

1. Introduction

Cultural tourism is one of the sector's most popular categories and is enjoying rapid growth. Within this category, cultural itineraries that seem to guarantee concrete results and promise responsible and inclusive tourism development are particularly successful. Seen as complex cultural products, itineraries can confer value on every single difference of culture and place, transforming them from a series of isolated local situations to a network of resources. Such itineraries serve to "reunite" and "recontextualise" many aspects of cultural heritage which, with the passage of time, have lost their original unity and the functions for which they were created (Baldacci, 2006: 12). The quality of the environment and the landscape, the historic contextualisation of the itinerary in terms of thematic content and the careful structuring of the individual routes are fundamental in the creation of the itinerary. In themselves however, these are not enough. The actual development that cultural tourism can generate depends on the concrete initiatives undertaken by national, regional and local authorities, as well as private-sector operators in all countries. Such initiatives require a spirit of cooperation that is regional rather than institutional, raising awareness among consumers and tourists of the cultural identity that derives from this collective memory (Bustreo, 2014: 126).

The literature on this theme is extensive, and is concerned with the type of cultural itinerary (e.g. Majdoub, 2010; Berti, 2012; Zabbini, 2012), the geographical contexts of reference (see Beltramo, 2013; Rizzo et al., 2013; Correia et al., 2017) and the national and international organisations and institutions that promote them and support them (Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2013; Berti and Mariotti, 2015; Graf and Popesku, 2016). Particularly striking is the increased number of papers focusing on religious routes and itineraries, which are no longer limited to an analytical distinction between pilgrimage and religious tourism (e.g. Hitrec, 1990; Cohen, 1992; 1998; Barber, 1993; Stoddard, 1997; Blackwell, 2007; Griffin, 2007; Damari and Mansfeld, 2014; Trono, 2014; Carbone et al., 2016) but seek to shed light on the current motives for such journeys (Trono, 2016), routes (Murray and Graham, 1997; Shackley, 2001; Raj and Morpeth, 2007; Gray and Winton, 2009; Herrero et al., 2009; Collins-Kreiner, 2010). There are also a considerable number of studies focusing on specific cases (e.g. those in Raj and Morpeth, 2007; Timothy and Olsen, 2006; Trono, 2009; Brayley, 2010; Lo Presti and Petrillo 2010; Cerrutti and Dioli, 2013; Rizzello and Trono, 2013; Santos and Cabrera, 2014). The present paper starts with a theoretical overview of the concepts of cultural and especially faith itineraries, their ancient and current meaning and the strategies designed to ensure their success and promote the development of sustainable tourism. It then indicates a number of sites, in the south of Italy through which St Peter the Apostle is said to have passed on his pastoral journey from the Holy Land to Rome. According to the biblical and proto-Christian tradition, Peter was considered the Prince of the Apostles and the foundation of the Church from the very birth of the new religion. Together with St Paul, the figure of Peter the evangelist, martyr and pilgrim is seen in numerous local traditions that share or claim the memory of his landing on their shores or passage through their lands, during his long journey from the Holy Land to Rome, which links the most important sites of Christianity's origins. The paper summarises the state of the art of ongoing research into the places that are connected to Peter's journey along the Italian peninsula towards Rome. On the basis of ancient sources and local memory, the research has identified and catalogued many cases, most of which are situated in Puglia (a region that has always functioned as a bridge between Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean), and others in the remaining regions of southern Italy.

The final result of the work is the indication of a route that recalls the historical and geographical dimensions of this singular story of the Mediterranean, highlighting its assets and attractions in terms of heritage and spirituality. This objective is part of attempts to plan the future of the Mediterranean in accordance with new principles and socio-political dynamics, imagining new possibilities for dialogue and cultural exchange, which have been neglected for so long. It also seeks to identify "positive signs and perspectives in both, past memories and future plans", which grant the *Mare Nostrum* a "continuation of history" and "an alternative renewal" (Signore, 2007: 20).

1. Cultural itineraries and the weight of history

The cultural itinerary falls within the logic of *homo viator*, the human being as a traveller over time, prompted to welcome the future, marvelling at the spectacle of the world, sharing knowledge and emotions, travelling in search of a dimension that transcends daily life.

The movement of individuals (or groups) from their habitual locations towards places considered 'holy' is part of the history of humanity. Even before they acquired a physiognomy of their own, routes of a devotional nature were already familiar to nomadic communities: their wanderings in search of psychological and physical stability contained a form of ritualisation of the journey, and the manifestations of this spirituality were identified with natural elements. As human beings adopted a more settled existence, they felt the need to aspire to transcendence and to set off once more. It was in the ancient world however that 'pilgrimage', as a devotional practice consisting of travelling to a place universally recognised to be sacred for votive or penitential purposes, was born (Figure 1)¹.

Figure 1. Graffiti left by pilgrims at the Temple of Karnak, the centre of an ancient Egyptian religious cult



Source: P. Davoli

Pilgrimage as a form of penitence and purification performed at sanctuaries and oracles began to spread properly in the fourth century AD. Throughout the Middle Ages it represented a fundamental, if not essential experience for believers. Large numbers of people travelled to pray, ask for grace or obtain an indulgence, knowing that they would have to face exhaustion and danger to reach the holy places. In those years, Europe became a crossroads of routes used by merchants, soldiers, travellers and pilgrims heading towards the holy places of Christianity. Indeed, «Every good Christian in the Middle Ages aspired to

¹ The term 'pilgrim', from the Latin word *peregrinus*, has its root in *per eger*, indicating a crossing of frontiers, or *per ager*, which means "through the fields". For the Romans, the *peregrinus* was simply a foreigner or a traveller (Lavarini, 1997:29). Because of their vulnerability, they required legal protection, hospitality and food during their journey. The practice had an economic and social impact: along the routes they followed, new roads and hostels were built, the facilities for travellers in monasteries were expanded, and markets sprang up.

undertake a pilgrimage, at some time in their lives, to at least one of the *tres peregrinationes maiores*: Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago de Compostela» (Arlotta, 2014).

With the fall of Byzantium (1453) and Otranto (1480) to Ottoman armies, the eastern Mediterranean became dramatically unsafe, cutting off or at least disrupting links with the Holy Land. This situation prompted Christians to draw up a new model of religious practice that dispensed with the long journey but still ensured the spiritual adherence to the cult of the saints and the origins of Christ. This led to the creation of an eminently European network of sanctuaries (Barbero, 2001), including numerous micro-pilgrimages on a local level, consecrated by popular devotion and preferred by the lower social classes who could not afford to go on long pilgrimages and visit the great sanctuaries of tradition.

Many of those routes remain popular today among those who wish to attempt a spiritual quest by means of a journey. They follow a pre-set itinerary, by now consolidated, and entail visits to both the religious monuments and the surrounding natural environment, generating an inseparable cultural unity with the landscapes of the sites. Some are famous and internationally recognised (see the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, the Via Francigena, the Way of St Olav), while many others are simply practised by pilgrims and tourists as part of local traditions and devotional pilgrimages. In terms of sanctuaries, a distinction can be made between the numerous small shrines of a local character, whose appeal is linked to the buildings themselves and the aura that surrounds them (their importance derives from their function as a point of reference for local worshippers and celebrations), and those that are interesting as a result of the landscape in which they are located. These sites are often obscure and may even be unknown to the local inhabitants. In many cases, such items have a high artistic and architectural value and an almost "palpable" potential as engines of economic and social development when "discovered" (Arslan, 2013; Rizzo et al., 2013).

While for the medieval pilgrim the road represented the most bitter and tiring aspect of pilgrimage (Lavarini, 1997: 361), today it has taken on a social and cultural value, providing an opportunity to meet other people and experience new things, to marvel at the landscapes, to conduct research or undertake a path of personal growth mediated by inner experience. The roads over which millions of pilgrims have walked in the course of the centuries are still the arteries of a faith that lives on, in accordance with distinct beliefs and forms of worship, in the hearts of a large part of the world's population. In many cases, those once dangerous paths have become consolidated itineraries with much that appeals to tourists who see the journey as an emotional, educational, social and participatory experience.

2. Cultural itineraries as an emotional experience and an opportunity for regional development

The structural changes affecting the economy and the contemporary cultural industry have given rise to the so-called *experience economy* (Pine and Gilmore, 2011), based on the production and sale of memorable events that have become the subject of interest for rapidly evolving cultural tourism. Cultural tourists now aspire to more dynamic and participatory ways of discovering a region, the perception of which is filtered by their sensitivity, culture and motivation.

Tourists are now more aware, involved and attentive to quality. They desire to discover the regions that they visit and learn about their history and the components of their identity: landscapes, villages, churches, traditions, crafts and gastronomy. Increasing numbers of people set off in search of something more than a simple holiday: they want to have an experience, meet others, discover new places and understand more about what they see; they want to establish a new, more authentic and direct relationship with the local culture. Obviously, such experiences are absolutely personal. They exist in the mind of an individual who is involved on the emotional, physical, intellectual and even spiritual level. They are unique and unrepeatable, deriving from the interaction between the event experienced and the traveller's mind, culture and motivation. Indeed, the traveller has become the protagonist of a new vision of the holiday, characterised by a less frenetic rhythm of life and the ability to maintain the cultural and environmental integrity of the regions being visited while meeting the economic and social needs of the host community. It is therefore important to interact with the visitor, whose internal dynamics (level of education, mental structures, sensitivities and perceptions) represent a fundamental element. The visitor is mentally and spiritually involved in the journey or the daily life of the host community (Richards and Wilson, 2006; Richards, 2011). It represents a new approach to travelling, aimed at qualitatively improving the current

way of visiting a location. It involves understanding and appreciating local heritage, in particular, that of the "slow regions", where the "slowness becomes a distinctive factor of development" (Rizzi, 2011: XI). Here, the landscape is of high quality, with small villages, an agricultural economy, and cultural and environmental assets. In such locations, it is possible to explore the historical sedimentation that is manifested in the strong signs of human endeavour. These are the so-called "minor regions", isolated from the centre, affected by depopulation but not backward or depressed. On the contrary they enjoy a high quality of life and offer a compatible form of tourism that is accessible to all: a "gentle" tourism that lends itself to slow forms of transport such as the bicycle, train, bus and walking; a tourism that offers eco-tourism routes with no barriers of an economic, structural, social or cultural character, that is able to combine the promotion of traditional local products with the rediscovery of cultural and environmental heritage and the enjoyment of food-and-wine resources, which represent an essential component of a region's attractiveness and competitiveness.

The cultural route follows ancient roads used by millions of travellers over the centuries, recovering the cultural dimension of travel and the subtle link between nature and the spirit of those that experience it. It showcases a category of heritage that generates "lasting social and economic development"², particularly in those areas currently characterised by depopulation and marginalisation. Indeed, such itineraries have considerable implications for planning in terms of the tourism sector and other economic activities: it entails the systematic organisation of all the economic resources present in the area of reference, it has synergistic effects resulting from the close complementarity between the cultural and tourism services offered to users and their associated economic activities, and it prompts the creation of networks among rural communities in order to enhance their visibility and encourage their use for tourism.

Creating a cultural itinerary means investing in *resources* and the *quality of the region* but it also assumes the presence of a *plan*, as widely shared as possible, regarding the ways and means employed to make it accessible, counting on the broad-based involvement of all the actors in the regional context (Lajarge and Roux, 2007; Berti 2012; 2013). Institutional consensus is "a good starting point" for the success of the itineraries, since it provides cohesion and stability in the eyes of the local population (Crocì, 2007: 57). The involvement of the institutions (from the local to the international scale) confers visibility and safety on the routes, even when this is not accompanied by financial support. The participation of the inhabitants and stakeholders of the regions and sites that lie along the route is essential. These include public bodies, institutions and other subjects (e.g. research and documentation centres) that can facilitate the process of identification, documentation, planning, implementation and subsequent promotion of the itinerary. Their involvement helps the process of protection of heritage and is part of the sustainable development of the region, one of the actions recommended by the Council of Europe (Berti and Mariotti, 2015). The latter also calls for the development of quality tourism with a European dimension, seeking agreements with public and private bodies active in the tourism sector that can develop tourism products and be of benefit to potential stakeholders (CM / Res (2013) 67).³

All these elements are clearly important to the itinerary, but they are not sufficient to prevent it from "sinking into oblivion" over time. Despite being well conceived and planned (and politically supported), even if they get it right on a practical and organisational level (services, hotel and catering, prices), itineraries need more, in order to take off. It is necessary to give them a *meaning*, to establish a two-way correspondence between *route* and *destination*. As Ricciardi points out: "the road must have the flavour of the destination. It is a kind of "already, not yet", that includes within itself all the charm that the road can exert on those who are travelling on it [...]. While on the path, people seek a meaning and this can be found if there is a destination that can be "counted off" [like the pearls of a necklace], step by step, along the road itself [...]. It is not just about discovering, but also feeling and reliving the route", hopefully then being able to describe it with clarity and imagination (Ricciardi, 2011: 117).

The authenticity of the places needs to be respected by means of targeted strategies that enable a genuine experience that has nothing to do with stereotyped and distorted representations or hackneyed simulations of traditional customs and the historic inheritance. Since they are often the expression of fragile situations, and therefore easily ruined, the route needs to be managed not only via strategies that

² http://www.icomositalia.com/img/2008-10-04_Itinerari

³ https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c69fe

minimise the uncertainty of action, but also with a healthy dose of responsibility that must first and foremost seek to guarantee the protection, safeguard and sustainability of the region.

The Council of Europe also makes reference to these principles. Its *Cultural Itineraries* programme, inaugurated in 1987, sees these principles as a useful tool for dialogue, intercultural cooperation and consolidation of European identity, but also for enhancing respect and appropriate use (including for tourism) of European cultural heritage (Council of Europe 2010/1)⁴.

These considerations are echoed in the resolution of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism, which declared 2016 to be a "National Year of Paths"⁵, concurrent with the Catholic Church's Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, giving new life to places of devotion that have long been pilgrimage destinations. It brought into a single network the almost seven thousand kilometres of paths running from the north to south of the country, subdivided into circuits and itineraries of varying difficulty and length, combining history and art, sacred and profane. The Ministry then launched a programme to promote the itineraries (suitable for walking but also other forms of sustainable transport, on the national and regional level), considering them to be an important component of Italy's cultural and tourism sector, a way of defending villages from depopulation and a tool for interregional coordination. Last but not least, they provide an opportunity for meaningful cooperation between operators in the sector on various institutional levels, both secular and religious⁶.

These are not the only public sector initiatives aimed at the creation of cultural routes. There is not a single region whose rural and local tourism development plans do not include at least one route⁷. Publicity campaigns now seek to promote artistic and environmental heritage that is little-known but deserving of protection and promotion for tourism purposes (Suarez-Inclan, 2005). Such campaigns are designed by tourism marketing experts and public and private operators in the field of interregional, transnational and cross-border cooperation (the various Interregs), and are also seen as an opportunity to promote intercultural dialogue and tourism.

3.The travels of St Peter

One of the essential principles to ensure that a cultural itinerary is recognised at the institutional level is the historical authenticity of the events that it narrates, as well as the authenticity of the heritage that it seeks to promote. In addition to itineraries promoted at the institutional level, in Italy there are dozens of planned or existing paths of extensive geographical range (i.e. the Via Francigena, Via Romea, Way of St Martin, etc.). They retrace ancient roads and infrastructure, passing through places of great artistic, cultural and natural interest.

⁴ On the objectives and characteristics of the Council of Europe's Cultural Itineraries, see, among others, Nagy, 2012; 49-50.

⁵ *Directive* of the Minister of Cultural Activities and Heritage and Tourism "2016-Anno dei Cammini d'Italia"- MiBact-UDCM REP. Decreti 12/12/ 2016 N°567. http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/sitoMiBAC/Contenuti/MibacUnif/Comunicati/visualizza_asset.html_2006215157.html

⁶ *Directive* of the Minister of Cultural Activities and Heritage and Tourism "2016-Anno dei Cammini d'Italia"- MiBact-UDCM REP. Decreti 12/12/ 2016 N°567. http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/sitoMiBAC/Contenuti/MibacUnif/Comunicati/visualizza_asset.html_2006215157.html

⁷ As part of the Plan for Culture and Tourism proposed by the Minister of Cultural Activities and Heritage and Tourism, approved in May 2016 by the Inter-ministerial Committee for Economic Planning, one billion euros from the Development and Cohesion Fund 2014 – 2020 were allocated for the execution of 33 measures to safeguard and promote cultural heritage and enhance cultural tourism. 20 million Euros were allocated to the Via Francigena, 20 to the Via Appia Regina Viarum and a further 20 to the Franciscan, Benedictine and Santa Scolastica paths http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/sitoMiBAC/Contenuti/MibacUnif/Comunicati/visualizza_asset.html_973493546.html

An ideal route of great historical, religious and cultural value, relatively little-known and studied, is based on St Peter's travels across the south of Italy on his journey from the Holy Land to Rome. Its potential in cultural terms lies in the relationship it establishes among several sites devoted to the memory of the Apostle in southern Mediterranean regions.

3.1 The travels of Peter in Christian sources

The methodology used to determine the route is based on:

- collection and analysis of information arising from local historical memories, signs and relics related to the passage of St Peter;
- geographical contextualisation of sites on thematic maps;
- research into the historical connections between the places where this evidence was produced.
- comparison of sites.

In order to investigate the identity and symbolic components of the geographical area in question, it is important to consider them as the "primary subject" of that area's image (Cosgrove, 1984; Mazzoleni, 2005). Indeed, the geographical framework is of fundamental importance and should be extended to embrace all cases which come within the present research, in a perspective of cultural interaction and dialogue among seemingly distinct contexts.

At present, the field research covers southern Italy, with a focus on the Puglia region and some coastal areas of other regions. Due to the scarcity of written sources that characterises many sites in this geographical area, in-depth local reconnaissance is required, including the study of the rich iconographic repertoire that has survived decay, neglect and deliberate destruction by people unaware of its historical and artistic value.

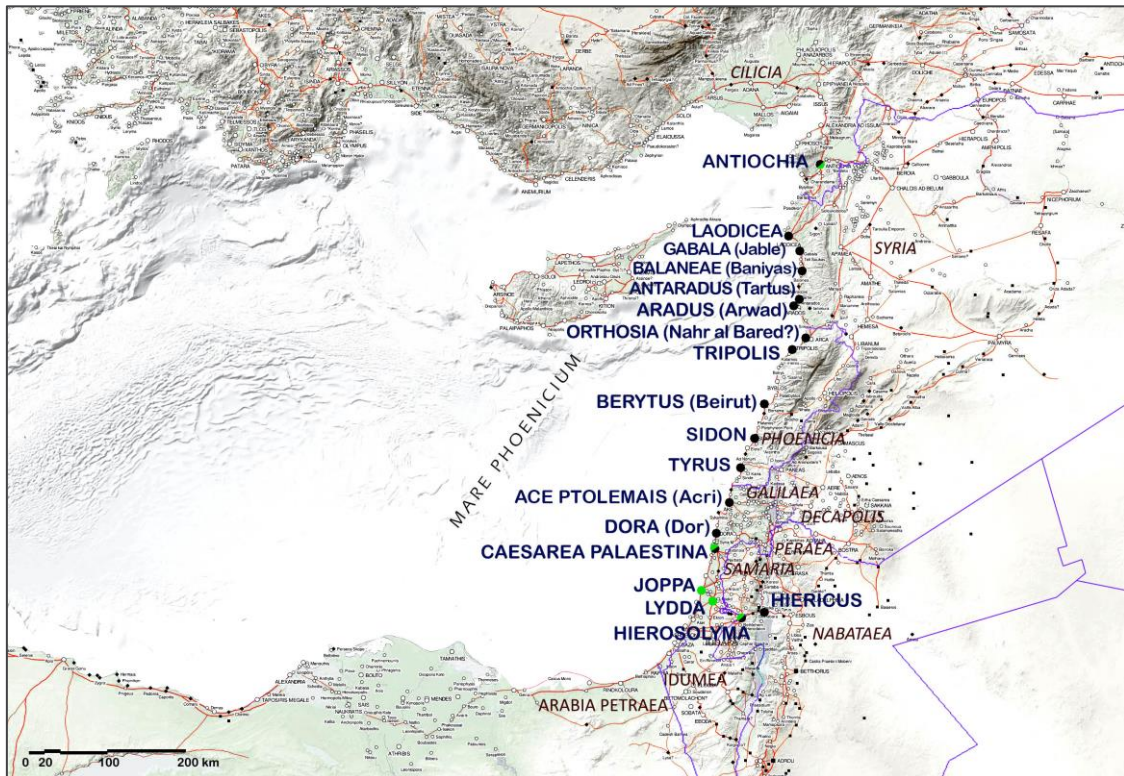
The Petrine tradition is characterised by a succession of known sources that are often contradictory. For this reason, they need to be analysed together with other data (material, landscape, iconographic and iconological, as well as ritual and liturgical), in order to decode and correlate the different signs in a broad cultural context (Lefebvre, 1974; Turri, 1998; Zappella, 2014).

The Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles are the official Christian sources available for reconstructing the life of Peter from the resurrection of Jesus to his martyrdom in Rome. Unfortunately, they contain little information about the places where the Saint pursued his evangelising mission (Donati, 2000; Palazzo, 2011). Research has mainly focused on the exegetical and doctrinal level of the "Petrine ministry", the apostolic succession⁸ and ecumenical aspects, seeking the foundations of Inter-Christian theological dialogue. If we shift the perspective of the research from the canonical religious to the historical-cultural, we can then make use of other sources, important among which are certain apocryphal writings that provide coeval (or nearly coeval) testimony.

The various Petrine writings are collected in the *Acta Petri* of the *Corpus Christianorum*. They have been handed down to us in many different ancient languages (Geerard, 1992). Among them, we focused on the so called Pseudo-Clementine writings. They were written in Greek between 222 AD and the end of the 3rd century. They are believed to have been produced in Syria or Coele-Syria, within the Jewish-Christian community. The original text (called G) is lost but some parts have survived in two different redactions: The Homilies (H) and The Recognitions (R), both dating to the 4th century.

⁸ The pericopes of Mark 8, 27-30, Matthew 16, 13-20 and Luke 9, 18-21 and 22, 31-32 have been variously compared with the magisterium of the Church, tradition, and historical and archaeological evidence.

Figure 2. Map of the Eastern Mediterranean under the Roman Empire showing the towns and regions visited by Peter according to the apocryphal sources (in black) and the Acts of the Apostles (in green)



Source: <http://pelagios.org/maps/greco-roman/>

The Recognitions, originally in Greek, have come down to the present day only in the Latin version of Rufinus of Aquileia (5th century) and in other fragments. The oldest evidence of the existence of the original text (G) can be found in the *Panarion* (XXX, 15, 1-3), a treatise on heresies written by Epiphanius of Salamis in the second half of the 4th century. Epiphanius cites the manuscript as the "Travels of Peter written by Clement," held by the Ebionites (Cirillo, 1997; Stanley Jones, 1995).

The story is presented in the autobiographical form of letters written by Clement of Rome to James, the brother of Jesus and head of the early Christian congregation in Jerusalem. The letters take the form of a travelogue and contain discourses, dialogues, and debates. The first letter explains how Clement followed a Jew named Barnabas to Judea, where he befriended the Apostle Peter, becoming his disciple. He records how the twelve disciples engaged in public debates on the temple steps until James suffered a violent attack. Then he describes Peter's debate with a Samaritan sorcerer, Simon Magus of Gitta, who claimed to be the resurrected Jesus. Once defeated in the debate, Simon fled towards Rome with the aim of promulgating a false religion. In the following letters we find Peter and Clement chasing Simon along the Syrian coast until they reach Antioch (Gebhardt, 2014). The places described in the Pseudo Clementine writings are mainly around Jerusalem and along an ideal line linking the coastal Palestinian-Syrian cities to the city of Antioch, the great capital and cultural hub of the eastern Mediterranean (Figure 2).

Another important source is the *Actus Vercellenses*, written in Spain in the 7th century. Like the previous writings, according to recent research, the *Actus Vercellenses* are linked to a literary-historical phenomenon of great importance: the simultaneous dissemination and circulation of various Petrine narratives during the 4th century, probably originating in the previous century (Filippini, 2008).

The sources prove that after Jesus' resurrection, apostolic preaching was not always linear. Many of the precepts of the new religion were in fact defined after debates - sometimes violent - among the apostles themselves, or with the Jews, the temporal authorities and impostors. In this framework, a key role

was played by Peter (Cephas), James ("brother of the Lord" or "the Just"), John, Matthew, Barnabas and Paul (Saul of Tarsus, "The man who formerly persecuted us") (*Gal.* 1, 19; 1, 23; 2, 9).

Preceding James as the leader of the Jewish Christian community in Jerusalem, and following Paul in the work of propaganda among the gentiles, Peter himself can be considered the epitome of early Christianity in a wider sense.

For the purposes of this study, it is important to focus on the itinerant dimension of the evangelising Apostle (*periodoi Petrou*), supported by the Pseudo-Clementine writings, a theme that anticipates the narrative of the Petrine route towards the Italian peninsula. The story of Simon the Sorcerer is also reported in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts, 8). It shows that since its beginning, Christian evangelism has projected itself outwards from the Holy Land towards the key centres of power, with a special focus on the capital of the Roman Empire. In the coeval sources as well as in the posthumous tradition, the journey to the centre of power is intertwined with preaching in all major settlements where Christian communities were springing up, with the intention of bringing the canon, the apostolic version of the liturgy and the new faith.

Following this statement we can better understand the non-linearity of the path and the role that certain sites associated with the Petrine Epiphany have played in the organisation of cultural and economic developments in Italy since late Roman times. Since the last century, historians have studied those Italian sites that keep relics, memories or legends of St Peter's journey, with the aim of outlining a possible route taken by the Apostle in the direction of Rome. The results of this research are not however geographically consistent. Due to the lack of reliable sources that might distinguish between local traditions, the paths between settlements can be distant and often disconnected from each other.

Medieval and modern local literature has tended to be somewhat biased in its interpretation of Christian sources (especially the Epistles and Acts of the Apostles), with the aim of asserting the primacy of some places over others. The result is the spread of local Petrine routes in various Italian regions such as Sicily, Campania, Puglia and even Tuscany (De Algeritiis, 1555; Tomea, 2012; BHL 6679; BHL 6679b). The routes vary from coastal ones, by boat or on foot, to inland ones (Baronio, 1588: 297-298) (*Acta Sanctorum: XXIX junii, Acta S. Petri*).

Since that time, other places and memories have been listed, extending the network of sites and complicating the task of arriving at a general, linear path. All the sources relate that St Peter came to Rome and spent several years of his life there (Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Romanos*, 4, 3). According to the official Catholic version, after his martyrdom, the Apostle was buried on the Vatican Hill and his remains rest in the crypt beneath the monumental basilica that was consecrated to him by the emperor Constantine. The basilica that stands on the site today is the largest church in Christendom (Guarducci 1989).

In conclusion, while contemporary archaeology and coeval writings leave no doubt about the presence of St Peter in Italy, and Rome in particular (Carandini 2013), his journey along the peninsula remains to be determined. The research being conducted to this end points to the creation of cultural routes.

3.2. The sites of the Petrine epiphany in southern Italy and the historical-cultural context

The south of Italy has for many centuries been a bridge between the Eastern and Western Mediterranean and a land of conquest. Since the fall of the Roman Empire it has experienced successive changes in territorial control. Each context preserves a cultural stratigraphy that is partially legible in the surviving signs and sources. The myth of St Peter's journey (accompanied by Mark, Paul or other disciples) is one of the possible thematic readings of this stratigraphy.

In local literature, the story of the first evangelisers who arrived on the Italian coast and moved across Europe is tinged with the classic mythology of the journey (in Latin: *per agere*) and its stages, which is rooted in the famous Homeric and Virgilian poems. This myth influenced an important part of the pilgrimage phenomenon in medieval culture (Ohler, 1986). It became a predominant component in the aftermath of the crusades, in conjunction with the development of the mercantile economy of the late Middle Ages, prevailing, in some cases, over religious and penitential components (Cardini, 1996).

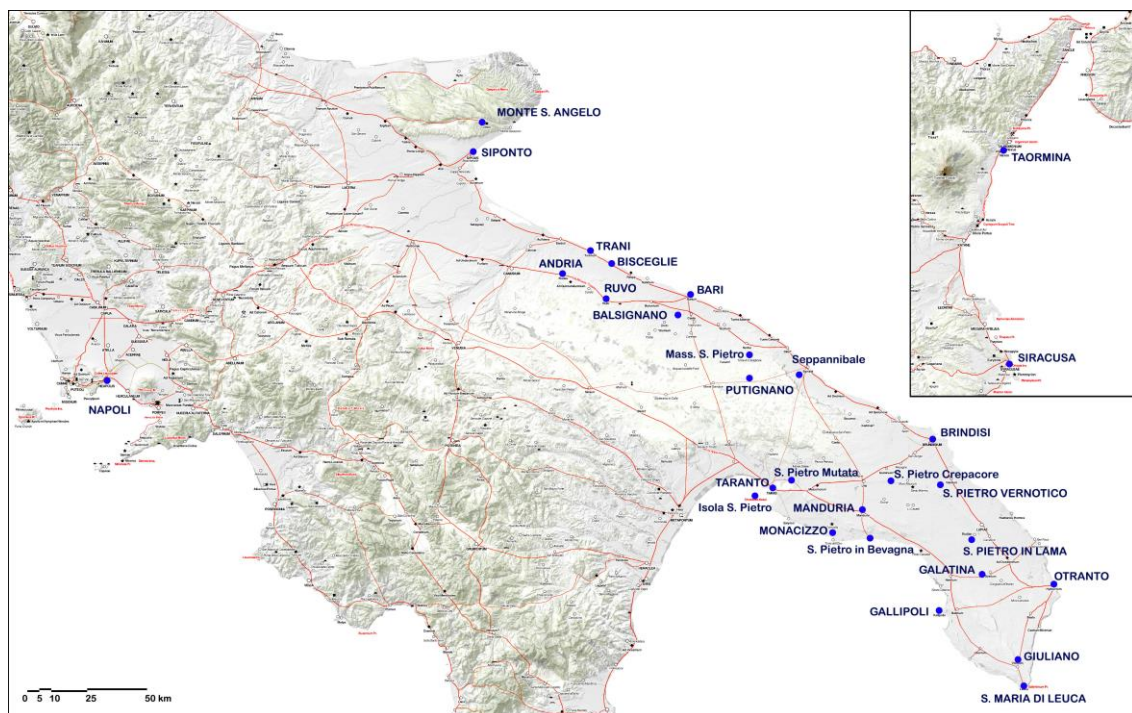
Leaving aside the issue of the historical reliability of local memories of the evangelisation of Italian Christian communities by the Prince of the Apostles, as raised by scholars (D'Angela, 1976; Lanzoni, 1927:

25-27)⁹, a preliminary survey highlights the presence of Petrine sites along the main historical Roman roads and near seaports (Uggeri, 1983). In some cases, there is an indirect link between St Peter and the places. The evangelisation was performed by one of his disciples, such as Andrew, Marcellinus or Pancras. In other cases, Mark, Peter's interpreter, who transcribed his words into the Gospel (Concina, 2009; Tomea, 2012)¹⁰, was the executor of his will. Indeed, there is much evidence for the bond between the Apostle and the Evangelist in the Christian canonical tradition. It has been represented since the earliest known frescoes dating back to the 4th century (Tavano 2009).

In the literature, legends are often embodied in the local context, acting as the founding myths of proto-sanctuaries. Many of those sites arose as caves or underground churches, taking advantage of existing Roman pagan or earlier structures. Later, they were converted into public places of worship, under the management of the clergy.

In the tourism sector, some operators have proposed a "Petrine way", running from Otranto to Rome along the route of the Via Sallentina-Traiana on which the Southern Via Francigena has also recently been based. Taking this path to be the only valid one would exclude many other sites in the peninsula, whose memories are no less considerable than those of the Adriatic sites.

Figure 3. Map of Southern Italy under the Roman Empire showing the sites linked to the Petrine tradition



Source: <http://pelagios.org/maps/greco-roman/>

Starting from the available medieval sources, it is possible to identify a number of locations, where the landing of the Apostle could have taken place. Many of these are in Puglia, along the coast and near the main Roman roads, such as the Via Augusta Sallentina, Via TraianaCalabra, Via Appia and Via Traiana.

⁹ Many scholars consider only the path of St Paul's journey to Rome to be reliable, passing through Syracuse, Reggio and Pozzuoli. In those cities, Christian communities had existed since 61 AD (Otranto, 1991: 3-5).

¹⁰ All over the country and Europe, many dioceses claim an apostolic mandate, handed down in the *Passio* of their patron saints and proto-bishops. Such traditions also played a symbolic role in consolidating the authority of the Roman Church over Christianity (Lanzoni, 1927: 78-83).

Other important memories can also be found in the seaports of other regions. Figure 3 shows the currently documented sites on a map, together with the infrastructural and settlement organisation of the early Roman Empire. The map highlights the attractive power of some of the cities where the evangelisation of Italy began and the first Christian dioceses were created.

The diachronic distribution of sites allows us to integrate the cultural route with the Roman road network and settlement hierarchy. The settlements of Sipontum, Ruvo, Egnatia, Leuca, Manduria and Tarentum (Taranto) stand out in this scenario, sharing similar traditions regarding the passage of St Peter. The Apostle preached in sites used as pagan places of worship or burial that later became churches or shrines. In Taranto and Manduria (D'Angela, 1975), we find classical rock-cut chamber tombs adapted for use as chapels. In Leuca (Morciano, 2012) and Taranto (Farella, 1979), the ruins of older pagan temples became the symbol of the power of Christianity over the ancient beliefs.

It is also important to notice the characteristics of the figures that accompany St Peter as described in the various local traditions. Among these are disciples travelling with the Apostle who chose to remain in certain places, becoming their first spiritual guides. In other cases, we find natives so fascinated by the Saint's preaching that he elevated them to the rank of pastor.

In some towns, the preaching of the apostles or their disciples found fertile ground in which to spread the new Christian message, especially within the Jewish community that flourished in Southern Italy. The Jewish-Christian dimension, which appears to be a crucial aspect of the Pseudo-Clementine chronicles, could help understand the special bond between the figure of Peter and some communities, where there was a strong Jewish or Levantine cultural presence¹¹.

In late antiquity and the Byzantine era, the cult of St Peter was revitalised by dedicating new churches and monasteries to him or by disseminating his representation in the sacred iconography (Sotomayor, 1962).

In this era, the Roman road system was largely still functional. The economic collapse following the continuous wars fought between the imperial troops and the northern invaders caused the disappearance of several ancient cities and the development of new settlement networks. Several Petrine sites developed in this cultural climate. Some particularly well-preserved early medieval churches, mainly in the inland areas of the Salento peninsula, are dedicated to Peter's journey. These include the ruined church of St Peter near San Giuliano di Lecce, showing the Byzantine construction techniques and the widespread use of *spolia*, materials extracted from other buildings or ruins (Belli D'Elia, 1975: 220; Bouras, 2002); San Pietro a Crepacore (Lavermicocca, 2012: 104-106)¹²; and Seppannibale (Bertelli, 1994).

Other sites are probably related to territorial organisation in the Byzantine epoch, such as Galatina, where the link with the Apostle is evident in the ancient name of *Casale Sancti Petri in Galatina*, and the inhabitants worship a stone touched by St Peter and a precious reliquary bust; San Pietro in Lama (Cazzato et al., 1998) and San PietroVernotico (Pennetta, 1997), which trace their foundation to the Apostle and have wells blessed by him; Otranto (Safran, 1992); Monacizzo, where devotion to the saint appears to reflect that of neighbouring towns (Tarentini, 2006); and Taranto (D'Angela, 1992). The tradition linked to the complex of St Peter in Monte Sant'Angelo certainly belongs to early medieval times. It is arguably the product of a religious syncretism between the image of the Apostle as an evangelist and proto-pilgrim and is linked to the birth of the first great European non-imperial sanctuary: St. Michael the Archangel in the Gargano (Belli D'Elia, 1999). Under Norman and Angevin rule the cult of St Peter was encouraged by the ruling families, who were vassals of the Pope, and by the aristocracy.

After the 11th century, the main Benedictine and mendicant orders acquired many shrines and Greek-rite monasteries from the Crown and aristocracy. Their task was to support the Latinisation of the region and to strengthen the royal authority. The Catholic monarchs also sought to control the ethnic and

¹¹ In his long journey from Europe to the Middle East during the 12th century, the Jewish traveller Benjamin of Tudela, moving in the opposite direction to the Apostle, covered parts of the Petrine Way that emerges from this research and from the sources (Signer et al., 1983; Minervini, 1989).

¹² The church lies near the Via Appia, on a road documented in the 12th century (Marchi, 2000: 93) between Oria and Lecce that ran along the so called *LimitonedeiGreci*. This route is largely included in the Puglia Aqueduct Green Way (<http://mobilita.regione.puglia.it/>; LeggeRegionale n. 1/2013) (Figure 4).

religious minorities variously distributed throughout the territory, such as Jews, Muslims, Greeks, etc. (Minervini, 1989: 47; Martin, 1993).

In this cultural phase, the renewed Petrine iconography referred to the papacy as a symbol of the direct lineage of the Pope's religious authority from the first of the apostles. Such propaganda became crucial to the Latinisation of the southern Italian regions, in contrast to the Orthodox-Byzantine culture that had prevailed in Norman times (Vetere, 1990). In addition, it proved to be crucial when the French Angevin dynasty was called on by the pope to restore its rights over the southern regions, against the secular expansion of the Emperor, the excommunicated Frederick II of Swabia (Tramontana, 2000).

The Crusades and the growing power of the Military Orders further modified this geopolitical framework. The Military Orders sited their commandries at ports and near the main cities and road junctions of the peninsula. In their view, the myth of the Petrine journey represented a link between the western cities and the Holy Land, emphasising the unity of the Christian world. In addition, the invitation to pilgrimage and the connection to the places of the Passion of Jesus were also an excellent means to raise recruits and obtain supplies for overseas conquests. A modern inscription that stands on the front façade of the church of San Pietro de' Samari near Gallipoli tells the story of the medieval church. It was rebuilt, *a fundamentis*, by Hugues de Lusignan in 1148, on his return from the Crusade (Moscardino 1969; Natali 2007). However, regardless of the validity of the inscription, the architectural style of the medieval part of the building reflects the model of the so called "axial domed churches". The model was used for many centuries in Puglia, which counts several medieval churches dedicated to St Peter. Furthermore, the constructive and stylistic references of the church, with Eastern and Nordic echoes, enabled the building to fully represent the region's role as a cultural and geographical bridge from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries (De Cadillac, 2008).

During the Angevin period, the first great Jubilee of 1300 was an exceptional event that attracted pilgrims from all countries *ad limina apostolorum* in order to gain a plenary indulgence. It provided a valid argument for the recovery of the tradition of the Apostle's journey along the routes followed by pilgrims to Rome. In the Middle Ages the Petrine tradition developed especially in those cities going through a phase of strong political and economic expansion. These include major Adriatic ports such as Bari, Brindisi and Trani, which developed prosperous trading relationships and promulgated civic statutes characterised by strong local autonomy.

Considering their importance since Roman times and their direct connection to the centre of power by means of the Via Traiana, for some of these cities the Middle Ages can be seen as simply the later development of a more ancient tradition. According to some local writers, the remarkable crypt of Santa Geffa in Trani, a rock-cut church of uncertain date and unclear dedication, may derive its name from Cephas, the name of Peter in the writings of Paul (Fonseca, 1976)¹³.

In Brindisi and Bari, there are no sites referring explicitly to Peter's journey, although there is a modern historiographical tradition in this sense. In other towns along the Via Traiana we find important shrines and churches dedicated to the Apostle. Passing through some remarkable sites linked to the myth, the route through Andria, Ruvo di Puglia and Balsignano (Castagnolo, 2006) may well represent the strength of the Petrine tradition along this Roman road in the late Middle Ages and modern times. At the present state of the research, some sites outside Puglia require more detailed study. Notable among these are Syracuse and Taormina in Sicily and Naples in Campania (Ciavolino, 1990).

Also worthy of attention in this regard is the situation in northern Italy, where the apostolic foundation of the maritime hegemony of Pisa was also based on the myth of Peter's landing. The church of San Piero a Grado and the port of Livorno keep the memory of this event (Testi Cristiani, 2011), and other dioceses and sacred sites also originate from the apostolic mandate. The survey is still in progress, with the aim of reconstructing the network of the Petrine tradition in all Italian regions.

¹³ *Kepha*, Aramaic name, corresponding to the Greek *petra* (rock), from which comes "Petros" (Matthew 16, 18; Galatians 2:7-14, 1 Corinthians 1:11-13, 3:21, 9:5 and 15:5).

3.3. Contemporary thematic itineraries

The spread of legends and Petrine dedications throughout Italy never gave rise to a movement of pilgrims beyond the local boundaries. On the contrary, the sources report localised worship, favoured by Swabian and Angevin authorities, who granted concessions for conducting periodic fairs. In modern times, they evolved into religious processions and demonstrations of popular piety that celebrated the towns' founding myths.

Architectural analysis of the buildings dedicated to the Saint confirms this evidence. Far from identifying any typological or stylistic relationship among the recorded episodes on a larger regional scale, it merely highlights a few similarities in the founding acts and the sites described by the local stories. Historical sources and sites typically mention the presence of a crypt, a rock-cut church or a ravine where the Apostle performed miracles, celebrated masses and converted people to Christianity.

These places had originally been used for religious (pagan), funerary and civil purposes (chamber tombs, canals, reservoirs, springs, warehouses). After their consecration, they were embellished with liturgical furnishings and decorations. In all cases, the decorations and frescoes came very much later than the moment of the supposed Petrine consecration.

The recurrence of water sources and underground sites in some regions, as well as some aspects of modern devotional practice, link the cult of St. Peter to agricultural fertility rites. The Saint embodies figures that are probably of pre-Christian origin or were otherwise created within cultures that had to adapt to climatic conditions characterised by prolonged drought. This could be the case of processions and pilgrimages held in San Pietro in Bevagna and Gallipoli.

Other aspects were based on the exploitation of the sea (maritime commerce, transport, fisheries, etc.). Examples of this tradition include Leuca, Taranto and Adriatic coastal cities (Trani, Bisceglie, etc.), where the saint is invoked to protect sailors.

On the regional level, although almost all of the sites are located near ports, rivers and major highways, we rarely find them in the centre of ancient cities. Similarly to what happened in Rome, it is assumed that the proto-Christian communities located their places of worship outside the urban perimeter, where they would be easily accessible from outlying villages and other cities.

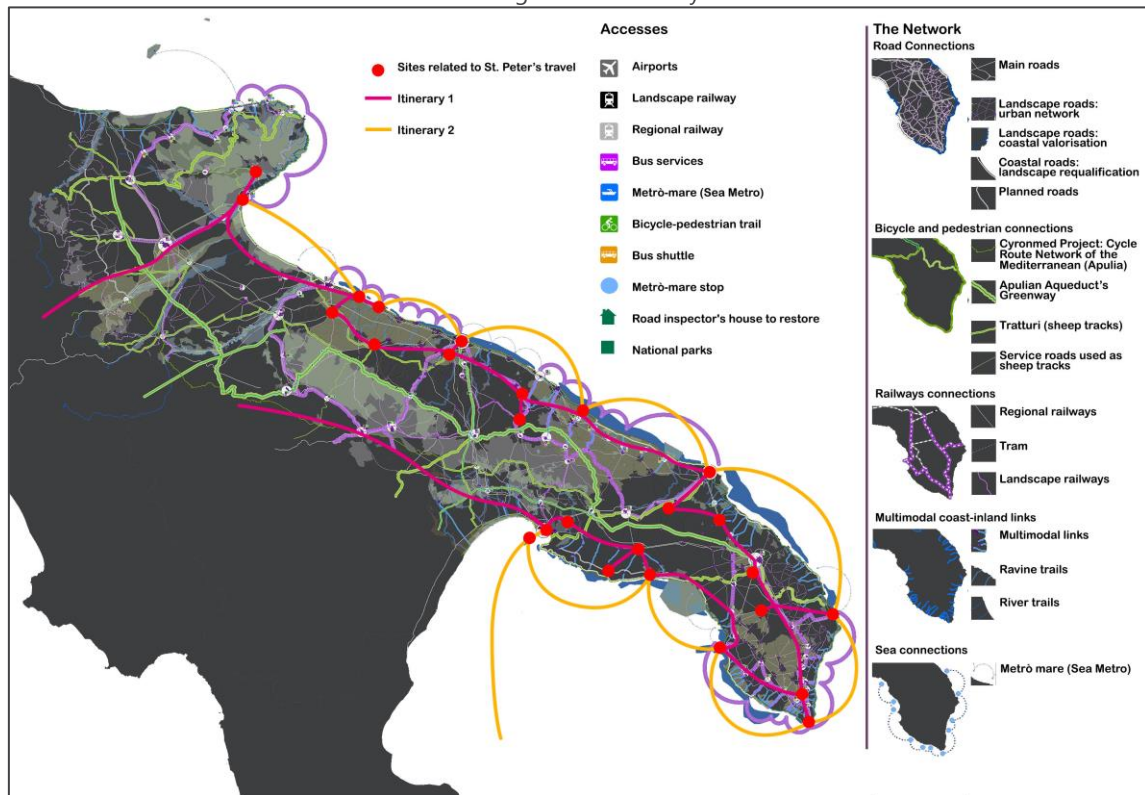
In light of the above, we have established two distinct routes, which are designed to integrate and overlap with each other according to the interests of the user. The routes focus on the sites associated with the Petrine tradition.

The final purpose is to establish the regional narratives that put the traveller in contact with the various aspects of the myth from different thematic viewpoints. The proposals overlap – and do not conflict – with the current and past formulations of the "Via Petrina" promoted by organisations linked to religious tourism and pilgrimage, tourism companies and local chambers of commerce. Both routes mainly lie within the territory of Puglia, where almost all of the sites surveyed to date are concentrated. However, they are designed to connect to extra-regional sites through the dense network of cultural and religious itineraries that are already widely promoted, or being developed, throughout Italy (see the Cammini del Sud, Vie Francigene, Via Appia, etc.). Figure 4 shows the correlation between the suggested itineraries and the "soft mobility" network in the Puglia Region.

The first itinerary is closely related to the system of internal and local routes that have somehow preserved the path of the Roman road network or the medieval *diverticula* linked to it. The route is designed to encourage the promotion of those local contexts that still bear witness to Petrine traditions and their more authentic and less globalised historical-religious values. The user is involved in a "slow" approach that is similar to the experience of a contemporary cultural pilgrimage.

The route starts from the outskirts of Taranto and heads towards the site of San Pietro di Mutata, crossing a stretch of the Appian Way that flanks the internal lagoon (Mar Piccolo). From there it leads to the eastern coast of the Gulf of Taranto following the transhumance sheep tracks on the plateau which runs parallel to the shoreline (the Ionian-Salentine arch). Taking the ancient Via Sallentina, the route descends to Cape Santa Maria di Leuca (Column and Cross of St Peter) and then continues along the western side of the peninsula to the north of Puglia. After Andria, the route leaves the Via Traiana and follows the coastal path from Trani to Siponto. From the Gargano, it takes the Via Sacra Langobardorum, heading back in the direction of Benevento, from where it is possible to reach Naples (church of San Pietro ad Aram, urban catacombs) or continue along the Via Appia to Rome.

Figure 4. Petrine itineraries represented on the existing and planned routes of the Puglia "soft mobility" network



Source: PPTR Regione Puglia – Oliva

This route can become a closed circuit by following the final stretch of the Via Appia from Benevento to Taranto. Circularity gives the path the flavour of apostolic itinerancy. With its historical and cultural values associated with the Petrine tradition, each site is able to impart the sense of travel for the purpose of preaching and conversion, moving from the Holy Land to Rome, the cornerstones of Early Christianity.

The second itinerary is historically linked to the maritime dimension of the Petrine journey. It is designed to evoke the point of view of the Apostle when he reached the Italian coast. This view allows visitors to relive one of defining moments in the history of Christianity, especially Catholicism: the landing of Peter and the spread of his revolutionary religious message in the heart of temporal power and ancient paganism.

The itinerary consists mainly of small-scale coastal trips between ports related to the myth by means of signs, relics, cultural and religious traditions. It can also be travelled by land, following the existing coastal roads or the traces of Roman ones. This sea route includes Siponto, Trani, Bisceglie, Bari, Egnazia (Savelletri), Brindisi, Otranto, Santa Maria di Leuca, Gallipoli, San Pietro in Bevagna, Taranto (the Island of San Pietro, the city and the coast of Mar Piccolo).

As with the first itinerary, the second may also become a circuit, comprising the entire Southern coast of Italy, the east coast of Sicily (Taormina, Siracusa) and Naples on the Tyrrhenian route to Ostia (Rome). This route may contribute to the development of sailing services in the landing sites, and the growth of local economies linked to the sea.

The distinct feature of the apostolic theme in the above proposals is that it considers each stage as part of a unified itinerary. Although it lacks cogency in terms of evidence, over more than two millennia it has given rise to a cultural stratification that reflects and enhances many typically Mediterranean themes (Braudel, 1977-1978). Therefore, to develop this project, it is essential to build a uniform communication system and produce virtual content that can be accessed by the user in situ or by means of ICT-based systems (Trono and Oliva, 2013).

The promotion of the St Peter itineraries is perfectly feasible within the Italian peninsula, where the consolidated emphasis on local traditions (religion, culture, food, crafts) supports slow tourism. Italy is crossed by a network of itineraries designed for an immersive and engaging regional experience. Considering the full dimension of the route discussed here, the challenge is to extend it to all the places of the Petrine tradition: the ancient Palestinian and Syrian cities, the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean islands. In this way, it can be seen as part of the process of cultural integration that is crucial to European and Mediterranean future horizons.

Though the religious connotations of these routes may seem to limit their interest for non-Christian consumers, the story of St Peter's preaching may well be an opportunity to construct an original narrative of *Mare Nostrum*. In his legendary travels, we can recognise the whole of the vast and impervious sea of antiquity, on whose shores elements of common identity developed and the seeds of the contemporary world germinated. It could represent a big step towards dialogue and integration, consistent with the desire of the European Community to recognise the Mediterranean as the cradle of its founding values and thereby confer on it a new centrality.

4. Conclusion

Religious routes and pilgrimage trails are among the best known places in historical studies, because they are rich in historic facts and personal testimonies that have been handed down to posterity. These routes still represent the ancient arteries of a faith that continues to be practised in accordance with distinct beliefs and forms of worship, but they are also proposed as a category of heritage that gives rise to a new system of knowledge and promotes the development of local economies linked to tourism activities and associated production chains. Their value lies in the identification of a model for a new ethics of conservation, which considers cultural assets to be part of a common heritage without borders, to be conserved and handed down to future generations.

The proposal for an itinerary that follows the stages of the evangelising journey taken by the Apostle Peter 2000 years ago from Jerusalem to Rome does not only mean retracing the first steps of Christianity. It also represents a healthy exercise of the collective memory, an opportunity to recover the historical, cultural, environmental and economic assets of the regions that host them and, last but not least, potentially a valuable opportunity for intercultural dialogue in that "world of conflicts" which the Mediterranean has been and still is today (Canfora, 2016).

The "historic and cultural" reasons for proposing the route of St Peter are not however sufficient to ensure its success. For this reason, as with all cultural itineraries, there is a need for public policies in which regional cooperation and coordination are essential for the success of the route and the sustainable development of the region.

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