born in Forsberg, Germany, assisted in setting up a glass factory (called the glass factory of the hall of mental cultivation manufacturing office: *yang xin dian bo li chang* 養心殿玻璃廠) in China to teach the Chinese craftsmen various glassmaking techniques (Heping 2008). Stumpf also brought the formula for raw materials and firing technology for porcelain to Vienna, Venice, and other places in Europe. The glass technique introduced to China by Stumpf also originated in Venice. The development of China's glass manufacturing industry reached its peak in the Qing Dynasty, and the glass body painted enamel lotus and longevity patterns snuff bottle in Figure 3 (5.2 cm high and 4 cm wide) is the embodiment of the integration of the Eastern and Western aesthetic interests of the Qing Dynasty and Italian Renaissance respectively, through the adoption of the technique of applying gold enamel to white glass snuff bottles.

Figure 3. Glass snuff bottle decorated with lotus blossoms and the "myriad" "longevity" characters in painted enamels (boli tai hua fa lang lian hua shou wen bi yan hu), Qianlong reign (1735–1796), Qing dynasty, glass, the National Palace Museum, courtesy of the Taipei National Palace Museum, https://digitalarchive.npm.gov.tw/Antique/Content?uid=53664&Dept=U. (accessed on 15 January 2023).

From the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, through trade between China and Italy, many Western missionaries went to China to preach, thereby also spreading glass

technology to China. In the eighteenth century, the glass industry in China prospered under the influence of Western missionaries as the Qing Dynasty established cross-cultural exchanges through religious communication and trade. In 1720, the Emperor of China received Pope Clement XI's Venetian glass as a gift (Zecchin 2009). From then, the Qing emperor's personal aesthetic tendencies were continuously integrated into the glass products, which meant the glass products presented a Kangxi-style aesthetic tendency different from the Western style during the 18th and 19th centuries. The glass of this period is basic but with an elaborate appearance and intricate shading and patterning. According to the statistics of the Qing Dynasty's construction office, Emperor Kangxi sent 136 glass vases made in Beijing and many other pieces of glassware to the Pope and European emperors as presents (M.S.S 1721). It can be seen that Emperor Kangxi was fond of the glassware made in China, and innovations in glassware from the Venetian style were integrated into Chinese glassmaking.

As can be seen by examining the composition (Table 1) of Ming porcelain (Xiong et al. 2014), lattimo glass (Verità 2021), and Qing opaque white glass (Yang 1990), the recipe of lattimo glass is more similar to that of Qing opaque white glass in China. Lattimo glass from Murano is mainly a soda-lime-silica glass or lead-silica glass. Soda-lime-silica glass is mainly composed of sodium (Na_2O), calcium (CaO), and silicon dioxide (SiO_2), and the SiO_2 content in opaque glass is higher than that in lattimo glass. Considering that the chemical properties of SiO_2 are very stable, Qing opaque white glass was stronger and more resistant to corrosion. Moreover, tin oxide (SnO_2) accounts for 15% of lattimo glass, while there is no SnO_2 in Qing opaque white glass. SnO_2 is commonly used to make lattimo so that it would look like porcelain (Verita and Biron 2015). However, in Qing opaque white glass, arsenic trioxide (As_2O_3) plays a significant role in opaqueness. The recipe of Qing opaque white glass was an improved version of the Western glass recipe, according to records (Yang 1983), taught by the Western missionaries Ji Wen 紀文 (Gabriel-Leonard de Brossard) and Tang Zhizhong 湯執中 (Pierre l'Incarville). Nevertheless, there exist discernible disparities in the composition between lattimo glass and opaque white glass produced during the Qing Dynasty, casting doubts on whether there was any semblance of imitation in the reciprocal exchange of techniques. Nonetheless, a plethora of similarities can be observed in the texture, color, and pattern of the glass.

Table 1. Mean chemical composition comparison (wt %).

Dating	16th Century	16th Century	18th Century
	Ming Porcelain	Lattimo	Qing Opaque white Glass
SiO_2	71.18	49.0	64.91
Al_2O_3	15.22	1.0	0.54
Na_2O	2.70	16.5	3.90
K_2O	5.28	2.2	15.34
MgO	0.60	0.8	0.13
CaO	2.36	2.3	2.03
Cl	\	0.65	\
TiO_2	0.09	0.03	\
Fe_2O_3	1.17	0.25	0.11
MnO	0.10	0.05	\
SnO_2	\	15.0	\
As_2O_3	\	\	2.28
PbO	\	12.0	4.57
B_2O_3	\	\	2.59

Meanwhile, with the ever-closer contacts between Western missionaries and the Qing Dynasty, the development of glass also reached its peak during the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912) as missionaries brought Western painting techniques to China. In addition to Western imports, local production of glass also existed in China. During the Qing Dynasty period, the glass industry flourished in Boshan, located in Shandong Province, and Guang-

zhou, located in Guangdong Province (Gan 2021, p. 106; Gong and de Divitiis 2023). Emperor Kangxi (1662–1722) was renowned for his fondness for glass (Yang 1983), and he had a penchant for incorporating exotic elements into the decorative patterns of glass to enhance its creativity. During the reign of Emperor Yongzheng (雍正) of the Qing Dynasty (1722–1735), Jesuit painter Niccolo Tomacelli, at the emperor's request, participated in the design of enamel products at the royal glass factory (Curtis et al. 2004, p. 56). Earlier, Italian missionary Lang Shining (1688–1766) combined the aesthetic tastes of China and Italy in his painting, offering fellow missionary Tomacelli advice regarding painting in enamel. Indeed, the concept of perspective in Western painting began to appear on the motifs of glass snuff bottles (Figure 4) during the Qing Dynasty. Specifically, as depicted in Figure 4, while the visual effects of Chinese ink painting are still preserved in style, the composition manifests a sense of depth through the placement of the vase and rock. Contrary to the scattered-point perspective commonly adopted in Chinese ink painting, a focal-point perspective is evident in the snuff bottle, resulting in a perceptible depth of field. During the Qing dynasty in China, Jesuit missionaries introduced Western painting techniques to Chinese artisans, which led to the development of a unique Chinese style of glass painting. The Chinese artisans blended Western and Chinese aesthetics in their glasswork, creating a style that was distinctly their own. This is the embodiment of the exotic style of Qing Dynasty glass. Venetian glass was adopted in China mainly with the intention to learn the recipes and glass enamel decoration techniques involved, but the glassmaking also diversified into imitation of exotic motifs, glass shapes, and recipes from other countries. Owing to the different cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs in Italy and China, China innovated new shapes and patterns based on learning Venetian glass technology, thereby creating a new integration of cross-cultural artistic styles. The aesthetic value became something of value to many people. The amalgamation of Eastern and Western artistic styles is exemplified through the production of diminutive glassware that carries significant connotations. Cross-cultural design not only shaped the values and aesthetic trends held by artisans but also shaped consumers' perceptions of their interaction with the surrounding world.

Figure 4. Glass inside-painted snuff bottle with angling decoration (bo li nei hui chui diao tu bi yan hu), Qing dynasty (1644–1911), glass, the National Palace Museum, courtesy of the Taipei National Palace Museum, https://digitalarchive.npm.gov.tw/Antique/Content?uid=63662&Dept=U. (accessed on 15 January 2023).

Therefore, this shows that the influence of the Chinoiserie style was two-way and interactive and was not limited to a single material. On one hand, this interaction resulted in lattimo glass imitating and innovating upon the religious patterns found on Chinese-style porcelain. On the other hand, Chinese glass materials and patterns were influenced by European glassware.

4.2. The Renaissance of Lattimo Glass and Its Contrasts with Qing Dynasty Glass

In the Middle Ages, Venice, as an important trading port connecting Europe and the Far East, facilitated trade between China and Italy. Lattimo glass, after being strictly controlled by the Venetian government from the 16th century onwards, regained popularity only in the 18th century. In the 18th century, Italian glass manufacturers' attempts and innovations in glass formulations also began to gradually influence glass manufacturing in China, providing Chinese glassmakers with more technological possibilities. Lattimo glass epitomized the exchanges between China and Italy, bestowing prestige upon its owners as it traversed cross-cultural networks. The continuous changes and innovations in lattimo glass, as well as the exploration of glass materials, testify to the historical experiences of cross-cultural exchange and cross-language communication.

In the 18th century, in addition to the influence of European glass technology on the aesthetic style of Chinese glass, Chinese styles once again influenced the revival of 18th-century lattimo glass. As mentioned earlier, lattimo glass experienced a revival in the 18th century after being suppressed by the Venetian government. During this period of revival in the 18th century, as trade between China and Europe became increasingly frequent, lattimo glass of this era gradually exhibited an aesthetic inclination towards a fusion of Chinese and European styles. We will find that both lattimo glass and Qing red-on-white glass in the eighteenth century (Figure 5) reflect the Chinoiserie style. Although both A-5 and A-6 are classic underglazed (*you li hong* 釉里红) plant motifs, A-6 begins to show the effect of Western three-dimensional influence, while A-5 has a more Chinese ink-painting flavor. Then, with the popularity of Chinese porcelain in Europe and the continually innovative spirit of craftsmen, the early Meissen factory produced imitations of Chinese porcelain (Litchfield 1879). Meanwhile, the Miotti and Bertolini families in Venice began to try cross-material glass creation, specializing in lattimo glassware and cleverly integrating the Western white opaque glass and Chinoiserie elements. Moreover, in 1739, brothers Gio Andrea and Pietro Bertolini acquired the exclusive rights for the production of lattimo glass with gold decorations (Zecchin 2014), and the Miotti family, with a factory on the island of Murano, enjoyed a reputation as remarkable glassmakers with extensive ability in lattimo glass (Charleston 1990). Most of their glassware carried a logo on the bottom for identification, and they excelled in lattimo glassware painted in red monochrome, again in imitation of Chinese porcelain, as shown in Figure 6. This indicates that in the 18th century, the influence of exotic religious factors gradually began to diminish. The aesthetic differences brought about by different religious beliefs started to transform into a symbolized aesthetic consciousness, becoming a decorative medium for expressing the exotic charm of glass. During this period, glass practitioners in China and Italy started to reconfigure foreign religious patterns by combining their own aesthetic preferences and religious beliefs. This led to the emergence of innovative fusion characteristics in the decorative patterns of glass. The cross-cultural dissemination of glass recipes and the re-innovation by local glass craftsmen revitalized this heritage.

The characteristics of the traditional Chinoiserie style are rooted in Eastern religious traditions such as Buddhism or Taoism, emphasizing inclusive and implicit pattern backgrounds. In contrast, European glass manufacturing patterns primarily focus on the objects themselves and the portrayal of mythological figures or scenes. In the face of such cultural differences, it is likely that the interactions among traders, technical personnel, and missionaries maintained and innovatively reinterpreted these cross-cultural aesthetic orientations, thus giving rise to new creations. Cross-regional trade was a bridge for glassware to stimulate interactions between China and Italy. Chinese porcelain, introduced through trade, influenced the creation of Venetian Murano glassware. Qing dynasty glass did not merely copy the typical colors and decorations of Venetian glass but modified functions, materials, and designs to meet Chinese needs and aesthetic preferences. Chinese glass craftsmen assimilated Western glass manufacturing and molding technologies, combining them with traditional methods, forms, decorations, and styles. They retained the technical advantages of Western glass while introducing distinctly Chinese features, re-

sulting in a series of exotic glass products. The invention and appearance of Chinese glass during the Qing dynasty and lattimo glass in Italy transcended the meaning of trade itself, becoming bridges of knowledge and technology for cross-cultural communication, artistic creativity, and practicality. This kind of cross-cultural design training allowed Chinese and Italian craftsmen to conceive of interesting combinations, through which the emblematic function was expressed in forms and decorations that imitated the Chinese style or white porcelain effect. The cultivation of a heightened awareness of painting and art may have played a crucial role in facilitating cross-cultural exchanges between China and Italy. This exchange, in turn, has extended into cross-cultural design, giving rise to new glass artifacts based on the religious beliefs and cultural aesthetics of each respective country.

(**A-5**)

(**A-6**)

Figure 5. Contrast of motifs between lattimo glass and Qing glass in the 18th century: (**A-5**) Teacup and Saucer, Vezzi, Francesco Maker, no.79.3.287, 1720–1724, Italy, Venice, lattimo glass, Corning Museum of Glass, courtesy of Corning Museum of Glass, www.cmog.org; (**A-6**) Red-on-white glass overlay snuff bottle with a floral design (bai tao hong bo li hua hui bi yan hu), Qianlong reign (1735–1796), Qing dynasty, glass, the National Palace Museum, courtesy of the Taipei National Palace Museum, https://digitalarchive.npm.gov.tw/Antique/Content?uid=69028&Dept=U. (accessed on 15 January 2023).

Figure 6. Plate, Miotti Family, no. 79.3.332, 1741, Italy, Venice, lattimo glass, Corning Museum of Glass, courtesy of Corning Museum of Glass, www.cmog.org. (accessed on 16 January 2023).

After going through a phase of purely imitating religious motifs from Chinese porcelain, lattimo glass gradually began to find its own style. The patterns of lattimo glass gradually evolved into a harmonious development that combined European and Chinese styles. Although it may appear as a concentrated manifestation of two distinct religious cultures on the same vessel, it primarily emphasizes aesthetic elements. The Rites Controversy fostered cautious attitudes towards the transmission of different religions across regions.

However, religious motifs gradually integrated into foreign contexts through the deepening of cross-regional trade, becoming visual elements of exotic styles.

5. Conclusions

In summary, this paper has examined the interaction between Chinese and Italian glass art design, considering the incorporation of design issues and religious factors to provide a comprehensive perspective on cross-cultural artistic interactions from the 15th to the 18th centuries. Through close maritime trade links, the exchange of glass and ceramic technologies between China and Italy facilitated the creation and dissemination of lattimo glass from this period. By examining the religious motifs present in lattimo glass, it becomes apparent that the Rites Controversy imposed limitations on the mutual influence of Eastern and Western religions. However, the frequent exchange of trade between the East and West led to a complex intermingling of Chinese-style religious elements with Italian religious elements. This intricate fusion resulted in different religious traditions from various countries gradually taking the form of graphic elements, thereby developing into a unique exotic aesthetic style. The dissemination of these religious motifs primarily occurred under the influence of aesthetic factors, allowing religious patterns to be presented on vessels as part of decorative aesthetics. As a result, it garnered appreciation from diverse religious and cultural communities. With the fusion of culture, art, and practical technology, glassware underwent innovative redevelopments over time. By serving as a carrier of two heterogeneous cultures, lattimo glass fostered a cross-cultural contact relationship between the arts of China and Italy.

This study demonstrates the adaptability of cross-cultural design in lattimo glass, harmonizing with the local religious beliefs, aesthetics, and practicalities of China and Italy. Essentially, the developmental process of lattimo glass represents the direct material embodiment of the aesthetic patterns, craftsmanship, and design intentions of glass vessels with Chinese-style religious aesthetics. Like other exotic materials in Europe, lattimo glass in Venice garnered cross-cultural esteem as an appropriated exotic object. The transformation of glass from a precious gift to a commodity for cross-cultural exchange between China and Italy highlights the aesthetic differences and novel pursuits of craftsmen from both cultures.

Author Contributions: Writing—original draft preparation, X.G.; conceptualization, X.G.; methodology, X.G.; Z.X.; X.L.; formal analysis, X.G. and B.D.D. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: China Postdoctoral Science Foundation Funded Project (Number: 2023M731690); China Scholarship Council: 202106790003; The Postgraduate Research & Practice Innovation Program of Jiangsu Province: KYCX22_2292.

Acknowledgments: We would like to thank particularly Glass historian Rosa Barovier Mentasti, who provided detailed on the glass presented to the Chinese emperor by Venice, as well as many classic bibliographies of lattimo glass.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

Alaoui, Brahim, Trinita Kennedy, Elizabeth Marwell, and Qamar Adamjee. 2007. *Venice and the Islamic World, 828-1797*. London: Yale University Press.

Bortolotto, Angelica Alverà. 1981. *Storia Della Ceramica a Venezia Dagli Albori Alla Fine Della Repubblica*. Florence: Sansoni.

Boyer, Pascal, and Charles Ramble. 2001. Cognitive Templates for Religious Concepts: Cross-cultural Evidence for Recall of Counter-intuitive Representations. *Cognitive Science* 25: 535–64. [CrossRef]

Burty, Philippe. 1869. *Chefs-d'Oeuvre of the Industrial Arts: Pottery and Porcelain, Glass, Enamel, Metal, Goldsmiths' Work, Jewellery, and Tapestry*. Boca Raton: Chapman & Hall.

Charleston, Robert J. 1990. *Masterpieces of Glass, A World History from Teh Corning Museum of Glass*. New York: Abrams Inc.

Chen, Wanli. 1964. Talking about the output of Chinese porcelain in Ming and Qing dynasties again. *Cultural Relics* 10: 33–36.

Chen, Wanli. 1997. *Collection of Chen Wanli's Ceramics and Archaeology* (陈万里陶瓷考古文集). Beijing: Forbidden City Press.

Clarke, Timothy H. 1974. Lattimo -A Group of Venetian Glass Enameled on an Opaque-White Ground. *Journal of Glass Studies* 16: 22–56.
Curtis, Emily Byrne. 1993. European Contributions to the Chinese Glass of the Early Qing Period. *Journal of Glass Studies* 35: 91–101.
Curtis, Emily Byrne. 2017. *Glass Exchange Between Europe and China, 1550–1800: Diplomatic, Mercantile and Technological Interactions*. Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Group.
Curtis, Emily Byrne, Ricardo Joppert, Ma Wenkuan, and Daphne Rosenzweig. 2004. *The Glass of China: Pure Brightness Shines Everywhere*. Farnham: Ashgate.
Dorigato, Attilia. 1993. *Art of the Barovier: Glassmakers in Murano, 1866–1972*. Venice: Arsenale Editrice.
Dwairy, Marwan. 2015. *From Psycho-Analysis to Culture-Analysis: A Within-Culture Psychotherapy*. Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer.
Fairbank, John King, and Merle Goldman. 1998. *China: A New History*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
Francis, Peter, Jr. 2008. The Venetian Bead Story. *Beads: Journal of the Society of Bead Researchers* 20: 62–80.
Fuga, Antonella. 2006. *Rtists' Techniques and Materials*. Los Angeles: Getty Publications.
Gan, Fuxi. 2021. *Development History Of Ancient Chinese Glass Technology*. Shanghai: World Scientific.
Gleeson, Janet. 1998. The Arcanum: The Extraordinary True Story of the Invention of European Porcelain. In *The Arcanum: The Extraordinary True Story of the Invention of European Porcelain*. Bantam: Grand Central Publishing, pp. 85–96.
Gong, X., and B. de Divitiis. 2023. The landscape theme of Han bamboo carving art. *Arte, Individuo y Sociedad* 35: 823–42. [CrossRef]
Guan, Youhui. 1992. *Analysis on the Pattern Structure of Mogao Grottoes in Tang Dynasty* (莫高窟唐代图案结构分析). Urumqi: China Xinjiang Fine Arts Photography Publishing House.
Guo, Lianfu, and Tao Ding. 1998. *Dictionary of Chinese Patterns* (中国纹样辞典). Tianjin: Tianjin Education Press. Available online: https://swu.redguide.top/https/77726476706e69737468656265737421f2f84e9769347d48771dc7af9758/bookDetail.jsp?dxNumber=000000624551&d=09026FF51E5EB2E202727035D6DD6C5B&fenlei=10070303&sw=%E6%8A%98%E6%9E%9D%E8%8E%B2 (accessed on 14 July 2023).
Haden, H. J. 1976. Corning Museum of Glass, Journal of Glass Studies", Vol. 26 (Book Review). *Technology and Culture* 17: 601. [CrossRef]
Hardie, Peter. 2000. Foucquet's List of Kangxi Glass. *Journal of Glass Studies* 42: 167–69.
Heping, Wang. 2008. The Technological Development of the Imperial Glass Factory of the Kangxi Dynasty: Taking Painted Enamel Glass and Venus Glass as Examples. *Collector* 9: 77–82.
Honour, Hugh. 1962. *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay*. Boston: Dutton.
Hyde, J. A. Lloyd. 1994. *Chinese Porcelain for the European Market*. Lisbon: Fundação Ricardo do Espírito Santo Silva.
Impey, Oliver. 1977. *Chinoiserie: The Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press London.
Janson, Horst Woldemar. 1977. *History of Art*, 2nd ed. New York and Englewood Cliffs: Abrams and Prentice Hall.
Jo Wheeler, Katy Temple. 2010. *Renaissance Secrets: Recipes and Formulas*. Edited by Victoria Museum and Albert. New York: Harry N. Abrams.
Knothe, Florian. 2010. East Meets West: Cross-Cultural Influences in Glassmaking in the 18th and 19th Centuries. *Journal of Glass Studies* 52: 201–16.
Koleini, Farahnaz, Philippe Colomban, Innocent Pikirayi, and Linda C. Prinsloo. 2019. Glass Beads, Markers of Ancient Trade in Sub-Saharan Africa: Methodology, State of the Art and Perspectives. *Heritage* 2: 2343–69. [CrossRef]
Lane, Arthur. 1961. The Gaignières-Fonthill Vase; A Chinese Porcelain of about 1300. *The Burlington Magazine* 103: 124–33.
Lessmann, Johanna. 2004. *"Italienische Majolika in Nürnberg," in Majolika: Die Italienischen Fayencen Im Germanischen Nationalmuseen Nürnberg: Bestandskatalog, Ed.Silvia Glaser*. Nuremberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum.
Levi, Cesare Augusto. 1895. *L' Arte Del Vetro in Murano Nel Rinascimento e i Berroviero*. Venice: Publisher, C. Ferrari.
Litchfield, Frederick. 1879. *Pottery and Porcelain: A Guide to Collectors*. Oxford: Bickers.
Lu, Kan. 2012. The Western Elements in the Exported Porcelain of the Qing Dynasty in China—The Shape of the Vessel in Line with the Living Habits of Europeans. *Collections* 4: 49–54.
M.S.S. 1721. *M.S.S Palatini 1115,Xxvi,1,f.363,1721*. Florence: Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze.
Mentasti, Rosa Barovier. 1982. *Il Vetro Veneziano*. Stockholm: Electa.
Minkov, Michael, and Geert Hofstede. 2012. Is National Culture a Meaningful Concept? Cultural Values Delineate Homogeneous National Clusters of In-Country Regions. *Cross-Cultural Research* 46: 133–59. [CrossRef]
Pevsner, Nikolaus. 1964. *Pioneers of Modern Design, from William Morris to Walter Gropius*. London: Penguin Books.
Porter, David. 2010. *The Chinese Taste in Eighteenth-Century England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Qisheng, Zhang, and Sun Fengwen. 1999. The Development and Prospect of Bamboo Industry in China. *China Forest Products Industry* 26: 3–5.
Ricciardi, Paola, Philippe Colomban, Aurélie Tournié, and Véronique Milande. 2009. Nondestructive On-site Identification of Ancient Glasses: Genuine Artefacts, Embellished Pieces or Forgeries? *Journal of Raman Spectroscopy: An International Journal for Original Work in All Aspects of Raman Spectroscopy, Including Higher Order Processes, and Also Brillouin and Rayleigh Scattering* 40: 604–17. [CrossRef]
Riegl, Alois. 1992. *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Smith, Paul Jakov. 2003. Problematizing the Song-Yuan-Ming Transition. In *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 1–34.

Ströber, Eva. 2006. The Earliest Documented Ming Porcelain in Europe: A Gift of Chinese Porcelain from Ferdi Nando de' Medici (1549–1609) to the Dresden Court. *The International Asian Art Fair*, 11–19.
Su, Pui Kun. 2005. Cultural Interaction of Blue and White Ware. Ph.D. thesis, Jinan University, Guangzhou, China. Available online: https://oversea.cnki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CDFD&dbname=CDFD9908&filename=2005142023.nh&uniplatform=OVERSEAS_EN&v=q7Nj7CBBrBD8V0hZQeQN9ut-A4XY2IPLwUS8ieaJeEuUk0SQOOPHb-lFk6r5GZCM (accessed on 19 June 2023).
Sun, Jinyi, Yongqian Feng, Tianjun Su, and Chinese Archaeological Collection' Editorial Board. 1997. *Collection of Chinese Archaeology II* (中国考古集成). Beijing: Beijing Press, vol. 1, p. 20.
Tonini, Cristina. 2007. I Lattimi Veneziani Smaltati Del XVIII Secolo Ei Rapporti Iconografici Con Le Incisioni. *Journal of Glass Studies* 49: 127–42.
Verità, Marco. 2021. Venetian Glass. *Encyclopedia of Glass Science, Technology, History, and Culture* 2: 1327–40.
Verita, Marco, and Isabelle Biron. 2015. Enamels on Venetian Renaissance Glass. An Analytical and Technical Approach. *Glass Technology-European Journal of Glass Science and Technology Part A* 56: 177–90. [CrossRef]
Wang, Da yuan. 1981. *Daoyi Zhilue's Proofreading Interpretation* (岛夷志略校释). Beijing: Zhonghua Bookstore.
Whitehouse, David. 1972. Chinese Porcelain in Medieval Europe. *Medieval Archaeology* 16: 63–78. [CrossRef]
Wilhelm, Heyd. 1879. *Geschichte Des Levanthandels Im Mittelalter*. Stuttgart: Heyd. Verlag der J. G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, vol. II.
Wood, Nigel. 1999. *Chinese Glazes: Their Origins, Chemistry, and Recreation*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
Xiong, Yingfei, Hua Huo, Yiping Li, and Jin Zhou. 2014. Study on the Chemical Composition of Hongwu Porcelain in Ming Dynasty in Jingdezhen. *Heritage Conservation and Archaeological Science* 26: 59–64. [CrossRef]
Yang, Boda. 1983. An Overview of Glass in the Qing Dynasty. *Journal of the Palace Museum* 4: 3–17.
Yang, Boda. 1990. Research on Chemical Composition of Glass Formulations in Qing Dynasty. *Journal of the Palace Museum* 2: 17–38, 17–26+38. [CrossRef]
Yang, Boda. 1998. The Influence of Chinese and Western Cultural Exchanges on Qing Dynasty Fine Arts in the Eighteenth Century. *Journal of the Palace Museum* 4: 70–94, 70–77+93–94. [CrossRef]
Yuan, Xuanping. 2005. Chinoiserie Design in Europe in the 17th–18th Century. Ph.D. thesis, Suzhou University, Suzhou, China.
Zecchin, Luigi. 1963. Le Avventure Del Lattimo. *Vetro e Silicato* 21–24.
Zecchin, Luigi. 1989. Lattimo Nelle s Ture Muranesi Del XV e Del XVI Secolo. *In Vetro e Vetrai [Nota 1]* 2: 348.
Zecchin, Paolo. 2009. Un Regalo Di Vetri Veneziani Settecenteschi All'Imperatore Della Cina. *Rivista Della Stazione Sperimentale Del Vetro* 39: 16–21.
Zecchin, Paolo. 2014. I Vetri Muranesi Settecenteschi Dipinti Con Fiori e Uccelli. *Journal of Glass Studies* 56: 125–36.
Zecchin, Paolo. 2020. Barovier. *Journal of Glass Studies* 62: 105–26.
Zhang, Tingyu. 1730. *Records of Emperor Shizongxian of the Qing Dynasty* (世宗皇帝实录). Shanghai: Office of the Qing Dynasty of China.
Zhao, Guanglin. 1986. Several ancient glazed kiln sites discovered in Beijing in recent years. *Archeology* 7: 628–631+680.

religions

MDPI

Article

Visual Communication and Evangelizing Art in the Temple of San Francisco of La Paz (Bolivia)

Josefina Leonor Matas Musso [1,*] and Fátima Matos Silva [2,3,*]

[1] Centro de Investigación en Diseño (CID), Universidad Católica Boliviana San Pablo, La Paz 4807, Bolivia
[2] REMIT—Research on Economics, Management and Information Technologies, Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, Universidade Portucalense, 4200-072 Porto, Portugal
[3] CITCEM—Transdisciplinary Research Centre Culture, Space and Memory, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Porto, Via Panorâmica s/n, 4150-564 Porto, Portugal
* Correspondence: jmatas@ucb.edu.bo (J.L.M.M.); mfms@upt.pt (F.M.S.)

Abstract: The temple of San Francisco de La Paz is one of the best examples of the mestizo baroque style in Bolivia. The richness of the interior of the temple contributes to creating a theatrical and symbolic space, intending to evangelize and transmit the new values of the Catholic faith, through its iconographic programme. Our analysis highlights the differentiation of interior space using altarpiece programmes, thus evidencing how interior architecture is used for communication purposes. We conclude that interior space is transformed for evangelizing purposes.

Keywords: San Francisco de La Paz; mestizo baroque; symbolic space; altarpiece discourse

1. Introduction

When the Franciscans arrived at La Paz, they built a chapel dedicated to San Pedro and Santiago. The chapel was founded by Fr. Francisco de los Ángeles Morales and his companion Br. Francisco de la Cruz Alcocer—probably in 1549 (Privaser 1919), which makes it the first religious establishment in this city. Currently, the church is in Plaza San Francisco, the historic centre, one of the busiest, oldest, and most tourist squares of La Paz (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Temple and Plaza de San Francisco. Photography: Josefina Matas 2023.

Citation: Matas Musso, Josefina Leonor, and Fátima Matos Silva. 2023. Visual Communication and Evangelizing Art in the Temple of San Francisco of La Paz (Bolivia). *Religions* 14: 894. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14070894

Academic Editors: José María Salvador-González and Marina Montesano

Received: 3 April 2023
Revised: 5 July 2023
Accepted: 6 July 2023
Published: 11 July 2023

Plaza San Francisco is surrounded by historic buildings and is considered an important cultural and architectural landmark. The church itself is the most significant building in the square, with its spectacular baroque façade and a solemn bell tower.

San Francisco of La Paz is one of the most important temples in Bolivia, as well as one of the best examples of the mestizo baroque in Latin America. However, the value of this building and the research carried out so far suggest that further inquiries on the impact of this heritage on evangelization should be undertaken, particularly from the perspective of visual communication, a discipline still in an early stage nowadays.

This article is noteworthy because, although there is abundant bibliography referring to Franciscan spirituality, in Bolivia, there is no existing bibliography regarding the architecture of this Order—and even less regarding architecture and visual communication. We, therefore, highlight the importance of this article, as its content is completely new, especially concerning the vision from visual communication.

Franciscan religious buildings in Charcas were not faithful copies of European architecture, nor the repetition of a model already solved. The ideas Franciscans brought from their places of origin were transformed and adjusted to new requirements, which generated different architectonic types (whose expression ended up being more American than European). This research is motivated by the questions raised by the previous observations, and it addresses issues more closely linked to semiotics.

The main objective of this paper is to explore the interior architecture of the temple: its main altarpieces, pulpits, and thrones, which communicate in their iconography the Catholic faith's values. The subsequent analysis examines how interior space is differentiated by the content and discourse of the altarpieces and highlights the role of interior architecture in communicating evangelical messages.

The article is divided into three parts. The first part recounts the arrival of the Franciscan Order to Charcas. The second one discusses the definition of the mestizo baroque style. The third part addresses the history of the construction and the description of the interior of the temple. The article finishes with a discussion.

2. Materials and Methods

This research was carried out in the framework of a qualitative and exploratory methodology. Primary sources were consulted, such as the chronicles of Diego de Mendoza (1664) and those of Diego de Córdova Salinas (1651). An exhaustive examination of documents at the Franciscan Archive of La Paz and secondary sources was also carried out.[1]

This material and the secondary sources consulted in several libraries—both in Spain and Bolivia—constitute the documentary corpus of this work. The libraries consulted are listed below:

- Biblioteca de la Nación, Spain;
- Biblioteca de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain;
- Biblioteca de la Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo, Madrid, Spain;
- Private Library of Teresa Gisbert de Mesa, Bolivia;
- Library of the Franciscan Fathers of La Paz, Bolivia;
- Biblioteca de la Universidad Católica "San Pablo", Bolivia.

3. The Franciscans in Charcas

The expansion of the Franciscan Order in its evangelizing endeavour begins in America in 1500 (Abad Pérez 1992). Bartolomé de las Casas states: "The Order of St. Francis came here to populate with the purpose (...) the five that arrived in 1500 were joined by the seventeen brought by Governor Ovando in 1502; thirteen were priests" (Anasagasti 1992, p. 22).

Between 1505 and 1524, a hundred friars arrived with the intention of founding convents from where to evangelize. The first constructions built were extremely poor. Diego de Mendoza does not explain what those convents were like in their physical

materiality; it is assumed that they were very simple, made of wood, and designed to receive a limited number of people. About the foundation on the mainland, the chronicler writes: "The following year of 1518, the fourteen Franciscans, who came from Burgundy, with others from Santo Domingo, left Hispaniola Island to found convents of both orders on the *Tierra Firme*" (Anasagasti 1992, p. 8).

Once the Antilles were catechized, the Catholic faith was established in Mexico and the gospel was preached in Central America; it was South America's turn (Morales 1993). The first Franciscan to arrive at High Perú, in 1532, was Fray Marcos de Niza. According to the Most Reverend Archbishop of Mantua, he was "a religious of fervent zeal for the health of the souls and in whom virtue and doctrine shone and were twinned into one, he was a native of the city of Nice, an instructed, observant and religious man" (Mendoza [1664] 1976, p. 10). The chronicler Diego de Córdova y Salinas recounts:[2]

> *And then came from East to West twelve Franciscan friars, poor, naked, from the Province of Spain, priests and laymen from Puerto Viejo and Paita, where they landed and ran through the land on foot, preaching Christ Crucified to the city of Cuzco. They carried on like very illustrious men glowing with religiousness and sanctity (. . .) and they fertilized the earth with their spirit and poverty in such a way that they began to call them the Twelve Apostles of St. Francis, giving that title and renown to this Province afterwards. Finally, these humble religious men, few and dead to the world, accomplished great things, gaining countless souls for God, albeit with great sweat and work.* (Córdova Salinas [1651] 1957, p. 79)

The first Franciscan to arrive in Charcas[3] was Father Francisco de Aroca, who settled in a modest house in 1539 (Mesa and Gisbert 1985). In the following years, the Franciscans founded the Convent of Saint Anthony in Potosí (1547), Our Lady of the Angels in La Paz (1549), Saint Francis Convent in Cochabamba (1580), and Our Lady of the Angels of Mizque (1600). In 1600, Father Francisco Morales requested the foundation of Saint Anne of Chuquisaca, and then inaugurated Our Lady of Guadalupe of Ururu, and Saint Francis of Tarija six years afterwards. This vertiginous growth of the Order in Bolivian territory will bring about the creation of the Province of Saint Anthony of Charcas in 1565, which will have a series of ups and downs until its definite establishment into the General Chapter of Lima in 1637. Originally, in 1565, the Franciscan Province of Saint Anthony of Charcas covered the territory of the Real Audiencia de Charcas—or La Plata—at that time. Soon after, Cuzco ceased to be part of the Audiencia of Charcas and passed to that of Lima, but the Province of Saint Anthony kept the Convent Máximo del Cuzco as the seat of its Provincial Ministry (San Cristóbal 2004; Espinoza Spinola 1999).

According to Córdova and Salinas, the division was conducted in the following manner:

> *(. . .) the Custody of the New Kingdom of Granada should become a Province and it should be named the Santa Fe del New Kingdom of Granada. The Custody of San Pablo of Quito should become a province and the Province of San Francisco of Quito should be instituted in Peru. The Custody of the Holy Trinity of Chile should become a province and should be named the Province of the Holy Trinity of Chile. The City of the Kings, where there is a Royal Audience, with the entire district of the Audiencia will be the province of the Twelve Apostles and in it, the adjoining name will be kept, as she is the mother of all those Provinces. The City of Argentina, where there is also a Royal Audience, with the entire district of the Audiencia, up to and including the city of Arequipa, should become the Province of Saint Anthony of Charcas. The Kingdom of Tierra Firme, together with the city of Cartagena and Tolú will be (under) the sudden custody of the Province of the Twelve Apostles.* (Córdova Salinas [1651] 1957, p. 79)

4. The Mestizo Baroque Style

From 1690 on, certain original traits, unlike European models, manifested in baroque architecture in Charcas. Some historians call this style "mestizo baroque" or "Andean baroque" (Angulo Iñíguez et al. 1945; Buschiazzo 1961). Its dates range between 1690

and 1780, and it is found in the strip of land between Arequipa (Peru) and Lake Titicaca (Bolivia). The altitude of this strip exceeds 3600 m above sea level. Most of its population is Aymara (Gisbert and Mesa 2012).

The distinguishing features of the mestizo baroque style are the peculiar decoration of European structural forms, with a total disregard for the blueprint (and style) of the building, the use of archaic and flat forms, and the *horror vacui* (Gisbert and Mesa 1997).

The decoration is varied. Its motifs may be grouped into the following themes: American tropical flora and fauna, themes of mannerist origin such as mermaids, masks and grotesques, pre-Columbian and tropical motifs such as monkeys and pumas, and elements of the preRenaissance Christian tradition. It is mostly symbolic architecture (Gisbert and Mesa 2012).

5. Our Lady of the Angels Temple in the City of La Paz

5.1. Construction History

From August 1549, the date of the last foundation of the Convent of San Francisco in Cuzco, until 1607, the Convent of Our Lady of La Paz belonged to the Province of the XII Apostles of Peru. On the latter date, the Convent of La Paz became part of the Province of Saint Anthony of Charcas, which included what today is the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the departments of Arequipa, Puno, and Cuzco, and all the doctrines and convents under their custody (Cajías de la Vega 2009; Cuadrado Sánchez 1991; García Ros 2000).

According to chronicler Diego de Mendoza, the Convent of Saint Francis in the city of La Paz was founded with the name of "Our Lady of the Angels" by Friar Francisco de los Ángeles Morales, one of the first twelve friars in the territory. Chronicler Diego de Mendoza textually points out that:

> *(he) founded it the year of one thousand and five hundred and forty-nine, and it was the first religious convent, which was founded there in the same year, in the same city of La Paz, [it] has ordinarily from fifteen to sixteen religious priests and laymen, two priests for the Indians, one for the Doctrine of Saint Peter that is outside the city, and another in the convent, which the Yanacona Indians of the Convent administrate, by special decrees of Don Francisco de Toledo, and other viceroys; it is an annexe of Saint Peter*. (Mendoza [1664] 1976, p. 48)

The first stone of the construction of the convent was laid on 2 August 1549, the feast of the Portiuncula of Our Lady of the Angels, and, according to chronicler Diego de Mendoza, in 1556, the construction of the temple and the main altarpiece started with enthusiasm—and, at the same time, with calm. The main altarpiece was made by the master Francisco Jiménez Vargas who, in 1582, with Francisco Tito Yupanqui, gilded the image of Our Lady of the Candle. This altarpiece is currently in the church of Ancoraimes in the Department of La Paz. Regarding the temple, the aforementioned chronicler reports:

> *the site is the healthiest in the city, on the banks of the river, with a beautiful bridge of lime and stone, which the Convent built for the passage and communication into town, as it is removed from the sun. Its fabrication is plain, without art, comfortably poor for the religious dwelling of its inhabitants, with two uncovered cloisters with only one room, for protection from water. The church is plain, in the ancient fashion (the description is from 1665 and it refers to the classical Greek-Roman style), with a carved wooden roof and two collateral chapels, the choir by the convent does not have more than two ascending steps and is high on the side of the church, as it falls into a precipice, like the other buildings of the town. The masonry is all cedar wood moderately carved*. (Mendoza [1664] 1976, p. 575)

This construction was not very solid and collapsed, due to heavy snowfall, in 1612. Immediately, Don Diego de Portugal, who was Corregidor of La Paz and Tertiary Brother (*Hermano Terciario*), began its reconstruction. Such was the commitment of this devotee, that one day, while he was working, he was told by the friars to go rest at his house, to which Don Diego replied, according to the Chronicles of Diego de Mendoza: "I will

not admit God to be without a home, while I am resting in mine; first the house of God must be finished" (Mendoza [1664] 1976, p. 575). This second temple remained standing until multiple factors—like population growth, changes in the stylistic fashion of the time, evangelizing needs, and the desire of the friars to offer God the best they could—demanded the construction of a new and monumental building, which is the one standing nowadays (Romero 1976).

Undoubtedly, the growth of the city and of its pastoral needs required building a new temple, the third one. The beginning of its work dates from 1743 or 1744, when Fray Alejo Bolaños was the Guardian of the Convent, " . . . following the donation of BOP 600,000 from the miner Don Diego Baena y Antípara" (Buschiazzo 1949, p. 65). Other donations were added until the sum of BOP 1,200,000 was reached, which is what it cost. The temple was completed in 1772, and its tower in 1889 (Buschiazzo 1949).

From the dates on the dome and in the keys of the vault, it is possible to determine that the dome of the transept was completed in 1753, and the vaults of the naves in 1772.

Written on the dome is: "Se aca/vo es/ta me/dia/nara/nja/año de/1753", which reads as "this half dome was finished in the year 1753". In the vault above the choir, it says: "Se cero est/a Yglecia sie/ndo Gn E. R. P. F./Xtobal de Ri/bas Lr. Jo. A 27 de o/ctubre Año de 1772", which means "this church was closed when Gn. E.R.P.F. Xtobal de Ribas Lr. Jo. on 27 October 1772" (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Inscription on the choir. Photography: Josefina Matas, 2022.

In 1781, indigenous commander Tupac Katari (Julian Apaza) and his troops led a siege to the city of La Paz; the building was set on fire and both the temple and the convent were looted (Figure 3).

Three years after the siege, the Bishop of La Paz Monsignor Gregorio Francisco Campos consecrated the building. In a painting of the sacristy, there is a testimony of this event:

> *A true portrait of the II H.D.D. Gregorio Francisco de Campos, the most dignified Bishop of La Paz and special benefactor of the Seraphic Religion, to whose devotion is due to the conclusion of this Church, which was consecrated on 23 April 1784.* (Rossi 2003, p. 30)

The "very anti-aesthetic" tower (Figure 4), according to Buschiazzo, was the work of Brother Eulalio Morales. Its construction was possible with the donation of BOB 60,000 from Mr and Mrs Penny. Mario Buschiazzo (1949) dates 1885 as the completion of the tower. It should be noted that the latest documents found in the Franciscan Archive of La Paz are from 1898.

Figure 3. Painting by Florentino Olivares in the Museo Casa Murillo, showing the siege of La Paz by Tupac Katari in 1781.

Figure 4. View of the tower. Photography: Josefina Matas, 2023.

In the history of the temple, an event worth mentioning is its declaration as Major Basilica, granted by Pope Pius XII and celebrated, with all solemnity, on 3 August 1952. On 4 October 1959, in the liturgical feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Bishop Thomas Manning of Coroico blessed the foundation stone of the convent's new façade (Figure 5).

Figure 5. View of the façade of San Francisco. Photography: Josefina Matas, 2023.

Some structural work was carried out in the Basilica and the convent in the 1980s, with the intention of turning them into a museum and an art gallery. The main altarpiece was cleaned, as well as the pulpit, the canvases, the medallions of the central nave, and the original building of the convent was rehabilitated. However, the largest and most appropriate intervention was undertaken between 1993 and 2005. The restoration and re-functionalization project was then completed, and the buildings look since then as they do today (Matas 2017, p. 185).

5.2. Temple

The temple is 58 m long, 26 m wide, and the width of the walls ranges from 2 to 3 m. It is of the basilica type, with three naves, a semicircular vault in the transept and a rectangular presbytery. The central nave is covered with a barrel vault, reinforced by transverse arches (*fajones*), and the lateral ones are reinforced by elliptical domes.

The construction entirely made of carved stone gives the effect of one being in a hieratic and sacred space, perhaps a Romanesque one. The low height of the side naves makes it possible for the temple to be illuminated by its windows, which generate large lunettes in the central canyon (cuts)[4]. These windows still have their alabasters preserved—the translucent stones that were used instead of glass and which filter a milky and soft light. The alabasters, in the current lighting of the temple, emphasize the choir and grant the nave a clear uniformity.

It is easy to imagine this space in the 18th century, without natural light and only illuminated by the light from windows and candles, with its resplendent altarpieces, granting the whole space the mestizo character which is a product of the Andean cosmovision (Matas (2017)—Figure 6).

The dome rests directly on the pendentives, without any drum interposition, so that the four windows open in the capstone, a "curious and constructively incorrect solution" (Buschiazzo 1949, p. 17). It is divided into eight uses, employing thick ribs which rise from the central rose window, ending in windows or anthropomorphic figures. Again, it is

Buschiazzo, quoting Harold Wethey (1949), who points out the Mudejar influence in the constructive solution of the dome of the building (Buschiazzo 1949).

Figure 6. The interior architecture of Our Lady of the Angels' Temple, in the city of La Paz—view of the nave and presbytery from the choir. Photography: Josefina Matas, 2022.

5.3. The Interior Architecture of Our Lady of the Angels' Temple in the City of La Paz

The interior wealth of the temple is considerable. The altarpieces and pulpit are from the 18th century, and the front of the altar and the tabernacle are made of silver. The paintings of the presbytery, by Leonardo Flores (Figure 7), present allegories of the Virgin[5] and the Franciscan Order, which contribute to hierarchizing the main space of the building.

Figure 7. Pictures of the presbytery. Photography: Josefina Matas, 2023.

There are three important altarpieces of golden cedar: one on the main altar and two on the side altars. Their style corresponds to the second half of the 18th century, a time when the so-called Mestizo style reached its peak. The currently existing sets of altarpieces are:

> *the one of the Lord of the Belt (*Señor de la Pretina*), the one of Lourdes and the High Altar which was gilded in the late 18th century by the artist Xavier de Vargas, who concluded the work at the same time as the closure of the vault, on 27 November 1772, and the semi-circular dome, the following year.* (Mesa and Gisbert 1972, p. 216)

Mesa and Gisbert (1972) point out that the authors of this altarpiece are the same group of altars-makers who worked in Arani and in the Cochabamba Valley. In La Paz, however, Solomonic columns were decorated with bunches of grapes and heads with shells and scrolls, and the niches, in the form of trilobed arches, alternated with mirrors in the Cuzco manner. The decoration of this monumental ensemble makes it more similar to the group of altarpieces of the department of La Paz than to those of the Cochabamba Valley—for instance, it is similar to the one of Carabuco (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Main altarpiece of the temple of Carabuco in La Paz. Photographs: Josefina Matas, 2020.

Moving to the analysis of the main altarpiece (Figures 9 and 10), one can observe that it has three registers (levels) and three vertical segments, and rests on a pedestal with mestizo decoration. The upper part is adorned with a semicircular arch, with mirrors topped with flowering scrolls. Nowadays, there is a canvas of the Virgin crowned by the Trinity closing this ensemble. This painting belongs to the Cuzco School of the 18th century (Nicolini 2003; Vives Azancot 1985).

Figure 9. Main altarpiece of the Basilica of San Francisco de La Paz. Photographs: Josefina Matas, 2020.

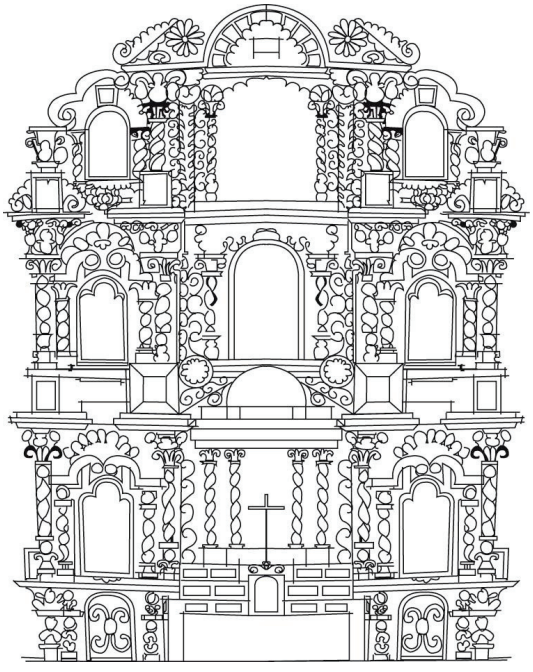


Figure 10. Diagram of the main altarpiece of the Basilica of San Francisco de La Paz. Drawn by: Josefina Matas.

The intercolumns are formed by free-standing *Bacchic* columns[6], supported by tenant[7] figures. There are niches of trilobed arches of Mudejar influence between the right feet. In the centre and first body, there is the tabernacle, inside a baldachin, supported by Solomonic columns and a semidome. The cornices that divide the registers are filled with little men in

support positions; the mirrors at the base of the columns are strategically placed to reflect the scarce light existing inside the temple. All the columns are *Bacchic*, with copious grapes, leaves, and branches[8].

The niches have pedestals for the saints and are adorned with complex mouldings with grapes and acanthus leaves.

It can be established that this altarpiece—like the building—is of mestizo baroque style. This is evidenced in its decoration and, above all, by its tone of *horror vacui*. The religious symbology is evident. The vine is the symbol of the blood of Christ that was shed for the salvation of humankind. On the pedestal, the bull, a symbol of the apostle St. Luke, appears on the side of the Gospel, and the lion, an icon of St. Mark, on the side of the Epistle (Montes Bardo 1998; Ramírez González 2006; Uribe 1962). These saints appear in this altarpiece as well as on the facade. It is difficult to establish the reason for this coincidence and why these evangelists were chosen, as we do not have any documentation referring to these facts. The number of anthropomorphic heads and the little men in tenant positions is striking. These are of cedar wood and are completely gilded with gold leaf.

Moving on from the main one, there are a total of ten other altarpieces.

From the same period as the main altarpiece, there are two more: those of the Lord of the Belt (Figure 11) and that of San Francisco de Asís. These altarpieces belong to the same school. Both have two registers and three vertical sections. As in the main altarpiece, the decoration is profuse; the Solomonic columns have abundant vines and branches, with anthropomorphic figures at the bottom and top, there are large angels in a support position throughout, and trefoil arches finishing the niches. The mirrors are also part of the ensemble.

Figure 11. Altarpiece of the Lord of the Belt. Photography: Romina Gómez, 2017.

The rest of the altarpieces correspond to Saint Anthony, the Virgin of Copacabana (Figure 12), the Virgin of El Carmen, Our Lord of Veracruz, Our Lady of Remedios, Our Lord of the Column, Saint Joseph, and the Sacred Heart. They are all in mestizo baroque style.

Figure 12. Virgin of Copacabana altarpiece. Photographs: Romina Gómez, 2017.

As for the hierarchy of spaces suggested by the altarpieces, the main altarpiece is the one that brings together the greatest functional, formal, and symbolic content of the whole: functional, because it frames the place where Holy Mass is celebrated; formal, for having the largest dimensions; and symbolic, for being the focal point of the entire building. The rest of the altarpieces have the same hierarchy. This similarity is due to the religious and symbolic function, equality of proportion, size, and design, which places them all in the same category.

The altarpiece discourse continues to have as its central axis the Virgin and the history of the Franciscan Order. In the case of the main altarpiece, it is interesting to note that, in addition to the Franciscan saints, one can find Santo Domingo de Guzmán, the founder of the Dominicans, order of preachers, and St. Thomas Aquinas, called the Angelic Doctor for his theological wisdom, who was also a Dominican. The themes of the altarpieces are the sufferings of the Passion of the Lord, the Virgin in her different advocations, Saint Joseph, the Sacred Heart, and the Franciscan saints, accompanied by a fairly complete repertoire of the saints.

The pulpit (Figure 13) is perfectly carved, along with the canopy, and is preserved in an almost intact fashion. In front of the pulpit and four other columns, there are canopies or thrones[9] of equal art (Figure 14). All these elements contribute to reinforcing the notions of transcendence and infinity, as well as the lustre and gold of the sober atmosphere. These are all aesthetic strategies that converge to highlight the evangelizing role of this altarpiece art.

In summary, the interior of the temple of San Francisco condenses the concepts of Christianity in a referential architecture, where the ornamentation of the altarpieces, pulpits, and thrones allude to important characters of Western Christian culture.

Figure 13. Pulpit. Photographs: Romina Gómez, 2017.

Figure 14. Throne. Photographs: Romina Gómez, 2017.

6. Discussion

Art has always played an important role in the evangelization and dissemination of different religions' faith throughout history. In the Christian religion, sacred art played a fundamental role in the transmission of biblical messages and the exaltation of the figure of Jesus Christ and the saints (Godinho 2018).

One of the tasks of Spanish conquistadors and religious orders in America was the evangelization of native populations and the transmission of Christian customs through models of holiness and civilized behaviour. Most of the population was more familiar with visual language than writing, so the image was the most commonly used method for disseminating the Catholic faith.

In indigenous cultures, icons were the means of communication between divinity and humanity. Therefore, expressing abstract realities, such as the Christian dogma, was easier through signs (Martínez 2012).

For both Christian and indigenous cultures alike art was a divine gift. The artist was either a messenger of the gods or their interpreter or servant. Art was made by and for religion, so it was not difficult to reinterpret ancestral nature-based cults for Christian worship (Monreal y Tejada 2000).

To impress the viewer, Catholic art used Mannerist and baroque features. Both trends stood out for emphasizing emotional and spectacular content through artificial colours and shapes since the purpose was not to imitate nature, but to highlight the message that was transmitted (Uribe 1962).

In this way, European missionaries and settlers could effectively convey their religious message to indigenous peoples, using accessible visual language familiar to them. This art also served as a propaganda tool for the Catholic Church and the Spanish crown, which sought to consolidate their power and influence in the region.

Mestizo baroque art also has unique characteristics, such as the presence of indigenous elements along with Christian religious imagery. This art is also known for the exaggerated use of ornaments, vibrant colours, and meticulous details.

Today, it remains an important cultural legacy in Bolivia, and many of the most impressive examples can be found in churches and museums in cities such as La Paz, Sucre, and Potosí (Bonet Correa 2001; Gisbert 1991; Simoni 2003). Sacred art, including altarpieces, was an important tool of evangelization during the colonial period in Latin America, and the church of San Francisco of La Paz was no exception.

The altarpieces of the church of San Francisco de la Paz, in Bolivia, are outstanding examples of colonial sacred art—they were used, as mentioned, as tools for evangelization during the colonial period in Latin America. Through their rich ornamentation and symbolism, the altarpieces helped teach the principles of Christianity to the indigenous population of the region.

The altarpieces of the church of San Francisco, of superb workmanship, are the best in the city of La Paz: with an exuberant carving, seraphim everywhere, and Solomonic columns with abundant vines and branches of small size. The paintings of Leonardo Flores, the mirrors, the sculptures of round bulk, the trilobed niches, the flowers, and the gilding make a vibrant ensemble in a sober environment, where transcendence is especially present.

7. Conclusions

In short, the whole Church has been designed to communicate. And, although the building is of great constructive sobriety, with walls, vaults, and a stone dome, there is a big contrast with the great ornamental display of the interior, resulting in a space that is the product of syncretism, the fusion of two cultures. All this boasts of interior decoration which speaks of the evangelizing desire of the friars, which led them to spare nothing for God, along with the idea that the temple should be attractive for the conversion of the peoples, thus making this temple one of the most important in Latin America.

The peculiarity of the style of San Francisco resides in the importance of its decoration, which impacts the perception of the interior space; where the formal experience of anthropomorphic motifs and other naturalistic designs accumulate, symbolism expands from the exterior to the interior. This is a novel way of working with form and content, as Marco Dorta says, with a "dense tapestry that completely covers the walls and overflows from the sides" (Gutiérrez 2005, p. 167), and with an arsenal of images accumulating in the retina of the indigenous people, which metamorphosed the whole into different works of

art. Themes of vegetable, animal, and religious worlds, typical of the American universe, are added to European motifs; the parts are integrated into a whole that subordinates them and gives them coherence, thus unifying not only two cultures, but two ways of thinking.

Author Contributions: This study is a joint work of the authors. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was supported by the sixth call for "Small projects and project ideas" from the Universidad Católica Boliviana San Pablo.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: To the Bolivian Catholic University "San Pablo" and to CICOP (Bolivia).

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

1 The Franciscan Archive of La Paz (AFLP) is not listed. Thanks to the kindness of the Provincial Minister, in the years 2021 and 2022, it was possible to enter and identify the following material about the architecture of the Temple of San Francisco of La Paz.

2 Diego de Mendoza quotes: "I, Fray Marcos de Niza, of the Order of the blessed Saint Francis, commissioner of the fathers of the same order in the provinces of Peru, who was one of the first to enter them, testifying on some of the cruelties that I have seen in that land, I speak about the bad treatment and conquest made to its natives" (Mendoza [1664] 1976, p. 10).

3 Named after the Charcas, a tribe of the area. This province, when it became independent, constituted the Republic of Bolivia (today the Plurinational State of Bolivia), named after the independence hero Bolívar. It was the first colony founded in 1538 by the governor of Peru, Diego de Rojas. Today, it is the capital of Bolivia, and is also called Sucre or La Plata.

4 The barrel vault is formed by an alignment of semicircular arches.

5 One of the features of Franciscan spirituality is its love of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. Father Galdós maintains that the main altar symbolizes "the devotion of the order to the Virgin" (Galdós and Ríos 2009, p. 233).

6 This term (relating to Bacchus, the God of wine, according to the Dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy) is used by Mesa and Gisbert (1972) to describe the incorporation of grapes in the form of a letterbox.

7 Each of the figures of angels or men supports some element of the altarpiece.

8 Green, tender, and thin shoots of vine. A decorative motif in the form of a volute or spiral.

9 The throne is called the place where the sculpture of a saint is placed when one wants to especially venerate that specific saint.

References

Primary Sources

Franciscan Archive of La Paz (AFLP). Photographs album of Franciscan Fathers, temple, and construction of the façade of the old Main Cloister, compiled by Father Manuel Aguirre (date not available).

Franciscan Archive of La Paz (AFLP). Correspondence between the architect Martín Noel, author of the façade of the convent, and the chaplain of the Church (around 1947).

Franciscan Archive of La Paz (AFLP). Manuscript on the history of the temple by layman Manuel Aguirre (the date of production is not known).

Franciscan Archive of La Paz (AFLP). Church Inventories (1918 and 1923).

Franciscan Archive of La Paz (AFLP). Plans for the restoration of the main altarpiece.

Secondary Sources

Abad Pérez, Antolín. 1992. *Los Franciscanos en América*. Madrid: Mapfre S.A.

Anasagasti, Pedro. 1992. *Los Franciscanos en Bolivia*. La Paz: Don Bosco.

Angulo Iñíguez, Diego, Enrique Marco Dorta, and Mario Buschiazzo. 1945. *Historia del Arte Hispanoamericano*. Barcelona: Salvat Editores S.A.

Bonet Correa, Antonio. 2001. *Monasterios Iberoamericanos*. Madrid: El Visio.

Buschiazzo, Mario. 1949. *Documentos de Arte Colonial Sudamericano*. Bolivia. Cuaderno VI. El templo de San Francisco de La Paz. Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes de la República Argentina.

Buschiazzo, Mario. 1961. *Estudios de Arquitectura Colonial Hispanoamericana*. Buenos Aires: Kraft.

Cajías de la Vega, Fernando. 2009. *Historia Colonial de La Paz*. Colección Bicentenario T. II. La Paz: La Razón.

Córdova y Salinas, Diego. 1957. *Crónica Franciscana de las Provincias del Perú*. Washington, DC: Academy of American Franciscan History. First published 1651.
Cuadrado Sánchez, Marta. 1991. Arquitectura Franciscana en España, S. XIII–XIV. In *Archivo Iberoamericano 51*. Madrid: Padres Franciscanos, pp. 15–70.
Espinoza Spinola, Gloria. 1999. *Arquitectura de la Conversión y Evangelización en la Nueva España Durante el siglo XVI*. Almería: Universidad de Almería.
Galdós, Carmelo, and José Luis Ríos. 2009. *Diálogo Permanente Entre dos Mundos, en Bolivia Franciscana*. año 9, Nro.9. Cochabamba: Kipus, pp. 133–35.
García Ros, Vicente. 2000. *Los Franciscanos y la Arquitectura de San Francisco a la Exclaustración*. Valencia: Editorial Asís.
Gisbert, Teresa. 1991. *Historia de la Vivienda y los Conjuntos Urbanos en Bolivia*. Sucre: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia.
Gisbert, Teresa, and José Mesa. 1997. *Arquitectura Andina*. La Paz: Don Bosco.
Gisbert, Teresa, and José Mesa. 2012. *Historia del Arte en Bolivia. Periodo Virrreinal*. La Paz: Gisbert y Cía.
Godinho, Carlos A. Graça. 2018. Evangelizar pela arte. *Theologica* 153: 69–78.
Gutiérrez, Ramón. 2005. *Arquitectura y Urbanismo en Iberoamérica*. Madrid: Cátedra.
Martínez, Juan Manuel. 2012. Arte y culto. In *El Poder de la Imagen Religiosa*. Santiago: Museo Histórico Nacional.
Matas, Josefina. 2017. Arquitectura franciscana en la Provincia Misionera de San Antonio de los Charcas. Unpublished. Ph.D. dissertation, Universidad Nacional de Tucumán (Argentina), San Miguel de Tucumán, Argentina.
Mendoza, Diego. 1976. *Crónica de la Provincia franciscana de San Antonio de los Charcas*. La Paz: Don Bosco. First published in 1664.
Mesa, José de, and Teresa Gisbert. 1985. La ciudad de Charcas y sus barrios de indios. In *La Ciudad Iberoamericana, Actas del Seminario de Buenos Aires*. Buenos Aires: Biblioteca CEHOPU.
Mesa, José, and Teresa Gisbert. 1972. *Escultura Virreinal en Bolivia*. La Paz: Academia Nacional de Ciencias de Bolivia.
Monreal y Tejada, Luis. 2000. *Iconografía del Cristianismo*. Barcelona: El Acantilado.
Montes Bardo, Joaquín. 1998. *Arte y Espiritualidad Franciscana en la Nueva España, siglo XVI*. Jaén: Universidad de Jaén.
Morales, Francisco. 1993. *Franciscanos en América*. México: Conferencia Franciscana de Santa María de Guadalupe.
Nicolini, Alberto. 2003. Categorías Estilísticas e Historia Urbana. In *Simposio Internacional sobre Arte Colonial*. Buenos Aires: Memorial/Fondo de Cultura Económica.
Privaser, Wolfgang. 1919. *Archivo de la Comisaría Franciscana*. Tarata: Imprenta del Colegio de Propaganda Fide.
Ramírez González, Sergio. 2006. *Málaga Seráfica. Arquitectura, Patrimonio y Discurso Simbólico de los Conventos Franciscanos (1485–1835)*. Málaga: Universidad de Málaga, Málaga.
Romero, José Luis. 1976. *Latinoamérica, las Ciudades y las Ideas*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI.
Rossi, José. 2003. *La Paz-Bolivia: Iglesia y Convento de San Francisco en su Historia*. Bolivia Franciscana, año 3, n° 3. Tarija: La Antoniana, pp. 29–31.
San Cristóbal, Antonio. 2004. *Esplendor de la Arquitectura Virreinal*. Lima: Ed. Peisa S.A.
Simoni, Juan Carlos. 2003. *Arquitectura y Urbanismo de las Misiones Franciscanas en el Chaco Boliviano*. en Esquicio 2. Santa Cruz: FADU UPSA.
Uribe, Ángel. 1962. Espiritualidad de la descalcez franciscana. In *Archivo Iberoamericano*. Madrid: Padres Franciscanos, pp. 133–61.
Vives Azancot, Pedro. 1985. Iberoamérica y sus ciudades en los siglos XVII y XVIII. In *La Ciudad Iberoamericana*. Actas del Seminario de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires: Biblioteca CEHOPU.
Wethey, Harold. 1949. *Colonial Architecture and Sculpture in Peru*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

religions

MDPI

Article

A Transition Period Ritual of the Karay Turks: Death

Emine Atmaca [1], Reshide Gözdaş [2], Ekin Kaynak Iltar [3,*], Rabia Akçoru [4] and Süleyman Ertan Tağman [5]

[1] Faculty of Letters, Turkish Language and Literature, Akdeniz University, Antalya 07058, Türkiye; eatmaca@akdeniz.edu.tr
[2] Faculty of Arts & Science, Turkish Language and Literature, Bolu Abant Izzet Baysal University, Bolu 14030, Türkiye; reshidegozdas@ibu.edu.tr
[3] Faculty of Letters, Philosophy, Akdeniz University, Antalya 07058, Türkiye
[4] Mediterranean Civilizations Research Institute, Mediterranean Medieval Studies, Akdeniz University, Antalya 07058, Türkiye; rabiakcoru@gmail.com
[5] Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Philosophy, Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Burdur 15030, Türkiye; setagman@mehmetakif.edu.tr
* Correspondence: ekinkaynak@akdeniz.edu.tr

Abstract: Karaism is a Jewish sect that emerged in the Middle Ages and became the name of a Turkish tribe in time. Its name is derived from "kara- (K-R-A)", meaning "the ones who can read the sacred scripture" in Aramaic–Hebrew. The Karaites are members of the Jewish Karai sect, which only accepts the *Torah*. This feature naturally causes many differences. One of the main differences observed is the rituals for an individual in the death transition period, an important phase of human life. In this study, the death-themed core beliefs of the Karaites, which are brought from the roots of the Turkish genealogical tree, and the rituals that are combined with Judaism are analyzed. The differences stemming from geography and contacts with diverse cultures (such as Russian, Lithuanian, Polish, Belarussian, etc.) and the similarities in the rituals at the time of death and afterward stand out, especially funerals, which comprise the mourning traditions performed during and after the funerals belonging to the Karaites living in Crimea and Lithuania. Texts and words compiled from the Karay Turks living in Trakai, Lithuania, and the data acquired via observations are used to determine this information. In particular, the studies of Yuriy Aleksandroviç Polkanov, the head of the Crimean Karaites Association, are used for the data related to Crimean Karaites.

Keywords: Khazar state; Karay Turks; Karaism; Crimea; transition period; death rituals

Citation: Atmaca, Emine, Reshide Gözdaş, Ekin Kaynak Iltar, Rabia Akçoru, and Süleyman Ertan Tağman. 2023. A Transition Period Ritual of the Karay Turks: Death. *Religions* 14: 870. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14070870

Academic Editors: Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges, Helena Albuquerque and José María Salvador-González

Received: 26 April 2023
Revised: 3 June 2023
Accepted: 5 June 2023
Published: 4 July 2023

1. Introduction

The Karai sect and the Karay Turks are topics that a few researchers could study further. Due to their inclination to privacy and their isolated lifestyles, there is not adequate information on the origin of the Karay Turks, their reason for choosing Karaism, or simply the way they carry out their rituals. In this study, we aim to find answers to some of these questions according to the information we have gathered and analyzed. Firstly, the Karay Turks, who owe their sect and national equality to the general ethnogenesis of religion and language, are discussed using historical data. Then, both the death-themed essential beliefs of the Karaites in Crimea and Lithuania, which stemmed from the root of the Turkishness tree, and the rituals blended with Judaism are analyzed together. During the analysis, the differences that originated from contact with different geography and cultures drew attention, as well as the similarities between the death transition period practices of the Karaites. Field research was carried out when gathering this information by using observation and interview techniques with three people residing in Trakai, Lithuania, whom we consider as a source and assigned identification numbers such as 1, 2, and 3 in the main text. Whether there are similarities between the customs, beliefs, traditions, and contemporary practices and whether these rituals still endure based on the information given by

the three people who were interviewed during the field research were established. Occurrences/situations were examined in their natural flow, and notes were taken constantly. The observation was carried out objectively without subjective evaluations. Lastly, the works of Yuriy Aleksandroviç Polkanov, Crimea Scientific Council President, were considered particularly fundamental for the data obtained from the Crimean Karaites.

2. The Karaite Sect

Religion is a sociocultural system that has persisted for thousands of years in terms of human history to this day. Judaism is among the oldest religions in human history and the first example of a monotheistic religion. It is an ethnic religion that consists of the beliefs, culture, moral structure, and laws of the nation of Jews. It is divided into sects in time with the impact of constantly changing discourses: Hasidics, Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Jewish Christians, Zealots, Yudghanites, Rabbinic Jews, etc. (Küçük et al. 2012, pp. 331–39). One of them is Karaism or the Karaite sect, which emerged from Judaism due to influences from religious, political, and social causes.[1]

The etymology of the word "Karâîm" ("Karayim" in Turkish) is related to the Ancient Hebrew root "kar" קרא, meaning "to read". From this root, the participle *karay* קראי, meaning "the one who reads", is derived. This participle is conjugated in the plural as קראים = Karâîm, meaning "the ones who read". While the word "Karâîm" is widely used to represent a religious group of Karays all over the world, the religious belief of this group is called "Karaism". The name "Karay" appears among people of Turkish descent and in literary language as *Karaylar*, *Karay*, *Keray*, and *Karait* (Мусаев 2003, p. 7; Kocaoğlu 2017, pp. 7–8). Additionally, from this root, the word *mikra* is derived (the Sacred Scripture or the Old Testament). This is the only sacred book of the Karaites (Kefeli 2002, p. 4). Those who are disciples of the Karai sect accept and read the Tanakh (~the Old Testament) as the source of religious commands (2). For the Karaites, Tanakh is written clearly, and it is free from mistakes (*Дубинский* 2005, p. 50). Tanakh is an acronym comprising three sections of the sacred book of Judaism: *Torah*, *Neviim*, and *Ketuvim*'s capitals (Kefeli 2002, p. 8).[2] Tanakh consists of 24 chapters that are divided into three books: "Law", q.e., *Torah*; "Prophets", q.e., *Neviim*; "Scripture", q.e., *Ketuvim*. The first of these is *Torah* or *Tevrat*,[3] and *Torah* means "code, shari'a, law, display, education, doctrine". It is divided into two parts: *written* and *oral* (Talmud). According to the faith, God gave written and oral *Torah* together as the oral one is an explanation of the written one to Moses at Har Sinai (~Mt. Sinai) or Mt. Horeb. Moses reported this orally to Yeshua, who would become the head of the tribe after him (Kaya 2015, pp. 81–82). The written *Torah* consists of five books, and it was given to Moses with its supplements by God at Mt. Sinai. Oral *Torah*, q.e., *Talmud*, is a written and supplementary book that consists of words attributed to Moses, which are accepted as his expressions, and *Torah*'s commentary (Kutluay 2001, p. 164).

The Karaites only believe In the written *Torah*, and the Ten Commandments in *Torah*/*Tevrat* are the foundations of their faith. One of the most important Karay Turks, Avraam Ben Shemuel Firkoviç, mentioned this matter in an interview: "The foundation of the Karay religion is the Old Testament (*Дубинский* 2005, p. 40), especially *Decalogue or Aserot ha-Diberot* (~Ten Commandments). Ten Commandments symbolize the part to be fulfilled by the Israelites, which is from the testament made through Moses between God Yahweh and the Israelites (Atasağun 2001, p. 136). Therefore, the firm commitment to the Ten Commandments, including honesty, modesty, and clemency, is considered a crucial moral responsibility for the disciples of the Karâîm sect. There are "Ten Dogmas of the Doctrine" developed at the end of the Middle Ages with the *Decalogue* (*Дубинский* 2005, p. 41; 2). The Karaites reject *Talmud* in which the productions of the oral tradition are to be found and accepted as the foundational text of the Rabbinical law. Since Talmud includes later additions which they consider to be against the written law" (Firkovičius 1994, p. 34; 2). As observed, the Karaites are strictly committed to the original transcript at the time of the Prophet, which is called *Ветхий Завет*/*Старый Завет* or "Old Testament". Thus, they comply with this commandment in the *Torah*: "You shall not add to that which I command

you and you shall not subtract from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord, your God" (Eliade 2019, pp. 205–6). This transcript is of divine origin and no interpretation, explanation, or any other modification was added to the transcript (Kokizov 2011, p. 875). Moreover, the Karaites changed the prayer that, resembling the Islamic confession of faith, Jews recite constantly in every ritual as "Shema Yisrael, Adonai eleheinu, Adonai ahat".[4] Instead of addressing Israel, they say "Shema Karai, Adonai eleheinu, Adonai ahat"[5] (Tanyu 1978, pp. 34–54).

The Karaite sect, which initially emerged as a Middle-Eastern-based religion, appeared in many regions of the world by particularly spreading to Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Byzantine, Iran, Armenia, and Caucasia (Danon 1925, p. 289; Suleymanov 2012, p. 22). The sect was established and systematized in c. 760 by Anan ben David (715–795) of Basra in the Abbasid Dynasty, even though its roots are traced far back in Jewish history. Rabbanites also date the sect's foundation to Anan ben David in the 8th century, and they view them as their opponents (Lasker 2011, p. 427). This sect, which is named Ananiya after its founder in the beginning (Kuzgun 1985, pp. 156–57), is named the Karaite sect after a short period (Doğruer 2007, p. 38).

Although the first Karaite community appeared at the time of Anan ben David, Talmudistic Jews, especially the ones in Iraq, objected strongly since the Karaites objected to the interpretation of Tanakh, similarly to the Talmudists. At the beginning of the 8th century, Karaite communities emerged in many places, especially in Jerusalem. One of them is Khazar country where most of the population consists of Turks (Şişman 1957, pp. 97–102). Unfortunately, sources on this subject are scarce, although research of great importance was carried out on the Khazars' conversion to Judaism. One of the most important sources is an anonymous epistle, which was introduced to the scientific world in 1912 and named after its publisher as *Schechter Epistle* or after its location where it was found as the *Cambridge Document* or *Kenize Epistle* (Karatay 2008, pp. 1–17). The Khazar state acknowledged Judaism between 750 and 790 according to this source (Suleymanov 2012, p. 50). Two papers on the Khazars called *Khazars* and *The Khazar Khanate* in the latest edition of *Bolshaya Sovetskaya Ansiklopedya* contain this conclusive statement: "Towards the end of the 8th century, the strata of the Khazars accepted Judaism (Zajaczkowski 1961, p. 480). It is known that the Karaite sect emerged in the Khalifate of Abū Jaʿfar ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Manṣūr (754–775) engaged in missionary activity at that time and converted the people of other countries. The Karaite missionaries arrived at Caspian and Black Sea steppes through Byzantine, and here they made the sect spread among the Khazars, the Kumans, and other Turkic people (Zajaczkowski 1961, p. 479; Зайончковский 2005, p. 69).

3. The Karay Turks

The Karaites are the only people in the world who have lived in Crimea since Antiquity and accept the Karai sect as their national religion (Бабаджан et al. 2000, p. 19). Their immigration to Crimea took place long before the Kipchaks, Khazars, and Tatars appeared in this region. The Karaites have lived together with the Tatars in Crimea. Tatar Khans frequently gained the support of the Karaites while struggling with each other. Even the Karaites supported Tokhtamysh Khan over Mengli Giray, and they helped him to be triumphant in the battle against Giray. At that time, the Karay Turk community consisted of only 40 families.[6] The name "Kırk-Er" or "Kırk-Or"[7] (40 places) was given to a castle in the dedication of their victory, and a piece of marble with engraved victory symbols, such as stirrups, pitchforks, and shields, was hung on the main door of the castle. These symbols are also preserved to this day (Lebedeva 2003, p. 5). Bertier-Delagard provided information about Chufut Kale (~Kırk-Er/Kırk-Or) as follows: "/…/ It existed long before the Tatars. Whatever the name was given, this city was so important in the country that when the Tatars attempted to siege it, the siege lasted longer than it could be, which meant the opponents' defense was persistent". After capturing the castle, the Tatars placed their garrison inside during the struggles for the independence of the Crimean Khans against the Golden Horde and the civil wars of the Giray Dynasty (Lebedeva 2003, p. 6). At the end of the 13th

century and the beginning of the 14th century, these civil wars in Crimea forced some of the Karaites to immigrate from Crimea to the Principality of Galicia–Volhynia and Lithuania. Another reason for this immigration decision was that the Grand dukes of Lithuania were called by Gediminas (1275–1341), Kestutis (1297–1382), and Algirdas (1296–1377) to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania for military service and to battle against the Teutonic Knights. These dukes conferred freedom upon the Karay Turks and permitted them to settle on the shores of the Vokė River near Vilnius. The Karay Turks began to settle in Lithuania in the 14th century, especially during the reign of Prince Vytautas (~Witold) (1392–1430). Prince Vytautas placed 383 Karay families from Crimea (near Old Crimea, Eski Kırım) in Trakai in 1398 (Мусаев 2003, p. 7). Thus, they owned lands that they forever benefitted from, on one condition that they should never sell their lands. In exchange for land, they owed military service to the dukes (Grişin 2000, p. 7).

The Karaites, who are ethnically considered Turkish people (Şayhan 2012, p. 95), describe themselves as *Karay* or *Karays* and trace their origin to Khazar Turks (Dunlop 2008, p. 12; Grişin 2000, p. 19; Şişman 1957, pp. 97–102). The Karay Turkish tribe descended not only from Khazars but also Bulgarians, Uz-Pechenegs, Kipchak Cumans (~Comans), and the old Turkish tribes: *Uzon, Çuyün*, and *Nayman*'s interactions were inferred from this Turkish tribe's texts according to native and foreigner Turcologist research, even though it is recorded that the Karaites are a Turkish tribe consisting of the Khazars. An Abbasid embassy delegation was sent to the Itil/Volga Bulgar Khanate, and as the delegation scribe, Ibn Fadlan's testimony in his *Risāla* proves this information. The testimony is as follows: "the Khazar Khanate consists of 25 people each of whom sent a bride to the Khanate as its subject". This community of Turkish descent accepted Karaism, which bore the same name as the sect they belonged to. Ibn Fadlan provides the following information: "all of the Khazars and their rulers are Jews"; however, there is no evidence supporting that they visited the Khazar State in his *Risāla* (Fadlan 2017, p. 47). In contrast, it is claimed in historical data that Khazaria was a cosmopolitan country where many people from diverse nations and races came together, and in the capital city, of Khazaria, Itil (~Sarkel), there are four different religious systems, such as Christians, Muslims, followers of the *Torah*, and ones who did not follow a scripture (q.e., Kamlik religion/Shamanists) (Zajaczkowski 1961, p. 479; Golden 2006, p. 285). Furthermore, religious diversity in the state's legal system stands out. As narrated by the Arabic geographer Mesudî, there were seven qadis in the capital of the Khazaria, Itil: Two of them were Christians, two were Muslims, two believed in the *Torah*, and one did not follow scriptures (q.e., Kamlik religion/Shamanists) (Zajaczkowski 1961, p. 479; Golden 2006, p. 285). Historical data show that the patrimonial class and intellectual class adopted Judaism, whereas the people were still following different belief systems (Türkdoğan 2011, p. 102). This example of *convivencia* could be explained as the indulgence of the Khazar Khan to his people (Zajaczkowski 1961, p. 479).

The Turkish traveler Evliya Celebi claims that the Crimean Karay Turks living in Crimea were different from Jews with respect to their faith (Бабинов 2004, pp. 11–12): "All of the Jews belonging to the Karai sect are Chufuts. Other Jews do not like these. They do not seek what is kosher (halal) or forbidden (turfa) in their foods. No matter whose food it might be, whether it is fatty or not, they eat it. These are the Qizilbashs of Jews and at the apocalypse, they do not ride the Qizilbash, but the other Israeli Chufuts do. They say 'Râfizî rûz-ı kıyâmet har buved zîr-i yehûd' as a verse. Those are Israeli Jews. They read Torah and Psalm, but they never know the Chufut language. They speak the Tatar language, and they wear Tatar kalpaks from purple çuka,[8] not hats /…/" (Kahraman 2013, vol. VII, p. 266).[9]

There is no doubt that Seraya Shapshal, the fourth hazan of the Crimean Karaites, had an immense effect on identifying the ethnic identities of the Karay Turks. Shapshal attempted to prove and convey his thesis that the Karaites had Turko-Khazar origins in his pamphlet titled *Karaimı i Çufut (Çuft) Kale v Krımu* (*The Karaites in Crimea and Chufut Castle*), which was published when he was a student in the faculty of oriental studies of

St. Petersburg University in 1896. The pamphlet has two main sections. He discussed the emergence of the Karaites in Crimea; their origin; their first settlement; the Karaite sect; the difference between the Karaites sect and other Jewish sects; spiritual leaders; the emergence of Russian Karaites; and so on in the first eleven pages of the first section. The settlement of Chufut Castle; places to see around the castle; the walls and door of the castle; temples; shrines; the living conditions of the Karaites near Chufut Castle before the Russian rule in Crimea; the fate of Chufut Castle since 1783; prominent people who visited the castle; the old cemetery of the Karaites; the speech of the Rabbi presented to the Tzar Alexandre III; and so on were discussed in the second section (Şapşal 1895, pp. 1–28). This brief but valuable work of Shapshal comprised the beginning of the research concerning the history of the Karaites, their ethnicity, their culture, Chufut Castle, and the Karaite sect. Later research has revealed that the Karaites adopted a religion of their own within Judaism, named Karaism, which accepts the *Torah* as the only scripture and rejects Talmud; by this aspect, the Karaites have different beliefs from Rabbinic Jews following Talmud. The Karaites have their place both in Judaism by believing in the *Torah*, Hebrew scripture, and Moses and in Turkish religious and cultural history due to their origins as Turks. As in other Turkish communities, the Karaites maintained traditional Turkish religious beliefs and lifestyles (Arık 2005, p. 49).

Daniel J. Lasker, a professor at Ben Gurion University known for his studies in Karaite Judaism, has different claims regarding the formation of the Karaite ethnicity: "A good example of the new Russified, secular, nationalist Karaites was Seraya Shapshal (1873–1961), the man most responsible for Karaite 'de-Judaization'… There is no doubt that Shapshal drew some of his inspiration from the Turkish nationalism of Kemal Ataturk. Part of Shapshal's reforms were to replace Hebrew with the Turkic Karaim language wherever he could, e.g., in the synagogue liturgy and on tombstones in the Karaite cemeteries. The language was now written in Latin letters, no longer in the traditional Hebrew characters. Loan words, especially from Hebrew, were replaced by newly coined Turkic words. Hebrew personal names were abandoned, and a new calendar, with the names of the months and the holidays replaced by 'Turkic' names, invented by Shapshal, was devised. Shapsal rewrote Karaite history as well. Suddenly, Jesus and Muhammed were considered Karaite prophets. Karaites were said to worship sacred oaks in the Chufut-Kale cemetery, thus turning Karaism into a syncretic religion that included elements of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and paganism. Shapshal also created a coat of arms, with pagan symbols, to replace the iconography of the Star of David and Ten Commandments in Karaite synagogues. The word 'synagogue' itself was banned and replaced by the less-Jewish-sounding term 'kenesa' or 'kenasa'. Most importantly, the Karaites were declared to be descendants of Turkic tribes, with no historical affinity whatsoever to the Jewish people" (Lasker 2020, p. 6).

The words of Szymon Juchniewicz from the Lithuanian Karay Turks regarding religious authenticity are worth mentioning. During our interview, although we did not pose any questions regarding this matter, he expressed these words repeatedly: "We are definitely not Jews even though our prophet is Moses, we are Turks, our traditions are the same as yours, we speak Turkish like you". We gathered text and word compilations from Juchniewicz and Hazan Lavrinovicius, a great deal of which are in the Turkic Karaim language (Troki dialect) rather than Russian. Hazan Lavrinovicius stated that both Jesus and Muhammed were subjected to the laws of Moses; they believed that the genuine book of religious law was the *Torah*, and neither the Quran nor Bible abolished the *Torah*. Moreover, he mentioned that they considered the Psalms of David valuable, and they prayed using the Psalms during daily rituals.

The Karay Turks owe their national equality to the ethnogenesis of religion and language. This situation united these Turkic people, ensured the preservation of national unity, and at the same time transformed the name of the religion into an ethnonym (Zajaczkowski 1961, pp. 480–81). Language has a common national value for this ethnic group. Therefore, the mother tongue equals national identity and religion for the Karay Turks. Within this respect, Crimean Karay Turks described their ethnic identity in the

Ukrainian Congress in 2003: "Crimean Karaites are the natives of Crimea who are unified through common bloodlines, language, and tradition. Crimean Karaites are fully aware of their blood relations with Turkic peoples, their ethnical privileges, their cultural authenticity, and their religious independence, they also feel unique feelings towards Crimea, for it is their historical homeland" (Suleymanov 2012, p. 44). In the same manner, during our interview with Szymon Juchniewicz, a Lithuanian Karay Turk, he mentioned this sentence repeatedly: "We are not definitely Jewish, we are Turks, our traditions are the same as yours".

As a historian of religions, Ahmet Hikmet Eroglu provided information that the Karay Turks living in Istanbul are different from other Jews in his work titled *Jews Among the Ottoman Turks (Until the end of 19th century)*: "Jews have another cult. It is called Karaim. The members of this cult differ from ordinary Jews. They do not live together with other Jews. They have their own unique houses.[10] They do not eat or drink in the same place, they feed their animals separately, and they make their wine. Their diets are specific to themselves. While other Jews eat meat, they eat fish. The members of this cult do not intermarry with others. They are committed to the five books of Moses and the Ten Commandments" (Eroğlu 1997, p. 86).

4. The Transition Rituals

In some cultures, the three stages of birth, wedding/marriage, and death are considered as the transition periods of human life. The customs, traditions, rituals of these transition periods, and their applications constitute the fundamental stages of Turkish tribes' traditional culture. The Karay Turks also consider the transition periods important, similarly to other Turkish tribes, and they apply the practices by themselves according to the remnants of the old Turkish religion and Karâî belief system.

The third turning point of the transition period naturally is "death". There are various beliefs, traditions, customs, and rituals about death among the Karaites as well as among other Turkic peoples. The foundation of these practices was formed by Tengrism or the traditional Turkish religion (Мусаев 2003, p. 9). While applying the practices, the deceased is feared because of the various negativities caused by death, and souls are deeply respected. This procedure comprises preparation for the deceased to be sent to the afterlife, and the idea that the deceased is still described as living and the need for protection from them lies behind this procedure. Moreover, concerns about hygiene and especially religious traditions are important factors (Örnek 1995, p. 214). For the Karay Turks, religious customs and traditions are more important when helping the deceased transition to the other world; in the process of transitioning, the soul of the deceased peacefully transitions into their new life (2). It is essential to provide protective power from the ancestors' cult, which comprises respect and fear when performing these rituals.

5. The Death Rituals of the Karay Turks

The Karaites' death customs and rituals, which are carried out to prepare the deceased for the other world, are very different from the Jews' customs. As mentioned before, many symbolic rituals of the transition periods of the Karaites consist of traces belonging to the traditional Turkish religion (Altınkaynak 2006, p. 12). Moreover, it could be claimed that this belief survives in new forms, even though they have adopted another religion or sect (Suleymanov 2012, p. 97).

There is no music in the worship and funeral rituals of the Karaites (3). They chant hymns and an elegy for the deceased, and they sing songs. To bury the deceased and carry out lustration, a kind of shroud and prayer by Hazan is necessary (1; 2). By carrying out these three processes, there are many traditional beliefs and religious rituals taken from the Karâî sect, so much so that most of the time, these beliefs stand out more (2).

Anyone or a messenger in the Karay community informs everyone about the deceased, similarly to weddings. The messenger offers their condolences by saying "bashin sav bolsun"[11] at every house upon arriving. The messenger gives information about the

identity of the deceased after having received the expression "dostlar sav bolsun"[12] in return. Since it is forbidden for the relatives to touch the deceased in Karaism, burial services are carried out by special officials who are called gabars (Suleymanov 2012, p. 127). Burial services are often carried out by two men or two women. Some representatives of certain families were the only individuals that could be gabars long ago; however, at the beginning of the 20th century, assigning Karaites that have poor financial situations as gabars have become a tradition (Чижова 2003, p. 80). Gabars in Crimea typically live in a house near the kenesa/prayer house (Çulha 2012, p. 396); this does not apply to the Karaites in Lithuania (1).

It is forbidden for the Karaites to shake hands, hug, and kiss at the mourning house and cemetery. The deceased needs to be buried as soon as possible according to the Karaites (Чижова 2003, p. 80). Burying the deceased on Saturdays (~sabbath "resting day")[13], Rosh Hashanah (~new year), Yom Kippur (~boşatlık "day for redemption"), Pesach (Passover), Shavuot, Sukkot (~Sukott), Simchat Torah, etc., is also forbidden. Therefore, the deceased is kept in a place called the ghusl room in kenesa (Çulha 2012, p. 396). After the person is accepted as deceased, a sheet is laid on them. A coffin is brought, and the corpse is washed on a special board, which is then brought to the house of the deceased by the cemetery guard (1). This board is round, with low iron-clad rims (6–8 cm), and it has holes for water discharge (Чижова 2003, p. 80). The cemetery guard is the one who brings the board (1). Having been washed, the deceased is clothed in white and shrouded with a white shroud. If the deceased is male, underpants, a long linen shirt, socks, a bathrobe, slippers, and a hat are used; if the deceased is female, a shirt, pants, socks, a dress, slippers, and a hijab are required (Saraç et al. 2007, p. 163; Suleymanov 2012, p. 128).

A velvet cloth is placed in the coffin, and over the velvet cloth, a clean white sheet is laid; on top of them, the deceased is placed with stretched arms, and a little pillow sits under their head. Soil from the family cemetery or Balta Tiymez cemetery in Crimea is placed over the eyes of the deceased. Again, a velvet cloth or a regular sheet is placed over the deceased. Their body and face are covered separately with a handkerchief. It is important not to place any jewelry anywhere near the deceased (1). After closing the coffin, a black cloth is placed over it (Polkanov 1994b, p. 56). Before taking the coffin out of the house, relatives and friends place pieces of fabric (velvet, silk, etc.) over it, of which their quantity and quality depend on their financial situation. These pieces of fabric are given to the closest relatives of the deceased, and they are handed out to Hazan and the poor after 7 days (Чижова 2003, p. 81). If the deceased is female, a marriage contract called şettar[14] wrapped with white linen is placed on the coffin. It is a custom among the Karaites to carry the deceased in a closed coffin because "the open coffins of the deceased at the funerals are profane"; this is accepted as a rule by a special decision of the Karay clergy congress (Бабинов 2004, p. 16; Suleymanov 2012, p. 128).

Concerning prayers, two candles are placed near the head of the coffin during the night. Then, Hazan recites kıyna, which are the mourning songs for this special occasion, and zeher is recited, which is a kind of prayer for the dead. The prayer is usually recited in Karay Turkish; however, in the 20th century, it was common for it to be recited in Russian (Polkanov 1994a, pp. 29–30; Чижова 2003, p. 81). As for Lithuanian Karaites, two or more people recite prayers for the deceased until the morning after Hazan completes the recitation. It is believed that sins are forgiven by God without the agency of a religious leader. Consequently, none of the Karay Turks speak loudly of their sins. Therefore, when praying, they ask for forgiveness from God both for themselves and for the deceased (2). They recite prayers from the Psalms of the prophet David (Kobeckaitė 2006, p. 11) and a book titled *Karaj Dińliliarnińj Jalbarmach Jergialiari*, which translates into "Supplication Texts of the Members of the Karay religion" (2). The main components of the prayers of the Karaites are separate parts of the Psalms and hymns written by the clergy. In general, prayer consists of four parts, which are praising, expressing gratitude, repentance, and supplication. The rituals of the Karaites, including the order of the prayers, were formed at the end of the 13th century (*Дубинский* 2005, p. 42).

The coffin's lid is always kept closed during prayers. If the lid is open, the visitors leave money on the stomach of the deceased; if it is closed, they leave it on the coffin's lid. Hazan prays for the funeral in a similar fashion to the salah in Islam before taking the deceased out. Among the Crimean Karaites, this prayer is recited in Russian today, and it used to be recited in Karay Turkish (Suleymanov 2012, p. 129). On the other hand, in Lithuanian Karaites, this prayer can either be recited in Karay Turkish or Russian (2). After Hazan prays for everyone, different prayers for the identity of the deceased are said. Even though the variety of the prayers depends on whether the deceased is old, a religiously respected senior, a single young man, a married man, a single young woman, or a married woman (Koçak 2015, p. 427), Hazan usually prays as follows: "Every living being's life and breath is under God's rule. All the doctrines of the earth are under God's rule and the power of the mountains comes from him. The sea he created is his. The land his power created is his. He never discriminates between the rich and the poor he created by his power. Everybody eventually returns to the ground. All of them lie over the ground and are covered by worms. God is the one who gives power to everyone, both the one who makes mistakes and the one who deceives. Mind and courage are given to all. A wise and powerful person never says anything unpleasant. He is the one who tears down the mountains, but they never know it is God's rage. He is the one who makes the land tremble, but humans come up with other causes for it" (Firkovičius 1999, p. 107; Koçak 2015, p. 427).

Then, Hazan continues their prayers as follows: "God is true and rules with justice. Praised be God whose every order is true and fair. If God stops and thinks, what will I say as an answer? Therefore, I fear your presence. I think and fear him. Lord, sitting on the throne of justice, I am purged from my sins, and who says, 'I purified my heart' is gracious to all sins" (Firkovičius 1999, pp. 107–8; Koçak 2015, p. 427).

Before the coffin is taken out of the house, Hazan prays as follows: "The mourning is heard with a wail/ The person fades into the distance from us/ The soul scatters and shakes/ The eye may shed sorrowful tears/ They left this world/ They went to their eternal place/ The sufferings they had/ Had shortened their life./ May you keep crying and groaning/ Lamenting too/ May you comfort the ones mourning/ They were orphaned./ Protect your flock my God/ Take away their worries./ Bring together what has been scattered/ Give comfort./ Spare your servants/ Guarding your unity./ Send them your forgiveness/ May they find power in your presence/ Send them your forgiveness/ May they find power in your presence" (Firkovičius 1999, pp. 111–12; Koçak 2015, pp. 427–28).

It used to be customary to keep the coffin in kenesa, a Karaite synagogue, for a while. However, it has become necessary to carry the coffin to the cemetery without delay after the prayer is carried out (1). During the funeral procession, Hazan follows the coffin closely, and the relatives follow the funeral procession at a certain distance. It is a tradition for the funeral procession to cease for a short moment when passing by shrines in the kenesa (Чижова 2003, p. 81). If the house of the deceased is close to the cemetery, the coffin is carried over the shoulders; if the house of the deceased is far, then it is carried over the shoulders to a car, which then takes it to the cemetery. Hazan follows the coffin, and the relatives of the deceased follow Hazan (Polkanov 1994a, p. 41; 2). They pay attention to taking the coffin out of the house with its head first since it is believed that a human being leaves the world the same way they came into the world (1). If the funeral passes by a house where a Karay lives, then the owners of that house must keep all windows and doors closed (1). The windows and doors are kept closed to protect the household from various negativities caused by the deceased and deceased souls (2). In the cemetery, Hazan recites a kind of salah and prays. This mourning comprises a prayer that narrates the deceased's life. This prayer is called syjyt jyry, meaning "the song of mourning" (Kobeckaitė 2006, p. 11; Firkovičius 1999, p. 129).

The grave is dug in the north/south orientation. The coffin is placed in the grave, with the feet of the deceased facing the south and their face oriented toward Jerusalem (2). The deceased must be buried in this fashion so that they face Jerusalem (1). The kiblah

orientation for the Karaites is oriented toward the temple of Solomon in Mount Zion, q.e., Beit Hamikdash (~Western Wall) (1).

Hazan prays while facing the grave: "Here even the servant is liberated from their servant. Generations come and go, but that place stays for eternity. What benefit is there for the person who suffers under the sun throughout their life? How will the end of mankind and animals be? They are not different from one another. All have one life, and their deaths are alike. If the whole world gathers in the same place, death will be the same for the faithful, the blasphemous, the good and pure, the villain, the innocent or the sinner, the one who took the vow, and the one who fears the vow. May you never utter evil words, and may your hearts never want to speak disgracefully in the presence of God, because God is in the heavens, and you are everywhere. Therefore, speak less. Try to do the best that is in your power to do, because your plan or mind does not matter in the grave which is your last resort. I looked and have seen that it does not matter what those who live under the sun do, whether it is that the one with the feet walks, the one with the courage builds an army, the one with the mind eats bread, the wise one teaches and the one who knows how is loveable. Everyone has a certain time no matter what is done, and everyone goes towards a common end. Humans do not know when death will come. Mankind is trapped as the fishmongers catch fish or the birds are trapped, and suddenly it finds itself in that bad moment. God turns all he created, and all their secret sins to his judgment to give reward or punishment for their good and bad deeds. These are the words to say besides those which you heard until now: 'Fear God and do his bidding because being human requires this'" (Firkovičius 1999, pp. 110–11; Koçak 2015, pp. 425–26).

Hazan and those present at the funeral throw a handful of soil over the coffin. It is improper to pass the shovel from hand to hand when throwing soil; the shovel should be left on the ground. The blood relatives never touch the coffin and never throw soil over the deceased with the shovel (1). A stake is piled at the two sides of the grave (Polkanov and Polkanova 2005, p. 107). This type of piling indicates the gender of the deceased person in the grave. Spears were commonly placed in the ground near the grave in the past (1). If the grave has a spear or stake, the deceased is male. If the grave does not have a spear or stake but has a stone or a branch both at the head and feet area, this grave belongs to a woman (1). Then, a rock or a branch of a tree over the grave is placed at the feet area (2). After the burial procedure, the grave is cleaned, and Hazan prays for the last time as follows: "Mighty God of the whole world! You, who are merciful, benevolent, and kind, are loved. Have mercy on the beloved deceased, …, who left us today, son of …/ beloved woman ….'s husband (daughter) …/ young ……'s son …/young girl …'s daughter's …/ young boy ….'s son (daughter). Amen" (Firkovičius 1999, pp. 112–13; Koçak 2015, p. 426). "Our almighty God, remember them with their people's love and think of them with goodness. Strengthen their place in heaven. Comfort the hearts of those who mourn ardently. God of the whole world, give them comfort for their pain, turn their anxieties to joy and heal their wounds. God of the whole world, drive away the death, calamity, destroyers, various fears, and anxieties from us, our homes, and all our people in honor of your mighty and sacred name. Your mercy is abundant. Let's say 'Amen!' to you. There is no doubt that God will be praised until eternity (Rest in peace)" (Firkovičius 1999, pp. 112–13; Koçak 2015, p. 426).

The Lithuanian Karays are buried in cemeteries in Trakai, Vilnius, or Naujamiestis (Kobeckaitė 2006, p. 11). As for the Crimean Karays, they are buried in cemeteries in Balta Tiymez[15] and Caffa (~Feodoiya/Feodosia). The Turkish Karays go on a pilgrimage to the Chufut[16] Castle and Balta Tiymez cemetery in the Kırk-Er region in the city of Bahçesaray. They pray on their knees at the entrances and exits (1).[17] The Balta Tiymez cemetery is deeply important for the Karaites[18] since they believe that Ishak Sangari's grave is there, who was one of the missionaries of the Karâî sect who came to the Khazar Khanate. Since the Karaites never touch the trees as an act of respect, this forest was named "Balta Tiymez" (pristine) (*Дубинский* 2005, p. 49; Бабинов 2004, p. 15). In that forest, there are trees and oaks with roots that are believed to be the roots of their own families. In this cemetery,

every family owns a tree, and it is believed that the lineage of the family would perish if the tree dries out or perishes (Дубинский 2005, p. 50; 1) because the Karaites believe that those trees symbolize immortality and can protect them (2), which makes this place a sacred location for the Karaites; eating, drinking, speaking loudly, listening to music, singing, etc., are forbidden. The Karaites believe that national vengeance is brought upon those that are disrespectful toward the trees, and they are punished while the cult's fanatics are rewarded (Бабаджан et al. 2000, p. 26).

There are approximately 20 sacred oaks that are estimated to be 300–600 years old in the cemetery. These trees are revered by the Karaites in a certain order based on the direction of the sun. The consecration proceeds as follows: First, a Karay picks dried leaves near the oak tree that represents their family, maintains the tree, and surrounds it with a fence. Then, the Karay embraces the tree as if embracing a family member in the past after crossing the fence by their left foot. The Karay pays respect to the tree, and hugging lasts a few minutes. Thus, the Karay makes a non-verbal connection with the sacred tree (1). The cemetery is open until the sun goes down, except for Saturdays, and it is visited by the Karaites as much as possible (1). Turcologist K. Musaev provides information on this subject as follows: "Among the modern Turkish communities the Karaites are a community that conveys their ancestors' old beliefs, the beliefs such as respecting a sacred tree, faith in souls, worship to the sky-Tengri to this day" (Бабаджан et al. 2000, p. 23). According to S. Sapsal, the Hazan/religious leader states the following about the origin of this practice: "the remnants of the Karaites' belief to revere the tree which is a religious superstition is inherited from their Hazan ancestors". Tree worship, which is a continuance of Khazar traditions and a reflection of Turkish traditions, is carried out among the Chuvashs, and they are the grandchildren of Itil–Volga Bulgars (Бабаджан et al. 2000, p. 24).

After the burial, all return to the home of the deceased. Upon returning home, the relatives of the deceased light a candle. No one puts out the candle, but everyone waits for it to wane (1). When it is time to change, a new candle is lit using a candle that was lit before the previous one. It is improper for the candle to be lit on a Resting day (Sabbath/Shabbath, resting or quitting in Hebrew שַׁבָּת) (Koçak 2015, p. 430).

There is a coffin resting, probably as an influence of Islam, in the cemetery of Istanbul Karay Haskoy (Türkdoğan 2011, p. 106). The Istanbul Karaites pray for the deceased in the 1st week, 4th week, and 11th month; they commemorate the deceased and perform a ceremony resembling a mawlid with a meal. Traditionally, a horseshoe is hung at the door of the house as protection against an evil eye. A piece of iron is placed over the body of the deceased. This iron piece tradition does not exist among the Lithuanian and Crimean Karaites. Those who attend the funeral touch the coffin with a handkerchief, which they then wash along with their hands once they return home. The clock is stopped at the house of the deceased, and breaking a mirror is considered to bring bad luck. Fire, candles, or anything that brings light is lit where the deceased is (Ahmetbeyoğlu 2011). At every death anniversary, the relatives of the deceased fast in mourning for one day.[19] Fasting continues to be carried out by Lithuanian Karaites (1).

Everyone, male or female, should cover their heads at funerals, similarly to religious services. While Lithuanian Karaite men wear a red fez with tassels, women wear a headscarf (2), which is not worn as tightly as the hijab in Islam. Among Crimean Karaites, men wear kalpaks made from merino sheep wool (Чижова 2003, pp. 81–82; Suleymanov 2012, p. 131). It is improper to speak loudly at funerals. Moreover, among Lithuanian Karaites, it is forbidden to visit other deceased relatives in the cemetery after the burial (1). The tradition of placing some pebbles equal to the number of closest relatives who could not visit the graveyard over the grave among some Karaite families is preserved. The tradition of bringing flowers to the graveyard and placing a garland over the coffin has been practiced since the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (Чижова 2003, pp. 81–82). It is improper for pregnant women, those whose babies are under 40 days old, and those who are ill to take part in the funeral (2). If a pregnant woman enters the house of the deceased, it is believed that their child will be unhealthy. For the Karaites, it is taboo

for a pregnant woman to enter the house of the deceased person and eat or drink anything there.

Those attending the funeral touch the coffin with a handkerchief, and once they return home, they wash their hands and the handkerchief, as do the Istanbul Karaites (Чижова 2003, p. 81). Having washed their hands, they touch a tree, wall, and a stone while saying, "you will be gone by stone" and "you will be gone with a tree" (Koçak 2015, p. 430), for they want the mourning is completed. After Hazan prays at the house of the deceased, everyone is served a meal. At this gathering with a meal, women and men sit separately. The meal consists of black mourning halvah/death halvah (~kara alvas), cooked eggs, kashkaval (puff pastry with cheese), and fish (1). Black halvah is a deep expression of sharing pain and sadness. Cloves and pepper are added to the black halvah. The younger the deceased, the more pepper is added (Polkanov 1997, p. 43; 1). Eggs and fish are placed on the table; the eggs represent rebirth, and the fish represents fertility and the continuance of the generation (Çulha 2012, p. 397). After this meal, Hazan prays, and those who come to offer their condolences return home.

After the guests leave, the closest relatives and Hazan stay at the house. A black pelt or skin of an animal is laid over the floor to represent grief. Hazan sits or stands on the pelt with bread and wine in their hand. The relatives surround Hazan by kneeling or sitting. They are arranged in a line that is ordered from those that are closest to those that are furthest to the deceased with respect to their relationship. After praying for the bread and wine in hand, Hazan offers them to the blood relatives: In repeated succession, a piece of bread is offered, followed by a sip of wine, and then a piece of bread is offered again, followed by a sip of wine. When bread and wine are consumed, the ritual is considered to have ended. Mourning takes nearly a week at the house of the deceased. Father, mother, brothers, and sisters; and sons, daughters, wife, and husband mourn deeply. Every night, they go to kenesa. Women wear a black headscarf, while men wear a black belt or girdle to express their grief during the mourning period (Polkanov 1997, p. 23; 2). If the day after the funeral is Saturday, a memorial is performed for the deceased. Then, some cheese pita and some fried "cheese pita/gozleme" are prepared (1). During the first prayer at the memorial, red wine is served. The relatives of the deceased do not cook, and the guests bring food to the house of the deceased. It is improper to return the utensils that are brought by the guests right away; the cleaned utensils are returned after the seventh day of the deceased's passing (Koçak 2015, p. 430). For the meal, boiled eggs are served. They are cut in halves, and black pepper is added. Olives, black plum, and black halvah called "mourning halvah" are served, and they must be finished before dishes with meat are served. The leftovers should stay in the house rather than being thrown away. The Karay men never smoke, consume alcohol, or shave during the seven days of mourning (1; Çulha 2012, p. 387); during this period, it is unacceptable to eat meat at the house of the deceased as it is considered an act of disrespect relative to the deceased. On the seventh day, everyone visits the cemetery. The visit is adjourned until Sunday if the seventh day is Friday or Saturday. On the seventh day, the relatives first visit the grave of the deceased. When they return home, they step on black felt again and perform the "ayak-içmek" ritual again; then, they step off the felt and stand at its side. With this carried out, mourning comes to an end, thus finishing the mourning process. The Crimean Karaites call this ritual "ayaktan çıkmak" (Suleymanov 2012, p. 133). Then, they go to the kenesa and pray. After that, a meat dish is served at the house of the deceased. Mutton or lamb meat is served as the dish. The mourning halvah, kubite/kubete (a type of pastry), shepherd's roast, puff pastry with boiled meat, bean or pea sauce, wine, dried raisin, tea, or coffee are on the menu. This ceremony takes place during the week, except for Fridays and Saturdays. Taking something out of the deceased's house is forbidden for seven days. At the end of the seventh day, the relatives give fabric and money collected for the funeral to Hazan and shammashim. Hazan and shammashim must receive these gifts; otherwise, it is believed that the prayers will not be accepted, and the soul of the deceased will never find peace (2).

If Hazan and shammashim see fit, they may hand out the fabrics and money collected to the poor on the same day (2).

Both the Crimean Karaites and Lithuanian Karay Turks perform a memorial service on the 40th day (1; 2). This memorial service is performed during the daytime, which is different from the memorials that take place at night. It is performed on the earliest Saturday. Breakfast is served in the morning. Instead of black halvah or mourning halvah, "comfort halvah", which is lighter in color, is cooked. This halvah is called "Khazar halvah/Khazar katmağı". This tradition of cooking halvah among the Karaites from Crimea is still observed to this day (Дубинский 2005, p. 50). The halvah is cooked without pepper but uses plenty of honey. The leftovers are treated the same as the dishes on the seventh day (Polkanov 1994b, p. 32). Vodka is served instead of wine only during the 40th-day prayer (1). Until the 40th day, all mirrors in the house should be covered. An oil lamp is lit, and a glass of water is placed near that lamp. All covers are lifted when the tables are set for the 40th day. The glass of water is poured down into the soil or at the bottom of a tree. Pouring that glass of water onto the road is forbidden. The boiled eggs are served to the guests without being cut in half. Moreover, the guests should bring something sweet with them (1). The same rituals are carried out in the case of a stillborn or the death of a child.

The Karaites could not carry out their rituals during death and after death during the COVID-19 pandemic, which emerged in March 2020. They could only recite the forgiveness prayers from *Karaj Dińliliarniń Jalbarmach Jergialiari* (*Supplication Texts of the Karaites*) at their houses with only the relatives of the deceased after the burial (3).

A memorial service is carried out on the anniversary of the death among the Karaites. This memorial service is held for the last time on the 11th month if the deceased is male and on the 12th month if the deceased is female. Commemorating death anniversaries is a common practice among the Karaites. If the deceased is male, a last sahynč memorial is performed in the 11th month. This is called ak-kiymyak (wearing white), which is the last prayer ritual and is usually performed after 11 months on the first Saturday. What makes this ritual special is that it includes desserts such as white halvah called karaite; nuts and tahini halvah; delights; sweet tarts and cookies; and jam on the table (Polkanov 1994a, p. 25), which are served during the last prayer ritual. In addition, at the ritual of the Lithuanian Karaites, a dish with lamb or beef meat called "kıbın" and a dish made of seven layers of pastries and three layers of cheese called "katlama" are served (1), along with traditional desserts. Among the Crimean Karaites, the guests are served wine, coffee, and compote to drink (Polkanov 1994a, p. 25). However, among the Lithuanian Karaites, compote is more commonly served (1). If the deceased is a woman, the memorial takes place at the end of the 12th month. Again, the guests should bring sweet treats when they visit the memorial service (1).

Among the other tribes residing in Turkistan, there is no prohibition for dishes, including meat. Besides the meat prohibition during the mourning period among the Karaites, memorials that take place on the 3rd, 7th, and 40th day after the death of the person usually exist among other Turkish tribes, such as Tatar, Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, and Chuvash (Suleymanov 2012, p. 134). Ibn Fadlan mentions the oldest mourning rituals, such as uncovering the head, crying, wailing, tearing one's clothes, etc., in the post mortem mourning traditions of pre-Islamic Turkish states. While this tradition continues with laments shouted for the merits of the deceased in Türkiye and Turkistan (Şahbaz and Taşkıran 2022, p. 48), crying, wailing, and lamenting out loud are forbidden among the Karaites. However, silently crying and shedding tears is permitted, as in Islam (2).

The tombstone is erected one year after the passing of the deceased among the Karaites. Before the tombstone is erected, the spear near the head and the stone or tree branch near the feet area, which should have been placed after the burial, are removed, and the tombstone is erected, which is different from the regular ones and bears details about the deceased. The graves of the Karaites are characteristically north–south oriented. The most common tombstones are two-horned tombstones that resemble a cradle in shape. The in-

terpretation of the tombstones' unique shape is highly intriguing. The people from whom researchers obtained firsthand experience information reported that they noticed a grave transformed into a tumulus, with pointed edges on the corners, and this is peculiar to Turkish graves; another grave with a saddle placed over the grave allegedly belonged to a warrior horseman. The tombstones usually do not have ornaments; however, occasionally, there are simple geometrical ornaments or schematic representations of trees. The inscriptions are placed at the northern point of the tombstone (Polkanov 1994a, pp. 34–38; Чижова 2003, pp. 84–85). Asceticism radically shows itself in the rejection of inscriptions on tombstones, which represents the choice of a qualified lifestyle without the temporal pleasures of this world, and it is commonly practiced among Karaites in order to reach spiritual goals. However, extensive poetic elegies are recited for the leading figures of the society. In earlier times, the inscriptions were written in Hebrew or Karaim language; on the other hand, modern transcriptions (the second half of the 20th century) are written in Russian. The inscriptions consist of the name, family bond, the date of the death, and rarely the cause of the death of the deceased, some of which have other information, such as the profession of the deceased. They also consist of an expression of blessing for the deceased; in other words, they are short farewell expressions for the deceased, which are written as an abbreviation consisting of the first letters of the words in the sentence and not as a full sentence. Writing long expressions of grief and giving details of the deceased's virtues are less common (Polkanov 1994a, pp. 34–38; Чижова 2003, pp. 84–85).

A vertical rectangular stele without a grave is erected for individuals who die in a foreign country and are buried there. This tombstone is called yolci taş, which means "wandering stone", or tikme taş, which means "erected stone". This kind of tombstone is mentioned in one of the worst curses of the Karaites: "tikme taş bol", literally meaning "may you be an erected stone", which is uttered in the sense of a curse that wishes that an individual will die in a foreign country and not in their homeland (Polkanov 1994a, pp. 34–38; Чижова 2003, pp. 84–85).

On the other hand, the modern tombstone of Crimean Karaites differs from the tombstones of other tribes, among which the Karaites are placed together only in terms of gender and certain names and surnames (Polkanov 1994a, pp. 34–38; Чижова 2003, pp. 84–85). These lines are usually engraved on the tombstone of the Karaites: "tınčlych džanyna/ džanlaryna (peace for their soul/s), tınčlych toprahyna (peace for their soil), jarych sahynč (may their memory be full of light), jachšy sahynč (may they be remembered well), jarych sahynč džanyna/ džanlaryna (may their soul/s be full of light), jachšy učmach (sacred heaven), džany/ džanlary ömiür tirliktia bolhej (may their souls be in eternal life), džany/ džanlary bah-bostanda balkyne (may their soul/s shine in heaven), sahynčy uzach tiriłgiej (may their memory lasts forever), sahynčy ulusunda tiriłgiej (may their memory stay alive in their community's mind), uzun sahynč syjly adyna/ adlaryna (may their name/s be remembered for a long time), etc." (Firkovičius 1999, pp. 138–39).

6. Discussion

The Karaites, who are considered remnants of the Khazar State (651–1048), settled in Crimea because they were exposed to the raids of Pechenegs who were fleeing from Uzes and Kipchaks. They are one of the Turkish tribes that rejected the Talmud, the orally passed down scripture of Judaism in the 8th century, and adopted Karaism. These Turks were influenced by this sect, which flourished in the Mediterranean region, and they contributed to this sect with respect to prayers, religious practices, and especially transition rituals.

Death is considered an important turning point for cultures that have a notion of an afterlife. Therefore, death is not regarded as an ending but as a transition phase to eternal life. Most traditions concerning death and the rituals performed during the funeral of Karay Turks, who are members of the Karâî sect, reflect Turkish culture and customs. Therefore, these rituals are important when it comes to passing down the traditions and customs of Karaites, functioning as a connection point between old and new generations and preserving unity and collectiveness. The Karaites have faced extinction since they are

not currently inclined toward interfaith relationships (even with other Turkish tribes) or intersecting marriages (even with Rabbanists and Krymchaks). This feature ensures that they preserve their language and identity more compared to other Turkish tribes and are more attentive toward their culture.

The food and treats that are served for the attendants of the funeral during death rituals and the use of clothing carry messages about the Karay Turkish way of life. To this day, their traditions and customs have been observed within the frames of these rituals. Similarities are observed between Crimean and Lithuanian Karaite traditions and customs regarding where the deceased is washed and shrouded and how Hazan prays. However, it is observed that post mortem rituals (on the 7th and 40th day) are preserved by the Lithuanian Karay Turks and are practiced precisely. The most important factor is that Lithuanian Karaites have formed social unity, and they are numerous in terms of population, as are their marriages. On the other hand, even though there is a decrease in practicing death rituals due to their small population and disunity, Crimean and Istanbul Karaites have not completely ceased practicing their funeral and death rituals.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, E.A. and R.G.; Data curation, E.A. and R.G.; Formal analysis, E.A., R.G., E.K.I. and R.A.; Methodology, E.A., R.G. and S.E.T.; Visualization, E.K.I., R.A. and S.E.T.; Writing—original draft, E.A., E.K.I. and R.A.; Writing—review & editing, E.K.I. and R.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available within this article.

Acknowledgments: We thank Szymon Juchniewicz (1), Markus Lavrinovicius (2), and Diana Lavrinovicius (3) for providing information about the firsthand experience of rituals. Their information is assigned numbers, which are used as references.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

1 Daniel J. Lasker's *Karaism: An Introduction to the Oldest Surviving Alternative Judaism* (The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization), which gives a detailed analysis of the influences and interactions with mainstream Judaism as well as the main differences between the Karaite history, teachings and Rabbinic Judaism, is of great importance.

2 It could be written as *Tanah* since when the /k/ voiceless consonant is used in the middle of a word or at the end of a word in Hebrew, /h/ becomes fricative.

3 Tevrat is the Turkish adaptation of Arabic تورات tawrat, which means *Torah* in Hebrew.

4 Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

5 Hear O Karay, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

6 There is a legend saying that 40 brave Karay families have come from Sarkel and Chufut Castle, and Khan wrote about them in his decrees, and they are called "40 people" (Kırklar) (Kokizov 2011, p. 873).

7 The first description of Kırk-Or or Kırk-Er belongs to Abu'l Fida, an Arab geographer who came in 1321: "Kırk-Or is in the country of Asslar (~Alanlar), which means 40 Castle in Turkish, it is a heavily fortified castle leaning on a hard-to-reach mountain. At the top of the mountain, there is an open space where the residents of the country can take shelter in case of danger" (Lebedeva 2003, p. 6).

8 A type of smooth cotton fabric.

9 In the original text, the following is stated: "Ammâ cümle Yahûdîler Karâyî mezhebinde cufud-ı cuhûdlardır. Sâ'ir Yahûdîler bu mezhebde olan cuhûdları sevmezler. Ve ta'âmlarında kaşer ve turfa nedir bilmezler. Her kimin ni'meti olursa say yağlı da olsa ve siniri çıkmamış her ne gûne et olsa yerler. Meselâ bunlar Yahûdîlerin kızılbaşlarıdır ve rûz-ı mahşer günü bunlar kızılbaşa binmezler, ammâ öbür İsrâ'ilî çufudlar yevm-i mahşerde(ki) kızılbaşa binerler derler. Mısra': 'Râfizî rûz-ı kıyâmet har buved zîr-i yehûd' demişler. Ammâ bu cufudlar gerçi İsrâ'îlî ve Mûsevîlerdir. Tevrât ve Zebûr okular, ammâ aslâ çufud lisânı bilmezler, cümle Tatarca kalpağı geyerler, şapka geymezler /…/ "(Kahraman et al. 2011, vol. VII, pp. 222–23).

10 The houses of Karay Turks usually have three windows. According to our interviewees, these windows symbolize God, the homeowner, and the guest.

[11] "I am sorry for your loss".

[12] It is an expression that literally means "may the friends get/be better", possibly in a cultural sense: "I appreciate your words, thank you". It emphasizes the wish that since the dead are gone, all the living shall live long.

[13] It is forbidden to eat meat that is cut, cooked, or had in any way during Shabbath among the Karaites. Therefore, both Lithuanian and Crimean Karaites prepare their food for Shabbath on Friday, which should be enough for consumption on Saturday and Sunday (Polkanov and Polkanova 2005, p. 89; Suleymanov 2012, p. 138; 1).

[14] The marriage contract is considered a sales contract, and the man to be married gives a certain amount of money or property to the woman's family (1).

[15] Pristine, an axe cannot touch or harm.

[16] For more details, see (Suleymanov 2012, p. 138; 1).

[17] In Crimea, Karay Turks showed their respect by dismounting while passing near the graves of the Khans in Bahcesaray for they were faithful to the tradition about the graves of the Khans in the Khazars period (*Дубинский* 2005, p. 50).

[18] Karaites have been in Crimea during ancient times, and this is shown by the tombstones on which Turkish names were engraved in the Karay Necropolis facing the south: The Balta-Tiymez cemetery near Chufut Castle in the years 6 and 240; in Mangup Castle in 866; in Solhat (~Old Crimea, Eski Kırım) in 910; in Kefe (~Feodosia) in 1076 and other monuments (Lebedeva 2003, p. 4). The Crimean Khanate always threatened the Karaites by destroying oak trees. When the Karaites rejected taking Timothy Khmelnitsky hostage in Chufut Castle, the Crimean Khan sent Suyun Aga as an ambassador to the Karaites. Suyun Aga threatened the Karaites angrily: "Well, know that an axe will touch Balta Tiymez!". The reason why the Karaites rejected taking Timothy Khmelnitsky hostage was that there was a blood feud about the murder of Karaimovich I, who was of Karaite descent (Бабаджан et al. 2000, pp. 26–27).

[19] The Karaites fast as a way of worship. According to the information gathered from the Karaites, there are various types of fasting: fasting during which water is allowed, fasting during which drinking water or eating any food during daytime is forbidden, votive fasting, ten-day fasting, and seven-day fasting during which it is forbidden to eat meat (2).

References

Ahmetbeyoğlu, Ali. 2011. İstanbul'un Solan Bir Rengi: Karay Türk Cemaati. In *Uluslararası Karay Çalışmaları Sempozyumu*. Edited by Mehmet Alpargu, Yücel Öztürk and M. Bilal Çelik. Ankara: Bilecik Üniversitesi Yayınları.

Altınkaynak, Erdoğan. 2006. *Tozlu Zaman Perdesinde Kırım Karayları*. Haarlem: Türkistan ve Azerbaycan Araştırma Merkezi.

Arık, Durmuş. 2005. Türk Yahudiler Kırım Karâîleri. *Dini Araştırmalar* 7: 27–49.

Atasağun, Galip. 2001. Yahudilikte Dînî Sembol ve Kavramlar. *Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 11: 125–56.

Бабинов, Юрий Александрович. 2004. Религия крымских караимов. In *Polsko-ukraińskie badania religii*. Edited by Kazimierz Banek. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, pp. 11–24.

Бабаджан, Александр, татьяна Богославская, геннадий Катык, Сергевич владимир Кропотов, and Полканова юрьевна Полканова. 2000. *Карай (крымские караимы) История, культура, святыни*. Симферополь: Акъмэджид.

Чижова, Лариса Алексеевна. 2003. *Тюркские народы Крыма*. Edited by С. Я. Козлов and *Л*. В. Чижова. Moskova: Nauka.

Çulha, Tülay. 2012. İstanbul Karaim Cemaati. *Uluslararası Türk Kültürü Kongresi Bildirileri* 1: 385–400.

Danon, Abraham. 1925. The Karaites in European Turkey Contributions to Their History Based Chiefly on Unpublished Documents. *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 15: 285–360. [CrossRef]

Doğruer, Semra. 2007. Karay (Karaim) Türklerinin Sözlü Edebiyatı. Master's thesis, Ankara University, Ankara, Türkiye.

Dunlop, D. Morton. 2008. *Hazar Yahudi Tarihi*. İstanbul: Selenge Yayınları.

Eliade, Mircea. 2019. *Dinsel İnançlar ve Düşünceler Tarihi*. Edited by Ali Berktay and Yayın Tarihi. İstanbul: Alfa Yayınları.

Eroğlu, Ahmet Hikmet. 1997. *Osmanlı Türklerinde Yahudiler (XIX. Yüzyılın Sonuna Kadar)*. Ankara: Seba Yayınları.

Firkovičius, Mykolas. 1994. Karaims in Lithuania. *Baltic News* 5: 34–35.

Firkovičius, Mykolas. 1999. *Karaj Dińliliarniń Jalbarmach Jergialiari*. Vilnius: Baltos Lankos.

Grişin, Yakov. 2000. *Pol'sko-Litovskiye Tatarı: Vzglyad Cherez Veka*. Kazan: Tatarskoye Knijnoye İzdatel'stvo.

Golden, B. Peter. 2006. *Türk Halkları Tarihine Giriş*. Çorum: Karam.

Fadlan, İbn. 2017. *Seyahatname*. Edited by Ramazan Şeşen. İstanbul: Yeditepe Yayınevi.

Kaya, Perihan. 2015. İstanbul'daki Son Karaylar. *Jofel/Journal of Endangered Languages/Tehlikedeki Diller Dergisi* 4: 79–106.

Kahraman, Seyit Ali. 2013. *Günümüz Türkçesiyle Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi 7.-10. Kitaplar*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları.

Kahraman, Seyit Ali, Yücel Dağlı, and Robert Dankoff. 2011. *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi 7.-10. Kitaplar*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları.

Karatay, Osman. 2008. Hazarların Musevileşmesine Dair Bir Belge: Kenize Mektubu. *Karadeniz Araştırmaları* 18: 1–17.

Kefeli, Avraam. 2002. *Karaimy Raziasnitelnaia Broshiura po İstorii k*. Israel: Ashdod publishing.

Kobeckaitė, Halina. 2006. Lietuvos Karaimai. Istorija. Kalba. Kultūra ir Papročiai. pp. 1–29. Available online: https://petged.files.wordpress.com/2010/02/lietuvos-karaimai.pdf (accessed on 4 June 2023).

Kocaoğlu, Timur. 2017. Karaycanın Bugünkü Durumu: Mykolas Firkoviçius ile Mark Lavrinoviçius'lerin Anısına. *Avrasya Uluslararası Araştırmalar Dergisi* 5: 2–17. [CrossRef]

Koçak, Murat. 2015. Karay Türklerindeki Ölüm Ritüellerinin Geçmişten Günümüze Yansıması. Paper presented at 7. Uluslararası Balkanlarda Sosyal Bilimler Kongresi, Kaposvar-Macaristan, Hungary, February 3–5; Skopje: Academy Global Publishing House, pp. 422–33.
Kokizov, D. Yu. 2011. Karay Türklerinin Kısa Tarihçesi. In *International Symposium on the Karaite Studies Proceedings (05–08 April, 2010)*. Bilecik: Bilecik Üniversitesi Yayınları, pp. 869–82.
Kutluay, Yaşar. 2001. *İslam ve Yahudi Mezhepleri*. İstanbul: Anka Yayınları.
Kuzgun, Şaban. 1985. *Hazar ve Karay Türkleri*. Ankara: Bilge Kültür Sanat Yayınevi.
Küçük, Abdurrahman, Günay Tümer, and Mehmet Alparslan Küçük. 2012. *Dinler Tarihi*. Ankara: Berikan Yayınevi.
Lasker, Daniel J. 2011. Medieval Karaism and Science. In *Science in Medieval Jewish Cultures*. Edited by Freudenthal. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 427–37.
Lasker, Daniel J. 2020. Inventing the Karaites. *Tablet Magazine*, September 11, 1–8.
Lebedeva, EmiliyaİsakovnaIsakovna. 2003. *Gvad'by*. Simferopol, [no publisher].
Мусаев, Кенесбай. 2003. *Синтаксис Караимского Языка*. Moscow: Academy of the Humanities Research.
Örnek, Sedat Veyis. 1995. *Türk Halk Bilimi*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları.
Polkanov, Aleksandr İvanoviç. 1994a. *Krımskiye Karaimı*. Bahçesaray, [no publisher].
Polkanov, Aleksandr İvanoviç. 1994b. *Kırım Karaylarının Ayinleri ve Gelenekleri-Türkler: Evlilik, Doğum, Cenaze*. Bahçesaray, [no publisher].
Polkanov, Aleksandr İvanoviç. 1997. *Karaitlerin Efsaneleri ve Gelenekleri*. Simferopol, [no publisher].
Polkanov, Yuriy Aleksandroviç, and Anna Yuryevna Polkanova. 2005. Reliktovıye Osobennosti Etnokulturı Krımskih Karaimov. In *Krımskiye Karaimı. İstoriçeskaya Territoriya Etnokultura*. Edited by V. S. Kropotov, V. Yu. Örmeli and A. Yu. Polkanova. Simferopol: Dolya Yayınevi.
Saraç, Mihail Semenoviç, M. M. Kazas, and Y. A. Polkanov. 2007. *Karaimskaya Narodnaya Entsiklopediya Karaimskiy Dom*. Kırım, [no publisher]. vol. VI/II.
Suleymanov, Seyyar. 2012. Kırım Karayları. Ph.D. thesis, T.C. Uludağ University, Bursa, Türkiye.
Şahbaz, Mehibe, and Hasan Taşkıran. 2022. Timurlularda Yas Geleneği. *Millî Folklor* 17: 39–49.
Şapşal, Seraya. 1895. *Karaimı İ Çufut-Kale v Krımu Kratkiy Oçerk*. Sankt-Petersburg: tipo-lit. i fototip. P. I. Babkina.
Şayhan, Fatih. 2012. Kırım-Karay Türkülerinin Anadolu Türküleriyle Söz Benzerlikleri Açısından Mukayesesi. *Millî Folklor* 24: 94–104.
Şişman, Simon. 1957. İstanbul Karayları. *İstanbul Enstitüsü Mecmuası* 3: 97–102.
Tanyu, Hikmet. 1978. *Türklerin Dinî Tarihçesi*. İstanbul: Türk Kültür Yayınları.
Türkdoğan, Orhan. 2011. Türk Toplumunda Karaman ve Hazar Türkleri. In *Uluslararası Karay Çalışmaları Sempozyumu Bildirileri 5–8 Nisan 2010*. Bilecik: Bilecik Üniversitesi Yayınları.
Zajaczkowski, Ananiasz. 1961. *Karaims in Poland: History, Language, Folklore, Science*. Warsaw: Panstwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
Зайончковский, Ана́ний. 2005. Хазарская культура и ее наследники. In *крымские караимы, происхождение, этнокультура, история*. Симферополь: Доля, pp. 66–74.
Дубинский, А. 2005. *Основы Караимской Религи. Крымские Караимы, Происхождение, Этнокультура, История*. Симферополь: издательство "Доля", pp. 38–56.

religions

MDPI

Article

The Development and Modern Transformation of Material Culture in the Worship of Mazu

Yanchao Zhang *, Chenjingyue Wu and Xiangbo Liu

Department of Philosophy, Xiamen University, Xiamen 361005, China; 21620202200607@stu.xmu.edu.cn (C.W.); 17420192200679@stu.xmu.edu.cn (X.L.)
* Correspondence: yczhang1028@xmu.edu.cn

Abstract: Based on fieldwork and the analysis of the historical literature, this article studies the development of material culture in the cult of popular goddess Mazu, exploring in particular the materialization mechanisms and strategies deployed by various actors in her worship nowadays. Through the ages, people in China have expressed their religious feelings and experiences in the objects they display, worship, and exchange, as well as in the spaces that they build and inhabit. In this process, religious beliefs are externalized in forms of material culture, including symbols, texts, relics, music, and temples. As a result, these artifacts and places carry individual and collective memories and affects that allow believers to experience religion not only at special events like festivals and pilgrimages, but in everyday life. In modern China, the connotations and forms of material carriers have diversified. The rise of souvenirs and other forms of cultural consumption have transformed the materialization of religiosity. In the worship of Mazu, the relationship between pilgrimage, tourism, entertainment, and the production and circulation of commodities has become increasingly tight, changing the cult's beliefs and their physical expression. That connection also brings social and economic sustenance to the local community. Taking the Mazu Temple in Meizhou as a case, this paper adopts a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to examine the pilgrimage–tourism–commerce nexus, as well as other contemporary forms of the materialization of her cult.

Keywords: material culture; the worship of Mazu; ancestral temple of Mazu; religious tourism; commodification

Citation: Zhang, Yanchao, Chenjingyue Wu, and Xiangbo Liu. 2023. The Development and Modern Transformation of Material Culture in the Worship of Mazu. *Religions* 14: 826. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14070826

Academic Editors: Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges and Helena Albuquerque

Received: 20 May 2023
Revised: 20 June 2023
Accepted: 21 June 2023
Published: 23 June 2023

1. Introduction

This article explores various expressions of religiosity through material culture in the worship of Mazu, one of the most popular goddesses in China. In particular, I will show the modern transformations the cult has experienced, highlighting the actors and media involved. We shall see that material expressions of the veneration of Mazu play a central role in constructing a modern version of worship. To undertake this task, I will rely on textual sources to illustrate how material objects were foundational in the rise of the Mazu cult and contributed to its orthodoxy throughout the centuries. I will also illustrate modern transformations of the materiality of the devotion to the goddess through ethnographic work I have conducted. This work includes participant observations and interviews with visitors at Mazu's ancestral temple during important religious festivals, such as the day of "Mazu's ascending to Heaven," and the 24th "Meizhou's Mazu Cultural Tourist Festival".[1] In order to obtain a wide variety of opinions, I interviewed tourists who are not Mazu believers, as well as Mazu devotees on pilgrimage. In addition, to gain a view from "the top," that is, from institutional religious actors, I sustained extensive personal communications with members of the temple association, including some in leadership positions. This juxtaposition of sources—textual and ethnographic—will enable me to place the current dynamics in their longue durée context.

While the study of religion and materiality has gained significant prominence in Religious Studies in the last couple of decades, its rise can be traced back to Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley's studies in the 1960s.[2] Rejecting philosophical idealism, Miller argued that the material world is not a superstructure separate from the social world: it both precedes and makes possible the existence and communication of human concepts. In other words, materiality is not just the expression of social identity and cultural concepts, as both of these are constructed and reconstructed in the historical and emplaced interactions of humans and material objects. Moreover, borrowing from Marx's notion of praxis, Miller pointed to the fact that individual and collective identities are crafted as we produce and handle material objects. In this sense, the study of the material world is indispensable to our understanding of culture, society, and religion (Miller 1987, 2007).

The 1980s witnessed the development of a variety of interdisciplinary approaches to materiality, including social anthropology (Tilley 1990, 1991), social psychological analysis (Dittmar 1992), and religious studies.[3] In religious studies, new perspectives have emerged, focusing on the "material economy of the sacred", following the "life of the religious object" from production to consumption (passing through circulation), and analyzing conversions back-and-forth from sacred objects like relics to commodities, including souvenirs (See Morgan 2010, p. xiii; see also Morgan 2019). Likewise, Manuel Vásquez characterizes the task of the materialist approach in religious studies as exploring the material (in the sense of being enacted by historical and embodied individuals) "practices of materialization and dematerialization", as well as the material infrastructure, that make it possible for an object, place, event, and/or performance to be experienced as religiously efficacious; that is, as a potent, meaningful, affective, and transformative reality, a reality that is often felt by the religious practitioner as transcending its material, immanent moorings (Vásquez 2020, pp. 11–12).

Throughout the Chinese religious landscape, traditions have been marked by a variety of material objects and cultures, such as temples, images, rituals, and texts. Traditionally, research in the field of Chinese religions has primarily focused on literary sources, prioritizing canonical texts in classical languages (Fleming and Mann 2018). This focus on literary evidence has been particularly dominant among Chinese scholars, and it still holds sway over the field. However, the study of materiality in Chinese religions has gathered some momentum. For example, Benjamin Fleming and Richard Mann have integrated material evidence in their explorations of a variety of cultures in South, Southeast, Central, and East Asia.[4]

The reciprocal constitution of individuals, community, and religious objects has attracted some attention in Chinese religious studies. For example, Scott Habkirk and Hsun Chang have explored how incense in traditional Chinese religion serves as a material medium to construct and maintain religious identity in local communities. Through incense and other related objects, individuals of a Chinese temple community generate shared religious emotions and memories, not only intensifying personal experiences of the divine, but also affirming communal religious identity (Habkirk and Chang 2017). Another case study of the construction of a temple in Ox Horn (niujiao) village of Mazu Island, conducted by Wei-Ping Lin, demonstrated the important role of religious materialization in transforming and reestablishing social relations. Specifically, in the process of working together to build a community temple, people from different generations negotiated conflicting ideas and interests and redefined their original social relationships, thereby establishing new shared values and a sense of community (Lin 2017). While these studies bring to the fore the social role of religious materiality, they do not examine the new developments in religious material culture and the latter's increasing interaction with religious tourism.

Every year, thousands of pilgrims and visitors travel across China to a myriad of religious sites, generating a sizable economy that involves not only relics/souvenirs but also a hospitality industry (Zhang 2021). According to the statistics of the Ministry of Tourism, there are over 3000 religious tourist sites throughout China. Over 40% of the total in the list of national tourist sites are connected with religious or cultural tourism.[5] In

the case of Mazu worship, there is a vast material religious infrastructure that enables the flow of pilgrims and visitors, bringing believers and nonbelievers into contact and thus transforming the way in which the devotion is experienced. More importantly, religious tourism also has a significant impact on the social and economic viability of the communities that have key Mazu sites. However, scholars in Chinese religious studies have not paid enough attention to these topics. Neither the literature on religious tourism nor that on religious materiality has dealt with the interlinkage between religious tourism, material culture, and social and economic profitability, especially in the Chinese religious context. I intend to address this gap with a focus on the role of tourism in the worship of Mazu.

The modern transformation of religious materiality in Mazu worship is part and parcel of significant changes in the Chinese religious landscape due to changes in the socio-economic context, a new religious policy by the central government, and the dramatic growth of religious tourism. In response to these new changes, Mazu worship has been increasingly commodified, becoming the locus of cultural attraction, as religious sites associated with the devotion seek to appeal to larger numbers of visitors. This is certainly the case for the ancestral temple at Meizhou, which is commonly known as the original place of Mazu worship. This temple provides a good window into the development of religious materiality in China, allowing us to see the characteristics of this phenomenon and highlighting different agencies and mechanisms involved in the modern transformation.

This article builds upon but goes beyond previous studies to explore transformations and expressions of material culture in the worship of Mazu in contemporary China.[6] More specifically, I will focus on tourism and the development of a cultural and creative industry at the ancestral temple of Mazu in Meizhou Island. The key questions I will pursue are: Have the material expressions of Mazu worship changed in modern times? If so, what are the factors that have contributed to these changes? What can we learn about the current dynamics of the religious field in China from the Mazu case study?

To answer these questions, I will first sketch a brief history of the devotion to Mazu, highlighting its expression though traditional material media and culture. Secondly, I will move on to the discussion of modern transformations of material culture in Mazu worship, identifying agents and social forces behind the process of transformation. The third part of the article will focus on the ways in which the new forms of material culture in Mazu worship interact with local economic and tourist systems through an interdisciplinary analysis. In this section, I also offer a model to explore this interaction. Finally, the conclusion argues for the need to develop a dynamic and interdisciplinary perspective on material religious culture in the modern Chinese religious context, one that studies the complex relations among religion, tourism, and economic development.

2. The History of Mazu Worship and Its Expression through Traditional Material Cultures

This section will explore the rise and evolution of Mazu worship through the use of traditional forms of material culture, including images, devotional and liturgical objects, architecture, and sacred spaces. While all of these of forms of materiality have enabled people to communicate with the goddess, the ancestral temple, as the original sacred space of Mazu worship, the text entitled *Tianfei xiansheng lu*, incense as a liturgical object, and Mazu statues have been especially crucial in the expression of religious emotions and beliefs.

According to historical accounts, Mazu's ancestral temple at Meizhou originated from a small shrine and later developed as a splendid temple complex. Historical sources from the Song dynasty illustrate this rise and transformation. According to *Shengdun zumiao chongjian shunji miaoji*, compiled by Liao Pengfei in 1150, Mazu lived at Meizhou Island and, after she died, local people established a small shrine to memorialize and worship her (Li 1995, p. 2). According to "*The Record of the Founding Temple in Meizhou Island*" (Jiang and Zheng 2007, p. 80), Mazu protected a merchant and his ship, enabling them to return home safely. To repay the numinous intervention of the goddess, the merchant donated a

large amount of money to enlarge the shrine into a temple in Meizhou (Jiang and Zhu 2011, p. 90).

The process of the refurbishment and enlargement of Mazu's ancestral temple complex in Meizhou is recorded in historical accounts written in the Ming and Qing dynasties. The temple eventually developed into a large complex that included a gate (*shanmen*), "the Palace of Celestial Empress" (*tianhou dian*), a dressing tower (*shuzhuang ge*), a "Facing Heaven" garret (*chaotian ge*), a drum and bell tower (*zhonggu lou*), and Taizi Palace (*taizi dian*). Each building of the temple was linked to a divine manifestation of the goddess, as shown in the *Record of the Sagely Manifestation of the Celestial Consort* (*Tianfei xiansheng lu*).[7] For example, the story "Pushing over Waves to Help Ships Cross a Storm" (*Yonglang jizhou*) hallows the reconstruction project launched by Commander Zhou, who established the incense pavilion, the drum and bell tower, and the temple gate, as an act of pious gratitude to Mazu's divine protection in assisting Ming military ships.[8]

Similar narratives, in which individual devotees contributed to the enlargement of Mazu's ancestral temple as an expression of religious piety and gratitude for the goddess's protection, appear in different contexts. The establishment of the Facing Heaven Pavilion (*chaotian ge*) by Commander Zhang, the construction of Taizi Palace by the Grand Governor Yao Qisheng (1623–1683), and a local devotee's sponsoring of the Dressing Tower stand out (Ibid). These three episodes share several elements. First, the goddess's divine and efficacious manifestation in time and space, shaping the material world, was the key reason for an intensified piety. Second, the devotees used materiality—in the form of elaborate temple reconstructions—as the means to publicly express this piety. In other words, materiality has been essential to the rise and spread of the devotion to Mazu.[9]

In addition to the construction of the Mazu temple, another traditional way to materialize the worship of Mazu was the composition of texts concerning her. One of the most well-known hagiographic texts documenting various mythical stories about Mazu's salvific power is the *Record of the Sagely Manifestation of the Celestial Consort* (*Tianfei xiansheng lu*). *Tianfei xiansheng lu* is attributed to the monk Shi Zhaocheng (c. 1644), the abbot of the Mazu temple at Meizhou Island in the late Ming dynasty. However, scholars of the period believe that this text was actually compiled and revised by a group of literati from the local community.[10] *The Record of the Sagely Manifestation of the Celestial Consort* is important in the cult of Mazu because other extant texts on Mazu's hagiography and myths are mainly based on it. For example, a later Qing version of Mazu's hagiography, entitled *Record of State Conferred Heavenly Empress* (Chifeng tianhou zhi, 1778), was elaborated and developed on the basis of *Tianfei xiansheng lu*. Another pictorial version, *Pictorial Record of Sagely Manifestation from Holy Mother of Celestial Empress* (Tianhou shengmu shengji tuzhi, 1826), includes a series of pictures that vividly paint mythical stories originally recorded in *Tianfei xiansheng lu* (see Jiang and Zhou 2009, p. 485).

The above hagiographic texts were written by Confucian literati in classical languages and are considered to be important historical sources for the historical study of Mazu worship. Scholars have stressed the special role of these literary texts in shaping the dominant narratives about and popular perceptions of Mazu.[11] Despite this insight, they have ignored the essential sense of texts as material objects that do not just provide accounts of the religious history of Mazu worship, but also carry group memory and communal religious experiences. For example, the *Pictorial Record of Sagely Manifestation from Holy Mother of Celestial Empress* was written in a simple language with illustrations that facilitated access by non-educated audiences, thereby further disseminating Mazu's cult throughout late imperial China. Here, the appeal was not simply one of conveying the stories of Mazu's miracles, but of touching the senses, allowing people to feel the goddess's power more directly. In other words, texts like the *Pictorial Record of Sagely Manifestation from Holy Mother of Celestial Empress* allowed believers to develop a stronger emotional bond with Mazu, and to have visceral experiences that could be shared with other devotees.

As one of the traditional forms of material culture in Mazu worship, the texts themselves became the material objects worshiped by individuals and groups of people. For

example, the Qing version of Mazu's hagiography, *Chifeng tianhou zhi*, was worshiped by the local community at the Xianliang port of Putian (see Zhang 2020). The Ming version of *Tianfei xiansheng lu* is consecrated and conserved in the museum of Mazu culture (*Mazu wenhua zhanlan guan*) as one of the most precious material objects (See Figure 1). Likewise, the *Pictorial Record* has been enlarged and exhibited in the museum of Mazu culture. In sum, hagiographic texts are not just the most influential literary sources in the formation of dominant narratives in Mazu worship, but also essential material objects worshiped by Mazu devotees.

Figure 1. The hagiographic texts in the Museum of Mazu Culture. Source: author's own photograph.

The above review of the history of Mazu's ancestral temple at Meizhou and Mazu's mythical hagiographies illustrates the material dynamics of temple buildings, texts, and the interaction of the two. In all of these cases, the construction of the temple buildings as a form of religious materialization became the most visible way to glorify the goddess and to bolster her sacred power and prestige, which, in turn, enabled the spread of devotion. In a process of mutual constitution, the enlargement and elaborateness of the Mazu temple, the crafting of mythical narratives, and the strong belief in the salvific power of the goddess went hand-in-hand with her rising status as an efficacious sacred figure. This tight connection between the glorious stories of Mazu's miraculous power on behalf of her devotees and the latter's gratitude expressed through wood and stone in subsequent enlargements of her ancestral temple have contributed not only to the promotion of Meizhou as the primary sacred site for the worship of the goddess, but also to her popularity. The economic and political nexus here is clear, for only economically and politically influential devotees had the resources to materialize their gratitude and piety in this manner.

However, a third traditional expression of material culture in Mazu worship is the image of Mazu, particularly materialized in her statues. According to David Morgan, images serve as "an effective means for conveying messages because they can be easily reproduced in a variety of media, [and] work among literate and illiterate audiences." (Morgan 2021, p. 88). In the case of Mazu, images of the goddess have been produced in different media, such as stone, clay, and wood, starting from the Song dynasty. A wooden statue of Mazu, enshrined in the Bedroom Palace (*Qindian*) of the Meizhou ancestral temple, is commonly believed to be the golden body (*jinshen*) or true body of Mazu.[12] This statue was crafted with a movable head as well as hand and feet joints to make it more human-like (see Figure 2). This soft body allows the statue to be easily dressed up with the empress robe, the royal diadem, and beaded shoes appropriate to Mazu's title as the Celestial Empress. We see here how materiality makes it possible for believers to experience the full presence of the sacred: Mazu as an embodied goddess. As the *Temple Inscription of Meizhou Ancestral*

Temple (*Meizhou zumiao miaoji*) has it, this statue was the one sitting in the sedan that was carried by devotees during religious processions and presented at key religious rituals, during which individuals and the local community paid respects and offered incense to it (Jiang and Zhu 2011, p. 339). As the material embodiment of Mazu, the statue is believed by the devotees to be the goddess' presence, with efficacious power. Praying in front of the Mazu statue during the religious procession and other religious events is the most effective way to communicate with the goddess and trigger the strongest emotions.

Figure 2. The soft body statue of Mazu. Source: author's own photograph.

Another prominent traditional expression of material culture in Mazu worship is the use of incense. In the Chinese religious landscape, the use of incense in religious ceremonies and events is very popular. First and foremost, incense, incense ash, and incense burners are considered crucial media to interact with spiritual beings. To burn incense is to open communication with the deity. Just like burning incense during the formal greeting of honored visitors is considered proper etiquette, 'burning incense is an invitation (to the god)' or 'a polite formality' and 'a signal of respect', 'to open communication' (Stephan Feuchtwang 2001, p. 133). Moreover, because of its wide access and portability, incense serves to bridge the gap between the sacred space of temples and the secular spaces of devotees' daily lives in Chinese religious traditions.

Second, burning incense is also a vehicle to build a religious community (Habkirk and Chang 2017, p. 158). Incense ashes are considered the foundation to establish a new temple through the ritual tradition of "dividing the incense" (*fenxiang*) or "dividing efficacy" (*fenling*) (Schipper 1990; Ter Haar 1990; Sangren 1993). Namely, devotees and ritualists who are responsible for building a new temple branch have to go to the ancestral temple to perform the ritual of *fenxiang*. Through infusion with the ancestral temple's incense fragrance, the statue enshrined in the newly established temple is sacralized and gains efficacy and miraculous powers from the deity of the ancestral temple. In addition, incense ash from the ancestral temple's burner is believed to carry the temple's spiritual power. By bringing these incense ashes to the new building, the new temple also builds a strong affinity and connection with the ancestral temple.

The Mazu ancestral temple established the tradition of dividing the incense as far back as the Song dynasty. Through dividing the incense, Mazu worship "flourished all

throughout Fujian province, and later spread all over China."[13] Through the material medium of incense, a complex system of belonging was established in which the new temples and enshrined statues were put into a subordinated position vis à vis the mother temple. With new temples created in the Chinese diaspora, a large and transnational religious community has been built and maintained through the material connection of the circulation of incense and incense ashes.[14] We see here how Morgan's suggestion to follow the life of the sacred object is helpful to our understanding of religious efficacy.

Incense and burning incense are commonly used in daily worship or sacrificial ceremonies dedicated to Mazu because they allow individual devotees to have more effective communication with the goddess. To be more specific, the smell of incense and incense smoke serves as material media to trigger the worshippers' visual and olfactory perception, thereby intensifying their spiritual experience and drawing them together in a special community of devotion and memory. During my fieldwork on Mazu's ancestral temple at Meizhou Island, devotees on many occasions mentioned that they believed the fragrant smell of the incense smoke would attract the goddess and convey their respect and love for her. Morgan makes a similar point regarding material offerings in general: "religious practitioners transfer living or useful things and convey respect to gods or spirits in order to secure forgiveness, favor, or benefit from the forces that can affect events in human life." (Morgan 2021, p. 95).

Material expressions of Mazu worship in history have not just been limited to the four aspects that I discussed in this section. Other objects have been crucial in the historical development of Mazu worship, such as inscriptions, sacrificial offerings in the ceremony, divination blocks, and inscribed boards. Nevertheless, the ancestral temple complex, Mazu statues, hagiographical texts featuring on Mazu, and incense and incense ash have been essential material media for devotees to express their religious beliefs and values. As these forms of materiality sustain powerful personal and collective memories and spiritual experiences, they constitute and have transformed individual and community identities, forging enduring social relations that link the local, regional, national, and transnational.

3. The Transformation of Material Culture in Mazu Worship in Modern Times

In modern times, Mazu worship has experienced salient transformations due to social and political changes. As we will see, the material expression of traditional Mazu worship has been transformed in terms of the scope of the devotion and the media used by devotees. These changes stem from the tight interaction of religious traditions with the rapid growth of tourism and cultural industries. In this section, I will discuss this interaction, showing how it has transformed religious sites, sacrificial ceremonies, religious performances, and statues connected with Mazu, as well as the image and place of the goddess in Chinese culture more generally.

First, religious spaces associated with Mazu have been dramatically transformed. This has included not only the renovation of the traditional temple complex and the enlargement of the temple complex, as in the past, but also the construction of the Heritage Park of the Celestial Consort's Home Place (*Tianfei guli yizhi gongyuan*). As we saw, Mazu's ancestral temple evolved from a simple shrine to a splendid temple complex in the late Qing dynasty. Unfortunately, this Qing-style temple was destroyed during the cultural revolution. In 1978, Lin Zhicong, the leader of the temple association, along with local people, initiated a reconstruction project seeking to reproduce the traditional buildings, particularly the western wing of the ancestral temple. I have argued in my study of transnational religious tourism and Mazu worship that this reconstruction process was an attempt to recover origins. By reproducing the temple as it was at its height, the temple association wanted to establish an unbroken link with the original place of Mazu worship, "further legitimizing the temple as the undisputed inheritor of ancient religious tradition." (see Zhang 2021, p. 6). Thus, what we have here is a modern "re-founding" of religious tradition.

The transformation of material culture in modern times is not just limited to the recovery of traditional styles, but has mainly been manifested by the enlargement of

temple complexes to accommodate the growing number of religious tourists and visitors. According to the *Temple Inscription of Meizhou Ancestral Temple*, the temple association launched the construction of the southern wing of the temple complex as a response to an official proposal made by the local government to establish the national tourist resort of Meizhou Island. The southern wing of the temple complex was based on the blueprint designed by Tsinghua University, following the traditional Song style. This newly built, pseudo-classic temple architecture occupies over 320,000 square meters, including the Efficacious Compassion Palace (*lingci dian*), the Celestial Empress Palace (*tianhou dian*), the Timely Salvation Palace (*shunji dian*), a temple gate, the Great Memorial Building (*dapai lou*), the Praying Blessing Palace (*qifu dian*), a drum bell tower (*zhongu lou*), the Celestial Empress Square (Tianhou), a theatrical stage, and an exhibition hall of Mazu culture.

What is important to note here is that while these new spaces are "religious" in the sense that they are associated with Mazu and her devotion, they do not have explicit ritual significance. Rather, they are primarily "cultural" spaces which have become very popular with pilgrims and tourists because they have either natural or historical significance. This is certainly the case for the "Potala Palace on the Sea", which is meant to honor the majesty and beauty of the Meizhou landscape. In turn, the exhibition hall of Mazu culture displays objects related to the worship, such as her relics, antiques, paintings, and calligraphies. The visitors I interviewed at the hall told me that they were attracted by the showcased artefacts that illustrate the history of Mazu worship and manifest the essence of Mazu culture. After visiting and viewing these objects, they felt more connected to the goddess.[15]

In addition to the enlargement of the temple complex, the construction of the Heritage Park of Mazu's Home Place exemplifies the transformation of material culture in contemporary Mazu worship. The construction project of Heritage Park was initiated in 2010, consisting of three main parts: the Celestial Consort's Home Place (*tianfei guli*), the Museum of Mazu Culture Origin (*Mazu yuanliu bowu guan*), and the Peace Tower (*ping'an ta*). The Celestial Consort's Home Place, built in pseudo-Tang architecture, materially manifests Mazu's living environment and her later deification. In my interview with the Vice President of the Temple Association, Wu Guochun, he admitted that the construction of Mazu's home place serves as a cultural media for visitors and Mazu devotees to understand Mazu's life story, expressing the historical and humanistic connotations of Mazu beliefs and culture. The Museum of Mazu Cultural Origin was designed to showcase the historical origin of Mazu's birth at Meizhou Island through cultural relics, pictures, statues, and three-dimensional animation. Through the multimedia of light, sound, and vision, the museum serves as a material channel to legitimize, if not spread, the spirituality of Mazu worship. The tourists I interviewed who were not Mazu devotees indicated that the multiple expressions of the goddess's culture did encourage their interests in her worship and increased their respect for her.[16] When I asked a family of tourists who came to Meizhou Island because they were originally attracted by the area's natural and cultural attractions whether the historical objects generated any religious feelings for them, one of the members told me:

> We are tourists from the north part of China. We came to visit Meizhou Island because it is a popular national tourist site. When we visited the Heritage Park and the Museum, I was impressed by the cultural heritage of the goddess, such as the texts and antiques, through which I became familiar with the history of the goddess worship. My little daughter was impressed by the animation. I am a Buddhist who does not believe in Mazu. After visiting these places, I got to know the goddess and felt a strong feeling of respect to the goddess and her great compassion.

Other non-believing tourists told me that they could feel the spirituality of Mazu as "a goddess with great compassion". In other words, even if these tourists do not believe in or worship Mazu as a divinity, they come to hold in high regard the values that her hagiography expresses through their interaction with her relics and the texts about her.

Regarding the Mazu devotees I interviewed, the sacred materialities at the temple deepened their devotion.[17] Ms. Cai appreciated the exhibition of historical relics, feeling that they gave her a fuller sense of Mazu's history, from her human life to her deification, from the Song dynasty to modern times. After viewing these relics and the objects connected with the devotion, she felt a stronger intimacy with the goddess. Mr. Zhang, a devotee from Hainan, said that material objects manifest a sense of the goddess' power and status through which devotees' beliefs are reinforced.

For instance, the Peace Tower is 9 floors and 48 meters high, symbolizing Mazu's authority as the Celestial Empress of the ninth heaven. The tower's height is not the only important thing, for it serves as a canvass onto which Mazu's history and cultural significance can be projected. This is illustrated by the carved pictures on the tower's bottom, which depict popular religious practices dedicated to Mazu at Meizhou Island, such as the greeting of the new year, the sending off of *Shunfeng er* (Mazu's attendant god), forbidding fishing, *guadou* (hanging the blessed money), *huanhua* (exchanging flowers with Mazu for babies), making red buns, and eating noodles for longevity.[18] At nights, during religious holidays and special events, a dazzling three-dimensional light show of the history of Mazu worship is projected on the tower (see Figure 3). According to a local government report (2020), this light show, named "the light show of peace tower at the home place of the celestial consort" (*tianfei guli ping'an ta xiu*), is designed to enhance night entertainment for tourists and pilgrims.[19] Thus, not surprisingly, the tower has become one of the most popular tourist spots on Meizhou Island at night, attracting thousands of tourists and pilgrims.

Figure 3. The light show at the Peace Tower. Source: the author's own photograph.

The second aspect of the modern transformation of material culture in Mazu worship is the revival of sacrificial ceremonies and other religious performances. In the history of Mazu worship, the imperial governments developed the official ritual tradition of sacrificing to the goddess twice each year, in the mid-months of spring and autumn. The officially standardized tradition has some basic ritual structures similar to those of sacrificial rites dedicated to national deities, including preparation, "welcoming the goddess", the

first sacrifice, the second sacrifice, the final sacrifice, and "bidding farewell to the deity".[20] To establish its religious authority as the original place of Mazu worship and, thus, the goddess' preeminent pilgrimage site, as well as to enhance its appeal to tourists, the temple board sought to restore the "original", the official sacrifice ceremony. In 1993, the renewed official sacrifice ceremony was performed on the stage as the main event of the first tourist festival of Mazu culture (*Mazu wenhua lvyou jie*). Since then, the official sacrifice to Mazu at Meizhou has been closely connected to cultural tourism, as it is always performed during Meizhou's Mazu Cultural Tourist Festival.

As a modern expression of material culture in the Mazu tradition, the restored official sacrifice integrates some innovations into the traditional ceremony to meet the needs of devotees and increase tourist appeal. First, the sacrifice ceremony of the Meizhou temple adds some modern music and dancing elements, in effect staging it as cultural performance and entertainment. For example, the performance of *yuewu* (dance with music) is a modern version of the traditional sacrificial dance, *bayi*. *Yuewu* are solely performed by 20-year-old female dancers whose gentle and graceful dancing postures symbolize the female image of a compassionate sea goddess, "a beautiful young girl who saves people in the sea".[21] Moreover, the music used in the revitalized sacrificial ceremony was composed by modern musicians Lin Hanzu and Zheng Ruilin, adapting some melodies from local music. Second, to increase the entertainment and aesthetic aspects of the performance, the contemporary version of the ceremony involves a large number of female actors, including dancers to simulate the beautiful goddess, female cantors and ritualists with beautiful body gestures, and a woman with a nice voice who functions as a host. Through my interviews with these female actors, I learned that they are local college students who receive a year of training. Only those with good posture and the appropriate heights and weights are selected to be on the stage. Third, to increase tourist attendance, a small-scale sacrificial ceremony is held every Sunday morning. In this way, tourists and pilgrims who did not have chance to attend the large-scale performance on Mazu's birthday, "Ascending to the Heaven Day", and the Mazu Cultural Tourist Festival can still experience the "glamour of traditional culture at the ancestral temple", as the Vice President of the Temple Association, Wu Guochun, expressed. More importantly, the restored official sacrifice of Mazu reconfigures the local religious rituals into performances that resonate with regional and national heritages, following the guidelines of the United Nations' Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). As such, these "folklorized" religious rituals provide a way for the central government to promote national unity and pride. I will discuss this "folklorization" in greater detail in the next section.

In addition to the sacrificial ceremony as a religious performance, the temple association has also created a night entertainment performance, "Auspicious Atmosphere of Meizhou" (xiangrui Meizhou) (see Figure 4).[22] This song and dance show combines popular religious practices with some traditional and modern music elements, including local religious practices, playing with flower lanterns, swaying sedan chairs, singing by the local opera of Puxian, and alternating ten voices and eight musical instruments (*shiyin bayue*). To emphasize the religious aspect of this show, it also includes a solo performance of *Yuewu*, the sacrificial dance.

Figure 4. The performance of "Auspicious Atmosphere of Meizhou". Source: author's own photograph.

The third aspect of the modern transformation of material culture in Mazu worship is the reinvention of Mazu statues. The ancestral temple was and is still dedicated to reproducing statues of the goddess from a variety of media, such as jade, gold, shell, wood, bronze, clay, and cloisonné. The modern expression of material culture in Mazu worship is primarily illustrated by the giant stone statue entitled "the Goddess of Peace". This stone statue, which is located at the highest spot of Meizhou mountain, is 14.35 meters high. It was designed in 1987 by Li Weisi and Jiang Zhiqiang, two professors at Xiamen University, and took three years to mold. Whereas in traditional images Mazu is portrayed in a sitting position, and should not be made of white material nor be exposed outside, for this modern statue, the goddess is in a standing posture, made of white granite stone, and is standing outside. Further, her facial expression is similar to the image of Guanyin (Chang 2013, p. 4). This stone statue is now commonly considered as a standard version of Mazu, widely accepted by devotees and scholars. This is attested to by the stamps issued by the national post office and the signature slogan of the ancestral temple at Meizhou.

The new changes in Mazu's statues illustrate the shared ideology of commercial, cultural, and religious agencies. First, because of its location above the ancestral temple, "The Goddess of Peace" provides a spectacular view of Meizhou Island, designed to attract tourists and pilgrims. Second, the new statue's facial expression emphasizes the religious essence of Mazu worship in modern China, full of "grace, benevolence, and philanthropy" (*lide xingshan da'ai*). In other words, the statue is not just a religious object to be worshiped by Mazu devotees, but also a material media to express a universal value, the goddess's great love and compassion to protect believers and non-believers. Third, since this statue was a gift donated by the Chaotian Palace at Beigang in Taiwan, it is widely considered as a symbol of unification of mainland China and Taiwan. The ancestral temple offered a replica of the statue to the Chaotian Palace in 1992 as a gift in return. These twin Mazu statues now

face each other across the Taiwan strait. In this sense, this statue illustrates the affinity and relationship between the Meizhou ancestral temple and the affiliated temple at Beigang. Indeed, officially named the Straits Goddess of Peace (*Haixia heping nǚshen*), the modern version of the goddess reflects the state's vision of a reunified Taiwan. This image also serves as an important medium to connect Mazu devotees in mainland China and overseas. Following the example of the Meizhou ancestral temple, temples in Guangzhou, Melbourne, and the newly built one in Nigeria have built the same style of statue.[23] Devotees at these diasporic temples frequently go on a pilgrimage to the ancestral temple. Thus, we see the establishment of a temple system and a transnational worship community through the combined use of material culture, media, and travel.

The fourth aspect of the modern transformation of material culture in Mazu worship worth mentioning is the development of cultural products dedicated to Mazu worship. In modern times, the ancestral temple has extended its functions to include the development of a cultural and creative industry, producing a variety of items such as woodcarving decorations, safety pendants, Mazu dolls, and all kinds of products featuring the image of Mazu. All of these products flow to local and national markets. At the same time, the ancestral temple has organized a series of competitions and exhibitions, such as "The Best Mazu, the best Meizhou" (*zui Mazu zui Meizhou*), to encourage and support the development of Mazu cultural and creative products.

The development of Mazu's products is not just a material expression of Mazu culture and the spiritual essence of Mazu worship. It also illustrates the interactions among religion, tourism, and the manufacturing industry. These products transcend the traditional representations, since they are meant to take the devotion beyond temples. For example, different sizes of Mazu statues are crafted to facilitate portability and allow devotees to worship at household shrines. According to Zhang Junmei, the manager of the retail store of Mazu's cultural and creative products, that is the reason why portable products, such as refrigerator magnets with Mazu's image, are particularly popular.

The modern worship of Mazu is not just evident in markets; the goddess is also present online. To attract younger visitors, the ancestral temple live streams events through official accounts on We-Chat and TikTok. As the Vice President of the Temple Association told me, they use Weibo (a micro blog) and TikTok to increase tourist appeal for the young generation and tout the reputation of "the sacred site of Mazu" throughout the world. In my interviews with over 20 young tourists, they all admitted that they had visited these online accounts created by the ancestral temple before making their visit to Meizhou Island. In addition, to fulfill the needs of overseas devotees who could not make their pilgrimage to the ancestral temple during pandemic times, the temple association also created webpages to "pay homage to Mazu online" and "make pilgrimage on-line".

From the perspective of material religion, a variety of materialities, what Vásquez calls the "material infrastructure of the sacred", are now central to the performance of Mazu religious spirituality (Vásquez 2020). Whether we are speaking of architecture, Mazu statues, cultural and creative products, the high-profile sacrificial ceremonies, or websites, these forms of materiality reflect the interaction of religious beliefs and social dynamics. As argued by scholars of material religion, we should "recognize the diversity agencies at work in the production of religious practice, belief, narrative, and ideology." (Morgan 2021, p. 50). As the ancestral temple clearly shows, tourism plays a central role in the transformation, extension, and experience of sacred spaces and objects connected with the worship of Mazu. The religious space is not just renovated and enlarged with the goal of strengthening pilgrims' and devotees' religious beliefs, but also to attract tourists. The same can be said of traditional sacrificial ceremonies, which have been redesigned to appeal to devotees as well as to the tourists who are seeking a cultural experience. Finally, in its size, location, configuration and material use, the newly built stone statue of Mazu atop Meizhou Island symbolizes the tight synergy between spirituality and tourism, combining commercial, cultural, and religious forms and functions.

4. Agencies and Mechanisms Underlying Material Transformations in Mazu Worship

This section will focus on the underlying agencies and approaches through which the material culture in Mazu worship has developed a variety of new forms. As Morgan argues, the study of religion "as a material reality emerges from the recognition of the plurality of agents at work in any event of religious value." (Morgan 2021, p. 51). As we have seen, the material media of Mazu worship has been extended and integrated into the modern social and economic systems closely connected to cultural tourism. Thus, our analysis of these processes will have to be interdisciplinary, involving a discussion of economics, tourism, and religion.

Let us start with a sketch of the socio-economic context within and outside the ancestral temple since its reconstruction in 1978. Starting from 1986, the temple has been managed by a board with a chairman, marking an evolution from a religious organization managed solely by religious specialists to an entity that integrates religious, economic, and tourist services (Jiang and Zhu 2011, pp. 107–9, also see Zhang 2021). The temple operates and is organized just as a modern enterprise, consisting of different departments with specialized functions, such as improving the temple's ritual and tourist services, administrating various scenic attractions, and overseeing the production and sale of cultural and creative goods.

These internal transformations mirror and interact with external dynamics in the larger Chinese society. The first factor is the changing economic environment, in particular the rapid growth of the market economy. Scholars agree that the market economy has played a significant role in the revitalization of Chinese popular religious traditions (see Chau 2006; Johnson 2009; Lagerwey 2010; Goossaert and Palmer 2011). Popular or "folk" religions in China comprise a wide variety of local and regional beliefs, practices and fluid forms of organization that amalgamate elements of Daoism, Buddhism, and the worship of ancestors, spirits, and deities. The boundaries that these religions have with established religions and with the cultural milieu at large are often porous. In 2012, the Pew Research Center estimated that 21.9 percent of China's population (close to 300 million) practiced some version of popular religions.[24] By 2020, the World Religion Database at Boston University placed that number at 30.4 percent (over 450 million).[25] While these numbers have to be taken with the proverbial grain of salt given the difficulty in measuring accurately an affiliation for such decentralized and hybrid religious phenomena, China observers agree that, following economic liberalization and the reforms I discuss below, the state has been laxer in overseeing popular religions than when it comes to Christianity and Islam because they are considered part of the country's heritage and identity.

The expansion of the market economy in China has opened opportunities and challenges for temple associations. Specifically, in the market economy, the operation and even survival of temples has come to be increasingly self-sustaining rather than depending on donations from devotees, which was the traditional way. Thus, the need to expand financial channels and increase income generated by tourism, as more Chinese people have the resources to travel and engage in pilgrimages, explains why the temple has shifted from a purely religious association to an entity structured to carry out significant socio-economic functions. For instance, in response to the growing economy generated by tourism, the ancestral temple built two large hotels—the Antai and the Qifu—to provide accommodation for tourists.

The second external factor in the transformation of material culture in the devotion to Mazu is the new orientation of official policies. The revival of popular religious traditions, including Mazu's cult across southeast China, has been made possible in large part by a dramatic shift in the government's attitudes toward Chinese religions, as exemplified by the implementation of "Document 19" in 1982.[26] In Document 19, the official government suggested that organizations and communities with historical religious sites should be aware of their tourist significance: "architecture should be properly renovated, the environment should be fully protected. In this way, these religious sites will become tourist sites with clean, peaceful, and beautiful environments."[27]

Adding to the impact of Document 19, the Chinese government has strongly supported the promotion of intangible cultural heritage. In 2003, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) promulgated the "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage." On the basis of this convention, the Chinese government issued "Suggestions for Reinforcing Our National Efforts to Safeguard the Intangible Cultural Heritage." (see Zhang 2021, p. 20). This suggestion provides a detailed account of administrative procedures to implement the convention at both the national and provincial levels. Mazu worship was recognized by the Chinese Ministry of Culture as worthy of being included in the national list of "intangible cultural heritage" in 2009. This "cultural heritization" and "folklorization" (i.e., the recognition that the cult is a central part of the everyday life of the people) of Mazu devotional practices have given them legitimacy vis à vis the modern Chinese secular state and enhanced their visibility in the larger society.[28]

In line with the recommendation by the central government to develop religious tourism, local governments have also played a crucial role in the growth of religious tourism. Specifically, local governments are actively involved in restoring and promoting religious sites in their areas to increase revenue. As shown in its 2020 financial report, the local government of the area in which Mazu's ancestral temple is located fits this pattern: it has launched serval programs to improve the tourist environment of Meizhou Island. For example, the local government of Meizhou donated CNY 10,000,000 to improve the night lighting of the ancestral temple complex and other scenic spots. It also invested another CNY 10,000,000 to support the development of cultural and creative products dedicated to Mazu worship.[29] As a result, the year 2020 witnessed a 0.9% increase in tourists and a 0.99% increase in annual income generated through tourism during the pandemic period. In addition, officials from the Putian government, including the mayor of Putian, and the propaganda minister of the province of Fujian, were strongly supportive of the Meizhou's Mazu Cultural Tourist Festival of 2022.

The third factor in the changing social context is the development of the internet and the popularity of apps in China. The temple association of the ancestral temple is keenly aware of the spiritual and cultural needs of the young generation, and mindful that traditional rituals and material objects like statues may not fit the values and aesthetics of this generation. To attract them, the material culture has to be updated. Thus, the temple association has encouraged the production of goods connected with the cartoon Mazu, the use of three-dimensional animation to disseminate Mazu's hagiography, and the creation of live-broadcasting platforms.

Overall, the constellation of changing socio-economic and political contexts has contributed to the post-secular transformation of religions in modern China. While religions have not disappeared, or even become privatized, as the secularization paradigm had predicted, there has been a process of rationalization and instrumentalization. We see that the material expressions of Mazu worship have been deeply involved with commodification, tourism, and the preservation of religious traditions as cultural heritage. As Tom Bremer puts it, "commodification involves processes by which the aesthetic desires of the consumer become manifest, if only in the consumer's imagination, in material objects, cultural performances, and a host of services that consumers utilize". (Bremer 2020, p. 191). Thus, we see how the religious association at Mazu's ancestral temple has made use of religious symbols and practices to produce systematically material objects and ritual services that fulfill and create the desires of tourists and pilgrims. In this process, the material objects and services have increasingly become the bases of a modern consumerist religion invested with "transcendent power and sacred significance" (Chidester 2005, p. 3). This does not mean that the authenticity of the tradition has faded.[30] Rather, the reconstruction and performance of religious ritual and historical authenticity become the bases for profit and transformation. As Bremer has observed, "religion in highly secularized modern contexts, translates authentic spiritual sentiments into the markets of late capitalism" (Bremer 2020, p. 191). We can say, then, that the materiality of Mazu culture transcends the strict demar-

cations between the sacred and the secular, tradition and innovation, and between past and future.

To summarize the interplay of internal and external factors and among new transformations of material culture, Mazu worship, and religious tourism, Kiran Shinde's model of the dynamics of religious tourism is helpful (Shinde 2003, p. 93; see Figure 5). Shinde argues that the interaction between religious tourists has a direct impact on the host environment. This is because the physical environment, which consists of natural and cultural attractions, as well as local transportation systems and the accommodation infrastructure, serves an intermediary role between, on the one hand, tourists and, on the other, religious institutions, the local economy, and the community (Shinde and Olsen 2020, p. 6). In other words, this model highlights how materiality, in the form of Meizhou's beautiful surroundings, the cultural attractions, and the infrastructure expanded by the temple association, has played a central role in the interplay between tourism and religion at Mazu's ancestral site.

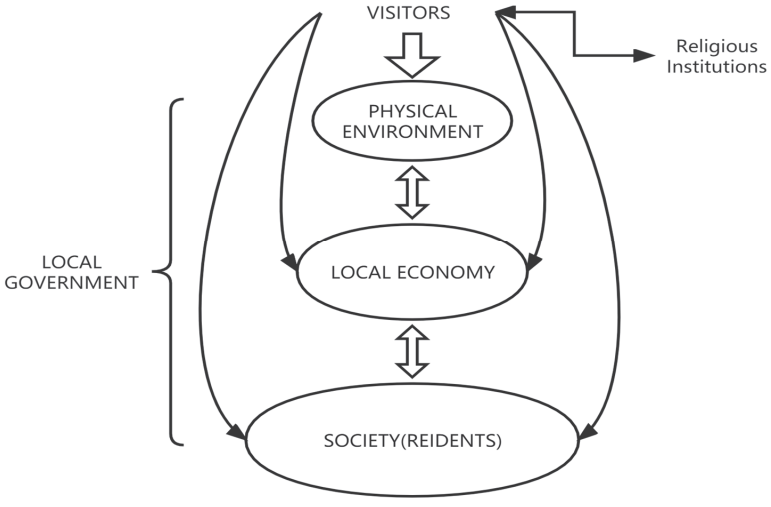


Figure 5. Model of the dynamics of religious tourism. Source: (Shinde 2003, p. 93).

In the case of Mazu worship, with support from the local and provincial governments and the legitimacy provided by a shift in the way the nation-state approaches religion(s), the temple association has dramatically changed the physical environment to meet the needs of tourists and pilgrims. These changes, including the giant stone statue of the Peace Goddess, the construction of the Park of Mazu's Birth Place, the modern performances of religious ceremonies, and the exhibition of cultural and creative products, as well as light shows and the use of three-dimensional technologies, have intensified religious experiences for pilgrims, travelers, and tourists, thereby attracting larger numbers of tourists and increasing the revenue that they bring for the local government. This revenue can then be invested in more physical improvements. The transformative cycle, or rather spiral, then goes on.

Although the model of the dynamics of religious tourism is useful in the analysis of the interaction between religious tourism and the host environment, it does not pay enough attention to the role of material objects and culture, including their interactions with other external and internal factors. In addition, the study of the interrelationships between material culture, religious tourism, and the local society should also take into consideration the bigger picture, such as the development of the Internet and online markets. To fill in these gaps, I have modified Shinde's model (Figure 6).

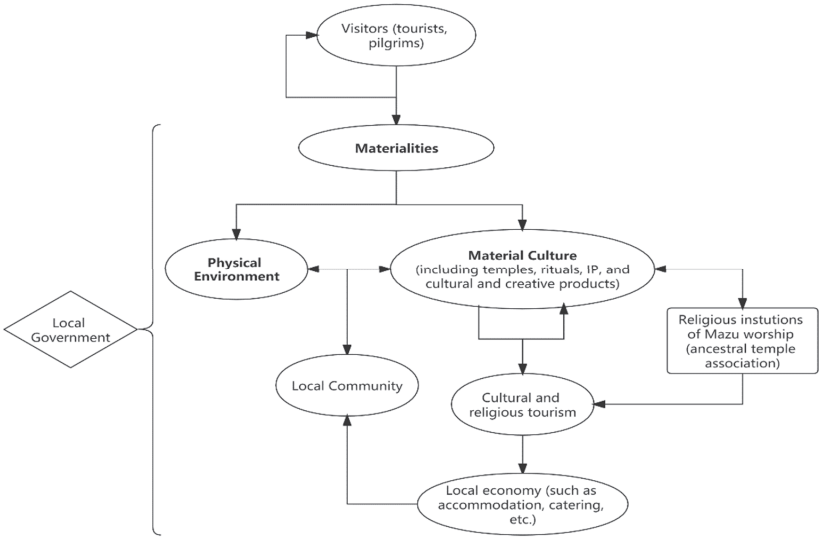


Figure 6. The impact model of agencies and mechanisms in material culture of Mazu worship.

The revised model first emphasizes the crucial role of material culture, which serves as a medium in the integration of Mazu worship with religious tourism. Tourists, the cultural and creative industry, religious institutions, and the local government interact with each other through both the (transformed) physical environment and the material objects of Mazu's devotional cultures. To be more specific, the material culture of Mazu worship has been modified to make the tradition appealing to tourists, both religious and non-religious. Conversely, the development of religious tourism opens new spaces for material culture, in particular regarding the expansion of the Internet and cell phone networks as the material media to express Mazu culture.

Our reworked model also highlighted the agency of religious institutions, which, as we saw in the case of the temple association, play a key role in linking the establishment of authenticity and authority and ritual innovation with the creation of new cultural products and the promotion of tourism. Shinde's original model tended not to recognize this simultaneously "conservative" effect, in the sense of recovering and preserving tradition and the creative role of religious institutions in terms of the dynamics of religious tourism.

In this model of multi-directional feedback, the profits coming from religious tourism and material products serve as financial resources for the religious institutions to consolidate their authority and capacity to innovate. Religious tourism also contributes to increasing the financial revenue of local governments, and reciprocally the local government plays an important role to support and sponsor the development of religious tourism.

In terms of the relationship between religious tourism, local community and economy, religious tourism has had an indirect but significant impact on the development of the local economy, including infrastructural improvements that, in turn, lead to more job opportunities for the locals. Changes in the local economy and society feed back into more development of Mazu material culture, and so on. We saw how a central dimension of the infrastructural transformations is the enlargement of a local hospitality industry. As of today, there are 204 homestay hotels in Meizhou Island, bringing an extra CNY 60,000 in the annual income of the local society.[31]

The growth of the hospitality industry goes hand-in-hand with the rapid expansion in the production and sale of Mazu souvenir items. In fact, Mazu has become the overarching theme for the place and the needs and desires of tourists and pilgrims have come to define the spaces and rhythm of local life. In Mazu's religious procession around Meizhou Island, commemorating the day of her ascension to heaven (4 October 2022), the local government

played an important part in coordinating the bus transportation. Local buses were assigned to pick up pilgrims, tourists, and volunteers and to take them to the temple gate before 8 a.m. Thousands of tourists, pilgrims, and local devotees gathered at the ancestral temple square and picked up blessing flags and sunhats provided by the temple association. The religious procession began at 9 a.m., departing from the ancestral temple, walking around the island, and finally arriving at the blessing boat. During the Mazu procession, all kinds of material objects, such as goddess statues, sacrificial offerings, and souvenirs, were pervasive. Throughout the journey, the local businesses offered snacks, water, and fruits to the tourists and pilgrims for free. Through participating into these religious events, the tourists and pilgrims can certainly feel the spiritual and cultural atmosphere expressed through these material objects.[32] In my interviews with the tourists who participated in the religious procession, they all agreed that this coming together amid a profusion of objects related to Mazu generated powerful feelings of great love toward the goddess. Surrounded by bountiful goods during this journey, they came to understand the spiritual meaning of "Mazu blesses you".

5. Conclusions

The transformations in the worship of Mazu offer a strategic window into the changing roles of religious materiality in the contemporary Chinese religious landscape. Materiality has always been essential to the devotion to the goddess. Historically, material media were created and used to express the devotee's beliefs and values as an integral part of their religious lives. While it is true that religious devotion has always been connected to politics and economics, as wealthy merchants, influential government officials, and powerful military leaders transformed a local shrine into a large temple complex through their bequests, materiality was primarily a means to express personal gratitude to the goddess and glorify her miraculous interventions. In other words, the temple complex, the use of incense, hagiographic texts, and the Mazu statues, along with other material objects, served principally to forge strong, intimate, and affective personal and group connections between the goddess and her believers' everyday lives, addressing issues like fertility and protection against disease and misfortunes, and guaranteeing the wellbeing of families. This link contributed to consolidating the ancestral temple as the origin sacred site of Mazu worship.

In modern times, the material expression of Mazu worship has experienced a tremendous transformation due to changes in the way the central government sees religion(s). Following the issuance of Document 19 in 1982 and the government's endorsement of the UNESCO's "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" as a way to strengthen national identity, the previous suspicion and hostility toward religion(s) gave way to seeing their potential for the recovery and preservation of national cultural heritage. This change in the approach from the Chinese central government has legitimized the development of religious tourism, which has also been facilitated by a rapid expansion of the Chinese economy that has given citizens increasing disposable income, allowing them to travel. In turn, religious tourism has transformed the devotion to Mazu and the local economy of Meizhou Island. The materiality of Mazu culture is now deployed in the overlapping worlds of spirituality, religious tourism, and the local socio-economic environment, transcending its traditional roots and character.

We saw how, in the case of the worship of Mazu, these societal changes have transformed religious experiences and practices. The conversion of a local/regional religious devotion into a national/transnational cultural performance through a transformation of materiality and, more generally, the integration of religion and the modern economic system through tourism, has been accompanied by a process of cultural commodification, which tends to "disenchant," to use Max Weber's (2002, p. 60) term, traditional meanings associated with Mazu. As we have seen, the modified cultural products of Mazu worship emphasize touristry and entertainment aspects, while diminishing the strictly religious aims. In accordance with the changes in Mazu worship, the temple association has trans-

formed into a socio-economic enterprise. The overriding function of the temple association has increasingly become to develop new cultural products which will attract more visitors and bring more commercial profits. From the perspective of local government, the purpose of its support for religious tourism and Mazu worship is now to develop the local economy and increase local revenues.

Borrowing from Shinde, I have suggested a model that accounts for the multiple agents involved in this process, as well as for the multi-directional relationships they sustain. The model highlights the centrality of materiality, both human-made and in the natural environment, and the agency of religious and secular organizations in animating the networks of interaction. I suggest that this model might be useful to understand the interplay of other religious phenomena with materiality and tourism in China and beyond.

While the transformation of the materiality of the worship of Mazu is a complex multi-agent and multi-variable dynamic, it has resulted in a process of commodification. We have seen how the material infrastructure of the ancestral site, from the expansion of the temple to the use of electronic media, and changes in the performance of ritual ceremonies to the growth of a hospitality industry and the proliferation of Mazu souvenirs, has been transformed to amplify its entertainment and tourist values. This modern version of Mazu worship has gained great support from local government since it has become an important source of revenue.

It is too early to assess the full impact of this commodification on the worship of Mazu. In the interviews I conducted, visitors to the Mazu ancestral temple felt that the lavish changes in the performances and material culture intensified their religious experiences and brought them closer to the goddess. In that sense, the traditional function of materiality in the devotion persists. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the changes ushered in by the new prominence of religious tourism at Meizhou Island represent a process of "de-sacralization" that has overflowed the referents of traditional practices and beliefs, re-signifying and linking them tightly to expansive "profane" political and economic aims. On the other hand, this commodification has allowed the spread and "massification" of Mazu, and her devotion nationally and transnationally.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, Y.Z. and C.W.; methodology, Y.Z. and X.L.; formal analysis, Y.Z.; investigation, Y.Z. and C.W.; resources, Y.Z.; writing—original draft preparation, Y.Z.; writing—review and editing, Y.Z.; visualization, Y.Z. and X.L.; supervision, Y.Z.; project administration, Y.Z.; funding acquisition, Y.Z. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received funding from Fujian Provincial Humanities and Social Sciences Foundation (Fujian sheng sheke) No. FJ2020B136; the Fundamental Research Funds for central Universities (Zhongyang gaoxiao jiben keyan yewu zhuanxiang zijin zizhu) No. 2072021109; and 2022 College Students' Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training [Program (2022 nian daxue sheng chuangxin chuangye jihua xiangmu)] "The Combination of Mazu worship and Contemporary Cultural Tourism" [(National, No. 202210384158)].

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Institutional Review Board of Xiamen University (protocol code XDYX2021024 and date of approval 29 September 2021).

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

[1] I conducted fieldwork in November 2021 and October and December 2022, and I also participated in Mazu's ascension to Heaven celebration on 4 October, and Meizhou's Mazu Cultural Tourist Festival on 17 December 2022.

[2] See (Miller 1998, p. 3). In Chp. 1, Miller offers a historical review of the study of material culture.

3 Scholars in the field of material religious studies include Colleen McDannell (1995), David Chidester (2005), and David Morgan (2005), as well as the more recent elaborations by Manuel Vásquez (2011), Carolyn Walker Bynum (2011), and Brent Plate (2015).

4 (Fleming and Mann 2018, pp. 21–38). Dirk Meyer's article "Bamboo and the production of philosophy: a hypothesis about a shift in writing and thought in early China" discusses the use of lightweight writing materials and the development of a manuscript culture, which marks a shift in philosophical production.

5 See (The website of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China 2022): https://www.mct.gov.cn/tourism/#/list (accessed on 26 December 2022). It gives detailed information on the lists of national tourist sites. There are a total of 119 national tourist sites, among which over 47% are related to religious or cultural tourism. Most of them are ancient sites that contain features considered to be of great cultural or religious significance. The statistics show the growing significance of religious and cultural tourism throughout China.

6 My previously published article, "Transnational Religious Tourism in Modern China and the Transformation of the Cult of Mazu", mainly focuses on the role of transnational tourism in the invention of tradition, folklorization, and the commodification of the Mazu cult. It did not explore the transformation of material culture in modern Mazu worship. See (Zhang 2021).

7 *Tianfei xiansheng lu* (*Record of the Sagely Manifestation of the Celestial Consort*), compiled by Zhaocheng (c. 1644). The text used in this paper comes from (Jiang and Zhou 2009, pp. 68–103).

8 *Tianfei xiansheng lu*, pp. 96–97.

9 Mazu's case illustrates common patterns in the use of religious materiality in the devotion to goddesses in China. The religious materiality is also significant in the transmission of other Chinese goddesses, such as Guanyin. See (Yu 2001).

10 For detailed information on the compilation of *Tianfei xiansheng lu*, see (Zhang 2020).

11 For example, the leading scholar in the study of Mazu worship, Li Xianzhang, uses the hagiographic texts to establish the history of her worship. See (Li 1995).

12 This statue is believed to be one of the earliest statues handed down from the Song dynasty. It was rescued from the cultural revolution by the first Chair of the Temple Association, Lin Congzhi.

13 (Jiang and Zheng 2007, p. 2). The original text comes from Liu Kezhuang's *Baihumiao shieryun*, "The numinous consort, a young girl, originated from the Meizhou Island through a slice of fragrant incense, through which her worship flourished all throughout Fujian province, and later spread all over China.".

14 For a detailed discussion of dividing incense and its role in constructing a transnational religious community, see (Zhang 2021).

15 I interviewed over 10 tourists who visited the exhibition hall of Mazu culture.

16 I randomly interviewed over 20 people who were visiting the Museum of Mazu Culture Origin on 4 October 2023. Five of them were tourists who did not believe in Mazu. I asked the following questions: Do you believe Mazu or not? What attracted you to visit these places? What is your impression when you saw the historical objects dedicated to Mazu? Did these objects generate religious feelings or not?

17 Miss Cai and Mr. Zhang were two pilgrims from Hainan province. They were pious devotees who participated in the religious procession and sacrificial rituals to celebrate Mazu's ascension to heaven. I conducted brief interviews with each of them, asking them the same questions I posed to non-believers.

18 All these local popular practices, which are closely related to Mazu worship, run throughout the devotees' life cycle, ranging from childhood to old age. When devotees are children, their money is blessed by Mazu, symbolizing good fortune as they grow up. Married women who want to become pregnant will go to the Mazu temple and exchange flowers with the goddess so that that she will bless them with the birth of babies.

19 The website of the national tourist site of Meizhou Island at Putian city on "The economic and social development of Meizhou island in 2020": http://mzd.putian.gov.cn/xxgk/tjxxx/202109/t20210921_1649516.htm (accessed on 26 December 2022).

20 The detailed descriptions of the official ritual are recorded in a Qing official text, "Collected Statutes of the Great Qing from the Kangxi Reign" (*Kangxi daqing huidian*), which describes the proper rules, procedures, and material objects to be used in official rituals. *Kangxi daqing huidian* is collected in (Jiang and Zhou 2009, pp. 197–99).

21 In my previous research, I made a similar argument. See (Zhang 2021, pp. 12–13).

22 The information of Xiangrui Meizhou is based on fieldwork material I collected on 31 October 2021.

23 These temples either built their stone statues with their own funding or through gifts from the ancestral temple. See (Chang 2013).

24 See https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-folk/ (accessed on 19 June 2023).

25 See https://www.thearda.com/world-religion/national-profiles?u=52c (accessed on 19 June 2023).

26 See (Goossaert and Palmer 2011, p. 324). They give a detailed analysis of Document 19 and its impact on religious practices in modern China. Also see (Zhang 2021, pp. 20–21).

27 See Document 19 on the website of the "Chinese National Religions": (The Website of Chinese National Religions 1982) http://www.mzb.com.cn/html/folder/290171.htm (accessed on 26 December 2022). For information in English, see (Goossaert and Palmer 2011, p. 325).

28 On the heritization and folklorization of Chinese religions, see (Zhou et al. 2017).

[29] On the website of the "the economic and social development of Meizhou Island in 2020": (The website of the economic and social development of Meizhou island in 2020 (2020 nian meizhou dao jingji yu shehui fazhan zhuangkuang) http://mzd.putian.gov.cn/xxgk/tjxxx/202109/t20210921_1649516.htm (accessed on 26 December 2022).

[30] Chidester uses the term "authentic fakes" to make sense of this paradox in the American religious field.

[31] On the website of "the national tourist site of Meizhou island at Putian city" (putian shi Meizhou dao guojia lvyou dujiaqu) http://mzd.putian.gov.cn/ztzl/dsxxjy/202204/t20220420_1719512.htm (accessed on 26 December 2022).

[32] The information on Mazu's religious procession around Meizhou Island on the day of her ascension into heaven is based on the fieldwork material I collected on 4 October 2022.

References

Bremer, Thomas S. 2020. Consider the Tourist. In *Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Materiality*. Edited by Vasudha Narayanan. Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 187–206.

Bynum, Carolyn Walker. 2011. *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe*. New York: Zone Books.

Chang, Hsun. 2013. Mazu zaoxiang yu biaozhun hua wenti taolun (The Discussion of Mazu's Iconography and the Question of Standardization). *Zongjiao Renlei Xue (Religious Anthropology)* 4: 149–67.

Chau, Adam Yuet. 2006. *Miraculous Response: Doing Popular Religion in Contemporary China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Chidester, David. 2005. *Authentic Fakes: Religion and American Popular Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dittmar, Helga. 1992. *The Social Psychology of Material Possessions: To Have Is to Be*. New York: Hemel Hampstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf and St Martin's Press.

Feuchtwang, Stephan. 2001. *Popular Religion in China: The Imperial Metaphor*. London: Routledge.

Fleming, Benjamin, and Richard Mann. 2018. *Material Culture and Asian Religions: Text, Culture, and Image*. London: Routledge.

Goossaert, Vincent, and David A. Palmer. 2011. *The Religious Question in Modern China*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Habkirk, Scott, and Hsun Chang. 2017. Scents, Community, and Incense in Traditional Chinese Religion. *Material Religion* 13: 156–74. [CrossRef]

Jiang, Weiyan, and Lihang Zheng, eds. 2007. *The Compilation of Mazu's Historical Material and Texts (the First Volume): The Volume of Inscriptions (Mazu Wenxian Shiliao huIbian Diyi Ji: BEIJI Juan)*. Beijing: Chinese Archives Press (Zhongguo Dang'an Chubanshe).

Jiang, Weiyan, and Jintan Zhou, eds. 2009. *The Compilation of Mazu's Historical Material and Texts (the Second Volume: The Volume of Writings (Mazu Wenxian Shiliao Huibian Dier Ji: Zhulu Juan)*. Beijing: Chinese Archives Press (Zhongguo Dang'an Chubanshe).

Jiang, Weiyan, and Hepu Zhu, eds. 2011. *The Record of Mazu at Meizhou Fujian: Local Gazetteers Publications (Meizhou Mazu Zhi)*. Fujian: Fangzhi Chubanshe.

Johnson, David George. 2009. *Spectacle and Sacrifice: The Ritual Foundations of Village Life in North China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Lagerwey, John. 2010. *China, a Religious State*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Li, Xianzhang. 1995. *The Study of Mazu Belief (Mazu Xinyang Yanjiu)*. Macau: Macau Maritime Affairs Library Press (Macau Haishi Bowu Guan Chuban).

Lin, Wei-Ping. 2017. Why Build a Temple? The Materialization of New Community Ideals in the Demilitarized Islands between China and Taiwan. *Material Religion* 13: 131–55. [CrossRef]

McDannell, Colleen. 1995. *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Miller, Daniel. 1987. *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Miller, Daniel. 1998. *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter*. London: UCL Press.

Miller, Daniel. 2007. *Materiality*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Morgan, David. 2005. *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Morgan, David. 2010. Introduction: The Matter of Belief. In *Religion and Material Culture: The Matter of Belief*. Edited by David Morgan. London: Routledge, pp. 1–18.

Morgan, David. 2019. The Material Culture of Lived Religions: Visuality and Embodiment. Available online: Https://www.thejugaadproject.pub/home/the-material-culture-of-lived-religions-visuality-and-embodiment (accessed on 16 April 2023).

Morgan, David. 2021. *The Thing about Religion: An Introduction to the Material Study of Religion*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Plate, S. Brent. 2015. Material Religion: An Introduction. In *Key Items in Material Religion*. Edited by S. Brent Plate. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 1–8.

Sangren, P. Steven. 1993. Power and Transcendence in the Ma Tsu Pilgrimages of Taiwan. *American Ethnologist* 20: 564–82. [CrossRef]

Schipper, Kristofer. 1990. The Cult of Pao-Sheng Ta-Ti and its Spreading to Taiwan: A Case Study of Fen-hsiang. In *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*. Edited by Eduard B. Vermeer. Leiden: Brill.

Shinde, Kiran, and Daniel H. Olsen. 2020. The Environmental impact of Religious Tourism. In *Religious Tourism and the Environment*. Edited by Kiran A. Shinde and Daniel H. Ols. Wallingford: CABI, pp. 1–22.

Shinde, Kiran. 2003. Environmental crisis in God's abode: Managing religious tourism. In Paper presented at the Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage–Conference Proceedings of the 1st Expert Meeting of ATLAS–Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Research Group, Fatima, Portugal, April 23–27; pp. 23–7.
Ter Haar, Barend J. 1990. The Genesis and Spread of Temple Cults in Fukien. In *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries*. Edited by Eduard B. Vermeer. Leiden: Brill.
Tilley, Christopher. 1990. *Reading Material Culture: Structuralism, Hermeneutics and Post-Structuralism*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell.
Tilley, Christopher. 1991. *Material Culture and Text: The Art of Ambiguity*, 1st ed. London: Routledge. [CrossRef]
Vásquez, Manuel A. 2011. *More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Vásquez, Manuel A. 2020. The Persistence, Ubiquity, and Dynamicity of Materiality Studying Religion and Materiality Comparatively. In *Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Materiality*. Edited by Vasudha Narayanan. Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, pp. 1–42.
Weber, Max. 2002. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.
Yu, Junfang. 2001. *Kuan-Yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara*. New York: Columbia University Press.
Zhang, Yanchao. 2020. The Local Promotion of Mazu: The Intersection of Lineage, Textual Representation, Confucian Values, and Temples in Late Imperial China. *Religions* 11: 123. [CrossRef]
Zhang, Yanchao. 2021. Transnational Religious Tourism in Modern China and the Transformation of the Cult of Mazu. *Religions* 12: 221. [CrossRef]
Zhou, Xing, Juwen Zhang, Natalie Zhang, and Bill Long. 2017. Folk Belief and its Legitimation in China. *Western Folklore* 76: 151–65.

religions

MDPI

Article

Paradisi porta—An Iconographic Analysis of Mary as a Humanity's Mediator in the Light of Medieval Liturgical Hymns

José María Salvador-González

Department of Art History, Complutense University of Madrid, 28040 Madrid, Spain; jmsalvad@ucm.es

Abstract: This article aims to highlight the rich doctrinal meanings underlying the textual and iconic designation of the Virgin Mary as the gate of Heaven, a highly brilliant metaphor used by writers and artists to symbolize her saving mediation before her divine Son on behalf of humankind. To justify our interpretations of this textual and iconic symbol, we will proceed first by analyzing an abundant set of fragments of medieval liturgical hymns, which designate the Virgin Mary as the "gate of Paradise" (*porta Paradisi*) or "gate of Heaven" (*ianua Coeli*) and other expressions alluding to her power to facilitate the eternal salvation of the faithful. In a second step, we will analyze ten sculptural and pictorial artworks that represent Mary as the gate of celestial paradise or the mediator before God in favor of believers to facilitate their eternal salvation.

Keywords: Mariology; Marian iconography; Mary's universal mediation; eternal salvation; Last Judgement; medieval liturgical hymns; doctrinal symbol; gothic portal

Citation: Salvador-González, José María. 2023. *Paradisi porta*—An Iconographic Analysis of Mary as a Humanity's Mediator in the Light of Medieval Liturgical Hymns. *Religions* 14: 284. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14020284

Academic Editors: Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges, Helena Albuquerque and Marina Montesano

Received: 5 January 2023
Revised: 16 January 2023
Accepted: 16 February 2023
Published: 20 February 2023

1. Introduction

The Ecumenical Councils of Nicaea (325) and Ephesus (431) set up the fundamental dogma of the Virgin Mary's divine motherhood. Consequently, she quickly began receiving repeated and profound attention from many Church Fathers and medieval theologians, thus configuring a solid and concordant Mariological tradition for more than a millennium. In turn, this doctrinal tradition was translated into two intrinsically related and complementary manifestations: on the one hand, the Fathers and theologians' statements about Mary served as eidetic inspiration and doctrinal foundation for numerous medieval hymnographers, who composed countless antiphons, canticles, and liturgical hymns, which were recited or sung in public religious ceremonies or private prayers; secondly, the Mariological tradition established by the Fathers and theologians also promoted a widespread devotion to the Virgin Mary according to various invocations and titles, which quickly spread to all corners of the Christian sphere.

In the current article, based on the analysis of texts and artistic images referring to Mary's savior-like mediation in favor of humankind, we will focus our research on three points: first, in the thematic field, we will analyze the textual and iconic data referring exclusively to the designation of Mary as the "gate of Heaven", "door of Paradise", or the equivalent concepts of Mary as "mediator", "intercessor", "protector", or other similar titles; second, in the textual field, we will restrict to the medieval liturgical hymns that allude to the subject under study, since we have destined another academic article to analyze the writings of Church Fathers and medieval theologians on the topic; thirdly, in the iconic field, we will center the study on medieval and Renaissance pictorial and sculptural representations that make Mary visible in one way or another as the gate of Heaven, or as a mediator and intercessor of humanity before God.

We believe it is necessary to highlight the academic novelty of our article in the sense that, based on considerable expertise in medieval Mariology, we are not aware of any study that has addressed the issue of the saving mediation of the Virgin Mary as gate of Heaven

from the perspective of medieval liturgical hymns. As if that were not enough, as far as we know, there is no study that has linked these hymns with some medieval paintings and sculptures that illustrate Mary as the *porta Paradisi* symbol, as we do in this article.

2. A Brief Analysis of Some Liturgical Hymns Alluding to the Gate of Heaven

In this section we will briefly present a select set of medieval Latin liturgical hymns that praise or appeal to the Virgin Mary, designating her with the metaphors "gate of heaven" (*ianua Coeli*), "door of Paradise" (*porta Pzaradisi*), or some other formula alluding to the power of mediation of Mary before her divine Son to facilitate the eternal salvation of the faithful. To better appreciate the conceptual and symbolic evolution of these medieval hymns, we will expose them sequentially in groups corresponding to the centuries in which each was written.

A preliminary precision is now required. Within the strict limits of an academic article, we have selected, as a representative sample of a much larger totality, those fragments of liturgical hymns that seemed to us the most significant for the topic we proposed. Although valid, ours is not the only possible choice. Obviously, another researcher who wants to carry out an investigation with a similar approach to ours will be able to choose many other examples of similar hymns, which will undoubtedly lead to the same or similar results.

2.1. 10th-Century Hymns

Dating from the 10th century, we have documented the following four hymns alluding to the subject we are studying:

The *Hymnus 71. Hymnus de sancta Maria* thus intones the saving and comforting power of Mary, by opening the door of the heavenly Paradise, as an antithesis to the deleterious role of Eve, who closed the door of the Earthly Paradise to us.

> You are the only virgin mother,
> You remain as the gate of Heaven,
> Who are sad because of Eve
> Are now happy because of you.[1]

The *Hymnus 2. De Nativitate Beatae Mariae Virginis* celebrates the sublime mother of God with these poetic metaphors, which include its designation as a receptacle of divinity, as the pure cell, and as the tabernacle of the Lord:

> The star of the sea has already been born,
> The star of the sea has already been born,
> The gate of Heaven, the pure cell.
> The pure cell, the gate of Heaven,
> The tabernacle of the Lord.[2]

The *Hymnus 6. Purificatio* thus proclaims the protective capacity of the Queen of Heaven:

> Comfort us
> with your guardianship,
> Additionally, always being a virgin,
> [you are] the happy gate of Heaven.[3]

The *Hymnus 11. De Annuntiatione Beatae Virginis Mariae* exalts the saving power of the heavenly Sovereign—whose royal Davidic lineage brings to light—in favor of the faithful with these verses:

> O venerable Virgin,
> Laudable
> Queen,
> Born of David's lineage,
> You are the proper gate of Heaven,
> For all who praise you
> with excellent prayers.[4]

2.2. 10th–12th Century Hymns

In that interval of three hundred years, we have documented these two hymns referring to our theme.

The *Hymnus 101. In Annunciatione Beatae Virginis Mariae*, after emphasizing that the mother of God is the only completely chaste virgin, extols the saving power of the celestial Sovereign through these revealing stanzas:

> 2a. Lady of the world,
> Who is the only one
> chaste
> Queen of virgins,
> 2b. The cause of salvation
> The gate of life
> and Heaven,
> full of grace.[5]

The *Hymnus 104. In Purificatione Beatae Mariae Virginis* highlights the sublime faculty of the salvation of God the Son's mother through these eloquent verses:

> 7a. Being earthly you unite yourself
> To the celestial beings
> and being human
> to the divine.
> 7b. For you the door
> Of the Paradise opens to us;[6]

In another stanza, this *Hymnus 104* goes on to stress Mary's efficacious power of universal salvation, when expressing:

> You are the nutritious salvation of the world,
> You have been made the gate of Heaven,
> Life is given
> For you to everyone.[7]

2.3. 11th-Century Hymns

From this century, we have found, in reference to our theme, only the *Hymnus 68, In Assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis*, which exalts Mary's saving power in favor of the faithful in the following terms:

> Empress of all,
> You are the firm hope of believers,
> The award,
> The price,
> the joy,
> Additionally, the salvation of the faithful,
> The gate of Heaven.[8]

2.4. 12th-Century Hymns

Corresponding to the 12th century, we have found six hymns alluding to the theses of reference.

The *Hymnus 98, De gaudiis Beatae Virginis Mariae* salutes the privilege of the Virgin as the universal helper, whose saving support it pleads for by these lyrical verses, which designates her as several beautiful flowers:

> 1. Queen of Heaven, rejoice,
> Enchanted with heavenly praise.
> 2a. Rejoice, glittering gem,

Rejoice, the gate of Heaven,
Splendid as the lilies,
Blooming rose.
2b. Splendid gate of Heaven,
Only you are the unique salvation
Oh, Lady of the world,
save us.[9]

The *Hymnus 350. De Sancta Maria* requests the intercessory help of the mother of the Lord, assimilated to the most precious wealth of Paradise, with this plea:

Gem of heaven, the gate of forgiveness,
Appease the King of glory
With the flower of your chastity.[10]

The *Hymnus 375. Alia de Sancta Maria (troparium)* enunciates this brief but eloquent acclamation to the helping Virgin:

Hail gate
blazing with eternal light.[11]

The *Hymnus 516. De Sancta Maria* exalts the Virgin as universal mediatrix with the condensed verses:

This one is the Virgin
that did not know the man's bed,
Additionally, as she ended her life,
[was made] the open gate of Heaven.[12]

The *Hymnus 143. De beata Maria Virginis* proclaims the sublime capacity for eternal salvation on the part of God's mother in these short stanzas:

2a. For you the door of Heaven opens,
That the Cherubim [of the Terrestrial Paradise] had closed [to Adam and Eve].
2b. Additionally, God [the Son] who was born from you
United the man to God.[13]

The *Hymnus 47. De Beata Virgine Maria* extols the exclusive supernatural attributes and virtues of the Redeemer's royal mother in the following statements, that underlines her special roles as mother, daughter, and spouse:

Virgin mother of the supreme King,
Virgin gem of virtues,
Holy Virgin, prudent Virgin,
daughter of Jerusalem,
Star of the sea, gate of Heaven,
gentle spouse of the Lord.[14]

2.5. 13th-Century Hymns

Dating from this century we have found only the *Hymnus 370. Sequentia de Virgine Maria*, which proclaims the theme studied with these brilliant rhymes that eloquently express the nutritious and healing power of the beautiful guardian of Heaven's gate:

Hail, crystalline door,
Living bread factory,
Hellish Death Medicine,
Flower of the world, Mary.[15]

2.6. 14th-Century Hymns

Composed in the 14th century, we have documented four hymns that are inspired by the ideas analyzed.

The *Hymnus 73. De Beata Maria Virgine* praises the mother of the Savior with these expressive phrases:

> Rejoice, Virgin, the gate of Heaven,
> For you, the light was born to the world,
> A mother so laudable.[16]

The *Hymnus 74. De beata Maria Virgine* glorifies the immaculate Lord's mother for her co-redemptive power with these statements:

> Hail rose born from thorns,
> By whom the gate of Paradise,
> Which was closed, was opened to everyone.[17]

The *Hymnus 67. De Beata Maria Virgine* expresses the virginal motherhood of Mary, from the royal lineage of David, with these illustrative metaphorical figures:

> 3a. You are called a rod, a bramble,[18]
> Flower, window, door,
> 3b. Mother of God, sunlight,
> born of the good lineage of Jesse.[19]

The *Hymnus 76. De beata Maria Virgine* ratifies the analyzed doctrine of Mary's universal salvaging authority, whose continuous protection ask in these short verses:

> 6a. You are the always open
> gate of mercy,
> 6b. Always be propitious
> For all of us.[20]

The *Hymnus 83. De beata Maria Virgine* sings the saving power of the Heavenly Queen in this stanza:

> The Virgin Mary
> Became the door of life,
> because she was born
> With the glorious titles of kings
> Additionally, the prophets.[21]

2.7. 15th-Century Hymns

We have found fifteen hymns alluding to the theme written in the 15th century.

The *Hymnus 510. Ad Beatam Mariam Virginem* salutes Mary, from the royal lineage of David, as God's temple and palace, for her helping and rescuing power through these verses:

> Hail, chastity cell,
> Gate of Paradise, hail, the temple of divinity,
> Hail, the palace of the Sun [God], hail, port of the shipwrecked,
> Hail, the little rod of Jesse,
> Hail, the splendor of goodness,
> Hail, full of grace.[22]

The *Hymnus 21. Historia de Domina in sabbato. In 3. Nocturno. Responsoria* underlines the power of God the Son's mother, and the high honors tributed to her in Heaven as follows:

Gate of Paradise,
hope and path of life,
the hierarchy of Heaven
serves you meekly
Additionally, praises you assiduously,
pious Queen;[23]

The *Hymnus 480. De Beata Virgine. Oratio* thus greets the mother of God for her competence in saving people, especially the poorest, in the following terms:

Rejoice, crossroads of salvation,
Mary, the hope of the humble,
You are the open door of forgiveness,
consolation of indulgence,
do not despise me, merciful.[24]

The *Hymnus 484. De Beata Virgine Maria* celebrates the rescuing intercessory power of God's mother in favor of those most in need through these verses:

Hail, holy temple of God,
Source of salvation, the door of hope,
all the prisoners run towards you
With full confidence.[25]

The *Hymnus 488. Salve regina* proclaims the saving role of the Virgin Mary for the benefit of the faithful in these eloquent terms:

Hail, [you who has been] heavenly created
for whom salvation is prepared,
gate of heaven [which is] open,
[but] closed to sinners.[26]

The *Hymnus 497. Super eadem sequentia [Ave maris stella]* asks the Virgin to grant the devotee entrance to Paradise in this concise plea:

Happy Gate of Heaven,
adopt us there.[27]

The *Hymnus 29. Item alius de Sancta Maria* takes this stanza from the famous antiphon *Salve Regina* to proclaim the saving power of God the Son's virginal mother:

Hail, star of the sea,
Nourishing mother of God
Additionally, always a virgin
Happy Gate of Heaven.[28]

The *Hymnus 54. De immaculata conceptione Beatae Mariae Virginis. In 1. Vesperis* praises the Virgin Mary for her ability to save the faithful from the devil through this illustrative stanza:

Spouse of God, star of the sea,
You are called the gate of Heaven,
The salvation of the world, which cuts
The head of the furious Holofernes[29] [the devil].[30]

The *Hymnus 21. Historia de Domina in sabbato. In 3. Nocturno. Responsoria* acknowledges with these verses the tribute that Heaven and Earth must give to the Virgin for her title as the mediator of humanity:

Gate of Paradise,
Hope and path of life,
Heaven's Hierarchy
Serves you submissively.
The assiduous praise
Is appropriate for you, merciful Queen;[31]

The German hymnographer Ulrich Stöcklins von Rottach (Udalricus Wessofontanus), in his *Hymnus 10. Oratio devota de Beata Maria Virgine*, invokes the Queen of Heaven for her saving intercession on behalf of the faithful through these fervent rhymes:

Mother, help us quickly,
So that we are not delivered to the prison of hell,
Do open the door for us so that we can
become consorts of Heaven.[32]

The same Ulrich Stöcklins von Rottach, in his *Hymnus 38. Abecedarius XIII*, requests the rescuing mediation of Mary before her divine Son, the Supreme Universal Judge, in favor of the believer to achieve eternal salvation through these pressing verses:

Grant us to avoid the terrible
Wrath of the Judge [Christ],
When he comes to examine
Our life,
[we ask you to] want to reject then
the snares of the enemy [the devil],
and open us
The gates of Heaven.[33]

The *Hymnus 80. In Nativitate Beatae Mariae Virginis* extols the excellent role of salvation of Redeemer's mother with this eloquent stanza:

Oh, you, happy gate of Heaven,
Always closed, for which the true light [Christ]
Appeared at birth,
3b. With the beauty of whose light
The darkened shadow
Of our night disappeared.[34]

2.8. As a Synthetic Recapitulation

Some primary results emerge from the analysis of the fragments of medieval liturgical hymns we have presented here.

Practically all the analyzed hymns designate the Virgin Mary as the gate of Heaven or the door of Paradise, to signify her privileged ability to help the faithful be saved in eternal life.

Many of those hymns further emphasize that Mary's saving power derives from her exclusive privilege to be the virginal mother of God the Son.

Some hymns even point to the idea that Mary was created *ex professo* to contribute to the salvation of humankind because she is the mother of the divine Savior. Other hymns add the idea that, in such a condition, the Virgin performs her helping work because she is full of grace and possesses all the virtues, especially chastity.

Almost all the hymns express in some way that, with such sublime attributes and prerogatives, Mary acts as a helper for those who pray to her or trust her, and as their effective intercessor before her divine Son, the Supreme Judge, to ensure that those who resort to her enter the heavenly Paradise.

Some hymns also formulate the idea that believers raise prayers to the Virgin to request earthly and heavenly goods, thus avoiding badness, especially from the devil.

In any case, these hymns designate the Virgin Mary as the door of Paradise or the gate of Heaven to signify her sublime mediating and helping power in favor of humankind, or, in other words: to manifest her role as an effective collaborator of her divine Son to ensure that the faithful obtain goods on Earth and the eternal salvation in Heaven.

However, taking into account the highly significant strength of these hymns to rebuke the thesis of Mary's universal mediation and her practical help to facilitate the believer's entry into Heaven, it is surprising that the traditional Mariology treatises (De Fiores 1992, 2006–2008; Müller 1998; Cerbelaud 2003; Laurentin 2011; Hauke 2021) have not considered these medieval liturgical hymns as supporting arguments to justify the doctrinal theses about the Virgin. One can perceive a similar waste of medieval liturgical hymns as a reflection of Mary's virtues and attributes in other prestigious specific studies on the mother of God (Rahner 1967; Ratzinger and Von Balthasar 1981; de La Potterie 1995; Perrella 2003; De Fiores 2010; Scheffczyk 2010).

3. An Iconographic Analysis of Some Artworks Alluding to the Virgin Mary's Savior Mediation

The doctrinal thesis of the Virgin Mary's mediating, intercessory, and savior power, expressed in the metaphor "gate of Heaven or door of Paradise", stands out in various forms or iconographic modalities in painting and sculpture. We will highlight here the three modalities that seem to be the most representative, namely, the intercession of Mary at the Last Judgment, the figure of the Virgin with the Child at some entrance of the temple, and thirdly, the Virgin framed by a door or opening in various Marian scenes, especially the Annunciation.

We believe that these three iconographic modalities are the ones that most strongly and clearly illustrate the Virgin Mary as the gate of Heaven or the door of Paradise (*ianua Coeli, porta Paradisi*, scilicet) as the decisive mediator in humanity's eternal salvation. The first modality, in which the Virgin appears in the scene of the Last Judgment pleading before her divine Son, the Supreme Judge, for clemency in favor of those who are being judged, is very clear and significant: in the Last Judgment, the salvation or eternal damnation of human beings is settled once and for all, and at this decisive moment the believer hopes to have the saving mediation of universal Judge's mother. The second iconographic modality, in which Mary appears at the entrance to the temple—whether, as we will see later, with her Child in her arms on the mullion of some portal, or on its tympanum, through the scene of the Coronation or that of the Last Judgment—is no less evident: by being located at the entrance of the Christian temple in a prominent place (in the mullion between two doors, and/or in the tympanum that crowns it), Mary exhibits herself in this way once again, due to her condition as mother of the founder of Christianity—the new religion and Church guaranteeing salvation—as the privileged mediator capable of facilitating the entrance to Heaven, symbolized by the physical temple at whose entrance the figure of Mary as *porta Paradisi* stands out. The third iconographic modality, although more subtly suggested, is also explainable: since the human conception/incarnation of God the Son in the virgin womb of Mary takes place just in the event of the Annunciation, it is clear that framing/identifying the Virgin with a door/arch/opening in a pictorial scene of the Annunciation allows us to highlight that, as the mother of the Redeemer/Savior, the Virgin plays a fundamental role in the eternal redemption/salvation of human beings, that is to say, as the gate of Heaven.

On the other hand, we selected here a set of sculptural and pictorial artworks without any pretense of alleged exact "science", as if it were a mathematical equation or a chemical formula: our subjective "humanistic" selection is only a representative sample within a much broader and more complex universe, in which any other researcher can select as many equally representative samples as possible. We chose those paintings and sculptures because they seem to us very important to the subject studied. Additionally, the fact that these artworks are different in type, in dating, and in subject matter, certifies that the various

countries and regions of Christian Europe in those medieval centuries agreed on the same or similar experiences, beliefs, and doctrinal ideas, just illustrated by these artworks.

Let us now see some examples of these three iconographic variants.

3.1. Mary Mediator at the Last Judgment

From early medieval times, the Byzantines spread the model of the *Deësis* or *Deisis* (a Greek word meaning "prayer", "supplication"), in which Christ almost always majestically enthroned as Pantocrator with a book in his left hand and blessing with his right, appears flanked by the Virgin Mary and Saint John the Baptist, both in an attitude of humble supplication. This successful Byzantine model, which in the East took form above all in mosaics, frescoes, and ivory reliefs, was adopted in the West for the Last Judgment scenes, frequently substituting Saint John the Baptist for Saint John the Evangelist. In addition, in Europe, this triple composition (Christ Pantocrator, Mary, and John the Evangelist) was frequently placed on the tympanum of some portal (almost always the central one on the main façade) of temples as the essential nucleus of the staging of the Last Judgment. In any case, the scene of the Last Judgment, with the pleading figures of Mary and John the Evangelist, was also developed in some paintings, one of which we will analyze below.

The tympanum of the central bay of the south transept of Chartres Cathedral, c. 1220–30 (Figure 1), represents the Last Judgment, with Christ half-naked (to show his wounds) enthroned between the Virgin and John the Evangelist, both seated. Above and to the sides of the three protagonists, several angels carry the eight instruments or insignia of the Passion (*Arma Christi*). Under this central set, on the lintel of the door, the archangel Saint Michael weighs the souls on the balance scale—an issue known as the *psychostasis*, of clear origin from Pharaonic Egypt—while to his right (on the left side of the lintel) the blessed head towards Heaven. To their left (on the right of the lintel), the damned are swallowed by the jaws of Leviathan/hell.

Figure 1. Tympanum of the central bay of south porch of Chartres Cathedral, c.1220–30.

As a perfect complement to the analyzed tympanum, the mullion of this portal shows a prominent figure of Christ dressed, carrying a book in his left hand and an attitude of blessing with his right, similar to a standing Pantocrator.

It is interesting to highlight in this Last Judgment of Chartres—a common fact for all similar scenes in many other temples—the gesture of Mary in an attitude of begging her divine Son to treat those who are going to be judged with mercy. That way, she manifests herself as the Virgin of Mercy, the Mediatrix, and the Intercessor in favor of humankind, as many of the liturgical hymns we exposed in the preceding section proclaim.

The tympanum of the Coroneria Portico, c. 1245–1257, on the north façade of Burgos Cathedral (Figure 2), exhibits a narrative-compositional structure quite similar to that of the Chartres tympanum just analyzed. At the top of this tympanum of the Coroneria, you can see the traditional scene of the *Deisis*, with Mary and John the Evangelist bowing with their hands together in prayer before the enthroned Pantocrator to implore his clemency for those in evaluation at the Last Judgment. Additionally, here the half-naked Supreme Judge appears with his arms raised, while above and on both sides of the trio of protagonists, several angels hold the insignia of the Passion. Under the leading group, the archangel Michael weighs the souls of the ones to be judged on a balance scale, which some demons to his left (to our right) try to unbalance, pushing down the pan-holder of sins so that it weighs more than the pan-holder with the good deeds of the one who is being judged. Other devils in the right sector of the strip take the damned to Hell, while to the right of the archangel (on the left of the composition), the blessed enter Heaven, symbolized by a small house with an open door. Once again, Mary shows in this scene of the Last Judgment her attitude of mercy in favor of those subjected to the Last Judgment and her power of mediation and intercession before the Supreme Judge, inducing his clemency and thus facilitating the eternal salvation of the faithful.

Figure 2. Tympanum of the Coroneria Portico, c. 1245–1257. North façade of the Burgos Cathedral.

Hans Memling in *The Last Judgement*, c. 1466–73 from the National Museum of Gdańsk in Poland (Figure 3), offers a highly complex representation of the subject. In the central panel, the Pantocrator, flanked by the twelve seated apostles, appears enthroned on a

rainbow, a symbol of Heaven, and with his feet on a sphere, a symbol of the created world. In this majestic pose, Christ raises his right hand towards a lily stem, a symbol of eternal salvation. He lowers his left arm as a sign of deciding the condemnation of the reprobate, a condemnation also symbolized by the sword that levitates to the left of his head. Kneeling and with hands joined to the right of Christ (to the left of the painting), the Virgin begs the Supreme Judge for mercy, while to the left of Christ, Saint John the Baptist, also kneeling and dressed in a camel skin, shows with both hands, as Precursor, the Messiah. Under the leading group presided over by the Pantocrator in Heaven, on the earthly plane, the archangel Michael, clad in armor as head of the armies of angels, weighs with his balance scale the souls of the just resurrected, who, completely naked, have emerged from their graves across the landscape. In the left wing of the triptych, to the right of the divine Judge, the blessed, received by Saint Peter in the foreground, go up to Heaven, represented by a great Gothic cathedral full of angels. In the right wing of the triptych, to the left of Christ, the convicts fall in disorder into Hell, represented by a den full of fire.

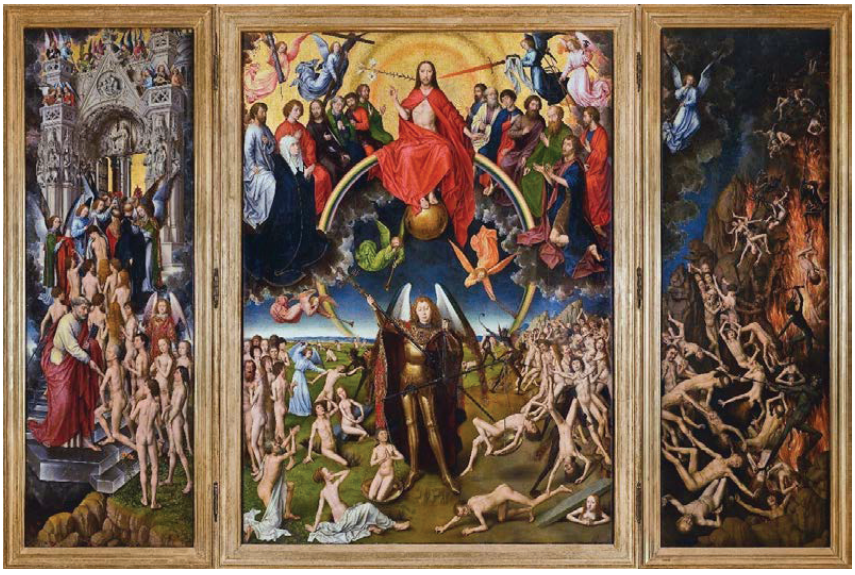


Figure 3. Hans Memling, *The Last Judgement (Triptych)*, c. 1466–73. National Museum of Gdańsk (Poland).

3.2. Mary as Porta Paradisi in Some Temple's Portals

The central portal of the west façade of the Leon Cathedral, known as the *Portal of the Last Judgment* or *Portal of the White Virgin* (*Virgen Blanca*), from the middle of the 13th century (Figure 4), is a perfect example of an artwork that reflects the theme we are studying. This portal in Leon is a monumental sculptural-architectural representation of the Virgin Mary's exceptional power of intercession and salvation in favor of the human gender under the formula Mary *porta Paradisi* or *ianua Coeli*.

Figure 4. León Cathedral, mullion with the *Virgen Blanca* at the *Portal of the Last Judgment*. Central portal of the West Facade, mid. 13th century.

The tympanum of the Portal of the "*Virgen Blanca*" brings the traditional tripartition. In the lower strip, the two sets of blessed and reprobate, on the right and the left of the archangel Michael with his balance scale, head, respectively, towards Heaven or the cauldrons of Hell. In the central sector, much more significant, the scene of the Last Judgment stands out, with the enthroned and half-naked Christ raising his arms to show his stigmata between two standing angels bearing some insignia of the Passion while Mary and John the Evangelist, kneeling with their hands in prayer in the ends of the compressive space, intercede before the Supreme Judge, begging for his clemency in favor of faithful. Finally, on the reduced apex of the tympanum, other angels carry the remaining *Arma Christi*. With this first presentation of the Virgin asking the Pantocrator for mercy, she already manifests herself in the tympanum as the mediator and facilitator of the entrance of believers to Heaven, that is, as the open "gate of Paradise".

In addition, in the mullion separating both doors, Mary reappears as an imposing standing figure (the "*Virgen Blanca*") with her divine Child in her arms and her head encircled with a large crown, which accredits her as the Queen of Heaven. It is evident

that—with her role as pleading intercessor before her adult Son as judge in the scene of the Last Judgment on the tympanum, and with her majestic display on the mullion as Queen of Heaven,—the nurturing mother of the infant King of the universe, whom she shows to the faithful carrying him in her arms—the Virgin Mary affirms herself in this portico of Leon Cathedral as an effective mediator to obtain the salvation of the believer, scilicet, as an open "door of Heaven". Not in vain, the ecclesiastical hierarchy has reserved for the Virgin this privileged space (tympanum and mullion) of the door through which the faithful enter the temple (an earthly symbol of Heaven) to make them see that, to achieve their entry to the heavenly Paradise, they need to turn to Mary Mediatrix.

The north portal of the west façade of the Notre Dame of Paris, known as the *Portal of the Virgin*, c. 1210–20 (Figure 5), also has—as in the case of the recently analyzed *Portal of the Virgen Blanca* in Leon—for the subject under study two large nuclei: the tympanum and the mullion. This tympanum from Paris is divided into three registers. The lower one includes six seated figures with phylacteries, three Old Testament prophets, and three kings of Israel. The intermediate register presents the scene of the burial of the Virgin (inspired by the Apocrypha), presided over by Christ in the presence of the twelve apostles, with two angels introducing the corpse into the tomb. The upper register narrates the Coronation of the Virgin—a theme we have studied in another paper (Salvador-González 2022a)—with Christ blessing Mary, both enthroned between two kneeling angels, while a third angel at the top places the royal crown on the head of the Virgin. In turn, the mullion presents the majestic figure of Mary as the crowned Queen with her Son in her arms, under whose feet the plinth or pedestal of the mullion describes some scenes of Adam and Eve in the Earthly Paradise, of which the central scene represents Original Sin, with Adam and Eve eating the apple before the serpent coiled in the Tree of Good and Evil.

As in the case of the Cathedral of Leon just analyzed, this Portal of the Virgin in the Notre Dame of Paris illustrates the same thesis about the mediating and saving capacity of the Virgin, emphasizing now her privileged position as Queen of Heaven.

The one known as the *Portal of the Majesty*, from the late 13th–early 14th century, in the Collegiate Church of Santa María la Mayor of Toro (Zamora) (Figure 6), poses almost the same compositional-narrative structure and the same symbolic meanings as the just analyzed *Portal of the Virgin* in the cathedral of Notre-Dame de Paris. Additionally, in Toro, the tympanum is filled with the scene of the Coronation of the Virgin (in the large central sector) and her burial (in the lower strip). The mullion also houses the upright figure of the crowned Queen of Heaven with her little Son in her arms. As if that were not enough, this Portal of the Majesty in Toro adds the representation of the Last Judgment in its last archivolt, whose center is occupied by the enthroned Pantocrator between the kneeling figures of Mary and John the Evangelist.

The mullion of the central portal of the West façade of the Reims Cathedral, c. 1260–70 (Figure 7), houses the monumental figure of the Virgin Mary with her Child in her arms, crowned as the Queen of Heaven. This appearance and this position between the two entrances of that portal to the temple want to highlight the power of Mary as the "gate of Heaven". She is represented as the facilitator of the believer's entrance to the heavenly Paradise and—for being the mother of the Redeemer, whom she displays in her arms before the faithful—as a collaborator in the redemption of humankind, as the scene of Original Sin sculpted on the plinth of the mullion also reveals. As if this explicit message were not enough, in the culminating part of the gable of this central portal, the scene of the Coronation of the Virgin as the Queen of Heaven appears, thus reinforcing her exclusive power to collaborate in the eternal salvation of the believer.

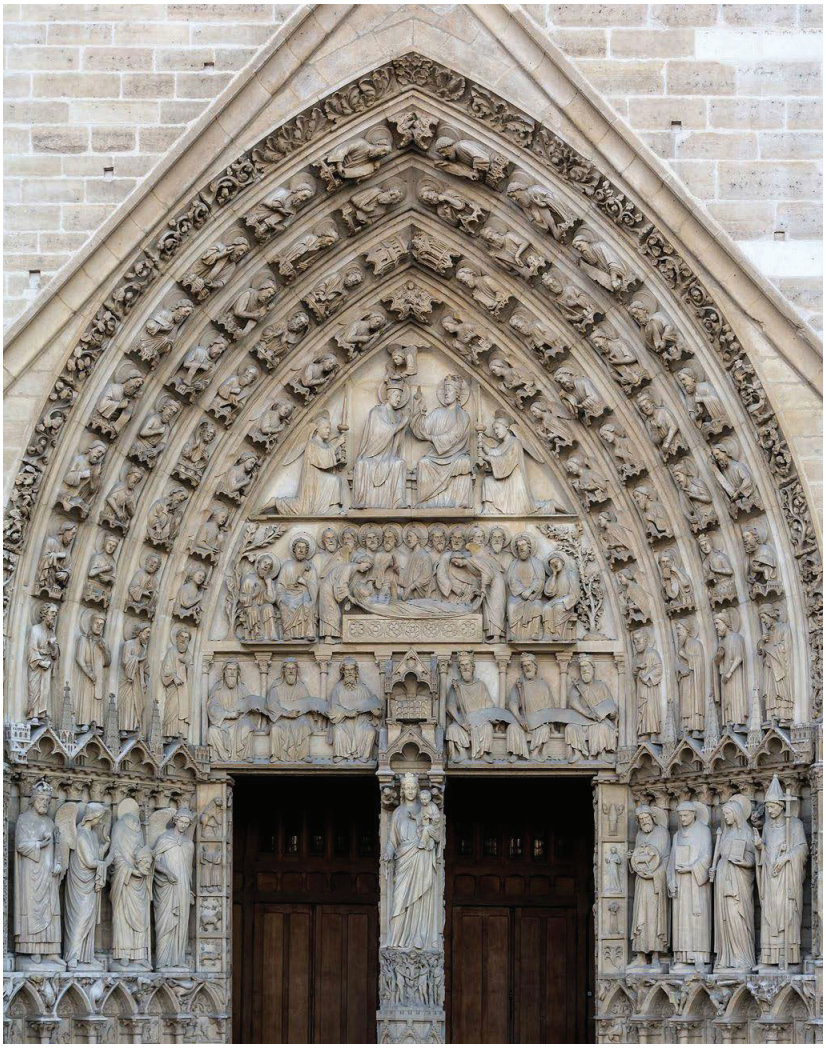


Figure 5. Notre-Dame of Paris Cathedral. *Portal of the Virgin*, North bay of the West façade, c. 1210–20.

3.3. The Virgin as the Gate of Heaven in the Scene of the Annunciation

Robert Campin stages *The Annunciation*, c. 1420–25, from the Prado Museum in Madrid (Figure 8), in a monumental Gothic temple. Mary is seated inside its central nave, absorbed in reading her prayers, next to a precious vase with a stem of lilies, a vase whose doctrinal meanings we have explained in another paper (Salvador-González 2022b). Outside the temple, before one of its side doors, the archangel Gabriel remains kneeling. In turn, God the Father, levitating in his splendid mandorla in the upper left-hand corner of the painting, sends the fecundating ray of light towards the Virgin. Significantly enough, this ray, before falling on Mary, passes through a stained-glass window without breaking or staining it, a circumstance whose theological meaning we have explained in another article (Salvador-González 2022c).

Figure 6. *Portal of the Majesty*, late 13th–early 14th century. Collegiate Church of Santa María la Mayor of Toro (Zamora).

By configuring the modest house of Mary in Nazareth as a monumental Gothic temple, the mastermind of this painting wants—in addition to tangentially designating the Virgin as the personification of the Church (Mary as *Ecclesia*)—to directly illustrate various Mariological and Christological meanings, referring to God the Son's supernatural human incarnation, and to Mary's virginal divine motherhood, which we have explained in other articles (Salvador-González 2017, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2021b), and which other commentators on this painting ignore (Panofsky 1953, vol. I, pp. 133, 175; Campbell 1974, pp. 634–46; Dijkstra 1994, pp. 312–29; Châtelet 1996, pp. 305, 306; Thürlemann 2002, p. 196).

Figure 7. Reims Cathedral, Mullion of the central portal of the West façade, c. 1260–70.

Figure 8. Robert Campin, *The Annunciation*, c. 1420–25. Prado Museum, Madrid.

However, we are most interested in highlighting in this panel by Robert Campin that he has placed the Virgin framed/focused by a large arch (one of those in the nave vault), which at first glance appears to be the main entrance to the temple. With this resource

of framing Mary in that enormous arch/entrance, the intellectual author of this painting seems to want to identify the Virgin with that arch/entrance, as if aiming to illustrate with this visual metaphor the textual metaphor that designates Mary as *ianua Coeli* or *porta Paradisi*. Being that this painted Gothic temple is a symbol of Heaven, this Virgin framed by that open arch/entrance reveals Mary's privileged capacity for mediation and intercession before her divine Son to facilitate the entry of the faithful to the heavenly Paradise, just as many liturgical hymns that we set out proclaim with determination.

In *The Annunciation (The Friedsam Annunciation)*, c. 1450, from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Figure 9), Petrus Christus—if he is the author of this work attributed to him—poses this Marian episode in a very innovative way. He places the scene outside a large Gothic temple, at the open door of which stands the Virgin with a prayer book in her left hand, raising her right one. The dove of the Holy Spirit, flying high, sends the fertilizing ray of light toward Mary, a ray whose theological symbolism we have explained in another context (Salvador-González 2020a). Meanwhile, the archangel Gabriel, covered in a splendid cope, with the herald's staff in his left hand and pointing his right forefinger upwards to indicate the origin of the announcement he is communicating to the Virgin, remains outside the temple facing its door.

Figure 9. Petrus Christus (attributed), *The Annunciation (The Friedsam Annunciation)*, c.1450. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

We will not dwell here on certain elements highlighted by some art historians who comment on this work (Panofsky 1953, pp. 133–34, 230–32; Schiller 1971, pp. 49–50; Ainsworth 1994, pp. 117–25, 179), nor in the stem of lilies that protrudes behind the lintel on the left side, stem of lilies whose multiple and profound Christological and Mariological meanings we have explained in other works (Salvador-González 2013, 2014, 2016). Due to its direct relationship with the subject we are studying, we are interested, instead, in highlighting two important conceptual decisions that the intellectual author of this painting has adopted in this scene: first, configuring the humble house of Mary in Nazareth in

a monumental Gothic temple; second, placing the Virgin right at her open door. In the analysis of the previous painting by Robert Campin, we already explained the doctrinal symbolism of Mary's house shaped as a temple. On the other hand, the decision to place the Virgin at the open entrance to the temple implies assuming the thesis according to which Mary is the effective mediator in the eternal salvation of the believers who facilitate their entry into Heaven: in other words, Mary as an open *porta Paradisi* or *ianua Coeli*—once again, with the temple painted in the panel as a symbol of Heaven, following what many liturgical hymns presented here exhaustively affirm.

Additionally, Gentile Bellini offers in *The Annunciation*, c. 1475, from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum in Madrid (Figure 10), a compositional-narrative approach relatively similar to Robert Campin's in the recently analyzed panel from the Prado Museum. However, Gentile Bellini stages the episode not in a Gothic temple but in a splendid Renaissance palace inserted in a city of large porticoed buildings. It should be noted that representing the humble house of Mary in Nazareth as a luxurious royal palace—about the biblical sentence "Wisdom has built her house" (Prov 9:1)—obeys the purpose of illustrating several deep Mariological and Christological meanings that we have already explained in other articles (Salvador-González 2021a, 2021c).

Figure 10. Gentile Bellini, *The Annunciation*, c. 1475. Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum. Madrid.

The painter placed Mary inside the palace, kneeling in prayer before a lectern. At the same time, the angel, carrying the stem of lilies and pointing his right index finger towards the heights, remains on his knees outside the palace in the middle of the street.

Now, apart from other details of this painting, we are interested in highlighting that its intellectual author framed/focused the praying Virgin through a monumental arch/open door to identify Mary with this open "door" that allows entry to the palace (the palace as an analogy for Heaven). In other words, he wanted to express, through the visual metaphor of this arch/open door, the textual metaphors *ianua Coeli*, *porta Paradisi*, and other similar expressions with which numerous medieval liturgical hymns proclaimed Virgin Mary's effective mediation and saving power for achieving the entrance of the believers to the heavenly Paradise.

4. Conclusions

We could highlight some direct results in a summary of the two analyses carried out in this article on texts and images.

Numerous Church Fathers and medieval theologians designate the Virgin Mary as the gate of Heaven or the door of Paradise to highlight her capacity for mediation and intercession before her divine Son in favor of humanity.

Based on the doctrinal tradition established by the Fathers and theologians in this regard, numerous medieval hymnographers composed countless canticles, antiphons, and liturgical hymns in which they exalt Mary as the open "gate of heaven" (*ianua Coeli*), "door of Paradise" (*porta Paradisi*), and as its equivalent concepts "mediator", "intercessor", or other similar titles referring to Mary's powerful mediation before her divine Son in favor of humankind.

Many hymns underline that Mary's saving faculty derives from her privilege as the virginal mother of God the Son. So, being the mother of the Savior, who is also the Supreme Judge, she is in the best condition to intercede on behalf of the human gender.

On the other hand, those ideas of the liturgical hymns—and, of course, those of the Church Fathers and the theologians who inspired them—were reflected during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in a series of sculptural and pictorial artworks that show the Virgin Mary as the gate of Heaven, and as a mediator before God in favor of the faithful.

In this article, we bring to light three iconic modalities in which Mary is represented as a mediator and intercessor of humanity under the metaphor of "gate of Heaven or door of Paradise": the *Deësis* or *Deisis* in the scene of the Last Judgment, the figure of the Virgin with her Child at the entrance of the temple, and third, the Virgin framed by a door or arch in the scenes of the Annunciation.

Medieval Christianity nurtured the faith of those mostly illiterate populations with two great resources: words and images. The words were expressed, above all, in the sermons of the ecclesiastics in the temple, and these, in turn, fed on the texts of the Bible (Old and New Testament), the Church Fathers, and theologians. To these primary textual expressions of the priests before the illiterate faithful were later added the lyrics of the songs, antiphons, and liturgical hymns that, although written in Latin and also being indecipherable for the illiterate majority, could be explained by the ecclesiastics on the occasion of the celebration of the Mass, or during processions, ceremonies, and devotional acts. Based on such explanations, it seems reasonable to conjecture that few of those uneducated medieval Christians would be ignorant of the basic meanings of such popular antiphons as the *Salve Regina* or the *Regina Coeli laetare*, even if they were not able to read/translate each of their Latin words.

One last important conclusion is necessary: these statements of the liturgical hymns and those sculptural and pictorial images centered around the metaphor of Mary as *porta Paradisi* are in perfect harmony. After all, what the liturgical hymns poetically proclaimed reflected the thousand-year-old exegetical tradition of the Church Fathers and medieval theologians on Mary's universal mediation symbolized by the *ianua Coeli* or *porta Paradisi* metaphors. Additionally, on the other hand, the ecclesiastical hierarchy could not miss the opportunity to "catechize" its illiterate faithful through that "catechism in stone or paint" materialized in those sculptures and paintings that iconographically represented Mary as the gate of Heaven.

Thus, both texts and images affect the spirit of the believer with the same catechetical effectiveness. In this way, after seeing the material sculptures or paintings of the Virgin "gate of Heaven" upon entering the temple and hearing the immaterial enouncements of the liturgical hymns sung there, the faithful could be super-assured in a solid thesis of the Christian faith: Mary is the effective mediator before God, and the believer must resort to her to obtain goods on this Earth and eternal salvation in Heaven.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

[1] Tu sola mater virgo es,
Tu porta caeli permanes,
Qui sunt per Evam flebiles,
Per te fiunt nunc alacres. (*Hymnus 71. Hymnus de sancta Maria*. AHMA 2, 71).

[2] Orta jam est maris stella,
Stella maris jam est orta,
Porta coeli, pura cella.Cella pura, coeli porta,
Domini sacrarium. (*Hymnus 2. De Nativitate B. M. V.* AHMA 2, 122).

[3] Tuae nos in pirgo
Tutelae conforta,
Atque semper virgo
Felix coeli porta. (*Hymnus 6. Purificatio.* AHMA 2, 126).

[4] O, virgo venerabilis,
Laudabilis
Regina,
De stirpe David orta,
Tu vera coeli porta,
Cunctis te laudantibus
Precibus praecelsis. (*Hymnus 11. De Annuntiatione B. V. M.* AHMA 2, 154).

[5] 2a. Mundi domina
quae est sola,
castissima
virginum regina,
2b. Salutis causa,
vitae porta
atque coeli
referta gratia. (*Hymnus 101. In Annunciatione BMV*. AHMA 7, 115).

[6] 7a. Coelicis terrea
tu jungis, divinis
humana.
7b. Paradisiaca
per te nobis patet
janua; (*Hymnus 104. In Purificatione Beatae Mariae Virginis*. AHMA 7, 119).

[7] Tu salus orbis alma,
tu coeli porta facta,
per te saeculo vita
omni est data. (*Hymnus 104. In Purificatione BMV*. AHMA 7, 119).

[8] Imperatrix omnium,
Firma spes credentium,
Praemium,
pretium,
gaudium,
Salus es fidelium,
Janua coelestium. (*Hymnus 68. In Assumptione BMV.* AHMA 9, 56).

[9] 1. Regina coelorum, gaude,
Inclita coelesti laude.
2a. Gaude, gemma lucida,
Gaude, coeli janua,
Lucens ut lilia,
Florens rosa.
2b. Coeli porta fulgida,

Sola tu salus unica,
O mundi domina,
Tu nos salva. (*Hymnus 98*. AHMA 10, Dreves 1891, 82).

[10] Gemma coeli, porta veniae,
tuae florem pudicitiae
placa regem gloriae. (*Hymnus 350. De s. Maria*. Mone 1854, 41).

[11] Salve porta
perpetuae lucis fulgida, (*Hymnus 375. Alia de Sancta Maria (troparium)*. Mone 1854, 68).

[12] Haec est virgo,
quae nescivit thorum viri,
dum finivit vitam,
porta patens coelica. (*Hymnus 516. De s. Maria*. Mone 1854, 299).

[13] 2a. Per te patet porta coeli,
Cherubim quam clauserat.
2b. Hominemque natus ex te
Deus Deo foederat. (*Hymnus 143. De beata Maria V*. AHMA 10, 108).

[14] Summi regis mater virgo,
virgo gemma virtutum,
Virgo sancta, virgo prudens,
filia Jerusalem,
Stella maris, porta coeli,
mitis sponsa Domini. (*Hymnus 47. De B. V. Maria*. AHMA 4, 37).

[15] Salve porta chrystallina,
vivi panis officina,
dirae mortis medicina,
flos mundi Maria. (*Hymnus 370. Sequentia de v. Maria*. Mone 1854, 63).

[16] Gaude, virgo, coeli porta,
Per te mundo lux est orta,
Mater tam laudabilis. (*Hymnus 73. De beata Maria V*. AHMA 8, 65).

[17] Salve, rosa spinis orta.
Per quam paradisi porta
Cunctis clausa patuit. (*Hymnus 74. De beata Maria V*. AHMA 8, 66).

[18] The figure of the rod refers to the rod that sprouted and blossomed in the root of Jesse, prophesied by Isaiah (Is 11:1–2). The figure of the bush refers to the bush that burned without being consumed, through which Yahweh manifested to Abraham (Ex 3:2–4).

[19] 3a. Virga, rubus appellaris,
Flos, fenestra, janua,
3b. Mater Dei, lux solaris,
Jesse stirps ingenua. (*Hymnus 67. De beata Maria V*. AHMA 8, 61).

[20] 6a. Tu pietatis
semper patens janua,
6b. Nobis ómnibus
Semper sit propitia. (*Hymnus 76. De beata Maria V.* AHMA, 8, 67).

[21] Namque regali
Ac prophetali
Stemmate orta
Vitae fit porta
Virgo Maria. (*Hymnus 83. De beata Maria V*. AHMA 9, 69).

[22] Ave cella castitatis,
paradisi janua, ave templum deitatis,
ave solis regia, ave portus naufragantis,
ave Jesse virgula,
ave splendor bonitatis,
ave plena gratia. (*Hymnus 510. Ad b. Mariam v*. Mone 1854, 284).

[23] Paradisi janua,
Vitae spes et via,
Tibi servit cernua
Coeli hierarchia.

Te decet assidua
Laus, regina pia; (*Hymnus 21.* AHMA 5, Dreves 1892, 74).

[24] Gaude salutis trivium,
Maria, spes humilium,
tu porta patens veniae,
levamen indulgentiae,
non me pia despice. (*Hymnus 480. De b. Virgine. Oratio.* Mone 1854, 195).

[25] Ave templum sanctum Dei,
fons salutis, porta spei,
ad te currunt omnes rei
plena cum fiducia. (*Hymnus 484. De b. v. Maria*. Mone 1854, 201).

[26] Salve coelitus creata,
per quam salus est parata,
porta coeli reserata,
clausa peccatoribus. (*Hymnus 488. Salve regina*. Mone 1854, 205).

[27] Felix coeli porta,
illic nos adopta. (*Hymnus 497. Super eadem sequentia [Ave maris stella]*. Mone 1854, 220).

[28] Ave maris stella,
Dei mater alma
Atque semper virgo,
Felix coeli porta. (*Hymnus 29. Item alius de S. Maria.* AHMA 2, 39).

[29] This expression alludes to the Jewish Judith, who decapitated the enemy Syrian general Holofernes, as an Old Testament prefiguration of the Virgin Mary, who—as promised by God in the Earthly Paradise after the Original Sin—would crush the head of the serpent (the demon) with her foot.

[30] Sponsa Dei, stella maris,
Porta coeli tu vocaris,
Mundi salus, saevientis
Caput caedens Holofernis. (*Hymnus 54. De immaculata conceptione BMV. In 1. Vesperis.* AHMA 4, 41).

[31] Paradisi janua,
Vitae spes et via,
Tibi servit cernua
Coeli hierarchia.
Te decet assidua
Laus, regina pia; (*Hymnus 21. Historia de Domina in sabbato. In 3. Nocturno. Responsoria.* AHMA 5, 74).

[32] Mater, ope succurre celeri,
Ne inferni tradamur carceri,
Ut possimus consortes fieri
Coeli, nobis januam aperi. (Udalricus Wessofontanus, *Hymnus 10. Oratio devota de B.M.V*. AHMA 6, 55).

[33] Diram da judicis
iram nos fugere,
Cum nostram venerit
vitam discutere,
Velis insidias
hostis tunc pellere,
Et nobis januas
coelorum pandere. (Udalricus Wessofontanus, *Hymnus 38. Abecedarius XIII*. AHMA 6, 132).

[34] O felix tu coeli porta,
Semper clausa, per quam orta
Vera lux apparuit,
3b. Cujus lucis venustate
Nostrae noctis obumbratae
Caligo disparuit. (*Hymnus 80. In Nativitate BMV*. AHMA 10, 68).

References

Primary Sources

AHMA, 2. Dreves, Guido María. 1888. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi, 2. Hymnarius Moissiacensis. Das Hymnar der Abtei Moissac im 10. Jahrhundert*. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland).
AHMA, 4. Dreves, Guido María. 1888. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi, 4. Hymni inediti. Liturgische Hymnen des Mittelalters aus Handschriftlichen Breviarien, Antiphonalien und Processionalien*. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland).
AHMA, 5. Dreves, Guido María. 1892. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi, 5. Historiae rhythmicae. Liturgische Reimofficien des Mittelalters. Erste Folge. Aus Handschriften und Wiegendrucken*. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland).
AHMA, 6. Dreves, Guido María. 1889. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi, 6. Udalricus Wessofontanus. Ulrich Stöcklins von Rottach Abts zu Wessobrunn 1438–1443 Reimgebe und Leselieder mit Ausschuss der Psalterien*. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland).
AHMA, 7. Dreves, Guido María. 1890. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi, 7. Prosarium Lemovicense. Die Prosen der Abtei St. Martial zu Limoges aus Troparien des 10., 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts*. Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland).
AHMA, 8. Dreves, Guido María. 1890. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi, 8. Sequentiae ineditae. Liturgische Prosen des Mittelalters aus Handschriften und Wiegenbrucken. Erste Folge.* Leipzig: Fues's Verlag (R. Reisland).
AHMA, 9. Dreves, Guido María. 1890. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi, 9. Sequentiae ineditae. Liturgische Prosen des Mittelalters aus Handschriften und Wiegenbrucken. Zweite Folge.* Leipzig: O. R. Reisland.
AHMA, 10. Dreves, Guido María. 1891. *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi, 10.Sequentiae ineditae. Liturgische Prosen des Mittelalters aus Handschriften und Wiegenbrucken. Dritte Folge*. Leipzig: O. R. Reisland.
Hymnus 71. Hymnus de sancta Maria. AHMA 2, 71.
Hymnus 2. De Nativitate B. M. V. AHMA 2, 122.
Hymnus 6. Purificatio. AHMA 2, 126.
Hymnus 11. De Annuntiatione B. V. M. AHMA 2, 154.
Hymnus 68. In Assumptione Beatae Mariae Virginis. AHMA 9, 56.
Hymnus 101. In Annunciatione BMV. AHMA 7, 115.
Hymnus 104. In Purificatione Beatae Mariae Virginis. AHMA 7, 119.
Hymnus 104. In Purificatione BMV. AHMA 7, 119.
Hymnus 350. De s. Maria. Mone 1854, 41.
Hymnus 375. Alia de Sancta Maria (troparium). Mone 1854, 68.
Hymnus 516. De s. Maria. Mone 1854, 299.
Hymnus 143. De beata Maria V. AHMA 10, 108.
Hymnus 47. De B. V. Maria. AHMA 4, 37.
Hymnus 370. Sequentia de v. Maria. Mone 1854, 63.
Hymnus 73. De beata Maria V. AHMA 8, 65.
Hymnus 74. De beata Maria V. AHMA 8, 66.
Hymnus 67. De beata Maria V. AHMA 8, 61.
Hymnus 76. De beata Maria V. AHMA 8, 67.
Hymnus 83. De beata Maria V. AHMA 9, 69.
Hymnus 510. Ad b. Mariam v. Mone 1854, 284.
Hymnus 480. De b. Virgine. Oratio. Mone 1854, 195.
Hymnus 484. De b. v. Maria. Mone 1854, 201.
Hymnus 488. Salve regina. Mone 1854, 205.
Hymnus 497. Super eadem sequentia [Ave maris stella]. Mone 1854, 220.
Hymnus 29. Item alius de S. Maria. AHMA 2, 39.
Hymnus 54. De immaculata conceptione BMV. In 1. Vesperis. AHMA 4, 41.
Hymnus 21. Historia de Domina in sabbato. In 3. Nocturno. Responsoria. AHMA 5, 74.
Hymnus 80. In Nativitate BMV. AHMA 10, 68.
Mone, Franz Josef. 1854. *Hymni Latini Medii Aevi. E codd. Mss. Edidit et Adnotationibus Illustravit Franc. Jos. Mone 1854, Tomus Secundus. Hymni ad. B.V. Mariam*. Friburgi Brisgoviae: Sumptibus Herder.
Udalricus Wessofontanus, Hymnus 10. Oratio devota de B.M.V. AHMA 6, 55.
Udalricus Wessofontanus, Hymnus 38. Abecedarius XIII. AHMA 6, 132.

Secondary Sources

Ainsworth, Maryan W. 1994. *Petrus Christus: Renaissance Master of Bruges*. New York: Exh. cat., The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Campbell, Lorne. 1974. Robert Campin, the Master of Flémalle and the Master of Merode. *The Burlington Magazine* 56: 634–46.
Cerbelaud, Dominique. 2003. *Marie, un parcours dogmatique*. Paris: Éd. Du Cerf.
Châtelet, Albert. 1996. *Robert Campin, Le Maître de Flémalle: La fascination du quotidien*. Antwerp: Fonds Mercator.
De Fiores, Stefano. 1992. *Maria madre di Gesù. Sintesi storico salvífica (Corso di Teologia Sistematica)*. Bologna: EDB.
De Fiores, Stefano. 2006–2008. *Maria. Nuovissimo Dizionario*. 3 vols. Bologna: EDB.
De Fiores, Stefano. 2010. *Maria nella teologia contemporanea*. [s.l.]: Maria Madre della Chiesa.

de La Potterie, Ignace. 1995. *Marie dans le mystère de l'Alliance*. Paris: Desclée.
Dijkstra, Jellie. 1994. *«Le Maître de Flémalle». Les primitifs flamands et leur temps*. Bruxelles: La Renaissance du Livre.
Hauke, Manfred. 2021. *Introduction to Mariologie*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press.
Laurentin, René. 2011. *Présence de Marie: Histoire, spiritualité, fondements doctrinaux*. Paris: Salvator.
Müller, Gerhard Ludwig. 1998. *Teoría y práctica de la mariología*. Barcelona: Herder.
Panofsky, Erwin. 1953. *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
Perrella, Salvatore M. 2003. *Maria Vergine e Madre. La verginità fecunda di Maria tra fede, storia e teologia*. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo.
Rahner, Karl. 1967. *María, madre del Señor*. Barcelona: Herder.
Ratzinger, Johannes, and Hans Ur Von Balthasar. 1981. *Marie première Église*. [s.l.]: Apostolat des éditions & éditions Paulines.
Salvador-González, José María. 2013. *Flos de Radice Iesse*. Aproximación hermenéutica al motivo del lirio en la pintura gótica española de La Anunciación a la luz de fuentes patrísticas y teológicas. *Eikón Imago* 2: 183–222.
Salvador-González, José María. 2014. *Flos campi et lilium convallium*. Third interpretation of the lily in the iconography of The Annunciation in Italian Trecento art from patristic and theological sources. *Eikón Imago* 3: 75–96. [CrossRef]
Salvador-González, José María. 2016. *In virga Aaron Maria ostendebatur*. A new interpretation of the stem of lilies in the Spanish Gothic Annunciation from patristic and theological sources. *De Medio Aevo* 5: 117–44.
Salvador-González, José María. 2017. *O Virgo, templum Dei sanctum*. Simbolismo del templo en imágenes de la Virgen María en los siglos XIV-XV según exégesis patrísticas y teológicas. *'Ilu. Revista de Ciencias de las Religiones* 22: 359–98.
Salvador-González, José María. 2020a. The symbol of light's ray in images of the Annunciation of the 14th and 15th centuries according to Greek Patrology. *História Revista* 25: 334–55. [CrossRef]
Salvador-González, José María. 2020b. The temple in images of the Annunciation: A double dogmatic symbol according to the Latin theological tradition (6th–15th centuries). *De Medio Aevo* 9: 56–68. [CrossRef]
Salvador-González, José María. 2020c. Iconographic Interpretation of the Temple as a Theological Symbol in Images of the Annunciation of the 14th and 15th Centuries. *Fenestella. Inside Medieval Art* 1: 23–41.
Salvador-González, José María. 2020d. Greek Fathers' interpretations of *templum Dei* as a double theological metaphor (3rd–9th centuries). *Volynskyi Blahovisnyk* 8: 127–45.
Salvador-González, José María. 2021a. Greek-Eastern Church Fathers' interpretations of *Domus Sapientiae*, and their influence on the iconography of the 15th century's Annunciation. *Imago. Revista de Emblemática y Cultura Visual* 13: 111–35.
Salvador-González, José María. 2021b. Latin theological interpretations on *templum Dei* until the Second Council of Constantinople: A Mariological and Christological symbol. *Veritas. Revista de Filosofía y Teología* 49: 115–33. [CrossRef]
Salvador-González, José María. 2021c. The house/palace in Annunciations of the 14th and 15th centuries. Iconographic interpretation in light of the Latin patristic and theological tradition. *Eikón Imago* 10: 391–406. [CrossRef]
Salvador-González, José María. 2022a. The Iconographic Type of the Coronation of the Virgin in the Renaissance Italian Painting in the Light of the Medieval Theology. *Religions* 13: 1145. [CrossRef]
Salvador-González, José María. 2022b. The Vase in Pantings of the Annunciation, a Polyvalent Symbol of the Virgin Mary. *Religions* 13: 1188. [CrossRef]
Salvador-González, José María. 2022c. *Facta est Maria fenestra coeli*. The ray of light passing through a window in images of the Annunciation from the theological perspective. *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia* 15: 39–85. [CrossRef]
Scheffczyk, Leo. 2010. *María, Madre y acompañante de Cristo*. Valencia: EDICEP.
Schiller, Gertrud. 1971. *Iconography of Christian Art. Volume I*. London: Lund Humphries.
Thürlemann, Felix. 2002. *Robert Campin: A Monographic Study with Critical Catalogue*. Munich: Prestel.

religions

MDPI

Article

Gold, Skin, and Body: Chinese Buddha Statues Are Constantly Being Shaped and Stripped

Xiangyu Liu [1,*] and Xinyi Huang [2]

[1] School of Design, Jiangnan University, Wuxi 214122, China
[2] Edinburgh College of Art, The University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh EH8 9JS, UK
* Correspondence: 7180306009@stu.jiangnan.edu.cn

Abstract: The brilliant effect of the Buddha not only strengthens Buddhist believers' psychological effects of worship, consecration, and showing off of merits, but also becomes an important dissemination method to attract the public to join in. Starting from the golden skin of ancient Buddha statues, this paper analyzes the relevant historical documents and unearthed objects of gilded Buddha statues in ancient India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and China and pays attention to the body decoration and technology dissemination as well as the process and influence of Chinese localization. In traditional Buddhist culture, gold technology and its application have an important impact on artistic expression, appearance protection, and the psychology of Buddhist statues. In the Late Tang Dynasty, the government and Buddhism suffered conflicts between supply and demand due to gold resources. The forced stripping of gilded Buddha statues became a historical epitome reflecting the deep social and economic problems.

Keywords: golden body; gilded statue of Buddha; mercury gilding; gold leaf gilding; Chinese Buddhism

Citation: Liu, Xiangyu, and Xinyi Huang. 2023. Gold, Skin, and Body: Chinese Buddha Statues Are Constantly Being Shaped and Stripped. *Religions* 14: 155. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14020155

Academic Editors: Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges and Helena Albuquerque

Received: 9 December 2022
Revised: 18 January 2023
Accepted: 21 January 2023
Published: 28 January 2023

1. Introduction

Gilded Buddha statues are religious works of art. These statues' appearances are decorated with gold, which is precious, rare, and soft and will never decay or fade, which has been widely recognized by Buddhist believers in all districts of Asia. Through their long-term production and publicity, they have already formed a solid tradition in sculpture and become a typical representative of Asian religious art. In addition, it must be mentioned that, in almost every Buddhist temple, the gilded Buddha statue occupies the most significant position in order to encourage people's consecration and worship. Meanwhile, gilded Buddha statues remarkably demonstrate the Buddha's extraordinary physiological phenomenon of the human body, which has been one of the most notable artistic expressions since the appearance of the Buddha. Buddhism has obtained great help and benefits from gold as a material medium, which plays an irreplaceable role in the production of Buddha statues and the psychology of believers.

At present, academic research on gilded Buddha statues can be roughly divided into three categories. The first kind of research relies on religious texts to explain the religious connotation of gold in Buddhism. In earlier work, Grafton Elliot Smith noted the sacred and immortal properties of gold in religious literature around the world (Grafton 1934, pp. 313–14). From linguistics, based on the Buddhist concept of "the thirty-two physical characteristics of a great man (mahāpuruṣa-lakṣaṇa)", Ji Xianlin compared the Buddhist scripture translations in Pali, Tocharian, Chinese, and Uighur (Ji 1982, p. 13). He concluded that the Buddha's "golden appearance" was a specific physiological phenomenon caused by a mixture of ancient Indian folklore and religious superstition. Sun Yinggang and He Ping focused on the special cultural background of Gandhara and believed that the rise of Mahayana Buddhism promoted the establishment of the "thirty-two physical characteristics of a great man (mahāpuruṣa-lakṣaṇa)" and the emergence of the gilded Buddha statue (Sun

and He 2018, p. 176)[1]. Meanwhile, Ma Zongjie paid attention to Lokaksema, a Gandhara monk, who came to China to translate Buddhist scriptures. He combined the golden body concept of Mahayana Buddhism with the rituals of statue making, providing theoretical support for the formation of the phenomenon of Buddha statues' golden bodies (Ma 2013, pp. 260–71). Additionally, based on the color vocabulary in Buddhist texts, Phyllis Granoff suggested that the golden skin of the Buddha has symbolic meanings such as nirvana, health, and solemnity of treasure (Granoff 2020, pp. 10–15). All of these are believed to provide a necessary theoretical basis for shaping the Buddha's image and worshippers' experiences of observing the Buddha.

The second type of research is scientific-empirical research on existing gilded Buddha statues. This type of research involves gradually restoring parts of the materials and steps of ancient gilding techniques, providing a scientific basis for the protection of cultural relics and the restoration of Buddha statues. Hu Dongbo et al. conducted scientific detection and composition analysis on the gold leaf and gold glue materials of the thousand-hand Bodhisattva statue in Baodingshan, Dazu, Chongqing (Hu et al. 2008, pp. 44–51). As the research showed, this Buddha statue was decorated with gold leaf and bonded with a mature paint, with tung oil added as a gold glue. In order to create a more brilliant appearance effect of the Buddha image, mercury sulfide was consciously added to the gold glue. In addition, Xia Yin et al. used chemical methods to analyze the painted composition and gold leaf gilding structure of stone statues unearthed in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, and conducted a horizontal comparison with the gold-leaf-gilded Buddha statues unearthed in Longxing Temple, Qingzhou, Shandong Province (Xia et al. 2008, p. 130). As a result of the research, it was illustrated that the gold leaf composition and gold leaf gilding technology of the Buddhist statues from the two places were the same. Broadly speaking, this result provided new proof for the spreading path of the gilding technology of Buddhist statues. Furthermore, Song Yan et al. expanded the selection scope of research objects (Song et al. 2021, pp. 2599–22). They discovered that gold-leaf-gilded Buddha statues from the Northern Wei Dynasty (386–532) to the Northern Qi Dynasty (550–577) unearthed in Longxing Temple in Qingzhou, Shandong Province, were all decorated and drawn with remarkably consistent high-purity gold leaf and mineral pigments. They pointed out that this might be related to local production. Through scientific examination, Zhou Zhibo et al. found that the gold-plated materials in the Kizil Grotto frescoes were based on a lac dye as the cementation material, which provided key evidence for the exchange of gilding technology on the Silk Road (Zhou et al. 2020, pp. 1–2).

The third kind of research focuses on in-depth analysis from the angle of metal craft and plastic art. Chen Yundun and Li Guoqing focused on the study of the traditional Chinese gold leaf production process and its applications (Chen and Li 1986, pp. 256–65). They believed that Buddhism also led to the introduction of the gold leaf gilding process to decorate the surface of Buddha statues in China, as well as the eastward spread of Buddhism. This progress strongly promoted the development of gold technology in ancient and medieval China. Taking a mercury-gilded bronze Buddha statue as an example, Zhang Fan explored the alliance between the ethnic minority regime in northern China and Buddhist monks during the Sixteen Kingdoms period and designed and produced a Buddha statue model integrated with the Han aesthetic, which promoted the sinicization process of Buddha statue art (F. Zhang 2018, pp. 88–102). Further, Li Jia discussed the artistic cause of gilded Buddha statues from the Northern and Southern Dynasties unearthed in Longxing Temple in Shandong Province from the perspective of gold leaf gilding technology (J. Li 2010, pp. 68–71). It was believed that this technology was introduced with the development of metal technology in the Qin and Han Dynasties (221 BCE–220 CE) in China, but there was no conclusive evidence. In addition, Li Jing and Zhang Jing comprehensively discussed the origin and development of gilded Buddha statues (Li and Zhang 2021, pp. 128–35). The research suggested that the gilded statue of the Buddha was born in Gandhara in the 1st century, leading to the development of mercury gilding technology and gold leaf gilding technology. Later, under the dual role of the arts of Han and non-Han

cultures, this difference was mainly reflected in the form of gold decoration. Gandhara Buddhas were usually covered with gold leaf entirely. However, some Chinese Buddha statues were partially decorated with gold and painted around the 5–6th centuries CE, which was a new look developed in China.

In general, the study of gilded Buddha statues from the perspective of gold production technology and technical exchange has not received sufficient attention from the academic community. In fact, existing studies mostly focus on literature induction, typical case analysis, and single studies of gold craft, but they lack exploration of the interaction of gilded Buddha statues with Chinese local gold craft and social and economic development from the historical dimension. It is an inherent tradition of Buddhist statues to have gold bodies. In this case, gilded Buddha statues reflect the close relationship between gold materials and Buddhist beliefs. This phenomenon aroused our research interest, leading to the following questions: How did foreign gilded Buddha statues enter and influence Chinese artistic creation? In addition to the direct influence on the ancient Chinese gold technology, are there other levels of influence? In what physical form and through what method is gold decorated on the uneven surface of Buddha statues? With these questions in mind, we decided to restudy gilded Buddha statues.

This paper mainly discusses the origin and types of gilded Buddha statues and the process of their spread in China. It focuses on the improvement of local gold processing technology, the expansion of application objects, and the transfer of gold resources due to the introduction of Buddhism. We can analyze the specific routes and characteristics of cultural transmission and integration in Asian civilizations using the golden appearance of Buddha statues as a medium.

2. Gold as the Buddha's "Skin"

Gold is believed to own the characteristics of rarity, purity, and easy processing and is regarded as one of the most valuable materials in Buddhism. Generally speaking, gold not only participates in the construction of the ideal Buddhist world, becoming the first of the Seven Treasures[2], but also connects life and faith, emphasizing the divine image of Buddhism.

According to Buddhist theories, Mount Sumeru[3], the center of the universe, is composed of four treasures, namely, gold, silver, colored glaze, and rock crystal. Around the mountain, there are four continents in the sea. Uttarakuru, located at the north end, is full of gold and enjoys bright days and nights. As for Jambudvipa, at the south end, it is rich in gold. As is known, Jambudvipa is the habitat of human beings and geographically refers to the area of the Indian subcontinent. According to records, this place is rich in large trees named Jambu, and gold, which explains why the Jambu continent and Jambu gold are named as such. Similarly, Buddhism describes the paradise of the Pure Land of Buddhism as a glorious scene of golden land. As recorded in the Amitabha Sutra, in the Land of Bliss, "there were seven treasure pools filled with eight merit waters, with the bottom of the pool covered by gold sand. Meanwhile, four sides' steps were made of gold, silver, colored glaze and glass. On the pavilion, there were also fine decoration made of gold, silver, colored glaze, glass, tridacna, red beads and agate. The Buddha on the other shore enjoyed happiness frequently while the ground was fulfilled by gold".

It should be mentioned that the importance of gold is also reflected in the Buddhist concept of the Seven Treasures. The Seven Treasures refer to the seven most precious substances in the world, as considered by Buddhism. However, there are different descriptions in different Buddhist classics. According to the records in Kumārajīva's (343–413) translation of the Amitabha Sutra, the Seven Treasures are gold, silver, colored glaze, glass, tridacna, red beads, and agate. Moreover, the Seven Treasures in Xuanzang's (602–664) translation of the Sutra of Praise for the Pure Land are gold, silver, colored glaze (verulia), rock crystal (Sphatika), tridacna (Musāragalva), red beads, and Ashimagarapha (similar to red agate or carnelian). In the Prajnaparamita Sutra, the Seven Treasures are gold, silver, colored glaze, coral, amber, tridacna, and agate. However, the Seven Treasures of the Lotus

Sutra are gold, silver, colored glaze, tridacna, agate, genuine pearls, and roses. Based on the above Buddhist scriptures, even though there are different interpretations of the Seven Treasures, gold is always the first to be mentioned.

One of the common dissemination methods of Buddhism in real life is to produce and worship Buddha statues. After the statue is produced, gold is often used for the final surface decoration of the skin and clothing. The construction of Buddhist statues may even be interpreted as echoing, perhaps unintentionally, the organic construction of human bodies (M. C. Wang 2016, p. 30). The extraordinary qualities of the Buddha are further emphasized through the skin decorated by gold. This art form, which is specially called "golden appearance" by Buddhists, is characterized by materiality and fragility. While it is shaping the image of Buddha, it is also vulnerable to damage. "Golden appearance " is not only an abstract religious concept but also a form of art that has been fully utilized in the real world. Its ideology and artistic expression have a significantly long history. Approximately around the 3rd–1st century BCE, the written Dirghagama-sutra,[4] the original Buddhist sutra, described the physical appearance of the Buddha as "golden shining like pure gold." The gold described here has high qualities such as purity, shine, and warmth. When it is used to shape the appearance of the Buddha, it is easy to create psychological associations of holiness and glory. Wobst has shown that adornment, because of its visibility, is a suitable medium for conveying stylistic messages (Wobst 1977, pp. 331–35). Diana argues that ornaments were part of dress strategies and that new combinations of objects were displayed visually over clothing or on the body to constitute new identities (Diana 2003, p. 236). Although most Buddhists believe that the Buddha has outlived his attachment to these materials, both Buddhist texts and Buddha statues actively use gold to decorate the appearance of the Buddha and mark the Buddha as a superior being in order to achieve the purpose of religious communication in different areas of social groups where the Buddha can express and spread their religious identity and status (Kieschnick 2003, p. 8).

Buddha statues in this form have been widely produced and disseminated throughout history. At present, the earliest gold products with decorated Buddha statues found in the world, or gold-decorated Buddha statues, are from the Gandhara region. The Bimaran reliquary, found in Stupa No. 2 in Bimaran near Jalalabad, Afghanistan, in 1838, is one of the earliest physical depictions of the Buddha (see Figure 1). According to the excavated condition and the art of the Buddha statue, it could be inferred that the box was made around the 1st century (Cribb 2015, pp. 26–36; Sun and He 2018, p. 145). The Buddha in this statue, wearing a Hellenic robe with a knot on his right hand, stands on the throne of the golden box and is accompanied by Brahma and Indra from Brahmanism.[5] Thus, it can be concluded that this statue absorbed the native Indian culture and Western Greco-Roman culture. Apart from that, a single mercury-gilded bronze seated Buddha statue dating from the middle of the 1st to 2nd century CE was also found in the area, which was proved to be the earliest Buddha ever discovered with its surface decorated with gold (Li and Zhang 2021, p. 131; The Metropolitan Museum of Art 2004, pp. 51–52) (see Figure 2). This Buddha is jagged at the edge of his head and sits in a preaching position. It is worth mentioning that its appearance and costume are obviously in the artistic style of a Greco-Roman statue. Meanwhile, the gold coin of Kanishka I (127–151), issued by the Kushan Dynasty (c. 100–300), which once ruled Gandhara, features a similar image of the Buddha on the back, with the Greek inscription "BOΔΔO" on the left. From the 2nd century CE, gold leaf came into use in Gandhara. During this period, gold decoration was placed on the surface of Buddhas made of schist, stucco, clay, and other materials (Li and Zhang 2021, pp. 131–32). The typical above examples indicate that Buddhist statues in Gandhara took the lead in adopting gold for artistic expression. At the same time, a number of gold techniques were also applied, such as hammering, chiseling, mercury gilding, and gold leaf gilding, to decorate the surfaces of bronze, rock, and clay. As is known to all, Gandhara is one of the important birthplaces of Buddha art. Gandhara Buddha statues integrate the ideological elements, art forms, and processing techniques of various Eastern and Western civilizations, such as Persia, Greco-Roman civilization, and

the civilizations of the central Asian steppes. The birth of Gandhara Buddha statues was clearly influenced by the artistic style of Greco-Roman statuary. At the same time, this external factor influenced Gandhara's gold technology. In 334 BC, Alexander's expedition brought advanced gold technology from the Mediterranean to Gandhara. In the temple at Ai-Khanum in northeastern Afghanistan, a gilt-silver Cybeli plate from the 3rd century BC was found, which would have been used for sacrificial rites. This typical silver plate features three ancient Greek gods, the stars, and the moon in a relief, and the surface is gilded. This undoubtedly introduced a new decoration concept and technology demonstration to gold-decorated Buddha statues. In this context, gold became an important material in the production and artistic expression of Buddha statues in Gandhara, focusing on the apparent skin or clothing of the Buddha. With the material advantage of gold, the appearance of the Buddha glittered. By comparison, its visual impact and sense of religious experience are far greater than those of other materials. The design inspiration and decoration techniques of this religious statue not only shaped the Buddha worshiped and offered by believers into a higher being but also provided a new form of surface decoration for religious statues. This created favorable conditions for the development and spread of Buddhism.

Figure 1. The Bimaran reliquary, 1st century (circa). Materials: gold and garnet. Dimensions: H. 6.5 cm × D. 6.6 cm. Displayed in the British Museum, London, United Kingdom. Photo source: the official website of the British Museum[6].

The story "Night Dream of Golden Buddha" by Emperor Ming (28–75) of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25–220) is the earliest record of Buddhism in Chinese history. At that time, the earliest sutra translators coming to China, Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna, recorded in their translation of the Sutra of Forty-Two Sections that, "in the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), the Emperor Ming dreamed at night that a person with a golden body and sunlight was flying at the nape" (Kasyapa Matanga and Dharmaratna 1924–1934, p. 722). He was so pleased with himself that he asked his officials the next day, "who is the person?" The knowledgeable person, Fu Yi, said, "I have heard that there is a person in Tianzhu who has attained enlightenment. His name is Buddha. He can fly with a slight lift and he is known as extraordinary." His appearance was golden. At the same time, the dream was interpreted by the court officials to be associated with the Western "Buddha." This indicates that golden yellow was the most prominent appearance of the Buddha. This kind of record also appeared in later Buddhist writings such as "Master Mou's Treatise Dispelling Doubts," "Biography of Eminent Monks," "the Disciplines of

the Later Han Dynasty," and "Historical Records of the Later Han Dynasty," indicating that the golden Buddha had become a certain social consensus from the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Northern and Southern Dynasties (25–581). In 178–189 AD, the Kushan monk Lokaksema (c. 147–?), in the capital of Luoyang, successively translated the earliest Mahayana Buddhist scriptures in China. As recorded in the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines (Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra) and the Pratyutpanna Samadhi Sutra, the Shakyamuni Buddha, Buddhas in the Ten Directions, Buddhas of the Three Times (tryadhva-buddhāḥ) and Nirmāna-buddha were all golden[7]. This proves that in the late 2nd century, Mahayana gilded Buddha statues had already been systematically introduced into China (Ma 2013, pp. 265–67). From the middle of the 3rd century, Chinese monks traveled westward through the Silk Road to seek dharma. On the way, they saw many bronze and stone Buddha statues decorated with gold. For example, in the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317–420), Fa-hsien (337–422) saw the Buddha's parietal bone relics in Hiffa City (today's Jalalabad, Afghanistan) (Fa-Hsien 1985, p. 46). Huisheng of the Northern Wei Dynasty (386–532) saw bronze and stone Buddha statues gilded with mercury and gold leaf in Yumi City (today's Yutian County, Xinjiang), Uddiyana State (today's Swat County, Pakistan), and Varusha City (today's Shahbaz Garhi area, Maldan Shabazi, Pakistan) (Yang 2006, pp. 210–214). This illustrates that Buddha statues were concentrated in Gandhara, the Buddhist art center at that time. They spread across the western regions, from west to east, and finally to inland China. The arrival of gilded Buddha statues brought new changes to the development of foreign religious art and Chinese gold craft.

Figure 2. The gilded bronze seated Buddha of Shakyamuni from Gandhara, 1st to mid-2nd century. Materials: gilt bronze. Dimensions: H. 16.8cm × W. 11.4 cm × D. 10.2 cm. Displayed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States of America. Photo source: the official website of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Behrendt 2007, p. 49).

3. Gold Amalgam, Mercury Gilding Process, and Surface Treatment of Metal Buddha Statues

Gold amalgam, commonly known as gold mud in China, is an alloy product formed by combining gold with metal mercury, which has good chemical activity. Mercury has a shiny silvery color and is present as a heavy liquid at room temperature and pressure. Mercury is copper- and sulfur-loving in nature, so most of it is distributed as mercury sulfide. Natural mercury sulfide was once used as a red pigment by ancient people because of its bright red color. Unearthed wooden bowls from the Hemudu culture period were

coated with substances such as these, suggesting that natural synthetic oils were used in China at least 6000 years ago (Wang and Wang 1999, p. 40). In addition, natural gold also generally contains mercury. Metallic mercury can be obtained through the calcination of mercury sulfide, or the collection of vaporized mercury vapor and condensation, which was the main method of extracting mercury used by ancient people. Gold leaf unearthed in Shuangdun Tomb No. 1 in Bengbu, Anhui Province, in the late spring and autumn periods (770–476 BCE) may be the earliest physical evidence of gold extraction using mercury mixing technology at home and abroad (Qin et al. 2011, pp. 95–96).

The ancient gold amalgam was mainly used as a special coating for the surface treatment of metal objects and was the key material for the invention and application of mercury gilding technology. When using mercury gilding technology, the gold leaf is cut up at first. Under a high temperature of 400 °C, the gold leaf is mixed with molten metal mercury to produce gold amalgam. With the gold amalgam wholly or partially coated on the surface of metal objects, through heating, the mercury evaporates when it is heated, while the gold remains on the surface of the objects. Because of the difference between the thickness of the application of gold amalgam and the baking temperature, the surface of each part of the object will appear inconsistently gold. In this case, when the mercury-gilded implement is preliminarily finished, a standard gold color needs to be chosen. Each part is subject to this accordingly. Through repeated mudding and baking a number of times, the mercury-gilded color of the whole object is unified. Finally, an agate knife with a higher hardness is dipped in saponin water and then pressed and polished back and forth evenly on the surface (H. Wang 1984, pp. 57–58). The advantage of this method is that the tiny glume formed by the evaporation of mercury can squeeze out the tiny gap left on the surface, meaning that the gold layer can be firmly combined with the body, increasing the surface brightness and the ability of the mercury-gilded implement to reflect light. The truth is its appearance is almost the same as that of pure gold. The mercury gilding process saves a large amount of gold, which can not only protect the surface of metal objects from oxidation for a long time, but also improve the visual beauty of the objects.

Mercury-gilded implements can only be determined by analyzing the uniformity of the gold amalgam and the heating traces between the gilded gold layers through the detection capabilities of scientific instruments. Under this standard, it could be inferred that Chinese mercury gilding technology had already appeared in the late Warring States period (475–221 BCE) and developed dramatically afterwards (Xu and Yang 2017, p. 72). According to the existing archaeological data, nearly 40,000 mercury-gilded artifacts from the Qin and Han Dynasties (Jiang 2015, pp. 215–16) have been unearthed, mainly including five types of small artifacts, such as human body ornaments, chariot and horse implements, weapons, daily utensils, and utensil components. Beyond that, the world's first gold amalgam was discovered in the Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE–25 CE) Tomb No. 2 in Shuangbao Mountain, Mianyang, Sichuan, China (He et al. 2007, pp. 44–50). The above data apparently prove that China's mercury gilding technology was an indigenous and independent development. The upper nobles once monopolized Chinese ancient mercury-gilded technology. Their noble and prominent social status was highlighted through the production of mercury-gilded utensils, in fact. In addition to small mercury-gilded objects, the mercury-gilded bronze horse unearthed in Maoling, Shaanxi Province, and the mercury-gilded bronze human-shaped lamp unearthed in the Han Tomb in Mancheng, Hebei Province, both showed that the Western Han Dynasty already had the ability to produce mercury-gilded utensils with a larger size and complex structure (see Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. Gilded bronze horse from the Western Han Dynasty. Materials: gilt bronze. Dimensions: H. 62 cm x W. 76 cm. Displayed in Maoling Museum, Shanxi Province, China. Photo source: the official website of the Suzhou Museum.[8].

Figure 4. Gilded bronze human-shaped lamp from the Western Han Dynasty. Displayed in the Museum of Hebei Province. Photograph taken by the author.

During the Eastern Han Dynasty, the Han Dynasty had already made contact with Buddhism. It is recorded in the Annals of the Three Kingdoms: the Biography of Dongyi in the Book of Wei that in the first year of the Yuan Shou (2 BCE) of Emperor Ai (25–1 BCE) of the Han Dynasty, Yicun, an envoy of the Kushan Empire of the Western Regions, came to China and dictated the Pagoda Sutra to Jinglu, an official of the school, in Chang'an, the capital of the Han Dynasty (Treatise on the Three Kingdoms Vol. 12 History of Wei. Dongyi zhuan, S. Chen 1936b, p. 120). Emperor Huan (132–168) cast a gold pagoda, the Laozi statue, covered with a treasure canopy, which was placed in the palace shrine (Kasyapa Matanga 1924–1934, p. 767). This illustrates that gold was used in the imperial court to produce special items for Buddhist sacrifices. According to the Annals of the Three Kingdoms, it was recorded that, from the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty to the Three Kingdoms period (c. 220–265), there was a local despot called Ze Rong (?–195) in Xiapai County

(now Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province). He "established Fu Tu Temple. The statue was made of bronze and painted with gold" (Treatise on the Three Kingdoms, Vol. 17 History of Wu. Liuyao zhuan, S. Chen 1936a, p. 5). This was the earliest record of a mercury-gilded bronze Buddha statue in ancient Chinese literature and might also be the earliest use of local, mature mercury gilding technology to treat the surface of a metal Buddha statue. In 1902, Tatsunobu Watanabe et al. of the Japanese Otani expedition team found several broken mercury-gilded statues in a temple in Hotan Prefecture, Xinjiang, China (Seiko 2014, p. 146). One of the mercury-gilded bronze Buddha heads, with a height of 13.7 cm, was believed to have been an imitation of the Gandhara style by local artisans in the second half of the 3rd century. Indeed, this place was an important area of ancient Buddhism in its spreading east, named Khotan, where mercury-gilded Buddha statues possibly entered the Central Plains. In the Sixteen Kingdoms of the Wei and Jin Dynasties (220–439), small standing or seated mercury-gilded Buddha statues gradually appeared in the Central Plains, which were either imported from the western regions or imitations from the Han region. There are presently about 40 representative works in existence (F. Zhang 2018, p. 98). Among them, in San Francisco, United States of America, is the mercury-gilded bronze Buddha statue produced in the Later Zhao Regime (319–351), the fourth year of Jianwu (338), displayed in the Asian Art Museum; it is 39.7 cm high and the earliest Buddha statue in China (see Figure 5). From the literature and existing objects, it can be confirmed that gilded Buddha statues were a common decoration technology in the eastward spread of Buddhism.

Figure 5. Gilded bronze Buddha from the Later Zhao Dynasty. Materials: gilt bronze. Dimensions: H. 39.7 cm × W. 24.1 cm × D. 13.3 cm. Displayed in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, San Francisco, United States of America. Photo source: the official website of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco[9].

In the Northern and Southern dynasties, when Buddhism was constantly communicating, absorbing, and digesting, the production of mercury-gilded Buddha statues began to flourish, and it has been prevailing and continuing to this day, occupying the mainstream position of mercury-gilded utensils for a long time. The invention of mercury gilding technology is actually an innovation of the surface treatment technology for metal implements, which balances the relationship between the surface treatment of implements and the efficient utilization of gold materials. However, with the prosperity of Buddhism in China, devout believers, especially the emperor, who possessed metal resources, also joined the ranks of those producing Buddha statues, and the number and volume of metal Buddha statues continued to increase. According to historical records, the Ming Emperor

of the Song Dynasty in the Southern Dynasty (420–589) produced a fourteen-foot gilded Buddha statue (Biography of Eminent Monks, Shi 1992, p. 493), while Emperor Xianwen of the Northern Wei produced a giant standing statue of Sakya, "with 100 thousand jin of bronze and 600 jin of gold" (History of the Wei Dynasty, vol. 114. Shi Laozhi, Wei 1997, pp. 3037–38). In the book "*A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Luo-Yang*" from the Northern Wei Dynasty, there were more than 1000 temples in the city of Luoyang. In the largest Yongning Temple, there were over 40 gilded bronze Buddha statues (Yang 2006, pp. 1–2, 124–25). Moreover, the Buddha statues of the Southern Dynasty flourished during the reign of Emperor Wudi (464–549) of the Liang Dynasty (502–557). During his forty-eight-year reign, it could be said that the emperor ruled the country with Buddhism, with numerous Buddha statues made of gold, silver, and bronze (Tang 1997, pp. 384–85). The mercury-gilded bronze Buddha Maitreya statue of the tenth year of Taihe (486) from the Northern Wei Dynasty is displayed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA. It is 140.3 cm high and known as the biggest statue of its kind at present (see Figure 6). Casting a large metal Buddha statue in ancient times, whether using the casting method or the lost-wax method, was an extremely expensive and complex project in terms of labor and material. This, in turn, increased the consumption of gold, mercury, and metals such as bronze and iron. Before the introduction of Buddhism to China, the main users of mercury gilding technology were members of royalty, which then changed to Buddhist temples. At the same time, the main objects of decoration also changed, from five types of small artifacts, such as human body ornaments, chariot and horse implements, weapons, daily utensils, and utensil components, to medium- and large-sized Buddhist statues[10]. This reflects the influence of the introduction of Buddhism on the application of metal processing technology in China and the distribution of social metal resources.

Figure 6. Gilded bronze Buddha Maitreya from the Northern Wei Dynasty, 10th year of Taihe reign. Materials: gilt bronze. Dimensions: H. 140.3 cm × W. 62.2 cm × D. 48.9 cm. Displayed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States of America. Photo source: the official website of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Leidy and Strahan 2010, p. 59).

4. Gold Leaf, Gold Leaf Gilding Technology, and Multi-Material Treatment on the Buddha's Surface

Gold leaf is a very thin piece of gold that is produced by taking advantage of gold's ductility and malleability and then repeatedly hammering and forging it. In the middle of the 24th century BC, there was a mural depicting the production of gold leaf in the A3 chamber of the Tomb of Mereruka in Sakara, ancient Egypt (Wilson and Allen 1938, pp. 29–30). Compared with Western countries, gold leaf production technology appeared relatively late in China. The earliest gold leaf found in China was a gold-copper earring from the Adun Qiaolu site in Bozhou, Xinjiang Province, dating from the 19th century to the 17th century BCE (The Institute of Archaeology Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 2013, pp. 30–31). The re-decoration of the outer appearance of the earrings showed the precious gold, soft texture, and obvious decorative properties. With the continuous improvement of people's knowledge of metal and forging technology, gold leaf products with a larger area and higher quantity began to appear in the Middle and Late Shang Dynasties. These sites are mainly high-level tombs or sacrificial pits in Zhengzhou and Anyang, Henan Province, and Guanghan and Chengdu, Sichuan Province (Liang and Gao 1962, p. 334; Sichuan Cultural Relics Management Committee 1987, pp. 4–5; The First Team of Cultural Relics Working Team of Henan Provincial Bureau of Culture 1957, p. 72; The Institute of Archaeology of Chengdu City 2004, pp. 6–10), indicating that gold resources were mainly controlled by the upper strata of society. One of them is a semi-circular gold slice unearthed in Tomb M14 of the Gaochengtai West Site in Hebei Province during the middle period of the Shang Dynasty (c. 1700–1600 BCE) (Taixi Archaeological Team of Hebei Provincial Cultural Relics Management Office 1979, p. 43) (see Figure 7). Its thickness is only 1 mm, and the lacquerware surface is flat. Presently, this is the earliest known gilded product discovered in Chinese archaeology. In the Late Shang Dynasty, such lacquerware had also appeared in Tomb No. 171 at Anyang Da Sagong in Henan Province. Its thickness is only 0.01 mm, and the lacquerware surface is flat (Beijing Institute of Iron and Steel Engineering 1978, pp. 34–35).

Figure 7. Gold Leaf from the Middle Shang Dynasty. Materials: gold. Dimensions: T. 1mm. Displayed in the Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, China. Photograph taken by the author.

During the spring and autumn periods and the Warring States period (770–221 BCE), gold leaf gradually spread to the capitals of various vassal states and their surrounding areas, covering most areas of northwest, central, and north China. According to archaeological results, Chu State was the most advanced in gold leaf production in the late spring and autumn periods. Moreover, in the late spring and autumn periods of Chu (c. 1030–223 BCE), batches of thinner gold leaf were found successively in the tombs of noblemen in Xichuan, Dangyang, and Bengbu, with the thinnest being only 0.007 mm (Cheng et al.

2019, pp. 10–19; Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Heritage and Archaeology 1991, pp. 203–208; Qin et al. 2011, p. 94) (see Figure 8). A total of 940 pieces of gold leaf with 13 shapes, including round and triangular, were unearthed in the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng from the early Warring States period (475–221 BCE). The thickness of the gold leaf ranges from 0.037 to 0.378 mm (Hubei Museum 1989, pp. 393–95). Each piece of gold leaf has a thick center and a thin edge. The gold leaf was used to decorate flat surfaces such as coffins, chariots, and armor. Chu State was the main gold-producing area in China in the pre-Qin period and the only vassal state that issued a gold currency (Z. Chen 2005, pp. 70–73). Gold resources and developed gold processing technology provided good conditions for the development of gold leaf products. Tracing back to its entire history, this kind of gold leaf developed rapidly from the middle and late Warring States period to the Jin Dynasty (266 CE–420 CE). It was widely applied to the surfaces of utensils and clothing made of lacquer wood, copper, iron, jade, plant fiber, etc. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that gold leaf was used exclusively by royalty. During the Sixteen Kingdoms period (304–439), Emperor Shi Hu (295–349) of the Later Zhao (319–351) produced gold fans, which had already reached the technical level of "thin pure gold such as Cicada wings" (A Record of Ye-Zhong, Lu 1937, p. 6). At the same time, Daoist external alchemy in the Northern and Southern Dynasties had also succeeded in their attempts to forge iron into gold as thin as silk (*Baopuzi Immortal Jinfen Sutra on Scroll the First Volume*, Anonymous 2016, p. 204). A large number of studies have revealed that gold leaf can be as thin as possible as long as it is stuck to the surface of something else. As a result, the development characteristics of gold leaf materialization are the key points that expand the wide applicability of gold leaf products.

Figure 8. Round gold leaf from the late spring and autumn periods. Materials: gold. Dimensions: D. 14.4cm. Displayed in the Bengbu Museum, Anhui Province, China. Photo source: the official website of the Bengbu Museum[11].

In addition to mercury-gilded Buddha statues, the combination of gold leaf production technology and gilding technology provided another option for the surface treatment of Buddha statues. It was recorded in "A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Luo-Yang" that people in the western regions of the city had the custom of affixing gold to the surface of gilded statues (Yang 2006, p. 210). It was believed that a patient could be cured by fixing gold leaf to a statue corresponding to the diseased part of the human body. This kind of religious behavior, which meets people's psychological expectations to a certain extent,

promoted the popularity of gold leaf gilding Buddha statues. During the Northern and Southern Dynasties, when Chinese Buddhism flourished dramatically, many Buddhist believers began to use a large amount of gold to decorate Buddhist statues to display their piety. According to the existing archaeological documents, the earliest gold-covered Buddha statues made of clay, wood, and stone appeared successively in Dunhuang, Gansu Province, Mushuke, Xinjiang Province, Yungang, Shanxi Province, and other eastward-spreading routes of Buddhism during the Northern and Southern Dynasties (Lu and Wang 2013, p. 133; Z. Zhang 2006, p. 413; Zhao 2016, p. 60). During the Southern Dynasty, there were other records of foreign gold-leaf-gilded Buddha statues being brought to China, whose inscriptions indicated that they were "foreign gold-leaf seated statues" with a height of seven feet (Biography of Eminent Monks, Shi 1992, p. 179). This shows the close religious and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries in this period. The majority of these different types of gilded Buddha statues were gold-leaf-gilded stone statues. According to statistics, there are 216 typical gilded stone statues from the Northern and Southern Dynasties in China in total. A total of 191 of them are distributed in northern China, including Hebei, Henan, Shandong, and Shaanxi provinces, while 25 are distributed in southern China, including Sichuan province (Li and Zhang 2021, p. 130). Comparatively speaking, these gilded stone statues' distribution proportion is much larger in the north than in the south. Apart from that, another remarkable discovery has drawn attention: the distribution and number of these gilded Buddha statues coincide exactly with the main route of Buddhism spreading from west to east along the Silk Road. This proves the historical fact that Buddhism was introduced into China from the west.

The gold leaf gilding technique is a type of processing technology that covers heterogeneous objects with gold leaf entirely or locally. By virtue of the adsorption of gold leaf itself or with the use of adhesive materials, the process plays a dual role of both decoration and sealing on the surface of Buddha statues. Specifically, the process can be divided into two steps. The first step is to boil the adhesive materials. Generally, a lacquer, tung oil, or icthyocolla is chosen for boiling into a thick semi-liquid, which is then evenly spread on the surface of the Buddha statue. Second, as the adhesive material dries quickly, bamboo clips are used to pick up pieces of gold leaf and place them in order. After pressing and polishing with a cotton ball or agate knife, the gilded Buddha statue is completed. Generally speaking, the face, hair ornaments, body postures, and costumes of Buddha statues are mostly uneven surfaces. In order to facilitate a consistent visual perception of gold-leaf-gilded Buddha statues, the surface adhesion of the gold leaf must be tight and uniform. Therefore, the more gold leaf produced, the thinner the thickness, the better the uniformity, and the easier it is to complete the production of gilded Buddha statues. With this background, gold leaf with an extremely thin thickness, uniform size, good uniformity, and mass production came into being. At present, there is not enough evidence to prove that these kinds of gold leaf and gold leaf gilding techniques were influenced by foreign gold-leaf-gilded Buddha statues. However, before the introduction of Buddhism to China, the main users of gold leaf gilding technology were members of royalty, which then changed to Buddhist temples. At the same time, the main objects of decoration also changed, from small artifacts to medium- and large-sized Buddhist statues, and the surface of decorative carriers changed from plane to three-dimensional.

During the Tang and Song dynasties (618–1279), when Buddhism flourished, this kind of gold leaf was widely used in large-scale Buddhist statues and temples. Emperor Jingzong (809–827) of the Tang Dynasty (618–907) built his palace with "100,000 pieces of gold leaf" (Taiping yulan, F. Li 2008, p. 203). In the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1126), the Dunhuang region's envoy to repair the Buddha statue came "begging for 100,000 pieces of gold leaf" (Song Huiyao, Edited the Manuscript, volume 198 Minority V, Xu 1957, p. 768). The gilded clay Buddha statues from the middle of the Northern Song Dynasty in Zhangzi County, Shanxi Province, are only 0.00016–0.00022 mm thick with gold leaf (Wang et al. 2020, p. 41). Built in Chongqing in the 22nd year of Shaoxing (1152) during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279), the Tongnan Buddha is 18.43 m high, and 369,000 pieces of gold

leaf are used to complete the decoration of the whole body (Xu and Liao 2020, pp. 95–96). The huge demand for gold made the craftsmen look for a more economical way to use gold and a faster technique to make gold leaf. The mass production of gold leaf in ancient China was realized because of the invention and application of Wujin paper. The earliest liner material was probably made from some kind of animal hide, with paper later being made from plant fiber. It is not clear when animal skins and paper were used (Han and Ke 2007, p. 799). If paper is used as a liner material, this would indicate a time after Cai Lun (c. 61–121) developed paper from woody bast fiber in the 105 years of the Eastern Han Dynasty (Pan 1998, p. 86). In the Genealogy of Fatie Puxi of the Southern Song Dynasty, "Kui paper," which records the calligraphy of rubbing inscriptions on tablets[12], is the liner paper used to make gold leaf (Cao 1939, p. 2). In the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), "Tiangong Kaiwu" first recorded the production method of Wujin paper, stating that "all Wujin Paper was made by Suzhou and Hangzhou. Its paper is made of East China Sea bamboo film. By lighting the lamp with soybean oil, blocking the surrounding air, stopping the pinhole ventilation, and smoking light, this paper is finished (Song 1978, pp. 338–40)." Therefore, the paper has high heat resistance, wear resistance, and impact resistance. Repeated stacking helps to evenly disperse the beating force. The production of gold leaf has been upgraded from one-by-one hammering to multi-layer hammering with a uniform thickness and uniform shape[13]. Scholars have investigated the traditional gold leaf production process in Nanjing, Fuzhou, and Quanzhou and found that at least 1792–2048 pieces of gold leaf can be produced at one time by using Wujin paper. Up to now, Wujin paper is still the core material in gold leaf production (Lian 2002, p. 346; K. Wang 1980, pp. 40–43). The technological improvement of batch leaf production and the maturity of gold leaf gilding technology not only meet the demand for Buddhist gold but also improve the utilization rate of gold and effectively solve the construction and efficiency problems in the gold installation projects of giant Buddha statues.

In addition to the gilded decorations on three-dimensional Buddha statues, Buddhism also developed a new type of low-embossing decoration technique in the planar grotto frescoes called gelled patterning and gilding. The gelled pattern is usually higher than the wall, with gold leaf above it, in order to increase the three-dimensional stereoscopic effects of the picture. The Kizil Grottoes, in Kuqa, Xinjiang Province, were dug in the 3rd century by Qiuci State, an ancient country in the west. They are the earliest Buddhist grottoes in China and the most western in terms of geographical location. Thanks to their location at the intersection of Eastern and Western civilizations in ancient times, the cave paintings not only show the Indian and Greek styles of early Buddhist art but also have a number of traces of gilded decoration. In addition, the technique of gelled patterning and gilding can also be seen in murals from the Northern Wei Dynasty in Dunhuang Mogao Cave 263 (Duan and Fan 2006, pp. 55–59), which happen to illustrate the propagation path that Buddhism took in its spread to China from the west. In fact, whether it is a three-dimensional Buddha statue or a plane fresco, the decorative layer formed by gilding on the surface plays the extra roles of waterproofing, corrosion prevention, weatherproofing, and peeling protection, which enables a lot of fragile Buddhist art that could easily decay to be preserved for a long time.

5. Stripping the Buddha's Gold Garments: The Contradiction between Gold Technology Evolution and Resource Supply and Demand

The value of gold has a high degree of consensus in human society. After Buddhism was introduced into China, it actively built and spread Buddhist thoughts with the help of gold. Chinese believers gradually accepted and imitated the gold decoration and worship of Buddha statues to obtain spiritual comfort. Generally speaking, Buddhism had a certain influence on the gold technology and social resource distribution in ancient China. As mentioned above, gold resources in ancient China gradually flowed from the ruling class to the religious field. The use of gold has expanded from the showing off of materials in secular life to the spiritual sustenance of religious belief. From a technical processing

perspective, ancient Chinese craftsmen further processed solid gold in its simple form into gold amalgam and gold leaf through forging, alloying, melting, and other methods and then applied it in the exterior decoration production of Buddha statues through mercury gilding, gold leaf gilding, and other technologies. These two main surface treatments expanded the application of gold and promoted the development of gold leaf production technology in ancient China.

A comprehensive comparison of the mercury gilding and gold leaf gilding processes used in the surface treatment of Buddha statues shows that the gold leaf gilding process has more advantages in terms of processing technology and decoration applications (see Table 1). As for the mercury gilding process, due to the use of mercury elements that are harmful to the human body in the production of raw materials, the bottom substrate must be made of metal, and the construction needs to be equipped with a stable and continuous fire source for baking. Due to the double influence of technical difficulty and metal material loss, the scale and quantity of production of mercury-gilded Buddha statues can only be relatively small. In fact, the technical difficulty of gold leaf gilding lies in the mass production of gold leaf. This problem was encountered because the original technology could not meet the increasing demand for gold ornaments on Buddha statues, which forced people to seek better technological solutions. Usually, the essence of technology is to utilize phenomena to combine and self-evolve existing technologies so as to bring new efficiency improvements and value niches (Arthur 2009, pp. 168–84). They promote and influence each other through science and the economy. The inventions of mercury gilding and gold leaf gilding make full use of the characteristics of gold. They use a chemical reaction or the means of physical processing to improve the utilization rate of materials and reduce economic costs. With the prosperity and development of the social economy and foreign exchange in the Tang Dynasty, gold crafting was also at the peak of the development period in ancient China (Qi 1999, p. 9). As recorded, the society of the Tang Dynasty greatly respected Buddhism, and eight emperors once spared no expense to welcome Buddhist relics (Han 1993, pp. 4–5). In this case, gold resources and the two technologies of mercury gilding and gold leaf gilding were widely used in the religious field of the country. However, the flamboyant decorative behavior of gilded Buddha statues has gradually evolved into a social phenomenon of extravagance and waste. The gradual imbalance between the technological evolution of gold and the social demand for gold has resulted in the consumption of more gold and other metal resources and even brought unforeseeable and destructive consequences to the social economy.

Table 1. Comparison of mercury bronzing and gold leaf bronzing techniques used in the surface treatment of Buddha statues.

Type of Technology	Raw Material Form	Bottom Substrate Material	Construction Methods	Buddha Statue Scale	Safety
Mercury gilding	Gold amalgam	Metal substrate	Heating	Medium- and large-sized Buddha statues	Toxic danger
Gold leaf gilding	Gold leaf	Unlimited	Pasting with glue	Unlimited size, especially suitable for giant Buddha statues	Safety

After the "An Shi Rebellion," the Tang Dynasty faced the financial dilemma of a lack of national power and expenditure (Gernet 1987, p. 40), which led to a conflict of economic interests between the imperial center and the Buddhist group. Scholastic officials represented by Han Yu (768–842) began to oppose Buddhism in an attempt to stop the extravagance of society (He 2000, pp. 58–59). During the reign of Emperor Wuzong of Tang (814–846), including the Huichang years (841–846), it was repeatedly ordered to destroy Buddha statues and to strip them of their gold ornaments. Moreover, the Japanese monk

Ennin (793–864) recorded in his travel notes, "Ennin's Travel in T'ang China," that in Shandong Province, he received a national decree issued by the imperial court: "the state and county department should take the gold of the world's gold and bronze Buddha statues, and weight the gold and turn them over to the State Treasury (Ennin 2007, p. 152)." Under the strong intervention of the imperial court, gilded Buddha statues had to be stripped of their gold, weighed, and handed over to the State Treasury. As a rare and precious metal resource in the social economy, gold served the functions of circulation, payment, and storage in social economic communication[14]. When the existing social economic order was destroyed, the ruler was bound to focus on the original, stable temple economy. The great tension of the polarization between the poor state and the rich temples led to the rulers confiscating and plundering the temple economy by invitation or forceful means, so as to use it for emergency subsidies of the government's finances, placing labor and resources under the name of the government (Jing 2013, p. 41). In addition, the same situation also occurred in the first year of Renzong Kangding (1040) at the beginning of the Song Dynasty, when the imperial court ordered "the prohibition of Buddha statues decoration with gold leaf" (History of Song Ren Zongji, Toqto'a 1985, p. 208). Although Buddha statues in the Tang and Song dynasties were universally revered and worshipped by the world, they were still stripped of their luxurious and solemn golden skin and clothing in the face of the difficult reality. Therefore, it can be seen that technology is not an independent factor born outside of society. Technology and society interact, restrict, and develop together in the same process.

6. Conclusions

Gilded Buddha statues are typical examples of cultural communication and integration between different civilizations. Their emergence and spread reflect the close relationship between body decoration, technological dissemination, and religious development in the complex social and historical background of Asia. With the help of the precious material medium of gold, Buddhism not only constructed the ideal paradise but also shaped and decorated the skin of various Buddha statues in reality. Gandhara was not only one of the birthplaces of the early Buddha statues but also took the lead in decorating them with precious and easily malleable gold. In this case, it made this the fixed and standard paradigm for Buddha decorations in all Buddhist traditions. Thanks to the universal recognition of the value of gold in human society, the gilded statues of the Buddha that originated in Gandhara were powerfully spread across Asia. Consequently, the gilded statues of the Buddha strengthened the communication between regions, being endowed with multi-level connotations such as craft, culture, and religion in the process of transmission.

With the spread of Buddhism to the east, gilded Buddha statues also actively absorbed and influenced the gold technologies in different regions. As research has shown, this situation changed the inherent trend of the distribution, processing, and application of gold resources in traditional Chinese society. As a matter of fact, existing data show that, even though the production of gold amalgam, gold leaf, mercury gilding, and gold leaf gilding technologies all originated in China, the introduction of Buddhism and gold leaf-gilded Buddha statues from Grandhara accelerated the application of gold resources and technologies to Buddhism in China. In particular, it played an important role in promoting the production of gold leaf and gold leaf gilding technology in the Northern and Southern dynasties. This provides a double guarantee of the material and technology for the surface treatment of Buddha statues with different scales and materials. Since the Wei, Jin, Northern, and Southern dynasties, Buddhism has used the greatest volume of gold, resulting in a large amount of gold resources in society flowing to the temples, which once had an impact on the national economy at that time. The driving force behind the evolution and progress of gold technology comes from solving the problem of the rational and efficient utilization of gold materials. However, with the progress and popularization of technology, as well as the change and development of society and the economy, there

will be dislocation or even alienation between the purpose and result of technological processing, which will lead to deeper social and economic problems. The wearing and stripping of the gold costumes of ancient Chinese Buddha statues are a periodical reflection of the mutual influence and restriction between gold processing technology and social resource allocation and moral orientation.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, X.L. and X.H.; methodology, X.H.; investigation, X.L.; writing—original draft preparation, X.L.; writing—review and editing, X.H.; visualization, X.L. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

1 In Buddhism, it is believed that the Buddha has 32 unique features after practicing and accumulating merits, such as a fleshy bun growing on the top of his head, and a real golden body.

2 In Buddhism, it is believed that there are seven most precious treasures in the world, which are sacred things for cultivation and offering in Buddhism.

3 Mount Sumeru is the highest sacred mountain in Buddhism, Jainism, and Hindu Cosmology, where the Hindu gods reside.

4 The Dirghagama-sutra is one of the four basic classics of the early Buddhist Agama Sutra, and it is named as such because of its length.

5 Brahma and Indra were originally Hindu gods; they were gods that appeared after being deified, and were later absorbed by Buddhism.

6 https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_1900-0209-1.

7 Buddhas in the Ten Directions are innumerable worlds in the ten directions of the dharmadhatu of Buddhism, and each world has a Buddha, which is the general name for all Buddhas. Buddhas of the Three Times (tryadhva-buddhāḥ): refers to the Buddha who has attained enlightenment in the past, present and future in Buddhism. Nirmāna-buddha is the changing body of the Buddha, who desire to help all living beings and manifest himself by enlightenment.

8 http://www.szmuseum.com/GoldShow/Appreciation/gjpxs?page=4.

9 https://collections.asianart.org/collection/seated-buddha-dated-338/.

10 Human body ornaments are general expressions of all kinds of ornaments worn on different parts of the body. These ornaments include men's belts and swords, as well as women's hairpins, bracelets, buttons, etc.

11 https://www.ahbbmuseum.com/?list_21/128.html.

12 Calligraphy rubbing is the technique of using a dye to reproduce text or graphics on a hard surface on easily portable paper.

13 Multi-layer hammering is the main processing form of gold leaf mass production. This method uses Wujin paper to layer and protect the gold leaf, and effectively improves the quality and efficiency of gold leaf production through regular pounding.

14 Since ancient Chinese, people have planned to store gold. These stores of gold included different forms of objects such as utensils, jewelries and curries. 'storage' means that gold is wealth. Through the means of storage, it could protect its relatively stable economic benefits.

References

Anonymous. 2016. Baopuzi Immortal Jinfen Sutra on Scroll the First Volume. In *Dong Shen Bu Zhong Shu Lei. Zheng Tong Dao Zang*. Edited by Lujun Xie. Beijing: Jiuzhou Press.

Arthur, Brian W. 2009. *The Nature of Technology: What It Is and How It Evolves*. London: Penguin Adult.

Behrendt, Kurt A. 2007. *The Art of Gandhara in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Beijing Institute of Iron and Steel Engineering. 1978. *A Brief History of China's Mmetallurgy*. Beijing: Science Press.

Cao, Shimian. 1939. *Fatie Puxi*. Shanghai: The Commercial Press.

Chen, Shou. 1936a. Treatise on the Three Kingdoms Vol. 17 History of Wu. In *Song Shaoxi Engraved Edition with Song Shaoxing Engraved Edition*. Shanghai: The Commercial Press.

Chen, Shou. 1936b. Treatise on the Three Kingdoms Vol. 12 History of Wei. In *Song Shaoxi engraved edition with Song Shaoxing Engraved Edition*. Shanghai: The Commercial Press.

Chen, Zhenzhong. 2005. Gold utensils and their characteristics in the pre-Qin period. *Researches in Chinese Economic History* 4: 65–73.
Chen, Yundun, and Guoqing Li. 1986. Gold Foil Technology and Its Exchange Between China and Other Countries. *Studies in the History of Natural Sciences* 3: 256–265.
Cheng, Xiaolin, Linran Tang, Mo Li, Na Wu, Qin Yang, Wei Liu, Xinyu Zhang, Min Liu, Ying Han, and Dandan Zhao. 2019. Research on the composition and manufacturing techniques of gold leaves of gold—Covered metal ornaments excavated from Chu tombs. *Sciences of Conservation and Archaeology* 31: 10–19.
Cribb, Joe. 2015. Dating and Locating Mujatria And The Two Kharahosters. *Journal of the Oriental Numismatic Society* 233: 26–48.
Diana, Loren DiPaolo. 2003. Refashioning a Body Politic in Colonial Louisiana. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 13: 231–37.
Duan, Wenjie, and Jinshi Fan. 2006. *The Complete Collection of Chinese Dunhuang Murals Volume 1*. Shenyang and Tianjin: Liaoning Fine Arts Publishing House and Tianjin People's Fine Arts Publishing House.
Ennin. 2007. *Ennin's Travel in T'ang China*. Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press.
Fa-Hsien. 1985. *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*. Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House.
Gernet, Jacques. 1987. *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries*. Lanzhou: GanSu People's Publishing House.
Grafton, Smith Elliot. 1934. *Human History*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd.
Granoff, Phyllis. 2020. Coloring the World: Some Thoughts from Jain and Buddhist Narratives. *Religions* 11: 9. [CrossRef]
Han, Jinke. 1993. Famen Temple and Famen Temple Culture. *Relics and Museolgy* 4: 3–12.
Han, Rufen, and Jun Ke. 2007. *A History of Science and Technology in China Mining and Metallurgy Volume*. Beijing: Science Press.
He, Jun. 2000. Han Yu's Taoism and Song Confucianism's Transcendence. *Confucius Studies* 2: 57–66.
He, Zhiguo, Shuyun Sun, and Honggang Liang. 2007. China's Earliest Taoist Alchemistic Artifact: Initial Study on the Gold-Mercury Alloy Unearthed from No.2 WesternHan Tomb in Shuangbaoshan, Mianyang, Sichuan Province. *Studies in the History of Natural Sciences* 1: 44–50.
Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Heritage and Archaeology. 1991. *Spring and Autumn Chu Tombs in Xichuan Xia Temple*. Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House.
Hu, Dongbo, Tiening Xue, Jinhua Wang, and Hongyan Zhang. 2008. An Analytical Study of Gilding and Adhesive Materials on the One-thousand-hand Buddha at Dazu Grotto, Baoding Mountain, Chongqing. *Sciences of Conservation and Archaeology* 20: 44–51.
Hubei Museum. 1989. *Tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng*. Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House.
Ji, Xianlin. 1982. The 32 Major Characteristics in Tocharian Language A. *Minority Languages of China* 4: 6–19.
Jiang, Nan. 2015. *An Archaeological Study on the Early Golden and Silver Wares in China*. Jilin: Jilin University.
Jing, Xian. 2013. Reasons and Reflection on 'Huichang destroys Buddha'. *Studies in World Religions* 5: 36–44.
Kasyapa Matanga. 1924–1934. *Da Zheng Zang Vol. 49*. Tokyo: Taisho All Sutras Publication Association.
Kasyapa Matanga, and Dharmaratna. 1924–1934. *Forty-Two Chapters*. Da Zheng Zang Vol. 17. Tokyo: Taisho All Sutras Publication Association.
Kieschnick, John. 2003. *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Leidy, Denise Patry, and Donna K. Strahan. 2010. *Wisdom Embodied: Chinese Buddhist and Daoist Sculpture in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
Li, Fang. 2008. *Taiping Yulan*. Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, vol. 2.
Li, Jia. 2010. Viewing the Gold Gild Technology in the Southern and Northern Dynasties from Long Xing Temple's Buddhistic Statues. *Journal of Dalian University* 3: 68–71.
Li, Jing, and Jing Zhang. 2021. Where Did the Gold Decorations of Buddhist Statues Come From?—Exploring the Source of Gold Decorations of Buddha Statues in Early China. *Journal of Nanjing Arts Institute(Fine Arts & Design)* 3: 128–135.
Lian, Haiping. 2002. Investigation on Traditional technique of Making Gold Foil. *Sciences of Conservation and Archaeology* 14: 335–48.
Liang, Siyong, and Quxun Gao. 1962. *Tomb 1001 Houjiazhuang*. Taipei: The Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica, vol. II.
Lu, Hui. 1937. A Record of Ye-Zhong. In *Preliminary Compilation of Book Series*. Shanghai: The Commercial Press.
Lu, Jie, and Yan Wang. 2013. *Introduction to Xinjiang Art*. Urumqi: Xinjiang Fine Arts and Photography Press.
Ma, Zongjie. 2013. The Rationale for the Formation of Golden Buddahas Images as Viewed from the Sutras Translated by Lokaksema. *Religionary Faith and Ethnic Culture* 5: 260–271.
Pan, Jixing. 1998. *A History of Science and Technology in China Papermaking and Printing Volume*. Beijing: Science Press.
Qi, Dongfang. 1999. *Research on Tang Gold and Silver*. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press.
Qin, Ying, Huang Huang, Xiaoli Li, and Xuhang Kan. 2011. Research on Gold Foil Unearthed in the Late Spring and Autumn Period from Tomb No. 1 in Shuangdun, Bengbu. *Cultural Relics* 56: 221–32.
Seiko, Murata. 2014. *The Charm of the Small Gold Bronze Buddha-China, Korean Peninsula, Japan*. Tokyo: Satobun Publishing.
Shi, Huijiao. 1992. *Biography of Eminent Monks*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
Sichuan Cultural Relics Management Committee. 1987. Brief report on the excavation of No. 1 sacrificial pit at Sanxingdui site in Guanghan. *Cultural Relics* 10: 1–15.
Song, Yingxing. 1978. *Tiangong Kaiwu*. Hongkong: Zhonghua Book Company.
Song, Yan, Linlin Zhou, Yunpeng Wang, Fangzhi Liu, Juwen Guo, Ruixia Wang, and Austin Nevin. 2021. Technical Study of the Paint Layers from Buddhist Sculptures Unearthed from the Longxing Temple Site in Qingzhou, China. *Heritage* 22: 147. [CrossRef]
Sun, Yinggang, and Ping He. 2018. *A History of Gandhara Civilization*. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company.

Taixi Archaeological Team of Hebei Provincial Cultural Relics Management Office. 1979. Brief Report on the Excavation of the Shang Dynasty Site in Taixi Village, Gaocheng, Hebei. *Cultural Relics* 6: 33–43.
Tang, Yongtong. 1997. *History of Buddhism in Han-Wei-Jin-Nanbei Dynasty*. Beijing: Peking University Press.
The First Team of Cultural Relics Working Team of Henan Provincial Bureau of Culture. 1957. Excavation of Shang Dynasty ruins in Zhengzhou. *Acta Archaeological Sinica* 1: 53–73.
The Institute of Archaeology Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. 2013. Aden jolu site and cemetery in Wenquan County, Xinjiang. *Archaeology* 7: 25–32.
The Institute of Archaeology of Chengdu City. 2004. First Season of Excavation at Meiyuan of the Jinsha Site near Chengdu. *Cultural Relics* 4: 4–65.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 2004. Recent Acquisitions A Selection: 2003–2004. *The Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 62: 49–54.
Toqto'a. 1985. *History of Song Ren Zongji*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
Wang, Kezhi. 1980. Gold leaf production in ancient China. *Shanghai Nonferrous Metals* 4: 40–43.
Wang, Haiwen. 1984. Research on Gilding Technology. *Palace Museum Journal* 2: 50–58.
Wang, Michelle C. 2016. Early Chinese Buddhist Sculptures Aa Animate Bodies And Living Presences. *Ars Orientalis* 46: 13–38. [CrossRef]
Wang, Jinyu, and Jincong Wang. 1999. Application of vermilion pigments in ancient China. *Sciences of Conservation and Archaeology* 11: 40–5.
Wang, Yongjin, Juan Ji, Dong Shaohua, Xiaojuan Dang, Chong Wang, and Peng Wu. 2020. Research on cleaning the coating on gilded clay figurines in the Thousands of Buddha Hall of Chongqing Temple in Zhangzi County, Shanxi Province. *Sciences of Conservation and Archaeology* 6: 40–44.
Wei, Shou. 1997. *History of the Wei Dynasty vol. 114. Shi Laozhi*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
Wilson, John Albert, and Thomas George Allen. 1938. *The Mastaba of Mereruka, Part I*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Wobst, Martin H. 1977. Stylistic behavior and information exchange. In *Papers for the Director: Research Essays in Honor of James B. Griffen*. Edited by Charles E. Cleland. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
Xia, Yan, Qianli Fu, Zhiguo Zhang, Weifeng Wang, Zhendong Liu, and Jianfeng Zhang. 2008. *Analysis and Research on the Color Painting of Buddhist Statues in Stone Carvings of the Northern Zhou Dynasty*. Treasures of the Ancient Capital—Buddhist Statues of the Northern Zhou Dynasty Unearthed in Chang'an City. Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House.
Xu, Song. 1957. *Song Huiyao Edited the Manuscript Volume 198 Minority V*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
Xu, Lin, and Xueqiong Liao. 2020. Nvestigation and Research on the Historical Materials of Tongnan Grand Buddha Makeup Gold. *Study of the Cave Temples* 10: 92–105.
Xu, Xiaodong, and Junchang Yang. 2017. *Ancient Chinese Gold Techniques*. Hong Kong: Art Museum, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
Yang, Xuanzhi. 2006. *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Luo-Yang*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
Zhang, Zhuo. 2006. *Chronicle of Yungang Grottoes*. Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House.
Zhang, Fan. 2018. The Buddhist Style of the Hu Dynasty: The development of the art of gilt Buddha statues in the Sixteen Kingdoms period. *Art Research* 5: 88–102.
Zhao, Shengliang. 2016. *A Brief History of Dunhuang Grottoes Art*. Beijing: China Youth Publishing Group.
Zhou, Zhibo, Ling Shen, Chenlu Li, Na Wang, Xuelian Chen, Jie Yang, and Hui Zhang. 2020. Investigation of gilding materials and techniques in wall paintings of Kizil Grottoes. *Microchemical Journal* 154: 104548. [CrossRef]

religions

MDPI

Article

Ecclesiastical Museums and the Pontifical Letter on Its Pastoral Functions

Maria Isabel Roque [1,2]

[1] Faculty of Human Sciences, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 1649-023 Lisbon, Portugal; mroque@ucp.pt
[2] CIDEHUS-UÉ, University of Évora, 7000-654 Évora, Portugal

Abstract: The Catholic Church arrogates a long tradition of protecting and using heritage to complement its evangelisation ministry from the medieval ecclesiastical treasures included in museology proto-history. While these treasures have adopted museographic features, other typologies of ecclesiastical museums have appeared, demanding regulations that could orient their activities. After the Second Vatican Council, the Church became increasingly focused on guaranteeing a worthy destination for the objects left over from worship. In 2001, the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church published the Circular Letter *The pastoral function of ecclesiastical museums*, establishing that the ecclesiastical museum is an adequate solution for these objects, keeping them close to the cultural group of origin and providing continuity to its original catechetical function. Two decades later, a critical analysis of the Letter is proposed in the theoretical frame of museum studies. Considering the recovery object's original meaning in the museum discourse, the connection to territory, and the interaction with the plural and heterogeneous audience, the conformity of the Letter with the museum theory is underlined. With a focus on its general accuracy, the aim of this study is to evaluate how the Letter remains actualised and adapted to contemporaneity in addition to the challenges and transformations now faced by museums.

Keywords: Catholic Church; ecclesiastical museums; museology of religion; museum studies; religious heritage

Citation: Roque, Maria Isabel. 2023. Ecclesiastical Museums and the Pontifical Letter on Its Pastoral Functions. *Religions* 14: 96. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14010096

Academic Editors: Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges and Helena Albuquerque

Received: 1 August 2022
Revised: 27 December 2022
Accepted: 5 January 2023
Published: 10 January 2023

1. Introduction

In 2001, the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church (PCCHC 2001) sent the catholic bishops the Circular Letter, *The pastoral function of ecclesiastical museums*. The ecclesiastical museum was defined as 'a place that documents not only the human genius but also offers an insight into the cultural and religious life in order to guarantee its existence at the present time' (PCCHC 2001, sec. Introduction), outlining its role for the care, valorisation, and promotion of their collections. The importance of this document is linked to high significance of the religious heritage within the global cultural heritage and, in particular, the Catholic heritage prominent in Southern European countries.

Throughout centuries, Catholic Church art patronage fulfilled a fundamental role in the development of art by establishing forms, contents, and meanings and simultaneously functioned as a proof of wealth and social status and as an instrument of power and propaganda. However, from the evolution of modern European nations, the secularisation of public life, and the rise of the art market, the role of the Church in commissioning works of art and its collection has broken down.

In the second half of the 20th century, and during the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church called for art and architecture simplification, austerity, and a decorative stripping of religious spaces. These orientations imply the disaffection of many works of art and artefacts in disuse. A museological destiny appeared as an appropriate solution for their protection, avoiding the risks of damage and loss. While considering that the Church mission is not focused on the preservation or interpretation of cultural heritage but

evangelisation, the Circular Letter proposed the ecclesiastical museum as a way to valorise art and use it for a pastoral purpose.

Two decades after the Circular Letter, it is considered appropriate to reflect on the relevance of their principles and impact, evaluating how it refers to the museological theory and practices. The aim is to analyse the Circular Letter in the light of current museum studies, describing their essential concepts, emphasising those more remarkable by their updating and innovating features, and verifying eventual gaps. Although studies focusing on the Circular Letter are scarce, the text by Marta Tigano (2021), with an analysis of the impact of the principles stated therein and the role of ecclesiastical museums in contemporary society, and that of Domenica Primerano (2020), former President of the Association of Italian Ecclesiastical Museums (AMEI) (2015–2020), stand out, analysing the museum's mission from this document and Pope Francis' message to the private audience granted access to AMEI on 24 May 2019.

The internal analysis of the document is complemented by bibliographical research on religious museum studies. The theoretical frame about museums of religion is based on the works of Crispin Paine (Buggeln et al. 2017; Paine 1999, 2013, 2019), Françoise Mairesse (2003, 2014), and Maria Isabel Roque (2011, 2013, 2020) as well as the proceedings of the 41st Symposium organised by ICOFOM under the general theme 'Museology and the Sacred' (Mairesse 2018), held in Tehran on 15–19 October 2018, and the ICOFOM Study Series special issue 'Museology and the sacred' (Mairesse 2019). In a broader view of the mission, management, fruition, and connection to the territory of ecclesiastical museums, and with the benefit of including case studies, there is also the work edited by Sibilio and Matacena (2021).

This paper is structured into three parts: the first, introductory, aims to briefly present the ecclesiastical heritage and the collecting history within Catholic Church; the second begins with an introductory note about the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican to contextualise the descriptive presentation of the Circular Letter *The pastoral function of ecclesiastical museums*, following its structure; and in the third, the document guidelines are discussed in terms of current museology.

2. Historical Context of Ecclesiastical Heritage and Collecting within the Catholic Church

The recognition of Christianity as religio licita by the Edict of Milan in 313 allowed the public and triumphant exteriorisation of the cult (Drake 2012). Emperor Constantine initiated a vast programme of temple construction in Rome and the Holy Land, providing them with dignified furnishings, such as chalices and patens in precious metals and rich altar adornments. At the same time, Saint Helena, Constantine's mother, converted to Christianity and began a pilgrimage to the holy places in Palestine, where tradition attributes the inventio (Jensen 2017), or discovery, of the site of the crucifixion, whose relics she brought back to Rome. Religious relics of saints and martyrs constitute the starting point for the constitution of medieval ecclesiastical treasures whose dominant value is of a spiritual order, such as thesaurus gratiarum. However, allied to this was the patrimonial and artistic value of the reliquaries and the church's set of tools and vestments, constituting a treasure in a literal sense (Cordez 2005, p. 57), which contributed to consolidating the concept of interdiction. Brief apparitions, either in liturgical use or in a sporadic presentation to the admiration and veneration of the faithful, contribute to underlining the intrinsic condition of the separation due to the sacred things. The ecclesiastical treasures fulfilled inventory, reserve, preservation, and exhibition tasks that, as we say today, are inherent to museological activities. They are, therefore, not only an obligatory reference in the proto-history of museology but also the historical background of ecclesiastical museums.

During the Renaissance, the classical influence, conveyed by the humanist current, stimulated the taste for collecting genuine works or replicas from antiquity, paintings, sculptures, and exotic materials in the cabinets of curiosities. In the Capitol of Rome, Pope Sixtus IV founded the Antiquarium with a precious collection of ancient sculptures

that he offered to the city's people (Jacks 1993). Pope Julius II exhibited his collection of classical art at the Vatican (Piana 2020). Papal collecting stimulated the development of other ecclesiastical collections that functioned as a sign of dignity and prestige and a privileged instrument in searching for knowledge. However, these artistic collections are not distinguished from the royal or aristocratic collections of the time, where, except for iconography, there are no objects of a religious matrix (Roque 2011).

In the 18th century, Pope Clement XIV, under the direct influence of Joaquim Winckelmann, the founder of art historiography and the Vatican's librarian, began the construction of a museum where the precious art collections preserved by the Popes over the centuries could be exhibited to the public (Valeri 2020). The museum was completed in the papacy of Pius IV and is an example of the universalist museums that mark the beginning of the history of museology.

At the end of the 18th century, as a concept and organisational structure, the museum's institution coincided with the progressive secularisation of society, which led to the depreciation of many collections of religious origin. The recognition that liturgical objects express the excellence of artistic production over time has led to them being considered the explicit documents of art history as objects with heritage and artistic value. Museums have integrated liturgical and devotional objects into their collections, recruited them as works of art, and displayed them in an undifferentiated way alongside other artefacts and works of art (Roque 2011). This occurrence marks the pioneering conversion of a sacred or religious object into a museological object.

3. Circular Letter 'The Pastoral Function of Ecclesiastical Museums'

3.1. Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican

In the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (Vatican Council 1963), namely in chapter VII entitled 'Sacred art and liturgical implements', the Second Vatican Council assumed the inevitability of human behaviour in reserving the most distinguished of its creations for worship and affirmed the importance of artistic creation for the worship. Within the continually recurring parameters of dignity, the search for material and aesthetic excellence is justified as a witness of faith and devotion.

The Second Vatican Council also expressed the goal of opening up to the multifaced world of contemporary art and the world's cultures. For this purpose, on 9 April 1965, Pope Paul VI created the 'Secretariat for Non-believers' (later renamed to 'Pontifical Council for Dialogue with Non-believers') and, on 7 December, promulgated the Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et spes, addressed 'to the whole of humanity'. This document stipulated that arts 'are able to elevate human life, expressed in multifold forms according to various times and regions' (Pope Paul VI 1965, para. 53). John Paul II founded the Pontifical Council of Culture on 20 May 1982, renamed in 1993 as the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church to establish the dialogue between the Catholic Church and other contemporary cultures. The Commission was an autonomous body whose President was to be the Pontifical Council for Culture member to ensure their coordination. On 30 July 2012, Pope Benedict XVI merged the two bodies, suppressing the Commission and transferring its former objectives and activities to the Pontifical Council for Culture.

However, following the Second Vatican Council, the simplification of the ceremonial caused the disaffection of disused vessels and vestments, confirming that places and objects of worship participate in sacredness as material intermediaries in the course of divine service, and so buildings, implements, and vestments are subject to specific consecration rituals. Execration becomes implicit when the object is damaged or considered inappropriate to the cult as a strategy to avoid abusive use of things disaffected. Hence, the disaffected ritual objects are immediately and unequivocally deprived of their intrinsic sacred content, which releases them for the museological function. However, these objects are used to be sent to secondary or marginal spaces in the churches without conservation and security measures, making them prone to oblivion and disappearance.

Observing the risks caused by this situation, the Catholic Church expressed a growing concern to ensure that disaffected objects could have a destiny worthy of their initial liturgical condition, with the defence that an important role is still reserved for them in the service of catechesis and Christian culture. This is the sense of John Paul II's message to the participants in the Second Assembly of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church of 25 September 1997 and the various Circular Letters of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church.

3.2. Circular Letter Description and Analysis

Among the Commission's documents, the Circular Letter, *The pastoral role of ecclesiastical museums,* maintains its particular importance, even when commemorating two decades. Apart from the introductory and conclusive notes, the Circular Letter is structured of five main points concerning religious heritage conservation, the nature of the ecclesiastical museum and its organisation, and the enjoyment and training of both agents and audiences.

In the Introduction, the definition and objectives of the ecclesiastical museum are clearly stated. In brief, the museum is presented as a place that documents cultural and religious life development. The pastoral function is the axis of its action and the factor allowing distinction from non-ecclesiastical guardianship museums.

The ecclesiastical museum becomes a suitable destination for the objects no longer available for liturgy and worship, avoiding abandonment, dispersion, or destruction. At the same time, it ensures the dignity those objects deserve and the accuracy of the museological discourse interpreting them.

Besides keeping the objects in the religious scope, the ecclesiastical museums used to maintain them in the territory, in close proximity to their cultural group of origin. This connection is beneficial as the community identifies with the religious heritage and, thus, tends to be committed to its protection and knowledge. These aspects have been widely defended by the museological theory, emphasising the importance of local community involvement in the museum's activities (Golding and Modest 2016; Munro 2014; Taylor 2020; Waterton and Watson 2010, 2013) and its role in the development of feelings of belonging and collective identity.

In point 1, the importance of religious heritage is defined through its artistic value, cultural content, theological meaning, and liturgical functionality, to which the Circular Letter adds a universal destination—a possibility of collective achievement.

It is up to the museum to perform inventory and study functions, preservation, and restoration, as stated in the Circular Letter. The tasks of the exhibition, interpretation, communication, or cultural mediation should be added at this point, as they are implicitly referred to in the document. All the functions fulfilment and museum competencies depend on heritage knowledge, valorisation, and use in the museological context.

Similarly to all the museological functions, the exhibition of religious objects and their underlying narratives depend on the knowledge of the particularities of their heritage. The main distinction derives from the liturgical and devotional use, but the Circular Letter points to another use, not always considered, that proceeds from the spread of Catholic culture in other regions, civilisations, and cultures. As a result of the inculturation process, with reciprocal appropriations and recreations, the liturgy, devotional practices, and objects they used have different formulations depending on the cultural contexts in other times and geographies. Despite the plurality of formalisations, a universal identity character comes from religion, or, as the Circular Letter reads, from 'the use by the Church it was created' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 1.1).

Above all, the object is integrated into the museum as a historic–artistic heritage. Still, it tends to be valued as a document (Robinson 2018) that provides information about its cultural context and contributes to enhancing the knowledge about the communities that produced it and those that followed them. This concept promotes the object, with no significant historical or artistic value, as anthropological heritage, bearing meanings that justify it in the museological discourse.

While confirming these objects' values, the Circular Letter referred to both material and immaterial conservation, even before the UNESCO *Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage* (UNESCO 2003). In defending that 'the artefact with an aesthetic value may not be totally detached from its pastoral function or its historical, social, environmental, and devotional context which it is expressed and witnessed to' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 1: 1.2), the Circular Letter focuses on the intangible components that contribute to knowing and understanding its material features, confirming the object's value as a document. The recognition of religious heritage and its spiritual values and meanings as intangible heritage, as well as its relevance to the pastoral mission of the ecclesiastical museum, will have favoured this recommendation.

In this sense, the preservation and enhancement programmes of cultural heritage, in addition to prevention, security, and restoration actions, must include research about the original function and history of objects, the contexts in which they were involved, the information on how the liturgy and devotional practices have evolved, comparing the past with current uses and establishing the logic that guided their development and gives meaning to the heritage. If all these practices should be regular for all museums, the ecclesiastical museum assumes the use of these objects in a pastoral and catechetical dimension, without prejudice to the required scientific rigour, and, eventually, can be taken in liturgy service.

Point 2 focuses on the ecclesiastical museum's nature, aim, and typology.

The ecclesiastical museum's nature (PCCHC 2001, sec. 2.1) is described in terms of religious heritage conservation and enhancement in a pastoral context, applying the concepts outlined in the previous point.

Establishing what distinguishes the ecclesiastical museum from others is precisely the pastoral mission, assuming that 'an instrument of Christian evangelisation' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 2.1.1) is strongly linked to the territory and community in which it operates. It is considered an ecclesial place as it is a part of the Church's mission and bears witness to its historical development and the different circumstances of its activity. In addition, it stimulates the understanding of the sacred through beauty.

The concept of object underlies the ecclesiastical museum's precise nature. In the Circular Letter, the object is presented close to the concept of musealium, or musealia, (Desvallées and Mairesse 2010, pp. 61–64), considering that the musealisation process changes the object's status as a sign. After being decontextualised and losing its initial function, the object is used as a proxy. It is exhibited and observed in its material and visual features, but it integrates the museological discourse to represent something that transcends it. As in any museum, the objects displayed in ecclesiastical museums were not designed and produced for this function. However, what distinguishes the musealia in the ecclesiastical museum is that this one, by its nature, extends the discourse to the original object functionality in worship, catechesis, or devotion.

The ecclesiastical museum's aim (PCCHC 2001, sec. 2.2) is centred on safeguarding memory, to which the museological functions converge. According to the definition of the term consigned by ICOM (International Council of Museums) at the Extraordinary General Assembly in August 2022, 'A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage' (ICOM n.d.). Besides these functions, the Circular Letter adds the representation of the 'stable memory of the Christian community' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 2.2.1) until the present and the 'comparison with other cultural expressions characterising the territory' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 2.2.1). In this sense, it approaches the idea of the museum as a 'place of memory' (Black 2011; Willis 2015), from the concept developed by Pierre Nora: 'a lieu de mémoire is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community' (Nora 1996, p. XVII). This definition allows encompassing the museum in a network of relationships with other cultural institutions, places, traditions, and experiences in the territory. As stated in the Circular Letter, the objects in the museum,

despite their diversity, 'even if different, make reference to one unique 'cultural system' and help reconstruct the theological, liturgical and devotional attitude of the community' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 2.2.2). In this framework, the concept of musealia in ecclesiastical museums gains a particular meaning: even when it loses the function of initial use and becomes obsolete, the object is seen as a relic of the historical past and allows the 'pastoral action through memory' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 2.2.2).

The ecclesiastical museum assumes itself as the repository of the history of Christianity in the territory, witnessing the religious experience of the Christian community. From the Circular Letter, it is inferred that the inclusion of the ecclesiastical museum in the scope of the territory museology (Rivière 1989) recovering the social intention of an interactive insertion in the community, albeit from a doctrinal and catechetical perspective.

Regarding typology (PCCHC 2001, sec. 2.3), the Circular Letter establishes it around ownerships (or tutelages) and collections.

Thus, in the typology of museums, the historical model of cathedral treasuries stands out, and currently, in the post-conciliar period, the following types are distinguished: diocesan, inter-parish, and parish museums; monastic, convent, or religious institutions museums, including the missionary museums; museums of confraternities or other ecclesiastical institutions. In Portugal, the Lisbon Cathedral's Treasury is worth mentioning as an example of a diocesan museum; as a religious order and missionary museum, the Consolata Museum—Sacred Art and Ethnology at Fátima—and as a museum of the confraternity, the Misericórdia Museum of Porto.

Despite having a common matrix, the museums included in this typology have different natures and objectives: diocesan, inter-parish, and parish museums are defined by their connection to the territory in which they are inserted, reflecting the culture and identity of the place; the museums of religious institutions refer to the historical and spatial landmarks in which the institute acted and the parameters of this action; the missionary museums focus on inculturation, witnessing the cultures they were confronted with and offering a relevant contribution to the studies of cultural anthropology.

Concerning the collections or objects gathered (PCCHC 2001, sec. 2.3.2), it is discerned between those for liturgical or para-liturgical use, which, in turn, are grouped in another order of categories: works of art; sacred vessels; furnishings; reliquaries and ex-votos; liturgical and ecclesiastical vestments and other textiles and fabrics; musical instruments; manuscripts, liturgical books, choir books, and print resources. The possibility of archival and library materials' custody is also mentioned. Thus, artistic, archaeological, and scientific collections of non-Christian nature are excluded even if they are ecclesiastical property. Conversely and pioneeringly, the Circular Letter encouraged the collection and preservation of 'the memory of those traditions, customs, habits, characteristic of the Church community and civil society' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 2.3.2).

Regardless of the category, the museum must show the meaning of works on display and those in storage through their artistic, historical, anthropological, or cultural values, spiritual and religious dimensions, and complex senses.

The whole experience of the religious is in close connection with the material object used in the liturgy or private devotion: the gestures used; the litanies and prayers associated with it; the manifestations of faith which it had aroused. Thus, the effectiveness of a museological presentation is dependent on adequate reference to these subjective data and is in accordance with the correct contextualisation of the religious object in the museum.

This point ends with the regulations related to the museum's institution (PCCHC 2001, sec. 2.4), defining the responsibilities and competencies of the various bodies responsible for the ecclesiastical heritage.

Point 3, concerning the organisation of the ecclesiastical museum, is configured as a brief treatise on museography in the sense that it presents a set of techniques and practices applied to the museum regarding the building structure, the arrangement of the exhibition space and adjacent areas, security installations, and its surveillance and administration.

Introduced are some indications regarding the structural architecture (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1), showing a preference for historic buildings of ecclesiastical property, such as 'ancient monasteries, convents, seminaries, episcopal palaces, clerical environments' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.1). The affinity between the structure and the exhibit should attenuate the decontextualisation effect inherent to the religious objects' musealisation process.

However, this indicates that the task of arranging the space and adapting it to the museological function must be given to an architect, who collaborates with other specialists in the theoretical and technical plan of the exhibition. Museology should be introduced as a crucial discipline (Rusnak 2021). On the other hand, two decades after the Circular Letter, experience adverts to the risk of handing over the design of the museum space to the architect alone. This risk is more significant when the space is constructed from scratch by a so-called 'starchitect', who creates designs with impressive visual impact prevailing over its functionality (Cominelli and Jacquot 2020; Klimek 2014). The manifest tendency to render the container predominate over the content—that is, the exhibition space and the exhibitors over the objects—may turn out to be a prestigious building in detriment to the effectiveness of the museological plan. Thus, along with the architect, the presence of a museologist is essential to ensure that the construction of the exhibition space is suitable for the elaboration of the exhibition discourse, especially since the building is a pre-existence whose identity must be preserved.

The Circular Letter points to the need for accessibility 'for disabled visitors, in conformity with the national and international legislation on the subject' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.1). Currently connected, the construction of inclusive factors goes beyond the concept of space accessible to relevant factors for a suitable social and cultural space. The new definition of museum, approved by ICOM, introduces this change: 'Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability' (ICOM 2022). Inclusion involves creating true accessibility rather than simply providing accommodations, implying the integration and participation of all and eliminating intellectual barriers (Galla 2016). Among these are illiteracy and, in the particular case of the ecclesiastical museum, religious illiteracy within the scope of Catholicism.

The first zone of contact is the entrance (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.2). It is described as the presentation and synthesis of the exhibition in order to 'highlight the museum's identity' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.2) and to 'grasp the criteria that lead to a global reading of the museum' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.2), under the heading of sobriety and clarity. It is a welcoming area, but it is also an area of transition between the exterior and interior space that, in this way, reflects the spatial organisation of the church preceded by the atrium or churchyard, creating an intermediate strip between the profane and the sacred that, in this way, accentuates the religious nature of the exhibition environment. Since the last decade of the previous century, several authors (Buggeln et al. 2017; Duncan 1995; Mairesse 2014) have highlighted the museum space sacralisation counteracting it, while, here, this is valued as a contextualisation factor.

The exhibition halls (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.3) are described as sober spaces where speech should be straight, logical, and explicitly presented. Thus, the exhibited objects must be arranged according to the logic of the discourse. Thus, 'the structure of the rooms and the itinerary through these spaces must be part of a unique and organic proposal, whose general criteria should be adapted to the specific situation and particular intentions' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.3).

Besides the original works, it is foreseen that the whole exhibit includes reproductions, texts, maps, and multimedia materials, which are currently mainly supported digitally. These requirements correspond to the systematic exhibition model where the objects, texts, and images are displayed in a chronological or taxonomic and defined order, as described by Rivière (1989). This model creates an artificial and illustrative prototype of the object's original function and use.

The Circular Letter recommends introducing rest areas and appropriate (and comfortable) spaces for contemplating the exhibited objects. When museums tend to eliminate

seats along the exhibition route to favour the movement of mass tourist groups, this is an element to be emphasised in ecclesiastical museums, given that the museology of religion must be contemplative (Duarte 2021).

Despite the preference for systematic museology, safety and conservation issues require articulation with the in vitro exhibition model, according to the terminology of Rivière (1989) regarding the use of display cases. Under the principles of sobriety and preservation, the Circular Letter states that the display cases must value the object, allowing its complete visualisation (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.4). The harmful effect of granting exhibitors the evidence of overlapping the object instead of using it as a support and instrument to accentuate its formal aspects is also highlighted. Hence, the display case is an element of service for object-effective conservation and accurate observation.

In this point related to display cases (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.4), the Circular Letter includes the reference to labels, attributing them a crucial role in the exhibition. It distinguishes between the identification and the interpretative labels. The identification labels provide the most basic information about the artefact: work title or designation, authorship, date of manufacture, material, provenance and inventory number, while the interpretative labels should include 'the liturgical or para-liturgical destination, the significance of the name, the original spatial-temporal context, the symbolism, and eventually references to more famous objects, iconographical explanations, hagiographical notes and brief bibliographical information' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.4). Although bibliography is not common, and its importance in a label can be disputed, all the other information effectively contributes to the reading and understanding of the object, clarifying its original meaning and justifying its function in the scope of the exhibition discourse. This model of labels began to be used in anthropology museums, later extending to art museums, where it is still very incipient and sporadic while being analysed in the broader framework of the debate about the role and scope of interpretation in a museum context (Fritsch 2021).

Temporary exhibitions (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.5) are subject to a specific theme that complements or extends the permanent exhibition. It is presupposed that the existence of their own space, which, although the Circular Letter does not mention it, should be modular, allowing its adaptation to different museographic projects and other cultural events. They are a pretext to restore and present artefacts in reserve and reinforce the connection to the territory.

In addition to the axial spaces of the museum, the Circular Letter refers to areas for training and research: halls for the education (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.6), envisioned for the educational service and extended to catechists and pastoral workers; cultural formation spaces (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.7), established as a more formal teaching space for the museum staff and collaborators but also opened to researchers and students; a specialised library (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.8), kept up-to-date in matters related to the museum collections and with digital support for multimedia content; the historical and current archives (PCCHC 2001, 3.1.9) to preserve the set of documents related to the collection and history of the objects.

Regarding the historical archive, the Circular Letter warns against the risk of the disappearance of documents related to deposit official acts or temporary loans. These materials are essential for clarifying issues related to the legal protection collection and the 'contextual knowledge of the art-historical patrimony' (PCCHC 2001, 3.1.9). To these documentary archives should be added the documents related to the planning and execution of permanent and temporary exhibitions, including the research and selections carried out, the texts and images produced, the architectural and museographic projects, and the administrative procedures of loan, insurance, and transport, which are generally neglected or lost but constitute relevant material for the history of the museum and museology.

The last of the public areas is the exit (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.10), which the Circular Letter advises to be in a different location from the entrance, a criterion established within the scope of sanitary practices resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The exit signifies the epilogue of the museum visit and, similar to the entrance, constitutes an intermediate

and transitional zone separating the exhibition from the outside. It includes a bookstore, with catalogues and guides of the present and past exhibitions and other publications related to the museum's issues, as well as a store where the visitor can acquire objects for the remembrance of the museum.

The Circular Letter also refers to places for refreshments (PCCHC 2001, 3.1.11) as a strategy to encourage visitors to stay and prolong the visit.

Private areas are facilities intended for management and other employees and services (PCCHC 2001, 3.1.12) and technical areas such as technical reserves and the restoration laboratory.

The reserves or long-term storage rooms (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.13) are essential to guarantee the safety and proper conservation of the collections not on display, according to their material specificities. Storage is recognised as part of the activities inherent to collection management. The value of the objects in storage is not necessarily lower than of those on display, selected according to the exhibition discourse and its capacity for representation. The Circular Letter underlines the importance of object circulation, either within the museum, in the reformulation of the permanent exhibition, for temporary exhibitions, or abroad, through loans to other institutions. For this reason, the objects in reserve must be arranged in an orderly and accessible manner, kept in good condition, and accurately inventoried and studied.

It is at this point that the Circular Letter addresses the inventory. It does so briefly, which is justified by the fact that, at that time, the digital database inventory was fairly new and had not yet been implemented in most museums, although it was perceived that support transition was imminent. Therefore, it advises the existence of two inventories: the general catalogue of the collection on display and the other for the stored artefacts. However, nowadays, the database catalogue is unique, allowing objects to be sorted by information fields and with different user profiles, including external users, hiding fields with confidential or restricted information.

Implementing a restoration laboratory (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.1.14) close to the storage rooms is considered opportune in the Circular Letter. At this time, having more than one restoration laboratory in each museum participating in preventive conservation activities is recommended to guarantee objects' material integrity. However, the so-called curative conservation involves specialised skills and procedures to interrupt an active process of active deterioration or introduce structural reinforcement and restoration, which seeks to recover the damage caused by the previous reversals or alterations. Therefore, these activities tend to become independent and require autonomous spaces, putting themselves at the service of several museums. Furthermore, with the creation of networks, grouping together several museums, technical reserves have also been centralised to optimise and maximise the investment in control and security equipment.

This issue resurfaces within the topic of the security (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.2). After the guidelines regarding the facilities (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.2.1), the Circular Letter addresses storage and protection of the collection (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.2.2). Security involves actions to protect against theft or vandalism, fire or flood, or riots, referring to national laws in these matters. However, it does provide some practical guidelines regarding preventive conservation of the building, collection, and surveillance in the exhibition space.

Then, and concluding this point, the Circular Letter deals with administrative issues, such as management (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.3), where it presents indications of a financial, legal, and communication nature, personnel (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.4), norms, internal regulations (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.5), and relations with other institutions (PCCHC 2001, sec. 3.6).

Point 4 concerns the fruition of the museum, interpreted in an ecclesiastical sense. Along with this point, the axial concept of the museum's pastoral function is developed, attributing to it the objective of highlighting the historical memory of the ecclesial experience and how it continues to manifest itself in the Christian communities of the place where it is inserted. Thus, fruition takes place in the context of the territory. In other

words, the ecclesiastical museum is defined as an 'ecclesial place' and a 'territorial place' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 4.3), with 'continuous physical and cultural contact with the surrounding environment' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 4.3). By identifying the object's provenance and relating it to the cultural context of origin, the museum emphasises the sense of belonging to the community and the identity characteristics of the ecclesial experience in the territory. These connections are easily implemented through an integrated and diffuse museum. Here, too, the innovative quality of the Circular Letter is noted, given that this concept, as described, is similar to current museum networks in a decentralised management model and under the coordination of the diocesan museum.

Point 5 focuses on the formation of the ecclesiastical personnel. Assuming the museum's cultural role, the Circular Letter recognises the importance of training all museum agents, preparing them to value the heritage and promote artistic creation in the tradition of the Church's patronage of the arts. Some generic skills are listed, such as responsibility, and the spirit of initiative and basic knowledge in the scientific domains of history, art, pedagogy, and pastoral care, advocating specialised training for each agent according to their role in the museum. However, it does not mention some currently considered essential disciplines, such as museology, cultural management, and communication. Nevertheless, as briefly mentioned, it already provides for the connection to academic centres in institutional collaboration. This collaborative approach with universities and centres of studies has been implemented to acquire interdisciplinary knowledge and encourage research on themes related to the collections.

The museum's cultural function implies a set of actions and strategies focused on its users. Currently, the term mediation appears in the literature (Bordeaux and Caillet 2013; Chiovatto 2020; Fraysse 2015), considering it a 'fundamentally dialectical notion that requires us to address the processes of communication as both institutionally and technologically driven and embedded' (Silverstone 2006, p. 189). Hence, in the museums, it designates various interventions to establish contact points between the exhibition and the audiences, providing them with the meanings inherent to the diverse components of the exhibition discourse. Mediation promotes sharing of the experiences and encourages the emergence of shared references with a view to a richer experience from an intellectual and emotional point of view. It implies planning segmented information and communication with different levels depending on the plurality of the audiences, as provided in the Circular Letter.

The Conclusion reinforces the idea of the pastoral function as an identity mark of the ecclesiastical museum, stating that 'ecclesiastical museums, as a place for the education of the faithful and the presentation of the art-historical patrimony, combine the value of memory with prophecy by conserving the tangible signs of the Church's Tradition' (PCCHC 2001, sec. Conclusion).

The axial objective of the ecclesiastical museum is to carry out a global project around cultural heritage, combining it with the diocesan or local pastoral project. The list of strategies to achieve this goal includes the experience of the visit, the preservation and enhancement of heritage, the inventory and research around the collections, the training and preparation of agents, the cultural function and communication based on interpretation and explanation, public participation, and the extension of the visit 'by placing a person in his own culture and by stimulating the desire to safeguard the art-historical treasures that he finds in his daily life' (PCCHC 2001, sec. Conclusion).

The most innovative aspect of this Circular Letter—aligned with Church action throughout the last quarter of the 20th century, an indication of which is the creation of the Pontifical Commission in 1988—is its recognition of museology as a pastoral activity, foreseeing the benefit that will occur for the preservation of religious heritage. It is an indicator of a new mentality: while, until very recent times, the priests responsible for small parish collections justified the lack of attention paid to them by the fact that their action was of a pastoral nature, from now on, conservation issues, study, and dissemination of heritage are seen as an integral part of priestly activity.

4. Discussion: The Circular Letter in the Light of Current Museology

The Circular Letter is in line with the museology research, namely as it regards recovery of the function and the original meaning of an object in the museological discourse; the connection to the territory and the culture of the place from a global and diachronic perspective to the interaction with the multiple and heterogeneous audiences; and, in the organisation of space, the importance that is given to the reception and multipurpose areas for cultural and pedagogical actions.

4.1. Musealisation and Recontextualisation of the Religious Object in the Ecclesiastical Museum

The musealisation process of a religious object follows deviation from the original context and functionality. It is, as a rule, the least abusive solution given the object's values in its various material, historical, artistic and symbolic features, and functions as a safeguard for heritage at risk of abandonment, dispersion, abusive use, or irremediable loss. The effectiveness and efficiency of the process depend on the capacity of collections' curators to interrogate the meanings of objects and render them intellectually accessible to visitors.

A core concern in museum studies lies in determining how knowledge is created around objects (Dudley 2010; Fritsch 2021; Hooper-Greenhill 2000; Pearce 1994; Thompson 1994; Whitehead 2012) while recognising that the object interpretation and meanings are not objective or inherent, but, instead, are subjective, being 'situated and contextual' (Macdonald 2006, p. 2). The ecclesiastical museum differs from the others, however, since it is confessional and assumes a catechetical function, inverting the norm of exemption that assists museological practice. Its programme is univocal, without duplicity in the reading and interpreting the facts and concepts it presents, as the Church assumes its doctrine as a unique and universal truth. Therefore, the capacity to propose religious experiences in the museological path is taken, transforming the museum routine into an evangelising mission. To the conventional cultural function of the museum, the Church juxtaposes a spiritual slope to the ones under its tutelage.

The advantage of the ecclesiastical museum arises from its material and symbolic proximity to the original context. The occurrence of shared supervision within the same institutional framework and the geographical proximity between the church and the museum allow some objects to interrupt their museological functioning and temporarily serve in the liturgy, keeping the function that gives them meaning active.

The object is taken as a semiological sign. Thus, inherent to musealisation, there is a process of semantisation of the object, recovering the meaning from its original functionality or use. Like linguistic signs, objects, as semiological signs, have two orders of signification, according to Barthes (2009): denotation and connotation. While, at the denotation level, there is a sign consisting of the signifier and the signified, the connotation uses the first sign (signifier and signified) as its signifier and attaches to it an additional signified sign. For a long time, museums focused on the object's denotation or literal meaning. However, following the intangible heritage valuation, concern for connotation is growing, associating the object with a symbolic and expressive significance, which is dependent on the context in which it is used. The ecclesiastical museum focuses precisely on this second order of signification (connotation) with a pastoral purpose.

The catechetical use of the memory conveyed in the museum does not contradict museological pragmatics, provided that its execution should be rigorous in complying with the conservation and dissemination of collections, as determined by the *ICOM Code of ethics for museums* (ICOM 2017), adopted in 1986 and revised in 2004. Regarding the preservation of disaffected objects or those in permanent or temporary disuse, or the presentation of the respective theoretical fundamentals, the Church asserts itself as the most competent authority and the primary holder of the theological and liturgical knowledge that informs the religious heritage. By attaching catechesis to information, this circumstance works as a positive factor in the recontextualisation of the object in the ecclesiastical museum.

The religious sense is inherent to the programme of the ecclesiastical museum, assumed as an extension of the church and the pastoral action developed there. In this sense, the ecclesiastical museum offers the most favourable environment for the intelligibility of the religious object.

4.2. The Role of the Museum in the Relationship with the Territory, the Community, and the Public

There are several references to the articulation between the ecclesiastical museum and the territory throughout the Circular Letter within the conceptual framework of '*integrated and spread out museum*' (PCCHC 2001, sec. 4.3). The connection of the integrated museum to the territory takes place in a model of vertical coordination, in which local museums submit to the coordination of a leading museum, in this case, the diocesan one. The integrated-museum model has been criticised for restricting the community's participation in knowledge creation and institutional discourses and activities, while the integral museum is open to the territory in a dialogic process with residents (Ippoliti et al. 2019). However, in practice, these models have been revealed as hybrids, articulating the vertical coordination with the integrative perspective of territory and communities, which coincides with the dispositions of the Circular Letter.

The diffuse museum seeks to add different places and cultural institutions with complementary functions, material and immaterial cultural testimonies, and any other type of resource relevant to the territory's identity (Minucciani 2005). The museological action goes beyond the museum's physical space, covering the territory and interacting with the community. The territory becomes, in this way, an extension of the museum in a complex network of interactions: the museum values the cultural heritage of the territory and acts as an agent of identity construction of the place; the territory provides the memory of culture and historical and cultural heritage, in its tangible and intangible components. From the memories associated with heritage, the community produces content that the museum shares, stimulating new contributions and, in this way, expanding the epistemological field of the museum.

Considering that the relationship between museum and territory is built based on the community's self-perception, the systems of thought, and the values inherent to its culture, each museum, even in a model of integrated coordination, defines itself in a particular and dynamic way, dependent on space and time.

The search for more significant interaction with the community coincides with the emergence of museology centred on the public and the visitor's experience (Packer and Ballantyne 2016). The museum public is no longer an undifferentiated mass and is to be understood in its plurality, composed of active individuals, interpreters, and participants in elaborating the museological discourse and planning museological actions. The monological nature of the first museums is replaced by the dialogic and interactive models. Hence, by focusing on audiences, the museum tends to opt for a more participatory and co-creative relational model. Knowledge is produced through mixed and heterogeneous discourses, eventually contradictory, integrating the narratives and experiences of the community.

The models of Interaction between the museum and the community, whether participatory or co-creative (Antón et al. 2018; Long et al. 2019; Ross 2020; Simon 2010), point to a path of action already implicit in the Circular Letter. It suggests initiatives involving the community audiences to increase the sense of belonging to the heritage and the commitment to its preservation.

Recognition of the plurality of audiences has implications in terms of communication or cultural mediation. The museum tends to configure itself as an interpretive centre, adapting information to different audiences by distinguishing between believers and non-believers and, according to the different levels of knowledge, skills, sensitivities, and desires. In order to adapt to this reality, modalities of segmented communication have been advocated, with various levels and types of information by the plurality of audiences. Here, we highlight information and communication technologies that allow a variety

of knowledge transmission strategies suitable for different audience profiles, including virtual ones.

While most museums maintain mediation strategies limited to traditional analogue solutions, such as interpretive captions, panels, and room sheets, complemented with guided tours that formalise a direct museological discourse with similar interest groups, digital technology allows the creation of an interactive environment in the space museum, with greater effectiveness in acquiring knowledge and understanding the above. In this way, knowledge is no longer passively received, implying the effort without prejudice to its playful character and giving primacy to the receiver of the message in the choice of method and research instruments. On the other hand, using technologies makes it possible to send additional information to marginal or extrinsic spaces to the museological route without distorting the space, transforming it into a technological apparatus. Being minimally intrusive, the integration of connectors between the visitor and the information, such as barcodes, QR codes, or RFID, allows access to remotely enhanced textual and multimedia information. Other strategies, such as 3D modelling, web mapping, storytelling, augmented and virtual reality, non-invasive in the space materiality, customisable, and interactive, promote new forms of cognitive, emotional, and playful relationships with the exhibition. The use of technology in the mediation process, before, during, or after the museum visit, is the most relevant element missing in the Circular Letter and should be considered further in the guidelines related to the functioning of the ecclesiastical museum.

5. Conclusions

The Circular Letter proposes that the ecclesiastical museum is an instrument to preserve and safeguard the liturgical and devotional objects disaffected to the cult while keeping them close to the cultural group of origin and giving them a primary evangelisation role. This conceptualisation contradicts the principle of neutrality. However, it has been questioned, considering that a museological discourse is hardly neutral and tends to present a perspective of facts and phenomena. At the CIMAM Annual Conference *The 21st Century Art Museum: Is Context Everything?*, held in Sydney in 2018, Suay Aksoy, then ICOM President, stated that 'museums are not neutral. They never have and never will [be]. They are not separate from their social and historical context. [. . .] To accomplish their missions and serve the betterment of societies, museums do not need to be neutral' (Aksoy 2018). Aksoy's argument, reflecting a stance of increasing popularity in museum studies, supports the Circular Letter's proposals on ecclesiastical museum evangelisation. Thus, ecclesiastical museums assume a religious ideology aiming to educate, inform, dialogue, and co-create narratives with the community, but it is compelled to provide objective, rigorous, and validated information. Over the last two decades, ecclesiastical museums have been applying the standards defined by the Charter. In Portugal, the treasures or cathedral museums of Lisbon, Braga, Évora, and Funchal can be mentioned in addition to the temporary exhibitions promoted by the Museum of the Sanctuary of Fátima.

As enunciated in the starting hypothesis, the analysis of the Circular Letter and its discussion in museum studies within a theoretical frame confirm its accuracy, particularly regarding the recontextualisation of the religious object in the ecclesiastical museum, covering its materiality and intangible meanings and the role of the museum in the relationship with the territory, the community, and its heterogeneous public.

The time that has elapsed since the publication of the Circular Letter does not compromise its relevance, adequacy, and usefulness, following (and, sometimes, anticipating) advances in museum studies. Therefore, two decades later, it is proposed that the scope of the Circular Letter be broadened, applying the norms and procedures enunciated in the document to the musealisation of religious spaces. Considering the growing religious illiteracy of the public who attend and visit churches and sanctuaries with a cultural or touristic purpose, the musealisation of these spaces—in a discreet and non-invasive way, using digital communication—appears an appropriate strategy for fostering knowledge and interpretation of the place.

It is suggested that the process to further pursue the Circular Letter postulates and goals should involve a collaboration between the ecclesial institutions and universities to formalise academic research in this domain, contributing to a theoretical corpus to support the musealisation of religious objects or the museology of religion.

Funding: This work is funded by Portuguese national funds through the Foundation for Science and Technology, under the project UIDB/00057/2020.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Aksoy, Suay. 2018. [Opening Speech]. Paper presented at the 21st Century Art Museum: Is Context Everything? Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia, November 15. Available online: https://icom.museum/en/news/museums-do-not-need-to-be-neutral-they-need-to-be-independent/ (accessed on 9 July 2022).

Antón, Carmen, Carmen Camarero, and María-José Garrido. 2018. Exploring the Experience Value of Museum Visitors as a Co-Creation Process. *Current Issues in Tourism* 21: 1406–25. [CrossRef]

Barthes, Roland. 2009. *Elements of Semiology*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Black, Graham. 2011. Museums, Memory and History. *Cultural and Social History* 8: 415–27. [CrossRef]

Bordeaux, Marie-Christine, and Élisabeth Caillet. 2013. La Médiation Culturelle: Pratiques et Enjeux Théoriques. *Culture & Musée* [Special Issue]: 139–63. [CrossRef]

Buggeln, Gretchen, Crispin Paine, and S. Brent Plate. 2017. *Religion in Museums: Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. London: Bloomsbury.

Chiovatto, Milene. 2020. In Defense of Museum Education. *ICOFOM Study Series* 48: 70–84. [CrossRef]

Cominelli, Francesca, and Sébastien Jacquot. 2020. Star Architecture Landing in UNESCO Sites: Local Frictions and Regulations. In *About Star Architecture: Reflecting on Cities in Europe*. Edited by Nadia Alaily-Mattar, Davide Ponzini and Alain Thierstein. Cham: Springer, pp. 247–66.

Cordez, Philippe. 2005. Les Usages du Trésor des Grâces: L'Économie Idéelle et Matérielle des Indulgences au Moyen Âge. In *Le Trésor au Moyen Âge: Questions et Perspectives de Recherche*. Edited by Lucas Burkart, Philippe Cordez and Pierre-Alain Mariaux. Neuchâtel: Institut d'histoire de l'art et de muséologie, pp. 55–88.

Desvallées, André, and François Mairesse, eds. 2010. *Key Concepts of Museology*. Paris: Armand Colin.

Drake, Harold Allen. 2012. The Impact of Constantine on Christianity. In *Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*. Edited by Noel Lenski. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 111–38.

Duarte, Marco Daniel. 2021. Para Uma Museologia «contemplativa»: O Papel Dos Museus Da Igreja Na Contemplação Do Ser Humano. In *Arte e Igreja Em Portugal: Histórias e Protagonistas de Diálogos Recentes*. Edited by Maria João Neto and João Alves Cunha. Lisboa: Caleidoscópio, pp. 137–53.

Dudley, Sandra, ed. 2010. *Museum Materialities: Objects, Engagements, Interpretations*. London and New York: Routledge.

Duncan, Carol. 1995. *Civilising Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. London and New York: Routledge.

Fraysse, Patrick. 2015. La Médiation Numérique Du Patrimoine: Quels Savoirs Au Musée? *Distances et Médiations Des Savoirs* 3: n.p. [CrossRef]

Fritsch, Juliette. 2021. *Museum Gallery Interpretation and Material Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Galla, Amareswar. 2016. In Search of the Inclusive Museum. In *Museums, Ethics and Cultural Heritage*. Edited by Bernice L. Murphy. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 304–16.

Golding, Viv, and Wayne Modest, eds. 2016. *Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections, and Collaboration*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. 2000. *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*. New York: Routledge.

ICOM. 2017. *ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums*. Paris: ICOM. Available online: https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf (accessed on 9 July 2022).

ICOM. 2022. Museum Definition. Available online: https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/ (accessed on 14 December 2022).

Ippoliti, Elena, Andrea Casale, Michele Calvano, and Francesca Guadagnoli. 2019. Giving Form to Absence: Experiences in Representation, Communication, and Narration for the Places and Community of Amatrice. In *Analysis, Conservation, and Restoration of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Edited by Carlo Inglese and Alfonso Ippolito. Hershey: IGI Global, pp. 329–65.

Jacks, Philip. 1993. *The Antiquarian and the Myth of Antiquity: The Origins of Rome in Renaissance Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jensen, Robin Margaret. 2017. *The Cross: History, Art, and Controversy*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Klimek, Andrzej. 2014. Museum Projects of the Star-Architects. *Challenges of Modern Technology* 5: 44–48.

Long, Duri, Tom McKlin, Anna Weisling, William Martin, Hannah Guthrie, and Brian Magerko. 2019. Trajectories of Physical Engagement and Expression in a Co-Creative Museum Installation. Paper presented at the 2019 on Creativity and Cognition (C&C'19), San Diego, CA, USA, June 23–26; San Diego: ACM DL, pp. 246–57. [CrossRef]
Macdonald, Sharon. 2006. Expanding Museum Studies: An Introduction. In *A Companion to Museum Studies*. Edited by Sharon Macdonald. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 1–12.
Mairesse, François. 2003. *Le Musée, Temple Spectaculaire: Une Histoire Du Projet Muséal*. Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon.
Mairesse, François. 2014. *Le Culte Des Musées*. Bruxelles: Académie Royale de Belgique.
Mairesse, François, ed. 2018. *Museology and the Sacred: Materials for a Discussion = La Muséologie et Le Sacré: Matériaux Pour Une Discussion = La Museologia y Lo Sagrado: Materiales Para Una Discusión: Papers from the ICOFOM 41th Symposium Held in Tehran (Iran), 15–19 October 2018*. Paris: ICOFOM.
Mairesse, François. 2019. Museology and the Sacred [Special Issue]. *ICOFOM Study Series* 47: 1–205. [CrossRef]
Minucciani, Valeria. 2005. *Il Museo Fuori Dal Museo: Il Territorio e La Comunicazione Museale*. Milano: Lybra Immagine.
Munro, Ealasaid. 2014. Doing Emotion Work in Museums: Reconceptualising the Role of Community Engagement Practitioners. *Museum and Society* 12: 44–60. Available online: https://journals.le.ac.uk/ojs1/index.php/mas/article/view/246 (accessed on 9 July 2022).
Nora, Pierre. 1996. Preface to English Language Edition. In *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past: Conflicts and Divisions*. Edited by Pierre Nora and Lawrence D. Kritzman. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. New York: Columbia University Press, vol. 1, pp. XV–XXIV.
Packer, Jan, and Roy Ballantyne. 2016. Conceptualizing the Visitor Experience: A Review of Literature and Development of a Multifaceted Model. *Visitor Studies* 19: 128–43. [CrossRef]
Paine, Crispin. 1999. *Godly Things: Museums, Objects and Religion*. London: Leicester University Press.
Paine, Crispin. 2013. *Religious Objects in Museums: Private Lives and Public Duties*. London and New York: Bloomsbury.
Paine, Crispin. 2019. Beyond Museums: Religion in Other Visitor Attractions. *ICOFOM Study Series* 47: 157–69. [CrossRef]
PCCHC (Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church). 2001. The Pastoral Function of Ecclesiastical Museums. Available online: https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_commissions/pcchc/documents/rc_com_pcchc_20010815_funzione-musei_en.html (accessed on 9 July 2022).
Pearce, Susan. 1994. Thinking about Things. In *Interpreting Objects and Collections*. Edited by Susan Pearce. London: Routledge, pp. 125–32.
Piana, Marco. 2020. Gods in the Garden: Visions of the Pagan Other in the Rome of Julius II. *Journal of Religion in Europe* 3: 285–309. [CrossRef]
Pope Paul VI. 1965. Gaudium et Spes. Available online: https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html (accessed on 9 July 2022).
Primerano, Domenica. 2020. Creare Comunità nel Tempo Sospeso della Pandemia. *Il Capitale Culturale: Per una Migliore Normalità e una Rinnovata Prossimità* 11: 213–29. [CrossRef]
Rivière, Georges Henri. 1989. *La Muséologie Selon Georges Henri Rivière: Cours de Muséologie: Textes et Témoignages*. Paris: Dunod.
Robinson, Helena. 2018. Curating Convergence: Interpreting Museum Objects in Integrated Collecting Institutions. *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 24: 520–38. [CrossRef]
Roque, Maria Isabel. 2011. *O Sagrado no Museu: Musealização de Objectos do Culto Católico em Contexto Português*. Lisboa: Universidade Católica Editora.
Roque, Maria Isabel. 2013. Exposer croyances et cultes: Les singularités de la muséologie de religion. In *Religion and Museums: Immaterial and Material Heritage*. Edited by Valeria Minucciani. Torino: Umberto Allemandi, pp. 24–36.
Roque, Maria Isabel. 2020. Museologia da Religião: Exposições Temporárias do Museu do Santuário de Fátima. *Transinformação* 32: e200029. [CrossRef]
Ross, David. 2020. Towards Meaningful Co-Creation: A Study of Creative Heritage Tourism in Alentejo, Portugal. *Current Issues in Tourism* 23: 2811–24. [CrossRef]
Rusnak, Marta. 2021. Eye-Tracking Support for Architects, Conservators, and Museologists: Anastylosis as Pretext for Research and Discussion. *Heritage Science* 9: 1–19. [CrossRef]
Sibilio, Barbara, and Antonio Matacena, eds. 2021. *I Musei Ecclesiastici: Proposte di Valorizzazione*. Milan: Franco Angeli.
Silverstone, Roger. 2006. The Sociology of Mediation and Communication. In *The SAGE Handbook of Sociology*. Edited by Craig Calhoun, Chris Rojek and Bryan S. Turner. London: SAGE Publications, pp. 188–207.
Simon, Nina. 2010. *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0.
Taylor, Johanna K., ed. 2020. *The Art Museum Redefined: Power, Opportunity, and Community Engagement*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
Thompson, Colin. 1994. The Role of the Museum in Interpretation: The Problem of Context. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 1: 40–51. [CrossRef]
Tigano, Marta. 2021. I Musei Ecclesiastici tra Salvaguardia della Memoria e Funzione Pastorale. *Il Diritto Ecclesiastico* 132: 49–73. [CrossRef]
UNESCO. 2003. Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Available online: https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention (accessed on 9 July 2022).

Valeri, Claudia. 2020. L'eredità Di Winckelmann Nella Percezione Dell'Antico e Il Trionfo Del Classicismo Nel Museo Pio Clementino in Vaticano. *Studi e Ricerche del Parco Archeologico di Pompei* 43: 73–86.

Vatican Council (2nd: 1962–1965: Basilica di San Pietro in Vaticano). 1963. Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. Available online: https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html (accessed on 9 July 2022).

Waterton, Emma, and Steve Watson. 2010. Heritage and Community Engagement: Collaboration or Contestation? *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16: 1–3. [CrossRef]

Waterton, Emma, and Steve Watson, eds. 2013. *Heritage and Community Engagement: Collaboration or Contestation?* London: Routledge.

Whitehead, Christopher. 2012. *Interpreting Art in Museums and Galleries*. London: Routledge.

Willis, Michael. 2015. Detritus to Treasure: Memory, Metonymy, and the Museum. In *Sacred Objects in Secular Spaces: Exhibiting Asian Religions*. Edited by Bruce M. Sullivan. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 145–52.

religions

MDPI

Article

Trade and the Mosque: An Investigation of Commercial Activities and Mosques in Antalya with Spatial, Legal and Functional Recommendations

Büşra Selin Kepenek [1], Engin Kepenek [2,*] and İbrahim Bakır [1]

[1] Department of Architecture, Architecture Faculty, Akdeniz University, Antalya 07070, Turkey
[2] Department of City and Regional Planning, Architecture Faculty, Akdeniz University, Antalya 07070, Turkey
* Correspondence: enginkepenek@akdeniz.edu.tr

Abstract: Expenditures, such as repair, heating and lighting costs, and payment of mosque staff's salaries, are the main cost items that need to be satisfied for mosques to continue their services. Throughout history, these expenses have been met sometimes with the state budget, sometimes through waqfs and associations, and sometimes with the cash aid provided by the people directly in Turkey. Adding a commercial function to the mosque, which was built for the sake of continuous income, has been seen in the history of Turkey since the Ottoman period. However, the commercial units dedicated to the mosque during this period were not always close to the mosque; sometimes they could also be located in very remote location. Today, a type of structure is built which can be called a trade and religious building in the lower floor of the mosque, or as a part of the same floor due to space shortage, cost reduction etc. This type of building, which was interpreted with different perspectives, caused problems in terms of perceptibility, ratio and proportion, visuality, accessibility, noise pollution, and the moral values of the mosque, and even became the subject of lawsuits for the closure of commercial functions. In this context, the commercial functions that the mosques added to the structure in order to find financial resources were examined throughout the city center of Antalya. Accordingly, the architectural projects and zoning status of the 15 identified mosques were examined, and a spatial and configuration analysis was made. The functionality of the mosques was discussed with the mosque community, its officials, and the people in the area close to the mosque via focus group discussions, and examples of the issue brought to the judiciary were examined.

Keywords: mosque and trade; sustainability of mosques; mosques in Antalya; mosque architecture; use of mosques

Citation: Kepenek, Büşra Selin, Engin Kepenek, and İbrahim Bakır. 2022. Trade and the Mosque: An Investigation of Commercial Activities and Mosques in Antalya with Spatial, Legal and Functional Recommendations. *Religions* 13: 958. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13100958

Academic Editors: Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges and Helena Albuquerque

Received: 3 August 2022
Accepted: 8 October 2022
Published: 12 October 2022

1. Introduction

In the early times of Islam, mosques were at the center of the city, along with cultural, social, political, and economic activities. They were the focal point of public settlements and also the center of all social life. Masjid an-Nabawi, also known as the Prophet's Mosque, sets an example for the construction of many mosques, and it is not only a place of worship, but also a management and education center where legal, commercial, and social issues are discussed, diplomatic receptions and meetings are held, the state treasury is protected, and religion is taught. The marketplace, which is thought to be an effective tool for inviting masses to Islam, is located close to the mosque at an appropriate distance (Koçyiğit 2013). When we look at the Seljuk period in Anatolian history, we see that the mosques fulfill more than one function, as in the Masjid an-Nabawi. Until assemblies and divans (high government ministries) were established, mosques served many functions, such as providing a place for discussing administrative matters, holding courts, preserving the state treasury, providing education, as well as functioning as gathering places, quarantine areas in cases of epidemic and immigration, and defense areas in case of war (Akın 2016). Similarly, it is known that the marketplace was located near the masjids in the Seljuks,

and those who came for the Friday prayer did their grocery shopping there (Hasan 1985). Likewise, Ottoman cities consisted of neighborhoods that developed around mosques and bazaars (Faroqhi 2000). The mosque, which is the focal point of this city system, is the main spatial element, and it undertakes functions beyond its religious purpose and the services gathered around it (Cerasi 1999). This system reached its peak with the kulliyes.

"Kulliye", meaning a group of buildings consisting two or more units with different functions, is derived from the Arabic word "Kulli", which began to be seen during the Seljuk period in Anatolia; it became widespread in the period of Beyliks and was one of the main institutions of the Ottoman culture (Haştemoğlu and Kepenek 2018) The kulliye, the focal point of which are mosques and madrasas, include units, such as infants' schools, public baths, public fountains, caravanserai, and bazaars. Income generating shops, land, and residences are included in the kulliye. The trade function that the mosque offers near or within itself is not only due to its spatial setup, but also it is function as a revenue source designed to satisfy the service, maintenance, and repair expenses of the mosques and social services (Cezar 1985) There are examples of mosques located in kulliye and adjacent to or near commercial buildings, such as bazaars, marketplaces, and covered bazaars built for this purpose (Figures 1–3).

(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 1. (**a**) Isparta Firdevs Bey Mosque and its covered bazaar (bedesten); the mosque and commercial unit are located close to each other (**b**) Tokat Takyeciler Mosque and its covered bazaar; the mosque and commercial unit are located adjacent to each other.

(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 2. (**a**) İzmir Başdurak Mosque is located at the lower level of the large-scale commercial unit (**b**) Afyon Yoncaaltı Mosque, where small-scale commercial units are located at the lower level.

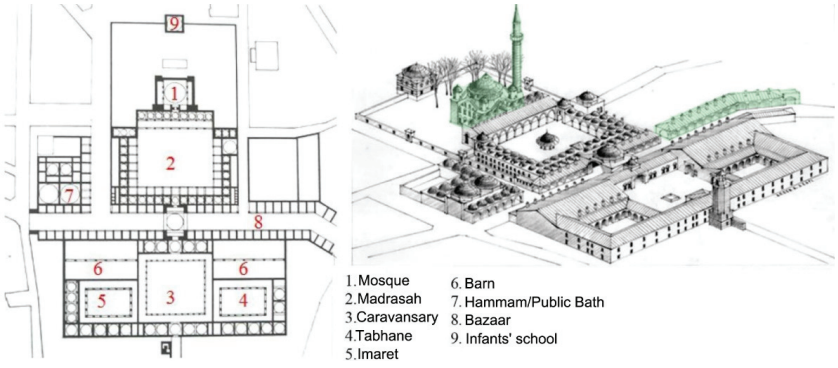


Figure 3. Sokullu Mehmet Paşa Külliyesi, with the colored areas indicating the mosque and commercial buildings (adapted with permission from Necipoğlu 2005).

In the period between 1923 and 1950, which came after the establishment of the Republic, a new state was built, and all institutions were restructured. The new state that was established needed new buildings but, due to economic problems and the scarcity of building materials, they could not be built, and the existing buildings were used for functions that were deemed necessary (Obuz 2017). In the following years, with the industrialization movements of Turkey, a rapid migration from the village to the city started. Intense population growth caused unzoned urbanization and irregular construction and, therefore, the number of mosques, which were compressed in the dense urban fabric, increased rapidly. Mosques tended to integrate with their sub-units rather than the surrounding units. For the visibility of the mosque, functions, such as a bazaar and a car park, were added to the lower floor by raising the mass (Duysak 2000). Mosques, which started to undertake different additional functions in line with both financial and environmental needs and trends, have been interpreted with different perspectives within the society, administration, and laws, and have become a subject of discussion. Discussions were not limited to the spirituality of mosques, but developed in many ways, such as urban rent, deterioration of functionality, and proportional imbalances between the building and its surroundings. This situation is seen not only in mosques built by the public, but also in mosques built by the state. The Kocatepe Mosque program, which stands out as the largest mosque project to be built in the Republican era, includes a place of worship, a courtyard, offices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, a library, a conference hall, commercial offices, administrative units, and parking lot (Türkiye Diyanet Foundation 2016). The fact that there is a supermarket under the mosque paved the way for the trade and religious buildings including the small place of worship (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Ankara Kocatepe Mosque.

In Turkey, the Directorate of Religious Affairs does not have a legal function or responsibility regarding the construction of mosques; it only appoints and supervises personnel if it is deemed appropriate for existing mosques. Meeting the need for mosques was left to the public through waqfs and associations, so it led to the emergence of structures that were not original, could not meet the public's needs, and which were forced to evolve differently at later periods. Projects presented as solutions to solve these problems have led to different architectural debates on several topics, such as identity and style. The number of financial discussions about mosques is rather limited. Among them, Onay's 2009 study entitled "Financing Mosques from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic" investigated the roles of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, waqfs, associations, municipalities, and the public on mosques, and researched which individuals or institutions covered the mosque's expenses. Dağcı (2010) conducted a survey with religious officials, revealing that 37.7% said that the mosque renovations could not be carried out due to financial difficulties, and that 23.5% stated that they had problems, saying "it is not easy to raise money". Kaçar (2020) offered an alternative solution with the work of the Directorate of Religious Affairs Mosque Construction and Maintenance Fund Budget and Accounting System, as it was determined that the construction of mosques and the meeting of their expenses on a voluntary basis, where and how the donor wanted, caused some aesthetic and security issues, along with inability to meet the mosque's needs. This solution is about creating a fund and giving all responsibility to the Directorate of Religious Affairs. Today, a combination of mosques and commercial units is regarded as a solution to the financial problems of mosques. In this study, we explored the results of this preferred solution, attempting to reveal the current relationship between commercial units and mosques and seeking out solutions for the issues complicating the matter.

2. Evaluation of Mosque Fund Management

Expenditures, such as construction, repair, heating and lighting costs, and payment of mosque staff's salaries are the main cost items that need to be satisfied for mosques to continue their service. Throughout history, these expenses have been sometimes met with the state budget, sometimes with the rent or crop income of real estate, such as fields and shops, by giving income to the mosque, and sometimes with cash aid provided directly by the public (Yediyıldız 1982). Today, associations continue their activities in line with this purpose

Onay (2009) listed the expenses in three different groups in his study on the financing of mosques, as follows:

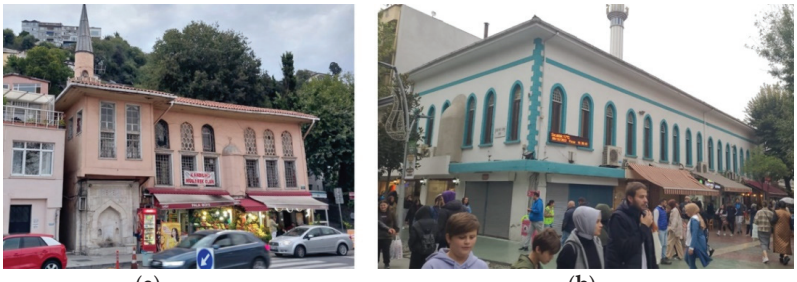
1. Construction and repair costs of mosques;
2. Salary expenses of mosque staff;
3. Other expenses, such as heating, lighting, water, cleaning, and fixture maintenance.

Covering the expenses of mosques differs according to the construction of mosques both in the Ottoman period and in the Republican period. During the Ottoman period, the expenses of the mosques, such as heating and lighting, were covered by the income generating sections in fused and annexed waqfs, while the expenses of the mosques that had no such income were generally covered by the general public. However, in case of financial difficulties, mosque expenses were paid with financial aid received from the treasury.

Waqfs are institutions of philanthropy and a type of spirituality pious icon in İslamic cities. Many services required in the city, such as religious and cultural services, education services, health services, infrastructure and public works, social security and support services, and philanthropy services, have been provided through funds established as waqfs (Çöteli 2016). The commercial sources (revenue sources), which were built in detail with the waqf system in the Ottoman period, sometimes located on different floors of the mosque structure and sometimes as independent structures from the mosque, started to be built on the lower floor for reasons, such as space shortages, in order to generate income for the mosque and its association (Figures 5–8).

(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 5. (**a**) Altıntaş Mosque, Balıkesir; (**b**) Piri Türkistan Mosque, Ankara.



(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 6. (**a**) Tezkireci Osman Efendi Mosque, İstanbul; (**b**) Şerefiye Mosque, Sakarya.

(**a**) (**b**)

Figure 7. (**a**) Sokullu Mehmet Paşa Mosque, İstanbul; (**b**) Söğütlü Mosque, Malatya.

(**a**) (**b**) (**c**)

Figure 8. (**a**) Eminettin Mosque, Rize; (**b**) Tepecik Aksa Mosque, İstanbul; (**c**) Derince Yeni Merkez Mosque, Kocaeli.

The mosque management resorts to various methods, such as collecting donations from the congregation to meet their expenses, generating rental income by building commercial units, such as shops under the mosque, and charging fees for toilet use. According to the regulation on mosques, masjids, and Quran school outbuildings, published by the Directorate of Religious Affairs dated 2014 and numbered 28,893, 10% of the gross revenue of the mosques generated in such ways must be paid as the Directorate's share. It was decided that two-thirds of the remaining amount should be allocated to mosque expenses, and the remainder should be left to the relevant associations or waqfs, provided that they are used for the purposes specified in their statutes or endowment or waqf deed. According to the same regulation, the tasks of a five-person commission, chaired by the mufti in each province and district and consisting of a preacher, auditor, imam, and the head of the association or a waqf representative, include detection of mosques, masjids, or Quran schools built through their own resources or donations collected, identification of commercial or religious uses of supplementary parts of these structures, and allocation of revenues from these buildings, after the president's share is deducted, to the association or waqf for mosque expenses (Presidency of Religious Affairs 2014) However, not every mosque has an income source from its commercial units. Currently, the repair, maintenance, cleaning, environmental arrangement, lighting, water needs, and security expenses of mosques and masjids are covered by the Directorate of Religious Affairs. Electricity expenses for the lighting of such places are covered by the appropriation allocated from the budget of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, while heating and cooling expenses belong to the mosque administration and mosque associations. However, mosques often experience problems in meeting such expenses. The news stories about power cuts in mosques, such as Said Nursi Mosque in Gaziantep (Koçyiğit 2013), Yeşil Kubbe Mosque in Diyarbakir (İlkha 2022), and Solakzade Mosque in Erzurum (Zirve 2022), which also offers Quran learning courses, have been in the headlines of various newspapers. Likewise, the news that the electricity meters of the historical Yavuz Sultan Selim Mosque in Istanbul were also removed due to unpaid electricity debt and its subscription was canceled (NTV 2022) confirms that the remaining expenses could not be met.

3. Material and Method

Antalya, the fifth most populous city in Turkey, is also among the top 10 cities with the highest number of mosques in Turkey (Presidency of Religious Affairs 2021). There are contradictions in the conformity of mosques to the zoning plans, their configuration, and their functioning, as is the case throughout Turkey. All mosques in Antalya where the mosque and trade function coexist have been selected as the examination universe.

In the spatial analysis, we examined the distribution of the mosques hosting the trade function in the city center of Antalya, the common and differentiating points in the site selections, and how the surrounding land-use decisions were defined in the 1/1000 and 1/5000 scaled zoning plans and plan notes, the defined functions in other social and technical infrastructure areas, and the relationship with residential areas.

In the analyses conducted in terms of formation, the architectural projects obtained from the relevant municipality and the current use cases were compared, and the changes in the spatial organization were determined by adding a different function.

In the study, the "focus group interview" (FGI), one of the qualitative research methods, was preferred in order to determine the opinions of the mosque staff, the mosque congregation, and the people of the region living close to the mosque. The purpose of the FGI is to create a positive platform that creates a wealth of content from various perspectives, ideas, and assessments (Baş and Akturan 2008). According to Krueger (1994), the purpose of focus group interviews is not to make sense, but to understand; not to generalize, but to describe diversity; not to explain about the participants, but to reveal how the participants perceive the situation. In addition, since there are willing participants in these interviews, involuntary participation in research is also prevented. The reason why

this method is chosen for the study is to observe the user experience of the community that uses redundant or required functions that are added to mosques.

According to the data of 2021, 1,462,129 people live in Antalya City Center. There are 518 mosques serving this population. Among the 518 mosques, 15 mosques with a commercial function in the same structure were examined. All mosques in Antalya where the mosque and trade function coexist have been selected as the examination universe. In each mosque, semi-structured questions were applied to groups of 4–10 people; usability, satisfaction, and function evaluations were made. Since the aim was not to generalize, the answers given were not presented in percentages. The keywords were determined by considering the "word and sentence frequencies" in each theme and were analyzed by taking the "descriptive summary" data evaluation of (Krueger 1994) as a guide. Since the study was conducted during the pandemic period, it was important to conduct as many group interviews as possible, rather than a specific sample rate. While this rate is approximately 50% in mosques with a small congregation, it has decreased to approximately 10% in mosques with a large congregation. The prepared forms were applied to 448 people, 20% of the average total congregation.

The ethics approval permission required for the focus group interviews was obtained from the Science and Engineering Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Akdeniz University.

Finally, by examining the cases brought to the judiciary authorities and the processes of the lawsuits filed against the administration in the province of Antalya, we discuss how the local administrative judiciary and the Council of State view the issue, which will set a precedent in the future.

3.1. Spatial Analysis of Mosques

Fifteen examples of mosques with trade functions in Antalya were identified with the help of municipalities and mufti offices. Ten of these mosques are located in Kepez District, four in Muratpaşa District, and one in Aksu District. When the general distribution of mosques was examined, it was seen that they were concentrated in the west of Antalya. There is no concrete reason why the choice of location is concentrated in the west of Antalya; however, the mosques with commercial units are located in areas with a common socio-economic structure (Figure 9).

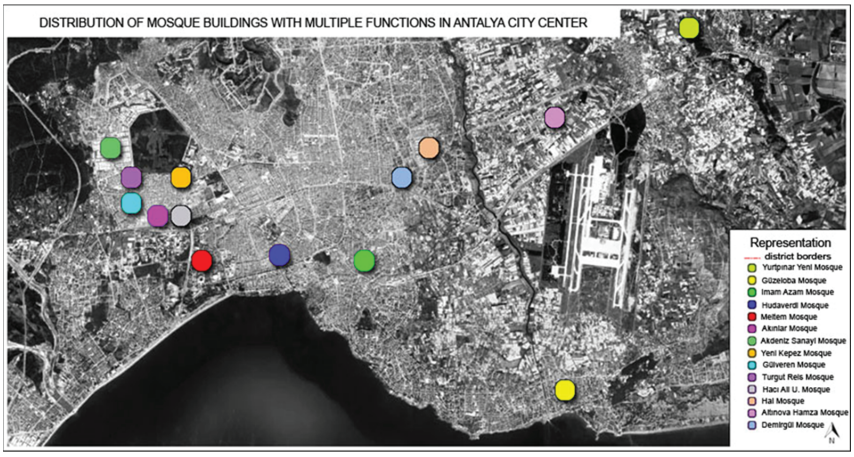


Figure 9. Distribution of mosques with trade functions in Antalya city center.

When the general land use of the immediate surroundings of the mosques within the scope of the study is examined, the three mosques differ from the others. These are Akdeniz Sanayi Mosque, Hal Mosque, and Yurtpınar Mosque. Akdeniz Sanayi Mosque

is located within the industrial area, close to regions focused on trade and socio-cultural practices, as well as park areas. Hal Mosque, on the other hand, is located in the Antalya Wholesale Market, in the area where the reinforcement areas serving the market tradesmen and commercial activities are located. Both mosques serve the surrounding working areas, rather than the residential areas. Among the mosques examined within the scope of the study, the other mosque that differs in environmental construction and land-use is the Yurtpınar mosque. The Yurtpınar mosque is located in residential areas with low-density rural settlements with greenhouses and cultivated agricultural lands. The common feature of the mosques with a commercial function other than these three mosques is that they are situated in the region where there are dense residential areas. In addition to being located in residential areas, most of the mosques are located in trade-intensive areas and on axes.

Evaluation of the mosques in our sample according to the zoning plan conditions showed that only 2 of the 15 mosques had a commercial function. Only one of the mosques was suitable for zoning plans due to reasons, such as function, drawing distance, additional structure, and high precedents. The common features of the examined mosques in their zoning plans were as follows:

1. They were located in the dense housing texture, in the range of 0.60–1.50;
2. All but one were located on axes defined as trade or optional trade;
3. All but one were located on local distributor or district distributor axes with a width of over 15 m.

In the Spatial Plans Construction Regulation (2014), mosques were grouped into three different classes in terms of their scale. These are the small place of worship, the medium (district) place of worship, and the large place of worship and its complex. Among the mosques with trade function in the same building, only Hüdaverdi Mosque falls into the small mosque class. All of the remaining mosques with trade functions were at the scale of district mosques.

3.2. Analysis of Mosques in Terms of Configuration

The construction permit information could only be accessed for 3 of the 15 mosques with commercial functions due to reasons, such as the lack of projects in the relevant municipalities and mufti offices, or because they date from before official record-keeping began. These are the Güzeloba, Akdeniz Sanayi, and Imam Azam mosques.

3.2.1. Analysis of Güzeloba Mosque in Terms of Configuration

As retrieved from the archives of Muratpaşa Municipality, the Güzeloba Mosque's layout plan includes only the mosque itself (Figure 10). The toilets and living quarters accommodating the mosque personnel, which is under construction in the north of the mosque, are not included in the layout plan, and the parking areas in the south and south-west of the mosque are not available.

When the floor plans were examined, we detected that the shops on the south side of the mosque were not included in the licensed architectural projects (Figure 11).

Figure 12 shows the south façade in the construction permit of the mosque and the current use. In the floor plans and sections of the construction permit, where the shops are located, there was Quran school for women, a condolence house, and a multi-purpose hall. Quran learning activities were taking place in a different part of the mosque.

During the architectural project in the Güzeloba mosque, it was observed that the market and glassware units had problems, such as loading goods, since no solution was offered for the service needs of the businesses. In addition, the expansion of the trade units towards the mosque garden could not be prevented, and the marketplace image was formed by the exhibition of the products sold up to the garden wall, causing a negative appearance in terms of urban aesthetics (Figure 13).

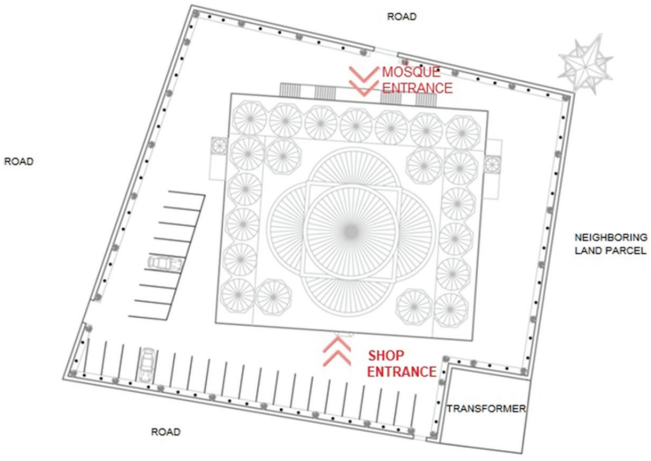


Figure 10. Layout plan of Güzeloba Mosque.

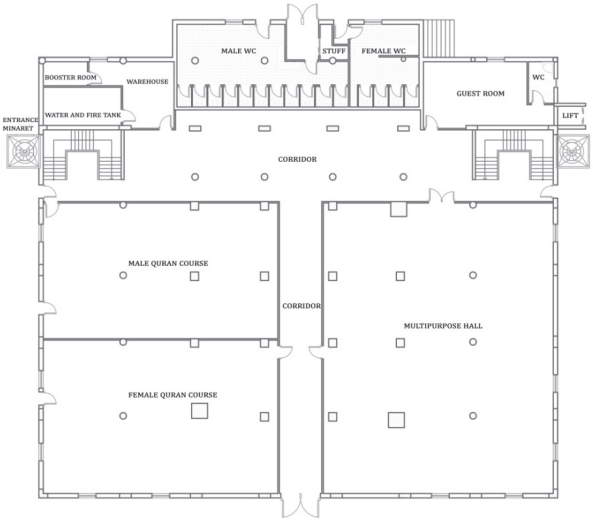


Figure 11. Basement floor plan of Guzeloba Mosque.

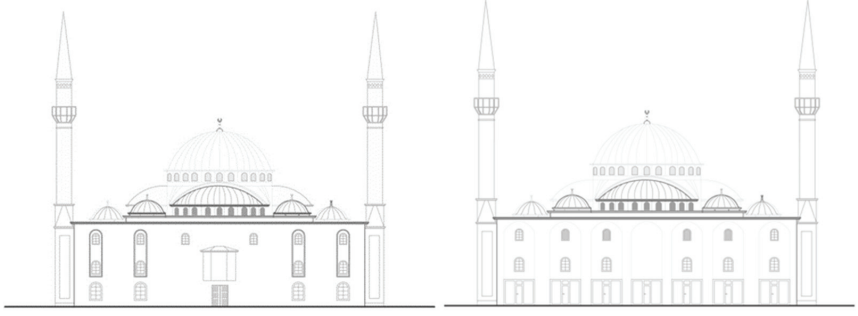


Figure 12. The Guzeloba Mosque's south façade, drawn in the construction permit/south façade in the current use.

Figure 13. The Guzeloba Mosque's south façade drawn in the construction permit/south façade in the current use.

3.2.2. Analysis of the Imam Azam Mosque in Terms of Configuration

Imam Azam Mosque was built in 1994. The first change took place in 1998 with the addition of a minaret to the structure. Later, living quarters for mosque staff and a Quran school building were added. According to the site plan included in the construction permit received from the relevant municipality, all additions were made by ignoring the building approach distances (Figure 14).

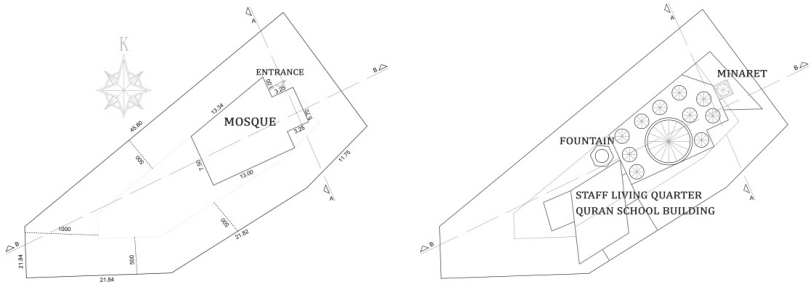


Figure 14. Layout plan for the construction permit of Imam Azam Mosque and its current status.

In the plans included in the construction permit, the fountain was built adjacent to the north wall, but a separate mass was added in the construction permit where the fountain was located. With the minaret added to the mosque, a separate section was created by closing the northeast side (Figure 15).

The commercial unit of Imam Azam Mosque is located on the ground floor of the building, which was built adjacent to the mosque structure. Although it is thought that it will not have a negative effect on the mosque because it is in a different structure, the structure in which the commercial unit is located affects the perception of the mosque in terms of its dimensions and has negative effects as a result (Figure 16). Furthermore, additional structures appear to cause aesthetic defects through their added functions without a plan and project.

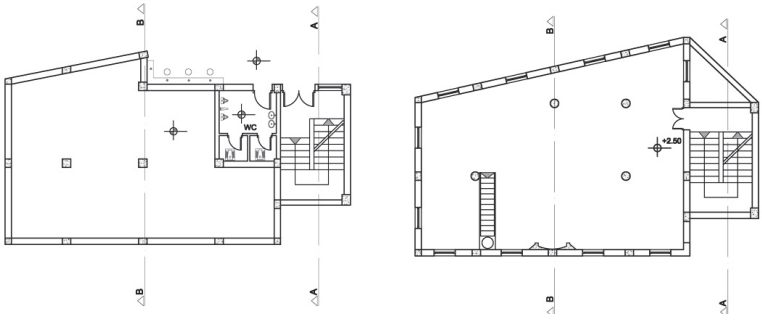


Figure 15. The Imam Azam Mosque's ground floor plan in the permit and ground floor plan in practice.

Figure 16. The Imam Azam Mosque and additional buildings.

3.2.3. Analysis of Akdeniz Sanayi Mosque in Terms of Configuration

According to the layout plan in the construction permit (Figure 17), there was no difference in the placement of the mosque or the outbuildings in Akdeniz Sanayi Mosque. The fountain and toilet units were shown in the layout plan and were built in the place indicated therein. However, it was determined that an extra floor was added to the building mass determined as public toilet and this additional floor was used as living quarters by the mosque staff.

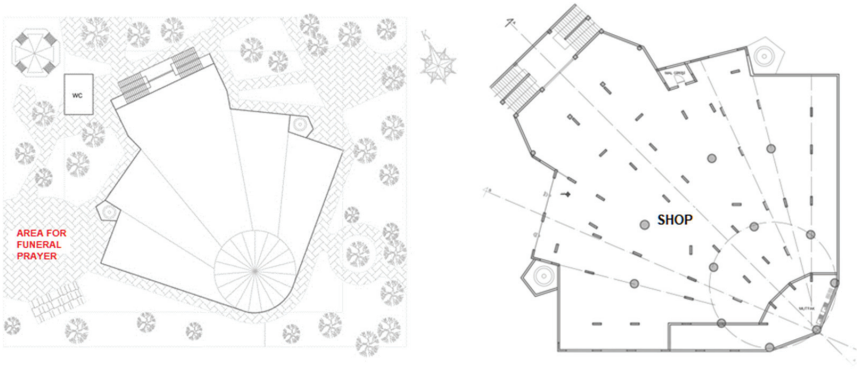


Figure 17. The Akdeniz Sanayi Mosque's layout and ground floor plan.

The plans and sections of the construction permit of the Akdeniz Sanayi Mosque show that there are kitchen and shop units on the ground floor, and there is an imam room next to the muezzin platform (mahfil), as well as pulpit and altar sections on the first floor (Figures 17 and 18). It was the only mosque where the commercial function was included in the architectural projects among the mosques whose construction permits we were able to find.

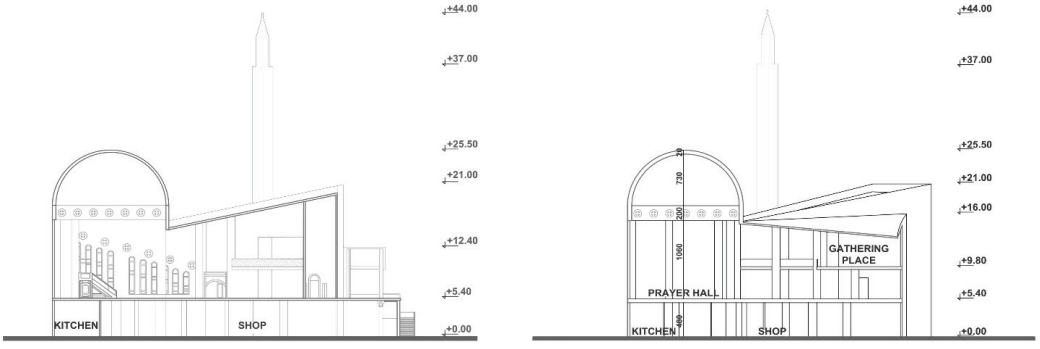


Figure 18. The Akdeniz Sanayi Mosque A-A and B-B sections.

3.3. Analysis of Mosques in Terms of Functionality

Ideally, within the scope of the determined time, each group interview was kept between 1–2 h and each participant was given 10–15 min. Groups consisted of 4–9 people, and interviews were carried out in the presence of a moderator who is an expert in the field. The analysis of the data recorded with the voice recorder focused on the differences in individual thoughts rather than numerical data, without quantifying the results. In the focus group interviews with the appropriate number of participants varying from 4 to 10 in each mosque, the discourses of the participants were conveyed in their own words. As the first theme, inquiries were made about the attitudes of people towards other functions beings added to mosques, obtaining information about whether they use the added functions and whether there is any unit they would like to have. In the second theme, it the participants were informed about the income and expenses of the mosque, and they were expected to make up their minds about the solution to the expense problems. In the third theme, questions based on obtaining information about the usability and functionality of the trade function added to the mosque were asked. Each theme was analyzed by taking into account the "word and sentence frequencies".

The problems and expectations identified with keywords related to adding a function to the mosque, which were addressed as the first theme, are as follows:

1. The added function is not sufficient for attracting more people to the mosque;
2. Creating accessibility problems to the place of prayer;
3. The necessity of units that will ensure the continuous use of mosques;
4. The added function creates the need for additional mosque staff.

The problems and expectations regarding the mosque expenses, which are covered as the second theme, are given as follows:

1. Mosque staff constantly asking for monetary donations after Friday and Eid prayers;
2. Insecurity about where the donations for mosques are spent;
3. Mosques not having enough income to manage themselves;
4. If mosques have enough income to manage themselves, it is thought that this income is more than it should be.

The usability of the trade function, which was treated as the third theme, was examined. The problems thought to be caused by this function are listed as follows:

1. Commercial units considered unsuitable are brought under the roof of the mosque;
2. Perceptibility of the mosque;
3. ismatch between ratio and proportion;
4. Visual deterioration caused by building features, such as signage and banners;
5. Building features, such as the entrance to the warehouse being in the same place as the entrance to the mosque;
6. Accessibility problems caused by arranging the commercial function on the lower floor and taking the mosque to the upper floor;
7. The concern that trade function corrupts the spiritual nature of the mosque;
8. The concern that sound and noise disturb the peace and quiet atmosphere.

3.4. Analysis of Mosques in Terms of Legal Grounds

Regarding the Meltem Mosque, one of the mosques examined within the scope of the study, a lawsuit has been filed against the decision of the council of the Antalya Metropolitan Municipality to add a planning note that "Commercial uses may take place under the mosque building within the planning area. The first Administrative Court decided unanimously to reject the lawsuit filed by Muratpaşa Municipality, deciding that the commercial function was architecturally compatible with the mosque, environmental factors were not adversely affected in its current situation, and that it was in accordance with the principles of urban planning, planning principles, and public interest.

After an appeal, the case was heard at the Konya Regional Administrative Court. The court of appeal approved the prior decision of the local court by a unanimous vote, stating that the decision of the local court and the reasoning on which it was based were in accordance with the law and procedure, and that there was no reason for the annulment of the decision. The judge of the Konya Regional Administrative Court, who voted against the decision, stated that the current regulation describes which buildings and outbuildings can be built within the scope of the place of worship, that trade was not a worship to be performed within the scope of a religious facility, that trade was not a religious service that will benefit people, and that the transaction that includes a business within the scope of a religious facility was contrary to the provisions of the current regulation. Due to the application to the highest administrative court in Turkey (the Council of State) following that decision by the court of appeal, the judicial process regarding the matter is still ongoing.

Akınlar Mosque, which is located within the boundaries of the Kultur Mahallesi of the Kepez district, is another mosque examined within the scope of the study. In the Antalya 4th Administrative Court, a firm has filed a lawsuit against the Kepez and Antalya Metropolitan Municipality, which has taken a decision to reject the 1/1000 scaled implementation development plan change proposal in order to bring a decision on "optional trade" and to add planning notes to the mosque area. In its defense, the Kepez Municipality stated that "the plaintiff's request was rejected as there was no benefit in its implementation since the current regional needs, planning principles and public interest were taken into account, and it was not in accordance with the demands of the people in the surrounding area". The experts whom the Antalya 4th Administrative Court consulted in the resolution of the dispute differed in opinion and prepared reports in different directions. The Antalya 4th Administrative Court accepted it as worthy of decision, although there was an annotation in the expert's report, and decided that there was no harm in having a commercial unit under the mosque. While the Antalya Metropolitan Municipality decided to have a commercial function under the Meltem Mosque, Akınlar Mosque became the defendant in a similar situation and took a stance to make a contrary decision.

In the lawsuits filed for the settlement of the dispute between the parties regarding the use of a mosque and a commercial unit together, the local courts were often observed to decide in favor of commercial units of mosques. However, when the process was examined in detail, we saw that the local courts, the courts of appeal, and the 6th Chamber of the Supreme Court, the Council of State, gave different decisions on the same issue, and even the judges who gave the verdict in the court decisions could not make their decisions

unanimously. It is clearly understood that the uncertainty experienced in the judicial process is not only between the parties, but also between the experts in the subject matter and the judges giving the verdict. This further emphasizes the importance of our study, and that the issue in question concerns the whole society and, thus, needs to be clarified and solved.

4. Findings and Discussion

Mosques are the spatial equivalent of Muslims' culture, belief, and worship. As a structure, they have undergone a considerable change throughout history in terms of material, space organization, plan elements, and understanding. As Oral (1993) points out, the mosque, which has existed as a "multifunctional building" for a long time in history, has emerged as an "independent element" with the Republican period. The commercial function added to this independent element is controversial in terms of planning, architecture, and legal and social aspects. The literature review we carried out within the scope of the study revealed that the use of mosques with different functions has existed since the first mosques, and that it is also in close relationship with commercial activities; however, this relationship began to be seen within the mosque during the Ottoman period.

Among the mosques with a commercial function in our sample, 10 are located in Kepez District, 4 in Muratpaşa District, and 1 in Aksu District. Considering the general distribution of mosques, we observe that they are concentrated in the west of Antalya. Although there is no concrete reason for the concentration of site selection in this region, it could have occurred as a response to the demands made to the administration due to the socio-economic structure of the Kepez district.

A thorough analysis could not be performed on the configuration of mosques due to several reasons, such as there being no available architectural projects in the archives of the relevant municipality. The mosques whose projects we managed to find from the Muratpaşa, Kepez and Aksu municipalities and mufti offices were the Akdeniz Sanayi, Güzeloba, and Imam Azam mosques. The existing drawings indicated that the commercial function of the Akdeniz Sanayi Mosque was included in the project and solutions suitable for trade were devised. However, non-functional changes were made in this mosque as a result of the mosque staff's desire to be close to the mosque, by adding a residence later. Some problems were encountered when the mosque plans, which were made without considering all the services to be provided, came to the practice stage, and then attempts were made to solve these problems. The current uses, which were not in the project, were mostly living quarters where the imam resides, the Quran school buildings, and the conversion of a part of the mosque into a commercial unit in order to derive income from rents. Since the commercial section was located on the ground floor and the entrance–exit arrangements were not fully resolved, it caused accessibility problems. Subsequent changes or additions to the structure caused inconsistency in terms of functionality, configuration, and aesthetics.

In the functionality analysis conducted to define diversity in the focus group interviews, it was determined that the problems caused by the functions added to the mosque depended on different variables (Figure 19). The trading function created a problem primarily because users thought that the spirituality dimension was negatively affected. The presence of such a unit in a holy place where people come to worship affects some of the congregation and causes them to even change the mosque they regularly attend. The mass that continues to come to the mosque is affected by the type of trade function, its size, location, and the income it earns.

Related to the type of trade function, the users of the mosque wanted units, such as tea houses, to serve the congregation, but they were uncomfortable with the conversion of units that work independently of the mosque and which are rented out only for the purpose of generating income. Some of the users stated that there should be shops where materials, such as religious books and pilgrimage materials should be sold, but they did not find it appropriate to include businesses incompatible with religious content. There

are those who think that small-scale businesses, such as grocery stores, greengrocers, and pharmacies may exist, but it would be wrong to turn them into branded supermarkets.

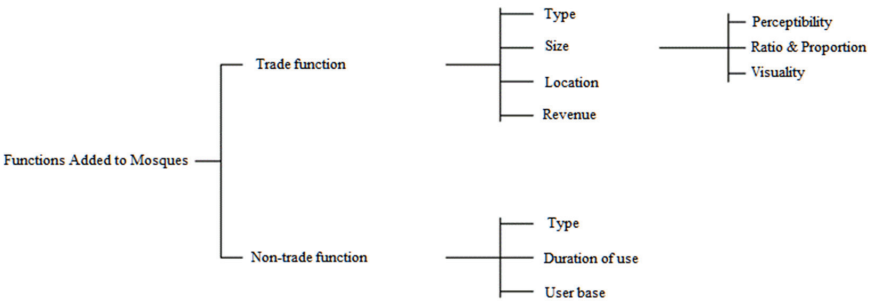
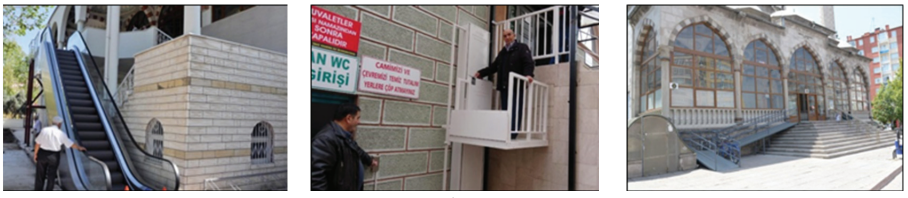


Figure 19. Variables for functions added to the mosques.

It was determined that the function of the commercial unit, which is integrated into the mosques, created problems for the users in terms of compatibility with the religious structure, perceptibility, ratio and proportion, and visuality. Besides those who think that it is morally unacceptable for the size of the trade function to override the perception of the mosque, there are some who think that if the mosque did not have a minaret and a dome, it would be completely detached from the definition of a mosque. Users generally argue that if a trade function is to be added, it should be constructed in a proportional size that does not exceed the mosque, and that it should not be forgotten that the main building is a mosque. In addition, it is a common problem expressed by both the mosque users and the people of the region that the signs, posters, and banners of businesses, as well as door and window joinery that are not suitable for the structure, create an aesthetically defective image in the mosque.

The functionality of the building is affected due to the fact that the commercial units are at different elevations and facades than the congregation entrances. First of all, taking the mosque to the upper floor and placing the commercial units on the lower floor creates accessibility problems for elderly and disabled people to go upstairs. If this problem was not considered during the project phase, other solutions were sought by mosque associations, municipal aid, the mufti office, or the community as much as possible (Figure 20). It was observed that the commercial functions are on the same front with the entrance of the congregation, and that the service units used by the commercial units disturb the mosque community. These problems are generally experienced with trucks approaching warehouse entrances, stacked parcels blocking the way, and this creates problems for the mosque community, because there are places where those who do not use the mosque have a common entrance and exit door.



(**a**) (**b**) (**c**)

Figure 20. (**a**) Meltem Mosque, escalator solution; (**b**) Green Mosque, elevator solution; (**c**) Melikgazi Mosque, ramp solution.

In summary, in terms of functionality, the commercial units deemed necessary by the mosque management for its self-management were received negatively by the community

depending on the variables involved; these variables affect the reaction of the public in line with the type, size, location, and earnings of the commercial unit. Social functions other than the commercial function added to the structure are generally found to be positive; the negative aspects of the functions vary with the duration of use, user base, and type of use.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Different functions brought to the mosques cause other problems in essence, and each problem can be prevented by specific arrangements. Separate evaluations were made for each title of the multi-faceted examination conducted within the scope of the study.

5.1. Spatial Recommendations

It was determined that the mosques had a trade function to provide commercial income by taking advantage of their location rather than by providing services within their sphere of influence. We observed that these mosques, which were positively differentiated from other mosques on the basis of providing commercial benefits, chose a location on the axes where local and district distributors had commercial functions, as a common site selection decision. The recommendations are listed as follows:

1. The principle of equality of planning must be applied in this regard. Along with the necessary architectural solutiions, mosques with similar spatial characteristics should benefit from this positive separation. This can only be achieved wih plan notes in a way that will affect entire plan;
2. According to the equality principle of planning, defining an additional commercial function to each mosque with certain spatial characteristics will lead to religious facility areas that are far from public and have no identity. For this reason, if the commercial function is to be defined for the mosque areas, this decision should be made by making the necessary architectural solutions at the project stage and making the necessary inferences for public spaces on the zoning plans, rather than later;
3. It should not be forgotten that mosques are social reinforcement areas for the general public, even if they provide architectural solutions as well as road width, surrounding density, trade presence along the road, and environmental land-use decisions;
4. In mosque areas, which are part of public areas, such as parks and public service areas, the proposal of a trade function that will disrupt the blue–green historical continuity should be avoided, despite the higher possibility of generating income.

5.2. Configuration Recommendations

The majority of the mosques we examined were built without considering all the functions to be provided, and the mosque sections were changed later as a solution. In this context, the following must be considered:

1. Before starting the construction of the mosque, all functions that it will provide should be decided in a way that does not conflict with the worship function;
2. Participation of competent people, especially architects and engineers, in the planning and construction process should be mandatory;
3. Other functions provided by the mosque should not be in front of the mosque, and certain standards should be maintained in terms of size and proportion;
4. The inputs and outputs of different functions should be designed in such a way that users do not disturb each other. If possible, this should be provided from different elevations and facades or, if not, with alternative "architectural solutions".

5.3. Functionality Recommendations

As in every architectural structure, user experiences have been used as a criterion, since the comments of the users of the mosque structure are important in determining the deficiencies of the structures, improving them, and developing the architectural typology. In the interviews, it was determined that the expectations of the mosque officials and the community were different, especially in terms of the commercial function. The suggestions

made at this stage, where accessibility, aesthetic, and spirituality problems are seen, are as follows:

1. The functions to be provided should be compatible with the changing social structure, opportunities, and needs;
2. The locations of different users of other functions should be arranged so that they do not disturb each other;
3. In cases where the mosque is placed at an elevation, solutions, such as escalators and elevators for the elderly and disabled, should be included in the project;
4. A service entry must be created for commercial functions. A service entrance is an important unit that provides service without occupying the main entrance, provides business functions, such as inputs and outputs of necessary materials and workforce, the removal of wastes, and goods loading. It also needs to be connected to the road;
5. Elements of commercial functions, such as signs and posters, should not be allowed on the mosque structure. Trademarks should be placed in standards and sizes determined by the state, ensuring perceptibility and without disturbing the aesthetics of the mosque.

5.4. Legal Recommendations

1. In the Planned Areas Zoning Regulation and Spatial Plans Construction Regulation, the qualities and nature of the buildings and outbuildings that can be built in the religious facility area are clearly stated. There is no use describing the commercial function between these structures and outbuildings. For this reason, necessary corrections should be made in the regulations in order to make the judicial decisions healthier;
2. When the judicial decisions are examined in detail, it is seen that different courts can give different decisions and that the judges in the same court cannot reach a consensus. For this reason, the subject should not only be addressed in the planned areas zoning regulation and spatial plans building regulation, but an implementation regulation for religious facility areas should be created in more detail;
3. Since the decisions taken in the lawsuits filed on the subject are site-specific, an approach in the form of a precedent decision should not be taken, and the judiciary authorities should always impose an examination with an expert panel consisting of experts in planning and architecture.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, B.S.K., E.K. and İ.B.; formal analysis, B.S.K., E.K.; investigation, E.K.; methodology, B.S.K. and E.K.; resources, B.S.K. and İ.B.; supervision, B.S.K.; and Writing—original draft, B.S.K. and E.K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Research Ethics Approval no. 01.09.2022/442040 as issued by the Science and Engineering Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Akdeniz University.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, Kepenek E., upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

Akın, Ahmet. 2016. Tarihi Süreç Içinde Cami Ve Fonksiyonları Üzerine Bir Deneme. *Hitit Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 15: 177–209.

Baş, Türker, and Ulun Akturan. 2008. *Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.

Cerasi, Maurice. M. 1999. *Osmanlı Kenti*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, p. 375.

Cezar, Mustafa. 1985. *Tipik Yapılarıyla Osmanlı Şehirciliğinde Çarşı ve Klasik Dönem İmar Sistemi*. İstanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi Yayınları, p. 422.
Çöteli, Methiye Gül. 2016. İslam Kentinde Vakıfların Ticaret Bölgesinin Oluşumu Üzerine Etkisi: Hayrat-Akar Ilişkisinin Döngüsel doğası. *Vakıflar Dergisi* 45: 1–20.
Dağcı, Tahir. 2010. Kırsal kesimde görev yapan din görevlilerinin sorunları—Akşehir, Ilgın ve Doğanhisar örneği. Master's thesis, Selçuk University, Konya, Turkey, p. 143.
Duysak, Nazan. 2000. 20. Yüzyıl Türkiye'sinde Cami Tasarımı ve Geleneksel Cami. Master's thesis, İstanbul Technical University, İstanbul, Turkey, p. 106.
Faroqhi, Suraiva. 2000. *Osmanlı'da Kent ve Kentliler*. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, p. 457.
Hasan, İbrahim Hasan. 1985. *İslam Tarihi*. İstanbul: Fatih Yayınevi, p. 7000.
Haştemoğlu, Hasan, and Engin Kepenek. 2018. The Architecture of Mevlevi Buildings, One of the Dervish Houses in the Ottoman Geography. *The Academic Research Community Publication* 2: 278–89. [CrossRef]
İlkha. 2022. İlkha News Home Page. Available online: https://ilkha.com/guncel/dicle-edas-diyarbakir-da-caminin-elektrigini-kesti- (accessed on 9 October 2022).
Kaçar, Yusuf. 2020. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Cami Yapımı ve Bakımı Fonu Bütçe ve Muhasebe Düzeni. *The Journal of Social Science* 4: 705–19.
Koçyiğit, Tahsin. 2013. Medine'deki uygulamalarından hareketle—Hz. Peygamber'in şehir tasavvuru hakkında bazı değerlendirmeler. *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 31: 73–88.
Krueger, Richard. A. 1994. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. London: SAGE, p. 148.
Necipoğlu, Gülru. 2005. *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire*. London: Reaktion Books.
NTV. 2022. NTV News Home Page. Available online: https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/ (accessed on 9 October 2022).
Obuz, Ömer. 2017. Yakın Geçmişte Camilerin Farklı Kurumlara Tahsisi ve Askeri Amaçla Kullanımı Üzerine Bir İnceleme. *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırma Dergisi* 6: 1444–60.
Onay, Ahmet. 2009. Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Camilerin Finansmanı. *Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi* 7: 43–80.
Oral, Murat. 1993. Gelişim Süreci Içinde Cumhuriyet Dönemi Cami Mimarisinin Irdelenmesi-Konya Örneği. Master's thesis, Selçuk University, Konya, Turkey, p. 207.
Presidency of Religious Affairs. 2014. Law No. 633 on the Establishment and Duties of the Presidency of Religious Affairs. *T.C Official Newspaper*, January 25.
Presidency of Religious Affairs. 2021. The Number of Mosques according to the Classification of Statistical Regional Units. Available online: https://www.diyanet.gov.tr (accessed on 31 December 2021).
Spatial Plans Construction Regulation. 2014, *T.C Official Newspaper*, June 14.
Türkiye Diyanet Foundation. 2016. *Ankara Kocatepe Cami (1967–1987)*. Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Foundation.
Yediyıldız, B. 1982. Vakıf Müessesinin XVIII. Asır Türk Toplumundaki Rolü. *Vakıflar Dergisi* 14: 1–27.
Zirve. 2022. Erzurum Zirve 2000 News Home Page. Available online: http://www.zirve2000.com/cami-elektriksiz-kaldi/ (accessed on 9 October 2022).

religions

MDPI

Article

Two Pre-Islamic Places of Worship in the Tourism Landscape of the UAE

Adriaan De Man

Department of Tourism and Heritage, United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain P.O. Box 15551, United Arab Emirates; adriaandeman@uaeu.ac.ae

Abstract: As suggested by the title, this paper explores two of the several archaeological sites that configure religious loci in the territory of the current United Arab Emirates. It does so by assessing their relevance, by refining their nature and historical context, and by analyzing their positioning as components of a tourism mix. The core research question is whether or not integration is accomplished. Both structures are quite well known in the academic literature and underwent excavation and conservation investments that allow their proper use and promotion. Discussion and conclusions identify challenges for achieving an appropriate integration with conditioning supply factors.

Keywords: archaeology; Abu Dhabi; Umm Al Quwain; heritage tourism; commodification

1. Introduction

The archaeological remains of ed-Dur and Sir Bani Yas represent two major inactive religious sites. Their precise location, historical meaning, current preservation, and tourism integration are dissimilar to all but two intertwined extents, namely an international scientific relevance that spills over to a cultural tourism purpose. Institutional and private stakeholder involvement differs as well, which reflects on specific branding and entrepreneurial dimensions. The conservation of heritage, within a rationale of public interest, is also a widely shared objective and, as such, becomes comparable in the light of socioeconomic development and, more specifically, in that of the cultural tourism industry.

2. Results

Through a heuristic approach and a comparative conclusion, cultural tourism potential for the sites is established, and important levels of integration, although asymmetric from a comparative viewpoint, were achieved. Further attention needs to be given to archaeological research and commodification.

The interdependencies between archaeological research and leisure have been studied for quite some time now and converge within the broad field of cultural tourism (Campbell 2004; Pinter 2005; Richards 2016; Walker and Carr 2016; Timothy and Tahan 2020). Religious heritage plays a defined role in this outline, from the perspective of pilgrimage, indeed of all sites that welcome tourists and, more specifically, of the ones that do no longer function as locations for worship (Nolan and Nolan 1992; Hernández Espinosa and Ontiveros 2020; Burgess 2021), which is the topic of this paper. The precise archaeological references to both temples under examination, one from the 1st–2nd centuries AD to an eastern Arabian deity and one Christian, dating from the 6th century, are provided below, but their integration in regional tourism development plans finds support in comparable case studies (Butler and Suntikul 2018; Scarce 2020; Chaddad 2021). Economic growth and archaeology are often perceived as mutually beneficial yet are not naturally aligned and do generate multiple colliding interests (Gould and Pyburn 2016), although edited volumes on capacity building (Srivastava 2021), local development (Girard and Nijkamp 2016),

Citation: De Man, Adriaan. 2022. Two Pre-Islamic Places of Worship in the Tourism Landscape of the UAE. *Religions* 13: 715. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13080715

Academic Editors: Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges and Helena Albuquerque

Received: 25 June 2022
Accepted: 4 August 2022
Published: 8 August 2022

and place regeneration (Wise and Jimura 2021) offer wide-angle insights on benefits and opportunities for community-centered heritage tourism. The UAE is fertile in examples that simultaneously integrate dynamics common to the MENA region (Seyfi and Hall 2021) and others that are profoundly local, with regard to narratives on the use of architectural heritage (Auji 2022), historic building restoration (Somhegyi 2019), sustainable conservation practice (Best 2022) and their integration in cultural tourism proposals for specific local destinations (De Man 2018; Longart and Iankova 2022).

Ed-Dur is a major archaeological site in the emirate of Umm Al Quwain, with successive consistent occupations since the Bronze Age, but it is especially significant as an academic reference because of its classical development into a commercial coastal hub. The main excavated structure, and the core argument for a World Heritage inscription application, is a rectangular temple that was identified in and has been studied since the 1980s by a team from Ghent University, led by Ernie Haerinck, following initial joint seasons with other European teams (see Boucharlat et al. 1988, 1989). The prolific, multidisciplinary outputs from this Belgian mission (Haerinck et al. 1991; Haerinck 1992; Van Neer and Gautier 1993; Vrydaghs et al. 2001; Daems 2004; De Waele 2007; Rutten 2007, to mention just a few) and subsequent spinoff projects in the region by original and new team members (e.g., the excavations at Mleiha, now directed by Bruno Overlaet; e.g., Overlaet and Haerinck 2014; Overlaet 2015; Overlaet et al. 2016) remain fundamental as source material for the local domestic and defensive architecture, and indeed the material expression of this important classical settlement in which Roman, eastern Mediterranean, southern Mesopotamian, Iranian, and Indian imports from the first centuries BC and AD have been recovered. The temple itself is, in fact, a sanctuary to a solar deity and is about eight square meters, erected in large, well-cut stone and covered in a geometrically decorated gypsum (Figure 1). Several altars surround the temple, while combustion areas and hydraulic infrastructures are connected to it in some way, in addition to a funerary area (Haerinck 2011). A large Aramaic inscription identifies the deity Shamash, hence the attribution of the complex to this sun god, an observation strengthened by further architectural details and by the widespread evidence of solar cults in this Arabian region (perceptible through multiple coin emissions and a reference by Ptolemy to a sacred sun promontory, plausibly located just north of ed-Dur, see Potts 1991 and Groom 1986, respectively). In structural terms, the temple is a balanced result of superposed, well-cut ashlars with corner and entrance pillars, as well as plaster decorations, originally painted, including the addition of hemicylindrical imitations of columns and pedestals on each side of the monumental entrance, which would have supported statues (Haerinck et al. 1993; see Figure 2).

Despite its quasi-isodomic configuration, the temple lacks any foundations and is built directly on the sand. Precise ritual practices at ed-Dur have been subject to some speculation, given the lack of direct written or iconographic sources, with the exception of some local coinage and funerary epigraphy (Haerinck et al. 1998). Yet, as pointed out by Haerinck (2012), it seems fair to assume a tradition that links to the reality described in a 9th-century source, the Kitab al-Asnam (Faris 1952), in which the adoration of idols is presented as ubiquitous in Arabia, and the process includes the circumambulation of temples, where stones representing deities, as well as animals, would be offered—a plausible interpretation for the many fireplaces, pebbles, stones, and altars around the temple of ed-Dur.

Figure 1. Temple of Shamash, at ed-Dur (Umm Al Quwain), during conservation works.

Figure 2. Entrance to the temple (note the pedestals and gypsum).

Sir Bani Yas is a small island just off the coast of the emirate of Abu Dhabi, in front of Al Dhannah, some 430 km southwest of Umm Al Quwain, in the direction of the Saudi border. The archaeological significance of the entire coastline was validated by a multiyear initiative, the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey, or ADIAS, which identified thousands of sites during its operational period. Sir Bani Yas was one of the first surveyed islands, and its Christian structures were quickly recognized and published (King and Hellyer 1994). At

that point in time, a few Nestorian churches had already been identified in the northern Gulf area, as well as in Saudi Arabia, but not in the eastern parts of the Arabian Peninsula (King et al. 1995). Current archaeological systematizations have gathered more comprehensive data but still depend on local fieldwork. Subsequent research and Sir Bani Yas, partly through a geophysical survey (Křivánek 1997) and partly through test trenches and open area excavation (Figure 3), defined the perimeter of a monastery containing a number of small units, interpreted as individual cells organized in blocs with their own cistern, and a church. This building follows a rather standard plan (central nave, two aisles, and a narthex). Architectural elasticity conferred by the stucco allowed for the creation of curved interior surfaces (niches, domes) and decorative elements, such as Greek and Latin crosses, geometric motifs, vine scrolls, and floral patterns (Elders 2003), which, together with radiocarbon and formal indicators, provide a 6th- to 7th-century chronology with some opportunity to establish constructive and abandonment phases (Carter 2008), fully aligned with the timeframe of the unsuccessful late antique attempts to evangelize the Arabian Gulf. The monastic nature of daily life is well reflected by very modest material culture, of which perhaps the glass fragments become most indicative (Phelps et al. 2018), in addition to some pottery provenance studies, which amplify the idea of Gulf-wide connections (Carter et al. 2011).

Figure 3. Aerial view of the Nestorian church, in the courtyard of the monastery at Sir Bani Yas, during excavation (2009).

3. Discussion

The development of archaeological sites for public use, be it community-based, educational, commercial, tourism-oriented, or still in the scope of a multipurpose transversal strategy, depends heavily on the ability to ensure the conservation of the resource. This equation is theoretically straightforward, but, in practice, one always detects a collision between cultural usufruct and physical deterioration, and the metrics of sustainability become progressively social instead of academic. Visitors are entitled to a reasonable return on their expectations, which depends not only on the site itself but on the integrated experience, including the enveloping cultural landscapes of the emirates (De Man 2020). Leaving aside the detailed stratigraphic specificities of a site such as Sir Bani Yas, what matters to consumer satisfaction is the production of uniqueness, which starts with conservation planning. Following the initial excavations mentioned above, 2009 marked the beginning

of renewed fieldwork, articulated with the development of a tourism project on the island. As part of a hiking trail, the fully excavated monastery is to serve as part of a natural and archaeological heritage product. In addition to stabilization of mortars, removal of vegetation, and reburial of selected areas, the construction of a shelter covering the site constitutes a preventive action to cope with severe environmental conditions (Goodburn-Brown et al. 2012; see Figure 4). Indeed, the unforgiving local climate often dictates conservation options that heavily restrict visitor engagement. In the case of the Shamash temple at ed-Dur, the building was not reburied and suffered greatly from three decades of exposure to the elements (Hellyer 2019). A recent conservation project carried out by ICCROM's ATHAR (Architectural and Archaeological Tangible Heritage in the Arab Region) program and the Umm Al Quwain Department of Tourism and Antiquities dealt with the rehabilitation of plasters, and the site now requires a long-term solution for its preservation.

Figure 4. Current perspective on the site, incl. shelter and walkway.

The commodification procedures put in place at both sites integrate tendencies explored by a vast body of literature, ranging from theory to case studies (see Timothy 2011 or Bhowmik 2021, for general synopses, and Baillie et al. 2010, for constructive practicalities). Given the purpose of this paper, the following ideas may provide a supporting background. One mainstream notion is that religious sites may function as embodiments of the past, through leisure and education activities, and therefore lose, or have already lost, part of their original meaning (Olsen 2003). This directly connects with a second fundamental concept (Ashworth 2000) that insists on the need for considering the place as a primordial element in the creation of heritage tourism. It is, of course, impossible to disentangle ed-Dur and Sir Bani Yas from their territories without losing basic layers of authenticity. But it is the very perception of sacredness, as coined by Levi and Kocher (2013) that, even in purely staged contexts, stimulates consumer interest. A third key notion is socioeconomic, as impacts of religious heritage commodification come over as encouraging in circumscribed or niche destinations (Shepherd 2018; Aldyan 2020) as well as in major archaeological attractions, where temples or sacred spaces are fully desacralized features. In such cases, managing levels of authenticity is massively important to the commodification effort, in

parallel with the notion of public heritage ownership (Gill-Robinson 2007), to be treated in a reasonably similar manner in the optics of consumer participation.

The use of heritage tourism has become central to UAE policy, producing a number of challenges to the sector, from promotion to preservation (Seraphim and Haq 2019). They emerge in a national leisure market that counts on significant investment in tourism infrastructures and events and that selectively taps into segments such as heritage (Bodolica et al. 2020). Archaeology, in particular, has been a vigorous accelerator to the sector, with emirates heavily increasing the conservation of heritage tangibles, keeping tourism growth in sight. This effort is, however, not exclusively concentrated on sites and is part of larger ecosystems that integrate museums, creative arts, and cultural landscapes. The precise forms through which the past is to be amalgamated with the present are, however, wrapped in some ambiguity, not only practical but also substantial. On the one hand, the importance of UAE archaeology has a long-lasting specificity (Blau 1995) that shares conflicting levels of interest with other countries. On the other, the associations between archaeological heritage and tourism often produce pressures on the sense of identity, particularly in a nation with a majority of expat residents, and with pervasive monetization of traditions for tourism consumption. Institutional support for heritage preservation as an end in itself (Szuchman 2012), not specifically as an ingredient for the tourism industry, does promote meaningful social awareness of tangible heritage. Two correlated dimensions further uphold commodification from a pedagogical standpoint. First, the association between historical forts and archaeological sites or museums as places of convergence, innovation, and social entrepreneurship (Eid 2019); second, the capitalization on archaeology-based UNESCO World Heritage, unequivocally understood as beneficial, promoted as such by tourism agencies and companies (e.g., Bidaa Bint Saud, Hili, Jebel Hafeet). Both realities provide society with cognitive references on heritage. The recent work on the Sir Bani Yas monastery constitutes a visible offshoot of this strategic cultural model, of which archaeological tourism is a quintessential component.

4. Materials and Methods

Distribution may be achieved fundamentally by concentrating either on isolated tangibles or on aggregated tourism products. While, in theory, the latter would seem a fine choice, this depends on the variables mentioned above, namely their immediate leisure potential, their location, and their impacts. Not all religious historical sites present the same inherent tourism qualities, which also do not necessarily align with other strategic goals, in purely scientific or political terms. Assuming assimilation into larger economic development platforms, primary benefits need to merge with multiple local stakeholder interests, which are inherently nonlinear and oftentimes problematic (e.g., Chen and Chen 2010; Seyfi et al. 2019; Li et al. 2020). The relationship between heritage and residents is generally positive at the abstract level but frequently leads to "not-in-my-backyard" attitudes (Qiu et al. 2019), and it has been empirically demonstrated that residents living farther away from sites have a more favorable perspective on heritage tourism than the ones living in close proximity to the heritage attraction itself (Rasoolimanesh et al. 2019). In the particular cases of ed-Dur and Sir Bani Yas, the lack of adjacent urban pressure invalidates any severe unenthusiastic response to begin with. This does not mean that civic and practical visitor reservations are implicitly nonexistent. Other inconvenient geographical considerations can arguably be factored in, unrelated to issues such as real estate development and rather due to the absence of infrastructures. Heritagization has become such a common reality in any tourism experience that up to 80% of all travel nowadays includes some sort of cultural pursuit, such as gastronomy or shopping (Timothy 2014), not only historical heritage, which means that visitors expect a coherent and varied experience, and that excessive marketing emphasis on archaeology may in fact become counterproductive to leisure demand.

Heritage clusters in the UAE reveal different levels of densification, and specifically, micro-clustering may represent a suitable response to territorial challenges in places away

from large hubs (De Man and Hassan 2022). While niche products do offer interesting branding and marketing opportunities, they always need to be packaged in terms of hospitality. With very few exceptions worldwide, the vast majority of standalone archaeological sites cannot anchor quality supply through intrinsic value alone. Ed-Dur is located a few kilometers from the Khor Al Bidiyah peninsula, where the Umm Al Quwain beachline displays several hotels and resorts and is easily accessible at less than a 1 h drive from Dubai, the main UAE tourism center. Conversely, Al Dhannah, from where one crosses to Sir Bani Yas, is a 250 km highway drive from Abu Dhabi city. The island resorts are located amidst a wildlife reserve within walking distance to the archaeological site. In both cases, the heritage sites enhance an existing leisure product, not the opposite, and are not economically crucial to demand, although they integrate an authentic and sustainable proposition. On the other hand, restoration projects of historical sites attract global investors (Chhabra 2015) and, unsurprisingly, overall visitor satisfaction depends heavily on the quality of cultural heritage destinations (Huh et al. 2006; Domínguez-Quintero et al. 2020). Sir Bani Yas has positioned itself as a nature-based, family-friendly luxury destination. A proposition augmented by the notion of island exclusiveness and the geographical remoteness from any major urban center. It is home to the Arabian Wildlife Park, with an announced 17,000 free-roaming animals and five-star retreats, to which the monastery becomes a marketable addition. While clustering is observable in the example of ed-Dur, integration is less coherent due to perceived distances, city articulations, commodification, and tourism promotion, which can be optimized in the scope of multi-level place branding (Hartman 2022). In which case, all relevant stakeholders would be required to come together and take ed-Dur as a key argument.

Apart from partaking in archaeological and conservational solutions, governmental involvement with both the temple and the monastery comprises tourism branding ventures. The promotion of the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Umm Al Quwain is designed on strategic axes, plugging into a common federal vision whilst offering location-specific distinctiveness. Destination branding has been instrumental to the successful diversification policy of the UAE (Ahmed et al. 2022) and to the individual emirates (Balakrishnan 2008; Westwood 2012; Kotsi and Michael 2015; Al Saed et al. 2020), which offer singular tourism value propositions based on their cultural landscapes. The national economic vision embraces the diversity of the respective tourism potential, which is very noticeable in the northern emirates, where the added value of local heritage does not gravitate around the large distribution structures of Dubai and Abu Dhabi. In fact, Umm Al Quwain, Ajman, Fujairah, and Ras Al Khaimah are exemplary dimensioned, emirate-level tourism systems, and they have been promoting their unique territorial attributes (Daleure 2017), as is the case in Sharjah (Alsalami and Al-Zaman 2021), a much larger, coast-to-coast emirate with a capital city in logistical and physical contiguity with Dubai, and with solid heritage destination branding activity (Saji 2017). In fact, the tourism authorities of all emirates provide digital outreach channels that reflect, precisely, archaeological and historical destinations blended with natural heritage. Ed-Dur is central to the cultural offerings on the government of Umm Al Quwain's Department of Tourism and Archaeology website and is presented as vastly significant, albeit detached from the hotel and investment-related section. Potential forthcoming commodification, either private or public, might densify partnerships between hospitality stakeholders and not only the temple of Shamash but the entire site. In turn, the monastery at Sir Bani Yas is managed by the Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism, and the emirate's dedicated tourism site highlights the island, suggesting a Desert Islands Resort and Spa Culture Tour that includes the archaeological site. Along with immediate commercial interest and archaeological research, the long-term return on investment is multilayered, based on a longstanding policy of tolerance within the United Arab Emirates. In 2017, some thirty Christian ecclesiastics from the Gulf region and the then Minister of State for Tolerance, Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, gathered at the monastery of Sir Bani Yas, in the context of the government's Tolerance Agenda, representing a particularly symbolic convergence between religion, archaeology, and heritage tourism. Subsequent

activities, such as the official reopening of the site in 2019, during the Year of Tolerance, included the presence of the Apostolic Vicar of Southern Arabia, which occurred in the wake of Pope Francis' historic visit to the UAE a few months earlier. These protocolar events do considerably enhance the public significance of the site.

Comparative regional results reveal a need for tackling management concerns, with multiple Saudi, Omani, and Qatari sites facing not only environmental, conservation, and interpretation challenges but also generic tourism-related issues and, more precisely, the use of religious sites for heritage tourism (Kessler and Raj 2018; Al-Tokhais and Thapa 2020; Rico 2020). In addition to integrated online communication and business-related platforms, digital data acquisition of the building features and ensuing processing, for instance, as 3D models, empowers both academic and societal actors and leads to a more refined construal of archaeological realities. This ultimately becomes critical for composing outreach and cultural tourism products (e.g., Egger and Neuburger 2020; Liritzis et al. 2021; Ugwitz et al. 2021; Yin et al. 2021).

5. Conclusions

The original sacred and religious dimension of the two practical cases is understandably not a social obstacle to current tourism development. Such structures are perceived as archaeological resources, and sensitivities relate primarily to urban development, conservation, and access rather than ancient and late antique worshipping practices. Even to the significant Christian population in the UAE, Nestorian monasticism remains a foreign unfamiliar reality. No living communities feel religiously attached to the temple of the sun god at ed-Dur. This contrasts with comparable religious buildings and sites elsewhere, given that tourism may interfere with current religious practice.

Opportunities for further developing the two archaeological sites described in this paper need resourcefulness from two intersecting players, the institutional and the entrepreneurial. The former has ethical responsibilities, and prevalent socioeconomic interest, in overseeing the preservation, study, and management of archaeological sites. The latter is able to capitalize on cultural hospitality, and downstream on a variety of ancillary service industries, by building competitive advantages through the idea of heritage uniqueness.

Pre-Islamic religious heritage can also be promoted as a trans-emirate cultural itinerary. Sir Bani Yas is not the only identified late antique church, and a second one, on Marawah island, also in Abu Dhabi, has been known for several decades. Ongoing fieldwork on Siniya Island in Umm Al Quwain, co-directed by Dr. Timothy Power, has just months ago identified yet another church. Similarly, the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf area would be able to articulate the religious archaeology of other cultural and historical periods, and successfully commodify them, from a regional microscale to the level of international cultural tourism networks.

Funding: Research was funded by the UAEU College of Humanities and Social Sciences and UPAR grant 12H012.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: The author wishes to thank Rianne Norbart (DCT Education & Outreach Department), Mariam Al Nuaimi (DCT Destination Marketing Department), and Zaki Aslan (ICCROM), for the photographs.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

Ahmed, Gouher, Abudaqa C. Jayachandran, Yam Limbu, and Rashed Alzahmi. 2022. Nation Branding as a Strategic Approach for Emerging Economies: The Case of UAE. In *Marketing Communications and Brand Development in Emerging Economies, Volume I*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 41–57.

Al Saed, Rashad, Amitabh Upadhya, and Mohammad Abu Saleh. 2020. Role of airline promotion activities in destination branding: Case of Dubai vis-à-vis Emirates Airline. *European Research on Management and Business Economics* 26: 121–26. [CrossRef]

Aldyan, Rizkal Akbar. 2020. The Commodification of Religious Tourism in the Tomb of Sunan Kudus. *Cultural Tourism Research* 2: 32–47.
Alsalami, Wafa Khalfan, and Qamar Al-Zaman. 2021. The role of media and public relations departments in effective tourism marketing in Sharjah. *Linguistics and Culture Review* 5: 133–43. [CrossRef]
Al-Tokhais, Abdulelah, and Brijesh Thapa. 2020. Management issues and challenges of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 15: 103–10. [CrossRef]
Ashworth, Gregory. 2000. Heritage, Tourism and Places: A Review. *Tourism Recreation Research* 25: 19–29. [CrossRef]
Auji, Hala. 2022. On Ruins: The Art and Politics of Architectural Heritage. *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* 11: 15–21. [CrossRef]
Baillie, Britt, Afroditi Chatzoglou, and Shadia Taha. 2010. Packaging the past: The commodification of heritage. *Heritage Management* 3: 51–71. [CrossRef]
Balakrishnan, Melodena Stephens. 2008. Dubai–A star in the east: A case study in strategic destination branding. *Journal of Place Management and Development* 1: 62–91. [CrossRef]
Best, Kathryn. 2022. Architectural Conservation and Cultural Heritage: Two Sustainably-Led Case Studies. In *Conservation of Architectural Heritage (CAH)*. Advances in Science, Technology & Innovation. Cham: Springer, pp. 233–48.
Bhowmik, Puja. 2021. Heritage Tourism: A bibliometric review. *Anatolia* 32: 387–403. [CrossRef]
Blau, Soren. 1995. Observing the present–Reflecting the past. Attitudes towards archaeology in the United Arab Emirates. *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 6: 116–28. [CrossRef]
Bodolica, Virginia, Marton Spraggon, and Nadia Saleh. 2020. Innovative leadership in leisure and entertainment industry: The case of the UAE as a global tourism hub. *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management* 13: 323–37. [CrossRef]
Boucharlat, Rémy, Ernie Haerinck, Carl Phillips, and Daniel T. Potts. 1988. Archaeological reconnaissance at ed-Dur, Umm al-Qaiwain, U.A.E. *Akkadica* 58: 1–2.
Boucharlat, Rémy, Ernie Haerinck, Olivier Lecomte, Daniel T. Potts, and Karel Guy Stevens. 1989. The European Archaeological Expedition to ed-Dur, Umm al-Qaiwayn (U.A.E.). An interim report on the 1987 and 1988 seasons. *Mesopotamia* 24: 5–72.
Burgess, John. 2021. *Angkor's Temples in the Modern Era: War, Pride and Tourist Dollars*. Bangkok: River Books.
Butler, Richard, and Wantanee Suntikul. 2018. *Tourism and Religion: Issues and Implications*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.
Campbell, Sally. 2004. *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.
Carter, R. A. 2008. Christianity in the Gulf during the first centuries of Islam. *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 19: 71–108. [CrossRef]
Carter, Robert, Jacques Connan, Seth Priestman, and Roberta Tomber. 2011. Torpedo Jars from Sir Bani Yas, Abu Dhabi. *Tribulus* 19: 162–63.
Chaddad, Rita. 2021. Culture, tourism, and territory: Analyzing discourses and perceptions of actors in Byblos and Baalbek in Lebanon. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 19: 805–18. [CrossRef]
Chen, Ching-Fu, and Pei-Chun Chen. 2010. Resident attitudes toward heritage tourism development. *Tourism Geographies* 12: 525–45. [CrossRef]
Chhabra, Deepak. 2015. A cultural hospitality framework for heritage accommodations. *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 10: 184–90. [CrossRef]
Daems, Aurelie. 2004. The terracotta figurines from ed-Dur (Umm al-Qaiwain, UAE): The human representations. *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 15: 92–104. [CrossRef]
Daleure, Georgia. 2017. Economic Vision of the UAE. In *Emiratization in the UAE Labor Market*. Singapore: Springer, pp. 27–37.
De Man, Adriaan. 2018. Portuguese Heritage in the UAE: Authenticity in Archaeology and Tourism. In *Innovative Approaches to Tourism and Leisure*. Cham: Springer, pp. 3–15.
De Man, Adriaan. 2020. Advances in Cultural Tourism: Two Examples from the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (UAE). *Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites* 31: 1027–33. [CrossRef]
De Man, Adriaan, and Boshra Hassan. 2022. Notes on UAE Heritage Clustering for Urban Planning. In *3rd International Conference on Built Environment and Engineering*. Shah Alam: Universiti Teknologi MARA.
De Waele, An. 2007. The beads of ed-Dur (Umm al-Qaiwain, UAE). In *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*. Oxford: Archaeopress, pp. 297–308.
Domínguez-Quintero, Ana M., M. Rosario González-Rodríguez, and Brendan Paddison. 2020. The mediating role of experience quality on authenticity and satisfaction in the context of cultural-heritage tourism. *Current Issues in Tourism* 23: 248–60. [CrossRef]
Egger, Roman, and Larissa Neuburger. 2020. Augmented, virtual, and mixed reality in tourism. In *Handbook of e-Tourism*. Cham: Springer, pp. 1–25.
Eid, Haitham. 2019. *Museum Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship: A New Model for a Challenging Era*. Oxon: Routledge.
Elders, Joseph. 2003. The Nestorians in the Gulf: Just Passing Through? Recent Discoveries on the Island of Sir Bani Yas, Abu Dhabi Emirate, UAE. In *Archaeology of the United Arab Emirates*. London: Trident Press, pp. 230–36.
Faris, Nabih Amin. 1952. *The Book of Idols, Being a Translation from the Arabic of the Kitab al-Asnam by Ibn al-Kalbi*. Princeton: University Press.
Gill-Robinson, Heather. 2007. Culture, Heritage and Commodification. In *Cultural Heritages as Reflexive Traditions*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 183–93.
Girard, Luigi Fusco, and Peter Nijkamp. 2016. *Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Local Development*. London: Routledge.

Goodburn-Brown, Dana, Kirsty Norman, Joseph Elders, and Elizabeth Popescu. 2012. Preservation In Situ for Tourism: An Early Christian Monastic Complex on Sir Bani Yas Island, Western Abu Dhabi, UAE. *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 14: 249–62. [CrossRef]
Gould, Peter G., and K. Anne Pyburn. 2016. *Collision or Collaboration: Archaeology Encounters Economic Development*. Cham: Springer Nature.
Groom, Nigel. 1986. Eastern Arabia in Ptolemy's map. *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 16: 65–75.
Haerinck, Ernie. 1992. Excavations at ed-Dur (Umm al-Qaiwain, UAE)–Preliminary report on the fourth Belgian season (1990). *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 3: 190–208. [CrossRef]
Haerinck, Ernie. 2011. *A Temple of the Sun-God Shamash and Other Occupational Remains at ed-Dur (Emirate of Umm al-Qaiwain)*. Excavations at ed-Dur vol. III. Leuven: Peeters.
Haerinck, Ernie. 2012. The temple at ed-Dur (Emirate of Umm al-Qaiwain) and pre-Islamic cult in south-eastern Arabia. In *Fifty Years of Emirates Archaeology: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Archaeology of the United Arab Emirates*. Abu Dhabi: Motivate Publishing, pp. 163–71.
Haerinck, Ernie, Carl Phillips, Daniel T. Potts, and Karel Guy Stevens. 1993. Ed-Dur, Umm al-Qaiwain (UAE). In *Materialien zur Archäologie der Seleukiden–und Partherzeit im südlichen Babylonien und im Golfgebiet*. Tübingen: Wasmuth, pp. 183–93.
Haerinck, Ernie, Catheline Metdepenninghen, and Karel Guy Stevens. 1991. Excavations at ed-Dur (Umm al-Qaiwain, UAE)—Preliminary report on the second Belgian season (1988). *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 2: 31–60. [CrossRef]
Haerinck, Ernie, Luc Vrydaghs, and Hughes Doutrelepont. 1998. Des feux sacrificiels pour la divinité solaire à ed-Dur. *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 9: 125–30. [CrossRef]
Hartman, Stefan. 2022. Multi-level Place Branding. In *Encyclopedia of Tourism Management and Marketing*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
Hellyer, Peter. 2019. The Unique Temple of ed-Dur Must Not Be Lost to the Desert Sands Again. Available online: https://www.thenationalnews.com/opinion/comment/the-unique-temple-of-ed-dur-must-not-be-lost-to-the-desert-sands-again-1.878427 (accessed on 22 June 2022).
Hernández Espinosa, Rafael, and Martha Marivel Mendoza Ontiveros. 2020. Teotihuacan and Tourism: Residents' Experience through their Narratives. *Región y Sociedad* 32: e1301. [CrossRef]
Huh, Jin, Muzzafer Uysal, and Ken McCleary. 2006. Cultural/heritage destinations: Tourist satisfaction and market segmentation. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing* 14: 81–99.
Kessler, Kristel, and Razaq Raj. 2018. The rise of heritage and religious tourism to sacred sites in Oman. In *Religious Tourism in Asia: Tradition and Change through Case Studies and Narratives*. Oxfordshire and Boston: CABI, pp. 10–20.
King, G. R. D., David Dunlop, Joseph Elders, Salvatore Garfi, Angus Stephenson, and Cristina Tonghini. 1995. A report on the Abu Dhabi islands archaeological survey (1993–4). *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 25: 63–74.
King, Geoffrey, and Peter Hellyer. 1994. A Pre-Islamic Christian site on Sir Bani Yas. *Tribulus* 4: 5–7.
Kotsi, Filareti, and Ian Michael. 2015. Planning and developing "Destination Dubai" in the context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In *Planning for Tourism: Towards a Sustainable Future*. Oxfordshire and Boston: CABI, pp. 149–68.
Křivánek, Roman. 1997. Geophysical survey on archaeological sites on Sir Bani Yas Island, Abu Dhabi. *Památky Archaologické* 87: 142–50.
Levi, Daniel, and Sara Kocher. 2013. Perception of sacredness at heritage religious sites. *Environment and Behavior* 45: 912–30. [CrossRef]
Li, Yiping, Chammy Lau, and Ping Su. 2020. Heritage tourism stakeholder conflict: A case of a World Heritage Site in China. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 18: 267–87. [CrossRef]
Liritzis, Ioannis, Pantelis Volonakis, and Spyros Vosinakis. 2021. 3d reconstruction of cultural heritage sites as an educational approach. The sanctuary of Delphi. *Applied Sciences* 11: 3635. [CrossRef]
Longart, Pedro, and Katia Iankova. 2022. Branding Al Ain as a Tourist Destination. *Transnational Marketing Journal* 10: 5–25. [CrossRef]
Nolan, Mary Lee, and Sidney Nolan. 1992. Religious sites as tourism attractions in Europe. *Annals of Tourism Research* 19: 68–78. [CrossRef]
Olsen, Daniel H. 2003. Heritage, tourism, and the commodification of religion. *Tourism Recreation Research* 28: 99–104. [CrossRef]
Overlaet, Bruno. 2015. Belgian Excavations at Mleiha, Sharjah (UAE) 2009–2013. *Bulletin de Séances de l'Academie Royale des Sciences d'Outre-Mer–Mededelingen der Zittingen van de Academie voor Overzeese Wetenschappen* 6: 249–67.
Overlaet, Bruno, and Ernie Haerinck. 2014. Monumental tombs along the Arabian Caravan Routes. *Akkadica Supplementum* 12: 205–14.
Overlaet, Bruno, Michael Macdonald, and Peter Stein. 2016. An Aramaic−Hasaitic bilingual inscription from a monumental tomb at Mleiha, Sharjah, UAE. *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 27: 127–42. [CrossRef]
Phelps, Matt, St John Simpson, and Ian C. Freestone. 2018. The early Islamic glass from Ṣīr Banī Yās, UAE. *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 48: 249–67.
Pinter, T. L. 2005. Heritage tourism and archaeology: Critical issues. *The SAA Archaeological Record* 5: 9–11.
Potts, Daniel T. 1991. *The Pre-Islamic Coinage of Eastern Arabia*. Copenhagen: CNI Publications.
Qiu, Qihang, Tianxiang Zheng, Zheng Xiang, and Mu Zhang. 2019. Visiting intangible cultural heritage tourism sites: From value cognition to attitude and intention. *Sustainability* 12: 132. [CrossRef]
Rasoolimanesh, S. Mostafa, Babak Taheri, Martin Gannon, Ali Vafaei-Zadeh, and Haniruzila Hanifah. 2019. Does living in the vicinity of heritage tourism sites influence residents' perceptions and attitudes? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 27: 1295–317. [CrossRef]

Richards, Greg. 2016. Cultural tourism. In *Archaeological Displays and the Public*. London: Routledge, pp. 1–12.
Rico, Trinidad. 2020. The restricted heritage significance of historic mosques in Qatar. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26: 874–84. [CrossRef]
Rutten, Katrien. 2007. The Roman fine wares of ed-Dur (Umm al-Qaiwain, UAE) and their distribution in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 18: 8–24. [CrossRef]
Saji, Beena Salim. 2017. Sharjah: A heritage destination in its growth and development. *Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies* 7: 1–11. [CrossRef]
Scarce, Jennifer. 2020. Tourism and material culture in Turkey. In *Souvenirs: The Material Culture of Tourism*. New York: Routledge, pp. 25–35.
Seraphim, Joanna, and Farooq Haq. 2019. Challenges for Promotion of Heritage Tourism: Case Study of the UAE. In *Conservation and Promotion of Heritage Tourism*. Hershey: IGI Global, pp. 35–56.
Seyfi, Siamak, and C. Michael Hall. 2021. *Cultural and Heritage Tourism in the Middle East and North Africa: Complexities, Management and Practices*. Oxon: Routledge.
Seyfi, Siamak, C. Michael Hall, and Edith Fagnoni. 2019. Managing world heritage site stakeholders: A grounded theory paradigm model approach. *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 14: 308–24. [CrossRef]
Shepherd, Robert. 2018. When sacred space becomes a heritage place: Pilgrimage, worship, and tourism in contemporary China. *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage* 6: 34–46.
Somhegyi, Zoltán. 2019. The (Future of the) Ruins in the United Arab Emirates. In *Philosophical Perspectives on Ruins, Monuments, and Memorials*. London: Routledge, pp. 166–74.
Srivastava, Surabhi. 2021. *Capacity Building Through Heritage Tourism: An International Perspective*. Burlington: Apple Academic Press.
Szuchman, Jeffrey. 2012. Archaeology, identity, and demographic imbalance in the United Arab Emirates. *Heritage & Society* 5: 35–52.
Timothy, Dallen J. 2011. *Cultural Heritage and Tourism: An Introduction*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.
Timothy, Dallen J. 2014. Contemporary cultural heritage and tourism: Development issues and emerging trends. *Public Archaeology* 13: 30–47. [CrossRef]
Timothy, Dallen J., and Lina G. Tahan. 2020. *Archaeology and Tourism: Touring the Past*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.
Ugwitz, Pavel, Herman Lukáš, and Stachoň Zdeněk. 2021. 3D Visualization of Historical Buildings: Methods, Their Utility in the Tourism Industry and Beyond. *Regionální Rozvoj Mezi Teorií a Praxí* 1: 43–62.
Van Neer, Wim, and Achilles Gautier. 1993. Preliminary report on the faunal remains from the coastal site of ed-Dur, 1st-4th century AD Umm al-Quwain, United Arab Emirates. In *1st International symposium on the Archaeozoology of South-Western Asia and Adjacent Areas*. Leiden: Universal Book Services, pp. 110–18.
Vrydaghs, Luc, Hughes Doutrelepont, Hans Beeckman, and Ernie Haerinck. 2001. Identification of a morphotype association of Phoenix dactylifera L. lignified tissues origin at ed-Dur (1st AD), Umm al-Qaiwain (U.A.E.). In *Phytoliths: Applications in Earth Sciences and Human History*. Boca Raton: CRC Press, pp. 239–50.
Walker, Cameron, and Neil Carr. 2016. Tourism and archaeology: An introduction. In *Tourism and Archaeology*. London: Routledge, pp. 11–36.
Westwood, Sheena. 2012. Branding a "new" destination: Abu Dhabi. In *Destination Brands*. New York: Routledge, pp. 219–34.
Wise, Nicholas, and Takamitsu Jimura. 2021. *Tourism, Cultural Heritage and Urban Regeneration: Changing Spaces in Historical Places*. Cham: Springer.
Yin, Celine Zhao Ying, Timothy Jung, M. Claudia tom Dieck, and Maria Younghee Lee. 2021. Mobile Augmented Reality Heritage Applications: Meeting the Needs of Heritage Tourists. *Sustainability* 13: 2523. [CrossRef]

religions

MDPI

Essay

Performativity of the Memory of Religious Places through Sound and Image

Frederico Dinis [1,2]

[1] CEIS20—Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Coimbra, 3004-531 Coimbra, Portugal; f.dinis@sapo.pt
[2] CITER—Research Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Portuguese Catholic University, 1649-023 Lisboa, Portugal

Abstract: In this essay, we explore and deepen the confluence between sound and image, linking and relating concepts, purposes and coherence of artistic practices mediating and reconfiguring the memory of religious places. We observed that the performativity of memory, as an autobiographical concept, can be enhanced through live audiovisual performances in religious places. We have established that the performativity of memory in religious places can promote a spatial 'self', creating dynamic, immersive and physical experiences in the religious places. And we argue that the construction of this spatial 'self' involves processes of social and artistic reconfiguration that contribute to transforming not only the social dynamics within the community but also the artistic representations of memory. These main findings were reached following a process of research through artistic practice, thus a systematization of the processes involved in approaching three religious places. It also assumes the (de)construction of the sense of place throughout a personal reading on the mediation through nonverbal means. In this research, we also observed that the aesthetic and performative configurations can have an impact on the most individual manifestations of religion, religiosity and religious belief, influencing the interpretation and creation of meaning, evoking emotional and spiritual responses.

Keywords: sound; image; memory; religious places; site-specific; sense of place

Citation: Dinis, Frederico. 2023. Performativity of the Memory of Religious Places through Sound and Image. *Religions* 14: 1137. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14091137

Academic Editors: Fátima Matos Silva, Isabel Borges and Helena Albuquerque

Received: 27 June 2023
Revised: 13 August 2023
Accepted: 1 September 2023
Published: 5 September 2023

1. Introduction

The concept of performance can be understood through different perceptions resulting from different disciplinary approaches, artistic fields or cultural contexts (Wardrip-Fruin 2006). It is also because of this conceptual openness and the diversity of creative practices that performance, as an action in front of an audience (Carlson 2004), offers a great potential for exploration, on which we would like to base this essay, focusing especially on the confluence between sound and image, mnemonic and sensory media, as a theme of theoretical and creative recognition, in religious places.

Performance has become a meeting point between the arts, where unconventional forms of dialogue converge in the desire to develop an experiment of fusion of artists with an intertextual, multisensory, technological and experiential approach to the event (Dinis 2020). In this sense, audiovisual performances are characterized by the inclusion of alternative aesthetics and technological innovation, decentralizing from the body/performer and extending to other media, namely sound and image.

The interrelationship between sound and visual media thus appears as a device to weave new possibilities of constructing meaning, where dialogical connections can emerge through rereading and reinterpretations that induce the audience to move to other contexts through the manipulation of sound and image, where the sound follows the image or vice versa, not homogeneously mixed in fruition. Sound and image, in confluence, offer a wider range of possibilities for interrelations, elaborating other narratives that, in the

performative moment, are no longer either sound or visual, but both, in a materialization of an ephemerality achieved through the use of technological means. We also assume that in the performative moments, the artist/performer is considered not only as an operator of sound and visual media but also as a mediator, a creator and, consequently, a narrator who constructs the sound and visual narratives.

Sound and image evolve in a combinatorial potential that conceptually expands the live audiovisual performance. And when sound and image simultaneously capture both senses in a single aesthetic-narrative sense, there is an articulation that not only captures the viewer's attention but also leads to new interpretations. This discussion of the capacity of live audiovisual performance to promote new interpretations and poetic readings of works raises new questions about the production of effects of presence through technological mediation in specific places. It is, therefore, necessary to examine these territories and the processes of mediation in the production of effects of presence in audiovisual performative moments in religious places.

Although other approaches reconstruct the spatial self through ritual and belief, this essay focuses on exploring the confluence of sound and image in religious places through a process of research through artistic practice in the field of contemporary performance, analyzing the role of site-specific audiovisual performances in the process of perception and apprehension, reflecting on the effects of the embodied perception of space through a performativity of memory in religious places, and examining the effects of the aesthetic and performative configurations through which religion/religiosity/religious belief is transmitted on its most individual manifestations in site-specific nonverbal artistic creations.

To respond to these objectives, a methodology of research through artistic practice is used, based on the principle that the performativity of memory and the construction of a narrative as a temporal text (Fonseca 1992) reinforces the role of sound and visual media in the context of audiovisual performances and during performative moments. The involvement of the audience thus escapes the commonplace of everyday corporeality, diluting the permanent boundaries and exploiting physical experience as a motto for spatial transgression and the construction of a spatial 'self'.

To rethink these issues and structure the arguments, this essay is divided into four main parts, in addition to this Introduction and the Conclusions at the end.

In the Section 2, Presence Effects, we consider the significance of the question of presence and its emptiness through technological mediation, creating in the debate an apparent opposition between the 'live' and the 'mediated'. We also argue that presence does not belong to a particular medium or living body but is produced through performative, live and mediated moments.

In the Section 3, Performative Moments, we reflect on the concepts of performative space and time in performative practice to analyze the performative moment as a moment of artistic expression that promotes a symbolic liturgy. We also highlight the conditions of space that affect performance, namely, in religious places as spaces that have special and intangible qualities, arguing that religious places are relational and contingent.

In the Section 4, Performativity of Memory, we analyze the place as a space endowed with sensations, affections and allusions to lived experiences and memories as lived records that start from memories and eternalize places as references and passages. We also highlight the importance of the performativity of memory that operates through sounds and images and which operates as an activator.

The Section 5, Methodology, presents the process of research through artistic practice (practice-as-research) followed in this research, guided by a 'conceptual model of approach to place' (Dinis 2020). It is thus a systematization of the processes involved in approaching the three religious places where the site-specific projects were developed, which is understood as a process of constant questioning. We also propose the (de)construction of the sense of place throughout a personal reading on the mediation through nonverbal means, focused on exploring key issues in this research.

Starting from a set of artistic practices and audiovisual performative moments that we have developed in this research, we explore and deepen the confluence between sound and image, linking and relating concepts, purposes and coherence of artistic practices that use these two means in the reformulation of religious places and how individual and community identities are mediated and reconfigured. Religious places are spaces that seek to create a place of spiritual connection and to reinforce religious ontological positions in the world, where interaction with the sacred is found and where the meaning and significance of human existence are intensified (Barrie 2010).

This intensification can be enhanced by mediation through sound and visual means, since when sound and image simultaneously capture both senses in a single aesthetic-narrative sense, there is an articulation that not only captures the viewer's attention but also leads to new interpretations (Wardrip-Fruin 2006).

These interpretations raise several issues about the perception of site-specific performances through the mediation of nonverbal means in religious spaces. How can the performativity of memory be an autobiographical concept enhanced through live audiovisual performances in religious places? How can the performativity of memory in religious places promote a spatial 'self' through live audiovisual performances? How does the construction of a spatial 'self' involve processes of social and artistic reconfiguration in live audiovisual performances in religious places compelled through the performativity of memory?

For the development of these lines of inquiry, practice needed to be present throughout the process, as the issues considered were the result of the practical component; otherwise, we would not have truly 'practice-based' research (Silva 2011). The approach followed in this research involved the realization of three site-specific projects in religious places (Tree of Life Chapel in Braga, Chapel of the Immaculate in Braga and Church of Cedofeita in Porto), under a proper format and language of research through artistic practice, intending to analyze and develop functional methods and strategies linked to the development of the artistic creations themselves and the proposal of ways of locally representing them.

These site-specific projects are also anchored in previously developed research through artistic practice and amplify nonverbal aesthetic and performative forms through which religion manifests and can be culturally transmitted. This previous research through artistic practice has shown that the interrelationship between sound and visual mediums, the performativity and the work of memory in site-specific performances emerges as an artifice to weave new transformations that inspire different forms of knowledge, whether intellectual, performative or sensory.

A website[1] has also been structured to present documentation on the process of designing, presenting and receiving site-specific projects. Taken as a whole, these materials deepen and illustrate the paths of research through artistic practice and are therefore materials inherent to creative making itself, rightly understood as a reflective practice.

2. Presence Effects

Over time, the evolution of technology and art has facilitated the blending of different art forms, allowing audiovisual artists to cultivate a distinct aesthetic centered on sound, image and 'in motion'. As a result, the synergy between sound and visual elements continues to be explored across disciplines, effectively broadening the conceptual scope of live audiovisual performance. This convergence of auditory and visual components enhances the immersive quality of 'live' experiences, creating a harmonious relationship that improves the overall aesthetic encounter.

The growing integration of new media and technologies into the performing arts has led to the emergence of diverse artistic expressions and methods. This phenomenon has also been documented in the theoretical field, and its influence can be measured by the large number of anthologies and texts that have been published on the subject in recent decades[2]. These approaches generally vary between understanding the use of new technologies and media as a rupture and as something new to be integrated into artistic practices or as a

continuity in the technological integration of artistic practices (Dinis 2021). For those who see this integration as a rupture, the use of technologies allows for the emergence and development of 'new artistic possibilities' (Saltz 2013, p. 422). Others, however, see these practices as the unfolding of a pre-existing potential, since "theatre has always used the most advanced technology of its time to enhance the 'spectacle' of productions" (Dixon 2007, p. 39).

These different visions reflect the construction of a critical discourse on the implications of the use of new media in transforming artistic forms and practices. One of the main issues raised in these discourses concerns the question of presence and its emptying through technological mediation, creating in the debate an apparent opposition between the 'live' and the 'mediated'.

The course of artistic movements associated with performance art, in the context of its history and its dominant languages, seeks to value the presence of the performer as something that can be experienced immediately, in the encounter between spectator and performer, and above all as the goal of the performance itself—that is, an absolute state of presence that Fischer-Lichte (2012) defines as 'radical presence', which means appearing and being perceived as an embodied spirit.

The discourse on performance tends to emphasize the character of 'live' art as its most distinctive feature, thus evading reproduction, as opposed to 'mediated' art, as Phelan (1993) argues. The ontology of performance is paradoxically enunciated in both presence and absence and in "all the conceptual oppositions of metaphysics" (Derrida 1988, p. 26). Auslander (1999) criticizes Phelan by arguing that the category of 'live' is actually an effect of mediation, not the other way around (Auslander 1999). Historically, 'live' only exists from the moment that reproduction techniques are invented, thus defining itself as what can be recorded. In this sense, the 'live' is linked to and dependent on mediation. Furthermore, Auslander (1999) notes that there is a progressive tendency to mediate 'live' events and understands the insistence of theoretical discourse on performance to situate it as a purely ideological, as opposed to a mediated or technological, form of art.

In this essay, we recognize that contrary to the emphasis on performance as something that takes place 'live', performance appears to be linked to various means and processes of mediation, mainly through the use of the image. From the perspective of those who value the 'live' character of the performance, mediation is seen as a factor that weakens the presence of the performer, but this impoverishment is not always seen as negative[3].

The growing mediation in the context of theater and performance marked the post-modern deconstruction of presence in the theoretical field through the decentralization of the subject and the narrative fragmentation that emptied[4] the authority of the text, creating a kind of persona that functions as a strategy of deconstruction of presence and structures of authority in performance (Auslander 1994). In addition to the emptying of the character, the deconstruction of presence is also due to the conceptual approach of the collective's work, which does not rely on the direct representation of a dramaturgical text but instead creates its texts and guides of performance[5].

The understanding of the use of new media as a strategy for deconstructing presence, defended by authors such as Pontbriand (1982), Fuchs (1985), Auslander (1999) or Féral (1985, 1992), has been reinforced by the valorization of the experience of presence in theater, performance and the arts in general with particular emphasis on the processes of producing presence through technological means. Thus, as Pontbriand (1982, pp. 155–56) argues, "presence no longer depends on materiality, but on the exhibition value of the work of art, its multiplicity and its accessibility". Presence, understood as 'being in front of', 'in the face of' something or someone who is 'other', always implies plurality and otherness and occurs in the dynamic between production and performance and in the reception of that presence.

Cusack (2007) also questions the increasingly dominant function of technology in performance, stating that the question is not what happens to the body and the living presence of the actor/performer but rather how to re-imagine the 'live' in a radically

networked digital world, where the experiences of presence for both the performer and the spectator are increasingly mediated.

Presence does not belong to a particular medium or living body but is produced through performative, live and mediated moments (Dinis 2020). The technological means of artistic expression allow the integration of different arts in the same work, and in this sense, the means allow dialogue and communication between different artistic realities. At the same time, these technological, audiovisual and/or multimedia media are auxiliary means of reproduction of the artistic object, becoming themselves artistic objects, distinct and autonomous forms of art, linked only by ties of descent from the other arts. Technological means, especially audiovisual media, must then be seen as a bridge between art objects and not as an artistic goal.

Audiovisual creations are an extension of the emotions and senses of the individual through media, making it possible to experience sensations that would otherwise be out of reach. The presence of performers is thus articulated in the relationship between live and mediated performance, in the tension between the isolation of bodies and technological encounter, in how physical and electronic presences are interdependent and complementary rather than exclusive or antagonistic and in the dynamics between performance and reception of that presence in the performative moments.

3. Performative Moments

In these performative moments, where the relationship of presence in a mediated performance is established, it is important to reflect on the concepts of performative space and time in performative practice that promotes a symbolic liturgy. A work of art can be completely liberated from space (Goldberg 2007), since all spaces in which any action can be performed attended by at least one person can be considered performative spaces (Rancière 2010; Alvarez 2004). However, in the case of performance, it is necessary to have an adjusted understanding of the conception of this performative space so that it can be assumed as such.

The experience of space is based on two conceptions linked with performative space: (i) the space that is conceived as a space that must be filled; (ii) the space that is conceived as invisible, unlimited and linked to its beneficiaries by coordinates, displacements and trajectories and observed as a substance to be extended. These two conceptions of space correspond to two different ways of describing it: the external objective space and the gestural space (Pavis 2003).

In addition to these conceptions of performative space, we can also highlight the multiplicity of other performative spaces and/or the adaptation of spaces with other functions, such as performance venues. These are conceptions of space that are intrinsically linked to a language of their own, where concepts such as performance and improvisation extend the limits of performance (Artaud 1996; Brook 2008; Rancière 2010).

This opens up new possibilities, recursive processes, repetitions, nonlinear structures, simultaneous events and a mixture of languages, where time, performative space and the performativity developed between the performer and the spectator are related with greater choice, with the cooperation of different means and often with the appropriation and invasion of new spatiality and in different performative moments (Dinis 2020).

These performative moments are the artistic expression in themselves, since they are the encounter of the performers, through their work, with the spectators and with their fruition. Thus, live audiovisual performance proposes the moment as an artistic expression that will always be a po(i)etic event (Duque 2018). Despite the possibilities of technologies for infinite repetition, the conceived performative moment is unique. This is because the quality of unrepeatability is not the result of chance or the unexpected, as is common between rehearsed and improvised performances. This quality is the result of the unrepeatable dynamic between the audience and the artists, in the way the latter react (albeit emotionally) to the sound and visual work of the performers, and also the dynamic between the artists themselves (Dinis 2020).

The conditions of the space also have an impact on the performance (Howell 2022), thanks to some specific qualities. The spaces that host these practices of the moment are of variable typology: gallery, theater, cinema hall and museum, but can also include outdoor spaces, and found spaces, among other spaces that are momentarily contextualized as artistic, such as religious places.

Religious places are spaces where special, intangible qualities can be revealed as a kind of quality that makes a place special (Barrie 2010). Qualities that are intertwined with the sense of place, the genius loci, which concerns fewer observable qualities in an environment, such as character and atmosphere (Norberg-Schulz 1988). These are spaces that seek to create a place of spiritual connection and reinforce the ontological religious positions in the world, where an interaction with the sacred is found and where the meaning and significance of human existence are intensified (Barrie 2010). These are also spaces that invite contemplation of the divine mystery in the built form and encourage a deeper understanding of the construction of place, our presence in the space and our role in human life. Space is not only transformed into place through meaning, and the religious place has an intangible meaning that is revealed in its spatial constructions (Norberg-Schulz 1979).

In this sense, religious places are relational and contingent, experienced and understood differently by different people, because they are multiple, contested, fluid and uncertain, producing multiple effects on the individual and provoking different transformations throughout live audiovisual performative moments.

During these live audiovisual performative moments in religious places, sound and image become convergent expressive processes, configuring a production of effects of presence, stimulating a representation of memory and promoting the creation of new immaterial meanings. The articulation between sound and image also promotes the creation of new narratives, making them denser and more immersive in artistic figuration, reflecting the complementarity of place and time, and opening new performative paths that are developed and experienced in live audiovisual performances.

4. Performativity of Memory

The notion of performativity was introduced into linguistic theory by the British philosopher John Langshaw Austin (1962) in his lecture series, "How to Do Things with Words", at Harvard University in 1955 and subsequently discussed by several authors[6].

The notion of performativity has also been developed within the field of performance studies. In this sense, the concept of performativity is elaborated at the moment when the performative act takes place, where performance and life intersect, in a sequential construction of different intersections where the effects of the real and the fictional are dissolved (Fernandes 2011). It is a space and time where the particularities of fiction, developed through performance, and the understandings of social life, guided by the real, come together in a 'doing' where their imaginary boundaries are transgressed.

It can also be said that the notions of performativity consider 'the other', the spectator, as a collaborator in the performative game. The spectator, in turn, can observe and be observed, affect and be affected, configuring an aesthetic experience characterized by open and procedural actions, thus promoting a resignification of experience (von Hantelmann 2014).

Performativity also develops the proposition of the actor/performer's own body as discourse (Austin 1962). For Féral (2015), artists who engage in and carry out performative actions are first and foremost generators of energy flows that transcend the notion of representation without fixing or focusing on it. As a border art, performance highlights the performer's body in all its fragility, autonomy and often in its insubordination to a script previously conceived by the performer himself, since the experience given by the performative moment can contaminate the content of the proposal, redirecting the performer to other possible places. Consequently, the interferences (or contaminations) of space, light, sound and audience mediate the performer's experience in space, unfolding the process of performing the work live, valuing the process over the notion of a finished product. This leads to another point emphasized by Féral, the 'total involvement of the

artist' (Féral 2015), in which the performer invests in a strong presence, not worrying about the formalisms of a message, but transforming his body into a discourse.

Performativity, in this sense, escapes the intention of traditional aesthetic theory, as it resists the hermeneutic disputes of understanding the work of art, falling within what Krauss (1990) has called a 'lived bodily perspective' or what Taylor (2022, p. 90) describes as "a process of becoming, of coming into being".

For Fischer-Lichte (2007), understanding the artist's actions is less important than experiencing them, crossing the proposed event. Participation in the experience provokes such a range of sensations that it transcends the possibility and effort of interpretation and the production of meaning and cannot be overcome or resolved by reflection. This is not to say that in a performance there is nothing for the spectator to interpret, but neither can it be said that the actions of the performance artist alone mean something.

The notion of performativity is linked to art as a network of exchange between artistic action and audience, guided not only by the sense of scenic representation but also by the approximation of art and life and the dilution of the boundaries that configure them (Dinis 2022). Through the mutual contamination between performer and spectator, some territories previously demarcated and/or at least thought of by the actor are dissolved for the construction of new, more uncertain territories. It can thus be said that performativity has brought about new configurations in the relationship between spectator and performance, leading the audience from matrices that operate beyond the narrative to aspects of physical proximity (Dinis 2022). The spectator is made aware of his participation in an artistic work, extrapolating the character of an observer to be framed as a co-participant.

In this way, performativity escapes the commonplace of everyday corporeality, creating mechanisms of continuous movement, diluting permanent boundaries, and seeking to destabilize the previously clear differences of everyday life, starting from the physical experience as a motto for spatial transgression (Fernandes 2011). In this sense, performativity acts through sounds and images, through plasticity, in the materiality of the interactions between the presentation space and the audience.

In the materiality of the interactions, the place becomes a resizing of the presentation space, endowed with sensations, affections and allusions to the lived experience, a place that retains within itself, its meaning and its dimensions of the movement of history in formation, as a movement of life, that can be grasped through memory, through the senses and the body (Carlos 1996).

Memories are important lived records that start from remembering and that eternalize places as references and scenarios for a constant visit to the past, bringing with them the most diverse feelings, documented and mentioned in narratives, imaginations and perceptions. Thus, as Nora (1993) points out, places of memory are places in the three senses of the word: material, symbolic and functional. Even a place of purely material appearance is only a place of memory if your imagination gives it a symbolic aura. They are therefore places that add a history full of complicities, meanings, affectivities and belonging.

Memory is stratified in place, searching for inscriptions and signs of absence that describe the memory of the place. As the place accumulates memories in layers that, when added together, form a unique profile, the place of memory emerges, where the community sees significant parts of its past of immeasurable affective value (Gastal 2002). The places of memory and the memories of the place, individual and collective, combine in the search for instruments to reinforce identity and singularity, thus strengthening the sense of belonging.

Memory is also inscribed over time, in the displacement between places, and the perspectives gained from immersion in these places. Places thus have a profound effect on thoughts and interpretations that arise from the way they have been felt through the body, founding the materiality of these places on aspects of representation. It is therefore a matter of giving new conceptual guidelines to the narratives of places by creating new conceptual guides.

The issue of memory and the tendency to expand its scope, considering the role of the performance of corporeal and noncorporeal practices (Hoelscher 2004), makes it so that

there is a diversity of approaches and that it is observed from several areas that look at the memory and the remembrance of the remodeled place, especially through its collective forms, to give itself a coherent identity, a narrative and a place in the world (Said 2000).

In the site-specific projects developed as part of this research, we start from the theme of memory as a phenomenon that allows the present creation of an absence (Ricoeur 2004), and we assume that any work of memory seems to imply a work of representation, which is amplified by the unique characteristics of religious places. Inherent in this work of representation is also a process of remembering that precedes a process of constructing sounds and images: sounds that are imagined to have been heard, images that are imagined to have already been visualized and sounds and images that are understood as assistants in the living experience of memory construction, promoting performativity of memory during live audiovisual performances.

It is a performativity that acts through sound and image, in the materiality of the interactions between places of memory and memories, individual and collective, place and public, in performances where the most important thing is not what the work seeks to signify or symbolize but the crossing of the experience—a crossing of the experience that goes beyond the possibility and effort of interpretation and the production of meaning, beyond pure reflection or rational interpretation, in a symbolic ritual action that mediates this performativity of memory.

During the performative moments of the site-specific projects, the performative aspects of memory are emphasized, highlighting the active and constructive nature of memory that challenges the view of memory as a passive container of past events, focusing on how memory is represented, shaped and influenced by various social, cultural and spatial factors.

In this sense, memory is interpreted as a performative action, an active and performative process rather than a simple retrieval of stored information. Memory is not seen as a static reproduction of the past but as a dynamic and creative act that involves interpretation, reconstruction and (re)contextualization. Thus, memories are shaped and influenced by the present moment in which they are reminded through an embodied perception of place. This embodied perception of place, facilitated by a performativity of the memory, can have several implications for audiences and their experiences, particularly in religious places.

Religious places often have significant cultural and historical value and embody the collective memory, ritual actions and traditions of a community. The ritual and performative actions related to the memory of and in these places reinforce a shared history and help to shape a personal and communal sense of 'self'. The embodied perception of place in religious places thus evokes deep emotional and spiritual experiences, intensifying emotional connection and facilitating a sensory experience that contributes to an immersive experience in a defined space-time. So, experiences with site-specific projects become an integral part of the site-specific projects and the meaning of these site-specific projects manifests itself in an experience (von Hantelmann 2014).

5. Methodology

Research through artistic practice is a process of constant questioning because, unlike other academic research models, it generates knowledge based on the experience and practice developed by artists. In this sense, since this practice is singular, unique and particular, it must be transmitted through models that correspond to its nature and through this can make use of various discursive and representational strategies.

One of the main characteristics of research through artistic practice lies in the claim that the results of research and the production of knowledge must be realized through the symbolic language produced and in the form of the practice of researcher-artists. This makes the process of research through artistic practice challenging, as the construction of any proposed approach constitutes a kind of productive uncertainty, a zone for temporary 'constructions' of concepts and contingent thinking.

The projects, developed according to a hybrid methodology and largely executed as works in progress, can be understood as an alternative form of investigative practice,

close to the recent dynamics of practice-as-research, which diverges from the context of traditional arts, driving the creation of new approaches and expanding the limits of these.

According to Witkin (2011), research is generally seen as providing important knowledge for practice, while practice can provide contextual relevance for research. However, differences in goals, language, expertise, audience and environment, among others, keep the two separate. Thus, the theme of 'practice-as-research', as adopted here, refers to beliefs and values about practice and research that create an understood gap between the current state of affairs and a more desirable panorama (Witkin 2011).

In addition to the differences mentioned by this author, three other characteristics have been presented as reasons for the separation of practice and research. These are creativity, mutability and presence. However, we defend that these characteristics can also be seen as points of convergence, as they are present in both practice and research.

To confirm this convergence, a series of site-specific research projects have been developed in religious places through artistic practice, under a format and with their language of expression, to analyze and develop functional methods and strategies linked to the development of artistic creations and the proposition of forms of their presentations. This research, through artistic practice, is developed around two main elements: the process of approaching the context of the place and the (de)construction of the sense of place, according to the approach developed by Dinis (2022).

The process of approaching the context of the place began by interacting with the places to apprehend and understand them and was carried out through permanence and several movements in them. In this sense, the site-specific projects developed in religious places are seen as a practice of memory, through which sound and visual narratives have been constructed, effective for the formulation of their corporeality and that of those who observe and receive them in the performative moments.

As a practice of memory and the materialization of this memory, each site-specific project is the result of a systematized methodology, at different times, in the approach to the place, evaluating the different levels of permanence and modalities of access to information, the relationship established with the place and the objectives defined by each site-specific project.

The methodology adopted fits into a process of research through artistic practice, since it is the practice that guides the research, and the research involves practical knowledge that can be particularly demonstrated in practice—that is, knowledge that is a matter of doing, rather than being conceived in the abstract and therefore able to be articulated only in words through a traditional research approach (Nelson 2013). This knowledge grows out of a mixture of practical and observational engagement with the beings and existences around (Ingold 2013), and its research involving works of art or artistic practice inevitably reflects an empirical dimension (Nevanlinna 2002).

This view is reinforced by Nelson (2013) when this author argues that the process of research through artistic practice involves a research project in which practice is a key method of investigation and, concerning the arts, where the practice is presented as substantive evidence of research.

Taylor (1985) suggests that these practices are semantic spaces that are indistinguishable from the language that is used to describe, invoke or perform them. These forms of research differ from the conventional methodologies traditionally recognized by the academy, precisely to be able to welcome and elaborate on questions that are intrinsically linked to the object of research and that go through several paths of formulating a hypothesis for its subsequent confirmation or refutation.

It coincides with the idea of exploring what emerges, adding that the process of research through artistic practice transcends and interweaves 'place', 'self', 'body', 'experience', 'mind', 'sensation', 'analysis', 'articulation', 'memory' and 'argument', often in idiosyncratically created structures.

This idea is also reinforced by authors such as Haseman (2006), Barrett and Bolt (2007), Kershaw and Nicholson (2011), Bonnenfant (2012), Leavy (2015) and Bala et al. (2017) when

they argue that because this artistic practice is individual, unique and particular, these models of research through artistic practice can be adapted using different approaches, as in a process of artistic research all aspects are often in motion and development (Arlander 2012). Thus, there is no general form of research that the researcher-artist can attempt to approximate, just as there is no universally accepted concept of art on which to base art-based research (Arlander 2012).

The research-creation projects of this research develop two components, the process of approaching the site-specific and the (de)construction of the sense of place, following a research approach through artistic practice (Dinis 2022), which is anchored in a 'discovery-led' research methodology (Rubidge 2005) and in concepts such as 'the undermind' (Claxton 1997, 'primary consciousness' (Edelman and Tononi 2001) and 'extended consciousness' (Damasio 2004).

The process of approaching the site-specific began with the interaction with the three religious places (Tree of Life Chapel, Chapel of the Immaculate and Church of Cedofeita) and was carried out through permanence and movements within them. The slow pace of these two actions allowed not only their registration but also the assimilation of the sensations of discovering the places, which were ordered from the memories of the places, thus highlighting the dimension of sensitive and affective experience (Jackson 1994). Observing the physical and digital records of the two actions carried out during the fieldwork, we noticed that they did not involve a subjective organization of the place but an intervention in the order of the elements presented. Thus, in this permanence and these movements, there is an intention to reorder the place and to create new local narratives, permeated with emotion, in a strategy of observing and assembling the atmosphere.

The site-specific projects focused on these three specific places, the Tree of Life Chapel, the Chapel of the Immaculate and the Church of Cedofeita, and started from the identification of elements of the context of the place, focusing on their ability to testify to symbolic aspects of the place, to inventory its memory and to reconstruct experiences of the place itself—memories and experiences that were used as guiding elements of the performative moments carried out in this research.

The process of research through artistic practice is understood by us as part of the temporal cycle of the work of art, in which its integral parts are thought together in a continuous iteration of research and action that we tend to consider appropriate to the performativity that we wish to substantiate (Dinis 2022).

The site-specific projects developed in this research were unfolded in a series of fundamental elements related to their design and realization[7]. We also consider that other information available for reading and viewing[8] is an integral and fundamental part of this essay. In addition to providing access to recordings and images of each of the creations, their consultation presents additional documentation on the process of the design, research, presentation and reception of each of the projects. Taken as a whole, these materials deepen and illustrate the paths of research through artistic practice and are therefore materials inherent to creative making itself, rightly understood as reflective practice. These three projects guarantee the thematic, temporal and spatial heterogeneity of the practical work developed within the conceptual framework of this research.

The site-specific projects were developed in two phases, the fieldwork and the creation of the sound and visual components, and followed a conceptual model of approach to place (Dinis 2022). The fieldwork covered the research process, which included reading and analyzing bibliographies about the places, interacting with these places, capturing and perceiving their environment, writing down sensations and local atmospheres, recording routines and activities in photographic and video media, sound recordings and visual recordings, and elaborating on the conceptual guide for the sound and visual component. The creation and production of the sound and visual component took place in the studio.

In the performative moments, the artist/performer is considered not only as an operator of the media that constitute, in this case, sound and image, but also as a mediator, as a creator and, consequently, as a narrator who constructs the sound and visual narratives.

At the end of each performative moment, a conversation with the audience was facilitated to get feedback on the performance and the development of the site-specific project.

From the implementation of the conceptual model of approach to place (Dinis 2022), in each of the religious places the meanings of the site-specific projects were found. These include the themes (activators of performativity) of each of the religious places chosen for the fieldwork, namely shelter (Tree of Life Chapel), humility (Chapel of the Immaculate) and fragility (Church of Cedofeita).

Inside the Conciliar Seminary of Saints Peter and Paul in Braga is the Tree of Life Chapel, a place that appeals to the senses and emotions, the result of the joint work of seminarians, teachers, architects, artists, sculptors, goldsmiths, painters, carpenters and masons. It is a wooden shelter in which the various embedded beams create a fascinating play of light and shadow, giving the chapel a luminous appearance. The public presentation of the performance[9], entitled *the slowness of waiting and echoing*, took place on 20 December 2022 in the Tree of Life Chapel of the Conciliar Seminary in Braga (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *The slowness of waiting and echoing* (20 December 2022, Tree of Life Chapel of the Conciliar Seminary, Braga).

A small forest gives access to the Chapel of the Immaculate, located in the Minor Seminary of Braga. Passing through this forest, one reaches a clearing that serves as the entrance to the assembly. All the elements of the assembly create an atmosphere of humility, conducive to introspection. There is also a 'body of light', a white marble panel suspended from a steel structure, through which an abundance of natural light floods the space, creating a qualified luminosity. The public presentation of the performance[10], entitled *the wander that aggregates and contains*, took place on 3 March 2023 in the Chapel of the Immaculate of the Seminary of Our Lady of the Conception in Braga (Figure 2).

The Church of Cedofeita is a monumental and brutal concrete structure that highlights the use of raw materials such as stone and wood. A space where time, silence and materials promote the complementarity between authenticity and fragility, and which seeks to respond to the main variables of space, time and silence, materialized in a place where autonomy and dialogue meet. The public presentation of the performance[11], entitled *the delay in searching and meeting*, took place on 2 June 2023 in the Church of Cedofeita in Porto (Figure 3).

Figure 2. *The wander that aggregates and contains* (3 March 2023, Chapel of the Immaculate of the Seminary of Our Lady of the Conception, Braga).

Figure 3. *The delay in searching and meeting* (2 June 2023, Church of Cedofeita, Porto).

Given the constant overlap between the themes of the site-specific projects (shelter, humility and fragility), the observation of the residual artifacts produced as part of the public presentations and the public feedback, we undertake that religious places are shelters for those seeking refuge, as they provide a space where one can find consolation, peace and a sense of spiritual connection, creating an atmosphere conducive to spiritual contemplation and inner reflection. These places can serve as a reminder of the importance of humility in a spiritual approach, fostering an attitude of openness, surrender and willingness to learn and grow spiritually. They are also places that inspire reflection on the fragility and impermanence of human life, inviting people to transcend their fragility and connect with something greater and more enduring, throughout the performative moments.

6. Conclusions

The concept of performance has been understood through different perceptions resulting from different disciplinary approaches, artistic fields or cultural contexts. Due to this conceptual openness and the diversity of creative practices, performance, as an action

before an audience, offers great potential for experimentation through the confluence of sound and visual media.

With its technological appropriation and expansion into other media, performance has stood out among the creative practices of recent decades, allowing a decentralization of the body/performer, thus opening up to other media and other materialities, such as sound or image. In the context of this decentralization, throughout this essay, we have sought to rethink and reflect on the notion of the connections between performer, spectator and religious place.

Through audiovisual mediation, we have verified that presence is produced in live performative moments and that sound and image become expressive processes in the production of these effects of presence since it is these that most obviously contribute to the production of meaning and the manifestation of the artistic work. In this way, audiovisual media should be seen as a bridge between art objects and not as an artistic destination, allowing dialogue and communication between different artistic realities.

The performative moments promote new possibilities, recursive processes, repetitions, nonlinear structures, simultaneous events and combinations of languages, where time, performative space and the performativity developed between the performer and the spectator are related with greater freedom and with the cooperation of different media, approximating them to moments that promote a symbolic liturgy.

In these live audiovisual performative moments, sound and image become convergent expressive processes, configuring the production of effects of presence and enhancing the representation of memory. The articulation between sound and live image also stimulates the creation of new narratives, making them denser and more immersive in artistic figuration, reflecting the complementarity of space and time, and opening new performative paths that are developed and experienced in live audiovisual performances, namely in religious places.

In the site-specific projects developed as part of this research, we start from the theme of memory as a phenomenon that allows the present creation of an absence, and we assume that the work of memory seems to imply a work of representation. This work of representation also involves a process of remembering that precedes a process of constructing sounds and images. These sounds and images are understood as tools in the living experience of memory construction, promoting a performativity of memory during the live sound and visual performances presented in performative moments.

During these performative moments of the site-specific projects that have been developed, the performative aspects of memory are highlighted, focusing on how memory is represented, shaped and influenced by various social, cultural, religious and spatial factors. These moments play a crucial role in the process of perception and apprehension, making use of the spatial qualities of places as they stimulate multiple senses, evoke emotional and psychological responses, take into account contextual meaning and encourage audience engagement.

The places chosen for fieldwork are spaces where particular intangible qualities can be revealed as a kind of quality that makes them special places. They are places that seek to create a spiritual connection and strengthen religious ontological positions in the world, where there is an interaction with the sacred and where the meaning and significance of human existence are intensified. This embodied perception of space in these religious places, through the performativity of memory, has an impact on the public because it promotes a sense of belonging and identity, evokes emotional and spiritual involvement, reinforces rituals and memories, allows for symbolic (re)interpretations and encourages a deeper understanding of the formation of place, our presence in religious places and our role in human life.

Throughout the development of this research and the development of site-specific projects, these (re)interpretations raised some issues about the perception and understanding of site-specific performances through the mediation of nonverbal means in religious places, to which we sought to respond.

In this sense, we observed that the performativity of memory, as an autobiographical concept, can be enhanced through live audiovisual performances in religious places by incorporating narratives and testimonies that have a connection to the place and by integrating sound and images that evoke memories and autobiographical experiences, highlighting the individual and subjective nature of memory in the spatial context of the place itself.

We have established that the performativity of memory in religious places can also promote a spatial 'self' through live audiovisual performances, creating dynamic, immersive and physical experiences in the spatial context of the religious place. This is achieved through the use of visual elements that can transform the architectural features of the place, evoke symbolism or represent narratives and iconography of the place itself, creating a deeper connection to the place and the memories related to it. The sound elements reinforce this spatial 'self', evoke emotional responses and trigger memories connected with the rituals and practices of the place. The confluence of sound and image also stimulates a multisensory experience in the here and now, reinforcing the sense of presence and connection of a spatial 'self' of the public to the place, grounding this spatiality in a contingent performative memory.

Finally, we argue that the construction of this spatial 'self' in live audiovisual performances in religious places, compelled by the performativity of memory, involves processes of social and artistic reconfiguration that contribute to transforming not only the social dynamics within the community but also the artistic representations of memory. Performative moments in religious places provide a platform for the community to shape its collective memory, contributing to the reconfiguration of social dynamics within the community and the recognition of diverse perspectives, thus fostering a sense of belonging and cohesion. These moments also involve artistic reconfigurations of practices, rituals and artistic forms, as they promote reinterpretations, representations or juxtapositions of narratives, symbolisms and religious aesthetics because of the multiple, contested, fluid and uncertain natures of these places. By reconfiguring artistic expressions, audiovisual performances stimulate creativity, artistic exploration and the formation of new aesthetic approaches that reflect contemporary sensibilities while respecting the identity of religious places.

From the residual artifacts produced and the feedback from the audience, collected during the conversations held after the performative moments, we also observed that the aesthetic and performative configurations used in audiovisual artistic creations of a place can have an impact on the most individual manifestations of religion, religiosity and religious belief, influencing the interpretation and creation of meaning, evoking emotional and spiritual responses, facilitating embedded engagement and promoting personal transformation and transcendence.

With this research through artistic practice, we also seek to anchor another sketch in the territories of performance, located between theory and practice, and the studies of religion in its multiple phenomena, traditions and grammar, questioning the aesthetic place of both today as essential tools for discovering new ways of understanding the contemporary culture and future directions on the aesthetic and performative configurations used in audiovisual artistic creations in religious places.

Due to the increasing interest in developing audiovisual artistic creations in religious places, the future directions on the aesthetic and performative configurations can include the development of immersive environments within religious places improving the experience of virtual pilgrimages or engaging in interactive narratives that enhance spiritual journeys, of interactive installations that can engage worshipers by allowing them to actively participate in the audiovisual experience. These future directions can also embrace multimedia storytelling through the use of multimedia platforms to convey stories, memories, religious narratives and personalized experiences with the use of wearable technology with curated content tailored to an individual's spiritual interests or beliefs, enhancing their engagement and understanding. Furthermore, and considering the above-mentioned conclusions, we believe it is important that future research work deepens the concept of spatial

self through its (re)construction based on ritual and belief and focusing on individual and collective remembrance processes.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: The Archdiocese of Braga, Conciliar Seminary of Braga, Minor Seminary of Braga, Collegiate Church and Parish of St Martin—Cedofeita, *Schola Cantorvm* Collegiate Church of Cedofeita, CITER—Research Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Faculty of Theology of the Portuguese Catholic University, Portuguese Catholic University, CEIS20—Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of the University of Coimbra, SELMA—Centre for the Study of Storytelling, Experientiality and Memory of the University of Turku, Institute of Education and Citizenship, Flying Thoughts—Association for the Promotion of Ideas, Braga Media Arts.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

1 Available at https://fredericodinis.wordpress.com/performance/lugares-religiosos/ (accessed on 1 June 2023). This website presents documentation of the research process through artistic practice and the performative moments. Taken together, these materials deepen and illustrate the paths followed by the research presented in this essay, being for this reason inherent materials to the creative process itself, understood precisely as a reflexive practice.

2 These publications include *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (Auslander 1999) by P. Auslander; *Remediation: Understanding new media* (2000) by J.D. Bolter and R. Grusin; *Multimedia: From Wagner to Virtual Reality* (2001) by R. Packer and K. Jordon; *The New Media Book* (2002) by D. Harries; *Prefiguring Cyberculture: An Intellectual History* (2002) by D. Tofts, A. Jonson and A. Cavallaro; *The New Media Reader* (Wardrip-Fruin and Montfort 2003) by N. Wardrip-Fruin and N. Montfort; *Performance and Technology: Practices of Virtual Embodiment and Interactivity* (2006) by S. Broadhurst and J. Machon; *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance* (2006) by F. Chapple and C. Kattenbelt; *Theatre and Performance in Digital Culture: From Simulation to Embeddedness* (2006) by M. Causey; *Postdramatic Theatre* (2006) by H-T. Lehmann; *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art and Installation* (Dixon 2007) by S. Dixon; *Closer: Performance, Technologies, Phenomenology* (2007) by S. Kozel; *Multi-Media: video–installation–performance* (2007) by N. Kaye; *A Philosophy of Computer Art* (2009) by D. Lopes; *New Media: A critical introduction* (2009) by M. Lister, J. Dovey, S. Giddings, K. Kelly and I. Grant; *Entangled: Technology and the Transformation of Performance* (2010) by C. Salter; *Mapping Intermediality* in *Performance* (2010) by S. Bay-Cheng, C. Kattenbelt, A. Lavender and R. Nelson; *Cyborg Theatre: Corporeal/Technological Intersections in Multimedia Performance* (2011) by J. Parker-Starbuck; *Performing Mixed Reality* (2011) by S. Benford and G. Giannachi; *Materializing New Media: Embodiment in information aesthetics* (2011) by A. Munster; *Multimedia Performance* (2012) by R. Klich and E. Scheer; *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Digital Media* (2014) by M-L. Ryan, L. Emerson and B. J. Robertson; *The Rhythmic Event: Art, Media, and the Sonic* (2014) by E. Ikoniadou; *Embodied Avatars: Genealogies of Black Feminist Art and Performance* (2015) by U. McMillan; *Black Performance on the Outskirts of* the *Left* (2017) by M. Gaines; *Transmission in Motion: The Technologizing of Dance* (2016) by M. Bleeker; *Performance in the Twenty-First Century: Theatres of Engagement* (2016) by A. Lavender; *The Delayed Present: Media-induced Tempor (e) alities & Techno-traumatic Irritations of "the* Contemporary" (2017) by W. Ernst; *Intermedial Theater: Performance Philosophy, Transversal Poetics, and the Future of Affect* (2017) by B. Reynolds; *Immersive Embodiment: Theatres of Mislocalized Sensation* (2019) by L. Jarvis; *Digital Theatre: The Making and Meaning of Live Mediated Performance* (2020) by N. Masura; among others.

3 In Beckett's *Come and Go* (1975) by the Mabou Mines, the set consisted of a huge mirror almost the full width of the stage, positioned slightly below the level of the platform and tilted upward. The actors performed on a mezzanine behind and above the audience, so that the audience could only see their own reflection in the mirror. This staging shattered the usual expectations of physical presence and contact between actors and audience (Fuchs 1985) and was characterized at the time as a 'theatre of absence', marked by the failure of the theatrical enterprise of the spontaneous word with its logocentric claims to origin, authority, authenticity, in short, of presence (Fuchs 1985).

4 One example is the work of The Wooster Group, in which the actors do not try to build a character but perform actions using the personal characteristics of each actor.

5 The creations are almost always the result of the collision, collage and assembly of multiple elements, including moving image, computer programming, light, sound and dance, resulting in a dense and highly dynamic web of overlapping text, media and performance (Dinis 2020).

[6] See also Derrida (1988), Butler (1990), Bätschmann (1997), Sans (1998), Taylor (2003), Hall (1997), von Hantelmann (2010, 2014) and Féral (2015), all of whom wrote about the notion of performativity, a keyword within the discourse of contemporary art and aesthetics.

[7] https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/4yh7wkzmj8j91cdqcuppc/p-s-doc-mapa-mental.pdf?rlkey=ocvgea2tcegrtjujav64u6keu&dl=0 (accessed on 1 June 2023).

[8] Available at https://fredericodinis.wordpress.com/performance/lugares-religiosos/ (accessed on 1 June 2023).

[9] The residual artifacts produced as part of the public presentation held in the Tree of Life Chapel of the Conciliar Seminary, in Braga, are available at https://fredericodinis.wordpress.com/2022/12/21/capela-arvore-da-vida/ (accessed on 1 June 2023).

[10] The residual artifacts produced as part of the public presentation, held in the Chapel of the Immaculate of the Seminary of Our Lady of the Conception in Braga, are available at https://fredericodinis.wordpress.com/2023/03/06/capela-da-imaculada/ (accessed on 15 June 2023).

[11] The residual artifacts produced as part of the public presentation, held at the Church of Cedofeita, in Porto, are available at https://fredericodinis.wordpress.com/2023/06/03/igreja-de-cedofeita/ (accessed on 16 June 2023).

References

Alvarez, José Carlos, ed. 2004. *Roteiro [Do] Museu Nacional Do Teatro*. Lisboa: IMC.

Arlander, Annette. 2012. *Performing Landscape—Notes on Site-Specific Work and Artistic Research (Texts 2001–2011)*. Helsinki: Theatre Academy Helsinki, Performing Arts Research Centre.

Artaud, Antonin. 1996. *O Teatro e o seu Duplo*. Lisboa: Fenda.

Auslander, Philip. 1994. *Presence and Resistance*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Auslander, Philip. 1999. *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Austin, John Langshaw. 1962. *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Bala, Sruti, Milija Gluhovic, Hanna Korsberg, and Kati Röttger. 2017. *International Performance Research Pedagogies: Towards an Unconditional Discipline?* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Barrett, Estelle, and Barbara Bolt. 2007. *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Barrie, Thomas. 2010. *The Sacred In-Between: The Mediating Roles of Architecture*. New York: Routledge.

Bätschmann, Oskar. 1997. *Ausstellungskünstler*. Cologne: DuMont.

Bonnenfant, Yvon. 2012. A portrait of the current state of PaR: Defining an (in)discipline. In *PaR for the Course: Issues Involved in the Development of Practice-Based Doctorates in the Performing Arts*. Edited by June Boyce-Tillman. Winchester: The Higher Education Academy Arts and Humanities.

Brook, Peter. 2008. *O Espaço Vazio*. Lisboa: Orfeu Negro.

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Carlos, Ana. 1996. *O lugar no/do mundo*. São Paulo: Hucitec.

Carlson, Marvin. 2004. What is performance? In *The Performance Studies Reader*. Edited by Henry Bial and Sara Brady. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 68–72.

Claxton, Guy. 1997. *Hare Brain, Tortoise Mind*. London: Fourth Estate.

Cusack, Tim. 2007. Is it live? *Stage Directions* 11: 52–54.

Damasio, António. 2004. *Looking for Spinoza*. London: Vintage.

Derrida, Jacques. 1988. *Limited Inc*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Dinis, Frederico. 2020. Sinuous Sensations Hypnotic Emotions: Contemporary Sound and Visual Performance. Ph.D. thesis, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal.

Dinis, Frederico. 2021. The confluence between materiality and immateriality in site-specific sound and visual performances. In *Multidisciplinary Perspectives on New Media Art*. Edited by Emília Simão and Célia Soares. Pennsylvania: IGI Global.

Dinis, Frederico. 2022. *Caderno de Representações da Memória*. Coimbra: Pensamento Voador.

Dixon, Steve. 2007. *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press.

Duque, João. 2018. Ritualidade da arte: Performatividade da memória. *Rever* 18: 11–30. [CrossRef]

Edelman, Gerald, and Giulio Tononi. 2001. *Consciousness: From Matter to Imagination*. London: Penguin.

Féral, Josette. 1985. *Performance et Théâtralité, le Sujet Desmistifié. Théâtralité, Écriture et Mise en Scène*. Quèbec: Hurtubise, pp. 125–40.

Féral, Josette. 1992. What is left of performance art? Autopsy of a function. Birth of a genre. *Discourse* 14: 142–62.

Féral, Josette. 2015. *Além dos limites: Teoria e prática do teatro*. São Paulo: Perspectiva.

Fernandes, Silvia. 2011. Teatralidades e performatividade na cena contemporânea. *Repertório: Teatro & Dança* 16: 11–21.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. 2007. Réalité et Fiction dans le Théâtre Contemporain. *Registres/Revue d'Études Théatrales-Théâtres du Contemporain* 11/12: 7–22.

Fischer-Lichte, Erika. 2012. Appearing as embodied mind: De ning a weak, a strong and a radical concept of presence. In *Archeologies of Presence: Art, Performance and the Persistence of Being*. Edited by Gabriella Giannachi, Nick Kaye and Michael Shanks. New York: Routledge, pp. 103–18.

Fonseca, Fernanda Irene. 1992. *Deixis, Tempo e Narração*. Porto: Fundação Eng. António de Almeida.
Fuchs, Elinor. 1985. Presence and the revenge of writing. *Performing Arts Journal* 9: 163–73. [CrossRef]
Gastal, Susana. 2002. Lugar de memória: Por uma nova aproximação teórica ao património local. In *Turismo investigação e crítica*. Edited by Susana Gastal. São Paulo: Contexto, pp. 69–81.
Goldberg, RoseLee. 2007. *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*. London: Thames and Hudson.
Hall, Stuart. 1997. The Spectacle of the 'Other'. In *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Edited by Stuart Hall. London: Sage and The Open University, pp. 223–79.
Haseman, Brad. 2006. A Manifest for Performative Research. *Media International Australia* 118: 98–106. [CrossRef]
Hoelscher, Steven. 2004. Memory and place: Geographies of a critical Relationship. *Social & Cultural Geography* 5: 347–55.
Howell, Charles. 2022. The Edge of Perception: Gordon Matta-Clark's Hermeneutic of Place and the Possibilities of Absence for the Theological Imagination. *Religions* 13: 920. [CrossRef]
Ingold, Tim. 2013. *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture*. London: Routledge.
Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. 1994. *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time*. Yale University Press: New Haven.
Kershaw, Baz, and Helen Nicholson, eds. 2011. *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
Krauss, Rosalind. 1990. The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum. *October* 54: 9. [CrossRef]
Leavy, Patricia. 2015. *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*. Paris: Guilford Publications.
Nelson, Robin. 2013. *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances*. Berlin: Springer.
Nevanlinna, Tuomas. 2002. Is 'Artistic Research' a meaningful concept? In *Artistic Research*. Edited by Saija Kiljunen and Mika Hannula. Helsinki: Fine Art Academy, pp. 61–71.
Nora, Pierre. 1993. *Entre Memória e História: A problemática dos lugares*. São Paulo: Dez.
Norberg-Schulz, Christian. 1979. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli.
Norberg-Schulz, Christian. 1988. *Architecture: Meaning and Place*. New York: Rizzoli.
Pavis, Patrice. 2003. *A análise dos espetáculos*. São Paulo: Perspetiva.
Phelan, Peggy. 1993. *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. London and New York: Routledge.
Pontbriand, Chantal. 1982. The eye finds no fixed point on which to rest. *Modern Drama* 25: 154–62.
Rancière, Jacques. 2010. *O Espectador Emancipado*. Lisboa: Orfeu Negro.
Ricoeur, Paul. 2004. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Rubidge, Sarah. 2005. Artists in the academy: Reflections on artistic practice as research. In *Dance Rebooted: Initializing the Grid*. Burwood: Deakin University.
Said, Eduard. 2000. Invention, memory, and place. *Critical Inquiry* 26: 175–92. [CrossRef]
Saltz, David. 2013. Media, technology, and performance. *Theatre Journal, Baltimore* 65: 421–32. [CrossRef]
Sans, Jérôme. 1998. *Daniel Buren: Au sujet de. . . Entretien avec Jérôme Sans*. Paris: Flammarion.
Silva, Susana Mendes. 2011. A Performance Enquanto Encontro Íntimo. Ph.D. thesis, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal.
Taylor, Allan S. 2022. *Authenticity as Performativity on Social Media*. Berlin: Springer Nature.
Taylor, Charles. 1985. *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Collected Papers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, vol. 2.
Taylor, Diana. 2003. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press.
von Hantelmann, Dorothea. 2010. *How to Do Things with Art: The Meaning of Art's Performativity*. Manchester: Cornerhouse.
von Hantelmann, Dorothea. 2014. The Experiential Turn. In *On Performativity*. Edited by Elizabeth Carpenter. Living Collections Catalogue. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, vol. 1.
Wardrip-Fruin, Noah. 2006. Expressive Processing: On Process-Intensive Literature and Digital Media. Ph.D. thesis, Brown University, Providence, RI, USA.
Wardrip-Fruin, Noah, and Nick Montfort. 2003. *The New Media Reader*. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press.
Witkin, Stanley L. 2011. Why Do We Think Practice Research is a Good Idea? *Social Work & Society* 9: 10–19.

MDPI
St. Alban-Anlage 66
4052 Basel
Switzerland
www.mdpi.com

Religions Editorial Office
E-mail: religions@mdpi.com
www.mdpi.com/journal/religions

Academic Open
Access Publishing

mdpi.com

ISBN 978-3-0365-8925-1