

THE CONTRIBUTION OF LITERARY BOOKS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM - THE ROME OF THE "ILLUMINATI" ACCORDING TO DAN BROWN- "ENLIGHTENMENT PATH"

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Abstract

The present paper aims to showcase literary tourism as a special form of tourism, or its association with special forms of tourism, as well as its relation to cinematographic tourism. The paper presents Rome from the eyes of the author Dan Brown and his book Illuminati. The immersive tour on the "path of enlightenment" is a journey through the beautiful piazzas of Rome and the unexplored places where pagan symbolism and Christianity are mixed in the seeking of truth.

Key Words: *Dan Brown, Illuminati, Path of Enlightenment, literary tourism.*

Introduction

Tourism is an activity that is fundamentally related to people's leisure time and the enjoyment of products (Varvaressos, 2000). Literary tourism is a specific type of cultural tourism that refers to the travels that visitors make to experience the adventures of the protagonists of their favourite books (Manola, 2019). The development of literary tourism is not only found in Britain, but also throughout Europe and in Italy to a very large extent (Manola et al.2021). Literary tourism represents only a small part of the world tourism, but this kind of tourism can be a great asset in terms of local and economic development of a place (Manola, 2020). Readers travel to the locations where their favourite stories are set, seeing what they used to imagine in real life, becoming part of the story of the book and having the opportunity to re-enact and experience scenes from the play. Aiming at experience, knowledge and personal self-discovery, tourists or groups of travellers make trips to places they have not visited before so that they can get to know their culture and their specificities to an ethnological degree (Linardatou, 2008). However, travellers often stop not only where the book mentions the story

takes place, but also visit the birthplace of the author, the house he lived in, and even where he died (Formato, 2021). It is worth noting that television and movies further facilitated all this tourist traffic, which further assisted in bringing the books to the screen and making them known to the public. (Manola, & Tsatambassoglou, 2021) Literary tours have as main objective the contact of the traveler with the artistic, historical, spiritual and literary heritage of the place and the current cultural creation (Venetsanopoulou, 2019).

1. Il romanzo «Illuminati» di Dan Brown (The book «Illuminati - The Enlightened»)

The book "Illuminati - The Enlightened" by Dan Brown is an unpredictable thriller that strikes a unique balance between unexpected revelations and dark truths as the battle between religion and science escalates, placing the plot in a historically and scientifically documented setting, following Robert Langdon through a series of remarkable sights and buildings throughout Rome. Reported by a world-renowned Harvard symbologist who is invited into a Swiss research unit to analyze a mysterious symbol that has appeared on the chest of a murdered physicist, he discovers evidence of the unthinkable: the revival of an ancient secret fraternity known as the Illuminati, the most powerful underworld organization ever to exist. The Illuminati have emerged from the shadows to perform the final act of their legendary vendetta against their most hated enemy, the Catholic Church.

Langdon's worst fears are realized on the eve of the Vatican's holy conclave, when an Illuminati messenger announces that he has hidden an unstoppable time bomb in the heart of Vatican City.

With the countdown running, Langdon flies to Rome to join forces with Vittoria Vetra, a beautiful and mysterious Italian scientist, to help the Vatican in a desperate attempt of survival.

Embarking on a frantic hunt through sealed crypts, dangerous catacombs, deserted cathedrals and even into the heart of the most mystical dome on earth, Langdon and Vetra follow a trail of 400-year-old ancient symbols across Rome to the forgotten "Church of the Epiphany," a secret location containing the Vatican's only hope for salvation. The traces of these symbols constitute the "Path of Enlightenment", which anyone wishing to become a member of the brotherhood was obliged to follow (Brown, 2004, p. 221). The book was also adapted in a movie, starring Tom Hanks as Professor Langdon. The book was a reason for many history enthusiasts wanting to travel and visit the places depicted. This fact clearly increased the touristic value of the monuments and did not go unobserved by the tour operators and tourism officials of the region. Among those, the Official Angels and Demons Rome Tour promises: "A unique experience that will allow you to visit Rome's most beautiful squares as well as unexplored sites where pagan symbolism and Christianity blend to reveal a disturbing ancient truth".

2. Il percorso dell' Illuminazione.(«The path to Enlightenment»)

The Path of Enlightenment is a complete guide to Rome, as "The reference to all of Rome's works of art, tombs, galleries and architecture is absolutely true (as are their exact locations). One can still see these places today."(Brown,2004). At the very same time, it is a cinematic travelogue in the film steps and a tourist map to the monuments of the "eternal city".

It is a path that runs through four points in Rome, called the Monuments of Science and contain artworks. These works, made by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, represent the four elements of nature (Earth, Water, Fire, Air), and each one indicates the location of the next one. In the story, the protagonist, solves mysteries and decrypts codes based on the architecture and the clues given by each point, in order to get to the source of the trouble, preventing the worst.

"The Path of Enlightenment" is one of the best options for a visitor to witness and discover the rich cultural and historical heritage of Rome and the Vatican. The traveller has the opportunity to experience in a unique and immersive way the story that takes place before his eyes and has the chance to discover the hidden, in plain sight, clues. The Path of Illumination is a guided tour of Rome, with a guide leading and informing visitors about the sights and significant parts of the story. The tour starts at Santa Maria del Popolo (St. Mary of the People) and ends at St. Peter's Basilica. These points form the architectural map that guided Galileo's enlightened to their sanctuary. They had to be protected by the Catholic Church, and so they designated the "Church of the Enlightenment" in Rome as the meeting place, while the exact spot, was kept secret.

The route consists of four sculptures, which are still on display today. They had two basic rules: they had to be indistinguishable from other works of art in Rome, and they had to be sculptures that the Vatican would never suspect were related to the Illuminati. All four works are by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, and appear to have religious themes, but are in fact references to the four elements of nature: earth, air, water and fire. The sculptures were donated to four churches, which they called "Altars of Science". These churches are discovered in the book by Professor Langdon and his assistant Vittoria

2.1. Santa Maria del Popolo - Terra. (The Holy Mary of the People) - Earth

The first monument is the Basilica of Santa Maria del Popolo with the Chigi Chapel (or Lady of Loretto). It is a Christian church in Renaissance architecture located in the northern part of Piazza del Popolo, one of the most famous squares in the city. The church was designed by Raphael, who gave an octagonal plan, with mosaics on the dome representing the creation of the world. The architectural design is by Raphael, the entire interior decoration is by Bernini. The Kiji Chapel, covered with dark brown marble, declares its earthy character. Based on the story, the temple is dedicated to the element of Earth and the corresponding statue representing Habakkuk and the Angel by Bernini, which is about the story of the prophet Habakkuk and the Angel Daniel. The prophet and the angel point in opposing directions in the temple, and the direction the angel points is the place of the second monument. Nowadays the church, now open to the public, is one of the few churches in the city that has remained unchanged over the years. Tours have also been set up inside the church displaying the artwork. The schedule and visiting hours are posted on the church's official website.

The octagonal chapel is topped by an impressive dome decorated with mosaics representing world creations. It is surrounded by the sun and seven planets, each of which is moved by an angel. This is a rare example of a mosaic created according to the Renaissance design. Two marble pyramids 3.5 meters high stand symmetrically on both sides of the church (Brown, 2004).

In Santa Maria del Popolo, there is the first marker, the sculpture "Abacum and the Angel". The Angel points to the southwest, the square of St. Peter's where the second sign is.

2.2. Piazza San Pietro - Aria. (St. Peter's Square - Air)

The second monument is that of the Air, located in Piazza San Pietro which is designed by Bernini with monoliths and depictions of the four wind directions on the floor. The monument is 25 meters high, weighs 350 tons and ends with a pyramidal top on which is placed a hollow metal cross, in which according to some there is a piece of a holy cross. The bas-relief entitled "Ponentis, West Wind", known as Respiro Di Dio was brought to Rome by Caligula. It portrays the figure of an angel blowing wind from his mouth in the opposite direction of the Vatican. The obelisk is flanked by two fountains, placed perfectly symmetrically to its right

and left. The artwork leading to the next monument is a plaque on which is inscribed "West Ponente", having an angel 'blowing' and representing the west wind (Puente). The direction of the wind leads to the third monument.

2.3. Santa Maria della Vittoria - Fuoco (Santa Maria of Victory - Fire)

Moving on to the third monument, Santa Maria della Vittoria, is a baroque basilica near the centre of Rome, west of St Peter's Square near Via Venti Settembre (20th September). Its construction was completed in 1620, design by the architect Carlo Maderno. The church is lavishly decorated with marble, gilded stucco and paintings. What makes it stand out, however, is undoubtedly the chapel of Cornaro. Inside is one of Bernini's main marble sculptures, "The Ecstasy of Santa Teresa of Avila", representing the element of fire, which took 8 years to build. The saint is reclining on a cloud with her mouth half open, her head back, her eyes closed and her body wrapped in cloth. Up above, a smiling angel looks down at her, leaving her dress aside, ready to pierce her with an arrow. This passion represents fire and the arrow points in the direction of the fourth location (Brown, 2004). Santa Maria della Vittoria began to attract more visitors after the screening of the film *Angels and Demons* (2009).

2.4. Piazza Navona - Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi - Acqua (The Fountain of the Four Rivers - Water)

The last monument of the Enlightenment Path is the Fountain of the **Four Rivers** ("Quattro Fiumi"). The bustling Piazza Navona with its majestic fountain in the centre is one of the places the reader should definitely visit. With the sculptures standing on the fountain depicting four famous rivers of the city, the fountain is a tribute to the element of Water and is the fourth marker of the path (Ioannou, 2017). Piazza Navona is one of the most famous squares in Rome, and arguably the most beautiful baroque square in the city. Shaped like an ancient stadium and built in Baroque style (Brown, 2004), the monument is a sculpture by Bernini that has four gods representing the world's major rivers: the Nile in Africa, the Ganges in Asia, the Danube in Europe and the Rio de la Plata in the American continent. The core of the sculpture, 6 metres high, is a rough mountain of porous marble, full of recesses and openings through which water gushes forcefully. There is a 12-metre-high obelisk in the centre, pointing towards the final destination of the Trail, the Church of the Enlightenment. The Fountain of the Four Rivers (Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi) is a busy monument in Piazza Navona.

2.5. Castel Sant' Angelo (Angels' Castle) - La chiesa dell'illuminazione - The Church of Illumination

The finale of the story takes place in the famous Church of Illumination, Castel Sant'Angelo (Castle of Angels). The majestic Castel Sant'Angelo was built on the banks of the Tiber River, in the Adriano Park very close to the Vatican. Its geometry is impressive, as it was built in the second century as a mausoleum and later converted into a fortress. It was commissioned by Emperor Hadrian as a mausoleum for him and his family and then used as a fortress for the Pope. Of particular interest is the Borgo Passage (Passeotto di Borgo) where an 800-metre-long covered walkway connects Castel Sant'Angelo with the Basilica of St Peter's and serves as an emergency exit for the Pope (Brown, 2004). The mausoleum is connected to the city along the river by a bridge decorated with 12 giant angel statues made by Bernini himself. At the top of the fortress, with a panoramic view, is a statue of an angel with his sword pointed at

the centre of the tower, revealing the final destination, the Enlightened's hideout, the Church of Enlightenment.

Today the castle is used as a museum, giving visitors the opportunity to see the Passetto di Borgo and tour the castle to admire its architecture.

3. Other sites in the book

3.1. *The Pantheon*

The visitor, starting his literary journey, could visit the Pantheon, the place where Professor Langton believes that the murder of Cardinal Cardinal will take place according to the evidence that Raphael is buried there in the first place (Brown, 2000). The Pantheon today is one of the main attractions of Rome and there is no admission fee. When the professor realizes he is in the wrong place he will head for the church of Santa Maria del Popolo.

3.2. *La Basilica di San Pietro (Saint Peter's Basilica)*

St Peter's Basilica is located in Vatican City at the place where the Apostle Peter died. Designed by Donato Bramante, Michelangelo, Carlo Maderno and Gian Lorenzo Bernini, it is the most famous Renaissance basilica and the largest church in the world. Also noteworthy is the "Necropolis of the Popes" located just below the basilica, with the most famous feature being the dozens of "snake holes" which are dozens of libation pipes. Dan Brown (*The Enlightened Ones*, 2004) notes that Christians believed in resurrection and fed the Popes through the pipes by pouring milk and honey. Now St. Peter's Basilica is open to the public, having free admission and giving visitors the ability to use a lift and climb to the roof of the church and enjoy the view of the city.

3.3. *Musei Vaticani (Museums of the Vatican)*

The Vatican Museums, housed within the Vatican City in Rome, are a group of some of the world's leading museums with an annual attendance of over 4.3 million tourists. It is a complex of museums with the most famous being the Vatican Gallery, which is featured both in the book and the film. The Gallery is home to world-famous paintings including Leonardo Da Vinci's "St. Jerome in the Desert". Today a significant number of organised tours on official tourist websites are based on Brown's book. The package tours are designed to allow the reader and the tourist to get in touch with the world of Angels and Demons, to follow the footsteps of Robert Langton and the path of light. That way, man is able to know and discover some of the most important monuments and places of the beautiful Rome and the Vatican, which are present in the book and in the film created on its basis (Helgren, 2009). The hotel that hosted the fictional hero of the book, named Bernini Bristol Hotel, has greatly increased its visitation.

Conclusions

Dan Brown's *The Enlightened Ones* is a book that was a big hit with the reading public, which skyrocketed after the release of the movie *Angels and Demons*. The book boosted visits from literary tourists who wanted to live and walk the streets where the book's characters solved mysteries. Taking this opportunity, Italy created the aforementioned Path of Enlightenment as a journey to the most famous sights of Rome and the Vatican through a cinematic and literary perspective. In addition to the visit of the readers to the monuments, many other aspects of the

city's tourism, restaurants and hotels that the traveller visits during his stay in Rome, are also important.

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