

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

THREE SANCTUARIES AND THREE TOURISM MANAGEMENT MODELS ON THE SACRED PUIG DE RANDA MOUNTAIN (MAJORCA)

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The island of Majorca is home to a wide selection of religious sanctuaries and centres with deep roots and tradition. These places have become symbols of identity for all Majorcans, particularly for those who live in the areas where these sacred sites are located. As a general rule, they offer the added value of housing interesting architecture surrounded by appealing natural landscapes that accentuate the sanctity of the setting.

Some of these centres currently run a 'status quo' management model, with an overwhelming predominance of their traditional religious role, albeit with lower activity. Others, the most innovative, have made changes to adapt to the new requirements of both society and the market, attempting to survive in a context that could be described as less religious but more spiritual.

The main aim of this work is to look at the current management models and the variety of options seen in the limited space of the sacred mountain of Puig de Randa, where three important sanctuaries are located: Gracia, San Honorato and Cura. Several spiritualities have a place in this setting and there are different formulae for maintaining and commercialising the sacred. The diversity seen points to a complex, dynamic and changing reality that can be extrapolated to other locations in the Balearic Islands and even the rest of Spain itself.

The methodology used is mainly qualitative in nature. The basis of this research focuses on the recognition of the sanctuaries and formal dialogue with the religious and/or tourist authorities responsible for the locations through personal interviews. To do this, a model was designed comprising over fifty questions: some highly specific and others more general in nature. The features of what is offered, their profile and the motivation behind demand, the basis for financial and continued existence, and the role played by heritage take up most of the questions put to those responsible for the analysed sanctuaries. Four individuals were interviewed in total: two members from the religious community of San Honorato, the lay brother of the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Gracia and the managing

director of the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Cura. The interviews lasted on average three hours each. The information and details provided were transcribed for later analysis and use. The research finalised with the documentary and statistical analysis collected by heritage-based institutions in Majorca and the Balearic Islands.

The text has been split into four sections: three for context and content, and one for conclusions.

Section one serves as an introduction and focusses the debate on the current status of knowledge in relation to spiritual tourism. Consequently, an attempt has been made to establish similarities to and differences from other tourist segments with which religious and cultural tourism are directly associated. Majorca is a tourism pioneer, basically specialising in sun and sand tourism. It has therefore been deemed essential to focus on a different type of tourism that contributes to supplementing and diversifying the current broad selection. Raising awareness and recognition of the potential operation of this alternative type of tourism on the island has been ongoing since the early 2000s.

Section two analyses the sacred locations under study. It sets out their evolution from a tourism perspective, how they have changed and how their image has, at all times, been reinforced by the presence of Ramón Llull—a key spiritual figure and one of the most important and illustrious names in Catalan culture who enjoyed huge influence in mediaeval Europe. The mystic Majorcan's stay on the Puig de Randa has been decisive in increasing the location's pull and strengthening its spiritual foundations.

Section three includes an applied component and examines current management at the three sanctuaries on the Puig de Randa mountain. The differing management models at these religious centres demonstrate a diverse panorama combining a more traditional profile (Gracia) with more innovative approaches (San Honorato and Cura).

The final section offers conclusions that may contribute to improved future planning. The first is that religious, spiritual and cultural tourism are co-existing together for the first time at these holy places. The management is seeking to obtain financial benefits whilst attempting to ensure heritage sustainability and uphold their traditional religious nature. The second is that the three sanctuaries on Puig de Randa have highly diverse management approaches that contribute to diversifying the sacred and leisure appeal of the mountain and, by extension, the island. Whilst Cura and Gracia welcome visitors and tourists with a more cultural profile, San Honorato has specialised in a more strictly spiritual tourism.

The management model at the Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora Gracia is the most austere since it only allows limited public access. The management responsibility for the entire complex falls to the lay brother, who oversees maintenance which thus avoids any trivialisation—an aspect representing the greatest advantage and asset of the sanctuary. Nevertheless, cultural, religious and economic activity is fairly low. Religious activity is limited the Franciscan brothers holding specific masses, who travel from the municipality of Lluçmajor, and cultural activity is focussed on organising special events with a view to earning some financial income. This management model is the most traditional and has seen fewer changes over time. Nonetheless, the economic crisis currently affecting the site and the need to earn more income means the model will require some changes in the short- to medium-term.

Activity is higher at the shrine of San Honorato due to the permanent presence of a mixed community (religious and lay) who indiscriminately manage the religious and financial sides. The members offer high-demand services open to all types of spiritual practice. Hostelry and hosting courses and workshops provide most income, a high percentage of which is used for heritage conservation. The main advantage of San Honorato, and the differentiating factor with regard to the neighbouring sanctuaries, is strict spiritual tourism can be practised here without interference, even though the relationship between guests and the community is very close. Its success is linked to the growing trend in spiritual tourism, both locally and globally.

The Sanctuary of Nuestra Señora de Cura is more focussed on cultural tourism. With the exception of the services provided by the Franciscan brothers mainly focussing on holding Sunday mass, management of the sanctuary is performed by a private company, albeit one that is constantly aware that it operates in a sacred public place. For this reason, tourist services (restaurant, hostelry, shop...) are more professional and the facilities are better quality. The museum, convent cloister, chapel, garden, vantage points and Ramón Llull cave contribute to diversifying the cultural and leisure attractions. These features represent an advantage for cultural tourists, although they have an adverse effect on the spiritual essence and traditional austerity of the sanctuary.

The specificities of what each sanctuary offers mean that they are all very busy throughout the year, although for the time being, the impact from tourist numbers is low-risk. Three factors lie behind the reason for this: the control undertaken by the managers at each of the centres; the respect shown by visitors for the inherent natural and cultural heritage at the sanctuaries; and the re-investment of some of the income obtained through tourist activities in maintenance and conservation of the heritage and nature areas.

The commitment to quality and uniqueness within a spiritual and peaceful framework has marked out the roadmap for the sanctuaries on the Puig de Randa mountain. The richness of this mountain lies in the varied attractions and in the pursuit of a sustainable cultural and environmental setting, meaning it could well strengthen as a religious and spiritual tourism highlight in Majorca. The future challenge for the managers will be how to deal with ever increasing visitor numbers—striking a balance between the need to protect the locations whilst providing a high quality experience.

