Religiousness as Tourist Practice

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The Religious Tourist: A modern Janus?

Designed by Nikos Tsoukalas based on the author's idea
Abstract

This thesis interprets ways in which religion is performed within the tourism sphere, moving from a study of textuality towards the essential embodiment and materiality of the tourist world. Embracing recent developments in studies of religion, religious tourism and tourism in general, this research seeks to consider not only the permanent religious structures and the experiences they stage, but also how individuals as reflexive beings become believers through a variety of unpredictable, active and complex performances that are enabled through tourism. Based on post-human theories (Franklin, 2008; Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Latour, 2005; Picken, 2010; Walsh and Tucker, 2009) and on social and individual constructivism alike, religion is considered a network, of the human, immaterial and material worlds, each of which is assigned agency. Accordingly, the performative approach (Crouch et al., 2001; Edensor, 2000, 2001; Perkins and Thorns, 2001) is considered here as being the most adequate in addressing how religion is experienced multi-dimensionally.

Using the example of the sacred island of Tinos, Greece, religious oriented tourism is regarded as a process of experiences in which three moments are performed: pre-trip, on-site, post-trip. The first stage explores religious tourists’ motivations and expectations from the religious trip. The second stage explores religious tourists’ on-site practices and the last stage the potential transformative effects the trip may have on the religious tourists. Rooted in the above, the study also acknowledges the complex process of becoming a religious tourist and of experiencing the holy that extends beyond the strict boundaries of the three stages, which rather seem to interact and to be linked with each other. Religious tourists’ collective and individual performances as well as their engagement with materials are explored using participant observation and in-depth interviews. Having explored the diversity and richness of tourist practices, the study identifies some main themes that underpin religious tourist experience, such as ghostliness, the theo-real and place entrenched sacredness, and discusses issues of authenticity and multiplicity of tourism performances, developing the tourism theory and the idea of pilgrimage within the Greek Orthodox context.
My first experiences with religious tourists and pilgrimage took place some years ago in Tinos when I visited the island for my Masters Dissertation research. Although my focus, at that time, was on residents’ perceptions of tourism impacts, the interest, for the ‘other side’ (the religious tourist) soon arose by viewing the crowd of believers ascending to the church. Countless people come to Tinos every year to make an offering to the Virgin Mary, to request for something or to give thanks for something that has been realized. People ascend to the church often accompanied by ill relatives or friends. One can see them crawling to the church, often loaded with a child on their back that has been cured or is hoped to be cured. Large numbers of Gypsies contribute with their colorful presence and dramatic performances to the crowds. The religious atmosphere was even more intense on the eve of the 15th of August. All night long, the Church of the Annunciation and the streets were filled with singing pilgrims, carrying candles in their hands and ascending to the beautifully lit church, which added to the place’s ambience. The church bells were ringing in a sweet rhythmic melody inviting pilgrims that have come from several different parts of the world. The following photos illustrate, for example, a pilgrim group from Ethiopia ascending the way to the church and the Church of the Annunciation by night.

On a more personal note, the interest grew even further when I visited the Church of the Annunciation in Tinos. Even though Greek Christian Orthodox myself, I was never really religiously attached, possibly because of my upbringing in a family, in which the parents had different religious identities and nationalities (to each other); my mother being German.
and Protestant, and my father Greek and Christian Orthodox. In that church, however, I felt drawn and moved by the power the place and the miraculous icon exercise on people, uniting so many in a restricted space. Such initial observations generated my interest in the performing crowd. This interest was further cultivated by the results of my masters research, according to which religious tourists were found to be ‘different’ from ordinary tourists by the residents of Tinos. That very ‘different’ has enticed me to further explore the phenomenon. In fact, the quantitative nature of my master’s research did not allow me to understand the different meanings and experiences people’s performances, on the island, had to them.

Even though the phenomenon of pilgrimage has been reported and studied for many years and from different perspectives, the complexity it contains is nevertheless evident. It became clear to me that it was something more than a social phenomenon holding on to the predetermined and fixed nature of the religious structures. Therefore an investigation beyond the quantitative was essential. Influential to this decision was my supervisor Dr Scarles who taught me to see life and happenings from ‘our’, human, perspective. Indeed, life is much too complicated and detailed to be comprehended merely from the arithmetic perspective. Accepting Thrift’s (1996) view, according to which social, cultural and material worlds intervene and interact, religious tourists’ overall experience constitutes a creative engagement with materials, belief and other people. The religious spectacle is, therefore, the result of co-construction between religious authorities, adherents and materials. Questions arose, hence, regarding the ways in which the complexities of this interaction permeate the entire production and consumption of religious experience and add to the overall on-site aesthetics.

In particular, the role of people on-site and the powerfulness of religious objects are not only inherited to direct people religiously. Rather, religious tourists constitute themselves an important element of the religious system as they bring with them their own thoughts, motives, anticipations and bodies. Simultaneously, their very practices influence others’ experiences, and additionally, sacred places and materiality are open to multiple interpretations. My thoughts therefore move beyond religious tourism as a sequence of static stages through which both adherents and producers must pass in order to achieve a single endpoint. I have attempted to move away from the sort of ‘realist’ account of ‘objective’ facts. Rather, the thesis extends the scope of research to address the entire
religion tour experience and explores the multiplicity of interactions through which tourists make sense of the holy. I was interested in pilgrims’ own interpretation of their practices.

My turn towards the qualitative research and thinking was challenging. In fact, my quantitative, in nature, academic background; my Bachelor in Business Administration and my Master’s degree in Tourism Management, made it initially considerably difficult for me to understand and dwell into the qualitative thought. In effect, I gradually realized that it was not a purely academic issue I had to deal with but it was something deeper. It was a personal change of heart and a letting go of my old acquired life conceptions. It was the realization of a look at my self, and the world around me, from a new, peculiar and unexpected perspective. Such a process, of the realization and the subsequent detachment from my old self was difficult and sometimes distressing, especially because I experienced for a long period of time an inner conflict between holding on to my quantitative self and reaching further to my qualitative self. It was as if the quantitative self, which had been fixed for years was struggling to resist. In the end, it has now become clear to me that the PhD process was a personal existential journey and a revolution in freeing my thoughts from my entanglement in the capitalistic structure and understanding of society and the world.

Finally, an important issue I would like to stress, which caused much skepticism and confusion, considers the specific terms I used to identify the subjects of my study. Indeed, while the study deals with ‘religious tourists’, however, most of the subjects of the study identified themselves mostly as ‘pilgrims’ and only sometimes as ‘tourists’. Scarcely did someone admit that she/he exercises to be a ‘religious tourist’. The term ‘pilgrim’ seemed initially to be suitable especially when considering its use in the Greek language, where it is considered mainly the act of devotion inside the church (Dubisch, 1995). Therefore, since all participants engaged in the act of devotion, they are considered pilgrims and believers. Nevertheless, even in that case some very pious pilgrims accuse others to be not genuine pilgrims or to be rather tourists. In other words, those taking part in religious tourism are often too profane to be pilgrims but also too pious to be tourists. Influential in this regard was Vukonic’s (1996) statement according to which tourists are also believers, since they may also be motivated by religious concerns and have as their destination a religious site. In addition, the outcome of a tourist’s experience on a sacred site may be the
same with that of a believer (Eade, 1992). As such, for the purpose of this study and in order to avoid confusion, religious tourists are considered a group of travelers with religious motives making use of travel agencies’ services. Moreover, rather than distinguishing one term, the terms pilgrims, tourists and religious tourists are used here interchangeably based on the very context under discussion. In the tourism context I use the term religious tourist, in the religious context pilgrim, and believer in all cases.
Declaration

This thesis and the work to which it refers are the results of my own efforts. Any ideas, data, images or text resulting from the work of others (whether published or unpublished) are fully identified as such within the work and attributed to their originator in the text, bibliography or in footnotes. This thesis has not been submitted in whole or in part for any other academic degree or professional qualification. I agree that the University has the right to submit my work to the plagiarism detection service TurnitinUK for originality checks. Whether or not drafts have been so-assessed, the University reserves the right to require an electronic version of the final document (as submitted) for assessment as above.

Matina Terzidou

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GNTO  Greek National Tourism Organization
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1. INTRODUCTION

"Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind."

(Albert Einstein)

1.1 Introduction

The main concern of this study is to interpret ways in which religion is performed within the tourism sphere. Thus, it seeks to renegotiate the role of belief and tourism within the context of religious understanding, moving from a study of textuality towards the essential embodiment and materiality of the tourist world. The present chapter initially provides a general overview of the phenomenon of religious tourism and the debate between the notions of pilgrimage and tourism. Secondly, it presents the concept that governs the thesis, and offers a foundation in understanding the role of tourism in religious experiences. It distinguishes three conceptual phases in the process of becoming a religious tourist (pre-trip, on-site, post-trip), whilst outlining the conceptual theoretical framework through which the study shall be discussed. This framework identifies six inherent elements of religious experience: faith and belief; embodied performances; performance and performativity; collective and individual; direction and sacred positioning, and materiality. Finally, the chapter will end with an outline of the current thesis.

1.2 Religious Tourism: an Overview

The link between religion and tourism has long been observed (Sigaux, 1966; Vukonic, 1996). Religion and tourism are historically related through the institution of pilgrimage, which is not an exceptional feature of Christianity, but according to Lanczkowski (1982) a universal phenomenon of religious history. Religiously-motivated tourism is estimated to
be as old as religion itself and is, thus, perceived by some academics as being the oldest form of travel (Kaelber, 2006). Such ‘social movement’ (Digance, 2006) continues to this day, with many religious centres such as Jerusalem and Mecca still remaining important belief centres, or others having re-founded themselves as, well-known, modern tourism-pilgrimage destinations (Sharpley, 2009). Until recently, however, relatively little attention has been paid to religion in tourism literature.

Considering previous studies on religious tourism, their primary focus was on the relationship between tourism and pilgrimage, and more precisely between the tourist and the pilgrim, the main players in the relationship between religion and tourism (Cohen, 1998). Attention was focused on the extent to which modern tourism practices can be distinct from, or comparable to, traditional pilgrimage, albeit mainly from a sociological structural-functional perspective (Boorstin, 1964; Cohen, 1979; Graburn, 1989; Smith, 1992). Boorstin (1964), for example, regards pilgrims as serious in their religious pursuit of spiritual fulfilment, whereas tourists’ activity in their search for hedonistic and superficial wish-fulfilment as trivial. Singh (2004) observed that tourists in Himalayan shrines were widely concerned with taking as many photos as possible, whereas pilgrims were concerned with resolving their personal problems by communicating with their gods. It is such behaviours that lead Smith (1992) to propose the social approval of pilgrims in contrast to tourists. For instance, devout exhausted Tibetans following the route to the sacred sites are admired by the locals for their devotion, whereas modern tourists are regarded suspiciously and with less sympathy.

Such distinction between pilgrims and tourists is further established through Smith’s (1992) pilgrim-tourist continuum. In her frequently cited work, Smith (1992) placed both pilgrims and tourists on a continuum according to their motives, with pilgrims at the sacred extreme and tourists at the secular extreme. Between the two extremes, countless possibilities of sacred-secular combinations may exist. In the middle of the continuum where leisure and recreational motives are almost equal to religious motives, Travellers are considered to be ‘religious tourists’. Smith (1992) suggests that even though tourists and pilgrims have the same basic travel needs (i.e. time, logistics, financial resources), a distinction can be observed between tourism and pilgrimage within the framework of individual belief and significance associated with each performance.
Thus, from the divergence perspective, the everyday, including tourism, is linked to the profane, whereas religion is primarily connected to the sacred. Accordingly, it is argued that tourism lacks the deeper spiritual significance that pilgrimage entails and does not lead to a ‘substantial’ change in a person’s life but is rather undertaken for diversionary purposes (Kotler, 1997). This view has been most actively promoted by theologians who perceive tourism to be a form of escape from everyday life (de Souza, 1988; Srisang, 1985) and a phenomenon having emerged from globalization, consumerism and scientific rationality (Maguire and Weatherby, 1998). In general, the Christian Church and theology express their disapproval towards the secular aspects of tourism by postulating that religious pilgrimage is not tourism, since its motive is predominately of a religious or spiritual nature (Vukonic, 2002). The present-day use of the terms, classifying the ‘pilgrim’ as a religious, pious traveller and the ‘tourist’ as a pleasure, relaxation seeker, is, thus, a culturally erected division that covers individuals’ motives (Collins-Kreiner, 2010).

Accordingly, throughout the review of the relevant literature it was observed that people who encompass travel for pleasure in their religious itinerary or where the pilgrimage site designate a modernity and change from its original purpose, are usually defined by a term comprising the word ‘tourism’ (see for example, Poria et al., 2003; Smith, 1992; Vukonic, 1996), whereas those who have only religious motives merit the term ‘pilgrimage’ (see Coleman, 2001; Digance, 2006; Morinis, 1992) or ‘travel’ (see Barber, 1993; Cohen, 1991; Singh, 2004) instead of ‘tourism’, which has been mainly connected to secularism. In short, even though shifting conceptualizations of religion and pilgrimage exist, the words ‘pilgrimage’ and ‘tourism’ encompass different ends: the sacred, which is connected to the past and the holy, and the secular, which is connected to the modern way of life, a notion that is challenged in this study. Indeed, as identities, within the framework of religious tourism, are negotiable both on a social and individual level according to each person’s background, conceptual framework and the locality (Tilley, 2006), it is important to move beyond simplistic typologies and social categories in order to develop an understanding of tourists’ behaviour, practices and adopted roles (Bhardwaj, 1997; Edensor, 2001).

Besides these dichotomy efforts, other scholars attempted to relate the two phenomena. Cohen (1979), for example, developed a thorough typology of tourists based on their experiences and identified that tourism has more of an affinity with traditional pilgrimage in the case of the “existential tourist” – someone who is “fully committed to an elective
spiritual centre, that is one external to his native society and culture” (Cohen, 1979, p.190). Generally, a shift has been noticed in the manner of interpreting tourism, giving new dimensions in the sacred/profane dichotomy. MacCannell (1973), for example, was the first who conceptualized tourists as pilgrims in suggesting that the modern tourist is a secular pilgrim and that tourism is a “secular substitute for organized religion” (Allcock, 1988, p.37). Similarly, Graburn (1989, p.22) compared the practice of tourism with that of pilgrimage, concluding that “tourism...is functionally and symbolically equivalent to other institutions that humans use to embellish and add meaning to their lives”. Accordingly, despite music and sport tourism being simply about entertainment and pleasure, the question of whether they constitute a kind of sacred or ritual experience in modern society has attracted considerable academic interest (see Alderman, 2002; Elias and Dunning, 1986; Gibson, 2005; King, 1993; Kruse, 2003; Maguire, 1992; Ritchie and Adair, 2004). Moreover, Graburn’s (1989) tourists, similar to pilgrims, engage in cyclical passages of time, which are divided into ‘profane’ and ‘sacred’ periods; individuals need to re-new themselves through ‘sacred’ tourism for the return to their ‘profane’ working lives. Nevertheless, even though tourism, within this context, can be compared to pilgrimage, individuals travelling for religious scopes still engage in different ways of practice and becoming than other tourists (Franklin and Crang, 2001), being in-between, and thus influenced and mediated by both their belief and tourism simultaneously.

1.3 Concept that Governs the Study: Tourism as Providing the Stage

Tourism has therefore become a rather misunderstood and confused concept within the context of religion. The scope of the current study is to go beyond the sinuous tourism, to advocate a religious-friendly approach to tourism that contributes to the religious tourist experience rather than destroying it. In particular, the religious tourism experience is considered to be much more complex in that it is the result of a series of performances intertwined with religious prescriptions, embodied spaces of production and consumption, inter-subjective interactions and material encounters (Bell, 2008; Coleman and Crang, 2002; Crouch, 2009; Edensor, 2001; Franklin and Crang, 2001; Veijola and Jokinen, 1994). Moving away from the ongoing superficial comparison between pilgrimage and tourism, which according to Weber (1949) is, in fact, invalid because the idea of the pilgrim and the medieval understanding of travel have changed over the years, this study attempts to view both the ‘sacred’ pilgrimage and the ‘secular’ tourism as two unavoidable
Chapter 1 Introduction

and inseparable forces in the process of becoming a religious tourist, which is considered dynamic and fluid, rather than fixed as observed above.

In particular, this study juxtaposes the two phenomena within the modern sphere acknowledging that they are two separate entities (Adler, 1989a). The attempt to bridge the two is, nevertheless, not merely of equating them in terms of the similarities they share (Graburn, 1989; MacCannell, 1973), but to bring them also practically and empirically together within the framework of a religious trip, so as to understand their mutual contribution to people’s religious experience and particularly the way tourism, as a series of practices and active ‘doings’, fits in the religious experience. Within this framework, it is believed that despite the ‘institutional’ travel truths presented above (the logistics and operational issues) which both tourism and pilgrimage have in common (Fleischer, 2000; Jackowski and Smith, 1992; Smith, 1992), the performance of tourism can accumulate as many sacred features as pilgrimage can secular. Thus, as Turner and Turner (1978, p.20) state “a tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist”.

In effect, in many European celebrations the simultaneous presence of sacred and profane behaviours often makes it difficult to distinguish pilgrims from tourists (Gartell and Collins-Kreiner, 2006; Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005). According to Nolan and Nolan (1989), the most extreme manifestations of religious behaviour may occur at the same places where profane activities such as getting drunk and flirting are simultaneously taking place. Eade (1992) who examined pilgrimage and tourism at Lourdes, observed that pilgrims participate too in typical tourist activities, dress like tourists, make similar purchases and cannot be differentiated from their tourist counterparts in the manner they relax and amuse in the evenings. Modern pilgrimage is, indeed, blended with tourism and pilgrims enact a mundane tourist habitus (like in other studies, see Edensor, 2007; Jaworski and Thurlow, 2011), involving sightseeing, travelling, visiting different places and buying local memorabilia, which inspired Cohen (1974, p.542) to state that “the pilgrim is a kind of part-time tourist”.

One can speak of shifting identities, where religious believers step out of their self, and actually enter into the role of the sinful other. Pilgrims, equal to tourists, can be frivolous or rowdy and interested in heritage features without, however, losing their identity as pilgrims (Digance and Cusack, 2002; MacCannell, 1973; Pfaffenberg, 1983). Moreover,
not all pilgrims are deeply religious, just as secular people can experience peak moments during travel (Jackson and Hudman, 1995) and are open to the emotions expected by pilgrims (Eade, 1992). Tourists are, therefore, to be viewed with less scepticism and austerity, as the outcome for both tourists and pilgrims may sometimes be alike at sacred places; even though tourism may not be practically related to the sacred, its end result may be (Singh, 2005). Consequently, the use of ideal types to distinguish between pilgrims and tourists as Smith (1992) did, disregards the fact that individuals hardly ever conform to strict categories such as ‘pilgrims’ and ‘tourists’ because such categories are themselves open to multiple interpretations (Coleman and Elsner, 1995; Graham and Murray, 1997). In fact, visitors can shift from the one end of the continuum to the other as part of their same conceptual framework. Religious tourist experience is, therefore, not only based on constructed meanings spread by social interaction or cultural meanings, but also considers the subjective nature of experience in the act of touring a destination (Coleman and Elsner, 1995).

Within this view, tourism is considered to be something more than simply a destination or a temporary movement (Mathieson and Wall, 1982), or periods of time spent in hotels (Shaw and Williams, 1994), travel and movement itself (Bukart and Medlik, 1974), or a space beyond and marginal to the everyday (Graburn, 1978). Rather, tourism achieves meaning for both the believer as a tourist and individual, and the believer as part of a religious group through relationships between roles, stages and places. The significance of tourism in this study is attached to its role as a moderator between believers and God. In particular, tourism, as an abstract and broader concept than the structured religion (see Figure 1.1), facilitates religious experience and allows for on-site performances and encounters equal to those mentioned by Cloke and Perkins (2005) and Cohen (2010), which bring about emotional and embodied experiences that are fundamental to the overall religious experience (Turner and Turner, 1978). Tourism and religion are, thus, mutually influential and influencing.
As such, the religious tourist experience is not considered as predetermined but comprises a collection of dynamic, unstable and intrinsically multifaceted, complex performances as tourists are entangled (Tribe, 2005) in the human and non-human world (Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Edensor, 2001; Franklin, 2008; Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Picken, 2010). Both humans and non-humans have affect and agency and the rationale is not merely of being but also of becoming (Crouch, 2003; Scarles, 2009). Through tourism, individuals encounter places, material and people that contribute to their ontological knowledge (Shotter, 1993) and the making of sense of their belief through their actual performance in sacred places (see Crouch, 1999; Crouch et al., 2001). Performance is a form of knowledge (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000) as people can ‘work’ their symbolic religious contexts through their bodily engagement with the tangible parts of their religious world and the collective activities, as well as through their encounter with unpredictable situations, new acquaintances and tourist spaces, which enable them to open up and refigure self and space (Carlsen, 1996) in relation to the religious prescriptions. Within this context, it is assumed in brief that individuals as performers, and human bodies as vessels of belief, move through the tourism experience to enliven their belief (see Figure 1.2).
Hence, tourism can be understood as a continuum of the practices (i.e. religious practices) performed at home, as well as affecting changes within familiar spaces back home (Hui, 2009). Religion is not predominately a semiotic, textual field of representation but also a theatre of enactment, performance and agency (Edensor, 1998; 2001), which operates in diverse spaces that are linked through mobilities. Within this context, believers dwell in mobility, equal to Larsen’s (2003) photography performing tourists, feeling often ‘at home’ in environments, which are transient, and therefore often both familiar and strange. In addition, the religious tourist is conceptualized as an active, reflexive individual whose ability to make up meaning and impose significance to what is done, is created through embodied practice and lay knowledge. In particular, the effect of signs and depictions are fused with physical, habituous, practical knowledge (Crouch, 2003), which enables transformation and becoming. As the consumer of religion is, therefore, also its co-producer (Crouch, 2005), it is important to capture the nuances of religious tourists’ experiences during their travels.

Therefore, having rejected the pilgrim-tourist dichotomy as being insufficient to capture the multi-layered meanings of religious tourism, the purpose of the current study is to provide a thorough understanding of the process of being and becoming a religious tourist by focusing on individuals’ emotions, perceptions and the practices they engage in during a religious trip to the famous sacred island of Tinos, in Greece. Using qualitative research methods, in particular interview and participant observation, the study seeks to answer the following research objectives:

1. To understand religious tourists’ motivation to visit religious places and the relationship/connection between the individual and the place.
2. To understand the interplays of, and emergent spaces of collective/individual practices of religious tourists at religious sites.
3. To unpack the complexities of religious tourist relationships with the material and immaterial in the religious tourist experience.

4. To explore the potential transformative process of religion in the religious tourism experience and the influence of the latter on religious tourists' future behaviour.

1.4 Faith and Belief

A gradual shift has been observed in the religious literature regarding the understanding of the concepts of belief and faith, which range from fixed/strict institutional definitions to flexible/subjective ones that both govern the current study. Originally, faith was always related to officially recognized religions that have as their point of reference some concept of a higher power, be it God, ultimacy or Being and are connected with particular beliefs, practices and feelings (Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle, 1997; Pargament, 1999; Sharpley, 2009). Religion can be defined as a “total mode of interpreting and living of life” (Geering, 2002, p.147), as it helps people ascribe meaning to their experiences and surroundings (Geertz, 1973) as well as to set goals and form their behaviour (Batson et al., 1993; Cohen and Rankin, 2004; Eidelson and Eidelson, 2003; Geertz, 1973; Silberman, 2005; Stark and Bainbridge, 1985). Religious beliefs constitute, in this way, an inherited form of knowledge (Barsalou et al., 2005), which provides a mechanism for experiencing stability and joy, and has the general function of satisfying humans’ desires (Freud, 1961). Along with Pargament et al. (2005) it is a unique source of significance, distress and coping that acts as a psychological assistant in reducing people’s uncertainty and fear associated to mortality and health issues.

Nevertheless, such a human-friendly oriented approach is not the sole truth. Resting upon dogmas such as: humans as being devout or sinful and of the world as being sacred or evil (Silberman, 2005), Christianity, in particular, has exercised significant power on people in its role of rewarding moral people while punishing sinners (Kushner, 1989). Indeed, historical facts, such as the process of inquisition in the Middle Age and Pope’s powerful role throughout history, indicate the close relationship between religious and political power. The concept of faith in religious beliefs as a result of fear, enforcement and psychological terrorism; belief as fear, has, thus, been cultivated. Considering Kierkegaard’s (1941) ‘Fear and Trembling’, commitment to the object of faith and obedience to what is commanded are the basic characteristics of faith and belief. Fear is
often connected to religion in that the power of religion is frequently accepted because of the end to which it is directed (hell, for example, in case of a sin), which transforms human beings into un-reflexive instruments of God. Within this realm, some religious believers utilize the term ‘faith’ in a form of ‘blind belief’ that accept truths without evidence (Fowler, 1981).

Such notions of believers as un-reflexive beings, habitually engaging in religious practices are further developed by Bourdieu (1991). Core to his considerations is the religious field or else the institutional form of religions, which creates relations of dependence/independence to the religious power. He resembles religion with ‘gift exchange’, which he defines as “a negotiated social practice whose rules are grounded in a shared implicit understanding of the meanings conveyed by giving and receiving” (1962, pp. 103-107). The power of habitus is thus mediated by fields, and the restrictions/opportunities imposed by fields are mediated through the implementations of habitus, which Bourdieu (1998, p.116) defines within the religious sphere as “collective misrecognition”; adherents are constructed by church officials who attempt to euphemize social relations of exploitation with the use of language.

Whilst belief is immanent in that it is usually inherited and un-reflexively performed, its expressions, self-conscious acceptance and enrichment are, however, often related to subjective means and unpredictable events in peoples’ lives, as for example, a miraculous cure. Religious enrichment may also emanate from the successful completion of a journey, or from particular positive moments in life that produce inner spiritual peace (Sharpley, 2009). Existentialist William James (1960) attempted to derive religion from certain universally available subjective experiences, such as having an encounter with Virgin Mary or speaking in tongues. In contrast to the absolutists, such as Clifford (1999), who deny the religious existence because of insufficient evidence, he, as an empiricist, believes in the lived experience: “I live, to be sure, by the practical faith that we must go on experiencing and thinking over our experience, for only thus can our opinions grow more true” (James, 1912, p.15). Indeed, an experience, which entails embodied notions, places and non-human assets, becomes an abiding memory (eg. Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Cloke and Perkins, 2002; Tilley, 2006) that frames the individual’s future life (Sharpley, 2009).
Based upon the belief that people are active and reflexive beings, it is assumed here that they are not only structured, that is, living their lives in relation to religious frameworks, but are themselves co-producers or even producers of their own understanding of religion. In fact, today’s globalization, with its abundance of information and the development of the tourism industry, brings encounter with places and situations that enable performance and first-hand experience. Travelling experiences to sacred places, which were in the past the privilege of the wealthy (Franklin, 2009), permeate religious understanding (Bruner, 2005; Harrison, 2003) through embodied practices and interaction with other believers and materials. Nevertheless, “in a mobile culture where people constantly meet otherness, habits are brought to the surface, becoming manifest and thereby challenged” (Frykman and Løefgren, 1996, p. 14).

In particular, a contestation of belief is apparent in the post-modern world, with people setting their own rules and contesting the belief from the institutions. Religious beliefs and practices have been replaced in modern societies by a more private, individualized religiosity without belonging, especially among young people (Lambert, 2004). The increased familiarity with other cultures’ literature and way of life may have influenced the way some young people view spirituality as being beyond institutionalised religions (King, 1996). The flexibility of faith is further addressed by Tillich (1957), who ascribes faith to every state with which individuals are extremely concerned. He further states that what concerns someone ultimately becomes holy regardless of whether it is sacred or profane. Following Deleuze and Guattari (1999), orderings too possess, hence, the quality of becoming, enrolling new elements, cancelling others and changing over time. Consequently, religion is itself considered to be a dynamic process, which develops across the lifespan, influenced by the society as a whole, its development and the progress of science (Fowler, 1981; Zinnbauer et al., 1999). Modern societies continue to be religious (Tomasi, 2002) but religion has become progressively deinstitutionalized (Harvey, 2003).

1.5 Embodied Performances

The changing nature of the religious phenomenon in contemporary culture is in fact the result of changing human activities more generally. Baudrillard (1981) argued that the overwhelming power of the media and its signs further erased both traditional and recent distinctions of culture. Human activity becomes secondary to the images that circulate in
culture and immobility is often observed with the erosion of the difference between art and everyday life, which consequently erases the need to confront the contentious notion of authenticity. Such phenomena go with Urry’s view of the rise of post-tourism, which involves processes of de-differentiation from daily life and tourist experiences as the end of tourism, since tourism is gradually not providing any special or extraordinary experiences for tourists (Urry, 1990). Virtual pilgrimage on the Internet is, for example, an important religious phenomenon in the U.S. in the post-modern world, which according to MacWilliams (2002) can be compared with religious travel.

Nevertheless, the narrow emphasis on the virtual neglects the power of places, events and the human body (Barsalou et al., 2005; Belhassen et al., 2008; Nolan and Nolan, 1992) in the tourists’ experiences that cannot be obtained at home. The positioning of performance is, hence, to be considered as believers’ participation in tourism activities can invoke new sensations and experiences, which move even beyond Urry’s (1990) gaze that is searching for images previously seen in brochures or TV programmes (Urry, 2002). The conditions of a place intensify a person’s experience since that place’s tangible assets, such as smells, sounds and happenings, are able to invoke/produce sensual qualities that otherwise get lost (Cloke and Perkins, 1998; Game, 1991; Perkins and Thorns, 2001; Veijola and Jokinen, 1994). It is not that one cannot celebrate Christmas in her/his regular place of worship, but the experience is intensified by being present in Bethlehem (Davies, 1988). In fact, it is not only the arrival at places, but it is a way of living in them and apprehending them through embodied practice, which lies beyond the conscious and the structured (Pons, 2003). Similar to MacCannell’s (1973) tourists who are in search for authenticity, religious tourists, disenchanted by the inauthenticity of their lives, are searching for more ‘real’ experiences in religious places. They are not only interested in ‘being there’ but mainly in experiencing and taking part in the ‘sacred there’ they visit in anticipation of a potential change.

Moving, thus, beyond the prevailing masculine paradigm of the gaze (Ateljevic et al., 2007; Pritchard and Morgan, 2000; Swain, 2004; Urry, 1990), the call for an additional multi-sensory, experiential approach has been deemed important in understanding the religious tourist experience. Among the first who paved the way for such feminist considerations of a sensuous engagement between the body and the world in tourism encounters were Veijola and Jokinen (1994), who highlighted the importance of bodily
experiences for tourists and their need to immerse their body in contexts, which have previously been experienced only visually or semiotically. Bodily sensations open up richer understandings of tourist experiences (Crouch, 2003; Crouch and Desforges, 2003; Leite, 2005; Selanniemi, 2001; Veijola and Jokinen, 1994) and can therefore play also a vital role in enhancing religiousness. In fact, this study challenges St. Augustine of Hippo’s religious view of “*Crede, ut intelligas*” (You need to believe in order to understand) (Michael, 2007) and incorporates knowledge into the religious field. Knowledge derived from corporeal experiences (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000) of God’s world, which does not solely rely on written truths. Rather, influenced by researchers such as Franklin, (2008), Haldrup and Larsen (2006), Latour (2005), Picken (2010), Walsh and Tucker (2009), religion is considered an inevitable hybridity of human and non-human worlds. It is a network, of the human, immaterial and material worlds, each of which is assigned agency (Franklin, 2003, 2004, 2008). The religious experiences are, thus, multifaceted and multisensory (Cloke and Perkins, 1998) and should, therefore, be considered from a performative perspective.

Consequently, even though Christianity emphasizes the spiritual values (Barsalou et al., 2005), the presence of rituals in the religious world underlines the importance of corporeal experiences, like doing, touching and seeing for believers, in generating particular feelings that constitute the core of religion (James, 1960). To walk, for example, in the footsteps of St Paul is, based on the Acts of the Apostles, to pursue with keenness the traces of the Holy Spirit (Davies, 1988). In general, the sacred is able to produce a state of ecstacy, in which people stand outside themselves (Colpe, 1987; James, 1960). Embodied practices produce and organize peoples’ knowledge of the world (Inglof, 2000) and thus belief systems instruct believers to engage physically in religious rituals as well as advise their followers which of these possible experiences are required or avoided. Such instructions have resulted in religious spaces that are often associated with “power differentials” (Morin and Guelke, 2007, p.19), especially in cases in which religious rituals necessitate the spatial separation of women and men.

Nevertheless, the restricted, fixed and formalized ways in which devotees are supposed to experience their bodies and the world ignore the self-conscious, reflexive and biological nature of human beings. In fact, even though tourists may be tempted by the imagery of the brochure (de Botton, 2002; Scarles, 2009; Urry, 2002) or the religious narratives of places,
believing that their experience will match their expectations, they always, inadvertently, bring themselves along too, which also influences the overall experience. A body that seeks rest or a body still distressed from work or an ill body will have different experiential results (Franklin, 2009) and will be differently affected by religious places, events and situations in the process of becoming a religious tourist.

1.6 Performance and Performativity

Analogous to Adler’s (1989b) ‘performed art’, the phenomenon of religious tourism can, thus, be seen to resemble a theatre, where acting upon the touristic stage that contains various sets such as the trip, place, materials and other people, religious tourists perform the religious play. Religious scripts/doctrines, similar to theatrical scenarios determine the nature of performative encounters in the religious tourist experience, while religious producers, such as priests, organize the religious scenario, mobilizing stages, directing believers, materializing and aesthetizing places. In this manner, producers and consumers become merged in a single space, which becomes active. Similar to MacCannell’s (1973) staged authenticity, such stage-managed directions (Cloke and Perkins, 1998; Edensor, 2000) guide people around, and perpetuate and establish particular meanings to sacred places and performances.

Consequently, religion creates spaces of power that do not let practices entirely to people. Places outline practices and religious oriented tourists are in fact considered ‘cast members’ (Crang, 1997), by performing a series of directed religious practices as established by producers. Performativity, which depends upon something being performed repeatedly (Bell, 2008), is utilized to achieve an embodied understanding of identity (Burkitt, 1999; Hall, 1996) and to secure ‘common sense’ naturalness (Hannam, 2006). Equal to Thrift’s (1997, p.126) understanding of non-representational theory as “the mundane everyday practices that shape the conduct of human beings toward others and themselves at particular site” (see also Thrift, 2008), religious adherents are educated as to establish religious habits, practices and performative techniques that ensure re-production of what should be done in the shared context of sacred spaces. For Bourdieu (1990), such prescribed religious practices are intended to develop a religious ‘habitus’ that automatizes religious actions in order to maintain and enhance religiousness, by producing practical reflexiveness in which embodied know-how regulates and copes with unexpected
happenings. He argues that such actions are dominated by traditions to establish ‘holding on’ to one’s belief and routines that enable a more progressive possibility and perspective on identity processes; sustaining rather than enabling differences and diversity (Bourdieu, 1984). Such staging of performance intends moreover, to make cultural codes intelligible and convincing (Edensor, 2009). In particular, religious oriented tourism that encompasses bodily actions in specific religious places increases the possibility that believers’ religious practices will be understood and remembered. Furthermore, such structured practices and rules minimize or prevent the risk of religious failure, resembling Taylor’s (1994, p.5) statement: “becoming a tourist is to risk the failure of not feeling or perceiving whatever is expected”. Based on Hendry’s (1993) concept of the ‘wrapping’ which separates the gift from the dirt, Collins and Dandelion (2006, p.46) suggest that religious participants are wrapped in the rules and practices of how the religious culture approaches the sacred, a fact that marks off two groups, ‘us’ and ‘them’. Performativities, thus, enable religious tourists to banish ambivalence and ambiguity as they predict and subsequently encounter place through practices that are consistent, predictable and appropriate for the religious setting. ‘Becoming’, in this sense, is understood here as reaching the religious ‘being’, in order to get along with life within a religious context.

Nevertheless, as performances constitute a series of encounters with places, people and materials, they are infused with complexity, due to the fluidity of possible combinations of encounters and the unpredictable nature of effect they have on people. Moreover, despite the unexpected, performances can create multiple routes of ‘becoming’ (Crouch, 2003; Crouch, 2009) as both embodied practices and performance theory have nonlinear networks and flows of action of life (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004; Thrift, 1996), consisting of various temporary enactments that may also be of significance in the process of becoming (Dewsbury, 2000). Performances extend beyond the guiding structures established by religious producers as pilgrims engage in in-between spaces; in religious and tourist spaces. Indeed, “the self is not a passive entity” (Giddens, 1991, p.2). Individuals as sensual, active and reflexive beings (Cloke and Perkins, 1998; Perkins and Thorns, 2001) construct part of the experience and generate vast diversity in tourist performances on a site (Edensor, 2001; Franklin and Crang, 2001) being able to feel, think and rethink (Crouch, 2009) and to ‘make sense’ of the world (Harrison, 2000). Hence, there is a possibility whereby relations with contexts may be reconstructed, broken, changed or negotiated (Butler, 1993; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000), thus affecting, as well as
being the effect of context. Doing as an understanding of dwelling (Ingold, 2000) can, thus, generate new potentials for re-creating the world as it discloses new, unexpected possibilities (Dewsbury, 2000; Grosz, 1999). Becoming is, thus, understood in terms of engaging in the new and the un-considered, not only in the pre-figured. Equally, the self is not an inborn fixed being, but is relational and situationally mediated and thus in an ongoing process of becoming (Cohen, 2010).

In particular, becoming a religious tourist is considered within the religious context a fusion between performativities as a series of prescribed, habitual practices that religious tourists have unreflexively to obey and ‘becoming’ as subjective, reflexive, unpredictable, which encompass a plethora of different enactments. In short, “people tend to move between unreflexive and reflexive states, sometimes self-conscious of their actions, sometimes instrumental and sometimes engaging in unreflexive habits that seem beyond interrogation” (Edensor, 2009, p. 544). Religious tourists’ performances are hence not only mimesis in terms of imitating prescribed actions, but also poiesis and kinesis, in that people are constructing (Bell, 2008).

1.7 Collective and Individual Experiences

Religion is above all a social phenomenon, since there is no religion without adherents. Emile Durkheim, in his classic work ‘The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life’ (1915), was the first to give it a sociological basis as he sees the idea of society as the soul of religion. According to Durkheim (ibid.) religion increases social ties, as people congregate in worship and other activities. In particular, the social religious self has emerged as a result of shared symbol systems like words, roles, gestures and rituals (Mead, 1934; Pfaffenerberger, 1983) that contribute to the establishment of beliefs, feelings and values in human societies (McClain, 1979) and construct members’ behaviour. Religious oriented tourists can, for example, be distinguished from ‘the other’ tourists or even from other religious believers (Singh, 2004, 2005; Smith, 1992; Turnbull, 1981), through their common bodily actions (Barsalou et al., 2005), their eating habits (Vukonic, 2002), their clothing (Besio, 2007; Morin and Guelke, 2007) and through their assistant objects associated with the service, such as the Bible and the rosary. Based on this, the term ‘theology of tourism’ has been introduced by Cohen (1998) to discuss travellers’ behaviour based on their religious affiliation (Fleischer, 2000).
In fact, through worship rituals and pilgrimages, devoted followers connect to each other and their group and develop, hereby, a heightened awareness of belonging to a larger whole (Davies, 1988). This offers in turn greater self-esteem and emotional and practical support in times of personal problems (Taylor and Chatters, 1988). This ‘connectedness’ is signalled in numerous ways. Through religious rituals and the participation in pilgrimages, members feel what Turner and Turner (1978) entitle ‘Communitas’, which denotes an egalitarian association between people who share a liminal state, in which they have symbolically exited one social ‘space’ or state but have not entered a new one. The sense of togetherness and brotherhood is marked by anti-structure, where the normal rules of social engagement and temporal specificity no longer apply; all are equal and no statuses and roles exist.

Communitas, is, however, not present in all sites, as pilgrimage sites are ideal locations for competition and conflict among pilgrims (Eade, 1992; Sallnow, 1981). Considering moreover, the geographical features of places, while smaller places encourage familiarity with other pilgrims as pilgrims meet each other many times a day (Reader, 2006), bigger or linear-oriented pilgrimages like Santiago, where pilgrims meet only at the sacred goal, seem to generate more tension among pilgrims (Frey, 1998). Turner and Turners’ (1978) characteristics of communitas deny also the concept of personal pilgrimage. In fact, what people bring with them to the site (for example, a range of personal problems), may affect them, as there is an on-going dialogue between the everyday and the extraordinary, the home and away and the profane and sacred, on-site (Crouch, 2009; Edensor, 2009) that does not allow the notion of anti-structure to all people and may also influence the nature and duration of their liminal state.

While institutional approaches highlight socially constructed meanings of symbolic power, in which human behaviour is structured, they fail to recognize, however, that believers can be independent religious producers wielding symbolic power through their very reflexive engagement in church activities. Indeed, where there is power, there is resistance (de Certeau, 1984; Foucault, 1978). The decline of institutional religion and the subsequent increase in personalized religions observed in modern society have created discrepancies between group members. Equal to post-tourists, who ridicule predictable performances expected from tourists (Edensor, 1998) some modern believers refuse blind obedience to
the prescriptions of clerics (Dianteill, 2003) or propose alternative performances (see Butler, 1990; Edensor, 1998).

1.8 Direction and Sacred Positioning: Sacred Places or Personalised Centres?

The very sacredness of a place may vary from individual to individual depending on their previous knowledge, values, expectations and experiences (Chronis, 2005; Edensor, 1998). Some pilgrims are full of regard for particular sacred places, and committed to them, because of their particular position in their religious belief systems (Belhassen et al., 2008; Leite, 2005). They even develop feelings of belonging to religious heritage (Poria et al., 2003; Turnbull, 1981) and claim ownership; it is their pilgrimage site, their sacred centre (Cohen, 1992). Eliade (1969) introduced the idea of the ‘Centre of the World’, according to which pilgrims travel towards the centre of the world when they visit a sacred site. Even though Eliade neglected the significance of the possible remoteness of that centre (religious place) for the individuals, this omission underpinned the work of anthropologists such as Turner and Turner (1973, 1978), who argued that pilgrimage sites are generally positioned ‘out there’. This remoteness is both spatial and cultural in that the religious centres are peripheral to communities and their socio-political centres. Nevertheless, since it is a focal point, the sacred centre placed ‘out there’, remains at the centre of the religious experience (Turner and Turner, 1978, p.241) and the feelings that motivate travellers to visit them are often very personal (Leite and Graburn, 2009).

Accordingly, even though places are designed or staged to bring forth particular practices (Edensor, 1998, 2000), they can accommodate different practices and fulfil different aspirations. On-site performances may vary from individual to individual according to her/his scope of visit and stages are thus only partial constructions of performance. While for some people a trip to sacred places is the result of a sense of obligation to do so, many people travel to sacred sites because they are promoted as heritage attractions (Timothy and Boyd, 2003), or because they look for authentic experiences, by watching religious priests and pilgrims perform religiousness or by experiencing a sacred site’s atmosphere and aura (Shackley, 2002). Moreover, emphasizing peoples’ mortal nature and their inability to solve all their problems in a secular manner (e.g. when a death is impending), sacred places’ centeredness can be attributed to their very connection to the supernatural,
to the presence or action of divinity (Coleman, 2001) which people seek, and to the hope they engender. Along with Turner and Turner (1978, p.6), “pilgrimage sites are believed to be places where miracles once happened, still happen and may happen again” and accordingly they can be viewed as endpoint achievements, as they typically constitute the primary target for pilgrim journeys (Nolan and Nolan, 1989). Consequently, individual performances differ from each other and stages change or even meld according to the individuals’ requirements. So, whilst obeying to the ordered, people are driven by subjective needs and in control of their own experiences.

Pilgrimage centres are, therefore, open to multiple interpretations, since though fixed in space, they are not fixed in significance and time space (Coleman and Eisner, 1995). In particular, religious tourists’ performances may have effect on after-trip life, invoking memories and creating travel motives. Thrift (1999) emphasizes, for example, the importance of previous experience and thus of emotion, memory, and language as key performative competences, which illuminate how places can obsess people and people obsess places. In particular, the knowledge of being able to alter life through visiting a sacred place can be important in believers’ decision to return and experience change once more. As such, based on Crang’s (2001) understanding of memory, religious memories can revive one’s present doings, but also are revived and can be redirected in the religious touristic ‘now’. Consequently, a place considered sacred by a person beforehand, as part of previous experiential memories or prescribed significance, may not be considered sacred for the same person in future. Places are themselves dynamic; “places are like ships” (Sheller and Urry, 2006, p.214), moving around a location and changing within networks of human and non-human. Therefore, unanticipated performances can arise even in carefully staged places, and these practices can contribute to the naturalness of the place concerned (Cloke and Perkins, 2005). Exactly what sacred or secular meaning might be attached to a place is both subjective and varied, as well as malleable, as it is merely contextual and experiential based (Badone and Roseman, 2004; Coleman and Eade, 2004; Frey, 1998). Consequently, rather than accepting the dichotomy that views pilgrimage as involving a religiously motivated trip toward the ‘spiritual centre’ of one’s world, and tourism as a movement towards the periphery (Cohen, 1992), it is argued here that it is neither possible nor advisable to draw an abstract distinction between them, as both parts (tourists and pilgrims) are in search of the same outcome: the improvement of their life (Smith, 1992). Intention here focuses upon individuals’ own perception of a place’s
centeredness, sacredness and upon the notion of personalized centres. Thus, this study explores the role of the subjects in the construction of the holistic religious play.

1.9 Materiality

The predictable and unpredictable becoming that arises from religious tourists' engagement with materials on religious sites is touched upon here in considering the constructed but also creative qualities of materials. Although abstract symbols and metaphors are important in communicating values, identities and ascribing meaning to events, the everyday existence is not only comprehended through the world of signs (Thrift, 1996), but also through people's actual engagement with the world of signs. Written signs have, according to Turner and Turner (1978), less immediate emotional impact than do symbolic objects. In fact, the implicit valuation and appeal of objects is not something added to a religion, but rather embedded within it, playing an important role in the religious experience and becoming part of the choreography and ordering of religious theatre (Edensor, 2000; Franklin, 2004, 2008).

Many religions that are bound by materiality create even what Baudrillard (1981, p.85) calls "strategies of desire", through which consumers-tourists become provoked and mobilized by promising interests, often engaging themselves in a process of consumption before consumption. The fame of miracle-working icons constitutes, for example, such a desire for people in need. Indeed, many religious sites have succeeded in becoming branding destinations through the selection of an emblematic trait, or historical event that is provided for consumption (see Coleman and Crang, 2002; Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Knudsen, 2011; Picken, 2010). Exceeding their need for gazing (Urry, 1990) at material objects that inscribe places with fantasies and memories (Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Coats, 2011; Selwyn, 1996; Tilley, 2006; Waitt and Head, 2002), people have an extra urge and motive to personally encounter the religious objects. The power of religious objects is sometimes so intense that the significance of places that host them changes when they become relocated (Nolan and Nolan, 1989).

The agency of religious objects is not only manifested in their ability to mobilize people but also in materializing their performances. Upon entering the religious world/site, people search for, make use of, and organize themselves around the structured religious signs in
material assets that exercise power on them and dictate their performances. Indeed, religious objects are usually not handled as common objects, but call for special treatment (Appadurai, 1986; Geary, 1986). Miraculous icons or relics are, for example, worshiped with a bow (Eliade, 1959) whereas sacred buildings, such as churches, become embodied spaces of performance that construct peoples’ appearance and acting (e.g. prescribed dress codes) which are meant to optimize their experience (Belhassen et al., 2008). Wrapped in symbolic meanings, religious objects embrace sensual qualities which are religiously essential (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) as they increase the possibility that the abstract religious ideas will be learned, remembered (Engelkamp, 1998) and hence established. The material extensions of affectual, embodied and existential encounters is moreover apparent, as objects do not possess only present value but also future and past value. In the form of souvenirs, for example, they can keep the ephemeral holiday magically alive (Haldrup and Larsen, 2006) carrying ideological messages about the site (Shenhav-Keller, 1993) and spreading memory (Dubisch, 1995; Pels, 1998). Souvenirs as well as other landscape features (such as monuments or trees see Cloke and Pawson, 2008) represent, thus, a materialized form of memory, connecting past and present times in relation to a desired future (Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Tilley, 2006).

The power of the site’s materials often seems to overturn the roles of the subject and the object, as people become trapped in the material presence, becoming themselves objects and hence directed by the subjective objects. Religion ceases to be mainly a people phenomenon and becomes instead an ‘ordering’ that is accomplished with the participation of non-humans in material relations (Cloke and Jones, 2001; Franklin, 2004; Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Latour, 2005; Picken, 2010; Walsh and Tucker, 2009). Thus, even though bodily practices may be directed in the religious world, however, peoples’ very presence in sacred places and on the broad stage of tourism can exercise also unpredictable becomings on believers and non-believers (Appadurai, 1986; Cloke and Jones, 2001; Miller, 2002), who organize themselves around the material possessions of the space, in the creation of their personalized religion. It is, therefore, important to appreciate the creative and unique qualities that non-humans possess (Appadurai, 1986; Cloke and Jones, 2001; Miller, 1987, 2002; Scarles, 2011; Whatmore, 1999) as what contributes to one’s religious experience may not always be related to the officially sacred.
1.10 Structure of the Thesis

Having outlined the basic notions that govern the study, the thesis will now move to explore in detail the complexities of the religious and tourism nature in order to justify the conceptual framework. In particular, the Second Chapter "Towards conceptualizing the Religious Tourist as Performer" will discuss in detail issues related to 1) belief and religiousness, 2) religious performativity and performance, 3) the role of religious objects and landscapes in the religious experience, and 4) their link to tourism, in an attempt to mark out the most suitable conceptual framework to undertake the current research. In particular, it concludes that within the context of pilgrimage, religious individuals simultaneously step into two worlds - the religious and the touristic - which interact and influence each other.

The Third Chapter "Methodology and Qualitative Methods" presents the philosophical underpinning of the research as well as introduces and discusses the multiple qualitative methods used in this study to investigate the motivations, expectations, performances and the experiences of pilgrims. The qualitative methods included in-depth and informal interviews, participant observation and the keeping of a diary. Two religious tours to Tinos were researched in the summer of 2009, one on the 15th of August at the celebration of Virgin Mary and one on the 14th of September on the day of the "Holy Cross".

Chapter Four "Motivations to Visit Sacred Places", Five "Agency, Materiality and the Human Being" and Six "Reflections of Religious Transformation" detail the main research findings and discuss them in light of the relevant literature and the previous established conceptual framework. These chapters reveal how participants view and interpret Tinos, the significance and meaningfulness of the human and the non-human in their religious experience as well as their nature of transformation. Finally, Chapter Seven "Conclusions" summarizes the key findings of this study.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the background of the thesis and underlined the deficiency in the field of religious tourism, which neglects the complexity of the pilgrimage world. In addition, this section specified the research aim and objectives, and presented the key
theoretical concepts that govern the study. Finally, it briefly outlined the structure of the thesis. The succeeding chapter explores in detail the complexities of the religious and tourism nature in order to justify the conceptual framework.
Chapter 2 Towards Conceptualising the Religious Tourist as Performer

2. TOWARDS CONCEPTUALISING THE RELIGIOUS TOURIST AS PERFORMER

2.1 Introduction

The notion of religion as a trigger for action in the human world has repeatedly been observed in present and past times. Evidence for the key role religion plays in people’s daily activities (Bailey and Sood, 1993; Walter, 2002) is found in practices, such as eating and drinking, clothing, as well as in social and political aspirations (Levin, 1979; Poulson et al., 1998). Indeed, the 11th of September tragedy in 2001 in New York and the ongoing situation in the Middle East highlight the tremendous power of religion both at a national and international level. Among others, religion is also known to affect tourism, in terms of tourists (consumers) and hosts (producers) behaviour, as well as their interaction (Cohen, 1998). However, despite the historical links between tourism and religion, only few studies deal with these concepts (Rinschede, 1992; Uriely et al., 2000).

Historically, travellers have often combined their journey with a stopover in religious places (Jackson and Hudman, 1995; Smith, 1992) as almost all religions encourage their adherences to travel to religious sites that are perceived to be the ‘Centre of the World’ (Eliade, 1969). Religion and leisure have, as such, a long relationship with each other (Heintzman, 2003; Vukonic, 1996). Nevertheless, as religions are oriented around a set of doctrines, any views of leisure and tourism are consistent with their theological teachings. More specifically, Hindu pilgrimages are considered religious obligation during free time (Singh, 2006). In Islam, adherents are instigated to travel so as to circulate Allah’s word, to enjoy Allah’s creations and to enrich their existing knowledge (Timothy and Iverson, 2006). This is achieved in part through one’s pilgrimage to Mecca or participation in the Hajj which is compulsory for every Muslim once in a life time, and constitutes one of the five pillars of Islam (Din, 1989). In a similar vein, while there are no specific references to tourism in the Bible, it can be inferred that a person’s attitudes and activities during leisure time should lead one to a greater appreciation of the dignity of God (Vukonic, 1996, 2002, 2006). Indeed, as leisure achieved religious recognition (Eisen, 1991), some of the main characteristics of religious travel in Europe are that it has its own trade fair since 1990 and
that it is predominately sold through Church channels. In fact, many dioceses in Germany, France and Italy have their own travel agencies or work with specialist commercial suppliers (Bywater, 1994) making it possible for believers to encounter what the religious community considers to be the presence of the holy or the divine (Eliade, 1959; Otto, 1958).

The purpose of this chapter is to conceptualise religious oriented tourists as performers, who act simultaneously in two settings that intertwine and interact; the religious and the touristic. To achieve this it has been deemed worthy to provide the religious framework within which believers orient themselves in the world so as to grasp and understand their religious tourist experience in depth. Obtaining information on the meaning religious people attribute to their religion and the way they practice their belief can illuminate valuable information about their behaviour also as tourists, as already touched upon above. Nevertheless, apart from the religious teachings that play an important role in structuring people’s actions and their tourism intentions and practices, other issues such as the role of the human factor and the material nature of the religious experience are also taken into consideration. In particular, the first part of the chapter reviews the nature of religion and the ways it organizes and influences people. A turn towards a more post-modern view of religion (changing notion of religion) in the human society is observed within the last decades, which entails also unpredictable and individualized facets of religious understanding. The second part reviews the performative side of the religious experience, addressing issues of automatization of practices which adherents unreflexively follow, but also of the subjective side of performance and the unpredictable becoming. In particular, the power of the human body (non-representational approach) and its relation to other people (social-interactionist approach) is unpacked here. The third section presents religion's connection with the material culture and the landscapes people come across during a pilgrimage. In particular, the material extensions of affectual, embodied and existential encounters are developed here. The chapter finally ends by outlining the concept that governs the current study.
2.2 Religiousness, Faith and Belief: An Ideology?

The complexity of the natural world in combination with the inability of human beings to interpret things that occur in their lives, have inevitably influenced their philosophical convictions and quests in life. Most human beings have the need to believe in a superior power that gives answers to their existential crises, and religions fulfil this very need. Based on a theistic concept of deity, this study conceives the deity as a transcendent spiritual being who is almighty, omniscient and perfectly good (Peterson et al., 2003). Even though theism itself -whose etymology derives from the Greek word ‘theos’ meaning ‘God’-, is not a religion, it expresses an important belief framework of three living religions; amid their differences, Christianity, Judaism and Islam share this basic view of God.

At times, many philosophers and scholars have tried to understand the power belief (in abstract concepts) exercises on human beings and attempted to ask the question whether and how this is justifiable in the human world. The theoretical approaches reviewed in this section range from structural and institutional to existential and experiential. For example, scholars such as Bourdieu (1991), Durkheim (1915), Geertz (1973), and Tylor (1970) in aiming to ‘explain’ the phenomenon, try to identify causal or precisely verifiable relationships. On the other hand, scholars, such as James (1960) and Tillich (1957), aim to ‘understand’ the phenomenon going beyond the explanations, by concentrating on peoples’ personal experiences, feelings and interpretations. In general, the exegesis of the phenomenon of belief in God ranges within a spectrum that has on its one edge the notion of fideism, which supports that reason alone cannot lead to truth but true belief arises only from faith (ontological nature), and on its other edge the rational positivism, which rejects the validity of any beliefs held by faith and tries to justify belief in terms of evidence. In any case, the profound influence of religion on the human world is undeniable. The word ‘religion’ itself, which derives from the Latin word ‘religare’, meaning ‘to tie, to bind’ (Oxford Dictionary, 2012), indicates the way religion intends to control or even manipulate people by providing the template within which people are to understand the world they live in. The creativity of religious power in its attempt and methods to convince people to realise the ‘truth’ is particularly observed here. Indeed, there are many different reasons for people adjusting to religious beliefs, which are presented next.
2.2.1 Belief as knowledge

Every religion rests on a chain of beliefs, which are considered to be arrangements that are accepted as true (Peterson et al., 2003). Based on Levi-Strauss's (1963, 1976) structuralism, anthropologist Geertz (1973) equated religion with a system of symbols like a culture, which establishes motives in people through a formulation of the general order of existence. Even though evolutionary rationalists (see Tylor, 1970) have treated religion as a phase in the history of science, in which primitive man, unable to understand the great natural phenomena, developed fantastic hypotheses of religion to account for them (Bowen, 2011; Phillips, 1988), religion still exists and is powerful today. It is one of the few meaning systems that acquires a linear form in that it explains the history of the world from the moment of its creation until its end, as well as humans' existence from birth to death and beyond (Emmons, 2005; Pargament et al., 2005). Indeed, it provides models and guidance for the meaningful integration of all experiences, even in the most crucial moments in one's life (Geertz, 1973).

Theological principles are presented in myth-like forms and grasped in terms of metaphors that translate these intellectual schemes into more familiar domains, thereby making them available, recognisable, interpretable, and in most cases, replicable by people (Badone, 2007; Levi-Strauss, 1963; 1976). Through symbols, religions clothe the conception of a general order of existence with actuality and define the possible cast of characters that exist on the natural and supernatural stage (Schniewind, 1953) using a rich religious language (Wagner, 1986; Witherspoon, 1977). Accordingly, almost all human societies possess a corpus of tradition about their past. It starts, as the Bible starts, with a story of the Creation. Most popular explanations for the meaning in life are structured on the views of God as purposive and God as infinite (Nozick, 1981). Biblical narratives are particularly important in this respect, because they offer specific examples of historic characters whose lives were touched by divine or diabolic intervention. Indeed, most of the Bible consists not of abstract doctrine but of stories and myths - tales of God, Jesus, angels, Satan, and demons and their actions in the lives of specific individuals (Timothy, 2004), which perpetuate belief and enable people to discuss and debate about it (Silberman, 2005).
Chapter 2 Towards Conceptualising the Religious Tourist as Performer

As Levi-Strauss said (1955, p.48) "myths constitute a system and each individual story is a syntagm of that system". The system as a whole presupposes a certain metaphorical apprehension of the positions of human, animals and deities in a matrix encompassing the oppositions: "Above-Below, This world-Other world, Culture-Nature" (Levi-Strauss cited in Leach, 1974, p. 70). Religions provide, hence, comprehensive world-views that attach significance to material objects (e.g. cross), status (e.g. marriage), spaces (e.g. temples, churches, synagogues), cultural features (e.g. music, scripts) and to individuals (e.g. religious leaders) (Pargament and Mahoney, 2005) and give individuals a means of deciding what is relevant, what is important, what is true and what is proper (Allport, 1950, 1959). In particular, religious beliefs explain divine purpose and define individuals' roles with regard to that purpose, such as for example beliefs about sin and salvation. In particular, one of the fundamental teachings in the Eastern Christian Church is that man's purpose in life is salvation, or else called theosis, which means to become holy or closer to God and which is considered achievable only through humans cooperation with God's grace (Ware, 1993). Moreover, religious beliefs establish proper conduct of the individual towards God and towards other individuals (Glock and Stark, 1965), which resulted in ethical teachings, like feeding the hungry, etc. (Yamane, 2007). Belief, accordingly, is the understanding and anticipation of the way one's world works. It is a way of living rather than merely holding particular religious beliefs, since it gives humans a purpose and shapes their world.

Nonetheless, people often find themselves believing, but they hardly know how or why, since religious ideas are usually inherited. Religious symbols and identity constructions evolve in both conscious and subconscious means through various social interactions (Bar-Tal, 2000; Volkan, 1997). According to Bourdieu (1991), habitually performed behaviour, which he terms 'habitus', "consists of deeply internalized dispositions, schemas and forms of know-how and competence, both mental and corporeal, first acquired by the individual through early childhood socialization" (Swartz, 2002, p.62). Indeed, religion consists of behaviours that are controlled by exoteric factors and accordingly a human being is always already a specific religious subject (by means of institutional religions) even before he is born (Althusser, 1969). The existence of God can be learned, for example, through oral and written teachings of school teachers, religious leaders, family members and friends (Silberman, 2005). Accordingly, habitus consists of 'structured structures', which are formed in terms of an internalization process similar to those used by Mead (1934) and the
symbolic interactionist tradition to describe the formation of self-identity.

Social learning theory, in particular, emphasizes the importance of significant others, who serve as role models of appropriate behaviour (Willits and Cridder, 1989). A young child, for example, learns and reproduces the attitudes of those who are significant to her/him, such as parents. Later on, the growing person relates to significant reference groups and communities, as well as to their values and behaviours (Wearing, 2001), which are acquired by processes of imitation, repetition, role-play and game participation. Levels of church participation are, for example, learned behaviour transmitted within specific groups of people. Some religious groups instil stronger church commitment in their members than do others. For example, much research points to the more frequent church attendance by Catholics than by Protestants (Stark and Glock, 1968). Equally, women are usually more devout than men and attend religious rituals more frequently (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 1975; Taylor et al., 2002). In the same manner, according to Fleischer (2000) pilgrims to the Holy Land are on average older people, contrary to Rinschede (1992) who evidenced that the vast majority of the participants in the Catholic Church gathering in Munich in 1984 were less than 25 years old. Religious identity is also strongly related to socio-economic characteristics such as education and occupation (Delener, 1990). Studies in Lourdes (Rinschede, 1992; Eade, 1992) found that highly educated people are not well presented there, contrary to the Hinduism, in which the high castes frequent sacred places (Bhardwaj, 1973; Morinis, 1984). Over all, such characteristics of habitus are acquired through group activity and media, and once collective meaning systems are constructed, they tend to be viewed within the particular religious groups as fundamental and unquestionable truths that bestow reliability and anticipated consequences to people’s actions.

Nevertheless, in applying Heidegger’s (1978) dwelling perspective merely as a metaphor of being-in-the-world religiously, not all people experience and understand particular belief systems, but only those who dwell in the corresponding religion as it constitutes “the homeland of their thoughts” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.24). Dwelling in this manner does not necessarily imply living in a bounded spatial community (Heidegger talks of dwelling place) but merely the conscious knowledge of God’s existence and the related embodied practices of ‘being’ religious, which are used to ‘live in’ the world. Believers become in effect rooted by the act of ‘accommodating’ the religious system. Accordingly, only for
those who believe, religious myths are true (Swinburne, 2005), whereas fairy-tales for those who do not believe (Leach, 1974). Indeed, only if there is a pre-existing tendency to believe, for example, in the beneficial properties of the holy water, are particular religious beliefs an existing option. Moreover, within this context, a religious experience is any happening that a human being attributes at least in part to the action of supernatural forces (Proudfoot and Shaver, 1975). Thus, no matter how unusual the emotional or the physical sensations are, if the individual does not consciously connect them to the operation of spiritual beings, then the individual has not had a religious experience. Emphasis is, therefore, given here to the notion of belief as knowledge, a notion which received prominent defence in the work of Plantinga (2000) where faith constitutes an assumed belief, a process of believing as a way of knowing and thus of accepting divine authority (Aquinas, as cited in O’Brien, 1974). Within this realm, some religious believers utilize the term ‘faith’ in a form of ‘blind belief’ that accept truths without evidence (Fowler, 1981).

2.2.2 Belief as coping

Religion, moreover, has the capacity to satisfy humans’ desires and wishes (Freud, 1961; Feuerbach, 1830) and remove their anxieties. In fact, human beings are often confronted with situations that cannot be secularly controlled in their lives, as for example, when a death is impending. When such events occur, humans need an illusory, subjective sense of control and they frequently turn to their faith as a mean of understanding and coping with such a situation (Boyer, 2001). Indeed, almost all religions are concerned with the issues of life and death. The belief, for example, in a soul that will forever outlive the death of the human body is well known. Christianity, for instance, promises people entrance to Paradise after their death, Hinduism believes in the rebirth and reincarnation of souls, whereas Buddhism, even though it emphasizes the impermanence of life, still believes that the spirit will remain on earth seeking a new body (Barsalou et al., 2005). Certain beliefs may, hence, be held conveniently by individuals because of their alleviative effects and their contribution to human beings’ existential fears (Jonas and Fischer, 2006; Kay et al., 2010).

Religion can, therefore, be described also as a unique source of coping and distress that acts as a psychological assistant in reducing people’s uncertainty and fear associated to death and health issues (Pargament et al., 2005). Indeed, the spiritual dimension of religious involvement is thought to help people deal with various kinds of personal
troubles. By turning to their faith in times of trouble, they are better able to cope with problems that accompany personal crises, as religion offers its adherents compensators for the tangible and intangible rewards they have not acquired or cannot acquire. Many parishioners even provide educational and other programs that aim to promote their members’ well-being (Krause et al., 2001). More precisely, peoples’ faith can promote feelings of hope, forgiveness, joy and other positive emotions that in turn enhance well-being (Levin and Chatters, 1998; Pargament et al., 1998) and especially physical and mental health (Koenig et al., 2001; Levin and Markides, 1988). Emmons (2005), for example, acknowledges the significance of religion in humans’ physical, interpersonal and psychosocial well-being (Miller and Tohoresen, 2003; Pargament, 1997) and especially its function and positive effect on disabled people. In fact, studies link church attendance with lower levels of anxiety (Peterson and Roy, 1985), loneliness (Johnson and Mullins, 1989), depression (Levin and Chatters, 1998; Witter et al., 1985), mortality (Zuckerman et al., 1984), and smoking and alcohol-related cancers (Gardner and Lyon, 1982).

Studies have attempted to explain who frequents church (Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi, 1975). Along with Dittes (1971, p.394) the most common theory of religion in the history of social science is the ‘deprivation theory’ according to which persons that suffer from deprivation look to religion as a means of compensation and, thus, become committed to the church, a notion which has roots in the thought of Marx and is considered also by Glock and Stark (1965). In an empirical study of social deprivation using Episcopalian data, Glock et al. (1967) argued that deprivation theory explains the higher church involvement of older people, diseased and the lower socioeconomic classes. Older people exhibit a stronger belief in God and in afterlife, attend church more regularly, read the Bible and practice private devotions more than young people, as religion provides consolation and gives them hope. Equally, previous research (Digance, 2006; Dubisch, 1995; Turner, 1978) on pilgrimage has revealed the tendency of people with health problems to visit sacred sites in order to experience miraculous healing that is attributed to the grace of God, which is understood as forgiveness in the Western Christian Church and as movement of God towards man in the Eastern Christian Church (Ware, 1993). Accordingly, belief in, and knowledge of, one’s religious system seems to create motivations and expectations to its adherents who anticipate certain outcomes.
2.2.3 Belief as wager

According to rationalists and foundationalists (such as Frazer, 1981 and Tylor, 1970) theistic beliefs should be justified only if there is physical evidence of God’s existence, of which they assert there is none or too little. In particular, as Clifford (1999) states, the sacredness of belief is violated when linked to unproved statements and it is therefore wrong to believe in something that is lacking evidence. Reformed epistemologists, on the other hand, (such as Alston, 1996; Plantinga, 1992; Wolterstoff, 1996) in an attempt to defend belief as rational, have criticised classical foundationalism as supporting too narrow a view regarding which beliefs can be basic. They hold that belief is considered automatically basic and hence is justified. Even though it cannot be proven by reason it must be accepted by faith. In particular, fideism, which derives from ‘faithism’, claims that faith is not derived from evidence, since no evidence could be sufficient to logically explain the total commitment involved in religious faith (Bishop, 2010). Many distinguished theologians and philosophers consider faith itself as the starting point of knowledge and encourage people to believe. Known is, for example, St. Augustine of Hippo’s assertion ‘Crede, ut intelligas’ (You need to believe in order to understand) (Augustine Hippo in his Sermon 43.7, 9). In fact, belief in scientific evidence is itself based on the faith that an unknown discovery is possible, a fact that is also compatible with devotees’ belief in God as infinite (Waardenburg, 1999). Indeed, religious awareness and enrichment are often unfolded based on unpredictable, immanent events in peoples’ lives. In contrast to the absolutists, who deny the religious existence, the existentialist James (1960) (as an empiricist), believes in the lived experience and attempts to derive religion from certain universally available subjective experiences, such as having an encounter with the Virgin Mary or speaking in tongues. Such experiences can become abiding memories that influence and frame the individual’s future life (Sharpley, 2009). For example, a sudden miraculous manifestation (e.g. cure or vision) or particular positive moments in life that produce inner spiritual peace can alter individuals’ religious doubts (Sharpley, 2009).

Accordingly, as human reason alone cannot help people in choosing whether to believe in a deity’s existence, people are often engaged in a process of weighing their possible gains and losses. People’s concern of the issues of truth is, indeed comparable to betting in a game of chance, which Pascal (cited in Bishop, 2007) calls belief as wager. If God really exists, religion offers itself as a unique opportunity for people who are supposed to vantage
in case of believing or to lose certain critical benefits/qualities in case of disbelief. In this way, religion represents a rather involuntary option and constitutes an 'acceptance' rather than belief (Alston, 1996) in that people do not have the opportunity to wait for more evidence, because, even though they may avoid error in case religion is untrue, they lose the good if it is true, in the same manner as if they chose to disbelieve. Nevertheless, an option to believe in a deity may also lead to negative results in case religion will prove to be false. In particular, when people turn to religion in times of personal crisis, as an ultimate hope to solve their problems, a religious failure in the form of an unfulfilled wish may lead to negative consequences, such as frustration, as people will have invested trust and energy in believing in God and will have changed themselves over time.

2.2.4 Belief as socialization/social identity

Shared social practice and the need to belong to a group are equally important determinants for people adhering to religious affiliations. For example, 'enjoy the religious services and style of worship' was the most important reason given for adhering to a religion (Pew Research Group, 2009). Structural functionalist Emile Durkheim (1915), with his classic work 'The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life', was the first to give religion a sociological basis, even though the meaning of church as a socializing factor has been known since Ancient Greece, when the initial definition of the Greek word for church, 'ekklisia', had the meaning of an assembly (its etymology comprises the verb 'ek-kallo' which means invite people from all around to form a group). For Durkheim (1915) society comprises the soul of religion and his functional treatment of ritual as a mechanism that reinforces social solidarity is so influential that his approach continues to dominate in the relevant literature today. In fact, through religious rituals and pilgrimages, devoted followers connect to each other and their group, sharing what Schutz (1962) calls 'common-sense knowledge' and develop, hereby, a heightened awareness of belonging to a larger whole (Davies, 1988), which offers in turn greater self-esteem and emotional and practical support in times of personal problems (Taylor and Chatters, 1988).

Furthermore, common beliefs and practices express what Durkheim (1915) calls 'collective realities', which assist group members in interpreting their common experiences and influence their behaviour on both national and international levels (Eidelson and Eidelson, 2003; Silberman et al., 2005) thereby, minimizing needless contemplation every
time a decision is to be made that is based on identity (Edensor, 2009). In particular, a social religious self comes out as a result of mutual symbol systems like words, roles, gestures and rituals (Mead, 1934; Pfaffenerberger, 1983) that contribute to the creation of attitudes and values in society (McClain, 1979) and construct members’ behaviour. Adherents of the same religion can, for instance, be distinguished through common songs, prayers and witnesses, but also through common bodily actions (Barsalou et al., 2005), their eating habits (Vukonic, 2002), their clothing (Besio, 2007; Morin and Guelke, 2007) and through the assistant objects associated with the service, such as the Bible and the rosary, which automatically disjoint them from ‘other’ people. Accordingly, religions, through their points of aggregation, have been argued to provide individual as well as collective identity within the framework of a universal or supernatural background (Marty and Appleby, 1991), contributing, therefore, to the creation of culture, tradition, feelings, beliefs and values in humanity (McClain, 1979). Religious belief systems and rituals serve as a way with which society can function that would otherwise be vulnerable to cognitive and sociological collapse over generational time (Durkheim, 1915).

2.2.5 Belief as fear and uncertainty

Nevertheless, belief in religious belief systems is not only humanly controlled and thus optional, but it is frequently the result of the enclosed efforts of religious institutional forces on people. Post-Durkheimian approaches tend to view religion not so much as a human universal but an historic product of the interaction of societies with each other and stress issues such as power and hierarchy. Even Marx, years before (in 1843), in his ‘Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right’, argued that society’s ideology and religion are pre-determined by the means of production of society, creating the known ‘false consciousness’, in which social elites tend to promote an ethos and worldview useful to their own political and economic interests. Max Weber (1958), in addition, developed his theory of ‘Protestant ethic’, which provided a psychological push for the development of modern capitalism in Europe. In particular, whereas Christianity is based predominately on ideas adopted from Hellenism according to which, God’s grace is entirely independent of human action and as such (as Calvin also taught) no one can know whether she/he is saved (Bowen, 2011), Protestants conversely believe in the ‘doctrine of signs’, where believers are led towards intense worldly activity in the hope that leading a rational, systematic life for the greater glory of God on earth would itself be a sign that one
has been elected and thus saved.

Highly influenced by Weber and Marx, Bourdieu (1991, 1998) advocated a symbolic economic approach to the phenomenon of religion, distinguishing between producers (church officials) and consumers (believers). In particular, human action does not emanate from habitus alone (as seen above) but the religious ‘field’ or else the institutional form of religions structures human’s dependence on religious power. As Bourdieu argues (1993, p.72) “in order for a field to function, there must be stakes and people ready to play the game [people who are] endowed with the habitus implying knowledge and recognition of the immanent laws of the game, of the stakes, etc.” He resembles religion with ‘gift exchange’, which he defines as “a negotiated social practice whose rules are grounded in a shared implicit understanding of the meanings conveyed by giving and receiving” (1962, pp. 103-107). The power of habitus is thus mediated by institutional forces, and the restrictions/opportunities imposed by people are enabled through the very dispositions of habitus, which Bourdieu characterizes as a “collective misrecognition” (1998, p.95).

In particular, resting upon dogmas, such as of the world as being sacred or evil and persons being religious or sinful (Silberman, 2005), Christianity, for example, has exercised considerable power on people with its doctrine of rewarding virtuous people for their good acts while punishing sinning people for their unorthodox/bad acts (Kushner, 1989). Even though Kant (1781) stressed the practical necessity of such religious beliefs in terms of justice and morality, however, historical facts, such as the process of inquisition in the Middle Age and the powerful role of the Pope throughout history, indicate the often repressive character of religion on human societies, which has resulted in believing as a matter of fear. For some religions, coercion is a condition, with discipline and fear as essentials to their maintenance (Asad, 1983; Kierkegaard, 1941). Belief in religion is, therefore, frequently accepted because of the end to which it is directed (hell, for example, in the case of a sin), which transforms human beings into un-reflexive instruments of God.

2.2.6 Dissolution of religiousness: The rise of spirituality?

In capitalistic and consumer oriented societies, orderings, such as religious belief systems, are nevertheless observed to possess the quality of becoming, incorporating new elements, cancelling others and changing over time (Deleuze and Guattari, 1999). In effect, a change
has been observed in recent years, with people setting their own rules and contesting the belief-systems of the institutions. Centuries before, Schleiermacher (1799) in his phenomenological treatise 'On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers' was among the first who unfolded the idea of the privatized form of religious experience. Influenced by the Enlightenment critics of religion written by Hume, he attempted to free religious practice from dependence on ecclesiastical institutions (Proudfoot, 1985) arguing that such religious institutions with their doctrines were secondary accretions to the primary source of religion. Similarly today, even though modern societies continue to be religious (Tomasi, 2002), the nature of religion is gradually changing. Especially among young people (Lambert, 2004) religious beliefs and practices are progressively more private and individualized (Berger, 1967). Their refusal to comply unreflexively with cleric's instructions is argued to be the result of an increase in instructional level (Dianteill, 2003) and the disappointment with religious institutions in Western society, not being in the position to deal with the present problems of humanity (Cousins, 1989; Pargament, 1999; Turner et al., 1995). One such example is Roof's (1993) 'New Age' religious participation known as the ‘baby boomer’ generation, which emphasizes the direct spiritual experience over the institutional religion.

People's increased acquaintance with other cultures' literature, art, and lifestyles has perhaps influenced the way they comprehend the notion of spirituality as a personal quest which exceeds the boundaries placed by any religious tradition (King, 1996). Indeed, in a mobile culture where people often encounter the other, their habits are frequently challenged (Frykman and Loefgren, 1996). Tourism plays a significant role in this respect enabling worldwide transformations of places and cultures (Hollinshead, 2007). In particular, social relations, such as those promoted by religions, are being radically reconstituted through mobilities that weaken community borders and give rise to complexly organized times and spaces (Allon, 2004; Urry, 2000) and to individualism (Baudrillard, 1981).

The flexibility of faith is extensively addressed by Tillich (1957), who attributes faith to every state with which human beings are ultimately concerned; Tillich continues to state that where there is faith there is an awareness of holiness and that what concerns one ultimately becomes holy regardless of whether it is profane or sacred. So, while spirituality has originally been linked to religion (Pargament, 1992; Zinnbauer et al., 1999) to describe
individual experience such as personal transcendence (LaPierre, 1994; Watson, 1989), supra-conscious sensitivity (Watson, 1989) meaningfulness (Spilka and McIntosh, 1996) and authenticity (Helminiac, 1996), it is regarded by many authors as being a much broader concept than religion (Miller and Thoresen, 1999; Walsh, 1999) since, not all modern notions of spirituality are connected to religion (Sheldrake, 1992; Wulff, 1997). For example, Dunlap (2006), in his paper 'Environmentalism, a Secular Faith', provides some interesting aspects of environmentalism as a religious movement, which serves humans' need to find a purpose in life rather than being related to institutionalised forms of faiths. Equally, passionate football fans (Elias and Dunning, 1986; Maguire, 1992) or Elvis fans (Ross, 1999) acquire religious-like characteristics. Consequently, the notion of religion is itself considered to be a dynamic process, which develops within the lifetime, being influenced by the development of the human society and the progress of science (Fowler, 1981; Zinnbauer et al., 1999).

2.3 Performing Religion: Being and Becoming a Believer

Despite the importance of symbols and metaphors used to communicate religious ideas and values, religion is not only comprehended through a world of signs (Thrift, 1996), but also through the key concepts of practice, subject and embodiment. "The signs of written language have less immediate emotional impact than do symbolic objects, gestures, sounds and actions" (Turner and Turner, 1978, p. 144). Religion is above all religion in action (Turner, 1967), since it does not exist without believers' involvement in it. Such actions, - religious believers' performances - are usually dramaturgical and built upon religious rituals, which enable the transmission of mental states that are religiously essential (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). With respect to rituals - which are defined by Turner (1977, p.183) as "a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words and objects performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests", embodiments can play a vital role in transmitting religious ideas metaphorically. Indeed, ritual activities are themselves clearly considered to be a form of 'work' and are thus also described as a "work of the gods" (Turner and Turner, 1978, p.35).
Grasping, articulating and making a spiritual world through embodied practice, allow people to acknowledge the corporeal generation of systems of symbolic-cosmological thought and meaning, but can also generate unpredictable and genuine outcomes for many people. Two seemingly contradictory theories, Arnold van Gennep’s (1909) theory of ‘rites of passage’, which is also applied in the study of pilgrimage, and Johan Huizinga’s (1938) play theory, laid the groundwork for the performance shift in the study of culture and religion, which rejects the view of performances as fixed objects to be studied in the science of positivism and embraces performance as a paradigm for understanding how culture makes and remakes itself. Within this context, performance can be understood as “the embodied processes that produce and consume culture ... performance makes things and does things” (Hamera, 2006, p.5).

2.3.1 Religion as theatre

Many bodily practices are already oriented towards actions in the world (Heidegger, 1971) and this is particularly the case in considering religious belief systems, and religiousness in particular, which denotes peoples’ actual subscription to institutionalized beliefs or doctrines (Vaughan, 1991) that accordingly prescribe their consumption values and behaviour (Delener, 1990). Indeed, individuals’ behaviour is determined by the meanings attributed to their actions and therefore it often demonstrates religious adherence (Lindridge, 2005). Hirshman (1981), for instance, who studied Jewish people, reported that Jews in relation to other adherents are more willing to adopt new products and to gather information. Sood and Nasu (1995), moreover, argued that pious Protestants are more concerned with prices and support local retail stores more than non-pious Protestants.

Based on power relations, and analogous to Adler’s (1989b) ‘performed art’, the phenomenon of religion can thus be resembled to a theatre as believers are prepared and subsequently perform religion in a choreographed way. In particular, religious doctrines, similar to theatrical scenarios, determine the nature of performative encounters, while religious producers such as priests, church staff and the attached ritual procedures enliven and organize the religious plot, directing people and mobilizing stages; in other words staging authenticity (see MacCannell, 1973). Such stage-managed directions (Edensor, 2000) guide people around spaces and ritualistic practices, in order to perpetuate and establish particular meanings. On the other hand, religious adherents as ‘cast members’
(Crang, 1997) take part in their religious belief system, by performing a series of directed religious practices as established by religious producers. Within this notion, people on the front stage accept and follow prescribed collective rules, performing a 'role' and thus reciting a 'script' (Goffman, 1959).

The invariance of religious performances is principally noted within this respect, with actions being consistently performed, emphasizing precise repetition and physical control (Bell, 2008), so as to increase the possibility that abstract meanings will be internalised and memorised (Engelkamp, 1998). Indeed, religious adherents are educated so as to establish religious habits, practices and performative techniques that ensure re-production of what should be done in the shared context of sacred spaces. For Bourdieu (1990), such prescribed religious practices intend to develop the religious 'habitus' (as seen also before) i.e. automatization of religious actions that assist in maintaining and enhancing religiousness, in producing unreflexive embodied know-how that confronts with unexpected happenings. In other words, such actions intend to establish routines. The rosary, for example, in the Christian world, provides a method for learning and memorizing important religious prayers. Such practices are easy and joyful to perform on a daily base, they increase one's chance for establishing related religious meanings and they intend to make cultural codes intelligible and convincing (Edensor, 2009). The intensiveness, however, of religious practices differs from ritual to ritual (McCauley and Lawson, 2002; Whitehouse, 2004). For instance, once-in-a-lifetime rituals, like marriage or baptism, which van Gennep (1909) call 'rites of passage', endeavour to generate fundamental changes in individuals' conceptual systems, pushing them out of their current understanding of the world and directing them towards a new religious world view. Inevitably, such a major cognitive shift requires relatively dramatic and shocking embodiments in order to make it more probable that people will alter their way of interpreting the world. On the other hand, the repeated-mundane-rituals intend to establish such new conceptual systems of belief with embodiments that are planned to entrench important concepts and beliefs into memory (van Gennep, 1909). Performativity, which is conceived as reiterative and unreflexive (Edensor, 2009) is thus utilized to achieve an embodied understanding of identity (Burkitt, 1999), sustaining rather than enabling diversity (Bourdieu, 1984) and securing 'common sense' naturalness (Hannam, 2006). Simultaneously, besides the mental function of habits, believers' very 'wrapping' (Hendry, 1993) in these habitual ritual practices (Collins and Dandelion, 2006) make up their
identity and distinguish them from ‘others’. The body, in its performance, is significant in the process of being and becoming ‘in relation to others’ (Harrison, 2000), as it signifies as well as is signified by our identities; and, as Butler (1993) argued, affects and is an affect of our identities. Gender seems to play a significant role within this matter as will be seen next.

2.3.2 Gendered spaces of religiousness

Belief systems are generally explicit about what kinds of religious experiences are humanly possible and at times even advise their practitioners which of these possible experiences are to be sought after or avoided. Some religions, such as Christianity and Islam, describe even the limitations, weaknesses and evils of the body, which have a considerable effect on how practitioners of these religions experience their bodies (Barsalou et al., 2005). “Power differentials” (Morin and Guelke, 2007, p.19) are hence produced mainly when religious rituals demand the spatial separation of women and men. In particular, based on their patriarchal nature (King, 1997), many religions, including Christianity, Islam and Judaism are concerned with regulating the human body (Butler, 1990), notably in matters of sexuality and modesty (Turner, 2006), as their belief systems emphasize the spiritual values and diminish the body and the environment (Barsalou et al., 2005). Women, in particular, may be given stricter dress guidelines than men (Fenster, 2005; Rimmawi and Abdelmoneim, 1992) in part because of traditional religious views that “set a premium on women’s sexual virtue” (Morin and Guelke, 2007, p.19). Indeed, such religious prescriptions and proscriptions for dress in public, lead to the creation of “ideological frameworks and related practices that reproduce a corollary of women’s spaces of inclusion, exclusion, and containment, regulating women in particular ways both discursively and materially” (Morin and Guelke, 2007, p.19).

With regard to pilgrimage travel, gender differences (Kinnaird and Hall, 1994) are remarkable in some Islamic places, such as Mecca, where men preponderate as a result of the social position of women in the Islamic culture (Shackley, 2001). On the other hand, women participants predominate at Greek Orthodox pilgrimages, because according to the Greek tradition it is most often women who represent and connect the families to the spiritual world (Dubisch, 1995). Similarly, in Catholic pilgrimage sites, like Lourdes, women outnumber men (Ranched, 1992). The consistency observed in the gendered
performances among adherents of the same religion, implies to the constructed internalisation efforts of, and emergence of, a stable religious self through repeated inscription and imitative process (Butler, 1990).

In a similar vein, religious spaces are seldom gender neutral. Holy spaces, like altars from which worship is led are usually accessible only to the church personnel or to males (Payton, 2007). For example, in Greek Christian Orthodox and Orthodox Judaism the altar is reserved only for the officiating male clergy members and male adherents while women's entrance is entirely restricted (Payton, 2007). In the churches' public spaces, which constitute the assemble points of the devotees, men and women are regularly separated. In the Greek Christian Orthodox Church, for example, women stand on the left and men on the right side of the church. Similarly, at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem women and men are separated by a fence, and in Jewish orthodox synagogues women are either not allowed into the main sanctuary area where men pray or are separated by a screen, “a practice that ensures that there is no contact with women’s impurity during menstruation” (Fenster, 2005, p.27). The same spatial separation of women and men is manifested also in Islamic mosques (Marshall, 1994). Additionally, while in Europe and North America, there is a culturally-conditioned dislike of crowds, Easterners are more used to crowds. They may feel more comfortable among a large number of people that creates feelings of togetherness and solidarity within the worshipping tradition, creating joy and enhancing the religious experience (Shackley, 2001). Accordingly, the church is an organized space that can be linked to a text (Dubisch, 1995) ready to be read by its readers. As Moore (1986, p.81) suggests “to understand space as text is to conceive of the spatial order as something more than merely the physical manifestation, or product, of activities conducted in space”. Indeed “what is inscribed in the organization of space is not the actuality of past actions, but their meaning”. As such, problems and conflicts arise when people who enter such spaces cannot read the spatial texts.

Certainly, gendered spaces of religiousness have implications for tourism too, as ecclesiastical authorities control the accessibility to and behaviour within sacred spaces (Morin and Guelke, 2007). Tourists at religious sites are requested to respect and adjust to the dress codes, such as remove shoes or don a head covering or skirt before entering a sacred place and to follow spatial patterns. Conflicts can arise when tourists lack necessary information connected to religious norms and gendered behaviour at particular places.
(Cole, 2007) and are surprised to find out that their outfit is inappropriate there or that they must be separated from their travel companions without their will to do so (Besio, 2007). In order to reduce such tensions, official government websites, travel guides and various tourist internet sources, underline the dress regulations at both the country and the site level.

### 2.3.3 Embodied practices of belief

The very presence of rituals in the religious world highlights the importance of corporeal experiences to believers, like doing, touching and seeing, which generate particular feelings that constitute “the deeper source of religion” (James, 1960, p.337). Indeed, textual religion cannot fully capture experiences which involve a multiplicity of kinaesthetic aspects and imaginations (Roach, 1996). Religious performance expands people’s knowledge about the religious world and is a means to prepare people and carry out a cultural practice, like “placing and rehearsal before the event” (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000, p.420). They enable the transmission of mental states that are religiously essential (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) for people in order to open up (Dewsbury, 2000) to the unexpected grace of a deity. The embodiment connected to meditation is, for instance, not accidental. A tranquil human body is a metaphor for a still mind and this is what meditation seeks through various techniques. Similarly, kneeling in a religious context is a metaphor for a respectful posture towards a God (Barsalou et al., 2005). Furthermore, religious performances through engaging the body in rituals, through the proper positioning of materials and through the interplay between believers, and between believers and materials (see Dewsbury et al., 2002; Holloway et al., 2011; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000) are capable of producing kinaesthetic effects (Cloke and Perkins, 2005) encouraging various emotions and extraordinary, ecstatic experiences (Colpe, 1987; James, 1960). A peak religious experience constitutes, for example, Csikszentmihalyi’s (1975) notion of flow, which is the holistic sensation present when people act with total involvement, and which entails profound concentration, a lack of self-consciousness and of time passing, a transcendence of the sense of self (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1988), wonder and intellectual challenge. The act of pilgrimage, as a result of one’s actual participation in it, constitutes for many believers also an act of witness and knowledge acquisition (Davies, 1988; Dewsbury, 2003; Knudsen, 2011).
When pilgrims visit, for instance, the prison of St. Paul in Philippi, they become witnesses of his suffering, and as such their presence there often provokes personal suffering as a way of attachment to the Saint. Many pilgrims to the Holy Land may even engage in re-enactments (Wilhelm and Mottner, 2005) by carrying crosses along the Via Dolorossa during the Easter time, imitating Christ's ascendance to Golgotha (Davies, 1988). In such cases, pilgrims transit from the historical to the spiritual state and their experience is more than a pious remembering (Engelkamp, 1998) but the experiencing of the contemporary relevance and reality of Jesus suffering (Davies, 1988). Through performances individuals bring the past into the present and people become able to feel and sense the very sacredness in real time. They understand religion as lived through their bodies (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000; Thrift, 1996, 2004) and are as such able to contemplate, to think and rethink. The body is, thus, considered a medium through which people can expand their knowledge of the world and initiate transformations (Knudsen, 2011). Embodiments intend to provoke 'becoming' in the sense of achieving entrance to an existing bounded entity; a religious identity, a 'being' (Grosz, 2000); the 'being' a Catholic, a Christian Orthodox, etc., and to maintain it or in a Bourdieuan (1989) sense 'hold on' on it.

2.3.4 Communitas: Collective experience

As a dramaturgical perspective suggests, meaning emerges also during the process of interaction (Durkheim, 1915; Timothy, 2004) and as such the collective nature of rituals should not be ignored. Inevitably, the actions of individual religious adherents are not simply expressions of their own internal states, nor are they simply the reflection of norms that govern participatory behaviour but they are based on their mutual support. In particular, balancing between structural and subjective approaches, objectivist views that want individual behaviour as a directly determined response to some kind of external condition are rejected here as well as the view that all internal, subjectivist views of human action are quite independent of any social influence (Bourdieu, 1990). Indeed, individuals' practices are also affected by the behaviour of other participants within the ritual process (Timothy, 2004). Newcomers, for example, have to learn from older members, and as such the correctness of the older members' performances is significant as well as the "ability of any audience to share the meaning the actor hopes to transmit" (see Edensor, 2001, p.72). Believers, therefore, deem themselves co-producers of religion as their action is both structured (by the system) and structuring (the system) (Bourdieu, 1977; 1989).
particular, an individual’s religious performance is an active residue of her/his past, which functions within the present to shape others’ thoughts and bodily comportment. Therefore, the idea of habitus (Bourdieu, 1989), within the religious context, is that religion shapes individuals through socialization and also that the very continuity and existence of religion depends on the ongoing actions of adherents (Swartz, 2002).

Believers mutually influence each other, developing inter-subjective understandings and building on ‘common sense’ activities (Durkholm, 1915; Schütz, 1962). Accordingly, they also share self-constructed intra-collective experiences, which extend beyond the religious structures. Through participation in rituals, believers connect to each other and their group, and may feel what Turner and Turner (1978) entitle ‘communitas’, which denotes an egalitarian association between people who share a liminal state, in which they have symbolically exited one social ‘space’ or state but have not entered a new one. Particularly newcomers to a ritual are “neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (Turner 1967, p.98). Within this state, the sense of togetherness and brotherhood is marked by anti-structure, where the normal rules of social engagement and temporal specificity no longer apply; all are equal and no statuses and roles exist. Liminal persons have nothing and are nothing. In particular, communitas, which can be experienced also in public places, like Carnival, is normative, as it is characterized by ‘we’ feelings, in which the group is mobilized toward a goal that no one member could make alone. It moreover is existential as group differences are diminished, the self becomes irrelevant and what is sought and happens is unity. Last but not least, communitas is spontaneous in that there is a shared flow of action and awareness, which is not governed by outside rules but by rules that emerge in the process of doing (Turner, 2005).

Nevertheless, communitas is not present in all sites. According to Eade (1992), who categorized and analysed the activities of pilgrims to Lourdes, pilgrimage sites are ideal locations for contesting rather than consolidating the sacred among the participants. Equally, Sallnow (1981) in his fieldwork in Andean pilgrimage asserted that what exists is not communitas but a “complex mosaic of egalitarianism, nepotism and factionalism, of brotherhood, competition and conflict” (Sallnow, 1981, p.176). The multiplicity of individualism and collectiveness is further manifested in considering the geographical features of sacred places. Shrines that exist in narrow framed spaces encourage familiarity
with other pilgrims, as a result of which pilgrims bump into each other several times a day (Reader, 2006). Contrarily, in pilgrimages like Santiago di Compostela, where it may be possible for pilgrims to meet up only at the sacred goal, pilgrims seem to be more critical about other pilgrims (Frey, 1998). Turner and Turners’ (1978) characteristics of *communitas* deny also the concept of personal pilgrimage. Morinis (1984) highlights the significance of other human aspects such as the mental, the communal, and the spiritual. Indeed, individuals as sensual, active and reflexive beings (Cloke and Perkins, 1998; Perkins and Thoms, 2001) construct themselves part of the experience. What people bring with them to the site (for example, the range of personal problems – corporeal or mental and their extent), may affect them on a personal basis, as there is an ongoing dialogue between the everyday and the extraordinary, the home and away and the profane and sacred on-site (Crouch, 2009; Edensor, 2009), which does not allow the notion of anti-structure to all people and may also influence the nature and duration of their liminal state.

The decline, moreover, of institutional religion and the subsequent increase in personalized religions observed in modern society have created discrepancies between group members, as some modern believers refuse blind obedience to the prescriptions of clerics (Dianteill, 2003). Indeed, the blurred boundaries between purposive and unreflexive actions are neglected.

### 2.4 Bridging Religion and Matter

Having discussed the effects and importance of religious symbols and social interaction in the religious experience, it has been deemed essential to consider also the material aspect, as practicing belief entails encounters with both human and non-human assets. In fact, “the signs of written language have less immediate emotional impact than do symbolic objects, gestures, sounds and actions” (Turner and Turner, 1978, p.144). Therefore, almost all religions create spaces and objects that facilitate specific performances, and as such, in order to understand religion, work must be contextualized within spatial and temporal frameworks (Brace *et al.*, 2006). Materiality within the religious sphere has, however, been encountered critically not only by religious institutions themselves but also by religious scholars. Although all religions rely on tangible assets at least in the form of buildings that serve as assembly points, a historical debate exists on the appropriateness and value of materials in the religious contexts. The polemic between iconophile and iconoclasm in the
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Byzantine era is well-known. Contrary to iconoclasm’s negation of materiality, it is assumed here that religious materiality is of decisive importance not only to religious institutions but also to believers. In line with post-human perspectives (Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Franklin and Crang, 2001; Franklin, 2008; Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Ingold, 2000; Keane, 2003; Latour, 2005; Miller, 1987; Picken, 2010; Walsh and Tucker, 2009) and with Hegel’s (1991) emphasis on the importance of materials in human life, religion ceases to be mainly a people phenomenon but becomes instead an hybrid institution that is accomplished with the participation of both human and non-human actors. Such a materialized study of religion assumes that objects, their usage, valuation and appeal are inextricable from religion rather than something added to it (Arweck and Keenan, 2006; Coleman, 2006; Insoll, 2009; Meyer, 2008; Meyer et al., 2010; Plate, 2002).

2.4.1 The materiality of religion

Materiality is generally understood as the consistence of which all physical objects are made. Things and objects are, however, not always regarded as being the same. Things - which are defined by Stein (1927, p.44) as “what we encounter” become transparent and read in the context of dialectic of looking through and looking at them, a process which transforms them into objects (Nabokov, 1972). Byatt (2000) developed the ‘window perspective’, according to which people look through objects because there are codes that make them meaningful to people, and catch only a glimpse of the objects’ thingness. Nevertheless, both terms are used here interchangeably as it is argued that both qualities, sign and material, can be important within the religious context. As such, even though objects within the religious context already acquire particular symbolic meanings to religious adherents, their very thingness is not to be overlooked in the human-non-human interaction (Buchli, 2008). In fact, symbols are things (Voloshinov, 1986) and not merely reflections of things (Saussure, 1966) and accordingly they must have some material manifestation that makes them available to, interpretable and replicable by, people through bodily actions, speech and treatment of objects, and thus also apprehended by the senses.

In particular, objects are connected to belief (Motz, 1998) in that the supernatural becomes accessible through the encounter with symbols (Weber, 1922). It is not their artistic attractiveness that touches pious people but the meanings they enclose. Possessing sign qualities, or what Keane (2003) calls ‘qualisigns’, religious objects function as vehicles of
meanings and as ‘the Bibles’ of the poor and illiterate (Turner, 1978). Of the most important such symbol-vehicles are the icons, which according to the Christian Orthodox tradition, are “houses of a holy spirit” and “doors opening the mind to the ultimate sanctity” (Theodore the Studite, cited in Barnard, 1977, p.12), being simultaneously containers and refractions of the divine essence. The icon of Virgin Mary is of particular significance because “she was the instrument by which God had made the Word flesh” (Turner, 1978, p.49). Candles, moreover, in the Orthodox religious practice enclose aesthetic qualities that are particularly meaningful to devotees. They are carriers of light, which resembles the higher illumination and as such when lit, candles can bless (Keane, 2003). In a similar vein, for Christian religious people, the church is more than just a building; it co-performs religion. In particular, the church, in the Eastern Christianity, is the place in which God and man meet and divine life can be experienced (Ware, 1993).

Nevertheless, contrary to Geertz (1973), who prioritized meaning at the expense of materiality by understanding religion as limited to the level of doctrines (language, text, sign), it is assumed here that by relying entirely on the symbolic approach one fails to explain and understand religious practices. Everyday existence is not comprehended only through the world of signs (Thrift, 1996) but also through people’s actual engagement with the world of signs, through one’s encounter with things, in which practice, space, subject, knowledge and embodiment are key concepts. Indeed, religion cannot manifest itself to, or affect, people without their direct encounter with it and engagement in it. This argument is in line with Hegel’s (1991) ‘notion of dialectic’, in which he foregrounded the role of materials in human life and their contribution in the process of development of any possible subject/subjectivity. Equally, religious objects and their stories are essential in connecting religious adherents together in time and space (Hanegraaff, 1999). As such, as Keane (2007) pointed out in his notion of ‘semiotic ideology’, attention has also to be paid to the formal religious views about the position and power of religious objects, bodies and landscapes in the world. Indeed, material religion is not limited to the existing religious objects, but also involves attitudes and feelings toward objects (Davis, 2005; Engelke, 2007; Pinney, 2004) and landscapes (Cochrane, 2009). Researchers’ call to ‘re-materialize’ religion rests hence upon the understanding that materiality was never really missing from religion (Chidester, 2000; Masuzawa, 2000), but rather had been excessively ignored by researchers.
2.4.2 Objects, society and the spirit of matter

Societies and individuals are constructed in constant encounters with people, things and places that surround them (Bourdieu, 1984; Hegel, 1991; Lash, 2001; Miller, 1998), making the material world an expected part of human life, which has simultaneously practical and symbolic qualities; 'use-value' and 'sign-value' respectively (Keane, 2003; Michael, 2000). Along with Heidegger's theory of 'Dasein' or dwelling (1962, 1971, 1978), people already embedded in the world do not only encounter things, but rather engage with things in order to get something done. In a similar vein, people have to dwell, that is, accept and embrace religious institutions in order to become adherents and act as pious people, as religious belief systems inscribe, despite religious embodiments (as seen in the previous section), also the functionality of material objects (Preston, 2000) and their particular 'affordances' (Gibson, 1979) to adherents. Religion, in Millikan's words (1993), provides the 'proper function' of objects, which is based on the notion that it is reproduced or copied from ancestors, who did engage in that performance. An important aspect within particular religious contexts is the appreciation that most of the objects adherents encounter have a single, definite function or in other words a 'canonical' (Costall, 1997) or 'preferred' function (Loveland, 1991) that draws adherents into common actions. Material possessions and their treatments can, hence, fulfil different symbolic roles from group to group as well as constitute the vehicle that increasingly represents identity to others (Graves-Brown, 2000). Wearing, for example, the cross on the neck indicates one's adherence to Christianity, whereas a scarf indicates one's adherence to Islam. Nevertheless, an object's particular form may also allow more than one function. A scarf may, for example, be used also by Christians as an accessory or a means to avoid cold. Cummins (1975), therefore, introduced the concept of 'system function' according to which a function is to be understood solely in terms of the capacity or disposition to perform a specific role in the context of a specific system. Accordingly, the usage and handling of objects is integral to social process as the conventions that emerge and evolve around material things inevitably depend upon shared understanding (Williams and Costall, 2000).

only to humans whereas performativity is assigned to the materials, Law (1999) and Latour (1999), in their frequently mentioned Actor-Network-Theory, bridge nature and culture together in an attempt to explain how they perform as a whole. In particular, they attribute agency to both human and non-human that act as one insofar as they bring about social action. They focus on the material nature of social worlds and propose that materials as actors possess agency as effects in the social world (Miller, 2002). For example, Latour’s (1994, p.30) “person/gun entity” is not considered as a subject with object but as a union which holds a number of forces, and can be the cause of any possible effect attributed to the person/gun combination. In a similar vein, a person wearing a cross may be considered an entity with effects in the social world, such as causing irritation in Islamic countries.

Nevertheless, Heidegger and Latour’s human-centered perspectives, which indicate already incorporate intentions, are too deterministic and neglect the various non-humans, which make up the world and the unpredictable becoming that emerges from the multiple encounters and interplays between humans and non-humans (Miller, 2002; Pons, 2003). It is assumed that being-in-the-world (Dreyfus, 1991) precedes thinking and planned action. As such, the world is not ‘ready-made’ but comes into being through one’s encounter with its components. In this regard, Cloke and Jones (2001) and Whatmore (1999) argue that it is important to appreciate the creative and unique qualities that non-humans possess. Objects not only symbolize the self but transform it also. By allowing rapid movement, motor vehicles, for example, embody a sense of freedom (Graves-Brown, 2000). In his influential work on materials, Miller (1987, 2002) developed the notion of the subject-like nature of things. In particular, he emphasises the importance of the physicality of objects, which act thereby “as a bridge between the mental and physical world as well as between the conscious and unconscious” (Miller, 1987, p.99). Nevertheless, Miller’s theory of materiality avoids the necessity of transcendent ontologies or attributes only a minimum capacity of transcendence to material objects (achieved however by human intentionality). Researchers like Appadurai (1986) argue, for example, that the transcendence of some material objects is not only achieved by humans intentionally but are part and parcel of the materials themselves.

Appadurai (1986) adopts ‘methodological fetishism’, which, in addition to the theoretical point of view that accepts that humans encode things with significance (with matters having the form of empty signifiers), also highlights the things-in-motion, which is the
tendency to attribute agency and intention to inanimate objects illuminating their human and social context. Similar to Elkin (1997), Appadurai (1986) introduces the concept of ‘things talk back’ and argues that things acquire their meanings from their uses and movements and that one can only understand how human action ‘enlivens’ them by analysing these movements. ‘Methodological fetishism’, thus, raises issues about how lifeless objects constitute human subjects, which transform human subjects into objects by moving them, threatening them and by facilitating or threatening their relationships to other subjects. Religious objects, for example, exercise effect and power on people in that they are usually not handled as everyday objects but require special treatment (Geary, 1986). They are sanctified, used in prayer and employed to generate stimulation and ecstasy (Belk et al., 1989). They are worshipped with a “bow, a prostration, a pious touch of the hand” (Eliade, 1959, p. 25) and enhance believers’ connection to a religious place as well as optimizing their experience there (Belhassen et al., 2008). Such objects constitute, therefore, a microcosm of the relationship between materials, humans and God in that it is a sacramental form of communion with that divine power. In fact, the sacred acquires form through objects, which produce agency (Latour, 2000; Michael, 2000; Whatmore, 2002).

In particular, Appadurai (1986) elevates fetishes from ordinary objects, attributing an irrational value to them and characterizing them as the ‘other things’ of commodity. The fetish erases Saussure’s (1966) distinction between signifier and signified, which dominates in literature today, as it is too powerful to be mere re-presentation of something else. Cloke and Jones (2001) highlight the dynamic and creative role of the non-human (trees in their study) in the construction and reconstruction of particular landscapes. Indeed, some religious objects overshadow other objects and even places, in that, pilgrim destinations change in meaning and significance when particular objects are displaced (Nolan and Nolan, 1989), as for example, miraculous icons or relics, which are found in several Christian religious shrines and invoke admiration. Along with Nolan and Nolan (1989), relics and images that serve as cult objects are usually considered to be miraculous, either through association with wondrous events and miracles they exercise on people (such as healing), or because they invoke special admiration or awe. Relics, equal to Appadurai’s fetishes, are special because they do not represent, but are the saints. They are a presentation of otherness rather than a sign of its absence (Pels, 1998) and this identity has proved itself by the performance of a miracle (Gear, 1986).
Opposing animism, which supports that spirit is in matter, the worship of the fetish, which has the quality to make people suffer sensuously, usually implies revering the material object’s presence itself (spirit of matter). Studies have shown, for example, how people tried to break pieces of sacred objects in order to take them home. Such a-theological worship, of a thing “untranssubstantiated into the signifier or allegory of a concept or ideal” is usually not honoured with the name of religion (Pietz, 1993, p.140). Nevertheless, even though materialism and greediness are condemned in the doctrines of the Christian world (Ps. 10:3; Lk. 12:15; Mark 7:22; Rom. 1:29; I Cor. 6:10; Eph. 5:3), the acquisition of materials and especially of religious items by the devotees, as well as the sale of them at religious places is a common feature (Cohen, 1989; Evans, 1998; Fleischer, 2000; Maseeh, 2002). Christian Orthodox doctrine, defending itself against iconoclastic arguments, holds that icons do not receive worship for themselves but stand metonymically for the deities to whom respect is to be paid (Barnard, 1977, p.10). In fact, religious tradition itself prizes the role of materiality in religion, if one considers that God became human (as Jesus Christ), so as to become capable of being depicted. Therefore, through incarnation, matter itself was ‘deified’.

In effect, the multiplicity of material functions is dynamic in the sense that objects are constantly losing or acquiring functions. Proper functions are acquired or vanished not by individual existing objects but by lineages of objects (Preston, 2000). As such, while the swastika as reproduced on clothing, jewellery and so on, originally had the proper ‘ideofunction’ of representing well-being, it acquired the proper ‘ideofunction’ of symbolizing anti-semitism when adopted by Nazi Germany. Equally in the religious field, dating back to the Byzantine period and later to the evolutionary society of the 19th century, materialistic religions (iconophile) were forbidden and gradually replaced by iconoclasm as they were accused for their idolatrous stance, in which personal material interests overshadowed the spiritual world of religion. Byzantine emperor Leo III, for instance, issued an order forbidding the use of religious icons in Christian worship. Reformists too, both Zwingli and Calvin were strictly against the use of art in religious practice and once again, religious paintings and statues were destroyed (Clasquin, 2009). Iconoclasm, influenced by the Enlightenment, assumed to be more advanced, more adequate, concentrating mainly on the spiritual and seeing religion as a question of inner belief and experience rather than as a material expression (Meyer et al., 2010). These historical facts have resulted in the split of the Byzantine empire and the creation of new Christian
affiliations, such as Catholicism and Protestantism, which detached themselves from Christian Orthodoxy, abandoning their yearlong ‘proper function’ of belief. On the contrary, in the Eastern Orthodoxy aesthetics remain a valued medium of access to the divine (Martin, 2006) even today. Finally, even within the same system people may use objects differently, disregarding both the constraining and enabling functions of the objects. Indeed, as Baudrillard (1981) points out, this is a world of symbolism that has its own rules and conventions.

2.4.3 Religious landscapes

Place is a highly problematical category in religion because of God’s perceived nature (in the west) as being unlimited and bound to no particular place (Brown, 2004; Holderness, 2009; Inge, 2003; Sheldrake, 2001). Nevertheless, almost all religions obtain sacred places and encourage devotees to visit them. Jackson and Henries (1983, p.94) defined sacred places as “that portion of the earth’s surface, which is recognized by individuals or groups as worthy of devotion, loyalty or esteem”. Although they usually differ from each other in terms of appearance, form and size, however, they share the qualities of stirring admiration, affection and attachment and of being relatively fixed and lasting. Place-centred sacredness owes much to the work of Eliade (1969) and Turner (1973, 1978). Eliade (1969) introduced the idea of the ‘Centre of the world’, to describe a pilgrimage destination, and Turner and Turner (1973, 1978) further developed it, considering the significance of the possible remoteness of that centre (religious place) for the individual, arguing that sacred centres are usually located ‘out there’. They are peripheral not only in a geographical sense but also in a cultural sense in that the sites are remote from the population and socio-political centres of the society, an argument which is, however, specifically Eurocentric (Cloesen, 2005; Cohen, 1992; Pfaffenberg, 1983). Nevertheless, since the sacred centre placed ‘out there’ is a focus for pilgrims, they remain at the centre of the religious experience (Turner and Turner, 1978).

In particular, the known history of the place plays a major role in the community’s shared interpretation. Almost all religious places include past, present and future and religious people understand such places as sacred in accord with their religious tradition and their own affiliation with a particular religious community. In effect, religious people are often attached to specific sacred places due to the role the latter play in their religious
convictions and identities (Belhassen et al., 2008; Leite, 2005). Places’ narratives within a discursive framework orient people towards an understanding of places’ sacrality (Badone, 2007) and organize aspects of people’s performances (Duncan and Duncan, 1988). Indeed, practices of staging (see Edensor, 1998) with their “cultural scripts and material regulations” (Baerenholdt et al., 2004, p.71) mobilize a directed gazing (Urry, 1990) of place. Visuals, as well as myths and narratives therefore become established as signs that reinforce collective gaze and mediate discursive spaces (Scarles, 2004, 2009); “familiar narratives of lost cities, ancient civilizations and spirituality facilitate people’s partial understandings of that which may be encountered” (Scarles, 2009, p.470). The history of the place and its commemorative value, help, moreover, to maintain personal and collective memories (Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Tilley, 2006; Thrift, 1999) that in turn contribute to contemporary perceptions of self and other and endow its occupants with a degree of social prestige. Sacred sites serve, as such, as an enduring symbol of, and orientation for, the continuance of the religious community itself. Nevertheless, symbolic meaning is not sufficient in sensing the place but the call for embodiments other than gazing at signs is necessary (Barsalou et al., 2005; Belhassen et al., 2008).

More specifically, there is ‘something’ about being near the real thing; although one can celebrate Christ’s birth in nearby churches, the experience is without question intensified by being present in Bethlehem (Davies, 1988). This something, along with media theorist Walter Benjamin is the ‘aura’ of a place or object, which is understood as the sum of its historical, cultural and personal contexts for a visitor and can be experienced only if the place or object can be connected to a person’s own understanding of the world (MacIntyre et al., 2004). As such, even though the meaningfulness of a particular place may derive from the text and discursive force (Badone, 2007), its significance and power can only be experienced with people’s direct encounter or ‘dwelling’ (Heidegger, 1971, 1978) in the place. Places are bearers of people, as they constitute the template for their practices (Bhardwaj, 1997; Stoddard and Morinis, 1997) and hence are part of the experience and authenticity (Belhassen et al., 2008; Nolan and Nolan, 1992). In particular, Heidegger’s concept of dwelling has been reworked by Ingold (1993, 1995) and other scholars who have emphasized the notion of doing and the significance of places’, landscapes’ and nature’s characteristics (Cloke and Jones, 2001; MacNaghten and Urry, 1998; Thrift, 1999). In fact, there is often an intensity of devotion greater than in one’s habitual surroundings and this is induced by being present at known religious places, such as
Chapter 2 Towards Conceptualising the Religious Tourist as Performer

Jerusalem, which are rich in meanings for believers. “We live places not only culturally, but bodily” (Crouch et al., 2001, p.259). It is argued that when people are freed from everyday life distractions, as it happens during a pilgrimage, they can pay greater devotion to God (Davies, 1988).

Harvey (1996) emphasizes the contribution of ‘dwelling’ in terms of how repeated encounters and complex associations with places serve to create memory and affiliation with those places. The ‘addictive’ nature of pilgrimage is, for example, noticed by Reader (2006), which causes people to return again and again physically and emotionally. It is the experience of activities taken on sites that often creates feelings of ‘topophilia’ (Tuan, 1974) that affect people to such an extent that even the ugliest site can become a strong competitor to well-established tourist destinations. Wright (1966) introduced the term ‘geopiety’ to describe a cognitive and emotional attachment, affection and belonging to a sacred site (Poria et al., 2003; Turnbull, 1981) whereas many people claim even ownership; it is their pilgrimage site, their sacred centre (Cohen, 1992). In fact, when places visited are regarded as sacred so is its material scenery and the time spent there (MacCannell, 1976). Even souvenirs can be regarded as sacred in terms of believers’ performance and experiences of place. It is, therefore, rare that a pilgrim leaves a religious place without having bought religious items (Dubisch, 1995), since the possession of religious objects implies a closer relationship to the place which is connected to a deity (Sinha, 1982). Through souvenirs, such as church miniatures, the sacredness of ephemeral experiences and once-encountered places is preserved (Bourdieu, 1984; Haldrup and Larsen, 2006). Apparently trivial objects thus turn into supernatural ones, connecting the past with the present (Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Tilley, 2006) and thus the sacred with the secular. This happens, for instance, when the presence of a souvenir suddenly changes people’s everyday mood, by invoking memories of moments that are absent (Pels, 1998; Rountree, 2006). Indeed, thinking arises through material agency (Gell, 1998; Pinney, 2004; Tilley, 2006).

Nevertheless, the very sacredness of a place may vary from individual to individual depending on their previous knowledge, values, expectations (Chronis, 2005; Edensor, 1998) and experiences. In agreement with Coleman and Elsner (1995), pilgrimage centres are open to multiple interpretations, since though fixed in space, they are not fixed in significance and time space. Rather, a place considered sacred by a person at present may
not be considered sacred by the same person in future. Each encounter can create place anew as people as active agents “do not merely accept but interpret, and frequently question, the producer’s message” (Bruner, 2001, p.899). Indeed, emphasizing on peoples’ mortal nature and their inability to solve all their problems in a secular manner (e.g. when a death is impending), sacred places’ centeredness can be attributed to their very connection to the supernatural, to the presence or action of divinity (Coleman, 2001; Nolan and Nolan, 1989), which people seek, and to the hope they imbue. Pilgrimage sites can therefore be viewed as endpoint achievements, since they are believed to be places where miracles occur (Nolan and Nolan, 1989). However, a site’s failure to satisfy believers’ needs may change their perception of it. So, exactly whatever sacred or secular meaning might be attached to a place is, indeed, both subjective and varied as well as changeable as it is merely context and experience based (Badone and Roseman, 2004; Coleman and Eade, 2004; Frey, 1998). Furthermore, through pilgrimage, believers do not encounter merely religious related places and objects. Rather, complexity arises since pilgrimage is exercised through tourism where unrelated objects, situations and places are interconnected. Even though tourism usually has an indirect position within a belief system, its abstractness, broadness and multifacetedness may, however, have unpredictable effects on the religious experience, a consideration which will be further analysed next.

2.5 Religion within the Tourism Context

As has been seen in the previous sections, religiousness has a strong effect on people’s behaviour, attitudes, feelings, perceptions and psychological well-being (McDaniel and Burnett, 1990; Sood and Nasu, 1995; Witter et al., 1985) and plays a significant role in problem-solving and decision-making processes (Pargament et al., 1988). Similarly, religious doctrines have, also, influenced people’s motivations to travel, their destination selections and their performances while travelling and on-site (Cohen, 1998; Mattila et al., 2001). The term ‘theology of tourism’ has been introduced by Cohen (1998) to discuss travellers’ behaviour based on their religious affiliation (Fleischer, 2000). Jews, for example, do not use to travel on Saturdays and other Jewish holidays (Fleischer and Pizam, 2002). Cohen-Ioannides and Ioannides (2006, pp.160-161), moreover, explain how Orthodox Judaism’s dietary restrictions cause some Jewish travellers to frequent hotels, airlines and restaurants that serve kosher meals. Timothy and Iverson (2006) also note that
devout Muslims will frequent hotels that have gender-segregated swimming pools and prayer rooms, are located near mosques, and have restaurants that offer halal foods. In addition, few Muslims will frequent beachfront destinations during their holiday travel owing to constraints on improper behaviour and immodest dress. In a similar vein, religion exercises power on tourism places, by influencing the destination’s attractiveness, residents’ behaviour toward visitors as well as visitors’ satisfaction and interpretation of various sites (Cohen 1998; Terzidou et al., 2008).

Nevertheless, pilgrimage is not all about religion. Rather, believers become susceptible to tourism too, as it entails a wide range of places, relations, performances and materiality that people inevitably encounter and sense during a journey, which, even though it may contradict their religious conventions, may also influence them, as well as result in unpredictable becomings. For example, the various stages of the journey, such as travel to the destination (Bukart and Medlik, 1974), periods in the hotel and out touring (Shaw and Williams, 1994), travelling home and subsequently narrating the experience to friends and family, inevitably contribute to the overall whole (Bruner, 2005; Harrison, 2003). A pilgrim is unavoidably also a tourist, as she/he is habitually engaging in tourist practices (Edensor, 2007; Jaworski and Thurlow, 2011). People perform tourism by carrying out un-reflexive and conscious actions known through shared ‘common sense’. In fact, as tourism has become so frequent, many people become habituated to modes of travelling, experiencing and consuming the world beyond their locales. Thus, air travel, coach tours, guided visits as well as staying in hotels, and purchasing souvenirs and craft items have become familiar practices to pilgrims (Eade, 1992; Gartell and Collins-Kreiner, 2006; Sharpley and Sundaram, 2005). Consequently, tourists also possess a practical, un-reflexive knowledge of such spaces in that they know where to go, what to do there, how to look and what to look at. Tourist space is approached with what Crouch (2003) calls ‘lay geographical knowledge’, according to which meanings and symbols are fused with physical, unreflexive, practical knowledge. An example of an ordinary tourist practice is the act and way of taking photographs at symbolic sites (Edensor, 1998; Scarles, 2009). Specifically, at the Taj Mahal, while there are numerous possibilities for capturing images, western tourists prefer to photograph the view of the entrance (Edensor, 1998), a fact that denotes a particular influence upon tourists.
2.5.1 Tourism as human performance

Tourism portrays itself a producer of experiences and its institutional and humanly controlled nature is widely acknowledged in the tourism literature (Bryman, 1999; Edensor, 2000; Scarles, 2004; Tucker, 2007). Producers and their marketing efforts do influence the meanings tourists ascribe to tourist products as well as to their performances. In particular, through processes of interpretation and packaging (Edensor, 2009; Tucker, 2007) producers attach particular meanings to tourism attractions (Tucker, 2007) and expect tourists to decode them (Herbert, 2001). For example, textual performances, such as brochures and guidebooks contextualize attractions and constitute "a means of preparation, aid, documentation and vicarious participation" for tourists (Adler, 1989b, p.1371). In addition, stage managers as choreographers support tourists' performance, guiding tourist along particular routes (Edensor, 2009), controlling aesthetics (Tucker, 2007) and arranging their collective gazes and photographic performances (Cheong and Miller, 2000; Scarles, 2004). They, moreover, perform power discursively by defining what is acceptable and what is not, and 'inspecting' the correctness of tourists' performances in order to avoid disruptions and to reinforce collective norms (Edensor, 2009). Such controls are intensively performed in strict dramaturgically staged tourist spaces, such as cruise ships (Weaver, 2005) or theme parks (Bryman, 1999), which undergo what Ritzer and Liska (1997) calls 'McDisneyisation', to ensure consistency, predictability and certainty, as they intend to guarantee known satisfaction.

Such an 'enclavic' tourist space (Edensor, 1998, 2000) is also the packaged guided tour (Tucker, 2007), given that because of the time limits and activity constrains of such a tour, tourists have to abide "to the overall structure and to role-consistency" (Schmidt, 1979, p.446). Especially tourists on organized bus trips are usually obliged to pursue tight itineraries (Bruner, 2005). Tourists are, however, not only captives of the human tourist agents, including guides and travel brokers (Cheong and Miller, 2000) but also of the tourist materiality and landscape, which are part of the staged ordering. Objects are intertwined in the practice of tourism, in that they are also choreographed in constraining and enabling a range of tourists' actions. Indeed the shape, positioning and nature of objects, the temperatures, smells and sounds on-site encourage humans to follow particular courses of action and bring about desired embodied emotions (Crouch, 2003; Edensor, 2006). Nevertheless, such a fixed view of performances and tourist 'becoming' neglects
the active and reflexive nature of tourists, the autonomous performativity and agency of materials and the co-performance of both human and non-human in the tourism field (Franklin, 2003, 2008; Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Latour, 2005), which can result in multiple and unpredicted becomings.

2.5.2 Tourism, agency and the individual: Tourists as co-producers

Tourist performances and performativities rather than being fixed, create an ontology of doing (Franklin and Crang, 2001), which may contain the transformative (Roach, 1995, p.46) as different to the structured and intended outcomes favoured by the tourist industry. Human-controlled approaches of tourism are insufficient as they neglect the power of the individual and its encounters and as such of the dynamics of affect and affected, or what Scarles (2011) calls ‘interplays of agency’, whereby relations with contexts may be reconstructed, broken, adjusted or negotiated (Butler, 1993; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000). Indeed, where there is power there is usually also resistance (Foucault, 1978). Tourists, accordingly, do not always conform fully to the specific performances dictated to them (Edensor, 2000). Edensor’s (1998) tourists, for example, protested and negotiated the itinerary proposed by their guide in order to allow themselves more time to see the monument. Other tourists perform ‘role-distance’ (Goffman, 1959), based on a personal conceptual understanding of tourism. Feifer’s (1985) ‘post-tourists’, for example, mock the predictable performances expected from tourists, performing cynically in front of the camera (Edensor, 1998) in an attempt to differentiate themselves from the institutional behaviour of mass tourists. Accordingly, tourism places are produced not only through institutional forces but also through individuals (Crouch, 2005) based on their requirements. So while some people travel to sacred places in order to pay devotion, others visit them due to their very fame and reputation as heritage or cultural attractions (Timothy and Boyd, 2003) or to seek authentic experiences, either through gazing at pilgrims performing religious rituals or by experiencing the place’s sacred atmosphere (Shackley, 2002). The subjective nature of experience, in the act of touring a destination, is hence open to multiple interpretations (Coleman and Elsner, 1995) and thus is able to remove any fixity created by tourism producers.

Furthermore, where the places are not managed, the possibility of unpredictable performances and becomings is even greater. In particular, where performances are
unformulated and unlimited and 'plays' are not choreographed, tourists may deviate from organized tours using 'tactics' to re-appropriate space (de Certaeu, 1984). For example, 'heterogeneous tourist spaces' (Edensor, 1998, 2000, 2001), which lack clear boundaries facilitate a wide range of actions in view of the multidirectional flows of different bodies and materials. Moreover, as "in the everyday enactment of the world there is always immanent potential for new possibilities of life" (Harrison, 2000, p. 498), the imminent experience of tourism everydayness may threaten to undermine the structures laid down (that is the religious as well as the tourist structures) or even to contribute to them. As Holloway (2003, p.1967) argued, for example, "embodied subjects ... turn onto and articulate objects in their spacing and timing of the sacred, and in so doing open up a space-time, or a field, for achieving their spirituality". People may even sense sacredness in the everyday enactments of tourism, through corporeal practices (Crouch, 2003; Holloway, 2003). Within the process of 'making sense' of the world (Harrison, 2000), individuals as sensual, active and reflexive beings (Cloke and Perkins, 1998; Crouch, 2009; Perkins and Thorns, 2001) construct themselves part of the experience selecting significance amongst a complexity of relations, objects, actions and feelings (Crouch, 2009) which generate vast diversity in their performances on a site (Edensor, 2001; Franklin and Crang, 2001).

The process of doing is thus open-ended and transformative, thereby concerning becoming rather than being (Franklin and Crang, 2001; Scarles, 2009). Based on the non-linear networks and flows of action of life (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004), multiple ways of 'becoming' (Crouch, 2003; 2009) and unexpected outcomes (Dewsbury, 2000) are considered within the tourism world. Indeed, tourism's physical experiencing is "constantly attaching, weaving and disconnecting; constantly mutating and creating" (Harrison, 2000, p.502). Accordingly, the meanings attached to tourism destinations and the experiences lived there are co-constructed through human performances (Chronis, 2005), which remove any fixedness from tourism (Coleman and Crang, 2002) and places, as they depend not only on their past history (Tilley, 2006; Thrift, 1999), but also on the unpredictability of present happenings (Chronis, 2005). Human performances are therefore important components of so-called 'new-economies' (Crouch, 2006) and tourism should be considered an ongoing process of negotiation, struggle and resistance (Jamal and Hill, 2002), in which tourism orderings are themselves active and dynamic rather than stable, possessing the quality of 'becoming' as well (Deleuze and Guattari, 1999), similar
to the religious orderings discussed before.

The tourist body is of importance here as some of the most intensive (but simultaneously also neglected) experiences derive from corporeal experiences, which may not be clear in advance to the tourist. Indeed, whereas tourists’ performances are choreographed by producers, they are never completely managed, as a human body is always performing. In particular, while stage managers or guides direct tourist gazes, the tourist body is engaging in numerous other activities such as hanging around on a beach, sunning, flirting, dancing, drinking and communicating with other people which cannot be easily controlled (Veijola and Jokinen, 1994). The notion of ‘going further’ may emerge through unexpected practices and temporary things (Dewsbury, 2000). The tourist body must be considered a medium (Baerenholdt et al., 2004; Crouch, 2005; Crouch and Lübren, 2003; Edensor, 2001; Knudsen, 2011) through which individuals reflect and expand their understanding of the world. This very corporeal notion can, however, also be the cause for negative outcomes. In fact, while tourists usually travel in order to experience identical sensations to those promoted in tourist brochures, these may not always be possible because of their human body, which they inevitably bring with them (de Botton, 2002). Indeed, an ill or stressed body is not having the same experiences as a healthy body.

2.5.3 Religious tourists as performers

To conclude, tourism is embedded in diverse complexities, rather than dualities (Crouch, 2009) (such as profane-sacred, everyday-extraordinary, home-away) since it entails multifaceted relationships and becomings (Crouch, 2003; Scarles, 2011). Religious oriented tourism, in particular, is more than simply the sacred destination or the activity but rather tourism achieves meaning for both the believer as a tourist and individual, and the believer as part of a religious group through relationships between roles, stages and places. As such, even though religious authorities usually differentiate themselves from tourism, it is assumed here that the study of pilgrimage demands new metaphors except from those of ‘belief’ and ‘narrative’, namely the metaphor of ‘tourism performance’ and ‘embodiment’. Embodied tourism can play a vital role in enhancing piety, as performativity in religious places can provide a particular focus to the possibility of opening up (Dewsbury, 2000) and entering upon a process of spiritual development (Davies, 1988). Moreover, through tourism, which is, above all, a set of performances, people can embody moments of
memory (Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Knudsen, 2011). Indeed, the significance of places and objects is not merely the result of predetermined texts and staged authenticity, but also the result of practice. They are entrenched in memory as momentous based on the ways they were encountered (Radley, 1990). As Crouch (2009, p.92) states “it is less that memory is performed, than it is in performance”. In particular, through doing, memories are recalled and reinvigorate what one is doing ‘now’, but at the same time they are also made anew as they are reinvigorated and rerouted by the ‘now’ (Crang, 2001). Performance is thus necessary in order to retain mental experiences and memories alive. Souvenirs too carry and transmit part of the sacred spirit of the place and aid pilgrims’ imaginative reconstruction of their journey (Rountree, 2006). Religion and tourism have, therefore, a long relationship with each other (Heintzman, 2003; Vukonic, 1996). Indeed, humans are not only working in the world (Heidegger, 1962, 1971) as it is understood within the religious context, but also upon the world and tourism may be a medium through which this is enjoyed and the subject declares the self within that world (Crouch, 2009).

In the same way as Scarles’ (2009, 2011) photographs and photography infiltrate the entire tourist experience, so do the tourist performances of believers’ ‘light up’ and invigorate religious becoming. Through tourism, believers encounter places and people that contribute to their ontological knowledge (Shotter, 1993) and make sense of the places through their actual performance there (Crouch, 1999; Crouch et al., 2001). Through a series of both internal states and experiential encounters individuals instill life and mobilize deeper affiliations between themselves and religion. Believers as tourist performers become vehicles of belief that activate, enliven and (re)construct religion. Nevertheless, the complexity of these tourism performances is apparent in that a religious oriented tourist is in-between her/his belief system, the tourist system, the numerable effects of the everyday tourism and the self. More precisely, becoming a religious tourist is considered a fusion between performativities as a series of prescribed, habitual practices, which religious tourists have to obey unreflexively, and becoming as subjective, reflexive, unpredictable, which encompass a plethora of different enactments. In short, “people tend to move between unreflexive and reflexive states, sometimes self-conscious of their actions, sometimes instrumental and sometimes engaging in unreflexive habits that seem beyond interrogation” (Edensor, 2009, p. 544). As such, whereas religions structure, up to a level, people’s travel motivations (Cohen 1998; Mattila et al. 2001) and create places, individuals as self reflexive and affective beings often have different motivations as well as
creating places in a personalized way based on previous experiences and connections. Similarly, whereas religion and tourism usually construct gendered performativities (Butler, 1990), individuals’ personal understandings of the world can create resistance and “politicisation of theatricality” (Butler, 1993, p. 233) or even alternative political agencies based on their inter-subjective relations (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000). Religious tourists’ performances are therefore not only mimesis in terms of imitating prescribed actions, but also poiesis and kinesis, in that people are constructing their own religious experience (Bell, 2008). The role of objects and landscapes is vital here as they are not only ‘performing’ as part of the structured religious and tourist ordering but often acquire independent personalities and agencies that can cause unexpected outcomes in the religious tourist performance. This analysis thus aims to focus on the specific tensions between fixity and fluidity within the context of pilgrimage. Specifically, and based on the above, the current study’s research objectives are as follows:

1. To understand religious tourists’ motivation to visit religious places and the relationship/connection between the individual and the place.
2. To understand the interplays of, and emergent spaces of collective/individual practices of religious tourists at religious sites.
3. To unpack the complexities of religious tourist relationships with the material and immaterial in the religious tourist experience.
4. To explore the potential transformative process of religion in the religious tourism experience and the influence of the latter in religious tourists’ future behaviour.

The research objectives are addressed by drawing on participant observation material and in-depth interviews conducted with tourists on an organized religious tour to the sacred island of Tinos, Greece. This study builds upon the religious view of ‘Crede, ut intelligas’ (You need to believe in order to understand) incorporating knowledge into the religious field. Knowledge derived from corporeal tourist experiences of God’s world, which does not only rely on written truths but also on aesthetics; from “knowledge derived from senses” (Harrison, 2001, p.163). In order to best answer the research objectives and develop a thorough understanding of religious tourists’ behaviour and their experiences, religious oriented tourism is regarded as a process of experiences. In particular, influenced by Edensor’s (2001) dramaturgical perspective, the religious trip is resembled to a stage, in which three moments are performed: pre-trip, on-site, post-trip (Figure 2.1) as they are all believed to contribute to the overall whole (Harrison, 2003; Leite and Graburn, 2009). The
first moment (Pre-Trip) is linked to the research objective 1, the second moment (On-Site) to the research objectives 2 and 3, and the third moment (Post-Trip) to the research objective 4.

**Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework – Religious oriented trip**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Trip</th>
<th>On-site activities - encounters</th>
<th>Post-Trip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivations to visit religious places</strong></td>
<td>• Performances (fixed, flexible)</td>
<td>• Place attachment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Institutional</strong> (faith, fear, society, etc.)</td>
<td>• Socialization</td>
<td>• Repeated visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Individual</strong> (health, miracle, etc.)</td>
<td>• Materiality</td>
<td>• Belief conversions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These moments provide a pathway to understanding the process of becoming a religious tourist as they entail factors that influence individuals’ experiences. The complexities hidden in the process of being and becoming will become further apparent as it will be shown that each factor is not independent from the others, but rather interact and intertwine at varying intensities within the process. In particular, each of the three moments will be analysed separately in the Analysis section.

**2.6 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter it has been argued that a religious oriented tourist or pilgrim is above all a performer; a performer within the realm of religion as well as within the realm of tourism. In particular, drawing upon theorists such as Crouch *et al.*, (2001), Crouch (2003), Thrift (1996) and Deleuze (1990) and Harrison (2000), only through a performing and sensing body, people can experience and understand their belief, and religious rituals assist in this as they constitute a way in which religions are visibly present, transforming religious abstract notions into concrete states. Therefore, religions have been observed to ‘mobilize’ the human world. Using a rich religious language, i.e. doctrines and materials, they attempt to direct people towards particular ends. They shape idiosyncratic meaning systems that
help people ascribe meaning to their experiences and surroundings, as well as setting goals and forming their behavior. In so doing, they provide templates that believers follow to make sense of their experiences (Bourdieu, 1984, 1991) and to identify and label the actions of spiritual agents within the realm of their past, present and future experience. The power of religious material culture has been thoroughly underlined as religious objects and places contribute to believers' storage of religious experience through the memories they invoke and produce, whereas their acquisition also indicates and strengthens peoples' religious identity. In particular, a 'dancing' of humans and religious objects observed in the world platform indicates that humans are as material as the material they construct, and that humans are also constructed by their senses of the material that surrounds them and which considerably affect them (Appadurai, 1986; Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Latour, 2005; Miller, 1987, 2002).

Equally, based on theorists such as Edensor (1998, 2000, 2009) and Franklin (2004), tourism, which is rather neglected in the religious literature, is organized and structures tourists' behaviour. In particular, guidebooks, travel programs as well as stage managers systematize tourist movements, guiding tourists along particular routes and arranging their collective gazes. Specifically, in organized bus tours and in other 'enclavic tourist spaces', individuals' activities are limited by the constraints imposed on them by their guides, who attempt to provide a particular experiential product, achieve and control specific outcomes and experiences as well as avoiding unwanted happenings. Even though participants are in a sense enframed, most of the time they unconsciously perform such restrictions as they have become habituated to them (Bourdieu, 1984). Even in cases where tourists refuse to abide by the tourist 'proper roles', as observed with post-tourists (usually backpackers, see Soerensen, 2003), they too slip in particular roles and form a community that works based on 'common sense' and enjoys particular outcomes.

Furthermore, it has been argued that even though framed by religious or tourist systems, believers are still autonomous and independent from church authorities and tourist managers in terms of meaning construction. In fact, reality is seen to reside not just in the institution (religion, tourism) but also in the subject (believer) (Crouch, 2003; Deleuze, 1990; Holloway, 2003) and the multiple off-script materials that surrounds it and particularly in the relationship between them (Crang, 2001; Franklin, 2003, 2008; Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Latour, 2005; Walsh and Tucker, 2009). Indeed, even though religions
often overshadow, through their belief systems, some of the possible human performative paths, tourism offers innumerable possible combinations of performances and experiences, which are often even overlooked by tourists themselves, and which can add to their overall religious experience away from home. Nevertheless, “individuals’ interaction with their bodies and through their bodies with the world around them” (Davis, 1997, p.9), can invoke unpredictable sensations that cannot be purposely constructed by tourist or religious ‘managers’. In Mead’s (1934) terms, the individual cannot be entirely controlled by others’ learned, structured attitudes and thus by the ‘me’ part of herself/himself. The individual is also an ‘I’, who embraces the ‘me’, but is not necessarily determined by it. Action and faith are, therefore, interdependent because belief requires a believer, but a human being is also in need of letting herself/himself be thrown into the unpredictable flow of happenings. Rather than merely a set of myths or propositions to which one assents, it is crucial to understand that belief, and in particular becoming a religious tourist involves a complex configuration of numerable practices, individuals, social bodies and materials that come across each other during a religious trip, and that each aspect of this network enjoys an element of agency (Cloke and Perkins, 2005; Fraklin, 2008; Latour, 2005). What is sacred or secular is something only the performing and experiencing individual can value. Having established the concept that governs the study as well as the theoretical framework upon which it is based, the study will now move to the methodological practices through which research was conducted.
Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY AND QUALITATIVE METHODS

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce and discuss the methodology employed to investigate the motivations, experiences and performances of religious tourists visiting the island of Tinos. The chapter will begin by presenting the research philosophy that governs the study and then focuses on the methods used to best answer the research objectives. The use of more than one method was considered necessary to increase the validity and reliability of the collected data. In particular, participant observation with the use of field notes and photography as well as in-depth interviews with material elicitation were employed and further analysed next. The ethical considerations, the sample design and the data analysis process will also be discussed. The chapter will end with the interpretation approach of the findings of the study.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Based on the fact that pilgrims are considered reflexive, active beings (understood within the context of Crouch et al., 2001; Crouch, 2003; Thrift, 1996) entangled in a tourist complex world of multidirectional flows of humans and non-humans (Edensor, 2001; Franklin, 2008; Tribe, 2005), a qualitative approach is chosen for this study as it is believed to be the best way to capture pilgrims’ experiences. In particular, a qualitative approach studies the subjective and qualitative elements that underpin individuals’ experiences (Galani-Moutafi, 2000) based on the notion that multiple realities exist and that “people have feelings, values and are able to give accurate accounts of all these” (MacDermott, 2002, p.266).

Inevitably, pilgrims, as belonging to particular belief systems, are structured by language and myths that direct and guide their performances (Bourdieu, 1984, 1989). However, cultures are not entirely pre-given (Heidegger, 1962), nor do pilgrims only work upon the religious world as external social actors, but also within the religious world (Ingold, 2000).
Accordingly, the study follows a social constructivism philosophy (Patton, 2002), which, “is built on the thesis of ontological relativity, which holds that all tenable statements about existence depend on a worldview, and no worldview is uniquely determined by empirical or sense data about the world” (Patton, 2002, p.97). In particular, “all of our understandings are contextually embedded, interpersonally forged and necessarily limited” (Neimeyer, 1993, pp.1-2).

The principal goal here is, therefore, to reveal the versatile, context-dependent, intersubjective understandings and ‘common sense’ activities of pilgrims (Durkheim, 1915; Schutz, 1962). Any notion of ‘truth’ becomes a matter of “consensus among informed and sophisticated constructors, not of correspondence with an objective reality” (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, p.44). Within social constructivism, social phenomena are not only generated through social interaction but are also in a continuous state of alteration (Strauss et al., 1973). Instead of seeing religion merely as an external, fixed, structured power that acts on and confines religious tourists’ behaviour and experience, it is approached as a reality in a constant state of construction and reconstruction. This is particularly noticeable in considering the various Christian religious affiliations that exist today, as well as the overall nature of religion, which, despite structuring people’s behaviour, seems gradually to change with adherents preferring their own way of religious expression (Berger, 1967; Harvey, 2003; Lambert, 2004), as seen in ‘New Age’ believers discussed by Roof (1993).

It is, therefore, also essential to explore the individual meanings that motivate the actions of community members because they may provide a different view and interpretation of the situations in which they live in and act. Constructivism, then, consistent with postmodernism, has a relativistic approach, meaning that knowledge is viewed as relative to time and place, and thus it is inappropriate to generalize results. Indeed, bodies as open and fluid (Deleuze, 1990) moreover support this view.

The epistemological position of social constructivism places an emphasis on the understanding of the social world through examining members’ own interpretation of that world (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Goffman (1961) believes that every social group has something distinctive and the best way to understand it is to get close to it. Accordingly, researchers have to enter the social world of the cultural group under study to comprehend it from their members’ viewpoint; or in Weber’s (1978) words to achieve ‘verstehen’. Therefore, as the researcher necessitated close association with pilgrims, ethnographic
research was conducted, as the most appropriate way to make an in-depth study of the individual, subjective experience of pilgrims over a period of time (Hammersley, 1992) in their natural environment (Fielding, 1993; Spradley, 1979).

In particular, the insider’s view, or emic perspective, facilitates the identification of multiple realities (Fetterman, 1998), as the opinions of all participants are taken into consideration and are equally esteemed. According to Jennings (2001), the insider’s view is perceived as providing the best means to understand the social actors being studied, since the interpretation is being made by the participant itself regarding issues such as meanings acquired, handling and evaluating of objects, decisions taken etc. Therefore, the relationship between the researcher and the subject is subjective rather than objective as in the case of positivism. In fact, empathetic accurateness can be attained in this way through compassionate participation, which captures the emotional background in which the action takes place (Weber, 1978). Moreover, “the researcher is likely to fill in the process of interpretation with his own surmises in place of catching the process as it occurs in the experience of the acting unit which uses it” (Blumer, 1962, p.188).

3.3 Ethnography, Self and Others

Ethnography is a form of qualitative research, aggregating several methods, such as interviews and participant observation (Fielding, 2008; Veal, 2006) that enable a better understanding of a phenomenon. Mobile ethnography should be especially used when dealing with ritual cycles and pilgrimage (Marcus, 1995). While some previous studies on religious tourism and pilgrimage (Andriotis, 2009; Cohen, 1979; Collins-Kreiner, 2006; Fleischer, 2000; Smith, 1992) advocated ethnographic methods, acknowledging that individuals may hold a range of different perspectives, they failed to provide inside into the complexities of tourism interactions. In fact, they were mainly concentrated in making ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) and creating typologies, being underpinned by positivist ideologies, where the researcher is seen as an ‘expert’ who determines the validity of the findings and already knows the Other (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

In considering the complex nature of religion and tourism in the current research project, the complexity of multiple flows of actions based on the interactions with humans and non-
humans as well as the concept of embodiment, are taken into consideration (Wearing and Wearing, 2001). As a matter of fact, social agents are central to the construction of knowledge and individuals therefore actively engage in the construction and reconstruction of reality (Aitchison, et al., 2001; Crouch, 2000; Goodson and Phillimore, 2004); their practices and own interpretations are important. As such, rather than creating grand narratives to explain phenomena to everybody the study is context specific and open to multiple interpretations (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). Thus, unlike positivism, exceptions are included in the findings rather than discounted. Additionally, while the researcher’s own identity and values are important in shaping the text and interpreting phenomena (Galani-Moutafi, 2000; Wearing and Wearing, 2001), the researcher’s voice is one among many that influence the research process (Jamal and Hollinshead, 2001). Qualitative research should, therefore, be used as a set of thinking tools rather than as a set of methods (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004) in order to allow “stories to be constructed” (Denzin, 1997, p.220).

This section presents and discusses the specific methods used to investigate the motivations, experiences and transformations of the religious tourist, beginning first with the rationale for selecting Tinos as a field of study and the sampling design. The narration will now turn in the first person in order to elucidate the exact procedures and decisions that have governed the current study.

3.3.1 Entering the field and sampling issues

One of the most difficult parts of doing fieldwork is gaining access (Spradley, 1980), because there are difficulties in entering the group dynamics of a tour group, which are closed in structure (Schmid, 2008; Tucker, 2003) like in the case of pilgrimage, which is considered a relatively close social group. In fact, to meet the aim of the study, which is to identify first hand and interpret ways in which religion is performed within the tourism sphere, I needed to gain access into two different spheres: firstly, into religious trips and as such into a travel agency or ecclesiastic institution and secondly into the participant sphere; and to gain acceptance and consent from intended participants (cognitive access) (Altinay et al., 2012).
According to Brewer (2000) all ethnographies involve case study research. The case in this study is a journey to a sacred place, which serves as a ‘setting’, a context in which phenomena occur that might be studied from a number of different angles (Daymon and Holloway, 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). The research problem and the setting are closely related (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). As the study’s aim was to interpret ways in which religion is performed within the tourism sphere, the setting for this research was initially not specifically place-bounded. Rather, importance was placed into my participation and entry in a traveling group of pilgrims to a tourist destination with religious meaning to them. Therefore, while the initial pilot study was conducted in Philippi, issues encountered during the research process made me change the setting and instead choose the sacred island of Tinos.

3.3.1.1 Pilot study
The first setting that came into my mind was the pilgrimage site of Philippi in my home area of Kavala, Greece, as it initially satisfied Spradley’s (1980) recommended criteria in choosing a setting: simplicity, accessibility and unobtrusiveness. Evaluating the site’s significance as being the place where the first European woman (Lydia) was ever baptized and where Paul the Apostle was imprisoned, as well as considering financial issues, I conducted my pilot study there between April and May 2009. While many people helped me in gaining access (Brewer, 2000; O’Reilly, 2009; Spradley, 1979) to the place and the religious groups visiting it, I soon realized how inconvenient the place and the particular type of pilgrimage actually was for my research, since most religious tourists in Philippi were transient as they were to continue their trips following the remaining ‘steps’ of Paul the Apostle, which did not allow me to get close enough to them (Goffman, 1961). In fact, the transient nature of tourism is a problem experienced widely by tourism ethnographers (Schmid, 2008). Due to time restriction I was not able to observe them meticulously and interview them in the hotel, as they were in a hurry and usually too tired. Additionally, to my surprise most of the tourists there were foreigners. In fact, the only group I was able to interview was a Canadian Anglican religious group of 21 people (which I met on-site) who all expressed their willingness to partake in the interviews. The interviews took place in the lounge bar of a hotel, after their dinner around 6.00 pm. I started conducting individual interviews with them and by 11:30pm I had interviewed six people. Even though there seemed to be no problem in understanding my questions, however, the time constraints did not allow me to go through all the interview questions in a relaxed way (Kvale and
Brinkmann, 2009) as well as interviewing them all, as it was too late and they were departing early in the next morning. As a matter of fact, all these issues made me question the suitability of Philippi and to search for an alternative setting.

After considering all the above issues I decided that the best way to observe religious tourists is to actually travel with them rather than meet them in the destination. Moreover, the fact that I belong to a different religious affiliation (I am a Greek Orthodox Christian) made me question the credibility of my interpretation of data and directed me to consider travelling with Greek Orthodox religious tourists, rather than with international religious tourists of different affiliations. Moreover, being of similar background would make it easier to engage with them (Andriotis, 2009) and would allow a more thorough understanding of the particular group of believers, as I would have both an insider and outsider view. Nevertheless, Greek tours to Philippi are very rare and moreover, participating in a whole bus trip across Apostle Paul’s steps (it covers the whole of Greece and parts of Turkey) would be too expensive and time consuming. Given the exclusion of Philippi and Apostle Paul’s steps tour, I decided to consider the island of Tinos, which is the most important pilgrimage centre in Greece (Dubisch, 1995) hosting thousands of pilgrims each year. Apart from its significance as a religious destination, Tinos constitutes a familiar place to me, since I undertook a research project on the island as part of my master’s dissertation in 2005.

3.3.1.2 Greek Orthodox theology: a context to understand the importance of sacred places

It has been observed that most religious tourist or pilgrimage studies (such as Belhassen et al., 2008; Coleman, 2004; Eade and Sallnow, 1991; Frey, 1998; Nolan and Nolan, 1992; Turner and Turner, 1978) summarize the different theological views and religious practices in Christianity by making reference to Protestants and Catholics, but rarely ever mention Eastern Orthodoxy. As Christians in the West are largely unfamiliar with Orthodoxy, I would like to provide some basic information about the Greek Orthodox Church, providing simultaneously the context for this study. First of all, the Greek Orthodox Church is part of several churches that belong to the larger communion of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and shares a common religious understanding and tradition with them. The Eastern Orthodox Church, or formally called ‘the Orthodox Catholic Church’ (also Orthodox Church), ranks second within the Christian world in terms of population after the Roman Catholic Church, taking into consideration that Protestantism comprises many groups that differ with each
other and do not form a single communion (Kariotoglou et al., 1997). Orthodoxy is the principal religious faith in Greece (95%) and in Eastern Europe, with Orthodox Christians being estimated at approximately 300 million people in the world.

Basic teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Church is that it is the One, Catholic and Apostolic Church created by Jesus Christ and his Apostles approximately 2,000 years ago (Kariotoglou et al., 1997). The Orthodox Church dates back to Paul the Apostle and reached its peak during the Byzantine Empire (Ware, 1993). Even today it practices the original ancient traditions, such as the liturgical worship, priesthood, making the sign of the cross, etc. (Constantelos, 2005; Ware, 1995), and believing in growth without change. While a number of other Christian churches vindicate the Orthodox title, the Orthodox Church considers them to be schismatic or even heretical, since they abandoned the Orthodox Church in the first few centuries after Christ birth. The Western Catholics was the largest group that ever left the communion, known as the East-West Schism (Constantelos, 2005).

Based on the Nicene Creed (Symbol of Faith), Orthodox Christians believe in the Holy Trinity, which comprises three separate hypostases (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit), who share a holy essence that is everlasting und uncreated (Ware, 1995). In particular, the Father is not born, the Son is born by the Father, the Holy Spirit stems from the Father, and all of them are eternal. The Son is therefore an agent of the Spirit, as opposed to Protestantism and Roman Catholicism who added a new doctrine (called the Filioque), according to which the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son (Botsis, n.d.; Ware, 1993), distorting the belief in God as the single source of the Son and the Spirit.

Moreover, the Orthodox Church is remarkable for the veneration of the saints, as opposed to Protestantism, with the greatest among them being the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos ('God-bearer'), who was chosen by God to be Jesus Christ's Mother. While the Catholic Church started believing in a new doctrine, according to which the Virgin Mary was born without sin, the early Church believed and still believes in the human-like attributes of the Virgin Mary, being capable of sinning but successfully resisting it her whole life. This very fact makes her admirable and a role model for many people. The Virgin Mary is believed by people to be an intercessor, and the content of prayer addressed to her is a request for
her intercession. It is believed that since it is proper for one sinner to ask another sinner to pray for him, it is much more appropriate to ask the saints already glorified and near to God to pray for people (Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South, n.d.).

Human relics and physical objects connected to saints and specific sacred places are also considered holy by the Church. Many miracles linked to them have been reported throughout history, usually including healing from disease (Ware, 1995). In particular, some saints' bodies and miraculous icons are particularly venerated in the Orthodox Church because of their holiness and special graces. By venerating saints' relics, the Church acknowledges them as temples of the Holy Spirit and the living God. The miracles connected to saints' relics and miraculous icons indicate that their devout veneration by believers is pleasing to God (Kariotoglou et al., 1997; Ware, 1995).

Another dogmatic issue considers the link between therapy and the institution of church. A basic teaching of the Holy Fathers (i.e. the priests, spiritual teachers and religious authors) is that the church is a 'hospital' which heals the sinning man, a notion that is supported in many passages of the Holy Scripture (Kariotoglou et al., 1997). Well known is, for example, the parable of the Good Samaritan who cured the wounded man and directed him to the inn. The Samaritan is considered to be much like Christ himself who descended to earth to heal man's maladies (which resulted directly from sinning), whereas the inn, presented the church as the true hospital (Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, 1994). Unlike the Protestant Church that supposes that salvation is obtained by grace through faith in Christ alone and thus that believing in God intellectually constitutes salvation (Braden, 1941; Wallace, 2011), in the Orthodox Church salvation is a matter of personal transformation and divination by grace (Metropolitan Hierotheos Vlachos, 1994); it is mystical and spiritually oriented. In particular, the Orthodox life is hesychastic (i.e. the cleansing of the heart and the continuous mental prayer) and a faith is a true faith insofar as it has healing advantages (Constantelos, 2005). The ultimate aim of every Orthodox Christian after baptism is to obtain theosis or union with God, which is possible only through living a holy life by imitating Christ, cultivating the inner life through unceasing prayer and visiting the church as being the only place where final salvation can take place (Botsis, n.d.; Ware, 1993).
In particular, it is believed that without the church people cannot understand the Holy Scriptures and the religious tradition (Botsis, n.d.), and, as such, be saved. In particular, as the Good Samaritan (metaphorically the Christ) said, while entrusting man to the innkeeper (metaphorically to the Apostle Paul, who along with Saint John Chrysostom, is the one who preserves and continues the Church of God): “They suffer illness wounded by sin, so cure them, using as remedies the words of the Prophets and the teaching of the Gospel; make them healthy through the admonitions and comforting word of the Old and New Testaments” (Saint John Chrysostom, Psalm 37). Faith is accepted first by hearing the Word and then by experiencing theoria (the vision of the uncreated energy or Light of God), which implies a source of religious experience that creates understanding and results in theosis (Vlachos, 1994), meaning believers’ involvement in the uncreated grace of God and their subsequent union with God.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the issue of spatially entrenched religiousness is apparent in the Orthodox Church. Indeed, while some other believers, such as Protestants, are free from institutional obligations and inclined to experience the grace of salvation emanating from subjective experiences in a variety of spaces (Belhassen, et al., 2008), Orthodox believers have to meet particular conditions. They are ‘obliged’ to visit churches since outside churches there is no salvation (Botsis, n.d.). Indeed, believers seek religious services to hear prayers and thus to become blessed and healed, as well as participating in the uncreated grace of God, which is possible only through repentance, spiritual discipline and the practice of prayer (Kariotoglou et al., 1997). The visit to the church is moreover intensified as the Holy Spirit is believed to reside there. In particular, holy relics and miraculous icons, like the miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary of Tinos, have special graces as the Holy Spirit, the living God, is believed to dwell in them. All the issues presented here provide the context for understanding the case of Tinos which hosts thousands pilgrims per year, who visit the miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary in search for therapy as only through their actual, physical presence there, can be cured and saved.

3.3.1.3 Entering the field and sampling: The case of Tinos
To establish a sample, I contacted the dioceses of Kavala and Drama (a nearby town) as well as searched for all active tourism agencies in Kavala that offered religious trips. The lack of information and the short list of travel agencies provided on-line, made personal phone calls and visits essential methods in gathering information as well as in finding
religious trips. Overall, eight out of seventeen tourism agencies in Kavala had incorporated religious tourism into their business, and two of them organized bus trips to Tinos at that period of time (August and September of 2009), which were accordingly chosen out of a mixture of chance and purpose. Moreover, both trips were scheduled within religious dates; 15 of August: the Dormition of the Virgin Mary, and 14 of September: The Holy Cross, which ensured homogeneity of the sample (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). In particular, events like festivals generate discussions and reflection because people are brought together and emotions are aroused in unique ways; they can be cases when all those themes a researcher is interested in emerge (O'Reilly, 2009).

Accordingly, the selection of the trips, and hence of the participants of the study were based on non-probability purposive sampling which “allows us to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which we are interested” (Silverman, 2008, p.306). In particular, critical case purposive samples were chosen on the basis that they can make a point dramatically as well as due to their importance in addressing the aim of the research. Their purpose is to understand what is happening in each case so that logical generalisations can be made (Saunders, 2012). The route of the trips is illustrated in the map provided below (Figure 3.1).

Unlike other studies (Schmid, 2008, Tucker, 2003; Weaver, 2005), in which the researchers could not obtain permission from the operators to interview and observe passengers, the tour agent welcomed my research project and expressed his support. Nevertheless, he had withheld the fact that he was not running the tour himself but was
acting as an agent for another tour operator (which is located in Drama) and that no guide (as promised) was present on tour. I only realised these facts on our departure from Kavala and I immediately contacted the organiser by phone to receive his permission and approval to conduct my research (Daengbuppha et al., 2006). After his consent and since no guide was present for introducing me to the group, I had to attempt by myself to intrude into the religious tourists’ sphere, which was not an easy task.

More precisely, at the beginning of the tour, when the bus set off, I took the microphone and revealed myself to the group as a researcher. I explained my research intentions and the purpose and scope of the study, which would involve observation and interviews and assured the confidentiality of any data collected as well as anonymity, so as to allow the participants to decide whether they would accept me and my research during the trip (see Daengbuppha et al., 2006). I then distributed leaflets (like other studies did, see Hardy, 2005; Seaton, 2002) with all the necessary information on my project and personal data (refer to Appendix A) and asked for any questions the participants might have and their objections for this research. In recalling that moment, I would describe the particular group of people as ‘verbal’ as I realized that almost no group member read the flyer. In fact, even though most of their questions were already answered by me or were provided in the leaflets, I had to repeat all information verbally several times. The tendency towards oral communication was further evidenced when I attempted to incorporate participant diaries (Latham, 2003) into the research, which did not succeed since no one was willing to fill them in. According to van Maanen (1990) most people prefer, and have less hesitancy, to talk about their thoughts than to write them on a paper, as they find writing more difficult. As one woman said “why shall we fill in a diary? We can tell you everything”. The lack of time was another important reason.

Initially, it was not very easy to approach them, as they were quite reluctant and suspicious. Religious tourists were uneasy about my status as a researcher and the extent to which I would be intruding on and analysing their pilgrimages. According to Seaton (1992), this entry and initiation difficulty is called the ‘mole under cover’ syndrome with which plain-clothes policemen have to deal with when entering in criminal groups. It happens in most ethnographic studies where researchers are perceived by the group members as being non-typical members. I noticed that when I introduced myself as a PhD research student, they seemed to be perplexed and overwhelmed. I later realised that most
of them did not really know what a PhD is exactly, as the majority of them were elderly and with a low level education (Ranched, 1992). As Rock (2008) also observed, when one does eventually enter the field he realizes that an academic is not always a very important person. So in order to take away their worries and hesitation I continued by introducing myself simply as a student who has a particular homework to do on pilgrimage, which worked out much better.

The first trip (13th-16th of August 2009) was a rather introductory trip for me (in comparison to the second one) into the world of the Tinos pilgrimage, which helped me gain clarity and better my role as a researcher in the second trip (Andriotis, 2009). It was stressful in the beginning because I felt an outsider in this community, a feeling which I tried however to cover. This feeling was mostly invoked by me, as a result of the on-going comparisons I made unconsciously of myself with them (deMarrais, 1998; Gilbert, 2008). I noticed cultural barriers (Seaton, 2002) in that even though I am myself Greek Orthodox, my understanding and expression of belief was different to theirs. For example, most of the members were older than me and used a rustic language with religious phrases turning up very often such as “Ach Panayia mou” (oh, my Virgin Mary), “I Panayia na mas exei kala” (Virgin Mary should keep us safe), “an to thelei I Panayia” (if it is Virgin Mary’s will) and “prota o theos” (what God wills). They further shared common beliefs in Virgin Mary and common anxieties regarding issues such as their devotion practices or the long queues they will have to bear, which even though important for me in my role as a researcher, did not personally touch me or at least not to such a degree.

My feeling as an outsider in the first trip was, however, also created by some individual group members. Indeed, my appearance had influenced a woman to ask me whether I am actually Greek. After a rather bad experience with that person - who got frightened by the news that my mother is German and requested to see my id card to verify that I am Greek in nationality and Greek Orthodox in religion - I decided to leave this information out of my future conversations in order to avoid further complications. I soon realized that it was not as easy as I had thought in advance, as most of the participants were initially not that willing to communicate with strangers and to help, a fact that to my own understanding opposes their religious character and ethics of loving and helping each other. The ethnographer’s initial experience tends to be far different from “striding into the field like Indiana Jones” (Bryman, 1988, p.9). There is puzzlement and lack of direction as not
everyone permits access to you (Rock, 2008). Impulsively, I compared the Greek religious tourists with the Canadians, who showed more friendliness and willingness to help me despite the fact that I belonged to a different affiliation. Yet, maybe the recent attempts of Mormons and Jehovah adherents to proselytize Greek people, has resulted in such suspicious behaviours from their side.

Despite the negative facets and barriers presented so far, as a member of the group I had to secure acceptance and trust, to minimise the reaction of my presence as an outsider (e.g. Brewer, 2000) and to adjust to their cultural frames. Of particular importance was my ease of access and the time to form relationships with the group members, which however needed a lot of effort and which often involved a struggle even once access had been gained. What I very soon realized was that simplicity was the key of success; the simpler and the more approachable, and the less academic and formal I was in terms of attitude and manner of talking with group members, the more they trusted me and opened up. Another tactic employed in order to gain access to the participants of the study was snowball sampling (Lee, 1993). The new acquaintances I made politely introduced me to their friends, thus giving me easier access to them, a technique highly recommended by Bryman (2004) and widely used in ethnographic studies of mobile populations such as tourists and migrants (Hardy, 2005; Lazaridis and Wickens 1999; Wickens, 2002). In fact the willingness of Alexia to help me was the trigger for other group members to participate too. Only six people refused to take part in the study and from the nineteen participants remaining ten were finally interviewed (see Table 3.2).

As time also needed to be considered in the sampling process, a second trip was selected to ensure that people and events are able to be observed satisfactory (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In fact, all trips to Tinos were restricted to four days. As I was told by the tour agents they do it in order to offer relatively cheap trips. Therefore, the actual stay in Tinos was limited to two days, given that the other two days were the journeys to and from the island. This fact along with the rather free schedule of religious tourists’ activities observed on tour often made it difficult to observe many participants simultaneously, and led me to the decision to participate in a second tour to Tinos in order to ensure a sufficient amount of observation data.
My access into the second organised trip (by another travel agency) and the religious group was easier. I discussed with Anna, the owner of the travel agency, about my project and intentions in a private meeting two weeks before the departure. Even though she expressed her willingness to help me, she hesitated regarding religious tourists’ eagerness to devote their time for the study, especially when she heard that I needed interviews lasting at least one hour. The result of our discussion in combination with my previous experience of the first trip, allowed time for me to slightly amend my approach towards the participants of the trip so as to minimize any negative impacts on collecting the data (Saunders, 2012). Based on my experience so far, I mainly focused on my stance towards the religious tourists. As I had already realised, participants of the first trip were indeed not really willing to help in the beginning but as we were spending a lot of time together and getting to know each other, they gradually became warmer towards me and the idea of the research. Indeed, time was seen to ameliorate the effects of an outsider as people gradually feel comfortable in the ethnographer’s presence (Malinowski, 1922; O’Reilly, 2009). In fact, as soon as the ice broke some of them openly talked to me for hours; and a few even said that they actually had the need to talk to me about their experiences.

Unlike the first trip, I therefore felt much more prepared, comfortable and self-confident in the second trip as I was more knowledgeable about the particular social setting and the itinerary, which was almost the same (see Table 3.1). Additionally, unlike in the first trip, I also had the help of the guide, who introduced me to the group members upon departure with the bus. A group of 3 women travelling together immediately asked for more details in order to help me, which I then provided in the same manner as described above in the first trip. Moreover, I was seated in the bus with a woman who travelled alone, and who emerged like “a fairy godmother” (Rock, 2008, p.34), since the many hours we spent together resulted in her acting as my supporter and a source of introductions and explanations. Moreover, I wore a pink rosary around my hand that a woman from the first trip offered me as a gift, which also triggered conversations with people and was positively evaluated. In total, thirty one group members agreed to take part in the study and sixteen agreed to be interviewed.
Table 3.1 Tours’ schedule in brief

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of 1st trip</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13/08</td>
<td>The meeting point of the first tour was in a square in Kavala. The bus departed at 7pm with 25 religious tourists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/08</td>
<td>Arrival at 5:25am in Rafina, (Athens region). Ferry departure at 7:05am and arrival in Tinos at 11am. Room allocation. Visit of the Church of the Annunciation. 1.20pm having lunch with 8 group members in a tavern. 5:30pm organized excursion to the monastery of Pelagia (the nun who found the icon) and to the traditional village Volax. 8.10pm arrival in the hotel. 8:45pm having dinner all together in a tavern. 11:30pm return to hotel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/08</td>
<td>7-8am breakfast. 8am church visit. 10:30am procession of the icon and start of the PanHellenic celebration at the Church of the Annunciation. 11.30am public speech by keynote speakers. 12:00 optional trip to Mykonos with 21 group members. Arrival back to Tinos at 6pm. Rest. 8pm dinner in a pizza restaurant with 9 group members. 10:30pm back to the hotel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/08</td>
<td>8-9am breakfast and check out. 9-12.15pm free time (devotion of Virgin Mary, buying of religious souvenirs). 1pm ferry departure. 4pm arrival at Rafina. Bus trip to Kavala, 2am arrival at Kavala.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of 2nd trip</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12/09</td>
<td>Meeting point in the same square as in the first trip. The bus departed at 8pm with 37 religious tourists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/09</td>
<td>Arrival at 6:15am in Rafina, (Athens region). Ferry departure at 7:05am and arrival in Tinos at 11am. Room allocation. 12pm visit of the Church of the Annunciation. 1-3pm walk in the town. 3pm having lunch. 5-6pm rest. 6pm organized excursion to monastery of Pelagia and Volax village. 8:30pm back in town. Shopping and dinner. 11.30pm back to the hotel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/09</td>
<td>7-7.30am breakfast. 7.30am church visit, “Holy Cross” day. Free time after church liturgy, group spread: some went to Mykonos island, some to Andros island, some to Syros island and some other, with the researcher included, stayed in Tinos and visited a traditional village (Ktikados) that was having a religious festivity. 6:30pm coffee in Tinos. 8:45pm dinner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/09</td>
<td>8am breakfast. Last visit to the church. Last shopping. 1pm ferry trip to Rafina. 4.45pm unscheduled visit of the monastery of St Ephraim. 3.30am arrival at Kavala.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Snowball sampling (Lofland and Lofland, 1995) was not only used during the trip, with participants introducing me to their friends or family members who accompany them on tour, but also afterwards. In fact, making the acquaintance of the people on tour helped me to establish contacts with other religious tourists back home (Bryman, 2004; Jennings, 2001) who had the required for the study characteristics (Gilbert, 2008). Using snowball sampling additional interviews were conducted in Kavala upon arrival with individuals that accumulated the same characteristics with the study’s participants; they had been to Tinos with organised tours within the last two years. The rationale for conducting extra interviews with individuals was to supplement data, verify that the data gathered sufficiently covered the topic and reach the point of data saturation (Guest et al., 2006; Saunders, 2012) at which no new patterns are observed in the data.

Accordingly, the final setting of my study was greatly influenced by modern ethnology, where ‘field’ is considered to be everywhere (Dubisch, 1995). The field for this research is considered to comprise multiple spaces: 1) the island of Tinos and the on-site activities, 2) the mobile time-spaces to and from the island (i.e. the journey by bus and ferry), as well as 3) my conversations and interviews with religious tourists back in Kavala, which added to my understanding of the phenomenon.

To sum up, the current study is based on non-probability critical case purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The limitation of the snowball sampling is that it only considers people that are part of particular networks of individuals (Gilbert, 2008). Nevertheless, as pilgrims are usually also religiously active at home by attending church services, it was easy to find other pilgrims that had visited Tinos, which is a famous religious destination in Greece. The limitation of non-probability purposive sampling technique is that participants selected through this method are almost certainly not representative of all the religious tourists in Tinos. However, as the study focuses on deep exploration (Daymon and Holloway, 2002) of performativities rather than on generalizations based on quantity, by asserting the existence of multiple truths (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004), a relatively small sample is sufficient. Indeed, whilst a small sample is usually insufficient for generalizing a population in a statistical manner, it is still capable of generalizing theoretically as long as the participants chosen are fitting in our research aim (Saunders et al., 2009). As such, sample size is established inductively, meaning data is collected until the point is achieved in which no new patterns and themes are observed in the data (Guba
and Lincoln, 1989; Saunders, 2012). For many non-probability samples the number of participants is even less than thirty, which is the most frequently quoted minimum number for statistical analysis (Stutely, 2003). In the current study I have interviewed in total thirty-eight participants, a number that exceeds Cresswell’s (2007) conservative suggestion of having between 25-30 participants for analysis. The stages of the current research and methods used, which will be further explained in the next sections, are synoptically presented in Figure 3.2.

**Figure 3.2 Research stages**

In addition, an overview of the timing of the methods used in this study is illustrated in Table 3.2 and further analysed in detail in later sections.
### Table 3.2 Overview of the timing of methods used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journeys and Dates</th>
<th>FIRST TRIP</th>
<th>In between period of 1 month</th>
<th>SECOND TRIP</th>
<th>Period of two months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Journey and Dates</td>
<td>Journey Out</td>
<td>At Tinos</td>
<td>Journey Back</td>
<td>Journey Out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journey and Dates</td>
<td>13/08</td>
<td>14/08</td>
<td>15/08</td>
<td>16/08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Reveal self as researcher</td>
<td>Revealed self as researcher</td>
<td>Unstructured overt observation / field notes / photos</td>
<td>Unstructured overt observation / field notes / photos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.2 Participant observation

In order to capture the multiplicity and multi-directionality of flows of action and relations between pilgrims, and between pilgrims and materials it was necessary for me to enter the field, so as to better reflect on the products of that participation. An ethnographer should not only watch but join in the activities going on around (O'Reilly, 2009) in order to study events as they evolve (Sarantakos, 2005). The closeness to the observed allows the researcher to see through the participants' eyes, to understand their 'argot' as well as to record performances that participants are taking for granted (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The researcher steps into the 'world of immediate experience' (Husserl, 1970), which entails natural and authentic data (Sarantakos, 2005). As such, participant observation enables the gathering of information, which often cannot be obtained during the interview (Bryman and Bell, 2007), revealing deviant and hidden activities. It is a method that provides first-hand information enabling researchers to become aware of how the participants construct and interpret their world and it is therefore widely used in qualitative research (Andriotis, 2009; Cohen, 1988; Edensor, 2001; Schmid, 2008; Seaton, 2002; Wickens, 2002).

More precisely, through participant observation it would be possible for me to observe whether pilgrims' motivations are in line with their behaviour and activities on site, as well as to see and experience situations and activities happening on site that I would not imagine otherwise. My immersion in the setting would also give me the opportunity to learn directly from my own experiences, as it offers the opportunity to hear, see and begin to experience reality in the same manner as the participants do (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Accordingly, unclear issues would be able to further be investigated, elaborated and clarified through succeeding interviews. Participant observation therefore also acted as a form of data triangulation (Hardy, 2005, Patton, 1990). The participant observation schedule involved four days, which amounted to approximately 48 hours of contact on the bus, the ferry and on the island of Tinos, to permit observation of the repetition of patterns (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973). Apart from the interactions during religious moments, I had conversations with many of the participants during periods of 'free time' over meals, in the bus, the day-trip, etc. (see Rock, 2008; Seaton, 2002), in order to copy some of the subjective knowledge of the world under view. Mobile ethnography invokes, thus, a sense of journey, where the ethnographer detects hints by travelling along trails, bodily, spatially, temporally or virtually (Ina Maria, 2002; O'Reilly, 2009). I observed all participants
except from those who wished to be excluded (see section on Ethics 3.3.5), taking advantage of naturally occurring groups and discussions (O’Reilly, 2005).

The issue of the kind of roles the researcher adopts (Flick, 2006) is of considerable significance, because it affects field relationships in the various situations that are encountered (Bryman, 2004). Along with Lofland and Lofland (1995) researchers must choose a role somewhere between the Martian and the Convert. Even though I was predominately a researcher and in my consciousness a participating observer (Bernard, 2006), based on Gold’s classification (1958) (see Figure 3.3), I acted as a ‘participant as observer’, as I did not want, in considering the rather sensitive religious context of the trip, to produce an issue of reactivity (Bernard, 2006) by reminding participants of my role as a researcher. A participant as observer, according to Gold (1958), interacts with people and participates in their everyday lives as in the case of the complete participant, but group members are informed about the role of the researcher. Through such a role, I would be able to observe them without becoming annoying and potentially gain their trust. Indeed, according to Seaton (2002, p.313) “the reaction problem is avoided since the researcher is perceived as a peer through membership of the temporal and spatial community that constitutes the closed-context group of the conducted party”.

![Figure 3.3 Gold’s classification of participant observer roles (1958)](image)

My experience with Greek pilgrims forced me in a way to acquire this role (of participant as observer instead of observer as participant), as my participation in their activities was a proof to them that I am one of them, a fact that would also enhance rapport. The question was the degree to which I would have an active or passive role (Van Maanen, 1988). An observer that would not partake in the ritual of devotion would cause suspicion. In fact, the researcher as observer in the close field situation may be accepted through seeming to be a
co-equal (Seaton, 2002). Thus, in the current study, there were contexts where my participation in the process was unavoidable. For example, when the group visited the church, I had to actively incorporate the role of the pilgrim because failure to do so could have indicated to the members of the group a lack of commitment, a weak religious faith, with the end result being the loss of credibility. My feelings were confirmed when a man of the group critically asserted, while we were sitting in a cafe in the village Volax that he did not see me in the church in the morning even though I was there. Indeed, I realized that I do not only observe others, but I am also observed by them (Pritchard, 2011), a realisation that made me feel stressed sometimes especially in situations where I had to be one of them.

Thus, I never refused to take part in the devotion of the miraculous icon or in the similar procedures in the monasteries we visited, even though I do not believe in God in the same way as these people do, but rather believe in my own spiritual way. To my mind this did not represent an unethical stance, as I belong to the Greek Orthodox affiliation and learned at school to perform it mechanically, in the sense of Bourdieus’s ‘habitus’ (1991). I was able to react immediately to religious social situations, my acting showing marks of habituation, automatism and half consciousness (Maso, 2008). Fortunately, I did not have to partake in the most extreme act of crawling, which is far from my own understanding of religion. Most of the participants did not crawl either, as it is not compulsory. Hence despite the religious act of devotion, which is a practice I am used to, I was not playing any role other than myself or engaging in unwanted activities as this would have emotionally exhausted me (Jones, 1973). I tried to avoid partaking in some activities, such as taking communion, using justifications based on religious tourists’ own “religious language” and understanding. Using their language and my inherited knowledge of the Greek Orthodox belief system helped me improve rapport and justify my absence from certain practices. Through this active but simultaneously also passive role, I did not run the risk of over-identification with the participants (Gold, 1958) or otherwise called ‘going native’ (Bernard, 2006; Bryman and Bell, 2007) as it is usually observed in the role of the participant as observer. The fact that I was a quasi-outsider helped me indeed retain my focus.

Inevitably, however, my travelling through the social world was simultaneously affecting and affected by encounters with others and a variety of spaces (Kvale, 1996; O’Reilly,
2009). In particular, my role as an observer was affected by the permanently altering field, which had also an effect on the ‘distance’ between me and the participants, which varied during fieldwork. Thus, sometimes I felt a complete observer, whereas some other times I became even myself a sort of pilgrim. I remember, for instance, the first time I went to the Church of the Annunciation in the first trip, that I was really touched by the religious sentiment and the power of religion that governed the moment and bound so many people together. Additionally, I observed that despite my roles as researcher and pilgrim, I had also acquired the role of the guide due to my familiarity with the island, both for tourist and religious scopes, as some of the participants sought, to my surprise, apart from directional also ritualistic advice. As will be seen in Chapter 5, I realized later that this was actually a common behaviour among religious tourists, who were advising and helping each other with the religious procedures. I occasionally acquired the role of the tourist, similar to the participants who were observed switching between the pilgrim and tourist roles (Smith, 1992); I bought souvenirs and local sweets for my family and friends, and at times I myself went sightseeing together with participants. Nonetheless, I tried to remain as conscious and as goal-oriented as possible, by engaging myself all day long in observing and talking to participants.

3.3.3 Fieldnotes and photography

In order to retain as much information as possible, I kept field-notes, which included “detailed summaries of events and behaviour and the researcher’s reflections on them” (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p.461). The unstable nature of the field of investigation as well as the phenomenon of pilgrimage as a community in motion (Coleman and Eade, 2004) required, however, intense adjustment and an ability to react. In particular, the changing physical spaces; the bus, the churches, the walking in the Tinos capital required energy to keep the research process going and to look for suitable times and ways of writing down my observations. I decided not to take notes in front of the participants, even though they knew about my role as a researcher, as I did not want to appear disrespectful as well as wanting to avoid violation of the scene and reactivity, that is, of people changing their behaviour when they know they are studied (Bernard, 2006), in order to ensure validity of data.
However, I made sure to note down the observation experience as soon as possible to avoid troubles of memory recall (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Spradley, 1979). In particular, I made scratch notes (Emerson et al., 2008; Jennings, 2001) as soon as I found some spare minutes alone, in order to keep in mind events and save my mental notes when something interesting occurred (Lofland and Lofland, 1995). I then wrote up observations promptly as soon as I returned to my hotel room at the end of the day, or at times of rest, including details like location, people’s participation, time of the day and events (Spradley, 1979). Any verbal data, which was included in the field notes, were recorded verbatim and distinguished through quote marks (“...”). I also included feelings and personal impressions (Gilbert, 2008) in relation to others around me and the field. The use of a voice-recorder was equally not preferred in this phase because it would also remind participants of my role as a researcher and would make them self-conscious. Hence, I frequently kept mental notes (Lofland and Lofland, 1995) or took photos and videos, when it was not appropriate to take notes, without however affecting the setting and the participants.

Photos and videos in particular, maintain activity in its original form, providing non-verbal facets of performance which are often difficult to capture through the note taking, such as facial expressions and gestures (Marshall and Rossman, 2006; Pink, 2007). Photographs emphasize the genuine facts of life with the smallest amount of subjectives’ pretence (Ball and Smith, 2008) as well as illuminating elements that are often overlooked; indeed, a picture paints a thousand words. In particular, the image of the ascending (to the church) mobile crowd, loaded with offerings and engaging in a variety of embodied performances could not be better captured than with the use of photography and video that illustrate details, such as clothing, small crosses hanging from pilgrims’ necks, etc. or aural representations, respectively, such as the sound of the church’s bell and the shouting of pilgrims. Similar to the study of Malinowski (1922) photos were used purely as a visual aid to the study, preserving and storing the information (Silverman, 2004), and allowing me to describe the facts as they happened, in a reliable way. As Plummer (2001, p.66) stated, images are “life as it is lived accurately recorded as it happens, and constantly available for playback and analysis”. For that reason I illustrated part of my thesis to unite the pictures with the theoretical concepts provided, allowing, thus, the reader to enter the scene and to make her/his own interpretations (Pink, 2007). Even though I had planned to include visual methods into the field, such as photo elicitation (Collier and Collier, 1986), as other ethnographic studies did (Morrow, 2003; Radley and Taylor, 2003; Scarles, 2004), in
which visual images are created with the participants to elicit feelings, responses and interpretations (Pink, 2007), however, it was observed that pilgrims scarcely used cameras in sacred places, and as such I did not want them to engage in a practice unusual to them. As Danay said for example:

Danay: “I never use to take photos from churches, neither inside nor outside.”
Interviewer: Neither outside?!
Danay: “No...”
Interviewer: Is there...?
Danay: “Because it is sacred...I never dared... I mean you can capture the view of a landscape if you like but the church... isn’t it better to keep it in your memory in a manner that you like to remember it? You don’t need to have a photo of it. All the landscapes are more or less the same.. Churches are... each church is unique and it is how you feel it...”

In fact, as I kept field-notes and took pictures by my own I was able to discuss about some striking findings with my participants in the interviews after the trip.

3.3.4 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews and informal interviews, or else called ‘ethnographic interviews’ (Patton, 2002), were important in covering the information gaps that emerged in the fieldwork and completing the picture of the pilgrims’ performances as interpreted by pilgrims themselves. In general, interviews are the most frequently employed method in qualitative research (see Andriotis, 2009; Daengbuppha et al., 2006, Schmid, 2008; Seaton, 2002; Wickens, 2002), especially when the information obtained is complex and expected to vary considerably. According to Kvale (1996, p.1), interviews “attempt to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of people’s experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations”. Ethnographic interviews distinguish themselves from other types of interview, because of their duration, frequency of interaction with people and subsequently of the quality of the emerging relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees, which allow interviewees to shape the interview path (Heyl, 2008). In particular, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) see the interviewer as being on a journey from which she/he will return with stories to tell. The success, however, of the stories is significantly related to the interviewer’s ability to achieve rapport
and empathy. Accordingly, interviewers have to develop trust and confidence and become friends with their participants in order to see and hear something of the inner facets of the community under investigation (Rock, 2008). In particular, in the first phase of the fieldwork I used informal interviews while semi-structured in the second phase, after having already gained participants’ trust. In fact, semi-structured interviewees were built upon the relationships that I had created on-site and are thus seen as a continuum of the ethnographic research.

3.3.4.1 Informal interviews

As religious tourists were initially not very pleased having a stranger around them who wanted to take up their limited time to conduct interviews, I conducted informal interviews on-site in order to gradually gain their trust by initiating friendly conversations, opening up and not appearing demanding (Rock, 2008). Indeed, much of the richest data that can be obtained derives from a range of informal talks between the researcher and the participants (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) and of “hanging out” (Agar, 1996, p.58). The informal conversational interview is the most open-ended approach to interviewing and it is also called “unstructured interviewing” (Fontana and Frey, 2000, p.652) being flexible to direct inquiries towards appropriate paths in order to capture information based on the researcher’s particular on-site observations and talks with various people (Patton, 2002). During the conversational interviews, which were part of my fieldwork observation, I did not take notes as they occurred spontaneously; I did not want to interrupt participants’ flow and influence their answers by reminding them of my role as a researcher. Instead, as soon as I had some private time, I made scratch notes, which I extended later in the hotel room. Most significant talks occurred during the long bus and ferry journeys as well as while eating or spending time in the church yard. Additionally, I managed to make significant observations during a sightseeing tour with some group members in the second trip. We visited a traditional village, Ktikados, which hosted a religious celebration (of the patron of the village). Even though the observation took place far away from the religious centre of Tinos, I was able to extract several very important conceptions about people’s way of performing belief.
3.3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

After having gained participants’ trust, in the second phase of my fieldwork, I conducted semi-structured interviews; a few during the journey back home and most of them in the participants’ homes. In fact, as my aim was to centre on the stories pilgrims tell that come up spontaneously (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009), the semi-structured interview was selected in order to focus on the subjects’ own understandings and articulacy (Gilbert, 2008). A semi-structured interview “has a sequence of themes to be covered as well as suggested questions, yet at the same time there is an openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and the stories told by the subjects” (Kvale, 1996, p.124). Qualitative interviewing, according to Silverman (2004) has the advantage that it reveals issues that cannot be captured through observation, can elucidate issues observed and permits the reconstruction of happenings. Consequently, prior to engaging in interviewing I compiled a list of issues to be addressed and topics to be covered during the process, which is also referred to as the “interview guide” (Patton, 2002). An analytic presentation of the interviews stages and their importance to the study’s objectives is presented in Table 3.3, based on Wolcott’s (1995) advice to keep interviews focused on a few big issues. The interview questions are presented in Appendix C.

In order to determine the multiple realities, the interview questions were as open-ended and flexible as possible (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995), so as to encourage respondents to freely communicate their beliefs, values, etc., without feeling constrained (Fielding and Thomas, 2008). A question used, for instance, in the current study was “what do you think of crawling?” In most cases the interviews were face to face with individuals, and only in few cases were two people participating simultaneously (in the case of three couples). Interviews lasted in average 75 minutes (ranging approximately from 50 to 120 minutes).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Issues</th>
<th>Topics of discussion</th>
<th>Type of Questions</th>
<th>Expected information and link to Research Objectives (R.O.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1) What influences people’s desire to visit a religious place/Tinos? | ✓ Motivation  
✓ Selection of site  
✓ Religious sites comparison  
✓ Preparation  
✓ Expectations | Feeling questions  
Opinion questions  
Values questions  
Knowledge questions | To identify and understand religious tourists’ motivation to visit Tinos and the relationship between the individual and the island (RO1):  
To understand the cognitive and interpretive process of people’s selection of the religious place |
| 2) How do the collective practices influence pilgrims’ experiences? | ✓ Structured activities  
✓ Unstructured activities  
✓ Timing  
✓ Embodiment  
✓ Relationships  
✓ Feelings about others/group | Behaviour questions  
Experience questions  
Knowledge questions  
Sensory questions  
Feeling questions  
Opinion questions  
Values questions | To identify and understand the collective practices of religious tourists in Tinos (RO2):  
To elicit behaviour, experiences, action, activities, and emotions regarding religious collectiveness |
| 3) How do the individual practices influence pilgrims’ experiences? | ✓ Handling/making use of things on-site  
✓ Souvenirs/Religious objects  
✓ Feelings  
✓ Meaning  
✓ Symbolism  
✓ Senses | Behaviour questions  
Experience questions  
Knowledge questions  
Sensory questions  
Feeling questions  
Values questions | To identify and understand the individual practices of religious tourists in Tinos (RO2):  
To elicit behaviour, experiences, actions, and emotions regarding pilgrims’ private sphere in the religious experience |
| 4) How does the material culture affect pilgrims?  
What object have had the greatest impact? | ✓ Atmosphere in church  
✓ Atmosphere on island  
✓ Senses | Experience questions  
Sensory questions  
Feeling questions  
Opinion questions  
Values questions | To unpack the variety of usage of materiality and its power, symbolism and meaning in the religious tourists experience (RO3):  
To elicit behaviour, experiences, actions, and emotions in pilgrims’ interaction with religious materials |
| 5) How does the immaterial culture influence pilgrims’ experiences? | ✓ Outcomes achieved  
✓ Changes observed (emotional, bodily, daily life)  
✓ Feelings  
✓ Religious understanding  
✓ Future travel behaviour | Behaviour questions  
Experience questions  
Feeling questions  
Opinion questions  
Values questions | To identify potential transformations and understand their connection to repeated visit (RO4):  
To elicit off-site behaviour, emotions, future life and travel intentions |
Prior to commencing the interview, I assured participants' confidentiality (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) and after receiving their verbal consent (see section 3.3.5 on Ethics) I notified the interviewees about the interview guide; the areas to be discussed, a fact that according to Bryman and Bell (2007) strengthens the dependability of the research. Moreover, before each section of discussion, participants were alerted to what is about to be asked. In the same manner, they were informed each time a section is completed and a new one is about to begin (Patton, 2002; Whyte, 1982). As I noticed, even though I explained to them the whole procedure and type of questions that would be covered, they were still anxious at the beginning of the interview but gradually became relaxed and enjoyed the conversation. Very crucial was, in fact, the ‘invitation effect’ preceding interviews had on potential interviewees; participants who had just undergone interviews usually incited and encouraged their companions to participate too. A participant, for example, said after the interview: “I liked it so much; I have so much to say! Now I see why the others were so excited [after the interviews]!” (Vicky).

For the first interview issue (see Table 3.3) an additional schematic technique was applied, which assisted in better understanding the importance and meaning of the Virgin Mary of Tinos for the participants. In particular, a schema with concentric cycles was handed to the participants (see Appendix B), who were asked first to write down the various religious places they have been to, and then arrange them into the circles (put the most significant ones in the middle and the less significant ones in the outer circle). After the completion of this activity, discussions were made comparing the places to each other and with the Virgin Mary of Tinos. Furthermore, as seen in the previous table the interviews included experience and behaviour questions, feeling questions, values questions and sensory questions, examples of which are further included in Table 3.4 below. The sequence of the questions was not always the same but varied according to the interview procedure. Additionally, I asked questions that were often not included in the list but were the result of participants’ responses (Fielding and Thomas, 2008) as the emphasis was on what they considered as important in explaining happenings, behaviours and emotions.
Table 3.4 Examples of questions asked

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of question</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience and Behaviour Questions</td>
<td>If I followed you in the church, what would I see you doing? What experiences would I observed you having?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion and Values Questions</td>
<td>What is your opinion about the church decoration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Questions</td>
<td>What were your feelings when you arrived at the island? What did you feel upon arrival in Tinos?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory Questions</td>
<td>When you walked through the church door, what did you see?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Questions</td>
<td>What is the usage of the consecrated oil in the Greek Orthodox belief?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was not always easy to communicate with people and the need to adjust to each person was imperative. Some participants opened up very quickly, while others, even though they were willing to help, often could not talk about their feelings. This aroused diverse feelings in me and triggered flexibility in dealing with such situations. Probes such as a glance, um/hm, or yes (Bernard, 2006; Fielding and Thomas, 2008; Patton, 2002; Whyte, 1982) as well as follow up questions (O’Reilly, 2005) such as “when did that happen?” were particularly used to establish rapport, convince respondents to expand their answers and clarify arising issues. When more complicated or private questions emerged then I used intimate self-disclosure to encourage disclosure (Oakley, 1981) as well as illustrative examples (Patton, 2002) such as: “Some pilgrims told me that they crawled, others that they didn’t crawl. What about you? How important is crawling to you?” As a passionate reader of Agatha Christie books I was, in fact, often identifying myself with detective Hercules Poirot, who asks indirect but related questions to arrive at specific points.

In preparing for the interviews I tried to use special terms (Patton, 2002) that were commonly used in the setting. However, my general distance from religious practices forced me to ask some questions about things and happenings that were quite obvious for the participants. This fact actually worried me, as some ‘easy’ or ‘taken for granted’ questions that I asked troubled some pilgrims who replied “but... that is known... I mean we all know these things, why is it so important? Should I really continue?” (Helena); an experience similar to Pandey’s (2002) in his study of tribal communities in Himalaya who expected from him to know everthing already. To encourage them to talk freely on those
issues, I underlined that people in England who will read my assignment do not know about our religious culture, so all information in detail is valuable. Through that explanation I also covered my own lack of knowledge in some religious issues, as I was able to freely ask them for further explanations. The justification for research has also provided beneficence (Beauchamp et al., 1982) to participants who believed that it will “make a difference” (Murphy and Dingwall, 2008, p.347). In particular, some participants even developed patriotic feelings stating that it is good that I am doing such a research in England, as foreigners will in this way realize how important the Greek Orthodox religion actually is. Most of them seemed actually proud to have been chosen in this way.

At the end of each interview I asked the participants if they would like to add something (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009), whether they want to propose a question that I did not ask them and if any questions had caused them uneasiness. Generally, no significant structural comments were made. Instead, all of the participants were very satisfied and in a sense positively relieved. For some participants, the interviews were a way to contemplate on issues that arose in the interview; “You made me contemplate on some issues” (Efi) or a way to travel indirectly back to religious places; “The discussion brought me back to Tinos” (Lia). Some participants explained their openness in terms of me being simple and approachable. It follows a part of my talk with a couple, after the end of the interview questions:

Interviewer: ...It was very interesting talking to you! Hope I didn’t bother you!
Katia: Not at all, the time passed by so pleasantly!
Petros: Just look at my wife! She is usually very shy in situations like that! Now she talked freely!
Katia: You are like my niece [she is talking to the researcher]! Why feel shy? The girl is so simple, why should I become stressed? Come’ on, she is like our child!

After each interview I kept notes about the process of the interview, the manner of the interviewee (cooperative, nervous, etc.), the setting and any new thoughts/topics that emerged. In particular, “the interviewer’s immediate memory will include the visual information of the situation as well as the social atmosphere and personal interaction which to a large extent is lost in the audiotape recording” (Kvale, 1996, p.161). Furthermore, reviewing later the notes of my interviews I realized that I had gradually improved as an interviewer. Certainly, there were a few interviews that due to situational issues did not go
well or were not very interesting and consequently were not taken into consideration. During one interview, for example, which was conducted in a quiet (I thought) café without music at the port of Kavala, we were constantly interrupted by street musicians and street-vendors, a fact that affected the interview and transcription quality. After that experience I decided to conduct the interviews at participants’ home or in other quiet environments.

3.3.4.3 Digital voice recording and transcription

Using a voice recorder can cause uneasiness to respondents (Bryman and Bell, 2007). To my surprise, however, all interviewees except for one, agreed on having their interviews recorded. One woman even said to me in an excited tone “oh it will be like the journalists do!” (Lina). In fact, contrary to note taking, digital recording is less time-consuming (Fielding and Thomas, 2008), is not open to doubts about validity (Heritage, 1984) and allowed me to be more attentive to the interviewees (Lofland, 1971). In some cases, where possible and with respondents’ knowledge, I left the recorder on when the formal part of the interview ended, as they often added interesting things even after the interview (Wolcott, 1995). I did not make verbatim notes as it would resemble an interrogation and would affect the interview, which I wanted to keep in a relaxed and conversational style (Mason, 2002). Indeed, I used note taking only to write down new questions (Patton, 2002) that arose during the interviews so as to ask them later. Moreover, I guaranteed confidentiality and allowed interviewees to switch off the digital voice recorder when they wanted to speak off-the-record, which happened only once during the pilot study.

I did all the transcriptions on my own as it provided an opportunity to get immersed in the data (Patton, 2002) and to add the non-verbal parts of the interviews. On average I needed around 7-8 hours for each interview, which was transcribed verbatim, including bracketed information that considered interviewees’ emotions or gestures which would otherwise get lost in case someone other than me would have made the transcription (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). In addition, when a part of the interview could not be heard properly during transcription, I indicated in the transcript that there is a missing word or phrase, instead of attempting to guess.

The third stage of the transcription process considered the translation from the Greek to the English language. Esposito, (2001, p.570) notes that translation is “the transfer of meaning
from a source language... to a target language” and that the translator is “actually an interpreter who... processes the vocabulary and grammatical structure of the words while considering the individual situations and the overall cultural context”. Thus, I worked throughout the analysis of data with the Greek version of the quotes in order to retain the focus on the exact meaning of the sentences before translating them at the end into the English language. As according to Wengraf (2001, p.7), translations transform the data from raw into “processed data”, I decided to translate the acquired for the study quotes myself in order to focus on generating accurate and meaningful data (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). To double check the correctness of the translations and to assure the natural flow of the participants’ sayings I had the translations checked by two translators (a Greek and an English one), who were working together to ensure that the translated part has the exact same meaning as the original part. Then I translated the quotes retroactively (Brislin, 1976) to make sure that their meaning was the same. Inevitably, even though the meaning is the same, interviewees’ particular folk religious language, the ‘argot’, is distorted in the translations.

3.3.5 Ethics, objectivity and the emotional side of research

Qualitative field research raises particular ethical considerations as the research examines the behaviour of people (Babbie, 2004). No ethical approval was required for this study from the University of Surrey, as it did not include the involvement of any University of Surrey staff or students, it did not offer any incentive for participating, and participants were protected in case sensitive issues arose. As Denzin (1981, p.33) states “any investigation that does not deliberately damage the reputation of those studied is ethically justified”. Especially within the field of religion, which can enclose sensitive issues, questions about ambiguities, trust and involvement in the fieldwork as well as ethics (Emerson, 1988) need to be addressed, not only to protect the interviewees but also the researcher. As Lerum (2001) says, emotionally engaged researchers must continuously evaluate and construct their behaviour. Even though consciously I may have sometimes had a deceptive role in practicing religiousness (as seen above in Participant Observation 3.3.2) compared to the group members, this was not harmful to the participants, as my role was to describe and interpret the particular culture without judging them based on my personal context and beliefs. Inevitably, I felt uneasy sometimes when I saw how touched participants were in the church contrary to me, or when I had to say that I have made a vow
too. Refraining from some basic devotional practices would have raised suspicion though, making me unacceptable to participants (Blackwood, 1995; Wolf, 1996).

Generally, ethical considerations are generic (i.e. informed consent and anonymity of participants) as well as situation-specific (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). In this study, I acted in an open manner by letting everyone involved know my role as a researcher. I used pseudonyms to preserve interviewees’ anonymity, altered non-relevant details (such as family members names) (Burgess, 1985; Tunnell, 1998) and ensured confidentiality to each participant by guaranteeing that personal information related to the participants would not be revealed (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Additionally, participants were ensured that they could withdraw their participation up until the time when the data analysis process would begin. In order to respect the privacy and confidentiality of tour participants who might not wish to be included in the research, I offered not to take notes of their individual role or behaviour during observed situations. Equally, within the interview process I never forced participants to talk to me for sensitive issues, but on the contrary, when a sensitive issue came up, I gave them the choice to stop talking about it so that they would not suffer later some emotional distress for having done so (Bernard, 2006; Patton, 2002).

Discussion of the research with participants and gaining their informed consent allows researchers to begin to gain their trust (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Nevertheless, even though such information is usually provided in the written informed consent, this was not the case here. As observed in some other studies too, writing one’s name or putting a signature on a piece of paper may seem dangerous to some participants (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Indeed, even though the foreign participants in the pilot study read and signed the consent forms without any hesitation, getting the Greek participants to sign the form yielded unpleasant reactions, a fact that made me change the nature of the consent form from written to oral; as I said earlier (in section 3.3.1.2) it is a verbal community. Some people even felt afraid to participate because of that. A preoccupied woman said for example: “Why should I sign this? For whom is it? What will they do with this form?” (Eleni). In fact, as Price (1996) notes, signed consent forms could actually threaten the confidentiality of participants by making them recognizable. Another reason is that written forms, which must be signed, are usually associated with highly corrupted governments (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Particularly, in Greece it is not common to request signatures for issues other than bureaucratic ones. Good faith is usually guaranteed through
one’s word rather than one’s signature. Another possible reason for a potential refusal to sign a form is that the participant may not be literate and hence cannot be fully informed as to what she/he is signing.

Many participants opened up themselves very much during the interviews recounting their personal life stories and dealing with their illnesses. In an extreme case on board, I found myself between two crying women (former cancer patients) holding their hands, a fact that affected me deeply. It was then that I actually realised how important and invigorating belief actually is for some people, because at that moment (of their emotional outburst) they were not telling me about their misfortunes, but about the Virgin Mary. Although I gave them the option to end the conversation, by wanting to protect them ethically from telling me issues they will later regret (Bernard, 2006), they preferred to continue and to talk about it. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.73) state “a researcher’s ability to listen attentively may also lead to quasi-therapeutic relationships”. In fact, sometimes, I felt that I had acquired also the role of a psychologist. In one case I have also been asked for advice and confirmation of the correctness of a participant’s practice. For some others it was almost like making confessions. As Maria stated:

“It was very nice talking to you.. It comes out like... its like a confession you know!
What do you think a confession is like? It is exactly this! You should come again!”

I generally tried to maintain rapport vis-à-vis the interviewees and neutrality regarding the content of interviewee’s sayings, which was not always simple as I became compassionate. In one case however I interrupted a woman that bombarded me with so many personal tragedies described in such detail that I felt overwhelmed. Even after a long time I still recall her tragedies. In fact, as other studies (see Ellington, 1998; Ellis et al., 1997) have also shown, intense field relationships or interview topics can leave the researcher as well as the informants feeling vulnerable. So I had often to ‘protect’ myself too from getting emotionally depressed, by using discouraging techniques of the interview process (such as stop nodding or ask them to stop for a moment) when these were necessary, because it would not contribute to the aim of the research (Patton, 2002). In fact, participants have a substantial capacity for exercising power over ethnographers (Hammersley, 1992; Wong, 1998). They may even use the research for their own ends (Atkinson et al., 2008; Bilu, 1996). A woman from the group, for example, approached me right before we were to embark on the ferry to Rafina, expressing her willingness to have an interview with me on
board. She then asked me if I could help her with her luggage, which I did. When we arrived at the deck she claimed to be tired and that she did not wish to be interviewed.

### 3.3.6 Material culture and material elicitation

The importance of material evidence in providing insight into lived experience is noticeable in considering the material character of the Greek Orthodox belief system and the way of life of its adherents (Keane, 2003). My observations as well as interview questions also concentrated therefore, on the material culture connected to the overall experience of religious tourists. In spite of the meaning of religious objects as mainly created out of the contextualized belief system and social action (Giddens, 1984; Miller, 1998; Tilley, 2008), material practices give an important insight into multiple and conflicting voices, differing and interacting interpretations, religious expression and understanding. Post-structuralist positions in the analysis of material culture have stressed “the polysemic and often contradictory meanings of things as well as the multiple ways in which they may be ‘read’, interpreted and understood” (Tilley, 2008, p.261). In fact, what people say is sometimes different from what they do. According to Hodder (2002, p.274) “analysts of material culture may not have much spoken commentary to work with, but they do have patterned evidence that has to be evaluated in relation to the full range of available information”.

Hence, participants were observed and field notes were taken considering their relation with religious objects, what they carry with them, what they buy, what they do with the objects and what their feelings and perception of the objects around them were. In the second stage, during the interview procedure, they were asked to interpret and explain their behaviour and to bring with them the most valuable (to them) object from the island so as to talk about it. The significance of such analysis is increased by the realization that material culture is active (Hodder, 1982), and especially the religious material which appears to influence aspects of adherents’ everyday life. As Gell (1998) suggests, materials are not only symbols and ways to communicate things in the world but affect people and societies and realize outcomes. Material culture is thus necessary for most social constructs and as such has to be considered also in the hermeneutical process (Hodder, 1992; Shanks and Tilley, 1987) of understanding religious experience.
3.4 Analysis and Interpretation

Systematic procedures were carried out in order to identify meanings held by the participants and to organize the meanings so that they make sense both internally and externally (Eisenhart, 1989). In the current study, thematic analysis is applied with the recognition of patterns and themes (Boyatzis, 1998). Rather than using a computer program I preferred the manual and traditional way of analysing data, coding by hand, as I felt the data more close to me and had a better overview of them (Patton, 2002). In particular, I read and heard the data I collected (fieldnotes and transcripts) over and over again so as to get a physical feel for the data that is not possible with a software program (Patton, 2002). This technique also facilitates creativity and critical thinking when data seemed to fit into more than one theme.

More precisely, to identify patterns I used colour highlighting pens (Jennings, 2001), with each colour representing a different concept and then I compared them to each other. Subsequent data analysis revealed that the sample size of thirty-eight was sufficiently large to reveal key patterns. In fact, the more I interacted with the data, the more patterns and categories seemed to appear (Goulding, 2002; Miles and Huberman, 1994). At the end of this procedure I cut and pasted different units (quotes and observations) together and sorted them into categories under a common heading. A codebook was developed, a sample of which is illustrated in Table 3.5 figuring out patterns and themes, which is called by Corbin and Strauss (2008) open coding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MVT - Motivation to visit Tinos</th>
<th>SOT - Selection of Tinos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L Love for God</td>
<td>CVM Connection to V. Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP Personal problems</td>
<td>ST/MI Stories/Miracles of the icon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1 Tama to request</td>
<td>R Reputation/Fame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2 Tama to thank</td>
<td>D Distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PM Personal Miracle/Vision</td>
<td>V Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI Self-Improvement</td>
<td>PRS Priests’ selection of site/push</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA Calm/find serenity</td>
<td>PRL Visit priests there/pull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR Priests’ recommendation</td>
<td>VW It was Virgin’s will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CU Curiosity</td>
<td>T Tama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOF Sense of fulfilment</td>
<td>VVH Visit Virgins’ home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SU To suffer</td>
<td>O Opportunity to combine with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5 Sample of open-coding used
While the analysis continued, through further comparing the data within each category, and the categories with each other (Eisenhart, 1989) and searching for similarities and dissimilarities (Guba, 1978), concepts emerged leading to the constructions of the established themes (Miles and Huberman, 1994). For instance, data coded ‘national history’, ‘orthodox duty’ and ‘others personal account’ were categorized as ‘structured motivations’ (see Table 3.6). Next, the second order themes were gathered into aggregate dimensions. Even though the general thematic outline was guided by the study’s conceptual framework, the final structure was created based on the responses given and observations made. I repeated this process a number of times in order to confirm the groupings under certain themes. I also asked from another researcher to have a look on the themes and confirm this classification (Miles and Huberman, 1994). During this process a few recommendations were made, and have been adopted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Order concepts</th>
<th>2nd order Themes</th>
<th>Aggregate Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National history</td>
<td>Structured</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox duty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others’ personal accounts</td>
<td></td>
<td>Motivation to visit Tinos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In search for miracles</td>
<td>Personal Quest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Unexpected and Immanent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motherhood</td>
<td>Experiences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name connection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a similar vein, the fieldnotes were analysed and coded. Firstly, they were sorted and coded based on their very nature; besides descriptive notes the fieldnotes contained methodological, emotional and analytic notes. Further abstraction and analytic ideas were recorded in a column on the margin of the page (Gilbert, 2008). Secondly, I read through all my notes in order to identify patterns. Data, which were mainly ‘behaviouralistic’, were not quantified at any stage, as the intention was to explore the issues of ‘how’ and ‘why’
(Gilbert, 2008). Indeed, as body movements are believed to attach additional meaning to spoken words (Marshall and Rossman, 2006) motion was analysed systematically in order to verify significant patterns in the communication process. In fact, such interaction and kinaesthetic analysis provided an insight into unconscious thoughts and a means to triangulate oral data (Marshall and Rossman, 2006). Finally, the patterns identified were linked to the themes that merged from the interview transcriptions, in a confirmatory and non-confirmatory way. This analysis particularly influenced the structure of the fifth chapter, which considers participants' inter-subjectivity, interaction and engagement with materials.

Furthermore, as the aim of the current study is to understand a social group and its actions, hermeneutic analytic framework was employed as it is not possible to grasp the meaning of an action without relating it to the world-view (religion) from which it originates. According to Geertz (1973, p.10) “human behaviour can be ‘read’ in several different ways, with several different meanings and so can be compared to ‘text’, a form of text that can be read, provided we disclose the adequate ‘grammar’”. The hermeneutic analytic approach is, along with Clifford (1986, p.6), “seriously affected by contextual, rhetorical, institutional, political and historical influences and by the genre”.

Beside the religious context, other contexts that have been discussed in the theoretical part of the study provided the framework for the analysis of the findings and the understanding of the religious tourists' performances. For example, materials were linked to social practices in order to explore their association with power and the way they help people to order their lives (Kaepler, 1978). The methods of interpretation of material culture used in this study are based on the identification of patterns and the use of relevant social and material culture theory. An important initial assumption made during interpreting material culture is that the conceptual has some impact on the patterning of material objects. On the basis of such knowledge the implications of material practices can be theorized.

During the interpretation stage, which involves “attaching significance to what was found, making sense of findings, offering explanations and drawing conclusions” (Patton, 2002, p.480), new doors open that contribute to the answering of the research objectives that were not previously touched upon. Therefore, the framework of interpretation used is flexible and dynamic. Furthermore, social constructivists (Denzin, 2001; Guba and
Lincoln, 1990; Turnbull, 1986) “are explicitly informed by attention to praxis and reflexivity” (Patton, 2002, p.546). Reflexivity, which is the on-going examination of “what I know” and “how I know it” affects one’s understanding and actions in the world. In fact, it involves “a willingness to probe beyond the level of straightforward interpretation” (Woolgar, 1988, p.16) and to investigate how biases and situations influence the research process (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Inevitably, my upbringing in a family environment in which the parents are pursued different religious beliefs, contributed to my receptivity towards different ways of religious expression and understanding. This fact made me open and receptive to multiple realities. Figure 3.4 summarizes and depicts the overall research design of the current study as has been discussed so far in the previous sections.

**Figure 3.4 Overall research design**

![Overall research design diagram](image-url)
3.5 Limitations and Issues of Reliability and Validity

Qualitative research can be very efficient in studying performances and is able to adapt to different field situations. However, it cannot deliver “statistical descriptions of a large population” (Babbie, 2004, p.298), but can generalise to theory. Another limitation of this study is that it is limited to the examination of religious tourists participating in organized tours to Tinos and therefore investigates only a small part of the range of religious locations and forms of travel in Greece.

Another issue considered reliability. Along with Hammersley (1992, p.67) reliability refers to “the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions”. For that reason I have made the research process transparent, providing detailed information of the research strategy and the data analysis methods (Moisander and Valtonen, 2006) as well as having previously provided the theoretical lens through which data collection and interpretation took place.

More specifically, the reliability of observation was enhanced through the directness of report (Lofland and Lofland, 1995), the taking of field notes and detailing the relevant context of observation (Kirk and Miller, 1986; Spradley, 1979) as well as distinguishing between etic and emic analysis with the use of field-note conventions (for example, double quotation marks for verbal quotes). The reliability of interview schedules was increased through the pre-testing of interview schedules (Silverman, 2008) in the pilot study, through my participation in training programmes for qualitative interviewing in order to enhance my skills, as well as through the thorough information of the interviewees about the whole study and the sub-sections to be discussed. The interviews’ reliability was further ensured by recording all face-to-face interviews and transcribing them in a careful manner. This was the main reason why I did the transcription by myself rather than have someone else do it for me. I also was reflexive about my own contribution as a researcher to the production of knowledge (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

The credibility of qualitative research does not only depend on the reliability of the data and methods but on the validity of the findings as well. Validity is understood as “the
extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers” (Hammersley, 1990, p. 57) and can increase if interruptions in the research fieldwork are minimized and method triangulation is used (Denzin, 1970; Silverman, 2008), as was the case in this study. Triangulation, in fact, minimizes individual and methodological biases and increases the study’s generalizability (Decrop, 1999). In the current study, participant observation was combined with interviews in order to verify that both methods draw the same or similar conclusions, and also because these methods are suitable in considering the constructivist theoretical perspective of this study (Fielding and Fielding, 1986).

In a few instances data collected by the one method appeared to conflict with the data obtained from the other. A good example is that of the participant Soula, who stated in the interview that she was very distressed during the trip towards the island, but I observed that she had brought ouzo (alcohol) with her from home and was having fun in the bus, singing with others. Or in a case of a couple, who despite emphasising the importance of the 15th of August to them in the interview, did not attend the festivity on that day but rather selected to visit Mykonos. Thus, in these cases, the findings seemed to contradict each other. Nevertheless, such contradictions often further enhanced my understanding of complex situations. As Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.5) state, “triangulation is best understood as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry”. Hence, in the first case I learned that the distress is in some cases spatially and bodily conceptualized and thus is mainly restricted to the time participants ascend to the church, whereas in the second case that even though the 15th of August is an important day for the Greek Orthodox, the issue of fear of God was also important; participants, after their first visitation to the church upon arrival (14th of August), feel free to engage in other activities too, because the fear of their uncompleted obligations has vanished.

LeCompte and Goetz (1982) support that internal validity is considered a strength of ethnographic research, due to the prolonged involvement of the researcher in the group’s social life, which facilitates a high level of congruence between concepts and observations. In addition, as I have already stated in the section above, I advocated the role of the participant as observer and tried not to affect the setting and the informants (Gilbert, 2008); by making my notes only at times when I was alone and by using their argot (Bruyn, 1966) so as to maintain the natural way of proceedings. Furthermore, I carried out 'researcher
triangulation’, meaning that the transcripts were checked by two researchers to verify the coding and the themes that emerged.

Finally, another technique suggested in the literature is the respondent’s validation, which is “a process whereby a researcher provided the people on whom she/he has conducted research with an account of her/his findings. The aim is to seek corroboration or otherwise of the account that the researcher has arrived at” (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p.411). Even though some participants were re-contacted in order to clarify some issues, this technique was, however, not applied in this study, in considering the sensitive topic of religion, the difficulties some of the participants have been through and their reliance on God and belief. In fact, it was in order not to hurt those studied who may expect the ethnographic report to define reality in some objective sense, in which the researcher affirms or endorses their version (Atkinson et al., 2008), which was not always possible.

3.6 Chapter Summary

As can be extracted from the above, the current study, governed by the social-constructivist philosophy, adopts a qualitative approach. Among the potential methods examined, semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant observation have been chosen as the most appropriate research methods for collecting the data. The way the researcher gained access to the field as well as the sampling techniques employed for the selection of the site and the study’ participants have been presented next. The last sections of the chapter involved the ethical considerations that governed the study, a description of the way the data were analysed and interpreted and issues of validity and reliability of the data. The thesis will now continue to present the wealth of the empirical findings.
Chapter 4 MOTIVATIONS TO VISIT SACRED PLACES

4.1 Introduction

This research will now move to fuse theoretical understandings with the empirical findings derived from my observations and interviews with religious oriented tourists. The first section of the analysis considers their motivation. While several motives exist, based on biological and cultural forces (Pearce, 1993), such as relaxation, prestige, facilitation of social interaction, and escape from mundane environment (Crompton, 1979), that trigger people to visit places, it is the human’s particular values (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1977; Pearce, 1988), symbols of identity (Palmer, 1999) that dominate in the case of sacred places. This chapter, therefore, aims to expand on the initial theoretical insights into collective and individual religious motives outlined in section one of the literature review, as I draw upon empirical findings to explore the practice and processes of this moment in greater depth and renegotiate motivational intensions. Accordingly, this chapter addresses the first research objective.

4.2 The Complexities of Pilgrimage Motivations

Traditional tourist approaches emphasize the semiotic nature of tourists’ motivation (Urry, 1990). Based on structural oriented approaches, and considering the teachings of Levi-Strauss (1976) and Saussure (1966), it becomes apparent that pilgrims are looking detachedly at signs and symbolic structures that are created through structured textual or verbal means such as narratives (Bruner, 2005) and myths (Bell, 2003; Leite, 2007; Selwyn, 1996) as well as through visual means such as brochures and television that organize and create meaning to them. Indeed, almost all religions, by means of priests and church staff, encourage their adherences to travel to religious sites (Cohen 1998; Mattila et al. 2001). As Bourdieu (1991) emphasized, the religious ‘fields’ structure the dependence of religious symbolic power and hence the longing for it. Pilgrimage, in this manner, acts as a pre-given text that enables and allows pilgrims to witness their religious origin, and religious movement can therefore bring about certain social and cultural transformations.
(Bhardwaj, 1973). Motivation thereby becomes constructed and organized by religious producers that mobilize and draw people together. Indeed, such ‘collective motivations’ bind people together and direct them towards the same direction. Nevertheless, such group perspectives where people either merge together in “communitas” (Turner, 1974) or engage in contests with each other or with foreigners (Eade and Sallnow, 1991; Pfaffenberg, 1979; Reader, 2006; Sallnow, 1981), neglect the importance of individual understandings of pilgrimage. In particular, pilgrims even within groups are often travelling very much on their own personal pilgrimages, which acquire different meanings. Aziz (1987) in her account of pilgrims in India and Nepal argues that every pilgrim has his individual motivations and is not necessarily bound by what their fellow travellers think or even by the dynamics of the groups they may travel with. Using interviews as a methodological tool, I seek, therefore, to understand, in addition to the structured motivations, also the power of personal stories/happenings, temporal issues, embodied anticipations, issues of marginality/distances of performance, everyday life and escape from it. Without intending to reject the traditional approaches, it is argued here that motivations are indeed socially influenced but simultaneously also subjective. Consequently, they are neither uniform nor predictable, but dynamic and diverse.

4.2.1 Staging motivation

Inevitably, curiosity and a longing for particular places is inspired through “collective realities” and peoples’ prior knowledge of the place and its values (Bruner, 2005; Edensor, 1998) as promoted by religious producers, who stage places and rituals, and stimulate circulation and exchange in key sacred sites (Badone, 2007). Generating ‘induced imagery’ (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Gunn, 1972), create standpoints from which believers look at, and perceive destinations, according to preferred ways of seeing them (Muir, 1999). In particular, priests discursively mobilize and socio-spatialise place as they guide people through particular spaces that are fuelled by ideological interpretation as they are endorsed with latent meanings acquired through religious texts and language (Selwyn, 1996). As such, they pre-programme (Urry, 1990) believers’ expectations and especially their embodied and experiential anticipations by sending them ‘out there’, a fact that resembles Walter Benjamin’s (2007, p.1240) understanding of the ‘aura’ of things and places, according to which “a man has to operate with his whole living person...for aura is tied to his presence” in order to experience the original. In fact, “embodiment is the existential
condition in which culture and self are grounded” and continuously created (Csordas, 1993, p.136). Therefore, the embodied notion of religiousness associated with on-site corporeal practices, is considered an essential motivating factor for pilgrims, since pilgrimage can be seen as providing the catalyst for certain kinds of bodily experiences (Dubisch, 2004; Frey, 1998; Mitchell, 2004).

Nevertheless, while religious fields control what is to be experienced and seen in particular places, they ultimately have no control over actual performances and what is seen or experienced once discourses are mobilized (Scarles, 2004). Motivation can be influenced by interactive performance as tourists fill in-between spaces that remain unanswered or overshadowed by religious producers. Indeed, within speech act theory, according to which, “a performative is that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names” (Butler, 1993, p.13), pilgrims influenced by other pilgrims may perceive and accordingly perform places differently as proposed. Previous travelers may seek to add meaning to others’ lives by sharing their experiences, through educating them about places or by motivating them to seek out similar experiences (Laing and Crouch, 2009). Motivation thereby becomes akin to preparation (Franklin and Crang, 2001) as believers merge collective and subjective experiences to apprehend otherness, constructing mental landscapes that guide understandings of the landscapes that may be seen (Travelou, 2002).

Consequently, despite warnings of directed mind-sets restricting imaginative engagement (Morgan and Pritchard, 1998), individuals take over their own motivational performances albeit subliminally mediated by religious frameworks. Even for women, who are the majority in Christian sites (Rinschede, 1992), and who, especially in the Greek Orthodox world are performing gender through their religious inscribed enactions (Butler, 1993), sacred journeys enmeshed in tourist settings can contribute to a re-experiencing and re-writing of the feminine based on the multiple routes of becoming.

4.2.2 Pilgrimage as rites of passage

Almost all religions in their fundamental teachings guarantee religious adherents that a visit to a sacred place will free them from their spiritual or secular anguishes. For Bolen (1994, p.31), sacred places are like “acupuncture points” on the earth’s body, which can diminish pain, cure bodies and restore balance and harmony. Accordingly, on-site
performance constitutes an essential tool and presupposition for some pilgrims to achieve particular end results from their trip. Indeed, Turner (1973, p.214) comparing pilgrimage to rites of passage (van Gennep, 1909) argued: “[a]n actor-pilgrim is confronted by sequences of sacred objects and participates in symbolic activities which [she/he] believes are efficacious in changing [her/his] inner and, sometimes, hopefully, outer condition from sin to grace, or sickness to health”. In particular, van Gennep’s (1909) central concept is based on the notion that all individuals undergo ‘life crises’ and that rituals exist to assure safe travel through those crises; hence, rites of passage. Rites of passage, which are thus rituals of conversion, usually incorporate changes of personal state and position in society and consist of three phases: separation, margin or limen, and reintegration.

Van Gennep’s (1909) formulation of rites of passage, within the context of the pilgrimage, provides thus a useful basis for understanding believers’ experiences in terms of the structure of journeys and the sequencing of events in the delivery of extraordinary experience, as well as the alteration between vacation and everyday life (Graburn, 1983). In particular, pilgrims often expect that there will be a particular outcome of their actions as a reward that justifies the effort they put into carrying out the pilgrimage (Digance, 2006). Manifestations of personal miracles and other sacred ‘signs’, such as visions, are thus anticipated by believers who undertake a journey (Davis and Boles, 2003) in anticipation of a future betterment (Smith, 1992). In salvation religion, it is believed that the more intensive one’s engagement is, the higher the possibility of an outcome. According to the Orthodox Church salvation is not only achieved through believers’ good deeds but also through their being patient in their sufferings, such as misfortunes, illnesses, etc. (Ware, 1993). Equally, pilgrims to Santiago addressed their will to endure hardship and make personal sacrifices (Frey, 1998), whereas in India they were motivated to perform religious ceremonies and engage in the veneration of their gods (Singh, 2004). In short, believers are motivated by the desire for performing anticipations/outcomes through pilgrimages.

4.2.3 Issues of marginality and separation

All rites of passage begin by separating the individual from her or his everyday environment (van Gennep, 1909), since only through moving outside one’s structural environment will she/he be able to sense liminality and enter into new states (Turner and
Chapter 4 Motivations to Visit Sacred Places

Turner, 1978). Being present in a pilgrimage centre is, for pilgrims, “a moment in and out of time, in a fluid, liminal place where they directly encounter and embody the sacred through miraculous healing or transformation” (Turner, 1973, p.214), which are commonly the valued ideals embodied in the sacred sites (Rountree, 2006).

Such a notion resembles traditional tourist models of motivation, which claim that tourists alienated from the shallowness and inauthenticity of urban life travel in search of ‘real’ experiences and authenticity elsewhere (MacCannell, 1976). Within this notion, pilgrims freed from the capitalist society which has trapped them in the disciplines of work, travel towards a ‘different place’ (Dubisch, 1996) acquiring a sacred realm that is associated with the ‘other’ and endowed with ‘spiritual magnetism’ (Preston, 1992). Nevertheless, even though people wish to experience something different or unusual (Franklin, 2004; Urry, 1990), they differ in their degree of alienation (Cohen, 1979); not all wish to or can detach, and thus escape, from their real lives. Most believers, in fact, bring themselves too to the sacred sites along with all their troubles. Therefore, a sacred centre is frequently not only embedded in one’s everyday life (Sallnow, 1987) but overemphasizes this very life, as it acquires for some the notion of a ‘true home’, where people freed from capitalist influences openly engage with and confront with their everyday life problems. As Coleman (2002) argues, they are ‘arriving at a second home’, a place that is both exceptional and an embodiment of the familiar. Though physically apart they are mentally in known domains.

Such a notion of attachment is usually socially constructed. Poria et al. (2003) found that there is a strong correlation between the religious affiliation of tourists (i.e. their religious heritage) and both their visitation patterns and personal involvement with the site. In particular, non-religious Jews feel more involved with the Wailing Wall than religious Christians, who do not attach the same significance to the site. Furthermore, frequent churchgoers were more positive toward the overall impression of their visit to a Welsh cathedral than people who never attend churches (Williams et al., 2006). For people who have already visited a particular place, a repeated journey is often motivated by the re-engagement in, re-enlivening of, and re-writing of the memories and visual conceptions they already acquired (Crouch, 2001; Scarles, 2009). Nevertheless, based on the notion of immanent potentials for new ways of life through one’s everyday enactment in the world (Harrison, 2000), not only past connections but also present unexpected happenings, such
as visions, mobilize people to visit particular religious places and can create attachment. Thus, “a site is as much a temporal as spatial concept” (Pearson and Shanks, 2001, p.55).

Religious places as well as human motivations are neither one-dimensional nor fixed. On the contrary, they fulfil a number of other functions too, related not only to the spiritual known but also to the unknown or ephemeral, thus producing additional motives for visiting them. Based on promotional efforts of staging managers, sacred sites can be attractive because they may be architecturally significant structures in their own right or they may simply be iconic tourist sites because they are “famous for being famous” (Urry, 1990, p.12), where people want to feast their eyes in order to consume the unusual. Additionally, they may occasionally host a variety of events such as celebrations and festivals that attract people on particular periods of time who intend to see and participate in the rituals. Indeed, notions of ‘centeredness’, otherness and authenticity are subjective and changing/fluid constructions. Wang (1999) distinguishes three understandings of authenticity: the objectivist, where an expert determines its true nature; the constructivist, based on socially constructed criteria; and the existential, where individuals rely on their personal and interpersonal feelings. The spatial and spiritual ‘distances’ of religious destinations are, hence, to be reconsidered, as people engage in interplays of different modes of separation, occasionally switching from physical to mental separations/escapes. Indeed, the dualities – everyday/away, past/present, self/other, human/deity – can be reconceptualized as continuities.

All the above issues will be further enlightened next using examples from participants who went to Tinos on an organized trip. In particular, the theoretical concepts are reconsidered based on three broad categories of believers’ motivations that have been identified in this study, namely: 1) those who travel out of tradition and reputation of the site, 2) those who travel out of personal happenings, and 3) those who are affiliated to the Virgin Mary.

4.3 Reputation and Fame: “Visiting a Phenomenon”

Many sites are directly linked to particular social communities or even nations (Cmapo, 1998). Indeed, some governments use particular heritage sites to foster nationalism and to construct national identity, in that, people can connect to their nation’s history through
visiting and consuming the places (Bossen, 2000; Palmer, 1999; Pretes, 2003). Religions, through their rich heritage sites, are thus not only fundamental components of a country’s history and modern life, but frequently also the trigger of many ethnic conflicts based on the existence of multiple identities. Many governments create dominant religious national narratives using popular media and political rhetoric (Bandyopadhyaya et al., 2008; MacCannell, 1976) to produce shared discourse, which structures social agents’ actions, meanings and thoughts that shape and differentiate a community from other communities (Ballesteros and Ramirez, 2007). Similar to MacCannell’s (1976) ‘marking’ process, objects or places are made meaningful and sacred to community members, through their being gradually differentiated from those of others. In particular, many people develop attachment to places (Badone, 2007; Poria et al., 2003) that subsequently become part of their identity (Tuan, 1974). Social reproduction is a key sacralisation factor within this respect (Fine and Haskell, 1985). Especially religious collective practices and believers’ interactions represent an ideal life, which adherents ought to long for (Mazumdar, 2005). Accordingly, if the idea of space, as created through social relations (Lefebvre, 1991), is accepted, then the social relations entrenched in religious rituals and performances contribute to the creation of particular religious spaces and places. All these, will be further unpacked using the example of Tinos.

4.3.1 National history and Orthodox duty

There is no other place where Greekness and Christian Orthodoxy are more closely related to each other than in Tinos (Dubisch, 1995), where politicians were able to identify and absorb both Hellenism and Orthodoxy (Frazee, 1977) in their ethnos binding efforts. In particular, the Virgin Mary of Tinos has come to be a symbol of cultural identity and a national emblem, being related to the Greeks independence and a striking expression of the traditional Orthodox belief and practice. Based on writings distributed by the church of the Annunciation in Tinos and the shared language of religious community, St Pelayia’s vision of the Virgin Mary in 1822 and the subsequent finding of the holy icon come to represent the resurrection of Greece, which was at that time under the oppression of the Ottomans. It is said that the discovery of the icon infused Greeks with hope and strength to believe in their independence (Lagouros, 1965). The strength and long-lasting effect of the textual Tinos is considerable as even today people are educated on, embedded in, and reproduce, the history that lies behind the shrine. Helena, for example, proudly commented that
"Even Kolokotronis [one of the most important Greek generals in the fight for the Greeks’ independence in 1821] was convinced that since the icon of the Virgin Mary was found, the battle would be vindicated." Indeed, by talking people into, and maintaining, historical facts, Tinos has acquired a strong brand name. Similar to Turner’s (1973) ‘Centre out There’, it is viewed as the ‘Centre of Greece’, where the icon of the Virgin Mary provides a binding focal point and underpins a sense of shared endeavour and community. A visit to Tinos constitutes a religiously motivated journey to the centre of Greece and is thus highly related to nationalism (Pretes, 2003).

Even though Bent (1965, p.233) considers the shrine of Tinos as “a cleverly conceived plan, the establishment of a miracle-working Madonna in the centre of Hellas”, its effect on the new nation and construction of national identity, was vital. In fact, people’s exposure to unlimited worldwide views contributes to their need to seek for fixed points of reference and to affirm and strengthen old boundaries (Meyer and Geschiere, 1999), a state that is provided by religion. Such need is evidenced, for example, in the words of Babis, who relies on, and views Orthodoxy and the Greek Church as Greek’s most valuable assets. As he commented:

"Greeks, let’s say, gain worth and entity only through the church.. When you eliminate the church from your life, you have nothing to be proud of!... Other countries have their industries, their airplanes, their satellites, what do we have? Nothing... But of course we have the most substantial thing of all! And all those who try to take the faith out of the Greek people make a huge mistake!"

Even in modern history, the sinking of the battleship ‘Elli’ at Tinos by an Italian submarine in 1940 provided a further means of commemorating this relationship of the island, the church and nationalism. The sinking of the ‘Elli’ reinforced the patriotic and military associations of the shrine and is permanently commemorated in the mausoleum erected below the church. In addition, since August 15 has been designated as a national Day of Military Strength, the association between the shrine, militarism and patriotism is made at a national level (Dubisch, 1995). Such structured historical events that contribute to the island’s image and shape its fame, continue to attract people even today. Motivated by this very historical incident, Babis further said:
"The main reason why I wanted to visit Tinos was because there the Italians bombarded Elli. It was on the day of the Virgin Mary’s celebration when they sank it..."

Indeed, the August 15th religious celebration of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary is accompanied by Greek flags fluttering all over the island as well as with the presence of navy generals and marine military ships that occasionally gunfire in a symbolic manner (see Figure 4.1). Such dramatic stages (Edensor, 2009) that structure collective gazes are created by church authorities and politicians to reinforce national identity (Bossen, 2000) and collective norms of Greekness. In particular, on that day, the very image of festive Tinos circulates all over Greece. The Greek folk is enraptured with a seemingly endless parade of images depicting the crowds, the holy icon and the leading politicians on television. It is interesting to note that whatever the current relationship between government and the church, political discourses make use of religion and find opportunities for its expression in religious occasions such as at Tinos on the 15th of August. Politicians highlight the contribution of the church in Greece’s independence and designate respect towards this institution. In particular, Prokopis Pauloupolos, the former Minister of National Affairs, in his public speech in Tinos on the 15th of August 2009, attributed the current peace in the country to the Virgin Mary’s grace.

Figure 4.1 Church of the Annunciation, Battleship outside the port of Tinos and Church and Political Authorities, August, 2009

Images captured by the author, Tinos, 2009
Such aimed attempts, with the use of media, shape people’s feelings and imagery of places and help them structure their gaze (Scarles, 2009; Shaw et al., 2000). Nevertheless, people are not naïve to authorities’ primary goal of staging collective gazing. As Barbara stated, for example:

“It is the advertising... everything what we hear on the 15th of August, of people going there and worshipping.. I have the feeling that everything starts there, from the media.. Because otherwise who would know about the Virgin Mary of Tinos?”

The Tinos phenomenon can be compared to a text which seeks to be read and performed. Similar to Bruner’s (1986, p.22) view of culture as the “performance of text”, the Greek Orthodox belief entails the performance of a pilgrimage to Tinos. Indeed, the looking for, and affirming of one’s identity and status acquisition (Bauman, 1996) are common motives of visitors to Tinos who have been constructed/educated to link Tinos to nationalism. Rather, Tinos accumulates features of a group-centred pilgrimage, as it constitutes, as Vaso said “a priority and commitment” for all Greeks. Greeks are attached to the site as it is part of being Greek, of performing Greekness and being Greek Orthodox. Nicky, for example, commented that “..every Christian comes round to Tinos. Whoever you may ask, he will say that at least once in his lifetime he has been there.” It is clearly what Bhardwaj (1973) termed a ‘national pilgrimage’ uniting Greek Orthodox people from around the world. As Sophia stated: “here is our Virgin Mary, she is our Virgin Mary.. for those of us who cannot travel outside Greece, the Virgin Mary is Tinos”.

People are, thus, increasingly driven by their need to prove to themselves and to others their devoutness and belonging to the particular community (Davies, 1988). As Elsa stated “..I always heard people saying “I went to Tinos, I went Tinos!” , and I thought “Oh my Virgin Mary, make me worthy to come to you... “. As Georgia further commented “to be actually there, in Tinos.. signifies that you deserve to be there”. Such is the power of reproducing the collective identity that people enunciate institutionalized roles (Edensor, 1998), embarking on ‘duty’ pilgrimages. Though only indirectly, the pilgrimage to Tinos can, thus, be compared to compulsory pilgrimages like the Hajj. Even though not directly required by the Greek Orthodox religion, it is mediated by institutional forces who have endowed people with the habitus, implying knowledge of the powerful Virgin Mary of Tinos, that act for them (church officials) and without them (Bourdieu, 1990). In particular,
through pilgrimages people aim to experience themselves not as isolated entities but as part of a group that shares a religious setting (Rountree, 2006). Such socially constructed motivations are further analysed next. In particular, the metaphorical use of Tinos as text and of believers as active and/or passive performers of text are considered and reconsidered below, as people seem to be considerable co-constructors and promoters of the Tinos experience.

4.3.2 The believer as an anthropologist: Human body, myths and personal accounts

The construction process of motivation is further evidenced through the broadcasting of religious crowds and the subsequent curiosity of outsiders to verify/evidence the very picture or even be part of it. In particular, the crowd’s religious on-site practices, which are captured by the media lens add to Tinos fame and reputation, and manifesting and witnessing their expressions of belief, is considered one of the most important motivators and triggers to visit the island as their practice implies devoutness. Makis, for example, said:

"First and foremost it is curiosity that attracts you, because you watch it also on television.. you see how they crawl.. on their knees...and you want to be there that day when the masses ascend to the church to see what exactly is happening.. I was impressed when I saw a famous singer on TV crawling to the church... You see, all that influences you."

Humans themselves become important ingredients in the authorities’ construction of the “strategies of desire” (Baudrillard, 1981, p.85). By presenting religion’s most valuable asset that is the crowds of believers (Durkheim, 1915), outsiders become grasped by the efforts made by politicians and Greek Church officials to make Tinos a significant religious dramatic stage (see Figure 4.2). The performing bodies embody the extraordinary and prove its presence, an actuality that cannot be transmitted through the passive speeches of authorities (Urry, 1990). As Tuan claims, “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place when we endow it with value” (1977, p. 6). The picture of performing believers therefore constitutes part of the text to be consumed, as it is a means to justify, and subsequently reinforce the significance of a place like Tinos.
The projected images of pilgrims’ dramatic ascendance to the Church of the Annunciation are so powerful that they not only create curiosity to some people, but implant them with awe and great expectations. As Makis commented, for example:

“In the beginning because you go there with... with all those feelings generated in you beforehand... you go in a different way... it’s like a fear I can even say for what you will encounter...” (Makis)

Spaces of uncertainty and ‘not knowing’ occur (Scarles, 2009) as visual representations are insufficient in embracing the extraordinary qualities the divine possesses. Collective discourse, personal interests and past experiences play a significant role in this matter as they enable people to make sense of potential encounters and experiences. As such, longing for particular places is further cultivated through word-of-mouth experiences and the re-production of stories connected to the places that circulate in human social interactions (Davis and Boles, 2003), and constitute, along with the destination marketing literature, one of the most important promotional tools (Baloglu and McClearly, 1999; Gunn, 1972). In particular, people’s interaction seems to be an important influential factor for visiting Tinos as well, as myths connected to the Virgin Mary of Tinos are made known, either through preceding travellers’ verbal narrations of personal experiences and of stories connected to the physical landscape, or through brochures, which are distributed by the Church of the Annunciation and re-produced among believers, attracting thus potential visitors who being in ‘trail of miracles’ (Slater, 1986) desire to feel or to feast their eyes on particular miraculous manifestations. As Nicki, for example, stated:
“I've heard so many stories... that influenced me to come... of disabled people that... went and got cured... and of other problems... personal problems, health problems... for their jobs.”

Consequently, curiosity, excitement and action develop in the course of social interaction (Davis and Boles, 2003), as believers exchange shared meanings as a result of common symbolization (Snow and Davis, 1994). One of the most famous stories recalled by pilgrims is that of the metallic orange tree (see Figure 5.4), placed inside the church, which is said to be the gift of a former blind man, who promised to make an offering to the Virgin Mary of Tinos as part of a vow, depicting the first thing he would be able to see when he would get cured; which was the orange tree in his garden (Church leaflet, 2009). Of equal fame is the story of the fountain in the churchyard, which entails added symbolic and national significance to the Greeks, as its protagonist is a Muslim. As Sophia, for example, said:

“In the churchyard there is a fountain. It is said that there was a Muslim, a Muslim... and that his wife was ill... And someone told him about... [the miraculous Virgin Mary of Tinos] and he prayed. He brought his wife to the Virgin Mary of Tinos and he prayed and begged, even though it was not his religion, and his wife got well. And then, in response he offered this fountain to the Virgin Mary of Tinos and since then it is there. You see... the Virgin Mary doesn’t choose... what religion you are ascribed to. For the Virgin Mary we are all equal, because some people may call her differently and we may name her ‘Panayia’ but the fact is that the Virgin Mary is ONE... and that’s why you see also foreigners coming to Tinos... with bated breath”.

Based on the participants’ accounts, it can, moreover, be argued that each religious site has its own ‘traditions’ and believers have therefore different sign expectations from each deity. As Eleni said, for example:

“From each saint you expect something different. For example, when you visit St Raphael... you expect to hear his heartbeat. You can see how those who believe in him, hear his heartbeats when they come in contact with his relic... When you visit St Irene you can see the blinking of her eyes.”
Even though such stories, as has been observed by the researcher, are not always reproduced by believers in consistence with the originals, they all emphasize the supremacy of the deities, thereby provoking thrill and stimulation to others to visit them. Similar is the effect of personal accounts that structure people’s movements towards particular sites. Helena, for example, recounted how she became interested in visiting Taxiarchi on the island of Mytilini after hearing her friend’s personal story:

“The first one who talked to me about Taxiarchis was Stella, who was in the past liberal and feminist and who said that she couldn’t worship him, as she said: “I go there and return because there is something like an invisible wall that doesn’t allow me.. I am going and returning..” and then she said that she started visiting him in a different mood and manner, and that she went there in a more humble and honourable frame of mind, and she made it.. After that I also had the need to see what this Taxiarchis is like.”

Consequently, places are produced to a large extent through social relations (Lefebvre, 1991) in that previous visitors motivate others to seek out experiences similar to their own in sacred places (Laing and Crouch, 2009). People are, thus, structuring, in Bourdieu’s (1989) words, pilgrimages and religions, as through their verbal accounts, they further enliven and cultivate the religious phenomenon, by maintaining the significance of sacred places as well as generating and assuring mobility towards them. In fact, religious story telling can be considered an immanent and habitual practice of believers that became evidenced even during the interview procedure. Citations from the diary:

20 August, 2009, 18:15, at researchers' home, Kavala, Greece
[After my interview with Janna] ... “I, moreover, have to admit that I find myself attracted to the Mount Sinai and the St Catherine’s church. So sparkling was her description of her ascendance to the mountain in the morning hours and the view of the sunrise that I really want to experience it too!”

Equally:

23 September, 2009, 20:05, at researcher’s home, Kavala, Greece
[After the interview with Danay] ... “and again there is a place I will add to my travel wish list! It is the island of Patmos, the third destination in my list that already includes St John The Russian in Chalkida and the Mount Sinai. It is really interesting that even though discussion focuses on Tinos, I often end up, leaving my interviews with an extra urge to visit other places. I realized from my
participants’ accounts that Greece has many interesting religious sites apart from Tinos. (Even research in one of those places would be interesting...). I kind of feel like being sold religious destinations from experienced agents, however, the feeling is sweet, as the participants’ ‘promotion’ efforts have a rather spontaneous and innocent character. The truth is that they convinced me!"

Almost all participants had the urge to tell something about previous sites they have visited. Their enthusiasm to describe and narrate stories grew even further as soon as they were told by the researcher that she has never been there. There was a need to share and convince others of the authenticity of one’s religious experiences and celebration of one’s religious heritage. Indeed, in Davis and Boles’ (2003, p.376) terms, believers’ personal miraculous accounts refer to their “interpretive and interactive efforts to attend to their religious environment, maneuver their way through that environment and engage others” in it. Narrative is indeed power (Bruner, 1986) as it was observed that many believers, in order to convince others of the validity of their accounts, made use of their own scepticism. For example, Lia in recounting the visit to St Ephraim stated:

“When we went to the church of Ephraim, and while we were near the tree where he was hanged, my friend noticed how wonderful it smelt there even though there were no flowers!! And indeed, I smelt this fragrance too. I couldn’t believe it. Before that I was ironically saying “yeah sure”. But really, even now I still.. I cannot forget this smell, this smell of flowers!”.

The dynamics of memory generate moments of sporadic reencounter as believers advise friends on sacred sites and make sense of forthcoming experiences (Crang and Travlou, 2001; Franklin and Crang, 2001). Such myths perpetuate belief as they enable people to discuss (Silberman, 2005) about, and verify the superiority of their divinities. Even though people as active and reflexive beings frequently question religious producer’s messages (Bruner, 2001) and the originality of their assumptions, however, resting upon the belief in the existence of supernatural events, like miracles and myths, (which are accepted as true only by believers of the same background (Goode, 1992), whereas as non-true for those who do not believe (Leach, 1974)), believers as adherents are but to accept them and hope for equivalent experiences. In fact, religious people wish to dwell in myths (Levi-Strauss, 1976). As Anna said, for example, “even if someone would prove, right now that nothing exists, the faith, God and so on... I would reply to him “leave it as it is!.. I like to live in
that fairytale!” Such fantasy-driven needs reinforce post-modern notions of the ‘society of spectacle’ (Baudrillard, 1981; Edensor, 2009). Motivations to experience the unusual can be compared, thus, to Loefgren’s (1999, p.7) vacationing, as “an arena in which fantasy has become an important social practice”. Indeed, believers, wish to transform the seemingly (in the human, secular sense) inauthentic, unreal into the real and authentic, based on their belief systems. Myths and narratives provide the conceptual frame within which pilgrims operate (Bruner, 2005). Hence, oral performances of identity and belief create motivations for performances of curiosity, collective gazing and collective embodiments.

4.4 Personal Happenings, Vow, Grief: “Visiting a Professional”

Motives to partake in pilgrimages are, moreover, constructed through religions’ capacity to satisfy humans’ desires and wishes (Freud, 1961). Based on their teachings, religions give their adherents the opportunity to hope for and request things and accordingly, belief in, and knowledge of, one’s religious belief system seems to create motivations and expectations to adherents who anticipate certain outcomes. Previous research (Digance, 2006; Dubisch, 1995; Turner, 1978) on pilgrimage has, for example, revealed the tendency of people with health problems to visit sacred sites in order to experience miraculous healing that is attributed to the grace of God. This phenomenon is further evidenced in the case of a vow, which according to Fowler (1981) is a promise made by an individual at some critical moment in life. Indeed, pilgrimages are often performed as part of a vow, either as a mean of requesting something or as an exchange for a realized wish.

In particular, based on Tinos’ fame as a miraculous destination, pilgrims’ most frequently mentioned reasons for visiting the island have been their wish to confront with personal happenings such as illness, getting pregnant, passing university exams or getting a new job. Even though not sacred in their own right, they are transformed into sacred, as they constitute states with which human beings are ultimately concerned with (Tillich, 1957). Embraced, moreover, in the social and cultural religious background of believers (Goode, 1992), they are viewed as miracles once fulfilled, being touched by sacred realms. Anticipated outcomes from the trip, often identified also as miracles, therefore included on-site and off-site emotional and/or physical states.
4.4.1 In search for a personal “miracle”

Misfortune constitutes a recurrent motivating factor for visiting sacred places. A wide range of physical and mental health problems are, in effect, brought to the Virgin Mary of Tinos for help based on religious adherents’ understanding of religion as a justification of their existence that can offer them release from the existential anguish of contingency or abandonment, or even from physical anguishes, suffering, sickness or death. As seen also in previous studies (Emmons, 2005; Proudfoot and Shaver, 1975), the attribution of difficult situations to God’s will, and the belief in the views of God as purposive (Levine, 1987), help people to accept and cope with their problems. Through her belief in God, Eleni, for example, managed to overcome her grief linked to a miscarriage she had experienced:

“Matina, we lost a child, we lost our child. However, one should not consider it a misfortune, because God knew why He took it from us, maybe it would have had a disability. You just accept that He gave it to you at that time in order to show you that you can have children and that you do not have to worry about that and I then relaxed because it will come at the right time.”

In particular, the Virgin Mary is predominantly venerated in the Greek Orthodox Christian world, as she reflects an increased accessibility to believers being believed to act as the mediator between humans and God (Gesler, 1996). As Stella stated “the Virgin Mary falls at Christ’s feet and pleads with him to save us”. In a similar vein, Babis commented that “the saints.. are moderators for us human beings who have not prayed enough. They intervene for our problems”. In applying Gibson’s (1979) theory of ‘affordance’, the use of the divine can be conceptualized within the notion of a deity as affordance and comfort to everyone. Indeed, through dwelling (Ingold, 1995) in a deity’s world believers are able to experience miracles since according to the Orthodox teachings they become one with God (Wear, 1993). As Babis commented, “if one has faith, one never knows what can happen”. Equally, Christos surmised that “what faith does, so to say, is to help people overcome their problems and if you really believe a miracle can happen. This is what people do there.. they want to get courage, and strength in order to face difficult situations”. Indeed, equal to Latour’s (1994) ‘person/gun entity’, ‘person/faith’ is considered a union which holds a number of forces.
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The relationship between the human and the divine is further intensified within the context of a vow. "Echo tama", which literally means 'I have a vow', is one of the most frequently reported self-explanations of people's presence in Tinos. Through a vow, a believer somewhat secures and feels like being guaranteed a better fortune. As Katia commented "[w]e believe that when we make a vow, the Virgin Mary of Tinos will realize our requests". Equally, Sakis, commenting on his travelling to Tinos as part of a vow said that "God has so many children, who should He first help?" thereby indirectly bestowing priority to those having a vow. Based on the active interaction between the two parts, a vow personalizes the relationship between the believer and the deity, and seals to some extent the direct communication of one's problem. While most believers admitted directly that their reason for being in Tinos was a vow, not all revealed verbally their personal happenings connected to it. Yet, the majority of the group members were diseased people, with cancer patients constituting a considerable percentage. Even though most of them had overcome or stabilized their problems, their need for psychological support was apparent. Sophia, for example, visited Tinos in order to cope with her fear of death:

"When you are in need .. Matina .. when you have a problem... I want to go there and beg... To get strength .. Strength .. because you need this strength to be able to survive .. to leave everything behind you .. not to think about the problem and not to fear because, unfortunately, the fear is always great .. you are scared .. you are a human being but I tell you it always gives you strength, it always gave me the courage and strength to overcome my problem.. I mean this.."

Believers' embark on private rites of passage (van Gennep, 1909), expecting a change through their pilgrimage experience. Another frequently stated reason for visiting Tinos was coping (Pargament et al., 2005) with fertility problems. In fact, unintended childlessness is the cause of many pilgrimages and vows in Greece, as it is considered a tragedy in Greek culture (Dubisch, 1995). Different strategies of coping were observed in Tinos. For example, in a conversation with the researcher in the bus, while the one couple was laughing at themselves about their misfortune, stating that the Virgin Mary of Tinos is their ultimate chance to release them from their haplessness and thus to help them to have a child, Irene, another young woman was so worried that she could not even directly pronounce her very wish, but restricted herself to saying that she and her husband visited
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Tinos in order to wish from the Virgin Mary “the desired to come” (Irene). As she further stated:

“We had heard a lot about the miracles of the Virgin Mary of Tinos and this is why we wanted to go there.”

The place selection is, thus, not merely restricted to the Virgin Mary itself, as sites dedicated to the Virgin Mary are numerous, but to her very activity there. Indeed, believers select religious places that accumulate evidence of the Virgin Mary’s power, made known through personal accounts or narratives connected to the site, places where the secular meets the sacred: “All Virgin Mary are the same. But she is. She has a different grace” (Babis), “it is said that when you go to Tinos you will get well.” (Stella). Similarly, Elsa commented “I was drawn by the Virgin Mary of Tinos, because.. I don’t know.. I just believed that SHE would answer my requests.”. Motivations based on the search for personal miracles, and especially miracles related to health issues, often link people directly to specific sites. In particular, place-oriented texts and verbal accounts pull and push people respectively to particular places (Dann, 1977), depending on their very problems, assuming that each deity acquires different graces. St Irene Chrysovalantou in Athens is known, for instance, for curing women with fertility problems (Irene), whereas St John The Russian in Chalkida (close to Athens) heals headaches (Eleni, Danay). As Eleni recalled, “you put his hat on your head and you don’t have headache any more! Proven!” Consequently, religion, like a big theme park (Crang, 1997; Gottdiener, 1997) provides various different dramatic settings/stages, filled with spectacles, for believers to perform healing. Each focal point, whether it is a miraculous icon or a Saint’s relic, stages individuals’ anticipations and materializes their movements (Edensor, 2009). Believers, therefore, like ‘therapeutic tourists’ travel to sacred places anticipating certain outcomes. As a quasi self-service industry, religion, thus, enables people, as reflexive (Crouch, 2009; Perkins and Thorns, 2001), purpose-driven beings, to ‘pick up’ their own centres and evaluate and critique them, based on the effect they have on them. Religion offers specialization and personalization to suit each believer.

Within this context, religious sites are not selected in terms of their outer characteristics, but in terms of their appropriateness to one’s problems. Accordingly, place attachment is not fixed and permanent, as it is argued for places of national significance (Poria et al., 2003) or for sacred places that play an important role in one’s religious belief system.
(Belhassen et al., 2008; Leite, 2005). Rather, place attachment may be temporal, as human problems change, and thus require different ‘recipes’. Place attachment and longing to visit it is, moreover, related to the outcome of previous visits and the memories connected to it (Crouch et al., 2001). Indeed, memories construct motivations and are constantly called upon, and revised to suit an individual’s current identity (Gillis, 1994) and to serve her/his purpose. The story of Soula is remarkable, as she abandoned her years-long pilgrimages to St Raphael (also a very important religious site in Greece) to whom she was committed, because she blamed Him for not having fulfilled her wish, although she had visited him with strong belief. As she recollects:

“I got angry with St Raphael, because I believed in Him very much and I was praying for my niece who had leukaemia.. I made huge vows and I cried from within my soul, I believed in His miraculous power.. We finally lost the child and I stopped requesting things from Him as I used to do.. I don’t know.. How come He didn’t hear anybody?.. Since then, I never visited Him again.. This year I believe very much in the Virgin Mary of Tinos, I believe in Her very much.”

The absence of holy manifestation may therefore result in the abandonment of religious places and subsequently of their related deities. The supernatural is, thereby, doubted and thus diminished, and compared to a bubble ready to blow up each time it does not fulfil peoples’ desires. Indeed, present facts (such as the death of the child) affect and transform one’s perception of past positive memories and experiences. Religious places thus, change or lose their functions and meanings, similar to material objects (Preston, 2000). Soula’s once personal religious centre became substituted by another centre in the same manner as a secular product by another competitive product, when it does not fulfil customer’s needs anymore. The stability and fixedness, embedded in Eliade’s (1969) notion of the ‘Centre of the world’ and Turner’s (1973) ‘Centre out there’, is thus reconsidered as it constitutes not only an institutionally constructed space but also an individually constructed sacred place equal to those encountered in the post-modern literature (Alderman, 2002; King, 1993; Kruse, 2003). Especially when end results are anticipated, a place’s ‘centeredness’ is transient and fragile. Religious sites constitute, hence, fluid ‘personalized centres’ embedded though in religious structures, a notion that challenges the dichotomy of the fixed structure and the fluid process and gives rise to the mental and dialogic construction of a place’s ‘centeredness’.
4.4.2 Gratitude

Motivation to visit religious places is, further, triggered by believers’ inner need to respond for the realisation of their wishes or for their general wellbeing. According to Lia “the saints intervene to help us with our problems and we feel the need to thank them. And how are we doing this? By visiting them!” Similarly, Sophia with tears in her eyes, attributing her cure to the Virgin Mary of Tinos, said:

“...she has offered us so much... [she is crying]... and the reason why we come here is to thank her, to visit her in her home so to say... it is her place... and you want to visit her and thank her for what you have, your children, your family... for the help she offers... so you want to do something for her too... as she does for us...”

Movement and action are, therefore, considered important aspects, as only in this way can believers engage in personal modes of sacrifice, acknowledged in terms of money and time spent, and distance travelled, which cannot be obtained through virtual pilgrimages (MacWilliams, 2002) nor through Urry’s (1990) passive tourists. In fact, believers are motivated by embodied performances of thankfulness, which in some cases also entail dramatic movements embodying hardship and effort. Stella, for example, commenting on crawling, stated that “it is very important that She sees your pain, you have pain... and the Virgin Mary does not ignore it. Because She thinks that ‘this living being is suffering for me’.” Such a ‘gift exchange’ (Bourdieu, 1962) and journeys as “rituals of affliction” (Turner and Turner, 1978, p.11) are especially noticed where vows are considered. In particular, vows, as ‘holy contracts’, directly structure believers’ motives to partake in pilgrimages as they constitute part of a promise given to a deity, once wishes are realised. Interesting is the case of Clery. Diary entry:

14 August, 2009, 11:30, upon arrival to the Church of the Annunciation, Tinos

“Upon ascending to the church, we came across Clery, a nice looking 36 year old woman, who joined our group. Once we arrived at the carpet that leads to the church, Clery took off her shoes and continued barefoot. Even though it wasn’t so striking in my eyes, (as I compared her to other pilgrims ascending on their bleeding knees), it was for all others, who immediately admired her for this
gesture. I assume that it was rather the symbolic meaning it denoted that touched them; the acting different as usual in order to express respect and thankfulness. In response to their congratulations Clery explained that she came from Athens because of a vow to the Virgin Mary of Tinos. As she said, even though she suffers from epilepsy after an unsuccessful operation, the Virgin Mary keeps her well and she therefore thanks her every year by visiting her.”

Pilgrimages, however, are not always voluntary in nature and filled with cordial emotions. Rather, where vows are considered, performances are usually accompanied by intense emotional tensions, as they are commitment based and, thus, bestow compulsory nature to pilgrimage trips. For example, a 69 year-old woman, who had promised a triple visitation to Tinos as part of her vow to the Virgin Mary there, shared how stressful it was for her to constantly have the fulfilment of her promise - which she had made when she was 35 - on her mind. As she said:

“When you owe a vow to God that’s that!! I made a vow to visit Tinos three times, this was my third time, I was distressed... It is said that one must fulfil his vow...” (Stella)

As such, challenging van Gennep’s (1909) notion of separation and reintegration, pilgrimages, within the context of a vow, constitute foremost ‘mental journeys’, as they seem to be entrenched in people’s minds rather than in nature. Thus, a pilgrimage’s end is not always related to one’s return back home, but may continue to exist mentally and to last for years. So, while travelling to Tinos has a liberating effect on some believers, the complexities attached to a vow’s fulfilment seem to terrorize others. Danay, for example, stated:

“I am reluctant to make a vow because I am afraid of it. I am a little bit.. with God.., I believe that if you do not fulfil your vow.. it makes me sad.. it scares me.. I believe in miracles and the stories told and this is why I am afraid to make a vow and not keep it.”

Indeed, people on a vow are often packed with fear, based on their beliefs in sinning people and of their subsequent punishing (Kushner, 1989; Silberman, 2005). Such journeys constitute, thus, for many believers, pilgrimages of fear, in which pilgrims are motivated by performances of release from their duties and from their psychological distress; one can
even say of release from structures. The deity’s inferiority, as well as notions of Kierkegaard’s (1941) ‘Fear and Trembling’ are, further, evidenced as the emotional struggle sensed by some believers is not only restricted to the personal effects an unfulfilled vow may have, but, it is claimed that a deity’s anger at a vow unfulfilled can also fall upon those close to the maker of the vow. Tasoula, for example, attributed her son’s health problems to her inability to fulfil one of her vows:

“When I was 5 months pregnant to my second child, I had to take some medicine... and because I was afraid I might lose the child I vowed to give him the name Christos instead of Nikos, which was his grand-father’s name1. But my husband didn’t agree with it because people would gossip... I cried so much at the baptism... so awful, so awful I felt.. and this is the only thing I blame my husband for. Now, he realized his mistake since all the bad things befell the child because he suffers now from multiple sclerosis. Even the child said to me “Mom, why does everything happen to me?”

Pilgrimage as part of a wish fulfilled, may, moreover, be motivated by believers’ desire to perform identity of faithfulness. In fact, the realization of a wish is significant for believers as it implies personal achievement and constitutes proof of religious piety and connection to God. Lia, for example, proudly announced, “it’s because I begged with strong faith”, to justify her worthiness for the realization of her wish by the Virgin Mary of Tinos and indirectly distinguishing herself from other people who have not such a strong belief. People’s presence in Tinos has social dimensions also, therefore, as it demonstrates individuals’ faithfulness and belonging to a pious community.

Such a formal relationship between a deity and human beings, based on laws and fears is, however, not the rule. Indeed, as will be seen next, not all pilgrimages rest on ephemeral relationships between people and deities (as is frequently the case within the context of vows), but rather pilgrims are often motivated to visit sacred sites based on lasting or intensive relationships to particular deities, with whom they feel attached, and whom they consider “friend” (Sophia).

1 According to the Greek tradition, babies are named by their grandparents’ names.
4.5 Affiliation to the Virgin Mary: “Visiting a Friend”

In recalling James (1960), the feelings provoked by, and attached to, religion, and to religious encounters in particular, also play a significant role in people’s intention to visit sacred places. Entrenched in religious belief systems, believers sense particular feelings that are considered well-known, expected, created and controlled by staged embodied performances or material encounters. However, within the boundaries of one’s belief system, unintended and spontaneous feelings may arise, as part of sudden unexpected encounters and situations. Along with James (1960) it is the belief and the letting of one’s body feel the religious, which results in extraordinary experiences and creates deeper religious bonds. Lasting and deep relationships with a deity may come up either through sudden but immanent personal religious experiences, such as the experience of miracles and visions, or through inherited and/or acquired states as, for example, one’s new state as a mother or one’s particular name. Indeed, pilgrimages here are motivated by, and start after one’s already acquired new state (an undergone transformation) similar to that obtained after van Gennep’s ‘marginality’ state (1909). Such past personal experiences may affect people to such a degree that they develop a need to get closer to the deity, or even develop a sense of ‘topophilia’ (Tuan, 1974) for particular places related to their experiences. Free from obligation, believers’ accounts reveal a voluntary and authentic connection to the deities, and accordingly their visits to particular sacred places are more relaxed. It now will be presented how the pilgrim’s spontaneous experiences influenced their travel intensions to visit Tinos.

4.5.1 Vision and Apparition

Religious visions and apparitions are strong motivators of action as they constitute signs and symbols that provide order and meaning to the faithful (Gesler, 1996). Equal to James’ (1960) subjective experiences, visions consider sudden, personal encounters with the sacred that, however, appear usually unconsciously in the form of dreams. Visions, like visuals, empower believers’ actions containing signs and messages that are directly communicated to them, thus influencing their desires and choices within the religious landscapes ‘market’ (Crouch, 2009). Similar to production efforts, visions initiate curiosities, by capturing the ‘feel’ of destinations and convincing people that sacred
destinations are worth visiting. Tasoula, for example, who visited Tinos for her third time, recalled how she became convinced to visit Tinos in the first place:

"I was operated on in 2007 and in July 2007 when I had my second chemotherapy, I asked a woman I knew, who was about to go to Tinos, to light a candle for me there. Two days later, after my medical treatment I met her and she told me that she didn’t go. In the afternoon of the same day, after lunch, while I was lying in my bed I dreamed of the Church of the Annunciation in Tinos, which was all lit up, and of me kneeling in front of the icon and begging. and when I woke up I said to my husband: 'I don’t know how you will manage it, but we are going to Tinos!'

Similarly, Kostas recounted his visit to another church after having a vision of St Taxiarchis. As he said:

"...I have experienced a vision. For me it was a vision... In fact, I saw, not in my sleep but while awake Kayianni talking to me. And the reason why he talked to me was because I went to 10 monasteries but didn’t visit him. This is why he talked to me. And I was not asleep, I was awake and he said: ‘you didn’t come to visit me’... - he also hit me in the stomach, he came with his javelin and hit me in the stomach... he was in a fluster... and from then on I made a lot of things.. I went to his church...I took photos of him [his icon] and I hanged them in my children’s bedrooms."

Believers are mediated, as pilgrims draw upon experiential encounters (i.e. visions) to create an active, embodied engagement with the world (Crang, 1997). Nevertheless, pilgrimage, within the context of vision, is not so much the experience of the sign (Urry, 1990) as it is often anticipated by tourists who read advertising brochures (Baudrillard, 1981), since the signs embedded in visions are usually intangible and not fixed in space. Rather, pilgrimage is the sensing of the place’s aura: the being there. Metaphorically, a host and guest relationship seems to develop between the deity and the believer respectively, as visions, and in particular apparitions, constitute sort of a deity’s invitation call. According to Zimdars-Swartz (1989, p.125), “an apparition may be understood as the appearance within the physical environment to one or more individuals of a person they would not expect to be within the immediate perceptual rang”. Rather than an exaggeration of reality, as is the case with advertising (Boorstin, 1964), visions are the real, as they are.
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not directly imposed or produced by someone. Consequently, their effect is even stronger than that of advertising and other visual materials, as visions are personalized, deliver the authentic (MacCannell, 1973) and sacralize places. Vision, may, moreover, be instructive and, thus, pilgrimages, within this context, constitute often the enlivening and embodiment of their visual contents (see Scarles, 2009). Indeed, apparitions of the Virgin Mary involve important communications, miraculous signs, ordinary seers, and suffering-based ideology (Davis and Boles, 2003). Sissy, for example, recounted the vision her mother had of the Virgin Mary of Tinos, which resulted in the curing of her brother:

Diary citation:
14 August, 2009, 12:30, in the Church of the Annunciation, Tinos
“Sissy’s urge to talk about herself and her religious experiences was apparent as she continued to talk to me even inside the church. She sat next to me and within almost 15 minutes she uttered all her personal matters”...... “Her mother saw in her dream a white angel that instructed her to take her ill son to the church of Tinos, to kneel and crawl carrying him on her back to the church and that the Virgin Mary would then cure him. At that moment she gave me a picture of her brother to show me how good and healthy he looks today.”

Some researchers argue that such occurrences take place within the notion of a religious economy (Stark and Bainbridge, 1985) and involve ‘re-sacralization’ (Wilson, 1985). Nevertheless, Stark (1991, p.241), stresses that such experiences are normal, stating that “normal people, through entirely normal means, have revelations, including revelations sufficiently profound to serve as the basis of new religions”. Indeed, believers’ internal wishes and guilt often force such experiences, as part of their inner drive to get close to them, in a similar vein as Freud (1961) attributed religious beliefs to a psychological mechanism understanding them merely as a product of the mind, as examples of illusions and wish-fulfilment. Nevertheless, crowd dynamics validate the miracles that people claim are taking place (Goode, 1992). In fact, none of the participants challenged the originality of any other’s stories.

To summarize, visions can be interpreted as a seemingly two-way relationship (host-guest), which is characterized by a mutual will (of human and of the deity) to visit particular religious places. Such an anthropomorphized personal relationship is further
evidenced in considering believers’ and especially women’s connections with the Virgin Mary and it is to this issue that attention now turns.

4.5.2 Motherhood

Believers’ affiliation to the Virgin Mary is not only evidenced in Greece but in all the Christian affiliations. Her role as ‘Theotokos’ (the bearer of God), which is one of the basic teachings in Orthodoxy (Carroll, 1986; Ware, 1993), seems to bring her especially close to women. Indeed, pilgrimages motivated by this special bond, constitute, especially in the case of women, part of performing gender (Butler, 1993), and in particular motherhood, since the Virgin Mary is the embodiment of the perfect mother, providing a role model for women in their everyday lives (Dubisch, 1995). Being the counterpart of the sinful Eve, the Virgin Mary is “the ideal model for the married village woman who in carrying out her duties as wife and mother fulfils her destiny, which is to become like the mother of God” (du Boulay, 1986, pp.165-6). The link between women and the Virgin Mary is, thus, both symbolic and earthly, as becoming a mother in the Orthodox world changes women’s status in society, since they can redeem their sinful natures, becoming identified with the Virgin Mary (du Boulay, 1986). Therefore, sudden events in women’s lives, such as pregnancy, can change their conceptual understanding of life and association with religion. Julia, for example, who declared her affiliation to the Virgin Mary, confessed that she had no relation to religion before her giving birth to her first child. She justified her conversion by stating nervously that “[o]ne day you [the researcher] will also become a mother and then you will understand me. [she laughs]”. In fact, Julia visited the island in order to beg for her son who was ill. As she stated:

“That day I was in need of the Virgin Mary and the church... I wanted to go there...I had this feeling... Imagine that while I lit the candle and kissed the icon I was crying so much...I couldn’t stop...I was begging the Virgin Mary to cure my child...”

Along with Blum and Blum (1970, p.327), the Virgin Mary is like “a powerful friend of the same sex” and this is why so many women seek her closeness and visit her places. Orthodox teachings, according to which the Virgin Mary remains a human intercessor and does not become a semi-defied human as in Catholicism (Sant Cassia, 1992), seem to make her even more approachable to people, as their relationship is based on mutual
understanding. Along with Irene, for example, “the Virgin Mary is a great comfort to us, to all of us and especially to every mother”. Indeed, her own life exemplifies every mother’s anxieties. As she further commented:

“[she is respected] because she has been through so many things in her life, she saw her child crucified.. and because of the strength and the courage she demonstrated after that having at her side another child, Saint John.. I consider this...it is tremendous to give birth to a child through a miracle and then see it crucified.. and after all that to retain your courage.. yes.. It is this strength that Virgin Mary gives you, to every person who is a mother, she gives strength to every human being, because people acknowledge her problem and how she went through it and kept going and we have to see our life in the same manner in order to reach what she reached; the paradise”.

Mothers’ interest in Virgin Mary’s places are, hence, to find understanding, relief and get strength to raise their children correctly, and it is therefore often part of the expected social roles of women, as it is, for example, in Greece. In particular, the demonstration of the fulfilment of maternal and housewifely duties can be seen as part of “being good at being a woman” (Dubisch, 1995, p.207). Furthermore, as the Virgin Mary is known throughout the teachings “that her love and tenderness are always available; no matter how unhappy or sinful the supplicant” (Parson, 1967, p.265), people develop a bond with the Virgin Mary that is not only based on their equivalent role as mothers, but also on a mother-child relationship (Balthazar, 2007), where people dwell in the role of children. According to Nicki, for example: “the Virgin Mary means mother to us, she is our support, our protector, she is everything.. because we can understand her.. we perceive her as a mother who protects her child... and she protects us too, we are her children and she protects us”.

In a similar vein, Sophia, after the death of her biological mother, stated that “the Virgin Mary is my mother”. She is someone they can consult every time they feel distress, self-doubt and fear (Balthazar, 2007).

A reverse approach is observed where martyrs are considered. In particular, motivated by saints’ dramatic life stories, believers visit their places to embrace them like their own children. St Irene Chrysovalantou and St John The Russian, for example, who cruelly died at a very young age, were mentioned by almost all interviewees, who visited them being motivated by feelings of sympathy and protection. For example, Janna recounted: “I
strongly believe in St Irene.. St Irene was 12 years old when she was burned... And I visited her this year, but I never stay in the church with the other people, I wait downstairs to sit next to her grave.. I like it very much there.. I don’t know.. I just love her so much”.

Considering all the above, it becomes apparent that believers’ relationships with the deities depict a macro-perspective of human relations themselves. Indeed, the above accounts can be interpreted as ‘a de-sacralization of the saints’ or as ‘a sacralization of the human secular lives’, as the Virgin Mary and the saints become equal to human beings, by acquiring human-like characteristics. Within this context, humans motivated by striking counterparts visit places, having first looked through the materialized saints that inhabit that places, who enclose signs and codes in their mythical stories that are meaningful to people. As metaphors (Levi-Strauss, 1976), the saints and the Virgin Mary transmit and distribute abstract values and moralities (Allport, 1959). In fact, as deities represent the symbolic universe, individuals learn to view themselves as parts of the universe, and as essential for its maintenance and reproduction (Balthazar, 2007).

4.5.3 Name connection and Celebration

Pilgrimages or visits to sacred sites may also be elicited by inherited states. In the Greek Orthodox world, for example, people are somewhat ‘ascribed’ to saints through baptism, by getting hold of their names, a fact that attributes attachment and often determines their future behaviour within the religious context. In particular, most participants admitted that they have a “prostati” (Lia) i.e. a personal protector, whom they are motivated to visit in person especially on her/his name-day celebration. As Lia commented, for example, “it is like visiting a person you love and when it is his name day you want to visit him and celebrate with him... So it is with the Virgin Mary too..” Saints are treated similar to family members or close friends, a notion that connotes familiarity and closeness, and their visit can therefore be compared to the visiting of friends and relatives. Again sacredness becomes melded into the secular world. Particularly, on the 15th of August, when the Dormition of the Virgin Mary is celebrated, and accordingly also her name day, it was observed that most of the participants on that trip bore one of the Virgin Mary’s names (for example Maria, Panayiota, Despina) combining, thus, their trip with the celebration of their own name day. For Theodora and Alexia, the trip functioned also as a depressor of loneliness (Johnson and Mullins, 1989). As Alexia, for example, stated:
"Basically, because the trip was planned for the 15th of August and I would have been alone on that day, I decided to celebrate my name-day with the Virgin Mary... to celebrate together..."

The women’s role is again substantial within this respect. In the Christian Orthodox world, they do not only attend church more often than men but are also considered the link between the family and the religion (Dubisch, 1995). Women actively participate in the construction of religious meanings (Davis and Boles, 2003) and the maintaining of religious bonds. Therefore, ritual activities such as the ornamentation of a home with saints’ icons as well as the keeping of fasts or remembering name-day celebrations and visiting the personal protectors of all family members are predominately woman initiatives. As Vicky talked about the icons hanging in her child’s room and the living room, she reflected:

"...hmm.. how should I define it?.. The identification with the saint when you have him in your house.. I believe.. that for the wellbeing of my family and the house, I must have the saints that represent my family. For example, if you see here in the living room I have some icons.. I have the Virgin Mary’s and Christ’s to protect my family, and then I have other saints according to our names.. Therefore, I have the icon of Saint Paul because my son is called Pavlos, I have Saint George because by husband is called George, my son is called Christos and is protected by Jesus Christ, and then it’s me affiliated to the Virgin Mary."²

Women as religious tools thereby perform ongoing connections to religion. They structure, organize, coordinate and maintain sacredness, and have, hence, the prime role in organizing pilgrimages for themselves and the family members, in their attempts to build attachment to, and longing for sacred places. In particular, believers’ and their children’s names constitute a substantial context to ‘work’ (Davis and Boles, 2003) pilgrimages, and subsequently religion, as they often determine how, when and by whom religious activities are performed (Mead, 1934). People’s names often even frame their religious travel preferences, as they influence their motivations to visit particular religious destinations that are dedicated to their saint,

² The names of the icons and family members were changed due to confidentiality
as well as create feelings of attachment to those places, affecting thus also the frequency of their visitation.

The Virgin Mary of Tinos and the Taxiarchis in Mytilini are, for example, considered Vicky’s most important religious destinations as both are connected to her children; her first child was vowed to the Virgin Mary of Tinos after its survival from an accident and her second child was baptized in St Raphael’s monastery in Mytilini. As she stated “it is the way you equate those things...”. One’s name can, thus, link people directly to particular places and also produce feelings of place longing. Tasoula, for example, who has never visited the island of Mytilini, where Saint Nikolas and Irene are venerated, revealed her wish to do so as her children are named Nikolas and Irene. Accordingly, one’s personal motivation to visit a religious place may be the result of an inherited state (Althusser, 1969); a smart way of religious institutions to secure crowds of believers who feel attached to these places.

4.5.4 Soul recreation - “Anapsychi”

Religion may, furthermore, be a ‘style of life’ which is concerned with the making of sense of habitually enacted worlds (Deleuze, 1990) or what Deleuze calls the “great politics” (1990, p.72). According to Janna, for example:

“I started getting bored with the daily life routine. But with the religion... my life suddenly became interesting. And with my participation in religious trips and in all those things we do, I learn so many things and it calms my soul, I feel exultation and completeness”.

Indeed, enframed in their belief systems, believers construct their own style of tourism too. Based on the belief that “our purpose is to save our souls” (Christos) and that the sacred places are the “workshops for the perfection of the soul” (Babis), believers embark on trips with the intention of gaining spiritual enrichment, equal to Cohen’s (1972) experiential tourists. Babis understands this as his way of recreation:

“What we call “recreation” (anapsychi), means in fact where your soul is happy [in Greek, the etymology of the word “anapsychi” means to rest your soul]. Wherever your soul feels joy, wherever the treasure of your soul is, there is your recreation. Jesus Christ said this! Because everything belongs to God. And God
made everything for the people. God said, you can do everything, apart from sinning.” ... “When you enjoy yourself and simultaneously retain your modesty, then you can feel emotionally touched, you can gain mental strength and retain it... you benefit a lot.”

Equally, Christos commented:

“It’s more beneficial than... When you have free time it is better to go on a pilgrimage, to hear something interesting, to see, to read hmm... rather than to have fun... We seek for such trips... this is also the meaning of religious journeys. To obtain something. To hear something. Something positive. And to, kind of change your life... the way you see things... to see things with love...”

Consequently, pilgrimage is a philosophy. It is a tourist style that makes sense of recreation within the religious world. Pilgrims do not follow the conventional, conceptual enclavic tourist spaces of the modern world (Edensor, 2000) that emphasize the resting of the body and escape from everyday life (MacCannell, 1976), but equal to ‘post-tourists’ mock the predictable performances expected from them and long for ‘substantial’ things. As Babis for example, commented:

“Do you know what they do? They leave their wives and children and say that they go for hunting.. But instead of hunting they go to Bulgaria, in nice hotels and indulge themselves in good food and sex.. A tourist seeks for pleasures! While a religious tourist, when he travels to Bulgaria, for example, he will visit a monastery to get spiritually touched. Hence God cannot save someone who doesn’t want to be saved. ”

What believers do in comparing various tourism forms and places is in fact not criticizing the places but the human performance there, i.e. distinguishing themselves from non believers. In fact, pilgrims do not differ conceptually from backpackers as they, similarly, seek to differentiate themselves from the secular identity they share with others in their everyday lives and prefer a new individualized identity (Desforges, 2000). They both attempt to escape from the basic values of their own society (Galani-Moutafi, 2001), which accumulates features of consumerism, stress and cruelty, and seek shelter in an authentic destination (MacCannell, 1973; Westerhausen, 2002), indirectly, however, making up another group that is enframed in common understandings. As dwellers in God’s world,
religious life accompanies them potentially wherever they go. Hence, within the view that ‘home’ is not place-fixed but rather understood as the routine sets of practices (Meyer and Geschiere, 1999), home can be everywhere. Pilgrimages are, therefore, part of performing home, God and life. Within this context, ‘centre’ is each one’s life and sacred centres are part of this centre. As Georgia, commented: “Tinos is like my second home”.

4.6 Other Motivations – Justified Vacation, Escape, Accompany

Based on Butler’s (1993) view that gender is constituted through performance, in the same manner do the motivations often imply to gender; as seen previously, women are motivated to visit sacred sites for the protection of the family, because of their very role and performances within the family, which are concerned with the upbringing of their children but also, along with Dubisch (1995), with their men’s honour and family reputation. Indeed, while women usually contribute to the family reputation by staying inside (mainly in villages), going on pilgrimage is a legitimate way for women to move through public space, which is usually the space where men’s honour is claimed (Dubisch, 1995). Women can be conceptualized as ‘legitimate tourists’, since pilgrimages and sacred places provide ‘space’ for women’s performances especially for rural women. A small number of women, decided, for example, to visit Tinos, as its religious character assured accreditation by their husbands. Tasoula’s husband said to her, as she stated: “you can go, I let you go if you want, but not somewhere else, only there.” Based on the women’s role in Orthodoxy, it is through symbolization that pilgrimage actions are legitimated (Snow, 2001) as their visit there occurs in a moral ground, which protects the honour of the masculine world. No woman can be criticized for religious excursions as they usually engage in ritual activities on behalf of their families.

Nevertheless, pilgrims often dare to perform gender differently (Butler, 1993) and accordingly, pilgrimages, for women in particular, can become political acts. As such, visits to religious destinations are not entirely motivated by religious issues but can also work as a camouflage to achieve other ends. Indeed, the paradox of being free through being enframed is noticed. Tinos, for example, constitutes a way for some women to escape from the mundane family life and their role as mothers and to enter into what
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Graburn (1978) calls the ‘land of play’. Barbara, emphasizing her need to escape from her everyday life and to recreate, recounted:

Barbara: “...when you get married.. you go without certain things because you have a lot of responsibilities with the children, the house... so the trip starts for me as an escape, the trip, and I think it is a way... for example, my husband would ask “what are you going to do there?.. you know...”

Interviewer: So, in order to keep your husband less preoccupied you choose religious destinations...

Barbara: “Yes, a religious destination, and then I combine it with entertainment and all those things.”

Women engage, thus, in a theatrical play, performing a front-stage role when deciding to go on a pilgrimage, so as to enable their backstage motivations and behaviours (Goffman, 1959) on-site. Through their performances at sacred sites women often challenge archetypal societal norms as they simultaneously introduce new norms and re-write themselves in reference to them (Rountree, 2006). Performances enable them to re-value themselves in society and in family in that they temporarily detach themselves from the material role they have at home, by demonstrating their need for subject like features, such as having fun and relaxation, thereby, exposing alternative representations of the feminine. Nevertheless, even though away on what was supposedly a ‘pilgrimage of freedom’, women are amid their role as tourists and their role as mothers and wives. As a result, it was observed that all women engaged in religious performances, which denoted their additional motivation for religious commitment and their inability or not-wanting to detach family from religion.

Furthermore, pilgrimages and visits to religious sites are often related to third party motivations. Usually, when one encounters people doing religious trips together, it is because one of them has particular wishes or needs that she/he seeks through the devotion, while the other is going primarily as a companion (Reader, 2006). This was the case with two women that participated in the trip. The younger one (aged around 50) said that she came to accompany and please her aunt (aged around 80) who wanted to make that visit to Tinos, in order to pay devotion to the Virgin Mary of Tinos. In a similar vein, the inability
of some people to travel to sacred places can result in the travelling of others on their behalf. As Katerina said, for example:

"My mother made a vow, years before and as she wasn’t able to travel to Tinos by herself she gave me... you see we produce extra virgin olive oil in Thassos [island] and she had promised to bring five kilos to the Virgin Mary of Tinos, so she gave them to me and I made the offering."

Finally, it is not rare for single female travellers, in their 30s to travel in order to get a blessing from the Virgin Mary to find a partner in life. Even though they did not directly admit it, it was observed during field conversations that they were all concerned about being single and having no children yet. Theodora, for example, bitterly said that she may never have children being already 39 years old. Although the possibility of an acquaintance with a single man is not considered very high in Tinos, for its being mainly a female or family oriented destination, it was noticed that Theodora flirted with the waiter in a tavern. Maybe this was also the reason why she travelled alone. Diary entry:

14 August, 2009, 13:00, in a tavern, Tinos

"[Then] we were wondering in the alleys of the picturesque capital of Tinos looking for a place to eat"... "It was so crowded"... "We finally found a nice tavern with its outdoor tables facing a small chapel. The waiter’s role seemed to be vital, since after a small but joyful talk with us, and especially with Theodora who was observed having fun, he was able to convince us to stay there for lunch"... "The waiter’s presence continued to add value to the stay. During the ordering he joined our table and continued the light talk with Theodora. In approximately five minutes they had interchanged significant personal information (all of course in a very innocent and joyful temper). Theodora uttered even her state as a single"... "The play with the waiter didn’t stop in the ordering. Each time he brought a dish or passed by our table to serve others he smiled at us and made funny comments, so were also Theodora’s responses"... "During the payment of the bill, Theodora, after praising the waiter for the delicious food, she promised that she would return."
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4.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter it was presented that while believers are primarily motivated to visit sacred sites by systems of signs (Urry, 1990) that direct them towards particular directions, creating ‘collective motivations’ and anticipated ‘collective gazes’, however, believers are often travelling very much on their own personal pilgrimages or are impelled by a multiplicity of motives ranging from personal despair and asceticism to tourism and a wish to get away from home for a while (Shuo et al., 2008). Indeed, as Pearce (1993, p.113) explains, “tourist motivation is a hybrid concept”, a position also stressed by Dann (1981, 1983).

Firstly, religious oriented trips are the result of motivations staged for people belonging in a religious affiliation. The structured attempts of the Greek Church and the political forces to attach national history and pride to the island of Tinos, through the use of media and political speeches, reinforced Greeks’ ‘romantic gaze’ towards the island. Authorities create visual conceptions and guide structures of remembrance by broadcasting and reproducing historical facts, such as the Virgin Mary’s connection to great officials of the Greek independence that result in Tinos being regarded as a ‘memorial site’ of Greekness upon which theatres of memory are constructed via ideologically filled stories (see Crang and Travlou, 2001). In particular, presenting Tinos as the ‘Centre of the Greeks’ has, thus, created attachment to the place and indirectly bestowed obligatory nature to its visit by Greeks. Its connection, moreover, to the miraculous working icon of the Virgin Mary, to whom Greek independence is credited, has contributed to its fame as a place where miracles occur, thus constructing also the ‘want to see’ and ‘want to experience’ aura and image of the magical world of Tinos.

Nevertheless, it was observed that people actively participate in the construction of their cultural meanings and affect social arrangements (Davis and Boles, 2003). For example, people’s own embodied performances contribute to, and establish Tinos’ overall picture as well as create longing for it, as their very presence there infuses the place with significance. Motivations also develop in the course of life and social interaction. Other people’s personal accounts or their own supernatural experiences and new acquired states influenced, to a large extent, pilgrims’ motivation to visit the island and perform
religiousness. For example, some pilgrims’ personal life-changes, such as renewed biological and social states (motherhood) or bodily and mentally changes (health issues), changed their conceptual understanding of religion and triggered their will to visit Tinos, either to give thanks for being cured or to create a vow, that is to say, to make a wish. Especially, women and mothers were found to long for Tinos in order to get support and strength to deal with family duties. Indeed, their very role as mothers adds to the justification of their presence in sacred places, and especially in places dedicated to the Virgin Mary, with whom they feel affiliated and whom they consider as role-mother (Balthazar, 2007).

Even though individual in nature, all motivations were justified within the broader context of religion (Davis and Boles, 2003), even motivations that had a more touristic character. Indeed, the pilgrimage group, as a miniature of the collective and framed religious phenomenon, was a combination of individuals with different views existing in a community that gave them a sense of identity, purpose and as such justification of their intentions and freedom of movement and practices. Nevertheless, as pilgrims are reflexive beings and often end-result driven, a sacred place’s ‘centeredness’ rather than being fixed in time and significance, is an individual, personal construction, and thus changing and fragile, according to the individual’s experiences, happenings and needs. The complexity and fluidity of motivations is further evidenced in the very performances of motivations, which is analysed next. People as reflexive and vulnerable beings become affected by on-site encounters, and previous motivations become therefore susceptible to change.
Chapter 5 AGENCY, MATERIALITY AND THE HUMAN BEING

5.1 Introduction

Having discussed the main motives that mobilize people to visit sacred places, the current chapter will shed light on people's actual performances on site. Accepting the view, according to which social, cultural and material worlds intervene and interact (Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Thrift, 1996), this chapter aims to move beyond the understanding of religious tourism as a series of static stages. Rather, religious tourism comes to be understood as a complex mosaic that is created through multiple interactions of human and non-human that are co-performing religion away from home and which are capable of producing unpredictable becomings that often extend one's initial motivations. The second and third research objectives are addressed here, using data derived from the interviews conducted with the pilgrims as well as from participant observation.

5.2 Between Human and non-Human

Religious tourism is something more than a social phenomenon stuck on the predetermined and fixed nature of the religious structures. Accepting Thrift’s (1996) view, according to which social, cultural and material worlds intervene and interact, the religious phenomenon is itself the result of co-construction between religious belief, adherents and materials. Religious oriented travelling, and pilgrimages in particular, thus constitute an intensification of one's religious understanding. The role of people on-site and the power/potency of religious objects are not only inherited to direct people religiously and achieve a ritualistic flow. Rather, religious tourists constitute an important element (Crouch, 2003) of the religious system as they bring with them their own thoughts, motives and anticipations. Simultaneously, their very practices also influence others’ experiences (Edensor, 2000; Holloway et al., 2011). In a similar vein, sacred places and materiality are open to multiple interpretations and their meanings are subjective. Objects are not only representation of meanings (Baudrillard, 1981; Saussure, 1966) but are themselves active and affective beings, acquiring agency (Appadurai, 1986; Latour, 1996). Religious tourism moves thus beyond its understanding as a series of static stages through which believers
must pass in order to achieve a single endpoint. Rather, religion is perceived as a hybrid containing human and non-human which are related through multiplicity of interactions within which individuals make sense of the holy and religion stays alive. Belief, human and non-human create an entity and are thus an extension of religion.

5.2.1 Materiality and the performing bodies

A body’s relationship with nature fixes symbolic thought as affect, emotion and feelings (Gil, 1998). Such knowledge resulted in perceiving materiality, human and animals surrounding individuals, as important ingredients of an ‘experience economy’ (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) that intend to construct experiences. Tourism, for example, increasingly produces spaces that can grasp the senses involving kinaesthetic experiences that are considered the most compelling and the most memorable (Cloke and Perkins, 2002, 2005). Religions too, especially through their pilgrimages, intend to entrench believers’ experiences in mind by bringing them in connection with particular objects and facilitating corporeal performances that maximize religious experiences. The role of objects is crucial within this respect as they have, according to Haldrup and Larsen (2006), use-value which enhances bodily movements and permit people to do things and sense realities. Material articulations of religion connect people to the sacred world, where it makes sense to hope in things unseen (Fenn, 2001). Objects’ presence in religious sites is, thus, usually part of the choreography or experience economy of religious institutions. Accordingly, enwrapped with symbolic meanings, religious objects, such as icons, are religiously constructed signposts (Rojek and Urry, 1997; Urry, 1990) that direct believers’ gazes and embodied performances, and construct their identities (Bourdieu, 1984).

Nevertheless, rather than only conceptualizing embodiments and human-material relations as influenced by the environment that individuals (here religious authorities and believers) cast around themselves in an ‘intentional arc’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.18), it is argued here that humans are part and parcel of the world and do not simply assign meaning to it (Ingold, 2000). Accordingly, people may use a variety of many other available objects, in different ways and for different scopes as their bodies live in space, not like spheres with a closed surface (Deleuze, 2000). Rather, through their numerous encounters, they establish various interactions with the things around them, and are open to multiple affects (Gil, 1998; Thrift, 2004). Human’s entanglement in a world of various things, can, thus, result in
unpredictable becomings as non-humans possess agency as well (Appadurai, 1986; Cloke and Jones, 2001; Latour, 1999; Franklin, 2008), rather than merely existing as symbolic entities (Selwyn, 1996; Shield, 1991; Urry, 1990, 1995). The complexity of becoming a religious tourist grows even further when considering Thrift words (2000), according to which “the space of the body consists of leaves each of which contains the relations of the body to things and each of which is related more or less to other spaces”. Accordingly, people occasionally shift/move from Heidegger’s dwelling (1971, 1978) in a world in which people are already oriented toward actions in the world, to Cloke and Jones’ (2001) perspective in which people are influenced, and organize themselves, around the material possessions of the space that exercise power on them.

5.2.2 Textual communities and the performing bodies

Similar to Urry’s (1990, p. 2) tourist gaze that “presupposes a system of social activities and signs which locate the particular tourist practices”, so do religious tourist performances expose the vigour of the institutional religions to condition people’s performances and aesthetics. Religious participants are wrapped in the rules, symbolisms and practices of how the religious culture approaches the sacred (Collins and Dandelion, 2006). Especially in Eastern Orthodoxy, aesthetic is a valued medium of access to the divine (Martin, 2006). Performativities serve as key expressions of religious belief systems, by embodying the unseen and transforming it to the seen. In particular, based on a common understanding of a religious text (spoken or read), religious performers as “textual communities” (Duncan and Duncan, 1988, p.117) perform religious tourism and places as the playing out of a script. Therefore, religious movements generally constitute a distinctive, materialized and embodied symbolic aesthetic or what Martin (2006, p.145) calls, “movement aesthetic”, which is recognizable as it is considered a set of markers of identity, that encompasses performative technologies (Hughes-Freeland, 1998) such as music, dress code, style, manners (Martin, 2006) and assistant materials. Such structured, collective embodied practices encourage common understanding and experiences among its participants, reinforce identity and lessen the risk of religious failure (Bourdieu, 1991); as Porteous asserted (1996, p.22) “symbolic aesthetics involves the appreciation of the meanings of the environments” (in this case, religious spaces). Furthermore, they are a means of amplifying passions, producing mystical experiences and thus connectedness with the religious world.
For example, according to Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) performative flow, people's trust in their actions leads to their total involvement and holistic sensation. Within such common understandings and practices, people themselves become texts to be consumed by others. Accepting Holloway et al.'s (2011) intra-tourist gaze, the influence other believers have on believers' sense of identity and behaviour is important. The intra-tourist gaze has, for example, authoritative power, appraising and regulating other believers' behaviours. It is capable of marking off selves from other people; 'us' and 'others', as has been observed with backpackers who perceive themselves to represent a better mode of tourism in comparison to others (Soerensen, 2003). However, it also has a self-governing gaze, in which the reflexive tourist alters her/his own behaviour, adapting behaviours of others that present newer, emerging norms and discourses. Accordingly, aside from Eade and Sallnow's (1991) three coordinates of pilgrimage sites (place: landscape features, person: holy person, relic, and text: myth) that determine the character of a sacred place, it is also pilgrims' very performances that influence the making and experience of place. Consequently, through inter-subjectivity individuals under common understandings (Durkheim, 1915; Schutz, 1962) share common behaviour and experiences with others, structure others' behaviour and become structured by others. Nevertheless, while such prescribed performances intend to bring particular meanings into state through embodied experiences that recapitulate the complex theological and mythical texts (Coleman, 2004), the human body is not simply an inscribed (with religious norms) surface (Thrift, 2000) but an autonomic, reflexive and sensual being. The individual "imagines, plays with places and their content, subjectively, on their own terms, refiguring them" (Crouch, 2000, p.96). Accordingly, the possibility to change or negotiate these norms as well as to resist or even stand out against these norms can be offered. Especially in modern societies that privilege individualism, individuals are increasingly observed to construct their own way of religion (Harvey, 2003; King, 1996; Roof, 1993). People remain free to "look the other way, or to not look at all" (MacCannell, 2001, p.24). Even within religious group perspectives and inter-subjectivities, while some members condemn others' inconsistency from the original religious procedures and cultural context, alternative political agencies, such as solidarity and sharing alteration of the religious 'play' take place in religious communities (Butler, 1993). In a similar vein, sacred places become negotiated and contested places (Gartell and Collins-Kreiner, 2006). Indeed, "lived
cultures, underpinned by social relations, shape the environment in which fresh cultural texts are produced” (Selby, 2004, p.190).

All these issues are further highlighted next, using the example of religious tourists’ performances on the island of Tinos. First their interaction with the place and its objects will be analysed and then their inter-subjective performances.

5.3 The Religious Landscape through the Pilgrims’ Eyes

Materials and places are wrapped with significance that is learned and distributed through narratives, discourses and myths (Selwyn, 1996; Slater, 1986). They signify to a large extent social constructs that frame and orient people towards an understanding of places’ sacrality (Badone, 2007) and organize aspects of people’s performances (Duncan and Duncan, 1988) and expectations. Pilgrims to Tinos, framed by humans and non-humans (Baerenholdt et al., 2007; Bruner, 2005) that guide their gazes (Urry, 1990), search for extraordinary parts of the site and signs where the Virgin Mary’s power can be manifested. Nevertheless, materials and landscapes are not only restricted to their symbolic value (Selwyn, 1996; Shield, 1991; Urry, 1990, 1995) but possess agency as well (Appadurai, 1986; Cloke and Jones, 2001; Franklin, 2008; Latour, 2005). They keep religion alive and performable as they enable people to sense realities and to do things that would otherwise not be possible (Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Latour, 2005). In particular, materials are useful as they allow religion to be sensed and relocated, as well as elicit inner thoughts and contemplation.

5.3.1 Location and aura of place

Being associated with Otherness, Tinos is anticipated with great impatience as it is believed to be endowed with extraordinary powers. Pilgrims have an extra urge to personally encounter religious places and the material objects that inscribe Tinos with fantasies and memories (see Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Coats, 2011; Selwyn, 1996; Tilley, 2006; Urry, 1990; Waitt and Head, 2002). Accordingly, approaching and finally arriving at Tinos, from the port of which the Church of the Annunciation is discernible, is accompanied by strong feelings, as believers are looking forward to capturing a long-imagined sight. In particular, “upon hearing crew’s announcement of the ship’s
approaching the island of Tinos and while entering the port of Tinos, crowds of people hustled and bustled on the deck, loudly packing their things and contesting their ways to the ship’s exit pushing and insulting each other, in their attempts to be the first to disembark” (Fieldnotes, 14 August, 2009, 11am, in the ferry approaching Tinos).

Even though the majority of the participants supported the idea that Tinos is not an ideal tourist destination, as for example Maria who stated that “I don’t think that Tinos is recommended for tourism. No, I didn’t like it so much... only for religious...”, however, the ‘semiological realization of space’ (Ringer, 1998), with the island and the Church of the Annunciation (see Figure 5.1) being regarded as “the Virgin Mary’s home” (Sophia) creates imagination and a new connection between place, people and context, “uniting [human] being to other beings and to Being” (Ricoeur, 1994, p.124) and transforming the place into a meaningful place. Equal to Tuan’s (1974) ‘topophilia’ which elevates the ugliest of sites, Tinos, being covered by the Virgin Mary’s aura acquires unique attractiveness. As Lina said “it is not what it looks like but to be so close to it”. Believers’ belief is what beautifies a sacred place and preponderates in their imagination of it. As Panos said:

“I don’t know.. maybe it is psychological, but .. when you see the church, so huge..- maybe because you expect something like this even if it is not so... you gaze upon it as being something grandiose, you see it and you say wow!!”.

Figure 5.1 The Church of the Annunciation, Tinos

Image captured by the author, 2009, Tinos
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As an established sign, the Church of the Annunciation brings significance to pilgrims’ attention and reinforces collective gaze (Scarles, 2004, 2009; Urry, 1990). Furthermore, it constitutes a marker that frames pilgrims’ performances (Baerenholdt et al., 2004). In particular, similar to a lighthouse, its visibility from everywhere directs people to the sacred centre (see Figure 5.2). It is people’s first impression upon their arrival, indicating the sacred direction as well as their last visible religious view while departing with the ferryboat. Alexia, for example, stated:

“For me it was such a nice spectacle... this view of the church! I mean, this... to be able to see the church from everywhere, no matter where your position currently was, the church of the Virgin Mary was always in front of you!”

The church building is a sign that speaks (Lukken and Searle, 1993). Commenting on Appadurai’s (1986) religious life of material things, Keenan and Arweck (2006, p.15) argued, for example, that “these silent, serene and scarred monuments to historic faiths cry Holy, Holy, Holy”. Equally the Church of the Annunciation transmits the Virgin Mary’s presence and magnificence. As Lia, stated:

“When you disembark... and you see this... it is magnificent! You feel the glory... and you bring in mind the Virgin Mary, thinking that ‘she really deserves this’!”

Figure 5.2 Panoramic view of Tinos capital

Accordingly, non-humans, such as buildings, are stages for human performance (Edensor, 1998, 2000) that enable people to enter into a new realm, into the spheres of the Virgin
Mary, and to experience something meaningful which impacts deeply on their sense of identity (Bourdieu, 1984; Osbaldiston and Petray, 2011). In particular, believers' immediacy to the Virgin Mary through their very being in Tinos, and thus, through their entrenchment and involvement in the sacred world through embodied practices (Crouch, 2003) allows them "to experience not only the landscape but perhaps also [themselves] in an unusual and vivid way" (Porteous, 1996, p.23). As Sophia stated, for example: "I was crying and crying for being deemed worthy by the Virgin Mary to come to Tinos [she cries]... I don't know... you live it. You touch it, you feel it!". Equally, Janna shared: "I suddenly have tears in my eyes... without my will... I just realize how unworthy I am being in such a place". According to their comments, their very being in Tinos enabled them to sense realities that would otherwise not exist. In fact, pilgrims' encounter with the place's materiality and aura contributed to the arousal of the sense of being in the religious world (Crouch, 2003). It was an experience that had touched their souls and echoed a complex of emotional, sensual and intuitive feelings.

Furthermore, as Maria stated, the Church of the Annunciation "seems like it is protecting the whole... island. The entire street and the seaport... that's the first impression!" Within these feelings of protection and security that the island's aura transmits, which allow believers to act with confidence, some of the believers experienced Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) flow. For example, whilst the group was gathering in the port, to be transported to the hotel, Georgia, neglecting the guide's instruction to wait there for the other members to be counted, left her luggage to me and instructed me, with tears in her eyes, to arrange her luggage and room, as she had to go immediately to the church! Then she ran away. As Davies (2008) argued the role of particular places or buildings is fundamental in invigorating feelings. Along with Lia, for example, who had no previous intention to crawl, "when you look at the church.. this splendour excites you.. it motivates you to reach it on your knees".

Accordingly, the aura of place and the strategic position of the church are fundamental components in the staging of the religious experience, possessing symbolic value (Selwyn, 1996; Shield, 1991; Urry, 1990, 1995) as well as agency (Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Latour, 2005; Franklin, 2008), which allows people to do and thus feel things more intensively. For example, along with Irene, crawling is a practice that entrenches memory in mind (Davies, 2008). As she said: "It helps you remember...to keep it in mind...Yes,
because you feel it more intensively”. Pilgrims’ interplay with the physical environment of Tinos can also create unpredictable effects and embodied actions (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000). Indeed, the appreciation of the island’s symbolic meanings expressed more than a merely sensory appreciation. Tasoula, in particular, a female pilgrim in her forties, who suffered badly from pain and exhaustion after several chemotherapies, embodied Virgin Mary’s miraculous power, as she said that her pain dissolved by the very act of setting foot on Tinos, equal to Reader’s (2006) pilgrims in Shikoku who attributed every event on pilgrimage to the deity’s will. As Tasoula said of her experience:

“I walked to the church, I ascended the hill on foot... and keep in mind that I had just undergone chemotherapy... and in spite of my body being exhausted, I didn’t feel tired at all”.

Through people’s dwelling in the sacred place (Heidegger, 1971) sacredness is evidenced both imaginatively and bodily (Baerenholdt et al., 2004; Crouch, 2003; Franklin, 2003; Loefgren, 1999; Pons, 2003), as Tasoula’s presence in Tinos enabled her body to do and feel religious intervention. The physical condition of the human body and its psychological stance (Franklin, 2009) remain, however, important factors in the consumption of the place’s significance and thus in experiencing and perceiving the place’s aura and sacredness. Considering the believer’s body as a medium (see Baerenholdt et al., 2004; Crouch, 2005; Crouch and Lübbren, 2003; Edensor, 2001; Knudsen, 2011) through which individuals reflect and expand their religious understanding of the world, it is observed that contrary to the tourist literature (Franklin, 2009; Veijola and Jokinen, 1994), an ill and troubled body, in Tinos, experiences more devoutness than healthy bodies. Julia, for example, said:

“I went to the Church and I was crying and crying. I felt such a relief. I mean, it was also my psychological state. I was feeling so attached to the church at that time, I wanted to go there. Contrary, the first time I went to Tinos I was healthy and feeling well, I wasn’t in the need of the church, I was young, my children didn’t have any problems... I didn’t feel the same that time.. it was just a visit”.

5.3.2 “Tamata” and the Holy Icon: a hybrid?

While the icon constitutes the focal point for the pilgrims in Tinos, being the most venerated item in the Greek Orthodox world, and as such a central staging post (Rojek and
Urry, 1997) for the Greeks, however, it is hardly discernible due to the numerous offerings that are placed around it (see Figure 5.3). In fact, the actual encounter with the icon created multiple feelings, even uneasiness, as people’s expectations of the icon’s appearance, as created by the religious tradition, do not always match with the actual view. Lia, for example, said:

Interviewer: How did you like the icon?

Lia: “Let me tell you [she laughs], in fact, it is not really discernible...! I can’t honestly tell you if I liked it. You search for the Virgin Mary’s face but you cannot find it [it is covered with offerings]... Sometimes you see I am contemplating about such... because usually only something that I like can bring me.. In fact, while I was praying I also asked for apology from the Virgin Mary for my thoughts because I didn’t want her to believe that I just went there out of curiosity to see if the icon is nice [she laughs].”

Figure 5.3 Icon of the Virgin Mary: the original and the covered with offerings

The materiality of the icon does, in the first place, not seem to matter as pilgrims are instructed by their religious teachings to look through the icon (Bourdieu, 1984; Geertz, 1973; Keane, 2003), in order to grasp the signs that make it meaningful. For some people gazing at the icon was a way to re-conceptualize their previous understanding of the icon. Commenting on the smallness of the icon, Vicky, for example said “I used to believe that the bigger the icon the more powerful it is. But size doesn’t matter.. the grace it transmits
matters”. In fact, the power of the icon accumulates many features of Appadurai’s (1986) notion of fetish, in which particular things acquire their meanings from their uses and movements that can be understood in examining human actions that enliven them. Lia, for example, stated:

“Although the icon is a small one, unlike what you expect to see... however... if you reflect on it and consider all those people who have passed by the icon over the centuries... even if they can’t even see her face!.. it is amazing...”

The icon’s effect on people is further manifested in viewing how it mobilizes people and materializes their performances; it is usually not treated as an ordinary object (Appadurai, 1986; Geary, 1986) but is worshiped with a bow (Eliade, 1959) as it transmits superiority. According to Janna, for example:

“We are unworthy and so small... Our eyes have to be so clean to dare to look at the Virgin Mary. Because our Virgin Mary is the purest temple... And we human beings have no pure look. And this is also why each time the monks and the nuns pass by the icon they incline their heads and bow. They do not look at the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ because they consider themselves sinful”.

Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether it is its symbolic value that affects people or its very materiality embodied in the pilgrims offerings. In fact, it was observed that while entering the church, pilgrims’ eyes were seeking for, and subsequently, feasted on particular objects, hanging on top of the roof or positioned in particular view posts in the church, which they then commented with their fellow pilgrims (Urry, 1990). Particular religious objects in Tinos were made known through myths that circulate in religious communities either through believers’ verbal interactions or in textual form distributed by the church channels. In particular, leaflets that can be collected for free from the church present the story of particular objects, thereby directing people’s gazes and meanings as well as encouraging inter-subjective understandings and discourses. One of the most famous objects recalled by pilgrims is the metallic orange tree in the church entrance (see Figure 5.4, and p.118). Thus, in the ‘trail of miracles’ (Slater, 1986), pilgrims were observed to engage in practices of ‘hunting’ and ‘capturing’ religious signs, similar to MacCannell’s (1976) and Urry’s (1990) semiotic tourists, who are searching for, and are influenced by structured religious signs in material landscapes.
Objects that at first glance seemed to be of secondary value were found to have a considerable impact on people. The suspended oil-lamps and the ornaments in the church and around the icon as part of believers’ offerings to the Virgin Mary, called ‘tamata’, are, for example, materialized forms of remembrance (Tilley, 2006). In particular, gazing at ‘tamata’ becomes understood as gazing nostalgically upon the lives of others (Feifer, 1985), since as Vicky stated “every hanging oil-candle hides a personal story... represents a pain...” (see Figure 5.5). Equal to the Shikoku pilgrims who were walking with the past (Reader, 2006), pilgrims in Tinos are encountering the past, through seeing tamata that bring back to life stories that happened before (see Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Osbaldiston and Petray, 2011). Each object depicts a miracle experienced by a human being, and as such, the numerous tamata in the church represent/personify people that have visited the icon before; they incarnate individual human beings. Moreover, the enwrapping of religious objects with human stories has a considerable effect on pilgrims and elevates their own role in the religious experience. In fact, equal to Mitchell’s (1997, p.86) study of Mormons, where “individual memory of a particular feeling was collectivized in the process of establishing a common explanation of what each individual had felt”, so individual representations, in the form of tamata in Tinos, which symbolize personal miracles, become collectivized through the collective gaze and through people’s shared understanding of worldly problems and their hope for solutions. Indeed, the church with its material possessions constitutes an environment of memory (Davies, 2008) which permeates hope.
Accordingly, the demonstration of religious objects and especially of the pilgrims’ *tamata* seems not to be an arbitrary act. Rather, they are part of the staged choreography (Edensor, 1998; Franklin, 2004) that intends to communicate beliefs and to direct performances. In particular, similar to Gillis’ (1994) notion of identity as depending on memory, so do *tamata* commemorate a deity’s graces. *Tamata* ‘speak’ and denote things to people, affecting, thus, collective religious identity in various ways. Firstly, the display of a huge amount of *tamata* is an internalization process of humanity’s imperfection. Katia stated, for example, “*looking at the many offerings [tamata], I thought ‘oh my God, how many people are suffering...’*. Equally, Vaso said:

“When I saw all these offerings [tamata] in the church.. and all the objects hanging from the ceiling... So much pain so... it really made me think...[pause] I don’t know, you see the offerings everywhere and you can realize how much pain they must have had in order to... all these golden and the silver items indicate great pain.”

The second effect of the displayed *tamata* was the elevation of the place’s and the icon’s significance by the pilgrims. In particular, since *tamata* are usually offered as a thanksgiving, their presence represents proof of miracles accomplished by the Virgin Mary.
of Tinos, who is indirectly annointed as being the solution to human’s suffering. Equal to the accounts of Starkie’s (1957) pilgrims that evoked memories of those who passed the way of Santiago centuries ago, so do tamata ‘transport’ pilgrims back to the past and to sacred realms, inscribing Tinos with memories of happy endings, victorious stories (see Coats, 2011; Selwyn, 1996; Tilley, 2006; Waitt and Head, 2002), as they constitute tangible proofs of the icon’s religious grace so far. As Danay commented:

“I saw various things... I saw many hanging ships, which are said to be offerings made by fishermen, as well as all those things around the icon... the embossed metallic plaques.. with feet.. And I saw also gold jewellery.. and I thought that the people who brought all those things to the church.. their wish must have been realized. Hence something really exists.. it’s good to believe in something”.

Offerings are thus vehicles of meanings (Turner, 1978) that are able to transmit out-there-ness and to reinforce belief. By embodying the ‘known’, they enable human agency, similar to Latour (2000) and Michael’s (2000) objects. Danay, for example, in view of the tamata ornamenting the icon made a wish:

“I believed that my wish would be realized, because I saw so many offerings around the icon and I really believed that mine would also come true. So many people have done this before...”

Accordingly, while the symbolic qualities of the icon are emphasized by the Greek Orthodox religion, however, what causes awe, and is worshipped and gives value to the icon, is in fact its material consistence, in terms of the offerings that surround it. It is the offerings that elevate the icon and produce agency. Thus, similar to Danay, while Katerina was initially performing a 3rd party vow on behalf of her mother, in view of the icon, she also made a vow. As she recounted:

“In fact, when I went there [in the church] I was so much... I mean I was enticed from the various... the crowd I saw.. the tamata that were all around the icon, the golden ones, and all those things.. that I made a vow too.”

In Weber’s (1948) words it is, in fact, an ‘emotional propaganda’, which rests upon the powerful supportive relationship between the tamata and the miraculous icon, the one indicating and justifying the existence of the other; they ‘inter-cover’ each other and function as a hybrid in the production of religious experience that causes effects on the
pilgrimage community. Even though it resembles Latour’s (2005) hybrids, however, in this case the two protagonists are both materials. Offerings promote Virgin Mary’s miraculous power, thus enticing people to look at them and to engage in the practice of wish-making, as well as adding economic value to the church through their particular materials that maintain and supply the icon’s existence. It resembles Bourdieu’s (1962, 1991) institutionally structured performance of gift exchange that intends to safeguard religious institutions’ existence.

The structured and staged (Edensor, 2000; Franklin, 2004, 2008), rather than arbitrary, visual role of offerings in the production of religious experience is criticized by some participants, who emphasized the provocative effect of displayed objects on people that diminish and hide the real meanings and values of the icon. Janna, for example, recounted how she went away from the sight of tamata hanging on the miraculous icon, and chose another non-distractive place in the church:

“I walked away from the icon of the Virgin Mary and went to the iconostasis. There is the Virgin Mary too but without offerings around her. I felt much more devoutness there, than in front of the miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary, because you cannot see her there, so covered with offerings it is. To be honest – God forgive me- but aren’t so many offerings really a planned enticement for the pilgrims?”

5.3.3 The anonymous crowd

As Tylor (1987) said cultures in some sense ‘write’, and ‘writing’ may be in a variety of forms, like in the form of behaviour of others, which according to Ricoeur (1979) can be seen as a kind of text that is ‘read’ by insiders and outsiders. Pilgrims themselves and the events that occurred at the church were in fact found to make up the religious text too. Religious crowds, walking or crawling to the church laden with offerings, or singing in the church, shape the religious landscape and become materialized themselves. They constitute the embodied truth of belief and in a sense an extension of the icon itself. As Julia stated, for example: “the people made her [the Virgin Mary of Tinos] known.”

In comparing to Coleman and Collins (2006, p.41) relationship between buildings and ritual participants according to which “the building does not merely contain, but is constitutive of religious practice”, so too, the miraculous icon, the Church of the
Annunciation, and the island in general are constitutive of people and their religious practices. People's practices enliven and prove the significance of the icon and subsequently influence prospect participants' religious experience on site. In particular, human practice and religious movements generate material and performative manifestations (Martin, 2006) that entail representations, artefacts, appearances and performances, which form a set of markers of identity, indicating the boundary between 'us' and 'them'. The anonymous performing crowd (see Figure 5.6), as an embodied form of belief, becomes a staging post (Rojek and Urry, 1997) that exercises power on viewers, shaping the passion of religion, which would otherwise be shapeless and would provoke a variety of feelings, such as religious pride. In particular, intra-pilgrims gaze is very common in religious places as practicing pilgrims form a phenomenon, a spectacle for their observers. As Eleni, for example, admitted "we [she and her husband] stayed in the church for half an hour... to worship... And then we sat outside, for about an hour, observing the people passing by... entering and coming out of the church... and how they went..."

Indeed, gazing at others is a 'school' that serves for celebrating one's belief. Field-entry:

14 September 2009, 9.30am, at the yard of the Church of the Annunciation, Tinos

"I walked out the church just to find three of the oldest group members seating on a bench in the church yard. I walked towards them and their smiling faces upon seeing me allowed me to join their conversation. They were all holding a small bunch of basil in their hands, acquired earlier from the church, and looking towards the people coming out of the church. Stella looked at me and said nostalgically: 'Just look at the people, look how pious they are'. She further said: 'We are the best religion on world, we do not exaggerate, we are low-profile, we do not proselytize other people', 'we are real and we therefore don't promote our religion like other religions do on TV, we just believe."

The view of collective practices, moreover, touches individuals as they constitute the embodied form of common-sense (Schutz, 1962) understanding shared by believers. For Georgia, for example, the huge crowd of pilgrims in Tinos verified the superiority of her religion and created feelings of pride:

"[the atmosphere] was very moving, because the place was crowded, and all those people had looked forward to being there so much... this really touches me. I feel..."
proud of being a Christian. I feel proud of being a Christian Orthodox and a Greek citizen”.

Figure 5.6 The anonymous crowd

Similarly, the performing crowds created feelings of attachment and belonging to it:

“You feel closeness to these people... there is a shared love... the love you have for the Virgin Mary...” (Sophia)

In accordance to Dupront (1987, p.413), “pilgrimage sites are consecrated by the presence and faith of pilgrims who add to their sanctity, which is disseminated back to the pilgrims”. According to Barbara, for example, “when you see people having faith, you feel a shudder”. Performing co-believers are often role models that people admire. Seeing dramatic performances (see Figure 5.7), such as crawling, seems, in particular, to fascinate and inspire awe in observers. Vaso, for example, said:

“When you see all those people... some on their knees, some... it.. I felt so... like my heart stopped... that’s how I felt...Especially when I saw that man crawling without kneecaps with his knees bleeding, and he was even carrying a paralyzed child in his back...”
Similar to Featherstone’s (1992, pp.286–7) spectacles, there was an “ever present Otherness” in Tinos, which allowed participants to “construct an identity, to know who [they] are, [and] to know who [they] are not”. In fact, gazing at others’ practices elicited reflection to their watchers in their own quest for self-identity, mainly because such practices are perceived to be an indication of their performers’ strength of belief. In particular, performance is linked to symbolic meaning. As Vaso said, for example:

“Because someone who ascends on his knees ought to have much faith... because if you want to do this on your knees... I don’t know, but I don’t think that I could do it, not more than 1 km, I don’t know the exact distance... it seemed to me to be a really long distance”.

Gazing at religious performers and their belief expressions constitutes, moreover, a means for people to witness the religious power. The active religious crowd becomes objectified and represents the present, active and contemporary proof of the Virgin Mary’s ongoing miraculous existence. Symbolic aesthetic experiences are, therefore, predominant among participants (Harrison, 2001; Porteous, 1996), as particular pilgrims’ movements or styles of mobility (Frey, 1998), such as crawling, are seen to encompass symbolic values (Bar-Tal, 2000; Volkan, 1997). Helena, for example, recounted:

“When you see an old woman on her knees, you realize that it is impossible... that she surpassed herself... You see, people entrust themselves to the Virgin Mary, she is our doctor. And there, without realizing it, human weakness is surmounted and so you see people like old women crawling”.
In fact, the human body acts as mediator, which according to Ricoeur (1994, p.124) "allows the ontological tie uniting our being to other beings". Through metaphorical links, activities such as a crawling body, can be interpreted anew and their value widened (van Peursen, 1992). As such, the practice of crawling indicates, for some people, Virgin Mary's intervention; human bodies are constituted as receivers or 'vessels' of holy grace. Performing pilgrims in Tinos are the living paradigm of the Virgin Mary’s enormity and grace and are thus themselves regarded as being beyond the ordinary.

5.3.4 The devil in Paradise?

While religious teachings and materials stage and direct pilgrims’ gazes (Edensor, 2000; 2009), pilgrims’ very being in Tinos physically permits encounters with spaces and situations, which can result in unexpected (Dewsbury, 2000) and even religiously unwanted outcomes, based on the notions of multidirectional flows of different bodies and materials in heterogeneous tourist spaces (Edensor, 1998) and of pilgrims as reflexive beings. Indeed, non-humans’ positioning in space triggers multiple flows of action and influences pilgrims’ experiences. Comparable to Cloke and Jones’ (2001) trees and the construction of operations around them, so does the spatial structure of the Tinos capital and its streets’ contents direct people’s movements and itinerary as well as shape and influence their behaviour. For example, while two main streets are leading to the church, pilgrims are observed to engage mechanically in a circled, clockwise route ascending to the church from the one and descending from the other street based on the streets’ contents. As Vangelis commented "It is really funny, because there are two streets... in one street you can obtain everything you need for the church and your vow, and in the other, parallel to the first everything for your entertainment!" (see Figure, 5.8). Accordingly, people usually ascend via the ‘sacred street’ and descend via the ‘secular street’.
Nevertheless, even in carefully staged religious spaces (see Bryman, 1999; Edensor, 2000; Ritzer and Liska, 1997) sacred and the secular features often exist in spaces simultaneously. In particular, the idyllic religious atmosphere in Tinos is often overshadowed by secular features, even in the ‘sacred street’, which is filled with temptations and economic exploitation that distract some believers from their primary religious scope of visit. Indeed, from a distant view, pilgrims notice facets which often contradict their religious scope. As Barbara noticed, for example:

“When you look at the street... so many people selling icons here and there you lose this religious feeling... you constantly switch from the one to the other state... Because when you turn your look towards the secular parts [see Figure 5.9] and you see various things... you have thoughts like: I will go there and there, I will go to enjoy myself, I will go for a coffee, I will go to have a drink...you see, you can’t resist. You get seduced! That’s life!”. 
Similarly, shop owners and beggars produce often negative feelings to participants, who feel that their faith is exploited. Maria, for example, recounted:

“From the beginning of the street till you reach the church you see people with their arms stretched out, dressed in black and begging... and wearing also a rosary. That is, they have made a business out of it. If Jesus Christ were alive now and entered a site like this, he would throw everybody out as he did it in the Solomon’s Temple”.

Even within the church sphere, commercialization of religion and exploitation is particularly evident as people are constantly reminded to support the church financially; as Maria noticed, for example, “you enter the church and you see one money-box here one there, everywhere!”, a fact that caused diverse reactions and feelings. Janna, for example, said that:

“Some people may not have enough to give or to offer. They may feel uneasy at that moment. The feeling of a simultaneous happiness and sadness may be experienced at that time so to say, and you may say ‘I love you Virgin Mary, but I don’t have anything to offer you’ or ‘I can’t offer you this or that’.”

Believers’ willingness to offer things to Virgin Mary is hence often transformed into an obligation with people engaging repeatedly in ‘unwanted’ activities, like donating money
and buying religious items without their actual will. Along with Julia, for example, "all around, you see this kind of bazaar, you feel lost and...I didn't even want to buy an icon. But of course I finally bought one... You somehow get scandalized..." Tinos, therefore, constitutes an enframed place, gifted with a grace and at the same time surrounded by secular threads, which struggle to enter and are thus also visible on-site. As Weber (1948, p.340) commented “tension occurs between the religious ethic and “this-worldly” life forces”.

5.4 Performing the Religious Landscape

Meanings are not only pre-given and inherent but are also invoked through activities of religious actors (Moore, 1986). Believers are more than ‘collectors of gazes’ (Urry, 1990) but engage also bodily (Crouch et al., 2001; Thrift, 1996) in the religious landscape. Hence, gazing at the religious signs, discussed above, is not sufficient for religious believers, who yearn to become part of the religious scene, actively engage in it and consume religion. Accordingly it is important to examine religious experience in terms of the performative character of what people do (Crouch, 2003) with the religious objects, as objects can be given new significance through the ways in which they are consumed (Miller, 1998). In view of the icon as the spring of sacredness and participants’ focal point, sacredness is consumed, 1) through the human body which is the medium through which religious signs are recognized and experienced (Martin, 2006) as well as 2) through secondary religious objects that are connected to the icon and constitute an affordance (Gibson, 1979) that allows people to take part in the sacred and to ‘play’ with the sacred. In fact, through religion’s material guise people examine and apprehend the construction of their religious worlds in a direct way (first-hand) rather than second-hand through reflection of religious scripts.

Pilgrimage is not just a question of getting to the destination (see Baerenholdt et al., 2004; Sheller and Urry 2004), namely the church but mobility continues even within the destination place itself. Religion in action (Turner, 1967), is more than manifested in Tinos in viewing believers’ vivid mobility and liveliness in allocating and relocating materials, while having the icon as their central point of action and reference. All ascended to the church, loaded with offerings; some holding candles, others carrying even big filled bags
(see Figure 5.10), and engaging in colourful and multiple corporeal practices such as crawling, walking barefoot, some of them laughing and some others crying. As cult objects such as icons or relics are most of the time entrenched in a place (Nolan and Nolan, 1989), the miraculous icon is characterized here as a ‘core religious object’, whereas other religious objects are characterised as ‘secondary religious objects’, a notion also resembling Appadurai’s (1986) distinction of materials into ordinary objects and fetishes which he characterises as the ‘other things’ of commodity. In particular, as will be seen, multiple uses of materials are examined considering their on-site and off-site importance to believers as well as the importance of the human factor and its performance in spreading religiousness is underlined.

![Image](Figure 5.10 Crowd loaded with offerings)

Image captured by the author, 2009, Tinos

5.4.1 The ritual of devotion

The ritual of worshipping the miraculous icon was pursued habitually by all participants of the study. As Fotis, said “You see, it is also a habit.. others are doing it, everybody is doing it”. In Bourdieu’s (1989) words, Tinos is a world that seems to be self-evident, a symbolic capital, in which religious participants perform known and recognized religious practices enwrapped in the rules, symbolisms and practices of how the religious culture approaches the sacred (Collins and Dandelion, 2006). Accordingly, a flow of performances
took place among pilgrims based on common-sense constructs (Schutz, 1962); each one enunciating institutionalised roles (Edensor, 1998) by playing out a role of the script based on a performative know-how.

The typical ritual of worshipping the icon of Tinos presents a 'kinetic ritual' (Coleman and Eade, 2004) that includes serialized performative manifestations, such as the kissing of the icon, the crossing of oneself three times in front of it and the lighting and placing of one or more candles in the stand next to the icon. Finally, pilgrims collect consecrated oil distributed by the church and holy water from the basement of the church. Some (usually older women) even performed 'metanoia', that is, a dramatic performance redeemed by the protagonist's 'turning' or 'repentance' (Martin, 2006), in which they bend three times in front of the icon touching each time the floor with their right hand, crossing themselves afterwards and kissing the icon, a fixed and structured procedure bestowing elements of art (Adler, 1989b) and dancing (Sallnow, 1987) to the phenomenon as pilgrims are distinguished by their performances.

Mobilized in a social space of common understanding (Bourdieu, 1989), such known performativities constitute a set of markers of religious identity (Bourdieu, 1984) that bestow confidence and security to its performers and transmit mental states that are religiously essential (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Kaliopi, for example, being so absorbed from the sacred atmosphere and the religious proceedings experienced flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), in terms of a lack of self-consciousness and loss of sense of place. As she said "it was so weird... I engaged in the veneration ritual three subsequent times entering the church and coming out from its basement, only to realize at the end that there were so many steps and that I had ascended all of them three times to enter the church, its unbelievable!" (Fieldnotes, Tinos, Village Volax, in a café, 13/09/09). In fact, such standardized habitual religious procedures (Bourdieu, 1991) create often unreflexive, passive believers who engage in practices mechanically without even knowing why. For example, Barbara, when she was asked why she lit candles in the church, responded: "I don't know why, I think that...I don't know... and I lit so many candles! [laughs]". Such passive performances neglect the notion of the human body as being open to multiple affects (Gil, 1998; Thrift, 2004) as well as places' dynamics, which can host unpredictable performances and experiences. Georgia, for example, experienced shock, when she realized that she venerated a Catholic church, during the day off, without knowing it.
Fieldnotes: 14 September 2009, 6pm, Village Ktikados, Tinos

"As soon as we were informed by a resident that the festival that took place in the village was an annual celebration of the Catholic Church in the village [we were told that there are many Catholics on the island and as such the village had two churches one Greek Orthodox and one Catholic, which however have the same architectural style], which we had previously visited, I noticed Georgia becoming so enraged and worried, as if she had venerated Satan. She kept stressfully saying "but I kissed the icons in there and I crossed myself even with holy water that I found there!! What is going to happen now? I really didn’t know that it was a Catholic Church.”

Nevertheless, the veneration of the icon is not only based on authoritative semiotic readings (Bourdieu, 1984) and structured practices but social constructs can also be unveiled in terms of how believers bodily use the icon (Haldrup and Larsen, 2006), since believers live the icon not only culturally, but also physically (Crouch et al., 2001). Believers’ bodily engagement with the icon can bring about significant effects as a result of this interplay (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000). The corporeal contact with the icon is,
especially for some people, very important and accordingly the practice of touching it with their hands or with other parts of the human body is a common observation, their very self becoming materialized in the sight of the subject-like nature of a thing (Miller, 1987) like the icon. Giorgos, for example, who has undergone many brain surgeries, explained the effect his embodied interplay with the icon had on him:

“When you reach the icon you remain with your head bowed, you try to pray... you cross yourself.. I don't know why, but I feel such a tremendous help when I lean my head, my forehead on the pane that covers the icon”.

The sign of help is constructed through his engagement, and is embodied through his encounter with the icon (Crouch, 2002). Accordingly, it is through doing that believers feel things and get things done (Harrison, 2000). Embodiments may play a vital role in transmitting religious ideas, since individuals are able to sense the sacred. In fact, the physical encounter with the icon enables believers to wish for things and receive grace, which would otherwise not be possible. Believers at that moment are selective open surfaces, which like ‘empty vessels’ are ready to be filled with the Virgin Mary’s grace. As Babis, for example, noticed “when you pray you want to receive grace.. To be cleansed and get blessed.. It is that such icons have been created and painted by holy and pure people. The mere touch of them, made the icon holy and pure”.

5.4.2 Making offerings

Apart from veneration, the practice of devotion is often accompanied by the placing of offerings and gifts next to the miraculous icon. Offerings are varied, have multiple purposes and are often even religiously inscribed. As part of a vow accomplished, or as part of a future wish or personal obligation towards the Virgin Mary, people used to bring objects or make donations to the church as a gift to the Virgin Mary. Money in particular constitutes for some an inseparable part of the religious system as it has a symbolic power that expresses pilgrim’s devotion to its deity (Davies, 2004); “You see so many women there running as if competing with each other in who is going to offer the most money...” (Makis). Similar to the secular developed societies, where money underlies most aspects of life being the medium of and for everyday life as well as constituting the means of intensifying any particular value, so in Tinos too the offering of money works for particular values, such as the saving of one’s soul. Kostas, for example, commenting on a
woman’s huge money offering said “she is doing it for the sake of her soul”. Equally, according to Babis, offerings allow people to make a wish. As he commented:

“The offering you make has a meaning. equal to the candle you light. When you light it you think that in the same way as the candle melts.. so should my sins disappear.”

Believer’s current bodily and psychological conditions play a crucial role in their engagement in such an action, a fact that confirms the notion of the body as a medium through which individuals understand and perceive the world (Baerenholdt et al., 2004; Crouch, 2005; Crouch and Lübbren, 2003; Edensor, 2001; Knudsen, 2011). Indeed, except for the washing of one’s sins it has also invigorating psychological qualities. As Danay said:

“If people feel pain, then yes. Even I, when I feel pain, I think that at that very moment it is better to give the money to the church rather than to keep it at my home and to spend it here and there. Why? I don’t know! I just feel like this.”

Accordingly, believers’ use of the non-human money seeks to enable agency of the non-human icon. Furthermore, some other believers prefer instead to give money to support the church through other offerings. Olive oil is, for example, a very common gift as well as wax. Along with Vasia:

“To the Saints you promise to bring olive oil and wax, the oil for the oil-candles which are lighted in the churches with olive oil and the wax is used by the church to make the candles we believers light.”

Other offerings made by the believers are self-made consecrated bread (“prosforo”) (Elsa) to support the ritual procedure as well as golden crosses (Theodora, Tasoula) and candles (Vaso). Usually, the bigger the wishes, the most impressive the offerings. As Vaso, for example, commented: “we buy our candles depending on the vow we have made... some people for example buy candles as tall as their height, in order to thank the Virgin Mary”. The metallic plackets of tamata bought earlier in the shops are also left behind at that very moment as a thanksgiving, depicting a particular miracle that happened (for example, plackets that depict legs or babies indicate the cure of disabled people and the birth of a child respectively). In a similar vein, the absence of such a gesture seems also to bestow particular identity to the believer. As Sakis said, for instance, when he was asked if he left
something behind for the Virgin Mary: “No, no, no, God be praised, there was no reason”, a fact that indicates that the differing acts of making offerings are part of different role plays in the religious stage (Edensor, 1998).

5.4.3 Empowering objects

The miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary acquires grace and a holy touch, which can only be sensed through one’s embodied encounter with the icon (Crouch, 2002). In particular, the power it transmits affects believers in such way that additional practices to the worship and to the personal corporeal consumption of its grace become possible. Working from within (Ingold, 2000) the religious environment of Tinos, pilgrims invent tactics for saving some of the icon’s grace, which would not occur without their intervention (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000). Applying Heidegger’s theory of ‘Dasein’ (1962), to get religious contact requires believers to dwell in the performance of transforming objects in order to accomplish it. Like mediators, they bring secular and secondary religious objects in connection with ‘core religious objects’, such as the miraculous icon, to illuminate them with the holiness enclosed in the sacred item. Through this process a transformation of the symbolic function of objects is achieved. In particular, through the physical encounter and contact with the icon, ordinary items become blessed as they are perceived to be touching the deity itself, since icons are generally believed to be “houses of a holy spirit” (Barnard, 1977, p.12) and hence both containers and refractions of a divine essence. Accordingly, most of the participants brought several items to the miraculous icon and by leaning and crossing them on its surface they religiously upgrade them. Soula, for example, said:

“I crossed it on the icon [the rosary]...it is like touching the Virgin Mary. I have illuminated it”.

Accordingly, while the place’s sacredness is immaterial, it is not abstract as it can be transformed into concrete form through pilgrims’ particular activities, such as the process of illuminating objects. Furthermore, independent from the predetermined functional nature of some objects in a society, namely, from their ‘techno-function’ (Schiffer, 1992), secondary religious objects, such as rosaries, talismans or icon replications are only then perceived as valuable and connected to the divine, when brought in contact with core religious items. As Anna commented, for example, in order to justify her practice of blessing a small icon replication she had previously bought in a religious shop in Tinos:
“otherwise there is no point having it, it is like buying a painting, that’s all. It must be eulogized in the church”. Thus, contrary to Gibson (1979) who argues that uses of things must exist and be immanent as affordances of those artefacts, secondary objects’ religious function and usage is only then accepted and efficient when having been previously transformed. Only religious items bought inside the churches are directly acknowledged as being blessed. As Fotis stated, for example:

“Look at this [he shows me his rosary], if you buy it from a shop it is not eulogized. I have left it for forty days in the sanctuary, and each time when I go to Tinos I lean it on the icon. Or when I go to the Mount Athos, I lean it on relics – there are many in Mount Athos - and it gets blessing... Saints’ relics are ... superior”.

Equally, non-religious items can acquire blessing too. Elsa, for example, bought several gifts for her family, which she then took to the church to get blessed by the Virgin Mary:

“... as soon as I bought the slippers we went to the church again, we lit the candles... I thanked her... I crossed my children’s slippers three times on the icon and said: ‘My Virgin Mary, let his steps be clean and honest’, this was my prayer to the Virgin Mary. Oh! I forgot to tell you that I also bought a shirt for my brother and another one for my husband. that I crossed too... to get blessed as well...”

Accordingly, things are not prefigured and predetermined but through pilgrims dwelling in the religious practices new possibilities of reconfiguring the world can occur (Deleuze, 2000; Ingold, 2000). It is not only through symbols and meanings that the world is experienced, but also through pilgrims’ particular material practices, which assist in managing and sustaining specific ways of experiencing the world (see Crang, 1997) Indeed, through making things ‘special’, pilgrims connect to the sacred in their everyday lives, in that, the ordinary, the everyday, joins with the sacred icon to become what Harrison (2001, p.170) terms “the extraordinary, the special”. Thus, contrary to Baudrillard’s (1981) de-differentiation of reality and images, trivial objects brought from a holy place are unique, their very uniqueness acquired from people’s physical disconnection from their secular reality and their embodied performances in the ‘other’ out-there. In particular, religious objects and souvenirs from sacred places possess significant past value. They carry ideological messages about the site (Shenhav-Keller, 1993) and spread memory (Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Dubisch, 1995; Pels, 1998) as they tell their own story. As Babis stated, for example: “I am so proud when I feel or even can tell others that my
rosary went to such-and-such a saint...” Objects do not only encompass memory but are touched with sacredness through their very travelling to holy places. Accordingly, through objects memory becomes materialized and past and present co-exist simultaneously in relation to a desired future (see Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Tilley, 2006).

The very ‘specialness’ of consecrated objects is recognized by pilgrims not only symbolically but also physically. Working as communicators between people and the Virgin Mary, empowered items possess agency that is interpreted by believers as holy signs transmitted by the deity. Elsa, for example, recounted her experience of manifesting the sacred through an object, which was previously blessed by the Virgin Mary:

“After the liturgy we went to the shops, and I bought this plaster shrine [she points to a big imitation of the Church of the Annunciation of Tinos, which stood on a table in the corner of the living-room]... and then I returned to the church and because it was so crowded I asked a church official to cross it for me on the icon. And then he gave it back to me and while I was putting it in my bag it suddenly started flashing on and off ...! ‘Thank you Virgin Mary’, I said, ‘for showing me your sign, thank you’...”

Once more, the act of witnessing the sacred through the material is about human intervention, as the sacred is experienced through all the witness’ senses. In accordance to Dewsbury (2003) it is a movement from the self towards the unknown and a movement towards the self, demanding that it acknowledges its responsibility as that unique witness. Indeed, residing in a religious belief system, a religious experience can be any happening that pilgrims attribute at least in part to the action of supernatural forces (Proudfoot and Shaver, 1975), which does not necessarily need to be something unusual. In fact, the blinking of the object indicates the pilgrim’s need to acknowledge religious intercession in her material possession. Accordingly, humans and non-humans are mutually involved and are constructing (Latour, 1999; Whatmore, 1999) the religious experience. Materials are an extension of religion, which enable believers to sense and meld into the religious world. Influenced by Thrift (1997), it can be said that humans and materials form hybrid assemblages that can be called ‘technologies of experience’.
5.4.4 Relocating and mobilizing sacredness: The sacred Out of there!

Based on the fact that the icon is entrenched in the place of Tinos, human's intervention is, moreover, necessitated in spreading its grace and blessing outside its surroundings. Through people, secular objects become 'traps' of a particular deity's grace and hence portable vessels of sacredness. Subsequently, places move around, rather than being fixed in one location. Places, and as such a deity's grace which is entrenched in places, are seen as travelling themselves, within networks of human and nonhuman agents (Baerenholdt et al., 2004; Sheller and Urry, 2004; Sheller and Urry, 2006). Pilgrims' experience and activity in sacred places can thus affect changes in familiar spaces of home (Hui, 2009). Homes can become sites for religious experience as sacredness penetrates people's everyday lives. Religious tourism and everyday life are joined rather than separated through pilgrims' performances and the objects they bring with them. Home, within the religious context, is not understood as one's place of residence. Home is where religion is. Place is thus immaterial, in terms of memories, representations and objects that can be mobile and experienced in many spaces (Hetherington, 1997).

As vessels of sacredness, items obtained from the island transmit sacred energy to the humanly imperfect world outside, making the religious material world an expected part of believers' lives (Lash, 2001; Latour, 2005; Miller, 1998). As Nicky, for example, commented: "The most valuable thing we got was the holy water and the oil from the Virgin Mary". In particular, pilgrims, after completing the ritual of worship, exited the church from the side door at the left side of the building and by holding empty bottles in their hands went downstairs to the lower floor to fill them with holy water which springs from the church's tap. According to Barbara "It is rather conceptual. It is said, for example, that the holy water is blessed... but ok.. I mean of course it is from the church's tap... but you see this is not exactly the water that the priest eulogizes, it is from the tap... yet, when you collect it you say 'it is from Tinos! From the church! I got it from there and it is holy!'"

Holy water constitutes a tangible and thus visible form of sacredness that can be saved and consumed whenever needed. Indeed, influenced by Bourdieu (1984), Hegel, (1991), Lash, (2001), Miller, (1998) it is argued that pilgrims' lives are constructed in constant encounter with things brought from sacred places, which are consumed across multiple
contexts (see Ateljeic and Doorne, 2003) having both practical and symbolic qualities (Keane, 2003; Michael, 2000). They are part of a becoming, which is considered in terms of re-writing of the self and the mechanisms of getting along in life (Dewsbury, 2000). As Katia, for example, said:

"When you suffer from something, you drink it and it does you good. It is blessed water. So if there is something wrong... or you feel pain, you anoint yourself with it. Making the sign of the cross, you cross yourself with the water wherever you feel pain... and you think 'it helps me'. And many times it really helps... I mean if you ask something with great faith...”.

Indeed, people’s faith in their religion and in their deity helps them to hope for things and to cope with their problems (Koenig et al., 2001; Pargament et al., 2005); their very hope flourishing from the view and consumption of sacred materials. The effect of the power of belief in materials’ extraordinary power is further evidenced in considering consecrated oil. Tasoula, a cancer patient, for example, recounted:

“When I had my first injection, none of the painkillers helped me, only the oil from Tinos calmed me down. This injection, you know, was so... in the spinal column, I could neither sit nor stand...But as soon as I anointed myself with the oil, the pain vanished”.

Equal to Levi-Strauss’s myths as ‘languages of pain’ that help people deal with their problems psychologically (Bowen, 2011), so does the usage of religious materials exercise a supportive and encouraging effect upon people in need; deriving from the island and the Church of the Annunciation, materials are believed to contain sacred qualities. Furthermore, Danay uses the holy water to free people from ‘the evil’s eye’ (Danay); the forces surrounding the bodies that are believed to be responsible for their misfortunes, as well as releasing positive energy and improving a place’s aura. As she stated, for example:

“When I don’t feel well in my home, when I am distressed, when I quarrel with my husband [she laughs], then I make holy water rites, I mean, I sprinkle the holy water in the house, on our bed, on the walls, everywhere. I air the place as I say.”

The multiplicity of uses of religious objects is further evidenced as their beneficial effects are not only exercised on human beings but also on non-human beings, who become
involved in the religious world (Cloke and Perkins, 2005; Franklin, 2008; Picken, 2010; Whatmore, 1999). According to Vicky, for example:

"After Easter we always clean our icon-stand. From there I gather all the small bottles of holy water and empty them into a bigger one, which we then bring to our fields to bless our productions. We water the roots of our plants in order to have a good harvest next year".

### 5.4.5 Maintaining the sacred

Religious material has not only ephemeral usages and effects on people, as seen in the case of holy water that is used occasionally. Rather, some believers seek to be surrounded by a religious presence or ambience to retain an ongoing connection to the sacred even outside sacred spaces. Using the metaphor of the diver, who needs the oxygen mask in order to survive in the deep sea, so do some believers need to be constantly connected to the sacred, in order to survive in the secular world. Accordingly, believers' intention to collect or buy religious materials from Tinos is to be understood also as a way of recharging sacredness.

The religious recharging is largely accomplished through the interplay of objects and pilgrims. It is pilgrims' engagement with religious places (Ingold, 2000) and the re-working and inventing of material uses that enable particular ways of experiencing the religious world (Crang, 1997). A common practice observed, for example, among believers in the sacred site, is the 'sweeping' of the icon with a piece of textile. According to Elsa "They are doing this so as to have the blessing always with them, in their bag, always with them." One can speak of a 'pocketization' of the Virgin Mary, that is, of the shrinking and mobilizing of sacredness, which is also possible through other objects, such as religious tokens (like small crosses) or rosaries that people wear after having been previously blessed. Stella, for example, who visited the relic of Saint Panteleimon in Andros island on the day off, as well as the relic of Saint Ephraim in Athens, which the second group visited on the return journey, said:

"We went to St Panteleimon's monastery, where his skull is kept... anyway, he is said to help sick people, he is like a doctor, yes. We worshipped there, and on the way out I bought a talisman to cross myself with it. Because we are in the habit of crossing ourselves... Do you know what its significance is? It is the same as the piece of cotton consecrated with oil we had got from Ephraim [a monastery]."
are carrying them [the Saints] with us! Now, we have them all with us! Yes! We took them with us! Is there anything better than this?"

Equally, Sakis, said:

"I have a habit... When I smoke in the car, I never stub out my cigarettes in the car astray, but I always throw them out of the window, because inside the astray I have a piece of cotton from St Gregory, dipped in consecrated oil. I have it there for my protection".

Accordingly, particular objects superiority enable people to create and change utilitarian functions (Preston, 2000) of materials in order to achieve particular states (Crouch, 2003), such as the feeling of being accompanied by saints and being protected. Furthermore, assistant objects (otherwise known as technologies), afford and affect subsequent affordances (Michael, 2000; Walsh and Tucker, 2009) as they increase a body’s capabilities and expand its ‘normal’ ‘affordances’. For example, Fotis and Irene never leave their home without taking their prayer books with them as well as the oil-lamp. As Fotis said:

"The most important thing is the prayer-book. Because it has all the prayers in it, that’s why it is called a prayer-book. So, when you wake up in the morning, you pray, as well as in the evening and at night before you go to bed! Everything is inside there. It is a small red book that has everything inside. And wherever I go, I always take it with me... I also take consecrated oil with me [he laughs] and the oil-lamp. So, as soon as we arrive at the hotel we light it. As soon as we arrive... You see it is part of the preparation to pray, and it keeps you calm...yes, yes it prepossesses you... maybe because you are thinking of the church in this way...you feel like being in the church, this is how it is..."

Similarly, a rosary, a bracelet that in the secular world is primarily used as an accessory, can additionally enhance, according to Lia, one’s closeness to God as well as one’s patience:

"Having a rosary enhances our trust, because many times you may pray to God but he doesn’t reply, he doesn’t even give you a sign, even if you have an acute problem and you need his sign immediately...But by having something in your
hands, like a rosary, you feel like having God near you, and this gives you patience, until God decides to reveal himself to you...”

In fact, objects such as the oil-lamp and the rosary play a crucial role in the production of religious experience. Therefore, a pilgrim with an assistant object can be considered an entity (Latour, 2005), a hybrid (see Michael, 2000; Walsh and Tucker, 2009) as each component sets the conditions for the other (Miller, 1987; 2005) sharing doings and enactments (Larsen, 2006). Through such hybrids religion can be experienced ‘away’ (see Hui, 2009), as believers are constantly connected to the sacred. Such objects orchestrate conditions of being (Walsh and Tucker, 2009). Alexia, for example, started reading the prayer book during the bus journey to Tinos as soon as tensions between other people in the bus arose, in order to calm down and be transferred back to the pious and peaceful scope of her visit. As she said:

“I started reading the Virgin Mary’s prayer [paraklisi]... Because there was a lot of stress and I wanted to calm down. Yes, and it really helped me calm down”.

5.5 Social Relations and Embodied Religiousness

Religiousness is not only sensed through gazing at others (Urry, 1990), but also through believers’ own bodily practices (Crouch, 2003) and engagement with the communities of religion. By being in settings that encompass the physical presence of others, pilgrims experience themselves as members of a group and develop feelings of belonging to it (Davies, 1988). Through their participation in performative flows, believers become part of the religious landscape, constituting a lived expression of religiousness, impressing others and working out their belief through their interaction and co-existence with other people. Pilgrims are not only religiously structured to perform religion, but also structuring religiousness and influencing each other both in a positive and a negative way. They are part and parcel of Tinos’s religious atmosphere and their activities constitute themselves a structure of religiousness, invoking sensualities, which according to the participants extended well beyond the visual. Pilgrims become hence objectified and both read and are the text.
5.5.1 When the anonymous crowd becomes ‘Us’: Collective feelings of religion

Performing shared symbolic systems through institutional practices have been found to have a uniting effect on people, especially within the church space. Indeed, as Bourdieu (1989, p.18) argued, “the construction of social reality is not only an individual enterprise but may also become a collective enterprise”. A religious service, in which many people worship together, can, thus, be a compelling context, generating a sense of being together (Davies, 1988) and being in the presence of something else. In particular, based on a common pre-selected and pre-interpreted world, people gather to experience their mutual reality (Schutz, 1962), which also determines their performances. As such, people’s participation in common practices, such as singing together, become symbolic capitals as they are perceived and recognized as legitimate (Bourdieu, 1989). Accordingly, collective religious practices raise profound feelings as they confirm one’s faith and celebrate symbolic reality. As Sophia said, for example:

“You see so many people, each with his own history, and you see how all of them sing together with devoutness, and you feel so nice!... Feelings that cannot be expressed with words”.

As Eade and Sallnow (1991, p.119) stated “the pilgrimage is about enabling pilgrims to feel that they are integrally involved in the divine redemptive project”. Through believers’ religious performative synchronization, the crowd obtains considerable power and forms a useful tool for manifesting and sensing religiousness. According to Bourdieu (1989, p.17), religious fields aim at producing social classes as “corporate bodies”, using a theory that is well-founded in their reality, which intends to unify and group people together. In particular, the practice of pilgrims’ writing their names as well as those of their beloved ones on a sheet of paper, in order to pray for their health, is a common ritual practice in the Greek Orthodox world and is also common in the Church of the Annunciation. As Babis commented:

“With all these prayers from the believers and the wishes they give and everything, this place inevitably becomes blessed! In fact, it is a considerable matter having a personal problem and seeing the people in the church pray for your problem...It’s great... That’s why you write down your name when you go to the church... Because it is important that so many people pray for you. Inevitably, God will listen to someone’s prayer. Not all people are spiritually dead...”
Through this collective practice, the crowd is given power, as it becomes an active, necessary and valuable part of the religious ‘success’. The announcement of the names by the priest synchronizes believers’ collective prayers, turning the assemblage of the many individual strangers into a powerful bonded crowd that works for all believers individually. The saying: “one for all and all for one” (The Three Musketeers, from the novel of Dumas, 1844) seems to be vindicated here. Individual practices, such as the writing of names, become collectivized, whereas collective practices, such as prayers, are individualised to match each one’s wish. Accordingly, the anonymous crowd can also be considered an important means for achieving personal ends, a fact that is consistent with Durkheim’s (1915) functionality of the religious collectiveness and the notion of the society as the soul of religion.

Religiousness and human connectedness is, however, not only experienced and constructed institutionally or in religious grounds. A communal tendency is observed in Tinos, with many participants seeking communication and social relations even in recreational spaces. Pilgrims construct by themselves part of the experience, selecting significance amongst a complexity of relations, things, actions and feelings (Crouch, 2009). In particular, the ‘everydayness’ of tourism (Crouch, 2003; Holloway, 2003), or else the ‘touristscapes’ (Edensor, 2007), with the mundane recreational activities, such as the time spent in the bus, the daytrips, the times spent in restaurants or in cafés have been marked as ‘special’ by some participants, as they enabled talking and subsequently feelings of solidarity; they highlight the spiritual, immaterial and thus practical sight of the religious phenomenon. As Sophia said, for example:

“You get to know people, you talk with them...you have common interests...you laugh, we even danced together! When we were eating, we were all laughing, but we all knew at heart the real purpose of our visit...and the love we have, and everything was shared and you feel joy...”

Accordingly, pilgrims may sense sacredness in the everyday enactments of tourism (Crouch, 2003; Holloway, 2003), which entails immanent potential for new appreciations (Harrison, 2000, p. 498) of religion through the pilgrims’ corporeal collective activities. Indeed, their shared understandings created also spaces of collective hunting of signs,
based on stories meaningful to the pilgrims (Frey, 1998). For example, based on the field-notes:

14-15 August 2009, Midnight, in the church yard

"While I was walking during midnight in the church yard, I was attracted by a large number of people standing below the lightened bell-tower and indicating excitedly and occasionally at it [see Figure 5.12]. As I wasn’t able to discern anything unusual, I asked a woman standing next to me what we are looking at and she said that around midnight, the shadow of the Virgin Mary is to be seen on the bell-tower. According to Panos “. . . but that depends on what you believe . . . cause if you believe it very much, even if you haven’t seen anything, you will say that you saw . . .” Yet, neither the researcher nor any other of the participants finally saw Virgin Mary’s shadow . . . “

Figure 5.12 In trail of miracles

Furthermore, apart from celebrating the common belief, leisure time enabled participants also to reveal and share personal problems. In particular, the Tinos experience is the unfolding of one’s everyday self and confrontation with it, rather than an escape from it (MacCannell, 1976). As Sophia, for example, recounted:
“You know on trips like this one, you openly speak about your pain, about what you have been through... because other people have the same problems as you... you get courage, you think that you are not alone... in this problem... because I have somebody to talk to, and as I said you gain so much from these people, like Voula or Tasoula... for me, making those acquaintances was a benefit for my life... how can I put it... I sometimes cannot really express what I feel... it is, it is something very beautiful... the common problem... all those things bond people and I believe that there you can find true friendship, because at these moments you see the real other person... because in our everyday lives outside, we are different, not completely different, but the daily pressure and stress make you... in Tinos you have in depth discussions... and you see people behaving differently, whereas if you see them in Drama [place of residence] they will be changed again... They open up here...it is easier here to express your pain...it is, some things are difficult to explain”.

Religious meanings, such as ‘to love each other’ are, accordingly, enlivened and constructed through people’s physical engagement in pilgrimages and thus through their encounter with space and its contents (Crouch, 2002), which has the ability to open people up. Freed from discrimination and secular pressures deriving from the utopian superficial happiness (Baudrillard, 1981) embedded in the capitalistic society of wealth and beauty, which surpasses and silences people’s troubles and alienation, people in Tinos find sympathy and understanding in other people, as the miraculous icon of the Virgin Mary accumulates equally misfortunate people in a spatially restricted surrounding. People here let their masks fall and in accordance to Hendry (1993, p.62) “present themselves unwrapped from social packaging” revealing their personal matters and concerns. Both sides of an interaction are simultaneously listeners and speakers usually connected by a common problem and hence mutually regarded with sympathy. Such trips denote the end of patients’ discrimination experienced in their everyday life, by uniting people in terms of mutual understanding and tolerance like that in Turner and Turner’s (1978) ‘communitas’; a bond that can, however, only be experienced away from home and while on Tinos.

Nevertheless, a specialized notion of ‘communitas’ is proposed here, as it was observed that pilgrims formed sub-groups, according to their particular problems. Most pilgrims in Tinos seemed to be in search for a pathologic group belonging. The concept of
‘communitas’ (Turner, 1967) is therefore better understood as ‘Sufferitas’, as people embodying similar problems get together to share and overcome their sufferings, as was observed, for example, with the cancer participants. Tinos bestows troubled people with the sense that they are not alone but part of a larger group, a fact that members seek to demonstrate. Neglecting discretion, and disrespecting other cancer patients’ privacy, almost all pilgrims with cancer problems were surprisingly revealed during the interviews and the on-site conversations by their fellow cancer patients, who did not hesitate to indicate them or even to give a short health record of them. An alternative interpretation of this action could, however, also include the underlining of the group’s existence and power - similar to Durkheim’s common beliefs and practices as ‘collective realities’ (1915) - by its members towards the healthy researcher who is considered the ‘other’; ‘sufferitas’ as a contesting of one’s identity.

5.5.2 Constructing religion: Structuring and restructuring each others

Religion is not only structured through the power of the religious fields which produce particular perceptions, actions and thoughts (Bourdieu, 1989), but relies also on people’s own efforts of structuring religion and of their mutual support. Thus, while most of the pilgrims obtain the performative ‘know-how’ (Goffman, 1959), they frequently consult each other. For example, pilgrims who had visited Tinos before served as assistants to new comers, providing instructive performative directions. It was observed, for example, that many pilgrims, even though they declared their religious activities back home, nonetheless asked the researcher and other members of the group about the sequence of the ritual performances. For example, a few metres before encountering the icon, Theodora asked in a worried tone: “What do we next? Do we light the candle now or do we kiss the icon first?.. And what about the oil? Where do we get it from?” (Fieldnotes, queuing at the Church of the Annunciation, 14/08/09).

Mimicking others’ performances was also evident. Equal to Holloway et al’s, (2011) self-governing gaze, in which the self-reflexive tourists may observe and adapt their own behaviours in light of others’ behaviours, so for example, in viewing Fotini entering a shop to buy a metallic placket ‘tama’ as an offering to the Virgin Mary and empty bottles to fill with holy water, other group members, who accompanied her, did the same. Furthermore, even though places and texts are designed to produce particular responses and repetitive
practices (Butler, 1990), however, new performances or understandings can arise even in carefully staged places, since space is a doing (Rose, 1999), which can involve different practices and skills. In particular, intra-pilgrims’ religious understandings are constructed as people remain worldly beings and have particular needs and ‘weaknesses’. Accordingly, except for performing script like roles, some pilgrims endeavour to change or negotiate existing norms, proposing alternative political agencies (Butler, 1990) and sharing alteration of the religious process with each other. In effect, mutual agreement is particularly valued by the group members who were observed seeking others’ opinion. For example, Theodora and Toula, who preferred to take communion one day before the official day, asked for approval by their religious fellows. Surprisingly, everyone encouraged them, even though it was religiously incorrect. As Irene, for example, said: “It is not correct to take communion the day before [the 15th of August] because it is fasting time. Only on the celebration day you can”. Equally, even though Theodora knew that one is not allowed to take communion while menstruating, she ‘got permission’ from her travel companions, but was finally rejected by the priest. What seems to matter is not so much the correctness of one’s religious practices but the community’s approval of the practices.

In this respect, the way Georgia reconstructed her negative experience of venerating the icons in the Catholic church (presented before) was considerable. She only then relaxed when the resident told her that she is also a Greek Orthodox and that she had venerated the Catholic Church too, as part of the tradition. As she said, “when the Greek church of the village celebrates then the Catholics come to our church too” [Fieldnotes, Tinos, Village Ktikados, 14/09/09]. The interest lies in the practice of the collective approved truth, the truth obtaining its interest and meaning through its becoming part of the theology of a group.

Moreover, structured performances neglect the human body’s being open to multiple affects (Gil, 1998; Thrift, 2004). Rather than being mainly oriented around the world, believers as active, reflexive beings act from within the world (Cloke and Perkins, 1998; Crouch et al., 2001; Crouch, 2009). In particular, while Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’ (1989; 1990), with the routinization of practices, helps people survive in ritual, it is nonetheless capable to produce monotony, boredom and lack of significance. Indeed, contrary to Baudrillard (1981) and Urry’s (1990) post-tourism, which involves processes of de-differentiation from everyday life and denotes the end of tourism (Lash and Urry, 1994), pilgrims in Tinos
want to have experiences that extend their structured known religious procedures that they perform also at home. Lina, for example, sheds light on the phenomenon of "meteorismos" (daydreaming), according to which, albeit physically present in the church, pilgrims are not always mentally there. Some younger participants justified this behaviour stating that it is impossible to follow the formal old-fashioned language used in prayers and liturgies. Others, like Lina, underlined the routinization of the institutional input of the religious service and the habitual religious practices connected to it: "you feel bored because you already know the prayers and the religious procedures in the church and it doesn't make you feel impressed".

Accordingly, Bourdieus's (1990; 1998) robot like features of 'habitus', with the absence of unexpected and creative performances, contribute to a decline in religious concentration. Some participants admitted, for example, that while they were performing ritual they were concentrated in gazing at others rather than consciously following the religious procedures. As Lina admitted "the bodily contact doesn't leave us indifferent". As she further commented:

"Especially within enclosed spaces, like churches, where no restrictive measures exist, an unwitting interest evolves for the human beings standing next to us. You always observe other people... What they wear... what they look like... You may see someone and think 'oh, he is nice looking'".

Other human presence in religious settings is sometimes more than powerful as human bodies, much like pieces of art, are endowed with enigmas that generate excitement. Despite attempts to restrict people's reactivity through the standardization of practices, human beings can never really detach from their human nature and environment. As human beings, believers inevitably get influenced by the human and non-human surrounding them (Franklin, 2008). Accordingly, while pilgrims engage in Bourdieuan performances as 'holding on' to their belief, they simultaneously enable themselves the unexpected (Grosz, 1999), being active rather than passive entities (Giddens, 1991) and influencing each other with their presence and practices.
5.5.3 Religious conflicts: Churchy vs. spiritual believers

While the intra-pilgrim gaze structures people's performances, helping individuals survive or improve their performances in religious rituals, it can also lead to identity struggles or inner conflicts based on the tensions between conservative and modern religious performances. In particular, as with the tourist gaze (Holloway et al., 2011), the intra-pilgrim gaze has the potential to be an authoritative gaze that can discipline and regulate the behaviour of others. In fact, as performances usually attach identity to their actors (Butler, 1990), not all practices are vindicated by pilgrims. Rather, the co-existence of many humans inevitably causes tensions, each one being an independent performative entity. Accordingly, observation of other's practices, inconsistent with the religious or one's own way of religious expression can be the trigger of rumours and can cultivate gossip and tensions, destroying any element of *communitas*. Conflicts arise especially between formal and spiritual corporeal expressions of religion, which resemble the discrepancy observed between modern and post-modern tourist performances (see Edensor, 1998; Feifer, 1985). For example, churchy believers who abide by formal religious rules, reciting a ‘script’ and playing a ‘role’ do not accept leisure or everyday activities, and thus differentiate themselves from others, whom they frequently call tourists. Irene and Fotis, for example, said:

"The truth is that there are tourists who follow the pilgrims, tourists who are not properly dressed which always annoys us... At least women should wear a decent top. Of course, we do not expect them to come in a kerchief or long skirts, just to be properly dressed... as a sign of respect for the people who are inside. Yes, we show respect... even for the priest in there who will otherwise get scandalised".

Contrary, Eleni commented:

"It is really difficult when all the participants are churchy because they usually quarrel. They fall out because you may tell a joke during the journey which they consider nasty and they say 'I have come to worship and you destroy the whole thing' and so on... They also may fall out because they want to attend the whole Liturgy and take offence when the group arrives too late.. But you cannot have everything! And to be honest, the churchy believers are usually more rotten..."
On the other hand, spiritual believers neglect the extreme categorizations of the correct/incorrect, authentic/inauthentic, home/away. So, while churchy people criticized, for example, others’ visitation to Mykonos on the day off, stating that it is a sinful island or “Satan’s island” (Stella) because of its fame as a party and gay island, spiritual people had a different philosophy, more deinstitutionalized and liberated (Berger, 1967; Lambert, 2004). Babis, for example, stated: “we have to live our lives. I mean when you are doing good deeds, the location doesn’t matter”. Tasoula, moreover, stated: “it is rather what you make out of it, we went to Mykonos and we visited a church there, the church of St Fanourios and they gave us diaries!”. Similarly, Julia stated “we didn’t do anything sinful there [in Mykonos], we were very self-disciplined. We went for swimming... nothing evil. We did these as a group of friends, but only women, not at all evil”. Accordingly, places and spaces are not predetermined, nor are their usages, but are dependent on people’s own working of religious understanding.

Furthermore, annoyances emerge in observing pilgrims’ inconsistency of religious ethos and their dwellings, interchangeably and theatrically, in different roles depending on the situation (Bell, 2008; Goffman, 1959). Sakis, for example, remembered how a woman who behaved in an extremely pious way inside the church, totally changed outside the church:

"On the one hand we go to the church in order to pray and beg for something and on the other hand we are full of rancour while we are waiting in the queue, in the courtyard... I will never forget an event that happened and impressed me... While we were waiting to collect the oil and the holy water, I saw a woman behaving in such an exaggerated manner, like a Muslim, up and down, up and down, praying and touching the floor, so emotionally... and when we went out of the church, my wife was about to sit on a piece of cardboard she had found in the courtyard, when suddenly this woman came and started shouting at my wife, blaming her for taking her cardboard!!... She expressed such a wickedness which wasn’t in keeping with her image inside the church. Such hypocritical behaviour makes me sick...”

Many women were observed to engage in intense bodily religious movements, which often have even a theatrical quality to their audience. This was especially observed in viewing crawling women laying, crying and begging God as if being tortured. It was, for example, not uncommon to see women stop and sigh and cross themselves and even wipe away tears while crawling or worshipping the icon. Dubisch (1995, p.217) justifies this stating that
“for women the identification with the Virgin Mary as a suffering mother lends a particular moral force to their own performance of suffering as enacted at the pilgrimage site, for it draws on powerful religious imaginary and aligns women with the major figure of Orthodox devotional practice”. Yet, some participants criticized such practices as being examples of superstition and religious excess, and thus as front-stage behaviours (Goffman, 1959). Makis, for example, stated that “some people do it in order to show off. To demonstrate that they are... holy... and they are doing all that... to prove that they are holy and all others are sinful". Lina, moreover, one of the youngest members of the group, justifying her role-distance (Goffman, 1959) from religious structured behaviours, metaphorically commented:

“You don’t have to wait for St Valentine's Day in order to prove to someone that you love him. The same applies here to the kneeling. You are not obliged to do it...” (Lina)

Additionally, a changing notion of religiousness is noticed based on people’s contemporary way of living. Lia, for example, stated that “even though the church’s sovereignty excites us to crawl, however, we are not doing it, because we are lazy”. Indeed, the comforts of modern life, with the automatization and virtualization of everyday processes, seem to alter religious’ practices against embodied performances (Baudrillard, 1981).

5.5.4 Resisting communities and the body as shelter

Negative feelings and tensions among people are attributed to the devil’s influence, which creates doubt and disbelief in people (Christian Union of Kavala, n.d.). As Lina said, for example, “This is what we call ‘ek tou ponirou’ [deriving from the Satan]; The Satan wants people to have evil thoughts and he cultivates them”. Therefore, believers are consulted and structured to ignore negative aspects of life, based on religious scripts; “adherents must do what God wants and not what others want” (Christian Union of Kavala, p.35). Vicky, for example, stated “I remember the conversation I had with my priest back home who advised me to overlook those [negative] things”. Using Lengkeek’s (2001) bracketing concept, particular bodily performances are pursued by pilgrims to push some experiential aspects to the foreground while some others into the background, as the religious reality does not entail everything that people can experience. For example, implementing their bodies as shield, many pilgrims followed religiously known bodily techniques (Barsalou et
al., 2005), such as kneeling, to keep them concentrated on their focus and to avoid the view of others’ scandalous behaviour. As Vaso said, for example, “I went with blinkers to the icon... I didn’t want to look at what or who was next to me... around me”. Accordingly, believers’ particular corporeal performances also assist in their refrain from sinning. Along with Irene, for example, “since you incline your head in prayer you cannot see the people around you, and you are not distracted... to get enraged and to think of something else and to become thus sinful”. Some even preferred to keep their eyes shut in order to remain concentrated. Soula, for example, while recounting her experience of crawling to the church said:

“I was lying down and I didn’t want to look around me nor to rest for a while... I had most of the time my eyes closed, because I wanted to concentrate. Because when you go there - I don’t know what the others do - but if you have your eyes closed you can think of the Virgin Mary, your pain and the purpose of your visit...”

The body acts as protector of negations and constitutes a shelter around the human soul, which protects it from the outside world, a notion contrary to Deleuze’s (2000) body as an open surface. Indeed, religious practices intend to create passive, sterilized bodies that ignore and distance themselves from the multiplicity and variety of the world’s agents, so as to avoid temptations, affections, inconsistencies and rejection. Religiously-structured bodily performances are, metaphorically, the rejection of the everydayness/the profane.

Accordingly, the intra-pilgrim gaze does not only have positive effects on individuals but also negative effects, and therefore it is often avoided by believers. In particular, pilgrims do not only invent corporeal ways to neglect others, but many of them and especially those who perform shifting identities (Bell, 2008) at home and away, also invented ways (Ingold, 2000) of isolating themselves from the views of other people. Practicing religion is not only about embodied forms of practice and modes of thought that are unconsciously acquired but individuals develop also their own embodied ways of practice. Travelling alone is, for example, often practiced as a mean to avoid being commented by known people. In particular, it is not rare for a pilgrim to admit that she/he does not feel comfortable to express herself/himself religiously in view of others. As Lina, in particular, commented “we do not let ourselves go when we are with other people”. Inevitably, the church provides a space of gossip where some people lose the religious sense of experience. Soula, for example, commented:
"When I go with people I know, I do not have the same experience. Why is that? Because if you travel with fellow-villagers they will comment on the way you look, on the way you cry, what you wear, what you eat, how you pray. It's better to travel with people whom you not know, in order to act with your soul. When I decide to visit St Raphael or the Virgin Mary, I am also escaping from what I will wear and so on. I go there to pray".

Danay, in addition, said that only when she was hiding herself in the dark parts of the church and when she was among strangers was she able to cry. In particular:

"I cried in the church so much... maybe because in the dark part of it where I was, no one could see me, I knew that the woman next to me couldn't see me and my feelings... I felt free... from thinking that she was watching me crying".

Religious performance and expression is in fact often influenced by an inner conflict; this can be seen as an identity crisis, as pilgrims often balance between two different worlds: the religious and the secular. Indeed, discrepancies in the pilgrims' performativity in their religious and secular lives seem to be the trigger of gossip, among known people, as one's exaggerated religious performances on site may be inconsistent with one's behaviour in secular life. As Stella said for example:

"we have to be careful in our actions, because we are role-models, we cannot for example go for a drink in a bar, because others may see us and think: 'she is in church in the morning and in the bars at nights'. We have to be careful with what we wear, whom we contact... with everything."

For some people, the religious self is even a personal secret that they avoid sharing with others and especially with known people. Young pilgrims often fall into this category, as religion is outdated. According to Lina "they feel a complex and insecurity to reveal it and that's why they want to go alone"..."we have no guts to demonstrate our faith, like many gay people who keep it a secret". In fact, they want to 'play' front-stage roles in both the religious and secular worlds. Accordingly, backstage and front-stage behaviour (Goffman, 1959) interchange depending on their very context of act (setting) and situation; while at home, peoples' front-stage behaviour is linked to the modern way of life and religiousness may be on the backstage, and while on the island of Tinos, the religious self is at the front-
stage and the secular self often in the backstage. Only in the case of the spiritual pilgrims does this dichotomy seem to be absent as all human life is considered religious.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter showed that while pilgrims are entrenched in their belief system, which constructs their bodies and movements through processes of discipline (Foucault, 1978) and habitus (Bourdieu, 1991), they inevitably are also entangled in a tourist world that permits encounters and experiences with people, everyday tourist activities and materials that influence and add to their overall experience in Tinos.

Firstly, believers, as adherents, were observed to engage in visual performances of admiration and affirmation of their religious capital. In particular, the location of the church, particular religious objects and the performing anonymous crowd seemed to be essential components of a religious play and economy, their very specialness deriving from inter-subjective understandings of written and verbal myths. The constructed power of the miraculous icon and the tamata is particularly evidenced. Nevertheless, as a religion of action (Turner, 1967), believers were more than 'collectors of gazes' (Urry, 1990). They also engaged bodily in the religious landscape (Crouch et al., 2001; Thrift, 1996), performing institutionalised roles (Edensor, 1998), such as worshipping the miraculous icon and making offerings, which generated intense feelings, such as experiences of flow and relieving pain. Moreover, corporeal sensations, such as the wounds on pilgrims' knees that have been interpreted as being a sign from the Virgin Mary, reinforce pilgrims experience and appreciation of the religious landscape, feelings which would not occur without their intervention (Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000).

The pilgrim's bodies, like empty containers, seek to be filled with spiritual grace in view of the subject-like holy icon. In particular, the power of the material icon affected pilgrims in such way that additional practices to the worship became possible. Working from within the religious world (Ingold, 2000) pilgrims invented practices to manifest or relocate the icon's sacredness using materials available on the island, such as the leaning rosaries or even shoes, previously bought on the island, on the icon to get illuminated and transferred back home. Indeed, their homes and everyday lives become sites for religious experience,
as sacredness penetrates in people's daily lives through the materials brought from the island, which have not only ephemeral, but often also lasting effects, such as the feeling of being accompanied by the Virgin Mary by wearing the illuminated cross, which created hybrid entities of humans and non-humans (Latour, 2005).

Furthermore, religion is above all a collective activity and reality (Durkheim, 1915; Schutz, 1962). Pilgrims come in contact with other pilgrims, sharing understandings and activities, such as the common prayers in church and the singing together and accordingly influencing each other. Nevertheless, not only religious grounds, but also recreational spaces, such as taverns and excursions served to create feelings of togetherness, opening up pilgrims and constructing communities of pain, 'sufferitas'. Pilgrims' performing bodies rather than being "coat racks on which traits are hung" (Swain, 2004, p.108; see also Butler, 1990), also perform mutually approved variations of structures to negotiate the limitations of their embodied experience (Davis, 1997). Entangled in the passiveness of the routinization of the structured practices, pilgrims seek new sensations in other people whose corporeal closeness generates significant affects on them, allowing themselves the unexpected (Grosz, 1999) and influencing each other. The human body is hence simultaneously a blessing and a curse as it protects the human soul from negative influences with the invention of a variety of structured body gestures (ex. closing the eyes), but at the same time, its attractiveness or 'misbehaviour' in the church are sources of sinning. Indeed, while pilgrims were able to sense the holy in sacred and secular spaces, however, the sacredness and secularity of their own performative bodies, triggered conflicts among some pilgrims.

To conclude, despite its material features, the island of Tinos, acquires subject-like characteristics attributed to the sensation of the Virgin's presence there as well as to its flowing/dynamic picture constructed by its believers, their very activity bestowing it with an element of kinesis. Metaphorically, it forms a living body, its heart being the icon and its blood the influx of pilgrims, who were seen to be crucial components for the continuing 'living' of the island. In particular, without pilgrims' practices, religious feelings and sacredness would not be able to spread either inside the religious place or outside, nor would transformations occur, a discussion which will now be further analysed.
Chapter 6 REFLECTIONS OF RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION

6.1 Introduction

Actions are usually accompanied by effects, such as emotions, reflections or even structural changes. Having shed light on people’s performances in Tinos, the present chapter will discuss the consequences, the passage from the old to the new state. In particular, it is assumed that ends are not always pre-established but rather develop conterminously within contexts that are themselves constantly changing and therefore open to reconsideration and reconstruction (Dewey, 1981; Mead, 1932; Schutz, 1962). Accordingly, this chapter intends to give answers to the fourth research objective, using quotes from the interviews conducted on-site and off-site as well as observation material. The chapter will begin by providing the theory that underpins religious tourists’ transformations, whereas the following sections discuss a variety of effects as well as pilgrims’ future travel intentions using the example of pilgrimage to Tinos.

6.2 Reflections on the End of Pilgrimage, Anti-structure and Return

Along with Parsons (1968, p.45) “an act is always a process in time... The concept end always implies a future reference, to a state which is... not yet in existence, and which would not come into existence if something were not done about it by the actor”. Thus, reaching the final destinations or goals (such as the Church of the Annunciation in Tinos or Santiago) does not necessarily signify the end of pilgrimages (Frey, 1998), but rather the pilgrimage experience continues to influence people’s daily lives after their return. Nevertheless, pilgrimage studies by concentrating their research between pilgrims’ departure and return back home usually ignore people’s reintegration back home and the future effects of the on-site experiences. Indeed, religious worldviews influence the way pilgrimages are studied. In particular, the notion of life as a line parallels the Christian worldview in which one’s finite earthly journey follows the one-way metaphorical path toward Christ. This has influenced the reading of pilgrimage as a linear narrative and the reaching of Christian sites by linear journeys (Nolan and Nolan, 1989) leading to Heaven,
contrary, for example, to the Hindu philosophy of life as a circle and pilgrimage as a “process of ending the endless journey of life and death” (Saraswati, 1985, p.101).

Nevertheless, such goal-centred and accordingly linear approaches of pilgrimage often distort the overall picture and the dynamic the pilgrimage has in peoples’ lives. Such concepts, neglect the immensity pilgrimages have on many people as well as their relationship to religion as a way of life. Pilgrimage, rather than being an anti-structural (Turner and Turner, 1978) endeavour, which is characterized as a transient event that is detached from believers’ everyday lives, should be seen as central to the daily life of pilgrims (Coleman and Eade, 2004; Frey, 1998). Inevitably, participants are focused on arriving at sacred centres but what happens before and after the visits is also of equal importance, as it may turn the whole experience into something enduring. Pilgrimage differs from some other forms of travel because of its transformative potential (Basu, 2004), in which participants gain new meanings of ‘home’ (Dubisch, 2004). Return and reintegration back home may, accordingly, be something more than a transitory issue and may often become a core element in the lives of participants (Reader, 2006). One of the first who addressed the importance of the return was Gold (1988) in her study of the return of Rajasthani (India) Hindu pilgrims as well as studies of Islamic pilgrimages, which highlighted the newly acquired social state of the returning pilgrims from Mecca and Medina (Campo, 1995).

In particular, travel experiences not only sustain but also affect, that is, transform and change participants once they return (Frey, 1998; 2004). Becoming is thus related to a deep restructuring of the self, and the mechanisms of getting along in life (Dewsbury, 2000). Religions usually provide means to facilitate this process, in that believers, entangled in religious systems, are in a great sense socially produced through regimes of power, or else religious fields that direct people’s movements, perceptions and reflections (Bourdieu, 1990; Foucault, 1977). In particular, according to Foucault (1988) through linguistic frames individuals are institutionally encouraged to reflect upon their own thoughts, feelings and practices. Equally, Bourdieu’s (1977, 1984, 1990) habitus develops a set of preconscious expectations about the future and the outcomes to the social actors.

Nevertheless, such approaches neglect the possibility of resistance (Butler, 1993) or even of a different outcome to that which was intended, since bodies are important mediators of
what happens and may reflect and sense things and effects in different ways (Crouch, 2002). Although Giddens (1991) acknowledges the active nature of human beings, he nonetheless emphasises the existential aspects and neglects the embodied notions. Indeed, human agency through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment is capable of reproducing and transforming existing structures (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Human beings are capable of distorting, restructuring, performing and transforming, which involve unintended outcomes, failures, uneven changes and resistance that are not always rule-governed (Deleuze, 1990; Thrift and Dewsbury, 2000). Visits to places are therefore likely to transform the original semiotics connected to them as well as influencing people’s everyday lives, often in unexpected ways. Accordingly, even though places are designed or staged to bring forth particular experiences (Edensor, 1998, 2000), selves are not innate fixed givens; they are relational and situationally mediated.

Completing the pilgrimage may, indeed, be the starting point rather than the end point. Nevertheless, it is often difficult to identify where the end of pilgrimage lies (if there is an end) and when the return home actually begins. Some pilgrims, for example, in Frey’s (2004) study of pilgrimage to Santiago, reach an inner goal that made the geographical end irrelevant, whereas some others anticipate the end and the return before reaching the journey. Reader (2006), moreover, in his research in Shikoku Japan referred to a circled pilgrimage which unlike the linear has no finishing end, based in particular on its spatial characteristics. For other people, pilgrimages are entrenched in their social and religious lives back home in that they occasionally return to it physically and mentally. Even though pilgrimage centres are fixed in space (Coleman and Elsner, 1995), pilgrimage experiences are not. In fact, they are at times so intense that they even dislocate sacred centres into secular realms. Inevitably, van Gennep’s (1909) stages of marginality (liminal) and reintegration are to be reconsidered in terms of their temporal and spatial occurrence, but also regarding the transition rites in which individuals do not simply change status but may also be emotionally, conceptually and corporally changed to some degree. In addition, the multiple flows of action in life and the non-linear networks (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004) between things and other humans, make the distinction between the sacred and the secular world even more difficult. The following section provides the background context in which these concepts are further explored in the case of pilgrims’ return from, and reflections of Tinos.
A pilgrimage to Tinos does not end when believers reach the miraculous icon. Several examples enforce the idea of a temporal and spatial transformation that cannot always be captured immediately. As stated in the book published by the Christian Union of Kavala (n.d.), human fortune is attributed to God and even if people do not know with certainty about their salvation, they can see signs of it. Sometimes this life-changing transformation through pilgrimage begins prior to actually setting foot on Tinos. Particularly within the context of a vow, two stages can be distinguished. The first stage considers the prior emotional state filled with stress and anxiety, which begins with one’s declaration and creation of a vow (promise) and ends in the church as soon as it is fulfilled, and the second stage begins whilst the vow is fulfilled in the church and continues in peoples’ subsequent actions on-site and back home. Renewal, return, lifelong miracle, corporeal changes, performative changes, conceptual, material changes, structural changes in life, identity issues, status change and repetition, are some of the issues analysed next.

### 6.3 Religious Conceptual Transformations

One of the prevailing reasons for people’s adherence to religious institutions and partake in pilgrimages are their existential anguishes (Kay et al., 2010; Peterson et al., 2003). Equal to Cohen’s (1979) existential tourist, pilgrims, committed to an elective spiritual centre, seek to confirm and learn more about their already accepted truth and accordingly focus on their own spiritual enrichment (Vukonic, 2000) and on a deeper understanding of self and interpersonal feelings (Wang, 1999). Pilgrimages are made to renew, express and reaffirm faith. Accordingly, as Turner and Turner (1978, p.15) argue “the pilgrim returns to his former mundane existence, but it is commonly believed that he has made a spiritual step forward”. Nevertheless, the accomplishment of a religious trip can have both positive and negative effects on peoples’ religious understanding and stance since existential authenticity is experience-oriented as well as gender-oriented. People’s participation in the trip to Tinos and their activities undertaken there, thereby provoked reinforcement and affirmation of belief but invoked also doubt.
6.3.1 Renewing belief

Most of the participants accumulated Bourdieuian (1990) religious ‘holding on’ outcomes in terms of religiously structured predictable outcomes that celebrate religious faith and position human’s role in the world. Much like the existentialist Tillich (1959, p.9) who argued that “religion opens up the depth of man’s spiritual life which is usually covered by the dust of our daily life”, participants like Christos acknowledged human imperfection and weakness and subsequently emphasized the necessity of being religiously reminded: “We are human beings, made of mud...sooner or later we engage in sinning”. A pilgrimage therefore has a deep religious meaning for most of the participants as it helps them transcend human imperfection. In particular, participation in religious rituals and religious experiences are considered, in the Greek Orthodox belief system, evidences of salvation, which depend on God’s sovereign pleasure and choice (John VI 54). Salvation in the Eastern Christianity is considered the union of human with the divine, which assures human’s partaking in the divine, eternal life (Ware, 1993). Especially within the context of a vow, the accomplishment of one’s promise brings about considerable psychological and existential changes to some people who perceive to be reaching new states. The metaphor of life as a line and pilgrimage as purposive driven, is noticed in Stella’s words, who after fulfilling her vow, is ready to reach heaven. As she stated:

“Now I have completed my vow! I didn’t want to die without having fulfilled it, you know... I am ready to pass away now. To go to heaven! I got my ticket. It is like purchasing a ticket, as we did for this trip; likewise, at that moment [of fulfilling the vow] we get the ticket for eternal life.”

Furthermore, pilgrimage to Tinos is seen by many pilgrims as a way of recharging belief, as a refreshment of their already accepted faith which perish in their everyday lives, a notion similar to Graburn’s (1989) tourists who engage in cyclical passages of time, which is divided into ‘profane’ and ‘sacred’ periods. Stella, for example, said “it’s incredible, you recharge your batteries, you feel so good when you return home”. Religious rituals and inter-subjective relations add to this refill. Ritual participants do not engage in transition but in “a repeatedly renewed familiarity with, and commitment to, their group’s values” (Davies, 2008, p.9). Chapple and Coon (1947), developed the notion of ‘rites of intensification’, to describe the ritual moments in which a group gathered to re-engage with their basic values. Religious connection is, for example, believed to be reinforced through
the divine Eucharist and people’s participation in that ritual (Christian Union of Kavala, n.d.; Ware, 1993) and thus through inter-personal relationships and feelings of communitas (Turner and Turner, 1978). Religious belief is thus also a social construction, since believers as performers become vehicles of belief that activate, enliven and construct religion. It is the sharing of common concerns among people and an antidote to their mutual problems (Taylor and Chatters, 1988), which help people see life differently. As Sophia stated:

“You laugh and feel joy, and you think that ‘I live this moment and it is so beautiful to be alive’... we all had something in common...something very nice... and the strength you get from others...strength and courage...because you need this strength in order to survive... to leave everything behind you...not to think of your problems...not to be afraid... because, unfortunately, fear is always there... you feel fear...you are a human being...”

The power of the inter-subjective communication in reinforcing one’s faith is moreover evidenced in Lia’s words. As she said:

“In such places there is something very special, the soul... this feeling that ‘prepares’ you, that brings you closer to the saints...And you live with this, and you go on in your life and you have faith and you hope and love, having this in your mind. Even this conversation now here...almost two hours...it renewed my faith!”

6.3.2 Gendered religiousness

Religious feelings and enrichment are often gendered performances. In particular, many believers are connected to particular pilgrimage sites because of their meaningfulness in their religious belief systems (Belhassen et al., 2008). Within this realm, particular religious places in Greece are religiously ascribed to be predominately masculine or feminine. Even though Tinos is not officially ascribed to women, it can be merely considered a feminine island, as women were found to be more affected by it than men. In fact, most of the men diminished the emotional and transformative qualities of the island, highlighting instead those of the Mount Athos (“Garden of the Virgin Mary”), a place restricted only to men and thus a ‘Centre for men’. Gendered religious spaces thus attach different meanings and sensations to women and men, who are demonstrating their differences, thus inscribing and affirming religious gender differentials (Morin and Guelke,
2007). Iordanis, for example, stated that only Mount Athos changes him. Similarly, Kostas, said:

"I am religiously motivated only when I visit Mount Athos... I have been there more than 40 times...this is my religious trip... I have done this for so long, and I always feel religiously touched there... such a devoutness... When I visit Tinos, I don't feel this."

6.3.3 Re-affirming belief

Religious oriented travel is moreover a way for individuals to discover and reaffirm religion and their identity. As Lia stated, for example, "such a pilgrimage does not strengthen your faith... Only someone who doesn't believe may acquire faith after such a pilgrimage. Someone who is a believer, his faith... gets re-affirmed, it gives him hope, courage..." Accordingly, pilgrims experience ‘becoming’ in the sense of achieving and confirming their very ‘being’ (Grosz, 2000) a Christian Orthodox, in Bourdieu’s (1989) sense of ‘hold on’ to what they already are. In particular, through a series of experiential encounters, individuals fill their life and mobilize deeper affiliations between themselves and religion. Kostas, for example, who insisted in telling the story of a personal encounter he had with a saint some years ago in another sacred place, stated that this miraculous experience was the milestone in his being convinced of God’s existence. Even though he stated that he always believed in God, now he had also the proof:

"No one can convince me that miracles don't happen. No one can convince me that God doesn't exist that there are no miracles, you cannot convince me that there are no sacraments, whatever you do, you cannot convince me now..."

Miracles commonly accepted by religious communities seem to have a confirmatory effect of a divinity’s existence. Elsa, for example, admitted that her belief strengthened after the blinking of the miniature church she had bought on the island and which was attributed to the sign of the Virgin Mary.

Interviewer: “Did your faith strengthen?

Elsa: Yes, yes.. especially with the signs that the Virgin Mary showed me...She always gives me some signs...the Virgin Mary never talks to us...She has her own way to respond... she replies to us... many times she...Many...She has showed me...”
The role of religious officials is important within this regard (Bourdieu, 1989; Foucault, 1978), since humans often doubt such phenomena because as Elsa argues “the cunning one [religiously language: the Satan] influences us...”. Priests affirm miracles in their attempt to enforce belief and to gather people under common understandings. As she recounted:

“When I returned home I immediately visited my priest and said ‘Father Philip such and such a thing happened...’ He closed his eyes and said to me ‘my child, it wasn’t the devil, but it was the Virgin Mary’s response! This is great news, everything is going to be fine’. That was his response”.

6.3.4 Religious disenchantment

Pilgrimage experiences are not only linked to positive feelings or to institutionally predicted results. Individuals as reflexive and sensual beings (Crouch et al., 2001; Crouch, 2009) often construct their own understandings through problematic situations they encounter. Indeed, on-site experiences can cause uneasiness to some pilgrims who develop a critical stance towards religious happenings, places and divinities. Danay’s personal story was notable, for example, when she said: “whenever I hear others speaking about Tinos, that they prayed and then got pregnant... I am thinking that she [the Virgin Mary of Tinos] didn’t help me...I’m saying this with bitterness...”. A religious failure in the form of an unfulfilled wish can lead to negative consequences, such as frustration, as people will have invested trust and energy in believing in the deity. As Danay further recounted:

“To be honest, I have bad experiences with Tinos. Because when I went there, I went in front of the icon and I made a vow, ehm.. no, not a vow, a wish to the Virgin Mary, I said “My Virgin Mary help me to give birth to a second child”, without knowing that I was already pregnant at that time... I was so sure that my wish would become true... so many people have done this... and finally.. when I went back home, I had a miscarriage and since then... [she laughs loudly]”

Consequently, even in carefully staged places (Cloke and Perkins, 2005; Edensor, 2000) such as religious sites, unanticipated happenings can change the perceptions of them (Badone and Roseman, 2004; Coleman and Eade, 2004); what is considered sacred by a person beforehand, may not be considered sacred for the same person in future. The
temporality and relativity of human action therefore must be considered, as individuals are observed to be involved in restructuring their courses of action in the direction of past and future based on emergent events (Mead, 1932). Within the concept of achieving end-results, negative results can raise inner conceptual conflicts and contestations between the structured (institutional) religious performances and the un-structured individual ones. Danay, for example, was contemplating on the correctness of her individual practice of making a wish rather than a vow. As she added:

"I regretted it later that I didn't make the vow... but I was afraid of it... you see, if I made that promise then I would be obliged to go [to Tinos] with the child... But the distance is so big and it wouldn't be possible and I knew that I would live in fear because of being filled with remorse, and this is why I convinced myself that I cannot make a vow... So I thought that if the Virgin Mary wants to help me, she will help me anyway, even without a vow. I really couldn't make a vow because I wouldn't be able to fulfil it."

Such internal conversations, within structures such as the religious, signify the autonomy of the individual, who is mediated by situations and relations (Cohen, 2010; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998) in its struggle to surpass its imperfection. Nevertheless, the power of the religious inscriptions and the end to which they direct, if not performed (Kierkegaard, 1941), seem to exceed human attempts. Indeed, structured practices and rules, minimize or prevent the risk of religious failure in comparison to the abstractness of individual practices. Accordingly, Danay's concern with the standing of her previous undertaken actions and her personal blame for having refused to partake in the institutional process of making a wish mirrors the fragility of the individualized religiousness in light of a religious institutional colossus like the Greek Orthodox Church. What seems to diminish individual religiousness (spirituality) in comparison to institutional religiousness is institutions' ability to justify and logically explain everything (including failures) through its religious teachings (Allport, 1950; Geertz, 1973; Pargament and Mahoney, 2005), contrary to the failures attributed to individual practices that acquire no considerable background and cause uncertainty.

Furthermore, even though the institutional practices seem to be vital for most of the believers, some other characteristics of the church institution were criticized. Issues of commercialisation and subsequent anti-church feelings arose in some believers who felt
misused by the church authorities. Maria, for example, who had bought a golden tama (offering), in the form of a boy as a gift for Virgin Mary for having cured her son, recounted how disappointed she was when she saw a box next to the icon with the sign ‘leave your gold here’ (Maria). As she further stated: “It made me angry...really angry...[bitter, silent, disappointed voice]. This means that they took it and melted it...”

The presence of such paying-reminder assets within the church sphere, which signifies an apparatus of late capitalism had a negative effect on some devotees who had a different and rather romantic view and expectation of the concept of gifting than ultimately experienced on site. Nevertheless, even though believers mentioned institutional irregularities that they had either observed personally or heard by others, they were still supporting religious places. As Lina said: “It is as with the doctors... Not all doctors are good. Priests too.. they are human beings and not all of them are good in what they do... But we cannot blame the church or God for their misbehaviour...” Equally, Vicky sought for advice from her personal priest back home, who advised her to neglect such negative commercialisation issues. Believers thus consciously accept Bourdieu’s (1998, p.116) “collective misrecognition” constructed by church officials. Taking also into consideration Pascal’s belief as wager, they prefer to believe in religion in the way it is presented to them as they are supposed to gain by their belief and to lose by their non-belief. Indeed, a rejection of religious reality would also refute other pilgrims’ performative essentialities and their effects, such as the begging for and the receiving of Virgin Mary’s help.

6.4 On-Site Transformations

Religious affect is not only conceptually realized but also depicted in pilgrims’ performances and embodied statuses on-site. Indeed, individual performances changed in nature throughout the time space of the journey, which has lead also to a conceptual transformation and alteration of the provided stages (Coleman and Eisner, 1995). In particular, a changing nature of activities was observed after believers’ ritual of devotion of the Virgin Mary, denoting a new acquired state. Believers were seen to engage in practices such as shopping, eating in restaurants and drinking in bars. Especially, during the bus trip around the island, most of the group members appeared casually dressed, in a good mood, laughing, singing and clapping their hands during the journey. Consequently, whilst obeying to the religious order, people are driven by subjective needs and in control of their
own experiences, which, however, are still ‘wrapped’ in the rules (Collins and Dandelion, 2006) and practices of how the religious culture approaches recreation as well as being based on religious social understanding (Durkheim, 1915).

6.4.1 Activity changes

In line with the Orthodox religious teachings that want people after their participation in the ritual of Eucharist to enjoy the rest of their day as a way of celebrating their being worthy to become receivers of Jesus’ body and blood (Christian Union of Kavala, n.d.), so were pilgrims to Tinos seen to recreate as an expression of being enlightened and touched by the positive aura of the Virgin Mary, and thus being connected to God. As Lina, for example, put it: “you feel boosted after a pilgrimage” and “you feel that you deserve to have fun”. The performative change is especially noticed within the context of a vow. Fotis and Irene, for example, said:

“We fulfilled our obligation, didn’t we? So of course, we went for a swim, and for... Come on, it is good to be honest! We are young people. we fulfilled our obligation, our vow, so it is normal after that to have a little fun... Of course all things in moderation! Within the bounds of reason...”

As such, whereas the concept of tourism was, at the beginning of the trip, merely approached as a taboo for the participants who claimed that they were not tourists but pilgrims who use the tourist means only in order to arrive at the sacred place, later on, a transformation in the meaning and form of travel was observed with participants engagement in, and supporting recreational activities, viewing them as a gift from God. Indeed, engagement in recreational activities marks an already acquired new identity; that of a believer who has accomplished her/his religious duties. Fotini, for example, changed her eating habits and longed for taverns and meat dishes, right after the devotion of the icon and the ritual of Eucharist, which indicated the end of her fasting time and the accomplishment of her religious duties. Equally, some pilgrims’ prior restrain from social activities or ‘sinuous habits’ like smoking, vanished right after the end of their religious enactments. As Soula, for example, commented remembering the moments she was crawling to the church: “for two and a half hours I didn’t smoke even one cigarette! I thought that I would ruin my promise otherwise!” Furthermore, a high participation rate was noticed among pilgrims in the excursion to the party island Mykonos, on the very day
of the Virgin Mary’s celebration (15th of August) and the Holy Cross (14th of September), which are both considered important religious days. Not only did pilgrims’ own performances change after their first visitation of the icon but also their conceptual understanding of their practices and places. In particular, even though Mykonos was characterized by some pilgrims as “the island of sin” (Stella), they rewarded themselves, after the devotion, with it by visiting it. Places are, therefore open to multiple interpretations, since though fixed in space, they are not fixed in significance and time space (Coleman and Elsner, 1995). In a similar vein, even though individuals’ performances are institutionally structured and directed, pilgrims situationally dwell in different roles.

Sins are therefore not generally connected to tourism and recreation but rather to one’s uncompleted commitments. Rather than observing the changing practices within the concept of front and backstage behaviour (Goffman, 1959), practices are to be considered in terms of priorities. It can be assumed therefore that people acquire two religious selves; one of ‘religious distress’ and another of ‘religious euphoria’. ‘Religious distress’ can be equated to the structured religious behaviour, which is mainly observed towards ascending and entering the church, where people demonstrate their piety and differentiate themselves from non-believers, whereas ‘religious euphoria’ is observed in almost all the remaining parts of the trip as people then (freed from obligations) feel free to express and act as tourists. Efi, one of the members who took part in the daytrip to Mykonos, also justified this activity by means of having accomplished her religious duties:

“Look, we went to Mykonos just after Tinos because from the moment I fulfilled what I had wanted to do I was more relaxed...lets say that...from then on it was like a recreational trip... I started enjoying the trip....”

Similarly, Katia stated: “when you travel for a particular scope [to Tinos] and you carry it out, then you think you have come to the end! It’s like being home again”. Accordingly, on-site recreational practices are linked to one’s everyday, secular life and constitute part of believers’ renewed lives back home, which are now freed from obligations and sins, and can be enjoyed. Recreation constitutes, in fact, an essential part of the religious experience as the happiness it transmits points towards religiously essential sensual pleasures which people are to follow in their lives. Recreation, therefore, signifies the beginning of a change and can be seen as the backyard of, and exit from the Virgin Mary’s place, or else,
as the anteroom to return to the previous life. It constitutes an addition to Turner and Turner (1978) and van Gennep's (1909) liminal state: a state in which people are still in the religious place being blessed and renewed but simultaneously ready to depart for their new everyday life.

6.4.2 Embodied changes

As individuals interact with their bodies and through their bodies with the world around them (Crouch et al., 2001; Davis, 1997; Deleuze, 1990) transformations were also noticed through their bodies. For example, before the veneration of the icon, people were silent and nervous, but considerable and visible changes occurred right after the worship ritual. As the act of devotion is believed to bestow blessing to the pilgrims and constitutes for some people a moment that seals their fulfilment of their religious commitment (vow), smiling faces, happiness and a sudden vividness were observed in peoples’ faces and actions, what Levin (1985, p.180) calls a “metamorphosis of [their] very being”. As Janna stated “it calms down my soul, I get filled with elation, I feel completeness”. In particular, returned pilgrims’ unaccustomed faces and revitalized selves are noticed also by those who wait for them back home. As Janna further remarked, for example:

"It's crazy but sometimes people ask me 'where did you go?', they ask me. 'to Tinos', I say... and they reply 'oh, your face is glowing!' Obviously my appearance, the facial expressions change!"

Through a performing and sensing body (Crouch et al., 2001; Crouch, 2003; Deleuze, 1990; Thrift, 1996), people can experience and understand the effect the belief has on them. Within the religious institutional context, such bodily effects are often unconsciously constructed through processes of discipline and normalisation (Foucault, 1978). In fact, correlations between particular somatic changes and religious agency are created by the church teachings that argue, for example, that it is the spiritual peace obtained from one’s communication with God what is mirrored in the healthy-looking face (Christian Union of Kavala, n.d.). Religion is viewed as grounded in the body, in that apart from its being a performer of religiousness and guard of one’s soul, it can also be the proof of being religiously affected (Davis, 1997). Bodies, in a way, speak in a metaphorical sense, of past, present and places. Elsa, for example, showing her wounded knees to the researcher, said:
"Those signs... you see there are two... when I ascended to the church. on my knees, two signs [wounds] occurred. Anyway, she [her friend], noticed the signs in the hotel and said to me ‘hey look at your legs!, how they are!’... ‘What is wrong?’ I replied... And she said ‘you have two, two signs on each leg! On mine there is only one’... And I said ‘It’s because I prayed and begged for my two children, that’s why!’"

Her body served as proof of her embodied transformation and religious enrichment which is attributed to religious means, whereas her friend and the current researcher were seen as witnesses. Indeed, embodied actions, even when private, are open to social discussion and view, as individuals’ bodies are often an expression and depiction of the divine. The body and its marks can be considered a means through which individuals as well as others can expand their knowledge of the religious reality and initiate transformations. Bodies are transformed into living memories of the places visited and the experiences felt there (Rountree, 2006). Some pilgrims even feel prepared to “conquer the world” (Frey, 2004, p.99), when they return from pilgrimage having gained spiritually, personally and physically. In particular, during the returning bus journey Elsa, for example, was observed discussing with her friend about her next moves upon arrival at the terminal station, as the bus was expected to arrive in Kavala late at night and she would not catch the connection bus to her place of residence, which was some kilometres away from Kavala. She finally decided to wait alone at the bus terminal, until her husband came to pick her up. Even though her friend expressed anxiety, she replied “I am not afraid of anything, I have just returned from a pilgrimage”, which would protect her from every peril. This resembles religious teachings on communion that say “he, who received holy communion, is shielded with the holy panoply, which protects him from the evil, from every attack of the cunning [devil], in such a way that even demons are afraid of him” (Christian Union of Kavala, n.d., p.118).

6.5 Transformations at home

Whereas some changes appear immediately on-site, others are expected after the journey. The confusion of the sacred and secular spaces’ boundaries can even be pushed further in the context of returning home from a pilgrimage. While the sacred place is the source of
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grace and salvation, it is at home that the effects of the religious power are confirmed. In fact, the return journey and one's reintegration back home in everyday life are the test of the pilgrimage as changes are often anticipated (Morinis, 1992) there. As Dewey (1981, p.61) put it: “experience in its vital form is experimental, an effort to change the given; it is characterized by projection, by reaching forward into the unknown; connection with the future is its salient trait”. Accordingly, human intelligence is based upon the ability to “read future results in present on-goings” (Dewey 1981, p. 69). As Soula stated, for example:

Interviewer: Have your expectations been fulfilled?
Soula: “I don’t know... when I return home I will know. You mean in terms of faith right? Look, I called home yesterday and she [her mother] told me that she can’t walk”.

Interviewer: Will you be disappointed if the wish is not fulfilled?
Soula: “Yeah, if she gets worse.. At least she should remain in the same condition.”

6.5.1 Everyday life

Religious oriented trips can affect changes within familiar spaces of home. The returning pilgrim may find herself/himself viewing everyday life with different eyes, and realize that perhaps changes are coming from within. The renewed emotional self of the believers was also mirrored in their changing course of actions. Equal to Graburn’s (1989, p.22-23) notion of tourism as “structurally-necessary ritualized breaks in routine that define and relieve the ordinary”, Elsa, for example, noticed the invigorating effect the religious experience in Tinos had on her working commitments back home. As she said:

“Psychologically I gained a lot... it revitalized me... my soul rested... I came back home and did my housekeeping with pleasure”.

Touristic experiences and mobilities can bring about new activities or discontinue old activities within everyday life (Hui, 2009). Religious trips may thus be starting points for new lives, where past aspects are transformed and pilgrims find themselves drawn to new paths of actions. Katia, for example, contently said ‘Now that I have completed the vow, I will not have to promise it anymore in my daily prayers.. I feel so relieved!’ Some other pilgrims invented practices to maintain the religious spirit as long as possible, by remaking and reshaping the pilgrimage in their minds and living their lives constantly in the light of their pilgrimage experience. As Janna stated “we try to maintain all these emotions that we
experience in Tinos and bring them into our home”. Indeed, “actors are always living simultaneously in the past, future, and present, and adjusting the various temporalities of their empirical existence to one another in more or less imaginative or reflective ways” (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998, p.1012). Pilgrims describe, for example, how memories from the place bring back the feelings of the pilgrimage experience, reminding them of what they have gained and reinvigorating their present doings (Crang, 2001). Symbolic or aesthetic memories, for example, situationally re-invoked seem to transmit courage to people. As Lia recounted:

“I feel consolation when I think of... I had a problem and I visited the church of Saint Paraskevi [in Kavala]... and as soon as the service ended we descended the steps, and I immediately thought of Tinos... I was filled with elation... and I felt such a relief, and for the moment I overcame my problem... you remember and rethink everything, you find yourself in those places again, the church...”

Other pilgrims hung pictures of the Virgin Mary, bought in Tinos, in their children’s rooms in order to keep them safe. Through material possession, the past and the present co-exist in relation to a desired future (Tilley, 2006). Place is, accordingly, not a fixed product (Coleman and Elsner, 1995; Hui, 2009). Rather, sacred spaces’ effects and their duration on people are often unknown, as sacredness ‘travels’ around, and intrudes in people’s lives unexpectedly. A religious oriented trip can therefore also unsettle people and reconfigure their lives (Crouch, 2003) as some changes may be sudden, unwanted and enduring. In this respect, the story of Lia was striking, as she gave away her fourth child to her sister-in-law after her visit to Tinos some years ago in the name of the Virgin Mary. More precisely, as she recounted:

Lia: “When we visited Tinos for the first time my sister-in-law was very stressed because she couldn’t have a child... but she had faith... I, in contrast, didn’t feel devoutness at this very moment there... I don’t know why... I was a bit ‘cold’...there was something I didn’t like in the monastery...anyway...”

Interviewer: If you don’t mind telling me, what was it you didn’t like?

Lia: “Oh, yeah, no problem...it was a bit, let’s say, commercial... This is what I thought at that moment. So, when we returned home after our pilgrimage, we asked her to look after our fourth child for a weekend, because we had a lot of work in the tomato fields. When we returned, she refused to give us our baby back and said to us ‘I am going to keep this child’. As parents, my husband
and I, felt so upset... But she finally kept the baby. I considered it as something meant to happen... I believed that the Virgin Mary helped her in reacting like that and keeping the child... because since then she has been so happy. That's why. She had faith during the pilgrimage, whereas I... and so the Virgin Mary rewarded her with a miracle! That's it. And so I obeyed the Virgin Mary's will.. I said she deserves it, its ok, let her keep it.”

Accordingly, people feel responsible for their practices and outcomes, as their performances can create multiple routes of ‘becoming’ (Crouch, 2003, 2009). Indeed, a personal understanding of agency permits a better comprehension of the transformations observed in social actions (Hays, 1994). For example, the new family state and structure is interpreted by the mother as a punishment for having been engrossed in negative thoughts about the site and as a reward for her sister-in-law who had strong belief. She thereafter promised not to have such thoughts anymore. More precisely:

“I don’t know, maybe I saw things this way because I grew distrustful?.. I don’t know... Anyway, when I visit the church now I try not to think in this way”.

6.5.2 Self improvement, Reflections on self

Journeys, moreover, enable experiences that are essential for the discovering and transformation of one’s internal values (Cohen, 1996; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2006; Hui, 2009). Through pilgrimages people can reflect upon themselves, discover hidden sides of their beings and create new possibilities of action in their lives. As Babis argues it is the Holy Spirit that changes people; “when the Holy Spirit visits you, it forever changes you, it changes your way of thinking...” Giorgos, for example, changed his stance towards people as well as his religious practices back home. As he said:

“I was much more selfish, and now I view things in a different way... I was that type of person who didn’t give a second chance to people. Never. I never gave a second chance to someone. But I can assure you that I have changed a lot. First of all, I do now something really difficult... I confess to the priest, which it is very difficult.”
Accordingly, religious trips assist in making people aware of, and internalise the basic doctrines of the Orthodox Church (such as confession) (Ware, 1993) as well as to become better persons and to help each other. As Sophia, for example, stated:

"I believe that you become a better person through such a pilgrimage. It encourages you to listen to other people’s pain too, to become a better person... and help others as much as you can, based on your own experiences... to give courage and hope to others..."

Rather than being an entirely institutional constructed outcome, it is through social interaction that people improve themselves. A religious oriented trip helps individuals to interact with each other, contrary to the capitalistic society that reinforces individualism. In such places people learn to be ‘human’, in the sense of sharing mutual problems and helping each other. Such a turn towards more altruistic behaviours was also observed within the family sphere. Along with Janna, for example:

"I calmed down... because gradually I got to know myself better and to apologize to others... Even my kids acknowledged it! They said to me: ‘mother, there is calmness in our home now’. I give more love to my children and my husband now."

Religious on-site activities and expressions, in form of good deeds, can extend over multiple spaces. Homes or even communities can thus potentially become sites for religious tourism. Nevertheless, the extent and duration of such changes seems to be another point of discussion, as human selves are not preset, but are always in process and performed (Bell, 2008) and thus vulnerable. Many of the participants indicated the weak and corrupted secular human life and the way it overshadows and gradually vanishes religious grace. The ephemeral character of change is also noticed by Barbara, for example, who argued “you return to your old habits again... you may say that you will be more careful and fair, but the human nature doesn’t change...” Equally, according to Soula “when we return home, no matter whether you want it or not you will once again engage in sinning”.

6.5.3 Sharing transformations

Religious status acquisition constitutes mainly a self-constructed condition. One’s very visitation of the Virgin Mary in Tinos is linked to personal achievement that automatically
ascribes a certain status to those who have been there. Georgia, for example, characterized herself as ‘worthy’, having been able to visit Tinos. Nevertheless, the construction and acknowledgement of religious reality is not only an individual case but is largely a collective enterprise (Bourdieu, 1989). Religion is above all a collective activity and reality (Durkheim, 1915; Schütz, 1962), in which believers encounter other believers, sharing understandings, activities and experiences and thus influencing each other. The transformative effect of religion on people is thus commonly shared by believers, verbally or even bodily (as seen in previous section) and materially. Indeed, returning travelers seek to add meaning to others’ lives by sharing their experiences, through educating them about places or by motivating them to seek out similar experiences (see Laing and Crouch, 2009). Tasoula, for example, intended to share her experiences and transformations through religious items as gifts to family members and friends “in order to convince them... to believe in the Virgin Mary” (Tasoula). In fact, the effect of gifting on people was considerable. Helena, for example, cheerfully narrated the story of the transformative effect her gift, from a previous trip to Tinos, had on a friend of her years ago:

“You remind me now of a story... Lenia [her daughter] had a teacher who had a miscarriage while we were in Tinos... I mean she was pregnant and had a miscarriage for a second time...So I phoned Lenia, and she was crying and telling me ‘oh mother, Suzanna lost her second child’, and I said to her ‘tell Suzanna and emphasize it please that I will bring her an icon of the Virgin Mary from Tinos and that she will then give birth to a child’. Then we bought an icon, we eulogised it and crossed it on the Virgin Mary’s miraculous icon and gave it to Suzanna as a gift. And Suzanna took it with such a longing, and even though she had been trying for 8 years to get pregnant, when she got the icon she believed it so much that she finally gave birth to Anna! And she said to Lenia that she would never part with this icon. And by the way, Lenia became the godmother!”

Others used verbal means and personal experiences in order to convince and change people’s religious views. Along with Babis, for example:

“I remember years ago while we were waiting to receive Holy Communion, there was a man in the queue, who was suffering from terrible headache, and he rubbed his head upon the icon and he got well! I will never forget this! And I always mention it when somebody doubts.”
6.6 Travel Intentions

Sacred sites are increasingly promoted as important heritage or cultural attractions designated for consumption (Timothy and Boyd, 2003). “Strategies of desire” (Baudrillard, 1981, p.85) are created to attract and mobilize people through the broadcasting of events, miraculous stories and material possessions with extraordinary power. Places’ narratives and material possessions orient people towards an understanding of places’ significance (Badone, 2007) creating motivations to visit them and organizing aspects of their performances (Duncan and Duncan, 1988). Many religious sites have, therefore, succeeded in becoming brand destinations through the selection of a distinguishing trait, such as the miraculous icon in Tinos or through the broadcast of spectacles, such as the dramatically ascending crowd to the Church of the Annunciation. Nevertheless, such staged motivations seem to influence only newcomers to Tinos as it was observed that intentions to return are mainly contextual and individually oriented. Indeed, believers are not only structured by their religious cultures but define themselves as producers of their own understanding of religion, setting their own rules in terms of sacred places’ visitation.

6.6.1 Vow dependent

Repeated visits (Reader, 2006) and notions of “serial pilgrims” (Frey, 2004, p.104) are manifested in Tinos within the context of vow, rather than as a result of the place’s particular traits or roles in the religious belief systems (Belhassen et al., 2008; Poria et al., 2003) nor as a result of the experience of activities taken on it that according to Tuan (1974) can create a sense of ‘topophilia’. Rather, it is a vow that defines the frequency of travel and the nature of one’s personal rite of passage. So while it is for some an ending process, like a linear pilgrimage (Frey, 1998), for others, it is a continuing state. Giorgos, for example, visits Tinos each year as part of his life long vow, whereas Katerina will have to come again as she had made a new vow in Tinos and thus will have to return when her wish will be realized. As she said: “I will have to come back because I have vowed it”. Inevitably, as seen also in Chapter 4, the creation of a vow prefigures the frequency of one’s return to Tinos, accumulating coercive elements that circle entirely around the performative process and the promise made. In the same vein, the fulfilment of a vow such
as that of Stella (see Chapter 4 - Gratitude), for example, marked the end of her physical and mental travel to Tinos. In an equal way, Efi stated:

"It is a rather exhausting trip, so since I have been there I don’t see any reason to return. Of course I hope that there will be no reason for me to have to make a vow, because you do that when you are in trouble... obviously if I have to do it [the vow] I will do it and of course I’ll visit Tinos again, but I do not see any reason to visit Tinos just like that”.

In Crouch’s terms (2009), pilgrims’ awareness of being able to change their lives through visiting a sacred place may be significant in their desire to return and experience this again, every time help is needed, as people are all, according to Smith (1992), interested in the betterment of their lives. Even an unrealized wish can be the trigger for a return as it was the case with Danay, who, motivated by her unfulfilled wish by the Virgin Mary and her subsequent negative thoughts, wished to return to Tinos in order to improve/re-construct her religious identity and relations to the deity:

“I would visit Tinos again out of persistence... To reveal what’s inside me, the heartache that I feel. This I would do. I would go, yes... I don’t know.. Maybe I was bad at the time of my devotion.. Maybe I made a mistake.. It is something that worries me.. I want to prove to myself that it wasn’t the icon’s fault nor my fault.. no one is to blame. It was just meant to happen”.

6.6.2 Emotional attachment

For some people, religious blessing is not something they need only occasionally. In fact, as its lasting is temporally limited believers seek its constant replacement. As Tasoula stated “I’ll draw strength till next year when the Virgin Mary will make me worthy to return”, which resembles Graburn’s (1989) cyclical passage of time and individuals need to re-new themselves for the return to their working lives. There is a need for recharging belief and energy by coming in direct contact with the sacredness of the place through repeated journeys to it. As Helena commented, for example:

“It is not that I’ve been there and so I’ll go somewhere else to see something new. No. As long as something rests me and I like it, I will seek to visit it again.”
Furthermore, a sense of ‘geopiety’ in terms of a cognitive and emotional attachment to places (Turnbull, 1981; Wright, 1966) is noticed in some pilgrims, based on past memories and self-constructed affiliations to those places. In particular, believers’ names and their children’s names as well as past miraculous happenings attributed to the Virgin Mary also influence the frequency of pilgrims’ visitation to Tinos. As Vicky commented:

"Many people say "ok, now that I have been here, I will not return but visit other places". I say, no matter how many times I visit the Virgin Mary of Tinos, it will never be enough. Maybe because I have associated this pilgrimage with my children."

Nevertheless, as already touched upon in previous sections, the fragility of such attachments with places is apparent, since the meanings they have for people may change based on the pilgrims’ experiences (Badone and Roseman, 2004; Frey, 1998) as was found, for example, in the case of Soula (see Chapter 4, p.127) who abandon her annual pilgrimage to St. Raphael after the site’s failure to satisfy her needs. Indeed, each encounter can create place one more as individuals do not merely accept but reflect and often reject the structured product (Bruner, 2001). One’s ‘dwelling’ (Ingold, 2000) in the place can thus refute a place’s sacredness and de-construct previous attachment with it.

### 6.6.3 The deity’s call

In the modern world of the automatization of everyday processes, which increasingly depress embodied performances (Baudrillard, 1981) flexible and convenient forms of connection to the deities are observed. In line with Yamba’s (1995, p.120) “ideology of pilgrim-ness” spiritual enhancement is not necessarily connected to one’s physical visitation of a place. As Lia said, for example:

"Certainly it doesn’t mean that if you cannot visit such places you cannot come close to Jesus...because even by reading the Holy Scriptures you can be there, mentally, even if you have never seen these places before".

Furthermore, for some, as has been seen also in the previous chapter (Chapter 5), leaving objects behind at the church reassures a mental bond/connection with the sacred place that continues after they have ended their journey. Efi, who offered oil to the church stated, for example “you know that an oil-candle burns, it burns for you... from you so to say, from
your own oil...and you feel peaceful”. Religious grace is thereby further ‘worked’ in peoples’ absence through their objects left behind. Much like the souvenirs that people take home which aid pilgrims’ imaginative reconstruction of their journey by refreshing their memory (Rountree, 2006) and connection to a deity (Sinha, 1982), so do peoples’ offerings constitute, in a metaphorical sense, a kind of souvenir to the Virgin Mary, invoking memories in Her of the people that have visited Her and of their particular problems, and reminding Her to preserve a close and sacred connection to them.

Finally, unlike Parson’s (1968) understanding of agency within the notion of effort, many pilgrims rely upon the Virgin Mary’s initiative and will when it comes to the question of returning to Tinos. Common sayings were, for example “if the Virgin Mary deems me worthy, I will return” (Georgia) or “I will return if it is the Virgin Mary’s will” (Voula) or “I may want to go, but if God doesn’t want me to?” (Soula). Believers not only choose to live in a miraculous world but also make use of its abstractness based on their wishes/desires. In particular, when it was announced by the guide that the group would visit, as an extra arrangement upon departure, the relic of St Ephraim (close to Athens), Soula interpreted it as miracle and a wish of St Ephraim to see me (the current researcher) who have never visited him before. As she said to me: “It is a miracle; He wants you to visit him. He wants to see you. In my case too, I wasn’t going to come, my mother was in a very bad state, but the Virgin Mary made me worthy to come”. Sudden events and travel arrangements are, thus, attributed to holy means, even though after interrogating the guide about this arrangement, she confidentially revealed that she always incorporates this into the program.

### 6.7 Chapter Summary

In this chapter it was argued that the end of a religious trip does not always signify the end of a pilgrimage. Rather, a pilgrimage is better understood as a temporally boundless endeavour and as a continuum of practices that can occur in many diverse spaces. Pilgrims’ transformations occur not only on-site but encompass many facets of their lives ranging from religious to secular ones. Believers live simultaneously in the past, present and future, linking the different temporalities to each other through practical and reflective means.
Firstly, as one of the pilgrims’ prime scopes in sacred places is to become spiritually enriched (Vukonic, 2000), the end of a pilgrimage trip is usually accompanied by a renewed and re-affirmed faith. While religious feelings were found to be gendered, however, most of the pilgrims were observed after the completion of their religious duties to acquire feelings of religious pride, joy and relief having achieved unity with God; some through the completion of their vow and some others through their times of collective joy and socialisation. Indeed, through a series of experiential encounters individuals were found to re-appreciate their lives and religion. Miracles in particular, experienced by some pilgrims, in the form of manifested signs, were milestones in their being convinced of God’s existence. Nevertheless, the accomplishment of a religious trip has not only positive effects on peoples’ religious understanding but also negative effects, especially in the case of a deity’s failure to fulfil particular believers’ needs, which can result in frustration and inner struggle between the self and the religious institution.

Secondly, religious affect is not only conceptually realized but also depicted in pilgrims’ bodies and performances on-site. In particular, as individuals interact with their bodies and through their bodies with the world around them (Crouch et al., 2001; Davis, 1997; Deleuze, 1990) transformations were also noticed through their body language. Pilgrims’ bodies were found to speak of the past and the present, in that, the smiling faces, happiness and particular body marks, such as wounds, can be considered means through which individuals can expand their knowledge of the religious reality and initiate transformations. Bodies constitute living memories of the places visited and the experiences felt there (Rountree, 2006) and can trigger inter-subjective talk. Moreover, a changing nature of activities was observed after believers’ ritual of devotion of the Virgin Mary. Believers engaged in practices such as shopping, eating in restaurants and drinking in bars, which denote an undergone transformation; of being already freed from obligations (from “religious distress”) and religiously enlightened. Recreation signifies thus the beginning of a change, a transformation which, by many participants, is taken back home and applied to their everyday practices.

Indeed, while the sacred place is the source of grace and salvation, it is at home that the effects of the religious power are confirmed. A renewed emotional self was, for example, mirrored in pilgrims’ changed everyday practices such as the doing of housekeeping with
pleasure or their relief in not having to pray for their vow any more. The journey, moreover, become the basis for believers’ discovering and transforming their inner values (Cohen, 1996; Goeldner and Ritchie, 2006; Hui, 2009) as it was observed that some of them become less selfish, calmer and fairer in their lives. Moreover, believers live simultaneously in the past, present and future, mentally (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998), in that, through remembering their on-site experiences they reinvigorate their present doings (Crang, 2001) as well as the lives of others through the gifts they have brought them from Tinos. Nevertheless, also unpredicted and sometimes even painful changes were observed, as for example, one pilgrim’s handing over of her child to her sister-in-law after the trip as a punishment for her lack of devoutness on-site.

Finally, it was found that despite some sacred sites brand name (Timothy and Boyd, 2003), repeated visits (Frey, 2004; Reader, 2006) are manifested in Tinos mainly within the context of a vow and as a result of pilgrims particular affiliation to the place, based on their names (and thus connection to the deity) and the place’s link to their children, rather than as a result of the place’s particular trait or roles in the religious belief system (Belhassen et al., 2008; Poria et al., 2003), which influence only newcomers. In particular, for some pilgrims leaving objects behind at the church reassures a mental bond/connection with the sacred place that continues after they have ended their journey, as they remind Virgin Mary to preserve a close and sacred connection to them. For others, a return to Tinos is let entirely to the Virgin Mary’s will.
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"Science and religion are two windows that people look through, trying to understand the big universe outside, trying to understand why we are here. The two windows give different views, but both look out at the same universe. Both views are one-sided, neither is complete. Both leave out essential features of the real world. And both are worthy of respect." (Physicist Freeman Dyson)

The author, image captured by a pilgrim, Tinos, 2009

7.1 Introduction

Having arrived at the end of the thesis, this chapter will discuss the contributions the current research makes to the theory of tourism and the idea of pilgrimage discussing and advancing issues related to authenticity, performances and spirituality in and of sacred sites. In briefly recalling the key directions the thesis has taken so far, it has been argued that religious oriented tourists are not merely structured entities but still enjoy autonomy of meaning, construction, being reflexive and sensual beings. Indeed, they not only work upon the religious world as external social actors, but also within the religious world. Hence, even though religions, through their belief systems, often overshadow some of the possible human performative paths, tourism offers innumerable possible combinations of performances and experiences, which can add to the pilgrims’ overall religious experience. Accordingly, belief is not merely a set of myths or propositions to which adherents consent, but involves a complex configuration of numerable practices, individuals, social bodies and materials that come across each other during a religious trip, and each aspect of this network enjoys an element of agency (Cloke and Perkins, 2005; Fraklin, 2008; Latour, 2005) that affects people on and off-site. The chapter ends by presenting the practical implications of the study as well as providing reflections on the methodological issues and future recommendations.
7.2 Talking back to Theory of Tourism

In recalling past theories, tourism was considered, during the 70s, to be a modern phenomenon that triggered two competing standpoints based on the nature and meaning of the modern tourist experience. Pioneer Boorstin (1964), for example, criticizes tourism as an indication of modern decadence, characterizing tourist activity as trivial and superficial in people's search for fake and hedonistic experiences. From the other point of view, MacCannell's (1973) tourists are in search for the authentic, for the real meaning in life and as such the tourist experience is considered a meaningful modern ritual. Nonetheless, he acknowledges the existence of 'staged authenticity' in tourist spaces, though as created by attraction managers to manipulate tourists. As he argued, tourists' inability to distinguish the authentic from the inauthentic renders them victims of the tourism industry (1973). Both Boorstin (ibid.) and MacCannell (ibid.) follow an objectivist conception of authenticity in which the experiences are linked to an epistemological experience of the authenticity of originals (Wang, 1999). In response to these grand theories, postmodern theories emerged later reacting against the conceptualization of societies as totalities and the homogenization of tourist experiences suggesting that authenticity involves a much larger spectrum. Their logic was based on a non-dualistic and less authoritative understanding of tourism (Franklin and Crang, 2001).

Specifically, in postmodern tourism, authenticity is distinguished by the multiplicity, subjectivity and fluidity of tourist experiences, performances and motivations. Well known post-modern theories consider the 'hyperreal' experiences, which resemble Boorstin's (1964) notion of pseudo-events, as they refer to artificial theme parks and other fantasy driven attractions (Baudrillard 1983; Edensor, 2009; Lash and Urry 1994) as well as the evolvement of nature-oriented tourism and other secular forms of pilgrimages as postmodern expressions (Munt, 1994; Uriely, 1997; Urry, 1990). Accordingly, scholars go even beyond Cohen's (1979, p.180) tourist's typology, according to which “different kinds of people may desire different modes of tourist experiences”, in that it is assumed that tourists can move across different types of tourist experiences (Feifer, 1985). Furthermore, 'the end of tourism' and tourism as de-differentiation of everyday life is proposed by Urry (1990) and Lash and Urry (1994), since tourism is increasingly not providing any special
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or extraordinary experiences to tourists (Urry, 1990), and art and everyday life are at times even undistinguishable to each other in the contemporary world.

7.2.1 The authentic holiness

In respect to the above theories it is found here that tourism can not be generalized, nor can it be conceptualized within particular tourist philosophies in an ‘either-or’ basis but, in referring to Franklin and Crang (2001), it must move beyond the dichotomies of self/other, us/them that confine tourism to a discrete set of events, habits and behaviours. In fact, situating tourism within particular world views, contexts and constructs, such as the Greek Orthodox Christian belief system, can result in different theorizing of the tourism phenomenon, accumulating both ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ features alike. Accordingly, the Greek Orthodox religious tourist departs in search for authenticity and ritualism that is socially and textually constructed and simultaneously enjoys the multiple and fluid tourist experiences that post-modern theories suggest, in that she/he is observed participating interchangeably in a variety of different performances, institutional and individual, and often even constructing part of the overall experience by herself/himself.

In particular, as “authenticity connotes ... a sense of the genuine, the real or the unique” (Sharpley, 1994, p.130), it is usually linked to the act of movement towards a place and detachment from one’s everyday surroundings. Greek Orthodox believers, similar to MacCannell’s modern tourists (1973), depart in search for the authentic, the ‘real’ that is entrenched in sacred places and embodied in miraculous icons or relics based on socially constructed knowledge. While new technologies reinforce the notion of the end of tourism, by providing alternative forms of religious activity, such as virtual pilgrimages (MacWilliams, 2002), which are increasingly adopted in the U.S, with believers attending religious masses on-line, however, physical pilgrimages still survive in the Greek Orthodox religious world based on particular teachings and dogmas. In particular, the triadic God (comprising of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) can only be experienced in the Church where the Holy Spirit subsists and assists in people’s transformations. Accordingly, unlike Urry’s (1990) tourism as de-differentiation of everyday life, religious oriented tourism and visitation of sacred places offers special sensations as well as internal and physical conversions; like hospitals (Vlachos, 1994), it is

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believed that churches continue the Christ’s mission, accepting and saving all people that
find shelter in them.

Previous studies support the idea that social constructivism creates ‘symbolic authenticity’
according to which objects, experiences or people are authentic not because they are
originals or reality, but because they are perceived as symbols of authenticity based on
texts (Britton, 1979; Culler, 1981; Silver, 1993). However, it is argued here that
authenticity is also linked to a reality ‘out there’ that is not humanly created and
conceivable nor can it be denied by non-believers; an intangible, unknown power that is
considered almighty and the creator of the visible and non-visible world that surrounds
people. As such, unlike the post-modern ‘hyperreal’ experiences or the modern notion of
pseudo-events (Boorstin, 1964) that emanate existential sense of authenticity only from the
humanly constructed world based both on collective (social) and individual interpretations
of experiences (Baudrillard, 1983; Edensor, 2009; Featherstone, 1991; Lash and Urry,
1994), a new dimension is proposed here; the ‘theo-real’ that affects people’s emotions
and actions in the world. Indeed, in line with Thrift (2004, p.60) the “inhuman” or
“transhuman” framework, is one “in which individuals are generally understood as effects
of the events to which their body parts respond and in which they participate”.

Accordingly, existential authenticity within the religious context not only includes
reference “to the particular setting in which this feeling is experienced and to the
collective, socially ascribed meanings that shape tourists’ understandings of that space”
(Belhassen et al., 2008, p.674), but also to the potential existence of something else that
cannot be explained by the ‘imperfect’ man and is therefore accepted often out of fear of
the unknown and the outcome of rejection. And religious institutions are the means to
connect with the supernatural. Especially within the Greek Orthodox world, believers are
obliged to visit sacred places not only as a way of experiencing the power of places in a
post-modern sense of nature appreciation (Barsalou et al., 2005; Cloke and Perkins, 1998;
Veijola and Jokinen, 1994) but merely in order to achieve ‘being there’; close to the holy
and allowing themselves to become one with the unknown: the God and especially the
Holy Spirit inside the church.

Ecclesiastic institutions reproduce ‘performative pictures’ as affects of religious
intervention and dominant religious national narratives using popular media and political
rhetoric (Ballesteros and Ramirez, 2007; Bandyopadhya et al., 2008; MacCannell, 1976) to attract religious adherents. Using cultural scripts, fuelled by ideological interpretation (Badone, 2007; Selwyn, 1996), as well as visuals and materials they mobilize collective gazing of place (Urry, 1990), mediate discursive spaces (Scarles, 2004, 2009), create strategies of desire (Baudrillard, 1981) and pre-programme (Urry, 1990) believers’ expectations, creating a notion that resembles post-modern’s ‘society of spectacle’ (Baudrillard, 1981; Edensor, 2009). Nevertheless, while spectacle in the post-modern world is connected to the contrived and fake, such as Disneyland, and tourism is criticized by previous heritage scholars as an inappropriate means for the presentation of human suffering (MacCannell, 1992; Urry, 1995), spectacle within the Orthodox religious tourism experience is related to the authentic; the higher reality, namely God, who is responsible for the miraculous healings and the impressive, dramatic collective performances of believers on site.

7.2.2 Multiplicity of tourism performances within the religious context

Based on Cohen’s (1998) idea of the ‘theology of tourism’, which discusses travellers’ behaviour according to their religious affiliation (Fleischer, 2000), it becomes apparent that religious doctrines have long determined people’s destination choices, motivations to travel and behaviour while travelling (Cohen, 1998; Mattila et al., 2001), thus providing a mosaic of different believers’ tourism performances around the world or even in the same places. Indeed, believers belonging to the same affiliation perform tourism by carrying out unreflexive and conscious actions knowledgeable through shared ‘common sense’. Unlike religious traditions that disconnect themselves from sacred sites and ecclesiastic textual rules, such as Protestantism, Greek Orthodox believers travel to sacred places as part of their collective understanding and shared religious heritage (see Poria’s et al., 2003). Indeed, as religious oriented tourism constitutes part of a believer’s religious life, it is often even pre-determined based on particular beliefs. A vow, for example, has been found to determine individuals’ frequency of travel to specific places. In particular, a fulfilled wish by a deity obliges people to visit the place dedicated to the particular deity, a fact that is the most common motive of people present in Tinos. Moreover, inherited attributes, such as Christian names (as belonging to Saints), as well as later acquired states, such as motherhood, a vision or healing attributed to a deity, create personal attachments to particular deities and thus sacred sites, regardless of their outer characteristics.
Nevertheless, it is not only believers’ motivations and future intentions that are religiously determined, but also their on-site practices. Accordingly, religious travel is predominately 3-star and below market (Bywater, 1994, Gladstone, 2005), since most religions teach modesty and austerity. Furthermore, Jews do not travel on Saturdays (Fleischer and Pizam, 2002) as it is considered a day of rest, and frequent hotels, airlines and restaurants that serve kosher meals. Equally, Muslims normally stay in hotels that are located near mosques, have prayer rooms, gender-segregated swimming pools and restaurants that offer halal foods (Timothy and Iverson, 2006). Greek Orthodox people restrict themselves from eating meat and dairy products before taking the communion, as part of their fasting ritual, and look out for restaurants that serve “nistisima” fasting food.

Moreover, gender differences in religious tourism (Kinnaird and Hall, 1994; Swain, 1995) are remarkable in some Islamic cultures, which enforce severe restrictions on women. In Mecca, for example, the predominance of men is notable as a result of the social position of women in the Islamic world and religion. On the other hand, women predominate at Greek Orthodox shrines, because according to the Greek tradition it is most often women who represent and connect the families to the spiritual world. Similarly, differences can be found in the age of the pilgrims. While Fleischer (2000), for example, found that pilgrims to the Holy Land were on average older people, a fact that is also observed in Greek Orthodox pilgrimages, in West Bengal old people are not well represented (Rinschede, 1992). Equally, while high castes are well represented in Hindu pilgrimage sites (Bhardwaj, 1973; Morinis, 1984), higher educated people do not frequent Lourdes (Eade, 1992). Additionally, unlike Protestants that concentrate mainly on the spiritual part and see religion as a question of inner belief rather than as a material expression (Meyer et al., 2010), in the Eastern Orthodoxy aesthetics remain a valued medium of access to the divine (Martin, 2006) and materials play a significant role in this matter.

Greek Orthodox believers therefore do not literally concern themselves with the authenticity of religious objects, but engage with them because they are religiously touched. Objects are embedded within Greek Orthodoxy, being an important part of the choreography and ordering of the religious theatre (Edensor, 2000; Franklin, 2004, 2008) and as a mean of connecting with God. With the aid of activities related to religious objects, believers are in search of their religious selves as religious objects, communicate
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beliefs and direct believers actions. They ‘speak’ and denote things to people, affecting, thus, collective religious identity in various ways. Through tourist activities within religious spheres, such as sightseeing, hunting of signs, gazing at tamata, believers strengthen their religious beliefs, understanding and attachment and create new appreciations of religion. Tamata, for example, personify people and stories of pain, denoting humanity’s imperfection and simultaneously constituting proof of the miracles accomplished by the deity. Equal to Cloke and Pawson’s (2008) memorial trees that have been used as blank canvases, to be colored by the paint box of memory, pilgrims in sacred places through gazing at religious offerings, encounter the past, bringing back to life stories that happened before (see also Osbaldiston and Petray, 2011) and inscribing the place with memories of happy-end, victorious stories. The church with its material possessions thus constitutes an environment of memory (Davies, 2008) which permeates hope.

Furthermore, believers’ engagement in tourist activities, such as the buying of souvenirs and gifts, enable them to fulfil their religious duties on-site (in the form of offerings as part of a vow) as well as off-site. In addition to their mental effects, blessed materials are consumed across multiple contexts (Ateljeic and Doome, 2003), having practical qualities also (Keane, 2003; Michael, 2000). Pilgrims, for example, occasionally drink holy water or anoint themselves with consecrated oil, as they are believed to have curing qualities. The connection of the past with the present, through materials, is, however, not only one-directional. Rather, objects left behind (on-site) by pilgrims, such as oil to be used for the oil candles in the church, have been found to have a similar effect on the deity; they are to maintain memories of the people that have visited the place and of their particular problems, and remind the deity to preserve a close and sacred connection to them.

Furthermore, ‘touristscapes’ (Crouch, 2003; Edensor, 2007; Holloway, 2003), within which mundane recreational activities are performed (such as the time spent on the bus, in taverns, in cafés or in the daytrips), are marked as ‘special’ by some participants, enabling talking and subsequently producing feelings of togetherness that highlight the spiritual graces earlier obtained from the church visit. Indeed, a Greek Orthodox person alone is not considered Greek Orthodox because the Orthodox belief and life exists only in combination with a community and can only be unfolded there (Kariotoglou et al., 1997). Religious meanings, such as ‘to love each other’ (John 13:34) are, accordingly, constructed
and enlivened through people’s engagement in pilgrimages and embodied through their multiple encounters in space and with space (Crouch, 2002), whether this is sacred or secular space. While the church still remains as the centre of believers’ accumulation, touristic activities provide a multifaceted stage on which relationships can further be unfolded, fastened and maintained, a reality that is however criticized by some believers.

In particular, inconsistencies are observed between formal and spiritual corporeal expressions of religion (churchy vs. spiritual believers), similar to those observed between modern and post-modern tourist performances (see Edensor, 1998; Feifer, 1985). It is rather the fear of a changing nature of religion, with the detachment from the institutional and attachment to subjective experiences of faith, like in other religious affiliations, what creates conflicts among believers. For example, churchy believers who abide by formal religious rules, reciting a “script” and playing a “role”, do not all accept leisure or everyday activities. Nevertheless, tourism both within the modern era and the religious context constitutes a dynamic entity. Tourism adjusts to religious contexts in the same manner as religions adjust to contemporary tourism. As such they are mutually dependent and complete each other.

7.3 Talking back to the Idea of Pilgrimage

7.3.1 The sacred versus secular pilgrimage debate

Many tourist studies, especially postmodern studies and constructivist approaches, have tried to relate their subjects of research to that of pilgrimage. Forefronting existential approaches (subjective experiences) to authenticity as the most suitable for understanding modern tourists’ experiences (see for example: Cohen, 1979; Kim and Jamal, 2007; Wang, 1999), similarities to pilgrimage are observed within contexts of sensual experiences. Places such as sport stadiums (Elias and Dunning, 1986; Maguire, 1992), singer’s graves (such as Elvis Presley, Jim Morrison, Jimmy Hendrix) (Ross, 1999), battle fields and prison cells (such as Nelson Mandela’s) (Strange and Kempa, 2003) have thus become sanctified, constituting a sacred or ritual experience in modern society (see Alderman, 2002; Elias and Dunning, 1986; Gibson, 2005; King, 1993; Kruse, 2003; Maguire, 1992; Ritchie and Adair, 2004).
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Such post-modern streams are rather linked to Tillich’s (1957) understanding of faith as every state with which human beings are ultimately concerned, thereby ascribing holiness and spirituality to everything regardless of whether it is profane or sacred. Within this context spirituality is restricted to the individual’s needs and thus an individually constructed state that gives people a purpose and meaning in life. For this reason, spirituality, which historically is referenced in the context of religion (Pargament, 1992; Zinnbauer et al., 1999), is recently regarded by many authors as being a much broader concept than religion (Miller and Thoresen, 1999; Walsh, 1999) since not all present understandings of spirituality are linked to religion (Sheldrake, 1992; Wulff, 1997). Nevertheless, aside from the multiple secular forms of belief there is still something else that is beyond human understanding and control. Despite different religions giving different names to it, the belief in the existence of a higher realm is a worldwide phenomenon. Religious pilgrimage and especially the Greek Orthodox therefore remains a unique phenomenon encompassing, in addition to other forms of pilgrimage, and the immaterial factor that is marked by mysticism and agnosticism: the Ghostliness (i.e. Holy Spirit, God’s grace), which acquires agency and affect.

So, while sacred and secular pilgrimages share common characteristics such as awe, feelings of communitas, respect and adherence, popular people’s tombs, battlefields and heritage sites are connected to past happenings and previous lives, constituting rather the embodiment of remembrance. Religious places, on the contrary, besides their connection to historical texts, are imbued with the present aura of holiness and immaterial existence that is alive and interactive, similar to experiences sensed by nature-oriented tourists. Nevertheless, what differentiates them further is the notion of the mystery connected to the existence or not of the sacred and thus of its potential infinite and unpredicted power over secular lives and aspects. For example, a visitation to the (filled with symbolic power) prison cell of Nelson Mandela on Robben Island can invoke sacred-like feelings such as awe, respect and inspire political and social reinvention worldwide (Lennon and Foley, 2000). However, these feelings are created by secular means and are known; proven historical facts that allow people to attach to, or to reject them contrary to religious places that are imbued with a mysticism that is attributed to a power that is inconceivable and uncreated.
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The spiritual, mystic atmosphere connected to religious sites is not only created as a result of the historic religious narratives connected to places (Rojek and Urry, 1997) but is part and parcel of the current ghostliness present there: the presence of immaterial existence. Its link to the unknown raises existential questions even for non-believers who in sensing the mystic aura of places and in viewing pilgrims’ dramatic performative landscapes unconsciously question/contemplate on the existence of something else on site. Accordingly, within the contexts of both religious tourism and the Greek Orthodox belief system that rests on a triadic God which entails the Holy Spirit, as different to the other Christian affiliations, this study advances the conceptualization of authenticity of the place and the lived experience there by adding a new dimension into the existing components that shape them. In particular, besides Eade and Sallnow’s (1991) three coordinates of pilgrimage sites (place: landscape features, person: holy person, relic, and text: myth) that determine the character of a sacred place, and Belhassen et al.’s (2008) additional component of ‘action’, this study asserted the importance of another component, namely of the ‘Ghostliness’ as an uncreated grace present in the sacred sites, in producing and influencing lived experiences.

In addition to Protestants that are inspired by their unconstrained relationship with Christ, and Catholics who believe that the will of Jesus is performed through the agency of the church (Bowman, 1991), Greek Orthodox people believe in the Holy Spirit that resides in the church and comprises it, enlivens it, directs it towards the truth, blesses it and accordingly influences and changes people, a notion that will now be discussed further.

7.3.2 Ghostliness, emotions, affect

Previous studies derive the extraordinary sacred experience from individuals’ subjective, experiential experiences of their own interaction with the world and as such from created feelings (Alderman, 2002; Belhassen et al., 2008; Elias and Dunning, 1986; Gibson, 2005; King, 1993; Kruse, 2003). In Greek Orthodox belief the individual and inter-subjective experiential experiences and feelings (Wang, 1999) are determined by the intervention and touch of the uncreated energy of God previously encountered in church. The Orthodox ‘mystic’ as differing from the mysticism and spirituality sensed by other Christian affiliations such as Protestantism or secular pilgrimages, is not detached from the church but is part of it and its ritual life. In fact, through people’s dwelling there (Heidegger,
1971) ghostliness is evidenced both imaginatively and bodily in the form of an affect “attached to things, people, ideas, sensations, relations, activities, ambitions, institutions and any number of other things, including other affects” (Sedgwick, 2003, p.19).

In particular, being in the sacred places enables people to construct religious selves through a poetic fusion of self and other, as they move into the place, working, learning and making sense of their symbolic religious contexts, picking significance amongst a complexity of relations, things, actions and feelings (Crouch, 2009). Gazing at religious offerings (tamata) and religious performers’ expressions of belief constitutes a means for people to witness religious power on-site. While the displayed tamata constitute past proofs of God’s religious grace and the Virgin Mary’s pleading, the performing religious crowd represents the present, active and contemporary proof of the Virgin Mary’s and God’s intervention. Performing pilgrims in Tinos are the living paradigm of the Virgin Mary’s enormity and God’s grace and are thus themselves regarded as being beyond the ordinary.

In addition, by attending with their bodies in settings that include the embodied presence of others, pilgrims experience themselves not as isolated subjectivities but as sharing an inter-subjective, and belonging to a larger whole (Davies, 1988). In particular, a religious service, in which many people worship together, can be a compelling context, generating a sense of being together (Davies, 1988) in the presence of something else that coordinates and orchestrates believers’ practices. Performing shared institutional/ritual practices, such as the writing of names to be prayed for health and the subsequent collective prayers spreads blessing and unites people within the church space, a fact that is attributed to the Holy Spirit which grants people with values such as love, joy, peace, goodness and faith (Kariotoglou et al., 1997). Pilgrims influence each other, verifying mutual realities through creating spaces of collective hunting of signs, helping and correcting each others practices as well as proposing alternative, but mutually approved, practices of religion. Pilgrims become one with the distant anonymous performing crowd that embodies sacredness, and as such, with the sacred itself.

Accordingly, building upon research by Coleman and Crang (2002), Crouch (2003; 2009), Deleuze and Guattari (2004), Franklin and Crang (2001), Franklin (2004, 2008) and Thrift and Dewsbury (2000), it is argued that religious oriented tourism does not constitute a
series of static moments through which pilgrims move, as the uncreated grace of God/Holy Spirit is capable of affecting everything that happens in the world and especially in the church and to inspire the human spirit (Kariotoglou et al., 1997), in so far as people search for it in churches and let it unfold (Figure 7.1). Hence, while Greek Orthodox pilgrimage is goal-centred as it is place/church-entrenched (e.g. veneration of icon), it is also radial and anti-structural (Nolan and Nolan, 1989; Turner and Turner, 1978) as it is highly related to peoples’ secular activities on-site and their lives back home.

The centeredness and importance of the Ghostliness in the pilgrimage experience is apparent as its revelation, through the encounter with tamata, the veneration of the miraculous icon and the participation in collective rituals, constitutes a changing point in people’s experiences and activities; a point at which the believer ceases to be in the process of becoming a religious tourist and enters into the state of being a religious tourist (Figure 7.2). Accordingly, pilgrimage is defined here as a journey towards a sacred center from which holiness (ghostliness, grace) emanates that releases people’s anguish and transforms them; a transformation that is present on-site and taken back home. Indeed, based on Scarles (2009) each stage of the pre-, during- and post-trip influences the other as experiences of trips blend with past and potentially future tourist experiences.
Religious affect is depicted in pilgrims’ bodies and performances. For example, a changing nature of activities and facial expressions can be observed among believers right after the ritual of devotion in the church (dotted line in Figure 7.2) which is attributed to the Holy Spirit that is said to change people’s mood and thinking; people were seen laughing, singing and engaging in practices such as shopping, eating and dancing in taverns. Pilgrims’ bodies speak of the past and the present, in that the happiness carved into their faces and particular body marks (such as wounds) are considered affects of ghostliness, which can trigger inter-subjective talk even back home. The church visit becomes the basis for believers’ discovering and transforming of their inner values as it is observed that some of them become less selfish, calmer and fairer in life.

Furthermore, while tourism is considered, in the post-modern world, an abstract and broader concept than the institutionalized religion in terms of its multiplicity of encounters and thus construction of experiences, what facilitates extraordinary experience, sacralizes and beautifies moments is God’s grace gained in the church, which offers endless potentials for experiences in the world. Individuals as vessels of belief and of God’s grace move through tourism which religiously unfolds and enlivens their belief back home. In particular, pilgrims’ recreational activities in the ‘secular street’ can be a symbolic expression of transformation and affect. They signify the beginning of a change, in terms
of one’s release from religious duties and sins, and entry into a state of religious euphoria. According to the Orthodox religious teachings, through religious performances, believers become free by being in communion with God and thus can enjoy the rest of their day (Botsis, n.d.). Recreation constitutes an essential part of the religious experience as the happiness it transmits points towards religiously important sensual pleasures and values the Holy Spirit grants people with, such as love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness and faith that people are to follow in their lives. The positive effects religious accomplishments have on people as embodied in their recreational activities thus reinforce the beauty of religion and life, notions that are taken back home and applied in everyday life. In effect, recreation is conceptualized as the anteroom to return to the previous but simultaneously new life.

Religious tourism and everyday life are thus joined. Places, as well as the deities entrenched in them, are not fixed in one location, but rather are travelling themselves as they move around and within networks of human and nonhuman agents (Baerenholdt et al., 2004; Sheller and Urry, 2004; Sheller and Urry, 2006) prolonging the state of ‘being a religious tourist’ even outside sacred spaces and having ephemeral and/or lasting effects on people’s lives. Indeed, pilgrims’ homes and everyday life become sites for religious experience, as sacredness penetrates in there through the materials, moods and body wounds brought from the island, each of which embodies its own story and spreads memories (Hetherington, 1997). A religious trip is often only a fragment of an individual’s pilgrimage. In particular, within the context of a vow, promises given upon announcing one’s vow to a deity overshadow pilgrims in their everyday life. Specifically, in case of a promise of multiple visits, the time-spaces between two or more journeys may be part of a pilgrimage, as individuals are constantly reminded of their religious ‘obligations’ in their everyday lives.

Nevertheless, a person ceases to be a religious tourist and shifts into the state of becoming a religious tourist anew when a new incentive triggers them to sacred places. A new vow, for example, denotes the beginning of a series of daily prayers. In particular, daily prayers, personal problems, religious promises given in the form of vows, as well as religious materials obtained from sacred sites as gifts from others, motivate people to visit sacred places. Believers become involved in an emotional state of becoming a religious tourist, which illuminate in Thrift’s (1999) terms how places haunt people and people haunt them. Thus, unlike van Gennep (1909), pilgrims’ ‘separation’ stage often begins in their
everyday life as they enter new internal states, which continue until their arrival to the church. In the church, the ‘religious distress’ sensed at home and observed towards ascending the church (“sacred street”), is again taken over by ‘religious euphoria’ that is manifested in almost all the remaining parts of the trip. Freed from obligations, blessed by the Virgin Mary and touched with the place’s ghostliness, that is, God’s grace, people reach the state of being religious tourists feeling revived and renewed and ready to participate in the uncreated grace of God and thus enjoy their religious being through tourist activities. Accordingly, a religious tourist is defined here as a person that has obtained religious grace through visiting a church and unfolds its blessing in her/his everyday tourist enactions on site and back home.

7.4 Practical Implications

Some findings of the study can provide valuable information for religious authorities in the organization and maintenance of the religious ambience and experience in sacred places as well as in their promotion. Religious experience is the result of a fusion of multiple factors present on site. In line with non-representational and post-human perspectives alike (Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Franklin and Crang, 2001; Franklin, 2008; Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Ingold, 2000; Keane, 2003; Latour, 2005; Miller, 1987; Picken, 2010; Walsh and Tucker, 2009), it has been found that religion is not only institutionally constructed but constitutes a hybrid institution that is accomplished with the participation of human and non-human (material/immaterial) actors which both possess agency. Human bodies, ghostliness, intersubjective interactions, material assets, landscape and their combined performances draw one’s experiential picture and mutually produce the religious end result. All components have therefore to be meticulously taken into consideration in the experience economy. While the experience economy (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) within the modern tourism context is related to the purchase of extraordinary experiences, as seen in adventure tourism (Cloke and Perkins, 1998), the payback of believers is not necessarily monetary as they are not obliged to pay entrance fees to visit the church. Believers’ pay back is in form of their return and the number of pilgrims on site who establish a sacred site and add to its fame.
Indeed, many religious sites, including Tinos, have become brand destinations through the selection of an emblematic trait, historical event as well as through the broadcast of its dramatic performing crowd which is provided for consumption and fascinates potential visitors. The role of people in the promotion of sacred sites is moreover manifested through the social reproduction of experiences and miracles that trigger visits to sacred places. ‘Word-of-mouth’ (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Gunn, 1972), based on social relations embedded within religious consumption, was found to be crucial in the production of religious places, as it cultivates a longing for them through the re-production of stories connected to the places (Davis and Boles, 2003). In particular, people, influenced by their interactive performance back home, visit sacred places in order to seek out similar experiences to previous travelers (Laing and Crouch, 2009) and thus to feel and feast their eyes on particular assets and happenings that they have become aware of through friends or family members’ personal accounts as well as through brochures. Notably, stories of miraculous cures, which are very common among believers, trigger motivations for people in need who have an extra urge to personally experience sacredness and manifest religious signs as well as to find emotional support and belonging in a homogenous group; to sense ‘sufferitas’. This very knowledge has, in fact, created many new important religious places, within the last decades, such as Medjugorje (Vukonic, 1996) as a result of the broadcasted miracles that happened there.

Nevertheless, it has been found that a place’s sacredness cannot be considered fixed and as such neither is its significance. In effect, a place’s weak aura of ghostliness and thus failure to fulfil given promises (such as miraculous cures) may have negative effects on the site and on pilgrims, such as negative word-of-mouth, preference for other sites or even the questioning of religious existence. Moreover, an experience of place can never be exactly the same as its significance may also change based on the situational nature; believers’ mood, particular needs (Badone and Roseman, 2004; Coleman and Eade, 2004; Frey, 1998) and multiplicity of relationships with different human (Edensor, 2001) and non-human entities (Cloke and Pawson, 2008; Franklin, 2008; Haldrup and Larsen, 2006; Picken, 2010) render places unpredictable, fluid and complex. Indeed, a sacred place’s ‘centeredness’ rather than being fixed in time and significance (Turner and Turner, 1978), is fragile and is subject to change according to the individual’s previous experiences, happenings, needs and conditions (see also Chronis, 2005; Edensor, 1998).
Furthermore, while the human factor seems to be successful in promoting the spiritual side of Tinos, it was found that it influences mainly newcomers as it was observed that the intension to return is mainly context and individually oriented. In fact, a sacred site’s significance is often independent of the pilgrims’ return, which is often even pre-determined. For example, one’s inherited attributes, such as the name, attributes attachment to the site before the visit and after the visit regardless of the place’s characteristics and meaning, which are important components in other tourist studies (Beerli and Martin, 2004; Martin and del Bosque, 2008; Tasci and Holecek, 2007). A vow, moreover, determines, to a large extent, pilgrims’ return and the number of returns to sacred places. In fact, a completed vow usually signifies the end of another visitation to Tinos, as the island had mainly religious rather than touristic significance for the believers based on its image and branding as a sacred place. Accordingly, a sacred site’s marketing should also consider *production orientation*, which emphasizes on the overall place’s supplies such as the surrounding landscape and tourist facilities and the extent to which they surpass those of their competitors (Mill and Morrison, 2002), in order to influence pilgrims to return for other reasons as well as to attract other types of tourists who may visit the sacred place and may become religiously affected.

In contrast to other Christian affiliations, Greek Orthodoxy combines both the immaterial and the institutional as it is believed that the immaterial derives from the church buildings and that charisma or ‘gift of grace’ as an affect of ghostliness is transmitted through collective ritual performances and the Holy Spirit. Indeed, most of the pilgrims take part in their religious belief system, by performing a series of directed religious practices as established by religious producers. Nevertheless, while religious institutions internalize such routine performances, and choreograph and direct people’s on-site movements in an attempt to entrench identity and make religious meanings convincing (Bourdieu, 1991), such standardized procedures and the use of purist Greek language in the religious liturgy create often unreflective, passive believers who engage in practices mechanically. While the routinization of practices helps people to survive in rituals, it is also capable to produce daydreaming, called ‘*meteorismos*’, as well as to turn believers onto other interests, such as gazing at each other in the church, as a result of monotony, boredom and decline of religious concentration. Such phenomena are the result of over elaborating institutional structures and rigidly adhering to laws that kill the spirit (Poloma, 1997) present in a variety of situations, and subsequently the real religious purpose in life.
Religious institutional practices construct close bodies that become immune to the influence of the world’s multiple agents and are thus protected from sinning. In this way, the affect of ghostliness (charisma, blessing) experienced within other aspects of the human world is restricted. Nevertheless, believers’ bodies live in space as open surfaces (Deleuze and Harrison, 2000) which are open to multiple affects (Gil, 1998; Thrift, 2004) and can host unpredictable performances and experiences. It is important within the religious sector to loosen the strict ties and to approach pilgrimages as a self-service industry which allows and supports the variety of religious experience. Indeed, religious fields’ efforts to achieve believers’ holding on to their beliefs through habitus (Bourdieu, 1989) neglect notions of creative performance, subjectivity and inter-subjectivity as a result of God’s grace.

Indeed, as the Holy Spirit emanates from the Church and is manifested in believers’ moods and activities, sacred spaces like the church and secular spaces such as recreational spaces (Edensor, 2007), become religious places through people’s agency, in the form of collective prayers and conversations, respectively, that create feelings of solidarity and union with God, a fact that is consistent with Durkheim’s (1915) notion of the society as the soul of religion. Rather than conserving the polemic between churchy and spiritual believers, diversity in performances has to be acknowledged since even in carefully staged places that are designed to produce particular responses and repetitive practices (Butler, 1990), new performances or understandings can arise (Rose, 1999) that are attributed to a holy intervention.

7.5 Talking back to Methodology
7.5.1 Trust, self and others through ethnography

The advantages of qualitative research have been increasingly recognized by religious/pilgrimage researchers in the last decade (Andriotis, 2009; Badone and Roseman, 2004; Belhassen et al., 2008; Coleman, 2004; Coleman and Eade, 2004; Collins-Kreiner, 2010), as a way to better understand individual multiplicity and the nuance of social context through thorough, first-hand descriptions of people and settings (Stein and Mankowski, 2004). However, while ethnographic methods have been advocated,
Chapter 7 Conclusions

acknowledging the existence of multiple realities for pilgrims, they were mainly used to
create grand narratives and typologies, thus failing to provide insights into the complexities
of the pilgrimage phenomenon and the sensitive issues it may conceal. In fact, even though
the current study was not initially considered a sensitive topic in the same manner as
studies dealing with health issues (Elam and Fenton, 2003; Rubenstein, 2008), drugs
(Dunlap and Johnson, 1998) or homosexuality (Platzer and James, 1997), and therefore
had no intention to extracting (from participants) and presenting sensitive stories, it
developed as such throughout the research, with participants uttering very personal
happenings to the interviewer.

In reality, all topics are potentially sensitive (Lee, 1993) and qualitative methods in
particular have the ability to extract sensitive constructs upon which quantitative measures
can be developed (Maton, 1993). A researcher’s humanness and ability to feel and to show
emotions is a basic virtue (Gilbert, 2001), as it is emotionality that connects people
(Denzin, 1984); “to be human is to be emotional” (Denzin, 1984, p.x). Research should,
therefore, not only be seen as an intellectual pursuit but also “as a process of exploration
and discovery that is felt deeply” (Gilbert, 2001, p.9). Accordingly, in order to understand
and feel a cultural group, like a religious one, and connect with it, researchers have to step
into the particular world, to witness and to see the world through someone else’s eyes; they
have to consider themselves research instruments. Therefore, witnessing is a natural
consequence of using qualitative methods, as they enable researchers to directly interact
with people being studied and occasionally to be absorbed into/by various social settings
(Stein and Mankowski, 2004). Indeed, the act of witnessing creates place or “our place in
the world” (Dewsbury, 2003, p.1907). The direct presence of the researcher in the field
creates connectedness and empathy between the researcher and the researched that can
advance knowledge and contribute to a greater social good (Stein and Mankowski, 2004).

7.5.1.1 Establishing Trust: Embodied performances and materialities

One of the most important conditions of undertaking qualitative research on sensitive
topics is the establishment of rapport. In order to create relationships based on mutual trust,
researchers have to make participants feel relaxed and comfortable enough to reveal their
personal experiences (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009; Liampputong, 2007). To have a positive
impact, witnesses are required to minimize potential feelings of thread (Lee, 1993) and be
open, totally ‘there’, enthusiastic listeners who are fascinated, affected and responsible to
what they hear (Laub, 1992). Indeed, the presence of an empathic and receptive listener opens up individuals and enables them to make sense of their experiences. Recounting one’s religious experiences in the presence of a witness, be it a researcher or a friend or relative, serves, for example, to affirm both the individual’s miraculous experience and the continued existence of the supernatural grace. In reality, it is something more than building rapport. It is the developing of trust, where respondents believe in the value of the research but also in the researcher as a researcher and are therefore willing to divulge personal insights, experiences and thoughts. As Rousseau et al. (1998) define it: “Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another”. This emerges through the sharing of self through vulnerability and empathy (Scarles, 2010).

Nevertheless, the establishment of connectedness is not always ready to hand but the result of thorough contemplation. Establishing rapport, and thus building confidence and trust with research participants, is not based on formulaic approaches. Instead, strategies and tools are best developed based on the particular research communities and the cooperation with them, so that the respondents feel safe and respected when talking about personal issues. Indeed, some research may be perceived as ‘intrusive’ especially when coping with topics that interviewees are not willing to discuss (Saunders and Reinisch, 1999). Especially elite groups or some minority groups may refuse to provide information that could negatively affect their position or social status (Elam and Fentom, 2003). As a matter of fact, researchers of the same nationally with their participants may find it easier to discuss about sensitive issues through their common language and cultural standpoints.

For example, it has been observed within the religious field and especially within the Greek Orthodox world that people hesitate to talk to heathens; I recollect a woman that asked for my ID to ensure that I am Greek Orthodox. Indeed, ongoing attempts to convert Greek people from their religion to other religions have made people reluctant to open up themselves to ‘strangers’. Yet, a disadvantage of religious uniformity between the researcher and the researched is that many respondents tend to simplify and shorten their narrations of experiences or beliefs that they assume the interviewer shares providing comments such as ‘as you know’, or ‘as you have experienced too’ or feeling perplexed when questioned about something that is ‘taken for granted’ (Elam et al., 1999). In such
situations the researcher has to work hard by repeating questions and probes or using a variety of excuses/tricks to avoid being exposed during the interview. Luckily, in the current study in order to conceal my personal lack of religious knowledge I used the ‘England excuse’ that not only made Greek Orthodox people talk about their religious experiences more in detail but also developed feelings of national/religious pride.

Indeed, conceptualizing the role of researcher as identical to the research participants enhances researcher’s need to prove belongingness to that group and thus the individual pressure to become one of them. Within this context, establishing rapport often requires researchers to come up with techniques, though ethically approved, that ensure adjustment to the group – the other, secure acceptance and trust and simultaneously enhance their understanding of it. Connectedness with the other is, for example, attempted in the current study through engaging with respondents’ embodied performances of religiousness in the tourist setting. Acts of devotion and habitual religious performances such as the gesture of the cross, lighting of candles, buying religious mementos are some of the performances undertaken to establish trust and develop respective feelings. Moreover, using participants’ religious language and understandings of religious situations further improved rapport and assisted me in better justifying absence from certain practices, such as taking communion or crawling.

The role of clothing and material possession/usage in the construction of the researcher’s identity was fundamental, since clothing symbolizes who we are to those around us (Lurie, 1981) and its meaning is closely related to the social setting (Kaiser, 1985). Therefore, I was faced with the dilemma of what to wear at the very beginning of my trip in order to fit into the believer’s picture. I decided to dress very modestly, wearing long trousers and shirts that cover the shoulders, even though to my surprise some pilgrims wore more casual or even sexy cloths, a fact that made me sometimes reflect on the appropriateness of my clothing; maybe I was too conspicuous. The rosary around my hand positively influenced my research participants. I gained trust and value through wearing it as people were admiring its pink colour (which is rather unusual) and welcoming its wearing by a young person like me. Indeed, the rosary triggered nostalgic conversations among participants regarding youngsters’ absence from the church that positioned the researcher on their (the participants’) side. In fact, by choosing to wear or not wear certain types of clothing or
ornaments I was participating in a process of identification and differentiation myself (Mookherjee, 2001).

Also similar was the effect of the religious mementos I had bought on the island and given later as a gift to the study participants after the conclusion of the interview procedure. Even though they were very small (wooden crosses), the gesture was highly appreciated. As a participant said “it's the best gift ever; a cross from the Virgin Mary of Tinos...” (Tasoula) (Fieldnotes: 15 September 2009, 6pm, in the bus to Kavala). Through all the above, I committed myself to understanding by actively incorporating the role of the pilgrim, using embodied and performative techniques to witness the practical, sensual and affective dimensions of human-nonhuman interactions and engaging with and exploring the materialities, psychologies and affective experiences of the other.

7.5.1.2 Emotions, Vulnerability and Transformation
Achieving connectedness as other, in the sense of believing in a different way, is, however, often very emotionally demanding and distressful. The immersion of self in performances of others in combination with the fact that not only do researchers observe others but are themselves observed by others (Pritchard, 2011), make a researcher vigilant in her/his attempt to avoid or reduce feelings of vulnerability and insecurity. Researchers have to perform religiousness in a natural and effortless way or be prepared to refuse performativities in an acceptable manner, to avoid rumours among research participants, some of whom are constantly judging the role of the researcher. Within this process, I sometimes felt uneasy when seeing how touched participants were in the church contrary to myself. Nevertheless, refraining from some basic devotional practices would have raised suspicion.

Furthermore, while my identity as Greek Orthodox facilitated and ensured the normality of religious performativities, based on the inherited values and the habitual enactions of religious life as learned in school, however some other facts related to my person made it sometimes difficult in thinking how best to accomplish my role. For example, because of the sensitivity connected to the religious beliefs it is not always clear as to how much I should reveal during interactions with participants about my personal beliefs and experiences, as half-Greek half-German, and thus of my upbringing in a family comprising of two religious affiliations (Greek Orthodox and Protestant). Indeed, my decision to
conceal some personal information has occasionally created feelings of being barriered (from expressing my own opinion) when I was entrusted with things that were weird to me or even contrary to my own understanding of the world, as it was for example in the case of the child that was entrusted to the sister-in-law for its life. Nevertheless, I draw clear distinctions between the participants and me in terms of witnessing and interpreting respectively. I decided to be fully open at the beginning to what they say, as I knew that later during the interpretation I would bring into conversation not only their voices, but also my own (Stein and Mankowsky, 2004).

Nonetheless, researchers do not always have the control over situations. Even if they intend to conceal some personal information, and dwell onto the participants’ performances and dressing codes, their very nature may be disclosed by their own outer physical characteristics that can be catalytic in revealing personal things. Indeed, a researcher is an independent entity that unconsciously and sometimes unwillingly reflects a sort of identity to her/his surroundings. For example, my appearance as being taller than the average Greek woman and paler in natural colours, have triggered some participants to ask me if I am entirely Greek or not, thereby causing feelings of quandary in me, after a rather negative tête-à-tête with a woman who by hearing about my German origin (from my mother’s side), requested my ID to confirm that I am still Greek and Greek Orthodox in belief. Indeed, establishing rapport often requires researchers to manage their own emotions and reactions when unexpected situations occur.

Furthermore, the emotional involvement of researchers is not only present in the process of gaining trust but also during witnessing and dwelling in the very lives of the study participants (Carter and Delamont, 1996; Reinharz, 1992). Indeed, a researchers’ ability to be empathic is one of the main skills necessary to undertake qualitative research (Liamputtong, 2007; Minichiello et al., 2000) and as such, witnessing can generate uncontrolled emotions and can be transformative for both the researcher and the research participants (Stein and Mankowski, 2004). For the religious tourist participants in the current study the research had mainly relieving effects like those experienced after confessions or visits to psychologists. Indeed, researchers give participants performative and oral spaces to express and discuss personal issues connected to their beliefs; they empower believers, give them voice and free them from thoughts and depressions. This is why some believers even expressed their wish to repeat the interview procedure again.
For the researcher, witnessing can change her/his years-long entrenched standpoints of life as well as transform her/him from a detached scientist to a passionate listener and human being. For example, I revised my previous rather critical stance towards religious belief, becoming more tolerant towards it by acknowledging the tremendous positive power it has over people as well as as a result of the effect people's stories had on my own embodied responses. Indeed, emotional attachment to the participants is not only internally uttered but also displayed bodily. For example, I found myself caressing two crying women during an interview and trying to hold on my own tears that were attributed to the participants' becoming emotional, or felt sickness while hearing in detail the misfortunes of a woman. In effect, even though becoming emotionally attached during a research signals that one has connected in a very personal and emotional way with the story of the participants (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009), participants' emotional outburst can have also a negative effect on some researchers who often report being emotionally overwhelmed (Dickson-Swift et al., 2009). In such cases, Hochschild's (1979) 'emotion management' must be an integral part of the research process in order to protect the researchers' health.

7.5.2 Final word and future recommendations

To sum up, religious tourism experience is the effect of the body-world-mind-spiritual amalgam. Away from Descartes' notion of mind/body distinction deriving from his saying: 'I think, therefore I am' that privileges knowledge and reduces self to a ghost in the body, a religious travelling believer experiences religion and engages in activities not only based on socially constructed reflections but also through lived experience; through the medium of the body (Merleau-Ponty, 1992) that renders ontology as unpredicted rather than pre-given. While, by using Heidegger's (1971) point of view, religious activity is largely shaped by adherents always already being in the religious world, the participants' physical interactions shape their understanding of their surrounding environment that is present-at-hand (Ingold, 2000) rather than merely ready-at-hand (Heidegger, 1971). Believers' involvement in the landscape makes them creative and unfolds their bodies through the making use of things and situations. Pilgrims, for example, can become wounded through crawling on the street, become emotional through viewing the icon, change their current worldviews, make new friends and engage in a variety of activities. In effect, bodies are unfixed as they become affected by the physical and social environments they circulate and
embody. Embodiment is "where the flesh of our bodies meets the pavement of the world" (Carolan, 2008, p. 409). Accordingly, humans’ understanding is constructed also based on more-than-representational forms of knowledge that evolve through doings.

An additional element that is part and parcel of the Greek Orthodox religious tourists’ experience, as derived from the study, is the spiritual sense of place. Similar to psycho-geographic studies that deal with the ‘spirit of place’ as a way of thinking of an environment based on its history (Coverley, 2006) or invented tools (Hart, 2004), ghostliness in Greek sacred sites exists based on textual sources, and also on lived, ongoing experiences with the sites, which have specific effects on the emotions and behaviour of individuals. Indeed, the investigation of Greek pilgrimages could profit from being looked at from a psycho-geographic perspective that refers to "people’s shared psychological representation or map of the natural and social world, the developmental antecedents of that map, the group dynamics which forge and revise that common map, and the consequences in group and intergroup action of living according to that map" (Stein, 1987). Still an important question that remains considers contemplations regarding the best way to study and report the more-than-representational encompassed in the embodied sensualities and the spiritual aspects. Indeed ethnomethodological techniques have been developed to identify and disentangle human-object hybrids based on actor-network theory’s and other relational materialist approaches’ acknowledgement of the agency of objects in the everyday life of people (Latour, 2007). In addition, embodied and performative techniques have been developed, such as autobiographical reflections and creative, mimetic techniques for sensing the world in order to witness the practical, sensual and affective dimensions in human-nonhuman interactions (Lorimer, 2010; Wylie, 2005).

However, methods have to be more innovative for witnessing and interpreting human and non-human interactions as “representations tell only part of the story” (Carolan, 2008, p. 412). In fact, it is very difficult to accurately depict sensuous, corporeal, lived experiences as they are all encompassing and rich in details. Visual means, for example, and especially videos, are likely to serve as a powerful supplement to present representational methodologies as they can produce rich audio-visual material that witness and capture phenomena that are often overlooked by verbal and text based methods. Indeed, visual autoethnography provides a path “to access both the tangible and intangible spaces of embodied performance as reflexivity extends to both respondents and researchers and
knowledge is shared through a merging of subjectivities within the space of the interview” (Scarles, 2010, p.921). Nevertheless, while such methods are recommended in future experiential studies (Scarles, 2010), such as religious studies, the use of visuals by future researchers in Greek sacred sites or by their participants as part of a research requirements should further be scrutinized and evaluated, since equipments such as video and photo cameras are not widely present in the Greek sacred sites and their use would possibly distort part of its authenticity.

The narrative and story-telling approach still remains the most original and closest means of understanding the Greek Orthodox religious participants. Certainly under the non-representational or else called more-than-representational approach (Lorimer, 2010) the potential cast of characters is expanded, encompassing human interactions, human/object interactions and human/ghostliness interactions based on their haptic, aural, olfactory and gustatory features. Emotions and motions are central elements in more-than-representational geographies and there is much work to be done here to unpack the relationships between moving imagery and affect.
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http://www.xristianos.net/?tag=%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%B3%CE%AF%CE%B1, [accessed on 12/02/2012]


www.tinos360.gr/aksiotheata.html [accessed on 12/02/2012]


www.tinosinfo.gr/tinosphotogallery/panagiatistinou/index.html, [accessed on 12/02/2012]
Belief, place and performance are part of religious tourists’ lived experiences on tour. Religious tourism can be seen as an experience that emerges from the dialogue between religious understandings, sacred place and individual engagement. The purpose of this study is to explore religious tourists’ understanding of religion and the extent to which their belief and faith influence on-site performance and practice. In particular this research addresses issues such as: 1) motivation and selection of the site, 2) the complexities of religious tourists’ interrelationships, 3) religious tourists’ approaches to the material and immaterial, as well as 4) the potential transformative effects of the trip to the participants.

DO YOU HAVE 2 HOURS TO TALK ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES AT SACRED JOURNEYS?

Some of the issues that will be covered include: The influence of religion on the desire to travel to sacred places and tourists’ perception of the sites, the collective/individual practices that influence religious tourists’ experience, the way the material/immaterial influences religious tourists’ experiences in terms of spirituality and fulfilment of goals.

If you are interested in finding out more, or would like to take part, please contact me (Matina Terzidou) on: 6936481885 or by email at: m.terzidou@surrey.ac.uk

Interviews will be arranged after participants’ travel to Tinos. Dates and times will be arranged at convenience of participants.

Participation in interviews is entirely voluntary and participants are able to withdraw their participation at any time.

The interview will be recorded by digital recorder. All data collected will be treated as strictly confidential and will not identify any individuals.

The interviews are part of a PhD project of Matina Terzidou. Any correspondence by mail should be directed to: Miss Matina Terzidou, School of Management, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 7XH.

If you are at any point unhappy with the interview, then please contact my supervisor Dr Caroline Scarles (c.scarles@surrey.ac.uk).
APPENDIX B – Interview Activity

Dear participant, please list and number the religious places you have visited in the past on the space provided below.

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Now arrange these places in the schema provided below, by placing their numbers into the cycles: Place the most significant ones towards the middle and the less significant ones towards the outer cycle.
APPENDIX C - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) What influences people’s desire to visit Tinos?
   ❖ What motivated you to engage in this trip?
   ❖ As what did you participate in this trip? How do you define this?
   ❖ How did you come to the decision to choose the sacred island of Tinos?
   ❖ How do you define Tinos? What does Tinos mean to you?
   ❖ What other alternative destinations did you consider? How do they differ from Tinos?
   ❖ How long have you planned this trip in advance?
   ❖ How did you prepare yourself? What items did you bring with you?
   ❖ What did you expect to find there? From this trip?
   ❖ What were your feelings when the tour began? What triggered those feelings?

2) How does the material and immaterial culture affect pilgrims’ experience in Tinos?
   ❖ What were your feelings when you arrived at the island?
   ❖ Can you describe the atmosphere of the place?
   ❖ When you walked through the church door, what did you see?
   ❖ What is your opinion about the church decoration and the hanging offerings?
   ❖ How did you like the icon? What does it mean to you?
   ❖ Were the church and the island as you expected them to be?
   ❖ Did you buy anything (souvenirs, etc.)? If yes, what is their significance?
   ❖ What is the meaning of particular objects (consecrated oil, holy water, candles, offerings) in the Greek Orthodox belief? How do you use them?

3) How do the collective and individual practices influence pilgrims’ experiences?
   ❖ If I followed you in the church, what would I see you doing? What experiences would I observed you having?
   ❖ What distinguishes religious activities at your home from these at the trip?
   ❖ Some pilgrims told me that they crawled, others that they didn’t crawl. What about you? How important is crawling to you?
   ❖ Did you have any extraordinary experience?
   ❖ How do you feel in this group? How important is it to be here with these people and not alone?
   ❖ What did you do in your spare time? How important was this time for you?
   ❖ How did your co-travellers influenced your practices and experiences?

4) Outcome of the trip
   ❖ How do you feel having accomplished this trip?
   ❖ How is life after the trip? Did you notice any change in your life after this trip?
   ❖ Do you feel that this trip influenced your faith? If yes, in what sense?
   ❖ Have your expectations being fulfilled?
   ❖ What did you enjoy the most?
   ❖ What disappointed you the most?
   ❖ Would you recommend this trip to others?
   ❖ Will you visit Tinos again?