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The Role of Lighthouses in the Construction of Coastal Identities¹

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ABSTRACT

Mysterious and fascinating figures – a light that brightens the land where it meets the sea – lighthouses have always played a vital role not only in drawing the line of the coast, but also in creating the social and cultural identity of those people who live at the edge of the land, in the *finis terrae*.

Lighthouses have known an architectonic and maritime history of their own, but most of them were abandoned after the decline of the maritime economy and the introduction of new technologies. Nowadays they are being rediscovered, both as part of a process of territorial re-appropriation enacted by the local communities, aiming at transforming them in modern houses or recovering their traditional use, and as part of tourist development policies, making of them new tourist accommodation for people wishing to live new types of cultural experiences or interested in re-discovering the history and memory of a territory.

The article analyses the role of lighthouses in the creation of territorial identities and in the tourist exploitation of the European coastal landscapes in areas with a strong maritime identity, inexorably connected with these coastal “giants”, symbols of both defense and openness towards otherness.

Keywords: Lighthouses; Territorial identity; Heritage; Heritage tourism; Territorial promotion

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Introduction

Mysterious and fascinating figures – a light that brightens the land where it meets the sea – lighthouses have always played a vital role not only in drawing the line of the coast, but also in creating the social and cultural identity of those people who live at the edge of the land, in the *finis terrae*.

Literature, as an example, offers evocative pages set in or around lighthouses, where they are not just the setting of the narration but assume a leading role, often fundamental for the evolution of the characters' story. The lighthouse, just as the port it identifies, is often a metaphor for a security space, in a very insecure environment; it appears stable and firm in a fragile territory, continually threatened by the unknown. This vision includes also the numerous sighting towers that were built in the past to protect the human settlements and their territories from the enemies coming from the sea.

Lighthouses have known an architectonic and maritime history of their own, but most of them were abandoned after the decline of the maritime economy and the introduction of new technologies, that have allowed the ships to follow their routes without observing the horizon (van der Eynden, 2003).

Nowadays they are being rediscovered, both as part of a process of territorial re-appropriation enacted by the local communities - aiming at transforming them in modern houses or recovering their traditional use - and as part of tourist development policies - making of them new tourist accommodation for people wishing to live new types of cultural experiences or interested in re-discovering the history and memory of a territory.

The article analyses the role of lighthouses in the creation of territorial identities and in the tourist exploitation of the European coastal landscapes in areas with a strong maritime identity, inexorably connected with these coastal "giants", symbols of both defense and openness towards otherness.

Following the European development policies, that focus on the strengthening of the interregional networks and a territorial promotion based on the European cultural itineraries, several projects aimed at rediscovering these buildings have been realized, in order to recover their functions and cultural symbolism, as it is happening in many other parts of the planet.

Italy too, since 2015, has recognised the importance of preserving these buildings as territorial features and a governmental initiative has been launched to recover both lighthouses, coastal towers and other buildings that were abandoned, mainly in the southern regions such as Campania, Puglia, Calabria and Sicilia, and in Toscana, in order to restore them to their local communities and promoting new ways of using them, in tourist, sport and cultural initiatives.

1. Lighthouses: historical, cultural and technological heritage of Europe

The history of Europe and of the Mediterranean Sea witness a long-lasting phenomenon of migrations, moved by the aim of occupation, the desire of exploration or the need of trade and travels.

For the above mentioned reasons, it is worthy to remember that the European civilization and the variety of its people are the result of continuous mutual exchanges and influences, in terms of know-how, traditions, socio-political experiences, and cultural expressions.

Travelling through a territory or by the sea is a determinant factor that contributes to the formation of cultural identities and structures.

By the previous experiences of travels and according to the morphology of territories and coasts, we see the emerging of particular concrete itineraries: those that were more comfortable, easy to be undergone, fascinating at both sight and soul, promoted the origin of infrastructures passed over by a big number of people and vehicles. From North to South, East to West, the European territory has been marked by roads and structures that occurred to give directions and restoration to travellers.

Lighthouses were some of those elements. They were at the end of a land (*finis terrae*) and represented the beginning of new travel experiences: beyond them, there is the sea, a diaphragm that divides territories, though it contributes to connect people, cultures, political systems, economies. Thanks to their vertical shape, lighthouses can be seen by far: their bright light informs that exactly there the previous experience will end, and a new geographical reality is going to begin. Therefore, a lighthouse is not only to be considered a *finis terrae*, but also an *initium* (beginning) *terrae*: from it, new itineraries begin, leading to new lands. Moreover, a continuous and systematic presence of lighthouses contribute to give the coast a safe, comforting and familiar image.

For these reasons, lighthouses are important geographical land-markers: they guide travellers, and warn them of dangers. Sometimes they are solitary buildings and stimulate people's fantasy produce epic stories referred to their history and culture. Sometimes they are the starters of new settlements. They are not neutral, but the result of a society's art and technique that contribute to reshape territories and to define specific and unique landscapes (der Eynden, 2003): in other words, they inevitably intervene on the *genius loci*, i.e. the relations of all the elements of a territory that define the peculiar spirit of a place.

Since the past, they have been represented in coins, charts, maps, paintings, stamps (fig. 1, 2, 3, 4). They were both so popular and so fascinating, that they were chosen by some authors as set for their novels (fig. 5, 6), because they played an important role for the social and cultural cohesion of entire communities.



Figure 1: Ancient coins representing Pharos, the famous Lighthouse of Alexandria.

Source: <https://www.ngccoin.com/news/article/4998/NGC-Ancients/>,
<http://ancientcoinage.org/lighthouses-of-alexandria.html>

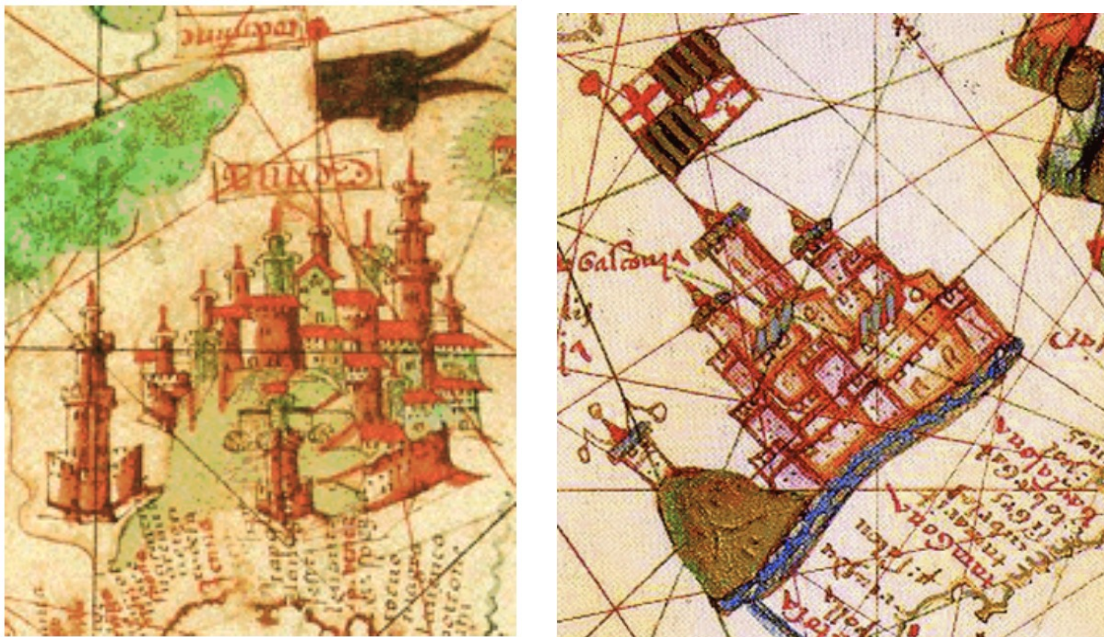


Figure 2: Nautical maps representing Genoa (Jehuda Ben Zara, 1497) and Barcelona (Joan Martines, 1570) harbours with their lighthouses.

Source: <http://fglorente.org/mapas.html>



Figure 3: Genoa Harbour, with its *Lanterna* (Lighthouse)

Source: http://historic-cities.huji.ac.il/italy/genova/maps/braun_hogenberg_1_44_1_b.jpg



Figure 4: Stamps representing lighthouses in a strategic geographical position, that is close to borders or potentially disputed between two Countries: Kampen (on the German Island of Sylt, off the Danish coast), Mayak (Russian settlement and Lighthouse in Crimea, on the Black Sea), Føroyar Islands.

Source: <http://lighthousestampsociety.org/wp/tag/germany/>,
<http://www.stamprussia.com/lighthouse.htm>, <http://lighthousestampsociety.org>



Figure 5: Three book covers of the novel *Le Phare du bout du monde* by Jules Verne, posthumously edited in 1905: it narrates the life and vicissitudes of three custodians at the San Juan de Salvamento Lighthouse on the Isla de los Estados, in the bottom of Southern America, where the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean merge and shipping isn't safe. The last is a poster of the movie inspired by the novel.

Source: <https://it.pinterest.com>, <https://www.abebooks.fr>, <http://www.anobii.com/books/>, <http://www.lecinema.free.fr>



Figure 6: Book covers of the novel *To the Lighthouse*, by Virginia Woolf (1st edition 1927). The lighthouses here represented is the one on the Skye Island.

Source: <https://www.theliterarygiftcompany.com>, <http://aretisakellaris.net/>, <http://www.goodreads.com>, <https://www.bookrepublic.it>

Many lighthouses are still functioning and stand as fundamental buildings for both sailors and local settlers. Some of the most famous over the time are in Gibraltar and Istanbul (the ancient gates of Europe, being its western and eastern borders), Finisterre (where the Road to Santiago de Compostela ended), Bilbao (the door to the North).

Others, indeed, are today less traceable. This is because many factors contributed to their destruction, e.g. the time, the coastal erosion operated by the wind and the sea, the human negligence, and the succession of historical events. When the Roman Empire failed, new lighthouses were built again only from the XII century, as well as other constructions like forts and watchtowers, especially those against the Saracen

invasions. It was the time of the Christian crusades to Jerusalem and of the Ottoman pirates' attacks against European ships, harbours and lands.

In some cases and especially in coastal villages, lighthouses weren't built in isolated areas: on the contrary, people used to lighten fires or lamps at the top of prior towers, belfries, statues. For that reason, many lighthouses are not easily distinguishable and seem to be lesser if compared to those drawn on the maps (Sheehan, 2009).

The Porto Pisano Lighthouse (1157), the Costanza Tower near Aigues Mortes (commissioned by Luis IX, King of France, in 1246), the lighthouses at the entrance of the Ports of Yarmouth and Rye (drawn in a map dated 1277), the light on the belfry of the Church of San Nicolò in Venice ("*phano magnum et pulcherrimum*", operative from 1312), the St. Catherine's Lighthouse on the Island of Wight (built by Walter de Godeton in 1314), the lighthouse on the Island of Cordouan at the mouth of Gironda River (1360) are some of the most remarkable examples of lighthouses dating back to the Middle Ages, as Sheenan points out in his paper (fig. 6) (Sheenan, 2009).

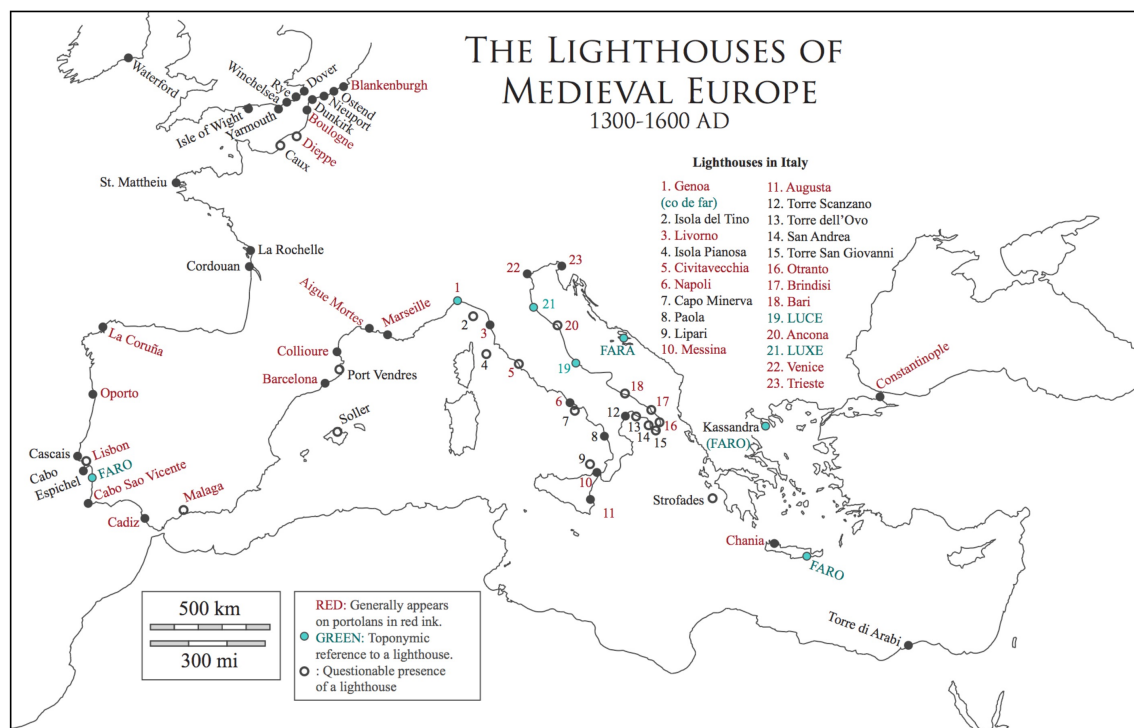


Figure 6: Lighthouses of Medieval Europe, 1300-1600

Source: <http://histgeo.ac-aix-marseille.fr>.

Not only history and cartography bear witness of the importance of lighthouses: lexicon and names of places are fundamental proofs of the fact that lighthouses were basic structures of the whole euro-Mediterranean culture.

If we look at the table below (tab. 1), we can see many similarities of the terms "lighthouse", "light", "lamp", and "flame" among the main European languages.

Table 1: Comparison of the terms “lighthouse”, “light”, “lamp”, and “flame” in the main European languages

<i>English</i>	Lighthouse	Light	Lamp	Flame
<i>German</i>	Leuchtturm	Licht	Lampe/ Lanterne	Flamme
<i>Italian</i>	Faro	Luce	Lampada	Fiamma
<i>Latin</i>	Pharo	Lux	Lumen	Flamma
<i>French</i>	Phare	Lumière	Lampe	Flamme
<i>Castilian</i>	Faro	Luz	Lámpara/ Linterna	Llama
<i>Catalan</i>	Far	Llum	Llum	Flama
<i>Portuguese</i>	Farol	Luz	Lâmpada	Chama
<i>Romanian</i>	Far	Lumină	Lampă/ Lanternă	Flacăra
<i>Danish</i>	Fyrtårn/ Fyr	Lys/ Lygte	Lampe/ Lygte	Flamme

Source: Personal table inspired by Sheenan, 2009.

Moreover, we must not forget that the term “Pharo”, that today commonly and generally stands for any lighthouse, in the past was the name of the lighthouse of Alexandria (Egypt), on the Island of Pharos. It was built between 300 and 280 BC, in order to safely lead sailors during their navigation. It was the biggest and the most outstanding of the World and it became the “pharo” (i.e. lighthouse) par excellence. Later, as a result of a semantic expansion, “pharo” started to represent all the lighthouses.

Also names of places could give us the proof of the presence of a lighthouse in the past. Flamborough is the name of a lighthouse built on the namesake Flamborough Head (Yorkshire, England). It is only one of the several lighthouses that lightened the British coast during the Middle Ages. Could that name derive from the term “flame” linked to the suffix “-borough” (concerning settlements)? Nevertheless, we must not forget its previous name, Flaneberg: in the ancient Saxon language, “flaen” meant “arrow” and it was probably used to describe the pointy shape of that promontory.

A crucial period in the history of lighthouses was between XVIII and XX centuries. Those construction, often provided with a dwelling for a man (and his family) in charge of its maintenance, started to function automatically: thanks to the Industrial Revolutions, the flame (beforehand produced by fire) was progressively substituted by the light produced by electricity. Something similar happened for the street lighting. This is the reason why that of the lighthouses can be defined a technological heritage.

Now, what’s the link (or the relationship) between lighthouses and pilgrimages? Are there connections between those land-markers and the pilgrims’ faith experiences along routes and roads? Lighthouses represented both the end and the beginning of a road, the gateway of a land that was the starting-point or the destination of all who wanted to walk, ride or sail in order to find atonement from their sins or their immoral life. Rome, Jerusalem, Santiago de Compostela were the three main destinations for the above mentioned practices of faith and penance. They were connected by a thick number of roads. For example, via Francigena started in Canterbury and led to Rome, and from Rome to Southern Italy and to Jerusalem. It was interrupted by the Channel and the Mediterranean Sea. Those who walked at a certain point arrived at the southern point of England, where they found a harbour marked by a lighthouse (*finis terrae*); there, they set sail on a boat and disembarked as soon as they arrived at

another harbour, on the French coast, marked by another lighthouse (*initium terrae*). From there, their walk generally continued through uninhabited territories (*per agra* > lat. “peregrinus”, eng. “pilgrim”). It was a sort of multimodal itinerary, and lighthouses were part of that network. With their light, they comforted pilgrims and played as a metaphor of eschatology: lights stood for deliverance and lighthouses, thin and tall, showed the right direction not only to a holy place, but also to Heaven.

Lighthouses are then worthy of being restored and promoted as heritage, because they can play an important role for the preservation of the local identities.

2. Structuring territorial identities through tourism and memory

In the 20th and 21st century, memory (Todorov, 1996) and the search for places connected to the historical memory, has become a key attraction for tourists and pilgrims. It moves a great number of people from all over the world, in search either for their origins or the historical evolution of human societies, often connected to dramatic events.

Pilgrimages and cultural itineraries along which pilgrims move either on foot, bicycle or horse-riding, answer to this need of identifying with the past or rather with a past that represents a founding moment in history for that specific group or nation. Memory and identity are thus tightly connected.

The identity of a place, however, is not a definite one, rather it is continually evolving together with the cultural definition of the group that lives on that territory (Carta, 1999), that is continually integrated by new cultural symbols, becoming new elements of the local heritage. Monuments and buildings connected to the history of a group are among the most significant elements in representing the collective identity of that group, together with the places connected to its heritage, as a testimony of the territorial action realized by that population (Caldo, 1994).

Postmodern societies produce a growing flow of tourists towards these places: in fact, the tourist use of memory allows the recovery of places and events of the past and their transformation in collective symbols. In respect to this, Dann (1996) highlights how the promotion of such destinations focuses on the need to answer to the rhetorical question “Who am I?” that is addressed not only to member of the same group or nation, but may also attract people from other places, interested in getting to know both the culture of the group who has produced that specific heritage and their own. These symbols may span from architecture to landscape features to intangible examples such as norms, beliefs, knowledge. Heritage, in fact, is composed by both tangible and intangible elements, being the first composed by statues, buildings, museums, galleries etc and the second by all the immaterial production of a culture such as gastronomy, traditional knowledge on agriculture and other activities, medicines, songs, dances, etc. This group of elements includes also the territorial features that create the idea of a nation or group, such as ceremonies, national sports, heroes, fairy tales (Smith, 1991) and the landscape, as a testimony of the human settlement on a territory.

Moreover, memory has a socio-psychological dimension that allows each one of us to give a personal interpretation of the historical facts that are being celebrated in that specific event or place: memory tourism, in this sense, enables a rediscovery - beside the official History - of one's personal history, and his identity with it (Meethan, 2001). Narration – and the narration of travels in particular – plays a vital role in structuring memory, because it allows a reflection on who we are, in response to the visit we pay to someone else's place and culture (Galani-Moutafi, 2000, p. 205, cit in Meethan, 2001). This is the reason why every journey, namely those towards the places of the collective memory, are particularly important in education, allowing the persistence of a group or nation and its relation with its collective past. This form of tourism is often associated to the idea of pilgrimage, because the visit to these “sacred” places builds a “moral geography of the nation” (Smith, 1991, p. 16) or of the group that is involved, that extends to all the visitors.

The tourist use of memory places, however, expose them to a risk, because opening up to leisure, memory may not be distorted or abused if not dealt with properly (Todorov, 1996; Dann, Seaton, 2001). On the other side, if not remembered, these events and places may be forgotten with a terrible damage to the mnemonic community of that group.

To promote and protect the diversity of the world cultural heritage, in 2001 Unesco has promoted the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* that recognizes the importance of cultural diversity as a tool for innovation, intercultural dialogue, cultural pluralism and inclusion, together with human development.

(<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf>)

Culture represents an important feature of tourist attraction, and cultural tourism is, in fact, a growing sector of global tourism that builds on both tangible and intangible heritage; the latter, in particular, is becoming more and more significant, because postmodern tourists are continually searching traditions to discover (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00002>).

3. Heritage: tourist resources for territorial development

Tourism is an industry that consumes images, dreams, time and places (Lozato Giotard 2006) and continually imposes new territorial goals on the tourist destination, produced by modernity, that often lead to a loss in territorial control, in favour of a limited number of global economic stakeholders. The process of territorialisation is strongly influenced by the introduction of tourist goals on a territory and its inclusion in a global system that is strongly controlled by the more powerful economic areas of the world (Lando, 2008). Using Turco's words (2012, p.13), the risk is to “*trasformare ... la metafora in una metonimia, in modo più o meno consapevole. La parte (Destinazione turistica) diventa il tutto (luogo)*”². To ensure the survival of the destination's peculiar character it is thus important to remember that “*la finalità culturale e quella economica non possono essere dissociate dalla finalità territoriale*”³ (Lozato-Giotard, 2006, 24): the control over the territory implies the control over the persistence of the group history, tradition and identity.

Heritage is central in the development of the global tourist system, being able to attract tourists interested in the memory and identity of the population who inhabits those places. Heritage is, literally, the inheritance of the past that each individual receives from the previous generations who have inhabited that territory, and it actually becomes heritage only when the present day population voluntarily accepts its symbolic role in representing their identity. Heritage may also be interpreted as the visible action of time over space, the stratification of the evolving cultures on a territory. This reproduction or stratification represents the physical supports to collective memory – through a process that identifies what has to be remembered – that contributes to the creation of the sense of belonging to a place and its very identity (Carta, 1999). Heritage is more and more connected to the so-called cultural needs, an internationally recognised right connected to the right to cultural inheritance and to the preservation and promotion of place identities, particularly through cultural tourism (Carta, 1999).

Landscape is included in the definition of heritage not only for its historical or aesthetical value, but also for its contribution to economic development: landscape is capable of influencing the tourist attractiveness and it may be one of the pillars of the tourist development policy of a region, making of it a tourist destination (Carta, 1999). In fact, not only cultural goods represent the cultural identity of a group but they also have become an economic resource, on whose utilization the global cultural tourism market is built: they attract capitals, create employment and produce incomes connecting the local production and the global tourist market⁴. This relationship is not an easy one, though, because the transformation of cultural symbols in economic resources may present all the critical aspects already described and it has also to adapt to the requests coming from the tourist supply, to satisfy which they often have to be adjusted, exposing them to the risk of being misrepresented; in order to maintain their tourist attractiveness, their cultural symbolism and authenticity have to be preserved. The preservation of cultural goods plays an important social role, in that they ensure the preservation of the cultural, artistic and spiritual values that benefit not only the local residents but also all the international tourists who exploit them (Friel, Trimarchi, 2007).

Heritage tourism is part of a network that includes the territory and the local stakeholders, the tourists, the resources; it's a virtuous circle that connects culture and economy, where supply and demand are supported by creativity and innovation (Friel, Trimarchi, 2007) that allow the creation of tourist products in which history, tradition and memory are central. Landscape too is central for these products, as the image of the territory is the vehicle of identity and culture that become accessible to tourists: the historical and cultural mould (Pollice, 2002) of the landscape becomes one of the main tourist attraction and its preservation attracts tourist (and capital) flows while strengthening the sense of territorial belonging, that enroots people in their place of origin, contributing to their protection.

The transformation of the local cultural goods into heritage allows the cultural value of a territory (its cultural armour) become a tool in the fight against territorial standardization, that may derive from the global process of de-territorialisation; such tool works creating local cultural practices and values that have to be protected because of their tourist attractiveness (Carta, 1999).

4. The promotion of the territory and of the cultural heritage in Europe: cultural itineraries.

The Council of Europe's recognition of the territory as a complex cultural good – a sort of encyclopedia where all the features of human life can be found – started around mid-1970s, with the European Charter of the architectural heritage (1975) and later with the Granada Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (1985). The two documents helped building a vision of the European territory and landscapes as cultural goods, to protect and promote through participative actions and sustainable exploitation (Carta, 1999).

The idea of valorization and protection of the cultural heritage value was introduced in the international discourse only in 1972, when the Unesco's World Heritage Convention first established a global system based on the inscription on a World Heritage List, that increases each year; in 2016 it includes 1052 goods distributed over 165 countries, among which 34 transnational goods (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>). In 2013, with the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, this protection was extended to intangible goods.

To complete this protection, in 2011 the Council of Europe has introduced the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, an international cultural strategy that, heading from the idea that the knowledge and the use of cultural heritage is a right for all the EU citizens, as defined in the Universal declaration of Human Rights. Cultural heritage is thus recognised both as a means for human development, for the valorization of cultural diversity and the promotion of intercultural dialogue and as a model for economic development based on the sustainable exploitation of cultural resources.

(<https://www.coe.int/it/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/199>)

The Convention aims at involving the local populations in recognizing the cultural values of their territories and stimulating the member States in promoting a participative process based on a synergy between the public institutions, the private citizens and the local associations.

This new vision of the relationship between heritage, territory and active citizenship has produced the forms of valorization of lighthouses that we will discuss later on.

Among the heritage protected by the Council of Europe, the cultural routes and itineraries are an important feature, being territorial circuits that connect places, sites and monuments that at a certain point in history have shared a common function based on their cultural, religious, commercial, military or artistic vocation (Patin, 2005). Itineraries are precious because they keep a memory of the past that is vital for the self-identification of many groups.

Already in the 1960s, the European Union had started discussing about cultural itineraries, as routes aimed at (re-)discovering, through the voyage, the common

cultural identity, promoting, at the same time, peace and cultural dialogue. Nowadays, the main goals of the cultural itineraries are connected to the promotion of three fundamental values for our common history: human rights – meaning freedom of expression, information and equity; cultural democracy and diversity; reciprocal comprehension and transfrontier exchange (<http://culture-routes.net/cultural-routes/values>). To support this project transnational cooperation at different scales is to be set in place, according to a process of global governance based on the principle of subsidiarity.

The landscape is a significant part in both structuring and experiencing cultural itineraries, being connected to the perception of the pilgrim/traveler all along the journey. It also shares a very important educational value, as the history of Grand Tour has shown. In fact, the Grand Tour has played a role in structuring the concept of cultural heritage in the western society, with its contribution to the promotion of an idea of memorialization of the past.

In 1987, the first Council of Europe cultural itinerary was opened – the Way of Saint James – and since then several other were launched: today, the Council of Europe has recognised 32 cultural itineraries and many more are being submitted for recognition (<http://culture-routes.net/cultural-routes/list>). They are classified according three different typologies: territorial itineraries, developed on wide regions that share a common heritage of a past civilization, activity or landscape (i.e. the growing of olives, the forging of iron, etc.); linear itineraries, that connect places though a continuous line, on which villages, castles, religious building contribute to the creation of a specific cultural landscape (i.e. the landscape created along the Way of Saint James); itineraries without spatial continuity, based on individual or aggregated cultural goods that may be reached by free routes chosen by the travelers themselves (i.e. The Cluniac monasteries).

We may include among the European landscapes and architectural resource, those buildings connected to the coastal identity and history, such as lighthouses, towers and other forms of seaside settlements.

The presence of lighthouses in the Mediterranean basin probably dates back to the very beginning of sailing and the very Homer and Aeschylus describe the dim light of the flames over the rocks and the glaring light of the fire to brighten the darkness of the night (Simonetti, 2009). As said in part 1, probably the first lights were made by fires set in high places over the seas, later to be substituted by oil lamps and beacons; because of the need of elevated and isolated places, for a long time the preferred location for lighthouses was beside monasteries with the monks taking care of them, as it happened with several lighthouses along the Portuguese coast during the XVI century (SIPA, 2011; <http://www.faroisdeportugal.com/>).

Several improvements have occurred since then, due to the introduction of technical innovations: in the XVI century the optical technique, that allowed the expansion of the brightness of these rudimentary beacons; in the XVII century watchmaking mechanisms, that allowed the rotation of the light, and in the XIX century new fuels and then electricity. Finally, in the XX century, information technology and Gps have allowed the creation of a very precise network of control over the coasts to which new sailing techniques have to be added, making lighthouses less useful. Notwithstanding,

their presence continues being perceived as vital or at least reassuring to all fishermen sailing on their boats at night (Simonetti, 2009; <http://www.faroisdeportugal.com/>).

Due to their location and height, lighthouses are not just functional to navigation; they have become symbols of a maritime culture and, with it, also of the land that joins with the sea; landscape symbols that narrate a story of their own, a story of different cultures that often meet, of construction techniques, of events, etc. They are not just territorial objects aimed at controlling the maritime traffic, but they are important for the very history and memory of the places where they were built (SIPA, 2011).

Lighthouses, in short, play a territorial role even when the sun is bright in the sky (Simonetti, 2009); they have become colourful landmarks of places where the land meets the sea- the *finis terrae* –, identified by white and red stripes or black and white check elements. To conclude, as landmarks of land's end, and for their strong connection with religious worshipping, lighthouses are included in several cultural itineraries, such as those in Galicia on the Way of Saint James, offering to modern pilgrims and to tourists an insight over the coastal identity of Europe.

5. Lighthouses: tourism and identity

The rediscovery and the promotion of the lighthouses as cultural itineraries operated by the Council of Europe has supported international, national, and local programs with the aim of bringing back to life not only lighthouses as such, but also cultural identities, by means of economic and social development. It's then necessary to operate for the reuse of lighthouses to accommodate tourists, or to allocate exhibitions, museums, events, with both an economic and a socio-cultural purpose.

These renovated activities can economically help isolated areas and/or local communities to afford expenditures for the lighthouse maintenance and to support local economies, often marginalized by the global turn.

Australia, the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, France, Portugal, Croatia, Greece are only some of the States that are fostering such policies, inspired by the goal of sustainability through the promotion and the fruition of the lighthouses heritage. The table below (table 3) presents a SWOT analysis, made by the Author who studied the underway or realized programs, in order to find out some general aspects that can be used as guidelines for the forthcoming projects. Strengths (characteristics of the site that give it advantage over others), Weaknesses (characteristics of the site that give it disadvantage over others), Opportunities (elements that can become possibilities for an enhancement), and Threats (elements that can cause problems or deterioration) are here synthetically summed up.

The document *Baltic Lights*, focused on the promotion of the lighthouses as a cultural heritage and a tourist destination, asserts that “by developing the potential of lighthouses e.g. as tourist destinations, we can preserve more of them for posterity. Today many of the lighthouse stations that are no longer operational or have been automated are used as accommodation for walkers, museums, restaurants and cafes, conference centres, guest and pleasure boat harbours, nature centres and bird observation stations. The adoption of new uses can also contribute revenue towards

the ongoing maintenance costs of the buildings” (<http://balticheritage.raa.se>, p. 9). These objects, that were originally used as a “guarantee of safe passage”, have progressively experienced a technological modernization, thanks to new “advanced technological systems”, that contributed to confirm lighthouses as real “landmarks in the coastal landscape”.

Table 2: SWOT analysis table that points out general aspects as guidelines for the planning of restoring and promotion of lighthouses.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Image: uncontaminated landscapes and evocative environments - Historical heritage: in the past, they were important places for both the economic and cultural life of local communities and of travellers - Tourist accommodation: though they are austere, lighthouses are potentially good to host travellers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decentralization and marginality: lighthouses and the villages on the coast (if they aren't big harbours) are not central in respect to the main networks - Dereliction of a place and soil/environment degradation - Lack of resources or inefficiency of the production or distribution services
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning of socio-economic events or activities, that can attract tourists or visitors - Tourist flows, that can attract people and strengthen the sense of identity and belonging of the local communities - Networks of similar heritage tourism experiences, that can optimize the efforts and reduce the expenditures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soil consumption and resources exploitation - Social conflict between tourists and the local community (in case there is one) - Economic and authority conflict among stakeholders in the management of the project and in the goal-sharing

Source: personal elaboration of the Author

Today, lighthouses are “historic monuments”, “distinctive buildings”, “sources of cultural history”, “tourism and recreation centres”, “centres for study and research”, “holiday homes” (<http://balticheritage.raa.se>,) and, since they are a lot all along the European coasts, they can play a geopolitical role: Europe is a Continent with a variety of political, economic and cultural systems, that has lived frictions over the decades, and suffered big economic or geopolitical crisis. Therefore, projects for the promotion of lighthouses can be effective to restore a derelict area and to involve local communities in the process of their development, because they are based on the recognition of their historical and cultural values, as well as on the evaluation and promotion of their accessibility, and the support for good governance processes. Similarly, France has 135 isolated lights and 220 lighthouses, today supervised by a network of local actors: the *Société nationale pour le patri moine des phares et balises*⁵, a section of the Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and

Spatial Planning, the Ministry of Culture and Communication, as well as Districts, Local Committees, and Park Authorities. They all work together to suggest and share ideas, projects and actions for the protection not only of the lighthouses themselves, but of the surrounding areas: abandoned villages, fragile territories exposed to exploitation and soil erosion, flora and fauna in extinction.

Lighthouses bear a huge sense of adventure and emotion. For this reason a growing number of people are looking for a break in a lighthouse⁶, that is becoming a real tourist experience, also promoted by tour operators.

In 2015, Italy launched the “ValorePaese - DIMORE” Program, that is part of the European Framework Policy 2014-2020 and of the Italian Strategic Plan for Tourism 2020. It is a network that includes several typologies of buildings that could be restored and promoted for tourism in a sustainable development perspective. Therefore, it's expected to recover derelict heritage sites with a public-private sector partnership, that can be worthwhile in terms of territorial development and economic expenditures. In fact, the project (like many other worldwide: Europe, USA, Canada, Australia) looks after derelict or abandoned lighthouses, tower, and other coastal buildings that are State Properties, with the aim to entrust them to private bodies after an announcement of selection. Winners are those who enjoy both economic and environmental requirements in accordance with the so called lighthouse accommodation: a “green” tourism typology that includes territorial and environmental knowledge. This approach is considered a good practice for the socio-economic development of the local communities, by promoting a complex cultural heritage, like lighthouses are. Such a green tourism is an alternative experience, that involves cultural tourism (wine and food heritage, folk songs and dances...), environmental tourism (visiting protected areas and contributing to the economic support of their maintenance, being delighted by the surrounding landscape ...), and slow tourism (desire of relax and finding yourself, discovering popular traditions...) as well.

Since 2015, thanks to the above mentioned Program, 9 lighthouses⁷ have been rented for a 50 years period, in cooperation with Anci (the Italian Association of the Local Districts), Invitalia (the Italian Association in charge of attracting non-repayable investments), the Italian Ministries of Defense (that is the managing authority of lighthouses and other state-property buildings) and of Heritage and Activities and Tourism, the Treasury Deposits and Loan, the Lending Institution for sport activities, the Italian Industrial Federation, the Italian Hotel Association, the Association of the Real Estate Industry.

A reason to brag for Italy is that, according to an international rank, the Capo Spartivento Lighthouse in Chia, 50 kilometres south of Cagliari (Sardinia), is considered the most wonderful, thanks to its position on a cliff surrounded by the Mediterranean scrub. It is a luxury guest house, all-year-long opened, composed of a suite, two small apartments and a single bedroom, as well as a swimming pool, some Jacuzzis and internet access.

In conclusion, these experiences are a good incitement to further improve: if, since few years ago, lighthouses have been considered merely for their historical heritage related to their ancient role of marking a *finis terrae* (or, as we defined them in this article,

initium navigationis and *initium terrae*), today they are strategic tangible heritage for tourism, related both to cultural promotion and to environmental protection.

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Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf>

Patrimonio intangibile secondo l'Unesco:

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Fari del Portogallo: <http://www.faroisdeportugal.com/>. Consulted on 15/10/2016.

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Convenzione quadro del Consiglio d'Europa sul valore del patrimonio culturale per la società: <https://www.coe.int/it/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/199>

Consulted on 14/10/2016.

Rotte e itinerari culturali del Consiglio d'Europa: <http://culture-routes.net/cultural-routes/list> Consulted on 18/10/2016.

¹ Filippo Pistocchi has written chapters 1 and 5. Elisa Magnani has written chapters 2, 3 and 4. The Introduction is common to both Authors.

² "To transform the metaphor in a metonymy, with a part /the tourist destination), becoming the whole (the place)". Translation from Italian by the Author.

³ "Cultural and economic goals cannot be separated by the territorial goal". Translation from Italian by the Author

⁴ The resources that create the cultural heritage of a nation are not the mere cultural goods themselves, but they include other aspects that are becoming more and more important in order to promote tourist development, such as cultural diversity, human capital and the cultural infrastructures of a territory. These cultural goods are enriched by innovation and, by expressing the connection with a territory, they become highly attractive for cultural tourists all over the world (Friel, Trimarchi, 2007).

⁵ It was founded in 1806, with the purpose of supervising the devices installed for the safe navigation both along the French coasts and the coast of the France's Overseas territories.

⁶ Marc Pointud, 64yo, "adopted" the Tévenec Lighthouse, with the aim to raise funds to transform that lighthouse in a house for artists. That building was built in 1874 and became operative from the year after. Since that time, lonely guardians tried to live there, but they often finished their lives in tragic (suicide) and mysterious ways (many became fool). For that reason, it was renamed the ghost lighthouse, and left abandoned in 1910.

⁷ Brucoli and Murro di Porco, Province of Siracusa (Sicily), Capo Grosso in Levanzo Island, Province of Trapani (Sicily), Punta Cavazzi in Ustica, Province of Palermo (Sicily), Capo d'Orso in Maiori, Province of Salerno (Campania), Punta Imperatore in Forio d'Ischia, Province of Naples (Campania), San Domino in the Tremiti Islands, Province of Foggia (Puglia), Punta del Fenaio and Capel Rosso in Giglio Island, Province of Grosseto (Tuscany) (www.touringclub.it).