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Marzamemi, an Interesting Case Study of Film-Induced Tourism¹

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ABSTRACT

The economy of Marzamemi, a small fishing village in the territory of Pachino, has always been linked to the sea. In the past the main activities were those connected with the *tonnara*, with the salting of fish and with the maritime commerce of the agricultural products. Later, the village became an important beach resort on a local scale. In the second half of the 1980s, the redevelopment of the waterfront, in the south of Marzamemi, stimulated a mainly local demand from young people attracted by some newly opened outlets connected, above all, with drink and food services. Then, in 1993 the cinema industry arrived in Marzamemi. Since then the old architectural heritage of the historic centre has been restored and used for tourism. Over the last few years, from the last ten days of July until the end of August, the tiny streets and the piazzas of the village have appeared overcrowded with tourists. A dynamism that the official statistical surveys are not able to describe.

Keywords: Marzamemi, Cinetourism, South-eastern Sicily, Fishing Villages, Territory of Syracuse.

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Introduction

Since ancient times literature – first in the great oral tradition and, then, in the written tradition – has been one of the main reasons (perhaps the most important reason) why men and women have wanted to experience tourism, move from their usual abode and start a journey for cultural, religious and re-creational (in the fullest sense of the term) purposes. If, at first, it was faith that instigated pilgrimages to Epidaurus, Delphi, Jerusalem, Rome, Mecca, Santiago de Compostela and many other places, since the Renaissance the great literature, both prose and poetry, has excited the soul of the modern traveller. Thus, the unknown has begun to be decoded and transformed in clear images and narratives which gradually become landscapes to be confirmed through the experience of the journey. Once having been appropriated by the reader, the literary narrative becomes the mirror of the place in which it is confined by the writer so that, as Onfray tells us: ‘Dans le voyage, on découvre seulement ce dont on est porteur. La vide du voyageur fabrique la vacuité du voyage ; sa richesse produit son excellence.’² (Onfray, 2007).

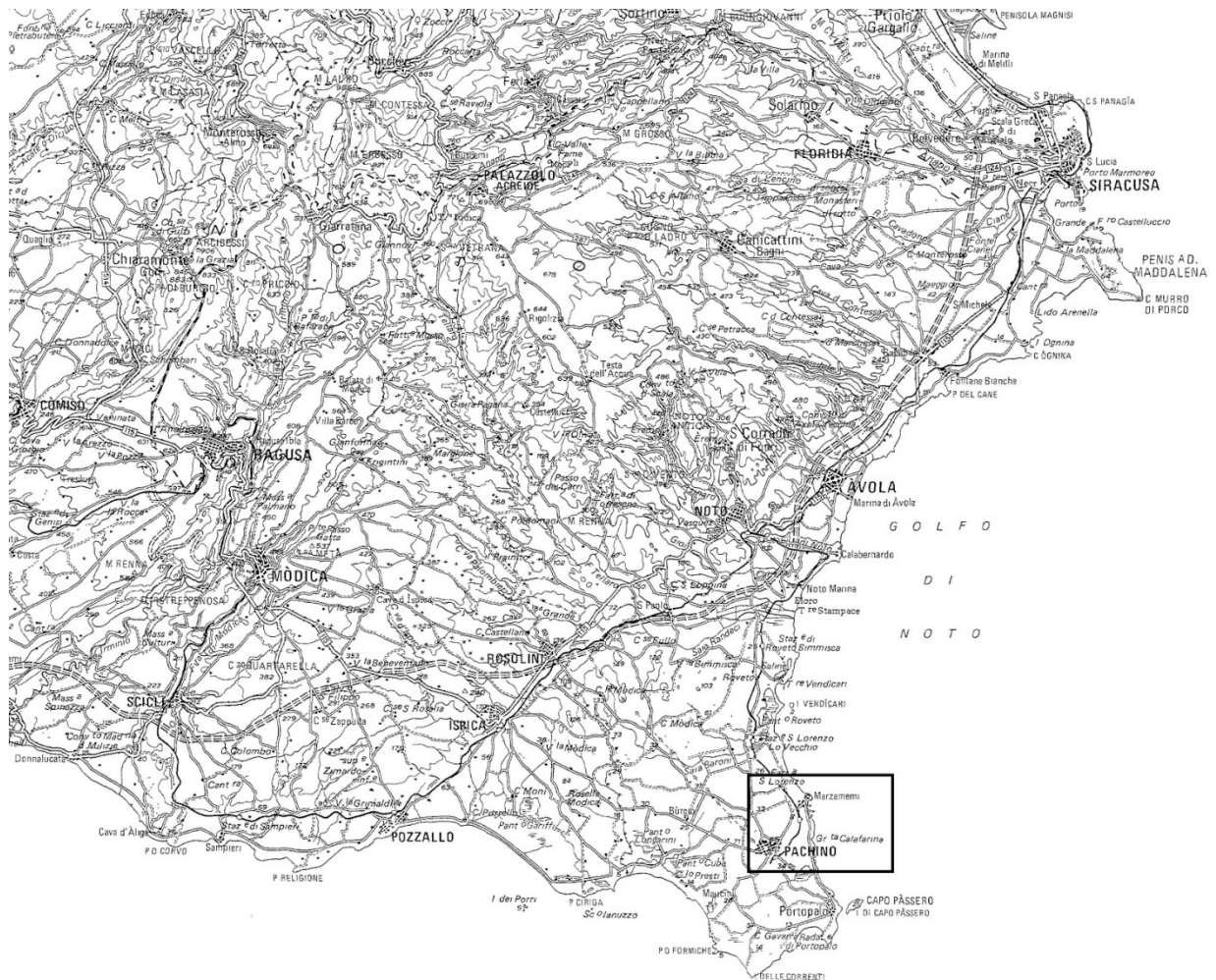
However, if, at first, the geographic images had to be necessarily decoded and organised by the reader, since the twentieth century film literature has made this act of creation instantaneous. The images on the (cinema or TV) screen are acquired effortlessly by the viewer who can, in this way, savour them before consuming them as tourist. Moreover, in a film, the landscape is constantly narrated, it does not need *ad hoc* descriptions as in traditional literature, and, therefore, it is the constant protagonist of the narration (Beeton, 2005). In this way the connection between the places in the film and their ‘real’ corresponding places has become very strong, so strong that the economists and sociologists have created a new tourist category, that is, cinetourism which has not only benefited the economy of the territory but also the sense of identity which, as in the case study analysed here, has become stronger and more conscious. Hence, film literature creates images which are not only shared by the users but also accepted even by those who live in these places projected on the screen, thus generating – especially when the visions are positive – a territorial *autopoiesis* which results in shared policies of redevelopment and promotion. Although the economic statistical surveys cannot translate into numbers or describe the beneficial transformations of the landscape produced by the cinema industry, we feel that the example of Marzamemi – analysed in this work – is extremely significant.

1. Marzamemi, history and economy

In the southern part of the territory of Syracuse, over fifty kilometres away from the provincial capital and near the south-easternmost point of Sicily, there is Marzamemi, a small fishing village of Arab origin dating back to the eleventh century. Marzamemi is four kilometres from Pachino and about twenty from Noto, and its territory falls partially within the territory of the former and partially within that of the latter. The toponym is of Arab origin and derives, in all likelihood, from *marsà al hamem*, that is, bay of the turtle doves. This area is, in fact, a stopping off point for migratory birds flying from Africa towards the north of Europe in springtime and then back to warm

countries in the autumn (Arangio, 2001). Marzamemi is, geographically, a small rocky peninsula on the Ionian Sea, facing south, breaking long stretches of sandy beach both northwards and southwards. The morphology of the coastline includes a small gulf with a clear port nature, which is ideal for fishing activities. In the south-eastern area of this peninsula there is the oldest part of the village which was built in sandstone around the *tonnara*³ and the small historic port of the Balata⁴.

Figure 1: South-east Sicily

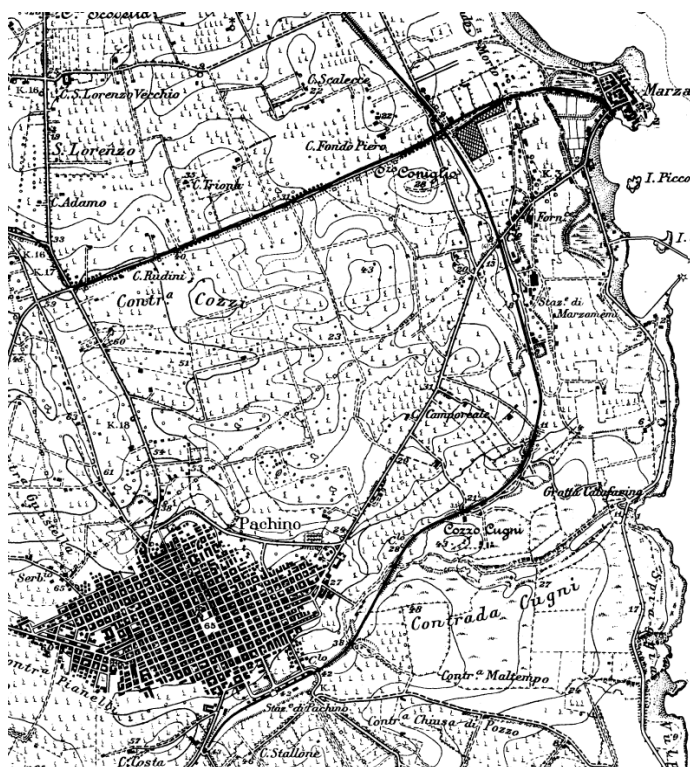


Source: IGM 250K

The history of Marzamemi is closely connected to the sea. The oldest sources we have date back to 1630, the year in which the Nicolacis, a wealthy family from the mercantile middle classes of Noto (who would obtain noble titles during the eighteenth century), took over the old *tonnara* of Marzamemi from a Spanish aristocrat. The *tonnara*, perhaps built by the Arabs, had probably long fallen into disuse. The Nicolacis had craftsmen and sailors come from Avola and, above all, from Syracuse and employed them, at first, for renovation works of the structures and, then, in the

*tonnara*⁵. In order to accommodate these workers coming from outside the town, some simple, square-shaped houses with sloping roofs and only one floor were built. It is still possible to see them mainly along Via Letizia, Vicolo Villadorata and bordering the main square of the village (today called Regina Margherita) on the southern and eastern sides. Other houses lie on the northern side of Piazza Giardinella and in the so-called Arab courtyard, a small, quadrangular open space which connects Piazza Regina Margherita and Piazza Giardinella by means of two alleyways. Around the mid-eighteenth century the Nicolacis put taxes on the *tonnara* and had the Palazzo Villadorata and the small, old church (which is dedicated to San Francesco di Paola, patron saint of Marzamemi, and today partly destroyed) built in the main square. Moreover, the little houses built the previous century to accommodate the workers from Avola and Syracuse, were refurbished so as to accommodate adequately the tuna fishermen and their families.

Figure 2: South-east Sicily



Source: IGM 100K

Figure 3: Marzamemi



Until the end of the nineteenth century the Nicolacis of Villadorata would be, de facto, the owners of the whole village, and the *tonnara* of Marzamemi would be the most important *tonnara* in all of eastern Sicily⁶, the first in the Kingdom for the fishing of the so-called 'coming-back' groups, that is, tuna coming back to the Ionian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea after spending a period of time in more northerly seas (such as the Adriatic Sea). The only economically more important Sicilian *tonnara* would be that on

the island of Favignana. Yet, although the economy of Marzamemi revolved mainly around the *tonnara*, there were other economic activities which, above all from the beginning of the nineteenth century, became more and more important in the socio-territorial organisation of the village and in the life of its inhabitants: the salting of fish and the maritime commerce of agricultural products.

In the eighteenth century Gaetano Maria Starrabba, Prince of Giardinelli, founded Pachino, and in its surrounding countryside, during the nineteenth century, Marquise Antonio Di Rudinì would create one of the most dynamic vineyard systems in Sicily. Marzamemi became, in this manner, the commercial port of Pachino. From the Balata, ships loaded with wine and salt produced in the salt pans of Morghella as well as the salt pans of Marzamemi itself set out towards the markets of the north of Italy (Sciuto, 1996). The salt, however, would not only be exported. From the turn of the nineteenth century, the *tonnara* entered a crisis, a slow descending phase which would turn out to be irreversible. Thus, gradually, the main activities connected with the fishing industry became the activities concerning salting (above all the salting of anchovies and sardines) which were more important than those activities connected with the *tonnara*.

In the twentieth century also the commercial trades of the 'marzamese'⁷ port began to decline. The construction of the Noto-Marzamemi-Pachino railway line, which was finished in 1934 and opened the following year, caused a shift in the fluxes. The new railway connection was preferred to the maritime connection because it was faster and safer, and also able to send the agricultural products to Syracuse in a short time. A severe downturn – which would worsen after the Second World War – began for the whole village. This downward trend would come to an end only in the 1980s when Marzamemi would begin to experience a kind of tourism which was, at first, entirely local and, then, from the end of the 2000s, both regional and national.

2. Cinema and tourism: the positive turning point at the end of the 20th century

Already, by the 1950s, during the summertime, the beaches around Marzamemi were visited by a fair number of bathers coming almost entirely from Pachino. In fact, in 1950 the first lido was inaugurated in the Fossa contrada, where, today, there is a landing place for pleasure boats (Arangio, 2001). It was, however, only from the second half of the 1980s, as a result of the redevelopment of the Gaetano Starrabba Waterfront, that the village started, slowly, to be revitalised thus showing signs of economic recovery. It is, above all, in the evening and during the night in July and August that the streets of the village and, in a special way, the waterfront are crowded with young people, not only from Pachino. They were initially attracted by the opening – in a pioneering manner – of some small pubs and bars (not many in fact) in Via Marzamemi, the street which flanks the new Starrabba Waterfront, and, then, they ended up stimulating recreational services also connected with the restaurant industry, basically nonexistent until a few years earlier. A pizza restaurant, two cafés, and then even a mini bowling alley began to enliven the village. In this first phase, however, it was not the historic centre of Marzamemi which attracted these young consumers but

a relatively new area, in the south of the village, which was easy to reach for those people coming by car or motorbike from Pachino or from Portopalo.

Only from the beginning of the 1990s did this mild ferment begin to affect the oldest part of Marzamemi. Many young people, in fact, started to spend their time at the Balata where a little 'trendy' café opened. Actually, this was not a new place. The café, although completely renovated, had existed for several years and had represented, until sometime before, a simple morning meeting place for the tuna fishermen and the other fishermen, especially those fishermen sailing away from the coast in their own boats in search of fish at dawn. However, the old Piazza Regina Margherita with Palazzo Villadorata, the two small churches and the old fishermen's houses remained completely marginal, not at all affected by this modest awakening. These old sites of Marzamemi were, instead, severely deteriorated and in a total state of decay. The situation slowly changed starting from 1993, the year in which the cinema industry arrived in this little fishing village in the territory of Pachino. The central areas of the village became the set of *Sud*, a film directed by Gabriele Salvatores starring Silvio Orlando, Claudio Bisio and Francesca Neri. A new chapter in the long history of Marzamemi thus began.

In just a few years appearances of this small fishing village on the cinema screen – but also on TV screens – began to increase. Here, in 1994, the Austrian film director and actor Klaus Maria Brandauer shot *Mario und der Zauberer*, a feature length film taken from the short story of the same name by Thomas Mann. In 1995 Giuseppe Tornatore directed, between Ragusa Ibla, Monterosso Almo and Marzamemi, *L'uomo delle stelle*, a film starring Sergio Castellitto, Tiziana Lodato and Leo Gullotta. In 1999 it was the moment of the Neapolitan director Nello Correale who set his *Oltremare – Non è l'America* in Marzamemi. Finally, from 1999, the Rai⁸ started the production of the TV series called *Il commissario Montalbano*, taken from the novels by Andrea Camilleri. The episodes were filmed in south-eastern Sicily, mainly in the territory of Ragusa, but also Marzamemi and the province of Syracuse served as background and provided the setting for the adventures of Salvo Montalbano⁹. The union between Marzamemi and the cinema was, by then, strong and, above all, widely acknowledged.

In 2001, thanks to Nello Correale, Marzamemi's International Festival of Frontier Cinema – an annual event acquiring more and more significance over time – was created. This six-day festival takes place mainly in Piazza Regina Margherita during the last ten days of July. At the same time other events are held in the alleyways and little courtyards next to the piazza. The aim is to promote films which are the product of an international and independent cinema, thus fostering, above all, the participation of young film directors coming from the Mediterranean region. Every year public and private institutions and cultural associations take part in the organisation of this event. Among these groups an essential role is played by the *Cinecircolo Baia delle Tortore*, a non-profit association, which was created in 2001 and is based in Pachino. To understand the importance the Festival is gaining from the point of view of tourism,

just think of the number of people (about 45,000)¹⁰ pouring into Marzamemi on the days of the event (Correale, 2011; Nicosia, 2013).

During the 2014 edition which has just come to an end, the American film producer Vito Bruno announced that Marzamemi will be the main set for *Mary, mother of Christ*, a movie directed by Alister Grierson starring Ben Kingsley and Julia Ormond. This film will be the prequel of *The Passion of the Christ*, directed by Mel Gibson and released in 2004.

3. The redevelopment of the old village: private initiatives and public interventions

During the following years Marzamemi stands out for its 'tourist fame'. Over three decades (1984-2014) it has turned from being considered a mainly local destination – a second-rate destination also at a provincial level, whereas other beach resorts, such as Fontane Bianche, Arenella and Helorus, appeared definitely better organised and renowned – to being perceived as an important tourist site at regional and national levels. Today, while walking along the old streets of the village during the summer months, it is not unusual to come across show business or sports celebrities enjoying a few days' holiday in Marzamemi. Since the 2000s, although still in a weak manner, a certain number of foreign tourists have begun to be noticed.

There is no doubt that, like in other centres of the Val di Noto, also in Marzamemi the cinema industry has set in motion an important process connected with tourism not only at economic and territorial levels but also in social and cultural terms. Since the 2000s, in fact, a series of private initiatives have started the redevelopment of the village. There is not a detailed development plan for Marzamemi and, for this reason, the restrictions applied to the village comply with the regulations of both the Legislative Decree no. 490/99 and the Regional Law no. 80/77. Above all since 2003 the Department for Cultural and Environmental Heritage of Syracuse has been presented with several projects, made by private individuals, for the restoration of buildings near Vicolo Villadorata and Piazza Regina Margherita. The central areas of the village have started to be filled up with little restaurants, nightclubs, souvenir shops, shops selling typical local products, cafés and ice cream shops. Some of the little old houses of the tuna fishermen no longer used for commercial activities have been converted into bed and breakfast hotels or have been rented out to tourists spending one or two weeks in Marzamemi.

In 2004 a project for the makeover of the lighting and the paving of the public areas of the historic centre of Marzamemi was presented. Piazza Regina Margherita, which used to lie above street level, was then lowered to the same level as the surrounding streets. Wide white limestone bricks – more in fitting with the local building traditions – cover all of the central areas and replace the anonymous grey asphalt. The works were completed in 2006, and they gave the village a totally new and definitely more appealing look. Despite the lack of a special development plan, the initiative of private individuals (which has the merit to have understood the value of the landscape of the village and, then, seized the significant opportunities offered by 'cinetourism') has combined with public intervention. Other important projects concern the restoration

of Palazzo Villadorata as well as the old *tonnara* and, also, the modernisation of the fishing port in order to, above all, make landing procedures safer.

Figure 4: Piazza Regina Margherita



Source: Di Blasi E. - Arangio A., 2014

This attention to the 'cinematographic' has undoubtedly brought both economic as well as social benefits to this region. Organisations for the protection and promotion of the territory have been created, young local professionals (architects and engineers) have had the opportunity to contribute to this process of redevelopment of the village as well as expressing their own taste and skills (Riley, Baker and Van Doren, 1998). Today, Marzamemi – with the countryside around Pachino which is famous for the production of greenhouse-cultivated cherry tomatoes and melons (Di Blasi and Arangio, 2013) – is, without a doubt, the main resource of the territory. Over the years, this little fishing village has become, also thanks to the cinema, a centre for the promotion of the territory with some renowned outlets of typical food products from the fish processing industry and agriculture. It is not by chance that one of the most awaited, and always extremely successful, annual events, is *Calici sotto le Stelle*. It is a display of local wine taking place every year on the night of San Lorenzo (10th of August), during which the wine makers offer tourists and locals their products.

Unfortunately, it must be said that this process of territorial redevelopment has not affected the whole village but only its oldest and most central areas. There is still a great deal to do to help Marzamemi make a qualitative leap which would allow it to become a tourist resort of both national and international importance. By comparing the architectural ugliness of the most modern areas of the village and its surroundings – where hideous blocks of flats and *villini*¹¹ built between the 1960s and the 1980s (sometimes illegally) irremediably mar the landscape – with the old central areas and, above all, with the quality of the restoration works which have been carried out, it is inevitable to think that, among its many merits, the cinema industry has also had the power to refine the aesthetic sensibility of many political and private local individuals (Cirelli and Nicosia, 2013; Pollice and Urso, 2013).

Figure 5: Vicolo Villadorata



Source: Di Blasi E. - Arangio A., 2014

In conclusion, it is necessary to say that, probably also thanks to the intense cinematographic activity in the territory, some young people from Pachino have found the courage to express their artistic talent and their creativity. During the summertime there are several local theatre groups and musicians performing nearby the small port of the Balata or on the stage set up in Piazza Regina Margherita. Finally, two young people from Pachino are worth mentioning because they have managed to achieve a

good level of success due directly to the cinema industry: the actress Margaret Madè, one of the protagonists of *Baaria* by Tornatore, and the film director and screenwriter Gian Paolo Cugno who, in 2006, brought to Italian cinemas *Salvatore – Questa è la vita*, a film starring actors such as Enrico Lo Verso and Giancarlo Giannini.

4. The local tourist market

An analysis of the characteristics of the tourism on offer and the fluxes determining the demand from the territory will be now attempted. To this purpose, the data regarding both the town of Pachino as well as the nearby town of Portopalo di Capo Passero (which is only 8 kilometres from Marzamemi) will be taken into consideration.

First of all, it is necessary to start by saying that determining, also approximately, the extent of the tourist fluxes (arrivals and departures) concerning Marzamemi is not a simple task. As has been written at the beginning of this article, the administrative geography of the village is rather complex since on the one hand its historic urban fabric forms part of the territory of Pachino but on the other hand almost all of the small summer holiday villas – which are rented out to tourists on a weekly basis during the months of July and August – as well as most of the structures which represent the complementary tourist accommodation supply (camping sites, tourist resorts, rental accommodation managed in the form of business ventures, bed & breakfast hotels, agritourism) lie in an area which forms part of the administrative territory of Noto. The town of Noto is, in terms of size, the first municipality of Sicily and the fourth of Italy (after Rome, Ravenna and Cerignola). In fact, the whole coastline stretching from the beach of the Spinazza lying north of Marzamemi to the southern borders of the Nature Reserve of Vendicari and over three kilometres long forms part of its territory. This coastal area (which includes the two maritime suburbs of San Lorenzo and Reitani as well as the *contrade*¹² of Littiricci, Forte di Marzamemi and Bove Marino) is characterised by a heavily built-up area – mainly consisting of summer holiday houses owned by many residents of Pachino – and, as has been said, most of Marzamemi's tourist supply is concentrated on it.

However, taking into consideration the data about tourism in Noto, together with the data concerning both Pachino and Portopalo, would not make sense and would not help us understand the extent of Marzamemi's cinetourist demand. It would mean ending up dealing with a wider tourist district and with a larger and more complex supply, Marzamemi not representing its only strength. The territory of Noto offers, in fact, a great variety of attractions to the tourist: the Baroque city architecture, Helorus, Vendicari. Thus, although it is true that the most substantial part of Marzamemi's tourist fluxes is statistically attributed to Noto rather than Pachino, it certainly cannot be said that Noto's tourist accommodation demand should be mostly identified with that of its southern territory neighbouring Marzamemi.

But there is yet another problem which makes the analysis of Marzamemi's tourist fluxes difficult. Even if the arrivals and overnight stays in the suburbs and *contrade* near the village were identified and quantified, an exact estimate of the local tourist demand would not be possible. This problem (affecting both the areas falling into the

territory of Noto and the territories of Pachino and Portopalo) is caused by the fact that Marzamemi, like all the places which have become tourist destinations only recently, shows a tourist accommodation supply heavily based on accommodation other than hotels. It is a well-known fact that night stays in complementary accommodation appear only partially in the official statistical surveys since this is an elusive sector which very often generates a hidden economy (Arangio, 2013). Suffice it to say that, in the data provided by the Tourism Observatory of the Sicilian Regional Authority, under the item 'rented-out private accommodation' – that is, one of the strongest branches of Marzamemi's tourist accommodation supply – only 10 Bed and Breakfast hotels are referred to the town of Pachino and none to the town of Portopalo. It seems, on the other hand, that there are no other types of private accommodation for rent. On the contrary, over the last few years, a widespread trend in the territory has been that of building private blocks of two or three flats. They have officially been built for the children of the owners with a view to spending their summer holidays there when they grow up, but, meanwhile, they are used to accommodate – paid, of course – small groups of tourists (often families) coming from other Sicilian towns or from other Italian regions. The traditional accommodation offer – that is, hotels – seems, on the other hand, weak in the whole area: two structures with 36 beds in Pachino, eight structures with 214 beds in Portopalo and no hotel in the areas of Noto near Marzamemi¹³.

Thus, in this type of situation, statistical data provide a highly distorted image of reality. Data gathered from the surveys do not correspond with what can be observed, during the months of July and August, on the beaches of the northern coastline of Marzamemi, in Piazza Regina Margherita and throughout the streets of the village, which are almost always overcrowded with tourists. However, they reveal some important trends which necessarily have to be analysed, at least to some extent.

As stated at the beginning of this paragraph, the data selected for consideration concern not only the town of Pachino but also the nearby town of Portopalo di Capo Passero. First of all, these two centres, given the short distance separating them, represent a unique tourist district which stretches from the Ionian beach of Cittadella lying in the southern area of the Nature Reserve of Vendicari (three kilometres north of Marzamemi) to the spectacular Mediterranean beaches of Carratois and of the Isola delle Correnti lying beyond Capo Passero. Secondly, it has to be said that the cost of a one night stay in the territory of Portopalo is on average lower than that normally paid in Marzamemi and its surroundings. As a result, in order to save money, many families prefer staying in Portopalo to staying in the area of Marzamemi. Both within the village and in the surrounding *contrade*, in fact, the weekly rent for small houses, small villas and flats – the cheapest solution for those who want to spend at least seven days in Marzamemi – ranges from 700 Euros in September and during the first ten days of July to 1,300 Euros for the week which includes San Lorenzo (10th of August) and Ferragosto (15th of August).

By looking at the time series of arrivals and stays in the tourist accommodation facilities of the Pachino-Portopalo district during the decade between 2004 and 2013, it can be noticed that the trend of the fluxes was far weaker in Pachino. What's more, according to the official statistical surveys, in 2007 only 7 arrivals should be recorded in facilities other than hotels in the territory of Pachino – a figure which appears obviously very unlikely! While the statistical surveys related to this municipality reveal a recovery starting from 2012, conversely, the fluxes concerning Portopalo seem to have been plummeting for over a decade. Even though the figure is not included in the table, in 2002 tourists in the territory of Portopalo were over 94,000. In 2013, they would decrease to fewer than 26,000. Moreover, by analysing the 2013 statistical surveys, it is possible to notice that only 3% of the arrivals in the territory and 2% of the stays would (the conditional must be used) concentrate on the Pachino-Portopalo district. There is no doubt that the most important tourist centre of all of Hyblean Sicily is Syracuse, a city which deals with about 65% of the arrivals and of the stays from the territory¹⁴; on the other hand, the 'desolation' described by the statistical surveys concerning Pachino and Portopalo appears improbable.

The analysis of the information about tourism reveals that in Pachino, despite the shortage of the hotel accommodation supply – it is worth remembering it: two structures and 36 beds – the demand seems to turn mainly to just those traditional structures. While in Portopalo, seemingly, the complementary accommodation structures would intercept over 60% of the demand in 2013. Above all it appears that 64% of the arrivals and 58% of the stays would concentrate on the two campsites in the territory, but in the past these percentages were much higher, sometimes higher than 90%.

Table 1: Tourist flows in Pachino. Time series data 2004-2013

YEAR	Hotel facilities		Non-Hotel facilities		Total	
	Arrivals	Overnight stays	Arrivals	Overnight stays	Arrivals	Overnight stays
2004	1,350	2,740	114	444	1,464	3,184
2005	1,712	3,474	92	343	1,804	3,817
2006	1,755	3,774	70	262	1,825	4,036
2007	1,574	3,503	7	22	1,581	3,525
2008	1,378	3,534	196	642	1,574	4,176
2009	1,446	3,431	151	750	1,597	4,181
2010	1,392	5,400	285	833	1,677	6,233
2011	807	1,702	287	1,122	1,094	2,824
2012	2,007	5,731	274	858	2,281	6,589
2013	2,171	4,314	565	1,948	2,736	6,262

Source: Tourism Observatory of the Sicilian Regional Authority (Data Processed by the Authors)

Finally, when grouping the information by nationality, it can be seen that, as you would think, the demand from the two municipalities is mainly national. When excluding the Sicilians, most of the tourists staying in the accommodation facilities of the district

would be from Lombardy, Lazio and, then, Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany. Among foreign tourists most of them are German, whereas on a territorial scale the French are the leading group.

Table 2: Tourist flows in Portopalo di Capo Passero. Time series data 2004-2013

YEAR	Hotel facilities		Non-Hotel facilities		Total	
	Arrivals	Overnight stays	Arrivals	Overnight stays	Arrivals	Overnight stays
2004	2,843	8,591	12,134	40,914	14,977	49,505
2005	3,078	8,839	12,483	45,092	15,561	53,931
2006	3,036	9,243	14,290	56,792	17,326	66,035
2007	2,975	9,111	8,842	25,569	11,817	34,680
2008	2,685	7,987	8,399	28,697	11,084	36,684
2009	2,592	7,557	8,697	27,199	11,289	34,756
2010	3,468	8,154	9,853	29,464	13,321	37,618
2011	3,536	9,690	8,637	25,753	12,173	35,443
2012	3,987	9,656	6,997	15,525	10,984	25,181
2013	3,805	9,427	7,436	16,417	11,241	25,844

Source: Tourism Observatory of the Sicilian Regional Authority (Data Processed by the Authors)

Final observations

When crossing the piazzas of Marzamemi or walking along the tiny streets of the historic centre a totally different situation from that described in the official statistical surveys can be observed. Of course, there are a significant number of day-trippers, that is, tourists who sleep in Syracuse and decide to spend a day in Marzamemi. However, the impression – which is confirmed by interviews with locals and visitors – is that the information concerning tourism fluxes provided by the institutions is dramatically played down. There is no doubt that the complex administrative geography of the village helps to make the situation very ‘obscure’, but it is likely that also the fragmentation of the supply – which has been incentivised by regulations as well as being boosted in a crucial phase by the increase in popularity of Marzamemi – has helped to spread a strong hidden economy.

Figure 5: Streets surrounding Marzamemi falling within the territory of Noto



Source: Di Blasi E. - Arangio A., 2014

The last two years have been a time of growth for tourism in this area. Syracuse and Trapani have been the *provinces* with the best performances in Sicily. But what is surprising is that, also during the crisis hitting this industry at the turn of the 2000s (ONT, 2013), many local tour operators believed and invested in Marzamemi. This is confirmed by the fact that newly opened outlets and restoration works of old buildings have been recorded during the years of the recession. This is a clear example of the fact that, also in times of crisis and of lack of stimuli from the demand, professionals keep investing in a resource when they are aware of its potential.

Undoubtedly, the development of the tourist image of Marzamemi has to be placed in a wider geographic context. The whole Val di Noto has been highly 'promoted' since the 1990s by the cinema industry (Nicosia, 2012) and by the inclusion of many sites of south-eastern Sicily in the list of Unesco World Heritage Sites. The promotion of both the image and the territory in those places where it has occurred has been supported by a strong local awareness and has often come after important actions of urban redevelopment, like, for example, in Catania, in Syracuse and in Ragusa (Arangio, 2013). On the contrary, as far as Marzamemi is concerned, it is likely that the image promoted, or, why not, created by the cinema industry might have set in motion a significant process of territorial redevelopment.

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¹ Despite common reflections: introduction and paragraphs 1 and 4 are attributable to Alessandro Arangio; paragraphs 2, 3 and final observations to Elena Di Blasi.

² [On the journey, we discover only what we carry. The emptiness of the traveller creates the vacuity of the journey, the wealth of the traveller determines its excellence.]

³ [tuna fishing and processing farm]

⁴ Marzamemi has three ports: the first and oldest port is the fishing port of the Balata; heading southwards there is the so-called 'small port', a shelter for private boats which finishes off the Gaetano Starrabba Waterfront southwards: going on southwards, along the road which leads to Portopalo di Capo Passero, there is the port of Contrada Fossa, the largest of the three, which specialises in prealure boating activities.

⁵ This explains the fact that until the 1970s the dialect spoken by the inhabitants of this small suburb of Pachino was the dialect spoken in Syracuse and not, as you might think, the dialect spoken in Pachino. The dialect of Pachino shows features extremely different from those of the dialect of Syracuse, since it forms full part of the dialects spoken in Ragusa and Modica and not, like the dialect of Catania and the dialect of Syracuse, of the non-metaphonic dialects spoken in south-eastern Sicily.

⁶ In the territory of Syracuse there are as many as seven tuna-fishing farms: Santa Panagia, Terrauzza, Fontane Bianche, Avola, Vendicari, Capo Passero and, of course, Marzamemi, the most important.

⁷ There is not a geographic term to define the inhabitants of Marzamemi in the Italian language. The dialect defines them as '*marzamaroti*' (*mazzamaroti* according to the Syracuse pronunciation and *marzamaruoti* according to the Pachino pronunciation). Recently the term 'marzamese' has come into usage, It was coined for the first time in 2001 by Corrado Arangio, a local historian and journalist of La Sicilia.

⁸ [the Italian state television]

⁹ In the beginning the series should have been shot in Porto Empedocle (Camilleri's birthplace) in the territory of Agrigento. In the end, the south-eastern cities with their Baroque settings and their evocative landscapes became Montalbano's Vigata.

¹⁰ The inhabitants of Marzamemi, including the neighbouring countryside, amount to a few hundred units.

¹¹ [detached houses]

¹² [districts]

¹³ These records were last updated in December 2013. Source: Tourism Observatory of the Sicilian Regional Authority.

¹⁴ By territory here we mean the Province of Syracuse.