AUTHENTICITY, INTERPRETATION AND THE ISSUE OF DEMAND: HOW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT AT WORLD HERITAGE SITES CAN ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT

INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES FROM MONT SAINT MICHEL IN FRANCE AND THE ABBEY OF MELK IN LOWER AUSTRIA

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Submitted on: May 21, 2007
STATUTORY DECLARATION

“\textit{I declare in lieu of an oath that I have written this diploma thesis myself and that I have not used any sources or resources other than stated for its preparation. I further declare that I have clearly indicated all direct and indirect quotations. This diploma thesis has not been submitted elsewhere for examination purposes.}”

\textit{Date: May 21, 2007} \hspace{2cm} \textit{Signature:}
Dedicated to my parents,
Who have instilled in me happiness, care and commitment
As well as a great love for culture and people.
ABSTRACT

In considering the research area of cultural heritage tourism, some general associations are made almost immediately. First, there is the inherent notion of quality and authenticity, which assumes a logical link to the values of this type of tourism segment. Cultural heritage is often linked to feelings of pride or responsibility for preserving the history or ancient values and traditions it represents.

Passed through the filter of society, heritage is the positive remains from history, which we value in the most different forms: traditions, monuments, architectural masterpieces, cultural landscapes or entire inner cities.

In today’s post-modern society, heritage gets caught up in the experience society, whose needs and requirements challenge the traditional way heritage has been depicted. For attractions in the cultural heritage tourism domain to become or remain successful, they must ensure far more than such inherent features as quality and authenticity. Certainly, these continue to be important aspects. Overall, however, a shift in focus is gradually taking hold.

Whereas once the “heritage tourism product” has been considered rather self-sufficient, today no such product can stay on the market nor remain competitive without implementing strategies that focus attention on the customer. The needs of demand go further than simple trend-setting: They are a strong influence on the creation, alteration or adaptation of heritage resources in order to become marketable products. This involves the challenge of interpretation, since meaningful revelation and personalised experiences are at the forefront of actual demand for cultural heritage tourism.

The ultimate goal for managers in this context lies in ensuring sustainable development of the heritage resource they are entrusted to. Tourism is not exclusive to this. It can provide for the necessary funding in order to sustain development, and it can help to create awareness, appreciation and respect among the local and visiting population.
This discussion has brought about the major dimensions that are of concern in the cultural heritage tourism domain. Continuously debated throughout the course of academic and professional literature, their importance has allowed the preparation of the following work.

Since no heritage tourism product or interpretational means can be developed without having the customer in mind, and since sustainable development and the pursuit of quality are arguably the most relevant future development goals, no thorough discussion can start without missing out on one of these vital aspects.

In the case of the two World Heritage Sites, which have provided for the applied focus in this thesis, these issues are often further exacerbated due to public pressures and increased international attention, especially as a result of tourism.

Research on two internationally renowned examples of this prestigious community, the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel in France as well as the Abbey of Melk in Lower Austria, has shown a number of successful examples and possible ways to deal with the above issues. In addition to that, the conduction of a focus group discussion has shifted the focus of the researcher to that of actual demand for this type of heritage tourism, which certainly has provided for valuable insights.

Its results are presented as strategic recommendations for action on each of the major dimensions identified for the research area of cultural heritage tourism. In addition, a practical focus related specifically to the Abbey of Melk has been added as a further outcome to this thesis.

This has provided the author with the great opportunity of establishing practical recommendations concerning the procedure and strategic thinking for opening up a part of its premises, the northern tower at the entrance gate, for tourism. These recommendations are given based on the in-depth knowledge the author gained from studying relevant literature, the developments at two major World Heritage Sites as well as the results from the focus group discussion. A situation of mutual benefit has thus been created.
KURZFASSUNG


Wo sich das “kulturtouristische Produkt” einst selbst genügte, kann sich heute kein solches Produkt mehr am Markt behaupten oder gar wettbewerbsfähig bleiben, wenn es nicht strategische Maßnahmen zur Kundenbindung schafft. Die Bedürfnisse der Nachfrage setzen weit mehr als bloß Trends: Sie nehmen einen wichtigen Einfluss auf die Entstehung, Veränderung oder Anpassung von kulturellen Ressourcen zur touristischen Vermarktung. Dies beinhaltet den Bereich aktiver Kulturerbevermittlung, da personalisierte Erfahrungen und Bedürfnisse bei der Nachfrage in diesem Bereich ganz weit oben stehen.

Letztendlich ist es Chance und Aufgabe eines jeden Verwalters oder Managers, für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung des ihm anvertrauten Kulturerbes zu sorgen. Der Tourismus schließt sich diesem Prinzip nicht von vornherein aus. Er kann die
notwendige Finanzierungsgrundlage einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung schaffen, sowie das nötige Bewusstsein bei der allgemeinen Bevölkerung fördern.

Dieser Diskurs beinhaltet einige der wesentlichsten Punkte im Bereich des heutigen Kulturerbetourismus. Ihre Relevanz, basierend auf einer soliden Grundlage von akademisch-wissenschaftlicher sowie praktischer Literatur, hat die Entstehung folgender Arbeit ermöglicht.

Da kein kulturtouristisches Produkt oder Maßnahmen seiner Wissensvermittlung ohne Eingehen auf Kundenbedürfnisse entwickelt werden können, und da die Förderung einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung sowie der Qualität und Authentizität des Produktes mitunter zu den wichtigsten Entwicklungszielen zählen, kann keine ganzheitliche Diskussion begonnen werden welche nicht alle dieser wichtigen Aspekte in sich vereint.

Im Falle der Welterbestätten, welche sich für den praktischen Erhebungsteil der Arbeit verantwortlich zeichnen, kommen diese Aspekte durch ein verstärktes öffentliches, privates und touristisches Interesse besonders deutlich zum Tragen.


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATB</td>
<td>Austrian Travel Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATLAS</td>
<td>European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2B</td>
<td>Business to Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2C</td>
<td>Business to Customer/Client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>etc.</td>
<td>“etcetera” (lat.), and so forth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.e.</td>
<td>“id est” (lat.), that means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICOMOS</td>
<td>International Council of Monuments and Sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITB</td>
<td>Internationale Tourismus Börse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBF</td>
<td>French Cultural Event Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONUM</td>
<td>Centre des Monuments Nationaux (French State Organisation responsible for national cultural monuments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OGS</td>
<td>“Opération Grand Site” (Large spatial planning site supported by public funds from the French State)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORF</td>
<td>Österreichischer Rundfunk (Austrian Broadcast Organisation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDA</td>
<td>Internationaler Bustouristik Verband e.V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWOT</td>
<td>Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USP</td>
<td>Unique Selling Proposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCED</td>
<td>World Commission on Environment and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHC</td>
<td>World Heritage Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHS</td>
<td>World Heritage Sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Tourism Organisation</td>
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1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, tourism has grown to become one of the world’s largest industries (Pedersen (2002), p. 11). People in Western society are now free to go wherever they please, and there are few corners of the world that still remain untouched by tourists (Smith (2003), p. 11).

Mass tourism, increased competition and price wars have announced the return to quality cultural tourism, which has come as a saving anchor for many destinations. Today, more and more tourists travel to experience so-called “authentic culture”, the “spirit of a place”, and to enjoy cultural elements as a fixed ingredient of their holiday. In this way, the importance of cultural tourism can no longer be denied.

At the same time, people look to the past for comfort in a more and more unstable and insecure environment. This combined interest for culture and heritage has given birth to a relatively recent phenomenon called heritage tourism, whose importance is growing on a global scale (Timothy/Boyd (2003), p. 3).

Undoubtedly, heritage, in its many forms, needs to be protected and saved for the benefit of present and future generations. One particular role in this field is taken over by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), whose “Convention concerning the Protection of the World’s Cultural and Natural Heritage” has assured the creation of a World Heritage List currently counting 830 properties around the globe.¹

Diverse as the sites on this list recognised for their “outstanding universal value” (UNESCO (2005), p. 14) may be, all of them share common issues such as the danger of commodification and the need for sustainable tourism development.

It is from this point where this research is going to start, taking a closer look at present-day issues at two emblems of the World Heritage Community: the Abbey of the Mont Saint Michel in France as well as the Abbey of Melk in Lower Austria.

1.1 Research Problem

When reviewing literature on cultural and heritage tourism, it can be concluded that these forms of tourism are definitely a wide-spread and well-researched topic.

Over the past few decades, and especially during recent years, a multitude of books, articles, studies or conference papers have been published on cultural and heritage tourism in order to explain the aspects and impacts of tourism in this field (Timothy/Boyd (2003); Smith (2003); Pedersen (2002); McKercher/du Cros (2001); Shackley (1998); Richards (1996); Ashworth (1995); Swarbrooke (1994); ICOMOS/WTO (1993), Cohen (1988); MacCannell (1979); etc.). The most important dimensions that have been derived from this literature are:

- Development of heritage resources into marketable tourism products;
- Authenticity and commodification of the past following the impacts of (mass) tourism;
- Interpretation of (built) heritage and experience design;
- Needs and expectations of demand in heritage tourism;
- Ways to achieving sustainable development.

All of these aspects have been found to be vital in any holistic discussion about a concrete example corresponding to this type of tourism. The overarching principle in this discussion is arguably sustainable development, which is all the more important where an area as sensitive as World Heritage is concerned.

For sustainable development to be successfully implemented over the long term, a solid vision and mission statement are needed in order to monitor the impacts of tourism in a given destination. From these, a clear strategy as well as a pro-active operational policy in tourist product development can be derived. Pro-active, on the one hand side, means being demand-oriented and making use of the interest of tourists for sustaining the heritage resource they visit. At the same time, this involves setting the right kind of marketing and interpretational activities. On the
other side, it refers to the current search for authenticity and meaning through heritage tourism, as opposed to its commodification.

These are the great challenges and opportunities for any kind of attraction in the cultural heritage tourism sector. In the prominent case of World Heritage Sites (WHS), these issues are often further exacerbated through the pressure of increased visitation and public interest. The need for sustainable development of both local heritage and tourism is therefore all the more imminent. This context constitutes the basis for the formulation of the research objectives of this thesis.

### 1.2 Objective and Research Question

The main objective of this thesis lies in developing strategic recommendations for action under each of the main dimensions that have been identified in the course of the research problem. The source of this information has been gained from qualitative research for the benefit of depth and variety. Two case study analyses looking at the selected WHS have been conducted in order to discuss practical findings on the relevant key issues. The aim was to approach the research problem from two different viewpoints, enhancing the knowledge base for the later recommendations. Despite both sites sharing common characteristics, they differ with regards to the individual context they are situated in.

Another valuable source of information to support the objectives of this thesis was the conduction of a focus group discussion in order to address the issue of demand in more detail. By doing so, the main aspects identified in the research problem were given the chance to be discussed from the view point of demand.

Ultimately, a very practical focus has guided this research. Based on the strategic recommendations developed from the thesis' findings and conclusions, the actual development project of the Nordbastei at Stift Melk served to give practical recommendations with regards to the key issues previously identified.

The research question has been derived from the context of the research problem is given in the following:
How can a pro-active policy in tourist product development, focusing on key issues such as authenticity, interpretation, marketing and the needs of demand, contribute to sustainable development in the context of a renowned World Heritage Site?

1.3 Methodology

In order to develop answers to the above-mentioned research question, the review of relevant literature (books, articles, studies, conference proceedings, etc.) as well as the use of qualitative research methods for the benefit of an in-depth insight into the research problem has been applied.

The literature review focused on defining and discussing the issues in cultural heritage tourism that have previously been identified in the course of the research problem. This was useful in order to gain a better understanding of these terms and to prepare the reader for the applied part of the research. Furthermore, it served to introduce and explain the research area of cultural and heritage tourism, including a detailed section on the special issues concerning World Heritage.

Following an expert interview held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris in November 2006, the theoretical knowledge on World Heritage could have been extended to include actual comments made by Mr Art Pedersen, who is in charge of running the official World Heritage Programme on Sustainable Tourism Development. This has provided a very useful insight.

The empirical part was built on what has been laid down in the first three theoretical chapters of the thesis. It employed two qualitative research methods: a case study analysis as well as a focus group discussion.

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2 The expert interview took place in Paris on November 17, 2006. Sources in the text referring to this interview are marked by the following expression: (Pedersen (2006), n.p.a.).
According to Yin (1993, p. 31),

“[…] the major rationale for using the [qualitative] method is when your investigation must cover both a particular phenomenon and the context within which the phenomenon is occurring […].”

For the present research, this involved studying different phenomena – product development, marketing, heritage interpretation, needs of demand and sustainable development – within the specific context of cultural heritage tourism at the selected WHS. This has been done following the study of two different cases as well as the focus group discussion, whose purpose is outlined in the following.

1.3.1 Case Study Selection

As one of the main objectives of this work was to come up with practical solutions to the before-mentioned research question, the selection of the research cases for the purpose of applied research is of special importance.

The Abbey of Melk, or Stift Melk\(^3\), and the Abbey Mont Saint Michel as the core of two major World Heritage Sites situated in France and Austria, perfectly lend themselves to practical research in cultural heritage tourism. They are both internationally well-known targets for this type of tourism and boost a high degree of experience and professionalism in dealing with visitors; last but not least based on their centuries of tradition in hospitality through religious pilgrimage. They have been selected based on the assumption that the analysis of their cultural heritage could create important contributions to the findings of this thesis.

Both abbeys certainly share common characteristics with regards to modern influences, such as demand orientation or the need for sustainable tourism development. The case study on the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel was chosen to provide for an international perspective to the developments at the Abbey of Melk.

\(^3\) For reasons of simplicity, the German and English expressions are used interchangeably.
Introduction

Being a World Heritage Site for almost 40 years as well as a major pilgrimage site for almost 1000 years, Mont Saint Michel offers a major source of experience and “know-how” in tourism development and visitor management.

Stift Melk is equally important at this point. Animated by a community of Benedictine monks since the early 11th century, it has evolved as an unparalleled monument of Baroque architecture counting significant art and cultural treasures. Today, tourism is a major source of income to the abbey, and an area which is guided by well thought-up strategies and care. Its results and activities provide valuable insights in this thesis, and ultimately fed the practical recommendations for its actual tourism development project.

1.3.2 Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussion was used as a research tool in order to enhance the thesis’ findings with regards to the needs and expectations of demand. Its aim was to engage in a discussion on the most important issues that are dealt with during this thesis from the viewpoint of demand. Since the motivations and expectations of tourists are vital to the successful design of sustainable tourist products, there is need to look into concrete ideas and approaches from the demand side of heritage tourism. Therefore, the focus group discussion with purposefully selected participants provided an excellent opportunity to discuss these ideas into more detail. Its results have been included in the recommendations, ensuring their quality through variety and actual in-depth insights.

1.4 Structure of the Work

The thesis is structured into the theoretical part focusing on the literature review as well as the empirical part, focusing on the elaboration of the two case studies and the results from the focus group discussion.
The first chapters, Chapter 2 and 3, serve to sum up the most important positions found in relevant literature on the research area of cultural and heritage tourism.

Chapter 2 explains the meaning of ‘cultural tourism’, its origins, fields, market considerations and the characteristics of ‘cultural tourists’ based on typologies from key authors such as Richards (1996) and McKercher/Du Cros (2002).

Chapter 3 then focuses on research area of cultural heritage tourism. It again provides the reader with detailed definitions on the aspects and origins of the terms ‘heritage’ and ‘heritage tourism’, sums up the most important cultural heritage attractions and briefly touches the aspect of religion-based heritage attractions. Furthermore, its purpose is to introduce the topic of World Heritage.

Chapter 4 then moves on to an outline of the main issues in the field of cultural heritage tourism based on the statements of key authors in the field. The purpose of this chapter is to cover all of these aspects through relevant literature sources. At the same time, the aim of Chapter 4 is to establish the guideline for the research design of the two case studies that are to follow over the course of Chapter 6 and 7.

Chapter 5 explains the methodology of the empirical part of research. It provides detailed accounts on the structure of the two case studies, their research design, the methods used for data collection as well as the analysis. The methodological principles of the focus group discussion are also laid down in this chapter.

Chapter 6 and 7 present the findings of the thesis in relation to the case studies on Mont Saint Michel (Chapter 6) and Stift Melk (Chapter 7). They are both equally structured and draw on a varied range of resources for their preparation: expert interviews, document analysis and, to a limited extent, direct observation.

Chapter 8 discusses the findings from the case study analyses in a comparative Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The conclusions drawn from this analysis are presented as the main competence areas in each of the two cases, followed by a discussion of possible answers to the research question laid down earlier.
Chapter 9 presents the results from the focus group discussion. Its structure is equally guided around the main aspects found in cultural heritage tourism. However, this time the point of view is shifted: The discussion no longer takes place from a general point of view, but rather from the specific point of view of demand in the research area of cultural heritage tourism.

Finally, Chapter 10 aims at presenting the thesis’ strategic recommendations based on conclusive evidence from both literature and applied research. It is to conclude by giving practical recommendations for the development project at the Abbey of Melk, as well as briefly discussing limitations and future research.

1.5 Justification of Research Methods Applied

Research on relevant sources from key authors in the field of cultural heritage tourism has shown that the aspects dominating this type of tourism are product development, authenticity, heritage interpretation, demand orientation and sustainable development. Therefore, it becomes justifiable to include them as part of applied research when analysing tourist product development at World Heritage Sites in the light of approaches to sustainable development.

As for the relevance of the two cases, much of the discussion in literature leaves room for further, especially applied research. The selection of the two sites follows both their suitability as a research subject, i.e. a readiness to cooperate on part of the local people contacted and a high level of activities in the cultural heritage tourism domain, as well as a strong personal interest of the author.

So far, Stift Melk has only been involved as a research subject in several seminar papers and quantitative studies following the work of two diploma theses at the University of Economics in Vienna and one thesis written at the University of Paderborn in Germany.4 Already during the exploratory research phase, Pater

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4 See Fedrizzi M. (2001); Die Benediktinerklöster Niederösterreichs und ihre Bedeutung für den Ausflugstourismus; Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien; Kleinberger C. (n.a.); Das Stift Melk als
Martin⁵, head of the department “Kultur & Tourismus” at Stift Melk, has expressed a vivid interest in the outcome of the present thesis in relation to the Abbey of the Mont Saint Michel in France. The motivation of the author in realising an applied, in-depth study on relevant issues concerning the Abbey in Melk was certainly welcomed by both the Abbey as well as the author.

The strongest justification for the present research is given by the practical dimension that lies in answering the research question with regards to the actual development project at the Abbey of Melk. The details on this project are developed at the end of Chapter 7, the case study on Stift Melk, in a separate side note (see section 7.9.1 of this thesis). Practical recommendations for development are given as part of the thesis’ final chapter (see section 10.7 of this thesis).

Mont Saint Michel as the second example in the elaboration of this thesis is justified by the benefit of the additional experience and the international perspective on the development in the case of the Austrian abbey in Melk. It was found that the study of two different case studies would further enhance the findings of the thesis and better relate to the construction of its strategic recommendations for further action.

Finally, justification of the focus group discussion is given by the overriding importance of considering the aspects of demand in the research area of cultural heritage tourism. Since the needs and requirements of visitors to sites and attractions in the cultural heritage tourism sector often dictate the way new products are created or altered, the need to discuss the actual expectations of these visitors is given. Furthermore, the scope of the discussion entails an important discussion on further aspects that are discussed in this thesis, such as authenticity, interpretation and sustainable development.

⁵ For reasons of simplicity and originality, the German expression of “Padre Martin” as “Pater Martin” is maintained throughout the work.
2 CULTURAL TOURISM

2.1 Introduction

The following chapter investigates the topic of cultural tourism against the background of available literature. Providing the basis for the later chapter on heritage tourism, several of the main dimensions in cultural tourism will first have to be considered.

Today, cultural tourism represents an important growth market. Shifting away from a niche tourism product into a massive global phenomenon (Richards (1999)), it is ever more important to consider this form of tourism from a modern-day perspective.

In this way, the aim of the following section is first of all to define what is meant by ‘cultural tourism’. Furthermore, the various fields of cultural tourism will be explored based on the typology provided by SMITH (2003).

The origins and the historic development of this form of tourism shall also be looked at. This is necessary to understand today’s cultural tourism market, as well as its audience: the cultural tourist.
2.2 Conceptualizing Cultural Tourism

Before outlining the various definitions on cultural tourism provided by several of the leading authors in the field of literature, it is important to keep in mind that cultural tourism is a form of tourism, with the adjective “cultural” used to modify the “noun” tourism (McKercher/du Cros (2001), p. 6 and p. 25). This means that it is essential to look at cultural tourism from a tourism perspective, to try and see how experiences are produced and how well tourists’ needs are served.

In his philosophical debate about tourism, the Polish sociologist Przeclawski (2005, pp. 55-56) argues that “tourism is a cultural phenomenon” and that tourism itself “is becoming a way of life”. He has identified the following five associations between tourism and culture (ibid.):

- Tourism is a function of culture; i.e. an expression of any given, contemporary culture.
- Tourism is an element of culture. Contemporary culture cannot be fully appreciated without such a phenomenon as tourism, and vice versa.
- Tourism is a transmission of culture. Urbanization processes or mass media alone are no longer sufficient causes for this transmission.
- Tourism is a meeting of cultures, or [...] a collision of cultures, depending on the scale of cultural differences.
- Tourism can be a factor in cultural change.

These above-mentioned lines of thought already show how narrow the relationship between culture and tourism really is. Emphasis has therefore to be put on the careful handling of the two, if its outcome, “cultural tourism”, is to cater to both the host culture as well as to the tourists’ needs and expectations.

The following section is going to outline the various definitions of cultural tourism.
2.2.1 Definitions of Cultural Tourism

It comes without a surprise that one of the oldest forms of tourism is still subject to a range of debates regarding its definition (Richards (1996), p. 26). Whilst “tourism” and “culture” are arguably more readily defined, no universally valid definition of the interrelation of both, namely “cultural tourism”, has been established to this present date, nor has there been a consensus about its exact boundaries.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) (2004, quoted in Mintel Group, p. 6), has defined cultural tourism very broadly as

“[… that form of tourism that focuses on the culture and the cultural environments including landscapes of the destination, the values and lifestyle, heritage, visual and performing arts, industries, traditions and leisure pursuits of the local population or host community. It can include attendance at cultural events, visits to museums and heritage places and mixing with local people.”

Earlier on, when cultural tourism had not yet grown into a mass-market activity, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO) and ICOMOS (1993, p. viii) have defined cultural tourism

“[…] more functionally – that is, by what it does and how. Firstly, cultural tourism is small, well-managed, educational and frequently up-market tourism. It offers a special sort of visit to a person with particular, often rarefied interests. It is not wide-ranging, mass tourism but tourism dedicated to presenting or explaining some cultural idea.”

A similar definition is provided in the Encyclopaedia of Tourism. When looking up the term “cultural tourism”, DEWAR (2000, pp. 125-26) has noted that

“the majority of definitions suggest learning about others and their way of life as a major element. Learning about self is a second common thread that runs through many explanations on cultural tourism. […] In short, cultural tourism can be defined broadly as the commercialised manifestation of the desire to see how others live.”
RICHARDS (1996, p. 23) further differentiates between the “sites and monuments approach” and the conceptual approach to defining cultural tourism. The first one is concerned with describing attractions visited by cultural tourists, whereas the second is focused on the motivations and meanings attached to the cultural tourism activity. He goes on to suggest the following conceptual definition of cultural tourism, as proposed by the European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS):⁶

“The movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experience to satisfy their cultural needs” (ibid., p. 24).

The technical definition provided by the same author is somewhat more narrow:

“All movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence” (ibid.).

Just as RICHARDS (1996) was already concerned with a conceptual approach to cultural tourism, MCKERCHER/DU CROS (2002, p. 6) have completely dropped the futile quest for definitions by conceptualizing cultural tourism through four key elements:

1. Tourism;
2. Use of cultural heritage assets;
3. Consumption of experiences and products;
4. The tourist.

As previously stated, MCKERCHER/DU CROS (ibid., pp. 6-8) argue that cultural tourism is essentially a form of tourism, and to be regarded as such. In addition, this form of tourism involves the consumption, or use, of cultural heritage assets

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⁶ It is important to note in this context that the foundation of the specific ATLAS research unit on Cultural Tourism in 1991 is a direct consequence of the problem in defining cultural tourism. For more information, please refer to www.atlas-euro.org or: Tourism, creativity and development – ATLAS Reflections 2005 (2005); ATLAS; Cultural Tourism Research Group, p. 81.
for tourism purposes. This difficult relationship is all the more emphasised by the need of turning these heritage assets into cultural tourism products ready for consumption by the tourist. This transformation process, though clearly not among the goals of conservationists, is essential for a successful and sustainable development of the cultural tourism product.

A strong relationship between cultural heritage and tourism exists in this concept. This, however, is clearly relevant for the present work, since the next chapter will be concerned with this relationship in greater detail.

As stated by Richards (1996, p. 23),

“[…] conceptual definitions can be useful in focusing attention on why and how people engage in cultural tourism, rather than simply how many cultural tourists are there. Conceptual definitions of cultural tourism are therefore more clearly process-based.”

“Process-based” relates to culture as a process in which tourists seek meaning and authenticity through their tourist experience. It stands in opposition to culture as a product, meaning the transformation of culture specifically for tourist consumption. As stated by the author (ibid., p. 22), these two concepts of culture rarely overlap, and it is undeniably difficult to integrate both of them into one stand-alone definition of cultural tourism.

For the aim of the present thesis, the conceptual or “thematic” approach to defining cultural tourism seems to be most suitable. This is not only more useful for the qualitative investigation (Richards (1996), p. 22), but moreover does not limit itself to one certain aspect, either (McKercher/du Cros (2002) p. 6).

### 2.2.2 Fields of Cultural Tourism

After having defined or rather conceptualised what is meant by cultural tourism, this section focuses on a “typology of cultural tourism” based on the work of Smith (2003).
Figure 1: A Typology of Cultural Tourism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cultural tourism</th>
<th>Places and Activities of Interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Tourism</td>
<td>Visits to monuments, museums, religious and archaeological sites, …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts Tourism</td>
<td>Visits to the theatre, concerts, galleries, festivals and events, …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Tourism</td>
<td>Photography, painting, pottery, crafts, language learning, …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban cultural tourism</td>
<td>Historic cities, waterfront developments, arts and heritage attractions, shopping, nightlife, …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural cultural tourism</td>
<td>Farm or agro-tourism, eco-museums, cultural landscapes, trails, national parks, …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous cultural tourism</td>
<td>Trekking, arts and crafts, visits to cultural centres, festivals, …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular cultural tourism</td>
<td>Theme parks, shopping malls, pop concerts, sporting events, industrial heritage sites, …</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: based on Smith (2003), p. 37

Looking at this typology, it becomes clear that heritage tourism is a major field of cultural tourism, with elements of this type of tourism involved in almost all other categories. As already mentioned previously, the field of heritage tourism continues to play a major role in this work.

According to Timothy/Boyd (2003, p. 11), heritage tourism is among the oldest forms of tourism, despite modern debates surrounding its phenomenon. Arguably, it has shaped the early beginnings of cultural tourism and followed during the course of its entire development over history. Even the early explorers and adventurers, coming close to our notion of tourists, have many times set sail to visit cultural heritage attractions.
2.2.3 Origins and Development of Cultural Tourism

In his definition of cultural tourism, DEWAR (2000, p. 125) argues that much of the history of tourism can be based on man’s innate desire to explore previously unknown places and cultures. Perhaps the earliest forms of “tourists” were traders and sailors, travelling to see the Great Pyramids or the Nile (Timothy/Boyd (2003), p. 11).

Culture, therefore, has always played an important part in tourism, with most of the early forms of travel involving visits to places of cultural interest (Frangialli (2004), p. 346).

RICHARDS (1996, p. 11) argues that the European continent has always been an important destination for cultural tourism. This goes as far back as to the Romans, who went on to explore ancient Greek or Egyptian civilisations. The origin of the word “tourism”, however, is attributed to the first Grand Tour participants, usually aristocrats, travelling during the early 17th century.

At the beginning of the 18th century, however, RICHARDS (ibid., pp. 11-12) argues that the nature of the Grand Tour began to change in favour of the “Romantic Grand Tour”, also offering the professional middle market access to these elite forms of travel. It acted as a catalyst for “scenic tourism” and was based on the study of landscapes (Swarbrooke (1994), p. 223). At the same time, RICHARDS (ibid.) mentions that another phenomenon occurred: the growing collection of cultural treasures during these travels and their first exhibition in public museums. This in itself helped to enhance tourism later on, with pioneers such as Thomas Cook offering the first “package tour” in the second half of the 19th century. These early forms of organised travel saw culture as an important element of their offer.

About a century later, when the European tourist market entered its maturity stage during the 1970s and 1980s, the first niche market segments had been created (Boyd (2001), p. 211). According to RICHARDS (ibid., pp. 12-13), culture soon began to play a role in an attempt to get away from mass tourism, with “cultural short breaks” based on cultural attractions being highly in demand. From a time when tourism was reserved to an elite and “high” culture denied to the masses, the
democratisation of the latter has led to a conversion of tourism into a major world industry. This development has clearly questioned the traditional boundaries between tourism and culture.

RICHARDS (1996, p. 15) concludes that the first wave of cultural democratisation in Europe took place after the Second World War, where culture was attributed the role in helping to foster a nation’s identity and solidarity. With the transition from modernism to post-modernism, the supply in existing museums literally exploded due to theming and market segmentation in cultural tourism.

Today, tourists are no longer viewed as unwanted visitors by cultural institutions. The development of tourism and culture goes hand in hand, and this is a result of the shift towards the consumer’s market as well as the global market force tourism now has.

2.2.4 The Cultural Tourism Market

Based on the words of authors such as TIMOTHY/BOYD (2003), McKERCHER/DU CROS (2002) and RICHARDS (1996), the World Tourism Organisation has recognised that over the past decade, heritage and culture have accounted for almost 40% of all international trips undertaken, and that demand for cultural tourism is likely to grow in the future.

Furthermore, in its “Tourism 2020 Vision Report”, WTO (2001, p. 20) states that the year 2020 will see the arrival of 1,561 billion international tourists worldwide, of which 717 million alone will travel to Europe. This continent will continue to be the world's most important receiving region, although its market share will be diminishing in favour of the East Asia and Pacific regions. Is it therefore possible to conclude that in 2020 Europe, 286.8 million or 40% of international tourist arrivals can be called “cultural” or “heritage tourists”?

Certainly, some previous distinctions have to be made. Whilst a typology of cultural tourists is readily available throughout literature (e.g. Smith (2003) pp. 34-36; McKercher/du Cros (2002), pp. 139-47; Opaschowski (2000), p. 96; Richards
(1996), p. 34), there is still a lack of hard evidence on the development of the cultural tourism phenomenon, especially in recent years. Many observers are convinced that its market share is growing, whereas others are not so sure that these quite optimistic figures are accurate. This has in part been alleviated by the continuous research on cultural tourism done by the ATLAS Cultural Tourism Research Group (Richards (1996), p. 31), as the following paragraph will explain.

2.2.5 The Cultural Tourist

Based on the work of Richards (1996, pp. 31-33), the ATLAS Cultural Tourism Research Group has conducted several transnational visitor surveys at 26 sites in 9 European countries one year after its foundation, in 1992 and 1993. The aim was to gather more quantitative and qualitative data on cultural tourism in Europe.

According to findings taken from the Mintel Group on cultural and heritage tourism (2004, p. 23), over 40% of the visitors asked came from an age group between 20 and 29 years. This is controversial to the general idea that cultural tourists mainly come from an elderly group of travellers. The result still holds for the more recent year of 2002, when the study was extended to include surveys at 70 cultural sites and events across Europe, Asia and Australia. This recent study revealed that almost 40% of all visitors continued to be under 30.

Also, when asked how important the cultural attraction was they were visiting, almost 60% said it was “important” or “very important” to their decision to travel (Richards (1996) pp. 31-33). This figure is likely to continue to hold for the new millennium.

According to the Mintel Group (2004, p. 24), another interesting, yet not surprising result revealed from the 2002 survey is the level of expenditure made by cultural tourists. Typically, their daily expenditure runs up to more than 70€, which is considerably more than the average spending of touring visitors (52€), beach tourists (48€) or those on a city break (€42).
The outcomes of the earlier survey also supported a previously established distinction between “specific” and “general” cultural tourists.

Richards (1996, p. 34) argues that “specific” cultural tourists are tourists who travel specifically to visit a certain cultural attraction. They are typically more highly educated, travel more frequently, with culture being an important factor in their choice of destination. In the 1992 and 1993 study, about 9% of all participants could be identified as “specific” cultural tourists, leaving the vast majority to the rest.

However, not all “general” cultural tourists can be said to be alike, either. There are several different shades of motivations to be found in this type of tourist. These are best expressed by consulting the cultural tourist model established by McKercher/Du Cros (see Figure 2):

Figure 2: A Cultural Tourist Typology

![Cultural Tourist Typology Diagram](source)

This model serves to establish the following five different types of cultural tourists, based on the importance of visiting a cultural attraction in the course of a vacation (low – high) against the depth of experience sought (deep – shallow) (McKercher/du Cros (2002), pp. 140-42):

The **purposeful cultural tourist**, comparable to the “specific” cultural tourist introduced by Richards (1996, p. 34), is entirely motivated by culture in visiting a certain destination or cultural attraction, and engages in a deep experience.

The **sightseeing cultural tourist** is chiefly motivated for cultural reasons; too, however his experience remains more shallow.

The **serendipitous cultural tourist** does not plan to travel for cultural motives, but after participating still ends up having a deep cultural experience.

The **casual cultural tourist** offers only a weak motive for visiting a certain cultural attraction or destination, and as a result, his experience remains shallow.

Finally, the **incidental cultural tourist** does not travel for cultural tourism reasons at all, and when he finds himself engaged in some sort of cultural activities, those typically remain shallow.

According to McKercher/du Cros (ibid., pp. 144-47), all of these tourists can be found at any time in a given destination, or at a cultural attraction. Likewise, depending on the nature of the trip and the person’s individual motivation, one single person can be everything, from a purposeful to an incidental cultural tourist. It is important to retain that each type of visitor will visit the attraction for different reasons and seek different experiences. This creates the challenge of making one cultural asset relevant and appealing to several different user groups.
2.3 Summary

The previous chapter has helped to understand the meanings and significance of cultural tourism. Looking at the variety of existing definitions and the continuous lack of universal agreement, the conceptual, or “thematic” approach to defining cultural tourism, as discussed by Richards (1996) and McKercher/Du Cros (2002) has been found to be the most suitable for this thesis.

Furthermore, when talking about the origins and fields of cultural tourism, the importance of heritage tourism has been underlined to mark the starting point for the next chapter’s discussion of this type of tourism.

Finally, the potential of the cultural tourism market as well as the main characteristics of cultural tourists has been discussed. It is important to consider the impact cultural tourism now has and will have in the future, and to cater to the needs and wishes of the different types of cultural tourists.
3 HERITAGE TOURISM

3.1 Introduction

Building on the conceptual definition of cultural tourism made by Richards (see section 2.2.1), it was argued in a later publication (1999, n.p.a.) that cultural tourism can comprise both the past and the present, represented by what is called “arts tourism” (contemporary cultural production) and “heritage tourism” (based on relics of the past).

The following chapter deals with this form of tourism in more detail. It starts by defining “heritage” and “heritage tourism”, thereby building on previous discussions and models established by key authors such as Timothy/Boyd (2003), Ashworth (1995) and Swarbrooke (1994).

In order to arrive at the present range of heritage attractions, it will once again be important to consider the development and growth of this form of tourism. In this field, religion-based heritage tourism continues to play a major role. Outlining its main characteristics will be the focus of a separate section in this chapter.

Finally, this chapter will deal with the concept of World Heritage in more detail, since, as already mentioned previously, both of the sites used for latter empirical analysis form part of the World Heritage List. It will conclude with a short summary.
3.2 Definitions and Concepts

“The cultural heritage of Europe is ‘one of the oldest and most important generators of tourism’, and it retains its central role in the European tourism industry to this day” (Richards (1996), p. 10).

“A growing number of cities and regions in the European Union are basing their tourism development strategies on the promotion of cultural heritage, and the number of cultural [heritage] attractions is growing rapidly” (ibid.).

There is certainly no doubt about the importance of heritage, or cultural heritage, today. Being a large tourism generator for many destinations, heritage is upheld by society for its political role as well as for the social and economic benefits it can bring to a host community.

The following two sub-sections look at the concepts of “heritage” and “heritage tourism” into more detail.

3.2.1 Heritage

In its 2002 report, the European Commission (2002, p. 16) wrote on the notion of heritage that it involved both a “sense of belonging” as well as a “sense of place” to be put into context. Heritage can furthermore be divided into “natural” or “cultural”, whereas the latter one

“[...] encompasses any cultural expression transmitted from the past and inherited by present day society. This can take on a material form such as a structure or building or [...] an immaterial form such as tradition, know-how, lifestyles, customs …” (ibid.).

ICOMOS (2004, quoted in Mintel Group, p. 5), defines the term “cultural heritage” as

“[...] an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values.”
Both of these official statements encompass the notion of **intangible heritage** and **tangible, or built heritage**. This is in line with the definitions found in literature. As for the meaning of the word “heritage” in the context of heritage tourism, **Swarbrooke** (1994, p. 222) takes it “[…] to mean history, culture, and the land on which people live. It includes both tangible and intangible elements […].” He states furthermore that

> “heritage is not homogeneous. […] Because it is a personal subjective and emotional concept as well as an objective and functional one, each individual views heritage in a different way” (ibid.).

This marked difference in the perception of heritage is supported by **Timothy/Boyd** (2003, pp. 14-16), who have established several “scales” of heritage. These go from World Heritage, to a nation’s heritage, to local heritage and even down to one’s own personal heritage.

The same authors have stated that heritage gets filtered through a system of values that necessarily changes over time. Therefore, the term heritage is not be confused with pure history or the past as such. This is an important concept which is also supported elsewhere in the literature (Harrison (2005), pp. 5-7; Poria (2001), p. 115; Schouten (1995) p. 23). According to both **Harrison** (2005, p. 7) and **Timothy/Boyd** (2003, pp. 2-4), a people’s heritage, the “inheritance” of past generations, always assumes some sort of value, either by society or by one’s own self. It is therefore selective, and not without a certain political power.

**Harrison** (2005, pp. 5-7) questions as to who is eligible to select what kind of heritage is ‘worth’ passing on to future generations, and how this should be done. Furthermore, he goes on to argue that heritage is subject to constant interpretation, claim and counter-claim, and necessarily assumes different values depending on the balance of status and power in society at any given time.

The following figure (see Figure 3) based on **Poria** (2001) is going to illustrate this development:
The above figure shows that heritage is undeniably subjective, based on depicting only selected items from the past; events that have either been labelled as “good”, or worthwhile remembering by society, or “bad”, i.e. not worthy of passing on to future generations.

SOFIELD/LI (2000, pp. 275-76) state that heritage is never static in time, but is adapted by society to suit its actual understandings, meanings and experiences. They argue that in modern societies, people regard the past as being completed and therefore look at it with nostalgia and curiosity. With this new type of demand in mind, it is by no means surprising that the “heritage industry” has turned into a major global tourism sector, stretching itself to both the developing and the developed world.
3.2.2 Heritage Tourism

The relationship between heritage and tourism has always been linked to a number of debates on its positive or negative impacts (Smith (2003), p. 103; McKercher/du Cros (2002), pp. 6-8). While Western societies have been accused of down turning heritage into little more than a tourism commodity, perhaps the best counter-argument is found in the World Heritage Convention, whose standards have helped to establish a globally growing list of outstanding cultural and natural heritage sites (Sofield/Li (2000), p. 276). In the light of the empirical part that is to follow, World Heritage and the issues concerning it is the focus of a later section in this chapter.

In his discussion of heritage tourism in the 21st century, SWARBROOKE (1994, p. 222) argues that heritage tourism is

“[...] based on heritage where heritage is the core of the product that is offered and heritage is the main motivating factor for the consumer. It is based on the view that heritage is only heritage in tourism terms when it is of interest to, and accessible to, tourists.”

This concept of heritage being only relevant to tourism when it is interesting and accessible to tourists is also followed later on by TIMOTHY/BOYD (2003). They agree on the basic notion that the discussion around heritage and heritage tourism is complex (Timothy/Boyd (2003), p. 7; Boyd (2001), p. 212). Earlier on, they have argued that heritage is selective, based on people’s motivations to keep certain elements of the past, while others are abandoned by society or political decisions altogether. According to them, this is one of the first steps leading towards the creation of a “heritage product”. The second step lies in only marketing heritage which is valued as a commodity to tourists, leaving them with the final product, the “heritage tourism experience”. Ultimately, they argue, what people want is to take away a good experience from their holiday, and this lies in consuming the “heritage tourist product”.

This relationship is illustrated in the following.
Of course, it needs to be recognised that this process runs the danger of selling off, or commoditising, heritage assets for the purpose of the tourism experience, unless proper management techniques are applied. This aspect is the focus of a special section in the following chapter.

ASHWORTH (1995, p. 68) furthermore sees heritage as a basis for political discussion. Heritage tourism, he argues, helps individuals to appreciate places and therefore results in political identification. These links are further expressed in the following simple schematic diagram.
Figure 5: Heritage, Place Identity and Tourism: Components of a Triangle

Source: adapted from Ashworth (1995), p. 69

This model is useful for understanding the purpose of the next section, development and growth of heritage tourism. With political powers involved in creating and sustaining heritage resources, heritage tourism has great impacts on society and the way tourism is handled.

3.3 Development and Growth

There has been a lot of debate regarding the recent growth of heritage tourism and the so-called heritage industry, from a “trivialisation of the past” (Swarbrooke (1994), p. 224 and p. 226) into the enormous existing variety of heritage sites today (Timothy/Boyd (2003), Smith (2003)). However, the concept of travelling for historic and cultural reasons is far from being new (Swarbrooke (1994), p. 222).
What has changed over time, and arguably more rapidly during the past few decades, are the scope and characteristics of this type of tourism.

According to SWARBROOKE (1994, pp. 222-24), it was above all the period of the Middle Ages which saw many people travelling all over Europe for spiritual reasons and namely religious heritage in the form of pilgrimage journeys. Later on, he argues, the development of heritage tourism went in line with cultural tourism, from the Grand Tour to the first “heritage package tour” made by Thomas Cook in order to visit the ancient monuments of Egypt. During the 20th century, and especially over the last fifty years, the growth of heritage tourism could largely be attributed to the growth of the tourism industry as a whole. There are, however, as he says, several factors which have contributed to the growth of the heritage industry more specifically. These are higher levels of education, increased media representation of heritage (either monuments or other people’s lifestyles), the high status attached to heritage tourism in society as well as a growing desire to learn something new while on holiday.

This historic development of heritage tourism has brought about a considerable range of heritage attractions, most of which are cultural. The following section will allow the reader an overview of the type of heritage attractions that currently abound on the market.

### 3.4 The Range of Heritage Attractions

Heritage attractions are the backbone of the heritage industry. They make contemporary use of the past by interpreting and representing history for tourism purposes. SMITH (2003, pp. 103-04) distinguishes seven major types of heritage attractions, those being of the following nature:

- Built (monuments, architecture, historic buildings, …);
- Natural (national parks, cultural landscapes, caves, …);
- Cultural (arts, crafts, festivals, traditional events, …);
• Industrial (factories, mills, …);
• Religious sites (cathedrals, abbeys, pilgrimage routes, cities, …);
• Military (castles, battlefields, museums, …);
• Literary or artistic (houses or landscapes associated with writers, …).

TIMOTHY/BOYD (2003) have moved on to describe some of the “more common and timely heritage attractions” of today in favour of more “general” (Smith (2003), pp. 103-04) or “extensive” (Prentice (1994), n.p.a. quoted in Timothy/Boyd (2003), pp. 21-22) typologies of heritage attractions.

These include (Timothy/Boyd (2003), p. 21):
• Museums;
• War sites;
• Religious sites;
• Living culture;
• Industrial locations and relics;
• Literary heritage.

In light of the present thesis, it is interesting to note that both of them attribute a specific category to religious sites, underlining the importance of religion-based heritage tourism for heritage tourism and cultural tourism in general. Explaining what is meant by this specific form of tourism will be the aim of the following section.
3.5 Religion-based Heritage Tourism

According to TIMOTHY/BOYD (2003, pp. 28-30), there is no doubt that religion has played a major role in encouraging early travellers and pilgrims to cross the European continent in order to visit sacred sites. Today, hundreds of them make up the world’s map as important heritage attractions in their specific country or within their specific religion.

The same authors, supported by COHEN (2004, p. 147), have argued that pilgrimage, or religiously motivated travel, is essentially undertaken for spiritual reasons. However, they say, this is only one consideration in today’s forms of tourism to religious or sacred sites. On the other side of the spectrum are tourists drawn to a religious heritage site out of mere curiosity; their major motivation is to visit a certain element of the religious heritage attraction.

This relationship is best illustrated by consulting the following model by TIMOTHY/BOYD (2003).

Figure 6: The Continuum of Visitors to Religion-Based Heritage Attractions

Source: adapted from Timothy/Boyd (2003), p. 32
In between of this spectrum are “pilgrim-tourists”, or “religious tourists”, who both travel for secular as well as for religious motives (Cohen (2004), p. 148). However, as with the typology of cultural tourists, TIMOTHY/BOYD (2003, pp. 30-31) as well as COHEN (2004, p. 154) claim that one person may find himself being more of a pilgrim tourist at one stage, or in particular society/religion, and more of a secular tourist at another stage, or when travelling for simple leisure and recreational reasons. According to TIMOTHY/BOYD (2003, p. 30), this varies as much in relation to the person as well as to the site: A religious heritage attraction might be a World Heritage site to one visitor, but a place of individual worship to the next.

Balancing the needs of different types of visitors is exactly what constitutes one of the major challenges of site managers today (Shackley (2003), p. 164). SHACKLEY (ibid., p. 161) has established three broad dimensions of religion-based heritage attractions:

- Components of the natural heritage (e.g. sacred mountains or islands);
- Man-made buildings and sites that were originally designed for religious purposes, but which are now also attracting tourists;
- Man-made buildings under a religious theme exclusively designed to attract tourists.

Clearly, there can be sites where actually all of these elements are involved. Mont Saint Michel in France, the site chosen for further case study research later on in this thesis, is a mixture of the first two dimensions, the abbey being built up high on a holy rock in the sea. Stift Melk, in Lower Austria, is a clear example of the second type of attraction, although today’s abbey has originally been designed as a siege of the Babenberger dynasty.

According to SHACKLEY (2003), pp. 163-67), the main “product” they are offering is subject to individual, spiritual experience and expectations. Site managers at religious heritage places face the delicate task of catering to various user groups (from the eagerly anticipated pilgrim to the idle leisure tourist), while at the same time being tied to various public and private sector interests. She argues that this
can go from local governments to UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee, if the
sight has been inscribed on the World Heritage List. As this is the case within the
present thesis, the next section will deal with the concept of World Heritage in
more detail. Therefore, SHACKLEY (2003), pp. 163-67) argues that operations
management and strategic planning are prerogatives for religious sites facing
thousands or millions of visitors a year. What is more, care must be taken to
preserve the “spirit of a place”, as it is called, especially in religious heritage
attractions. This will still be of interested later on in this thesis.

In any case, it can be concluded that prospects for future growth of visitors are
positive, as many religious attractions are major historic sites of great significance
for cultural and heritage tourism.

### 3.6 World Heritage

This section is dedicated to explaining the meaning of World Heritage and its
importance for cultural and heritage tourism as a result of the “globalisation of
heritage tourism” (Smith (2003), p. 99). It will help to understand the objectives of
UNESCO and to outline some of the major issues of World Heritage at present.

#### 3.6.1 The Role of UNESCO in the Conservation of the World’s Heritage

In 1972, UNESCO has adopted the World Heritage Convention, whose full title is
“The Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage” in
order to protect natural, cultural or mixed properties around the world considered
to be of “outstanding value to humankind” (UNESCO (2007a), n.p.a.);
According to the World Heritage Committee (WHC), a total of 183 countries have adhered to the World Heritage Convention as of October 25, 2006\(^7\) (UNESCO (2007b), n.p.a.). On signing the convention, each country commits itself to conserving both the natural and cultural sites within its borders that are acknowledged by the Convention as having “outstanding universal value”. These sites are inscribed in the **World Heritage List**, containing only those cultural, natural or mixed properties that have met the specific criteria defined by the WHC.

The criteria have last been updated in 2005 and focus on the assessment of “outstanding universal value”, which is defined by UNESCO (2005, p. 14) as

“[…] cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.”

In addition, World Heritage Sites must meet tests in authenticity and integrity, and ensure necessary protection through the submission of a management plan (UNESCO (2005); Smith (2003); Shackley (1998)).

At the beginning of 2007, the World Heritage List has grown to include **830 different properties**, distributed over 138 States Parties (UNESCO (2007c), n.p.a.)

The following figure (see Figure 7) illustrates this distribution. It shows the different categories of cultural, natural and mixed properties that are classified under UNESCO World Heritage. “Cultural properties”, or “cultural heritage”, has been considered by UNESCO to fall into three broad categories (UNESCO (2005), p. 13):

- Monuments: architectural works, sculpture, paintings, elements of an archaeological site, inscriptions, etc.;

- Groups of buildings: separated or connected which are outstanding on account of their architecture, homogeneity or place in the landscape;

• Sites: man-made or combined natural and man-made areas, including archaeological sites outstanding from a historic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

Figure 7: The Number of World Heritage Sites as of April 2007

![Bar chart showing the number of World Heritage Sites as of April 2007, with 644 cultural properties, 162 natural properties, and 24 mixed properties.]

Source: adapted from UNESCO World Heritage List (UNESCO (2007c), n.p.a.)

According to the findings of an expert interview led with Mr Pedersen from the World Heritage Tourism Programme (Pedersen (2006), n.p.a.), the World Heritage Centre has authorised the creation of a World Heritage Tourism Programme in 2001. Its activities are used to support and advise the regional desk offices on issues connected with tourism, namely tourism or public use planning, working with local communities and engaging the industry so as to produce a more positive tourism driving force at the different WHS.

3.6.2 Significance of the World Heritage Designation

Despite, or even because of the fact that the primordial goal of the UNESCO Convention lies in the conservation and safe-guarding of the world’s most
outstanding natural and cultural heritage, the term “World Heritage” holds an enormous potential for tourism. This viewpoint is supported by a number of commentators in the field (e.g. Smith (2003); Timothy/Boyd (2003); Hall/Piggin (2003); Pedersen (2002); Leask/Fyall (2000); Shackley (1998); ICOMOS/WTO (1993)). Their main conclusion is that the World Heritage designation will raise public interest, and especially those of tourists, once the specific property concerned has been put on the World Heritage List.

SHACKLEY (1998, Preface) goes as far as to suggest that “the World Heritage List is the modern equivalent of the Seven Wonders of the World”; a “must-see” in terms of tourism and a virtual guarantee for increased visitor numbers.

This view is supported later on by SMITH (2003, pp. 108-10), who nevertheless takes on a more balanced stance. Clearly, she argues, the prestige earned by World Heritage designation is enormous. However, things may vary considerably in the international context. Supported by HALL/PIGGIN (2003, p. 218), she claims that not all properties are equally able to reap the benefits of this prestigious inscription, caused either through a lack of technical know-how or the absence of appropriate funds to support the development of the brand.

SHACKLEY (1998, pp. 5-8) as well as ICOMOS/WTO (1993, Introduction) furthermore state that World Heritage Sites vary considerably in size, and not all of them are equally well known. Nevertheless, they argue, all are obliged to provide visitors with the necessary information about their significance, at different levels and in different languages. Since they act as visitor magnets, they must cope with issues such as accessibility, transport, food and accommodation, but not to the detriment of the originality of the site, or the needs of other types of visitors. This balance is difficult to strike.

To conclude, SMITH (2003, p. 110) and PEDERSEN (2006, n.p.a.) both mention that the overall benefits of the World Heritage designation can be significant. Apart from encouraging additional funding and tourism flows to the site, local people may take on an increased or renewed pride in their heritage. On the other hand, they agree, care must be taken to ensure sustainable tourism development in order to maximise the benefit of the designation for all stakeholders.
3.6.3 Challenges and Issues in Promoting the World’s Heritage

According to Smith (2003, p. 107), UNESCO recognised a perceived imbalance in the distribution of the World’s Heritage and strived to move away from a less Eurocentric and material view of cultural heritage towards the end of the last millennium. This has encouraged the creation of the category “Cultural Landscape” to be added to the World Heritage List in 1996.

This argument is supported by Pedersen (2002, p. 17), who agrees that this process of re-thinking helped to stimulate a range of activities, namely the Youth Education Programme, Friends of World Heritage8, the Sustainable Tourism Programme as cited above, or the Cities Project.

Nevertheless, Smith (ibid.) goes on to mention critics who have voiced their concern over the sheer growth of the World Heritage List, including a recommendation to slow down the process of nomination in some of the more developed countries.

UNESCO (2005, p. 14) is clearly in favour of this argument. Following the definition of the concept of “outstanding universal value”, it states that

“[..] the Convention is not intended to ensure the protection of all properties of great interest, importance or value, but only for a select list of the most outstanding of these from an international viewpoint.”

In light of the current situation in the United Kingdom (UK), Fyall/Leask (2000, p. 218) go on to argue that one day indeed, the World Heritage List “will be deemed complete”. They claim that the limited resources available should therefore be channelled in the management and efforts of existing sites, rather than searching to include ever more properties on the List.

8 A UNF partnership programme created in September 2003. The goal is to raise public awareness and to inform about the benefits of becoming a ‘member’ of World Heritage. More information about this initiative is available at http://www.friendsofworldheritage.org/
3.6.3.1 Access to and Interpretation of World Heritage

Following an introductory report of the 2006 European Summer School on World Heritage, opening up heritage to as wide an audience possible can create a challenge, particularly as the physical openness of the heritage property in itself does not guarantee accessibility. The paper argues that some sort of complicity between the object and their visitors needs to be in place, if heritage is to reveal its true meaning to its audience. This may be helped through events that actively involve visitors and create a more memorable experience (Pedersen (2006), n.p.a.). Therefore, the authors of the report from the European Summer School (n.a.a., 2006, n.p.a.) as well as PEDERSEN (2006, n.p.a.), conclude that literally opening doors does not create intellectual access to heritage, let alone World Heritage, per se. Adequate interpretation measures need to be in place to ensure visitors take the most out of their visit.

This viewpoint has been supported earlier by SHACKLEY (1998, p. 7) in her discussion on World Heritage Cultural Sites. She mentions that sites are required to provide adequate visitor interpretation in order to facilitate access to the heritage attraction. However, many sites either do not have the possibility to provide for these in all the required depth, or are already seriously threatened by overcrowding at peak times.

3.6.3.2 Visitor Management

According to PEDERSEN (2006, n.p.a.), managing visitor flows is one of the most important challenges faced by World Heritage, and it involves giving concessions to different companies that operate at the WHS in order to deal with visitor flows.

“Visitor management has become a new and as yet inexact science which aims to balance the needs and requirements of the visitor with the potential impact that the visitor may have on fragile buildings or artefacts” (Shackley (1998), xiii).
This “visitor management dilemma”, as advocated by Hackley (1998, xvi), becomes a clear reason for concern once visitor numbers run up to several millions a year. She states that this is already the case for the most prominent members of the World Heritage Community.

This somewhat contradictory relationship is underlined by Garrod (2003, p. 125-30), who argues that tourists run the danger of compromising the very uniqueness or quality of the cultural or natural assets they have come to see. According to him, there are three main types of visitor impacts (ibid.):

- Overcrowding;
- Wear and Tear;
- Traffic-related problems.

Garrod (ibid.) stresses that these can have impacts on the local community as well as on the attraction itself, especially in terms of authenticity.

However, Fryall/Leask (2000), p. 212), argue that the World Heritage designation is not always necessarily an immediate cause for increased visitation. Moreover, and following a lack of conclusive evidence, it is being said to correspond to the overall increase in tourism in the specific country concerned. This notwithstanding, the authors (ibid., p. 218) conclude that the very belief that this relationship exists helps to add value to the brand of World Heritage.

3.6.3.3 Planning Issues and Sustainability

According to Pedersen (2006, n.p.a.), World Heritage Sites are especially sensitive to issues concerning strategic and operational planning. He argues that the question that needs to be answered by managers is to what kind of an experience should be provided to visitors: either a solitary, or a unique, or an adventure-loaded, intensive one for example. Once this is defined, everything else falls into place: marketing, product development, interpretation measures, etc.
Another aspect, he continues, that is worth considering in the case of World Heritage is that demand generally is extremely inelastic, especially at so-called “icon sites”. Visitors and tourists continue to come, no matter how far things may have deteriorated at site level. The warning bell for site managers, therefore, he claims, is often missing. However, he talks about the efforts currently being made so as to integrate tourism matters into the requirements for site management plans once a place becomes inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Another important consideration that has resulted from the expert interview with PEDERSEN (2006, n.p.a.) is sustainability and World Heritage. According to him, this relationship involves legislative issues at site level, the ability to decide on a global tourism vision having all local stakeholders involved and developing quantifiable standards such as to monitor the development at the site. He goes on to suggest that the industry can play a role, too, by promoting local products and by acting as a bridge between the needs of the market and the development perspectives of the local community. Product development in general, he mentions, is likely to evoke positive factors such as pride and authenticity in the heritage being presented, so long as it involves all the affected stakeholders and forms part of an overall agreed planning process.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has helped to understand the broad concept of heritage and heritage tourism, especially with regards to religion-based heritage attractions and the concept of World Heritage.

After the reader has been equipped with all the necessary definitions and understandings, the way is now open into a more practical discussion of the remaining concepts at the end of the theoretical part of this thesis. These will stay within the context of “cultural heritage tourism”, i.e. heritage tourism based on cultural attractions as opposed to natural ones.
4 ISSUES IN CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM

4.1 Introduction

The aim of the following chapter is to elaborate on the main dimensions that have been identified as part of the literature concerning cultural heritage tourism. All of them are particularly relevant and serve as a basis for the practical analysis of the two case studies, Mont Saint Michel in France and Stift Melk in Lower Austria.

The following main topics have been identified for the purpose of this section:

- Authenticity and commodification in cultural heritage tourism;
- Interpretation: The balance between education and entertainment;
- Product development and heritage marketing;
- Characteristics of demand for cultural heritage;
- The challenge of moving cultural heritage tourism towards sustainability.

The first one, authenticity, is central to the phenomenon of heritage tourism (Boyd (2002), p. 221), and one of the key issues to be regarded in this context. It will therefore mark the starting point for discussion of this chapter.
4.2 The Authenticity Debate

According to authors such as Li (2003, p. 250), Taylor (2001, p. 8) and Wang (2000, p. 44), hardly anything in today’s cultural heritage tourism market is as largely debated as the notion of authenticity. As part of the social sciences, authenticity has been discussed and analysed as a motivational factor in tourism for more than two decades. One of the first who raised the issue of authenticity was MacCannell in 1973.

According to Wang (2000, pp. 43-44), “[…] authenticity is a modern value and an ideal that resulted from the experience of inauthenticity and alienation in modern society.” In this way, Wang argues that the search for authenticity is essentially a modern phenomenon. Based on the work of MacCannell (1999), this view is supported by Goulding (2000, p. 837), who states that

“[…] the desire for authentic experience is the modern embodiment of the religious pilgrim, but […] since postmodern society is essentially inauthentic, those who seek it must look elsewhere. One form [to achieve this] is the experience of the past, packaged and sold as authentic.”

Other authors, like Li (2003, pp. 249-50), have taken on a less radical view. This author links authenticity with everything that is honest, genuine and unchanged. Furthermore, according to Li, authenticity also relates to a sense of being.

“[…] Tourists can achieve authentic experiences through relationships with people in tourist settings […] either through environmental experiences or people-based experiences, or an interaction of the two” (ibid., p. 250).

This refutes the possibility of a mere “objective” or “object-related authenticity” (Kim/Jamal (2007), p. 183; Wang (2000), p. 44) in favour of an “emergent authenticity” that is “socially constructed” through negotiated meanings and individual conceptions (Kim/Jamal (2007), p. 183; Xie/Wall (2003), p. 111; Cohen (2000), p. 216). In this way, products or objects that have previously been declared as inauthentic or contrived may in the course of time come to be considered as authentic, even by experts (Cohen (2004), pp. 109-10).
Similarly, fluent states of authenticity exist within tourists. COHEN (2004, pp. 106-109) argues that the tourist concern for authenticity depends on a person’s degree of alienation from modernity. He defines “existential tourists”, who abandon modern life in search for the Other: They will be the most concerned with authenticity, as are “experimental tourists”. “Experiential tourists” also seek to participate in the authentic life of others, hence they still follow strict criteria for evaluating authenticity. “Recreational tourists”, he argues, have less strict criteria and are willing to accept something as real for the sake of the experience. Finally, “diversionary tourists”, who look for mere entertainment on their holiday, remain totally unconcerned by a lack of authenticity in their experience.

WANG (2000) has justified this individual perspective in the perception of authenticity by adding what he calls “existential authenticity” to the mere notion of objective authenticity (Kim/Jamal (2007), p. 183). According to MCKERCHER/DU CROS (2002, pp. 73-74) and WANG (2000, p. 44), objective authenticity has its origins in the museum, where objects of art were assigned a certain historic value to justify the price asked for them.

Since existential authenticity is arguably more experience-related, STEINER/REISINGER (2006, p. 303) have recently argued that it leads to tourists being neither authentic nor inauthentic, since a person’s “existential self” is transient, i.e. changing over time. As a consequence, people choose to be authentic or inauthentic according to the situation and the experience presented to them.

This view has in part already been taken up by SMITH (2003), when discussing authenticity against the backdrop of postmodernism. The postmodernist era is characterised by the arrival of mass tourism and the so-called “heritage industry” (ibid., p. 82). It sees tourists playfully accepting the idea that their experiences have been commoditised, and that people might yet be searching for inauthentic, “hyper-real” attractions as the ultimate goal in the tourist quest (ibid., pp. 20-23).

Another term that marks the post-modern tourist experience is the concept of “staged authenticity”, as argued by MACCANNELL (1999, 2000). He states that every interaction between the tourist and the attraction necessarily involves some
degree of staging, or contrived setting, and thus blocks the possibility of an authentic experience (ibid. (2000), p. 554).

Earlier on, MACCANNELL (2000, pp. 102-105) introduced the concept of “front and back stage” in tourist settings. According to him, the quest for authenticity is marked by the tourists’ struggle to move from front to back; i.e. from contrived tourist settings to the participation in the real way of living of a people. In practice, however, most tourist experiences take place in front regions designed to look as back regions, with short glimpses into back regions being rather the exception.

WAITT (2000, p. 836) and MCINTOSH/PRENTICE (1999, pp. 589-93) have argued that in Western societies, authenticity is often declared by politics and “experts”. When it comes to heritage and history, this is many times just one version of the truth, subject to the interests of the dominant party in society, and therefore, any representation of the “authentic” past cannot be separated from a particular knowledge or belief. MCINTOSH/PRENTICE (1999, p. 593) argue that “authenticity is exclusively culturally determined”.

Therefore, according to MCKERCHER/DU CROS (2002, p. 76) and BOYD (2001, p. 221), another point to consider is the “degree” of authenticity of the built environment that often serves as the basis for cultural heritage tourism. Cultural heritage assets are being altered, renovated, protected or even rebuilt as part of the conservation process. This is important to ensure that they convey their “feeling value” to tourists.

But as any form of tourism needs to commodify assets for the purpose of turning them into marketable goods, the question arises whether these assets do not cease to be “authentic” after all. The “authenticity dilemma”, as mentioned by MCKERCHER/DU CROS (2002, p. 76), WANG (2000, p. 45) and SWARBROOKE (1994, p. 225) refers to a situation where sites, to be experienced as authentic, must be “marked” for visitors, but the very process of marking these sites as authentic denies them the chance of being truly authentic.

For the scope of the present work, it is therefore interesting to consider authenticity from the viewpoint of demand, i.e. from a person’s individual perception of authenticity. As argued by COHEN (2004, p. 114), mass tourism
succeeds not because it is a “colossal deception”, but because the majority of tourists deal in concepts of authenticity that are fare looser than those of experts or heritage curators. This viewpoint is supported by McKERCHER/DU CROS (2002, p. 77), who have argued that the acknowledgement of authenticity also includes a cultural element. This means that any perception of authenticity moreover is dependant on the cultural background of the visitor to a heritage attraction.

The next paragraph deals with the relationship between authenticity and commodification in more detail.

4.2.1 Authenticity and Commodification in the Context of Cultural Heritage Tourism


In cultural heritage tourism, COHEN (2004, p. 111), SMITH (2003, p. 99) and GRABURN (2000, p. 91) argue that this leads to presenting only those images of the past that have broad appeal to the market. Cultural objects or performances are increasingly jeopardized by the so-called “acculturation” as part of the tourist activity in Western societies. This is also referred to as the “McDonaldisation” or “Disneyfication” of culture, expressing that the global tourism industry has down-turned culture and heritage into little more than a “commonly available good”.

According to XIE/WALL (2003, pp. 111-12), in the field of cultural tourism the term “commodification” has come to mean

“[…] situations in which a price is placed on artefacts or experiences which were previously not for sale so that cultural expressions become marketable tourism products.”
On the other hand, the same authors as well as COHEN (2004) have postulated that commodification of cultural expressions can also be interpreted as a means of identity creation, to sustain traditions and to achieve economic benefits from the tourist activity (Cohen (2004), pp. 112-14; Xie/Wall (2003), p. 112).

This balance arguably remains difficult to strike and is certainly subject to the context in which it is performed.

4.2.2 The Balance between Commodification and Conservation

DUROS (2001, p. 168) has presented a way around this dilemma by placing the priorities of management in cultural heritage tourism on a continuum between conservation and commodification. This relationship can be visualized by consulting the following matrix (see Figure 8) adapted from DUROS (ibid.). The Y-axis stands for “robusticity”, or conservation priority of the heritage attraction, as opposed to its commodification. The X-axis denotes the tourist potential, i.e. the “market appeal” of the attraction.

At this point, it is also useful to define what is mean by an “attraction”. According to LEW (2000, p. 36), no site or event is an attraction in itself: for it to draw tourists, it has to be marked as such. He argues that “the objects from which attractions are created are typically environmental and cultural resources” (ibid.). Anticipation and the tourist experience are furthermore crucial to building up successful attractions. Depending on their potential to attract tourists, the author differentiates between primary, secondary and tertiary attractions. These are used to create a competitive advantage of one destination over the other.

The following figure places heritage attractions along the continua of “robusticity” and “market appeal”.

Elena Paschinger
Figure 8: Cultural Heritage Attractions in a Tourism Environment

According to DU CROS (2001, pp. 168-69), heritage attractions that are placed within the fields A1 and A2 can therefore be said to be ideally suited for tourist purposes. They have high market appeal and moderate to high robusticity against being commodified. Places falling into the categories B1 and B2 have moderate to high market appeal, but low robusticity: They run the highest danger of becoming commodified through any form of tourist activity. Fields C1 and C2, she argues, relate to heritage attractions with moderate to high robusticity, but only limited market appeal. In this case, visitor numbers could either still be increased, or the place could remain as a secondary attraction. Finally, the last three fields (D1, D2 and D3) are referred to by DU CROS as a situation where there is really low appeal to market the heritage attraction for tourism purposes: The goal of these types of attractions could be to follow a purpose other than tourism, e.g. archaeological or scientific research.

Source: adapted from du Cros (2001), p. 168
4.3 Education and Entertainment – The Role of Interpretation

According to proceedings of the American conference on “Heritage Tourism for the Next Millennium” (Ratchford (1998), pp. 131-32), the origin of the concept of interpretation can be found in the US National Park System, dating back to the early 1950s. At the time, the report argues, instructing visitors in scientific fields such as nature and biology had been seen as an educational activity to enhance the recreational experience of the visitors. Interpretation is aimed at revealing meanings and relationships, and to make the tourist understand and appreciate a particular place or phenomenon (ibid.; Timothy/Boyd (2003), pp. 196-97).

This draws on the work of TILDEN (1977, quoted in Smith (2003), pp. 83-84), who argues that “[…] rather than simply to communicate factual information, […] the chief aim of interpretation is not instruction but provocation.”

Therefore, interpretation is about creating meanings and provoking a reaction as part of the tourist experience. In a further thought, this involves the controversy of educating or entertaining the tourist – arguably a well debated topic in the context of cultural heritage tourism.

However, with what has been termed as the “heritagisation” of the past (Smith (2003), pp. 81-82) and the arrival of the “heritage industry” (i.e. the past being commodified and sold to the visitor according to BOYD (2003, p. 192)), aspects of the heritage product do now contain both of these elements seamlessly. This is also referred to earlier by SWARBROOKE (1994, p. 225) as the notion of “edutainment” in tourism and leisure studies. While some argue that “edutainment” has reduced the quality of the heritage experience, other authors like SWARBROOKE believe “you cannot teach unless you entertain”. 
A question arising when investigating interpretation and the tourist experience is whether tourists are really willing to be taught. Schouten (1995, pp. 21-22) argues that tourists are essentially looking for pleasure experiences and might only be partly interested in historical reality as such. He exemplifies this point by arguing that tourists feel deceived once an interpreter rejects “their” idea of how things could have been in the past when there is “no scientific evidence” for their conclusions. According to him, another barrier between the tourist and the interpreter is the fact that information received is processed through what is called a person’s “cognitive structure”. This indicates that only this information gets filtered that fits with a certain person’s knowledge, or concept, around him.

To give a recent example from the European Summer School on World Heritage (Papathanassiou-Zuhrt/Sakellaridis (2006), n.p.a.), the high-density World Heritage Site Nea Moni in Chios, Greece, has recently applied an approach to interpreting their Byzantine heritage by focusing on “tourism value”. Based on the authors of the study, this approach is based essentially on cognitive elements and a person’s ability to process new information, especially as it relates to a heritage context other than one’s own. The interpretational measures they have used include an involvement of all the senses and encourage active questioning and participation on the part of the visitor. Thus, the tourist’s empathy for a different cultural and religious background other than his or her own has positively been influenced. The project, as reported by the authors, has proved to be a great success in improving visitor accessibility to this specific World Heritage Site.

As underlined by ICOMOS/WTO (1993, p. 49) in their Site Manager’s Handbook for World Heritage Sites, successful interpretation and presentation techniques of a heritage resource begin with effective planning and management. It argues that key questions such as who the visitors to the site are, what their motivations are, and how management shall go about answering these, need to be answered first when it comes to successfully building a bridge between the tourist and the specific features of the heritage site.
BOYD (2002, p. 222) suggests that one of the key distinctions between heritage tourism and other forms of tourism is the specific and greater willingness to learn on the part of the tourist, which is best assured by detailed on-site information and vividly created historical accounts.

Therefore, according to authors such as SMITH (2003, pp. 83-84) and SCHOUTEN (1995, p. 28), one of the key words in heritage interpretation is experience, and if possibly, involving all the senses. They claim that the entertainment function of interpretation can therefore no longer be neglected.

4.3.2 Sustainable Development and ‘Mindful Tourists’

According to a second proceeding of the American conference on “Heritage Tourism for the Next Millennium” (Ratchford (1998), pp. 133-35), all types of tourists are pleasure seekers. They value experiences on the basis of how much they have enjoyed themselves. In this way, tourists appreciate what is presented to them – be it a foreign culture, an ancient monument or a certain way of living – through interpretation. Information creates understanding; understanding creates appreciation, and so on. The report therefore argues that interpretation is key to the heritage experience; it might yet be regarded as the heritage product itself. Especially when interpretation is assured by local people, another important and yet familiar issue is at stake: the enhancement of authenticity. Therefore, it is argued, interpretation can also act as a means of moving towards a more honest, sustainable development.

This latter view on achieving sustainability through adequate interpretation is also stressed by MOSCARDO (2001, p. 13) in discussing the role of interpretation in sustainable cultural and heritage tourism. The only common criticism refers to a situation where visitors arrive with sufficient historical or cultural background of the heritage attraction, and no pre-determined interpretations: arguably quite a rare situation. In this case, MOSCARDO (ibid.) and TIMOTHY/BOYD (2003, p. 195) argue
that visitors are no longer able to derive their own meanings and understandings of the heritage presented to them.

Much of these problems occur due to the fact that interpretation is seen as a one-way flow of knowledge from the interpreter to the visitor, denying him the possibility to decide what is “true” or “false” (Crang (1996), p. 416). An alternative consideration of “responsive” visitors is provided by MOSCARDO (2001, pp. 13-15) and TIMOTHY/BOYD (2003, pp. 198-200). These authors have classified visitors into being either “mindless” or “mindful”. **Mindful visitors** are able to make sense of what is being presented to them, and to actively question new information and their meaning in the context of the heritage experience. They are flexible and interactive, and eager to fill the knowledge gaps that are presented by the interpreter. This should even go as far as to encourage speculation, underlining SCHOUTEN’s prior statement that interpretation should actively involve visitors and allow their own ideas in the creation of the heritage experience.

Having dealt with central issues to cultural and heritage tourism, such as authenticity, commodification or interpretation, it is now important to place them in the actual context of supply and demand in cultural heritage tourism. The following section will therefore focus on product development and the marketing of cultural heritage attractions, whereas the latter one will come up with the characteristics of demand in cultural heritage tourism.

### 4.4 Product Development and Marketing

Since cultural and heritage tourism involves the consumption of cultural products, it is first important to understand what a product is. According to KOTLER (1989, n.p.a. quoted in McKercher/du Cros (2000), p. 103), a product can be defined in marketing terms as “[…] anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a need or want.”
According to McKERCHER/DU CROS (2002, p. 103) and SMITH (2000, p. 461), tourism products typically consist of a tangible, or core element, and a symbolic or peripheral element. Another model suggests three different elements: core, tangible, and augmented. In this model, it is argued that the core product is about satisfying the basic need of the tourist through the experience consumed. The tangible product represents the service that is purchased, and the augmented product provides the additional features and thus adds value to the experience.

Ultimately, in tourism, SMITH (2000, p. 462) argues that there is neither a homogeneous product, nor a common production process, since many different players make up the “tourism industry”. The consumer, in any case, is an integral part in the production and consumption of the tourist experience. Therefore, SMITH equals the tourist product with the tourist experience.

In the context of cultural and heritage tourism, this is expressed using the simple model (see Figure 9) designed by MOSCARDO (2001).

Figure 9: A simple Model of Cultural and Heritage Tourism Production

This model suggests that the tourist product or experience is only created after an interaction, such as interpretation, with the heritage resource. Furthermore, the
outcome is influenced by the tourist’s prior knowledge, his earlier interpretation of the heritage resource and his motivation to the experience.

This is important when considering tourist product development in the context of cultural heritage tourism, since usually there is a certain reluctance on the part of management to consider cultural heritage assets as “products” (McKercher/du Cros (2002, pp. 104). The same authors claim that adopting a consumer-based marketing approach however is vital to the success of any actual heritage product. This becomes clear when looking at sites that are either overcrowded or suffer from too low visitation. In either case, management and planning actions are needed to control the visitor experience and to minimize impacts (ibid., pp. 104-106).

4.4.1 The Challenge of Marketing Heritage for Tourism Purposes

Following the International Conference on Cultural Tourism organized by the World Tourism Organization (2001, pp. 7-8), it is argued that in marketing cultural tourism, the needs and wants of the consumer should be taken into account when designing or updating a product. Tourists travelling to experience the culture of a certain region or country are prepared to live rich and interactive experiences with the host community, and are therefore a key ingredient to any successful tourist product development and marketing strategy.

The key words of this report are (ibid., p. 8):

- Experience-based;
- Customer-focused;
- Technological facilitation;
- Ability to solve problems;
- High sense of ethics.
The last point in this enumeration, however, is still subject to further research and on-going debate as to whether it is “bad for business” or “too moralistic and idealistic” a consideration, as Fennell (2006, pp. 12-13) points out in his work on Tourism Ethics.

Further implications in the marketing context of heritage attractions are named by Austin (2002, p. 455) to be prior visitor expectations, their individual emotional affinity to what is presented, and inter-visitor relationships. Marketing, according to him, should therefore always play a role in ensuring that various levels of learning opportunities and experiences can take place.

At this point, it is helpful to consider the following model developed from Herbert (2001, p. 316):

**Figure 10: Heritage as a Product in the Context of Marketing**

![Figure 10: Heritage as a Product in the Context of Marketing](image)

Source: based on Herbert (2001), p. 316

It describes the interaction between the heritage resource, the product and the market by focusing on the relation between the latter two. Key issues such as matching the needs of the respective visitor segment and the interpretational facilities have to be addressed, resulting in the overall question of how to interact.

Returning to the overall concept of product development in cultural tourism, McKercher/Du Cros (2002, pp. 107-09) have claimed that adopting a marketing approach is not only vital for successful visitor management, but also for the party
interested in presenting the product, or cultural heritage asset. According to the authors, this way of thinking helps managers to define the core product, or benefit, of the attraction themselves and consequently the chance to target the “right” type of visitors: those whose needs are in line with the benefits provided from visiting the specific attraction. If this is not explicitly done, it is argued that tourists will arrive at their own conclusions or experience of the product, which may not necessarily be in the best interest of the cultural heritage manager. Therefore, target marketing, consequent planning and “product positioning” (Mazanec (2000), p. 464) are necessary concerns of successful cultural heritage management. The conclusion is that this will help to leave visitors satisfied with their experience and provide for sustainable, well-managed use of the heritage resource.

Additionally, SWARBROOKE (2001, n.p.a.) has identified the following four points for the marketing of heritage attractions:

- Marketing should make use of the latest technology, i.e. the Internet, but ensure that the medium does not compromise the message. Alternatively, the Internet should be seen as a means to providing up-to-date information and pre-booking facilities.

- It should involve the local community, i.e. local decision-makers, whose story is being presented in the attraction.

- It should lay emphasis on the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) and the “Wow-Factor” of the attraction.

- It should focus on “relationship marketing” and increased market segmentation in favour of psychographic segmentation, as opposed to traditional demographic or geographic segmentation.

Earlier in this paper, it was argued that not all heritage attractions are homogeneous. Indeed, heritage itself is a complex commodity, and leads to going beyond the conventional marketing mix for marketing purposes. Apart from Product, Price, Place or Promotion, the remaining three P’s in heritage marketing are (Boyd (2003), pp. 190-93):
• **People:** As already argued by **Austin** (2002) and **Smith** (2000), people are a necessary ingredient to the consumption of the tourist product. This is all the more true in cultural heritage tourism. The ‘people’ element suggests placing additional value on the dimension of experience.

• **Programming, cluster development or attraction bundling:** This component is essentially about packaging together certain elements of a heritage product or experience and market them together, e.g. in a themed festival or series of events.

• **Partnerships, collaboration and network development:** The focus in this concept is to ensure a long-term focus among different stakeholder groups, from community initiatives to government associations, in order to ensure sustainability and a long-term vision in planning, development and marketing.

### 4.4.2 Developing Cultural Tourism Products or Attractions

Based on the practical work of **McKercher/du Cros** in reconciling tourism with cultural heritage management and their numerous publications and research undertaken in the field, their work will serve as the basis for the upcoming points on tourist product development in the context of cultural heritage tourism.

Like **Lew** (2000, p. 36), **McKercher/du Cros** (2002, pp. 109-10) have distinguished three types of attractions in this context: (1) primary, (2) secondary and (3) tertiary attractions. Primary attractions, they argue, are global icons like the Pyramids of Gizeh or the Great Wall of China; strong demand generators featuring high up on a visiting agenda. Most attractions in the cultural tourism sector, however, fall in the latter two categories: visits to them are triggered only after tourists visit the region or town, either consciously (in the case of secondary attractions) or unconsciously, that is by mere coincidence (tertiary attractions). Interestingly enough, it is argued that one type of attraction could mean all three things, depending on the visitor and his background and motivation to visit.
The question remains of how cultural heritage assets can be turned into cultural tourism products. Based on McKERCHER/DU CROS (2002), the following points will give an overview of some of the basic strategies.

4.4.2.1 Creating a Primary Attraction

This may be the dream of any local community interested in developing its cultural heritage. However, means are often short-cut by other type of interests. Wherever communities lack existing heritage resources or funds to turn these into primary attractions, purpose-built theme parks with a focus on heritage could be constructed involving private sector funding. Despite them being less authentic, they could work for a certain clientele and by focusing on a quality experience. (ibid., pp. 111-12)

4.4.2.2 Bundling

Using this approach to product development, different products are grouped or ‘bundled’ together to create a new, more appealing product benefiting both the market and individual suppliers. This is very common in tourism, and encouraging sustainable practices since visitors are enticed to continue their visit throughout the destination and not only by visiting simply one or two attractions. (ibid., p. 112)

4.4.2.3 Linear or Circular Tours and Heritage Networks

Linear or circular touring routes linking many different communities through a commonly created theme can create a strong reason to visit a certain destination. They have the potential to be turned into a primary attraction, too. (ibid., pp. 113-14)
This can go from the famous “Camino de Santiago” all the way throughout Europe to a more secular theme like the Apple Road in Styria to promote some of the region’s traditions and local heritage.

4.4.2.4 Festivals and Events

These two types of attractions can be re-named short duration primary attractions, since they are punctual and often draw on a large number of visitors. In addition, there is a strong potential that they become branded products in their own right. Therefore, they can create positive effects for the local community and enhance a destination’s status (McKercher/du Cros (2002), p. 114).

4.4.3 The Tourist in Product and Attraction Development

Arguably, according to McKERCHER/DU CROS (ibid., pp. 119-22), all tourists seek some degree of change while travelling. To a certain extent, they are willing to be exposed to new types of experiences. However, not all tourists are alike in their motivation to leave their familiar world behind and become exposed to a new environment and a different way of living. At the core of this concept, as explained by the authors, is the so-called “environmental bubble”, a kind of “safety blanket” that protects tourists from the risk factors associated with new and unexpected experiences while on holiday. In cultural tourism, creating this environmental bubble is in part achieved by the product development measures as described above, namely bundling, concentrating usage or designing festivals and events. To a certain extent, it is argued that this helps to facilitate the consumption of the experience and to reduce “strangeness” (Urry (1990), n.p.a. quoted in McKercher/du Cros (2002), p. 120) when tourists are confronted with something new during their vacation. While this might lead to think that tourists are ignorant and prefer to remain in their environmental bubble, McKERCHER/DU CROS (ibid.)
argue that “strangeness reduction” can also create some positive benefits for both the customer and the supplier in cultural heritage tourism. On the part of the visitor, it means reduced risk, better enjoyment, knowing what to expect and even better understanding and confidence of the experience since the context of where to place it is clear. The attraction itself benefits by increased efficiency and introduction of a certain degree of standardisation that facilitates control and better management. Finally, “reducing strangeness” will help to appeal to a broader market base, since sensitive commodification can lead to catering to the needs of more disparate visitor groups and needs.

To sum up, the following figure (see Figure 11) is aimed at illustrating the ingredients of successful product development in cultural heritage tourism while keeping in mind the needs and requirements of the customer:

Figure 11: Elements that make up successful Cultural Heritage Products

Additionally, McKercher/Du Cros (2002), pp. 128-34) have developed the following tactics that can assist in the transformation of a cultural heritage asset into a cultural tourism product:

- **Make the asset a myth**: This involves marketing the extraordinary of a certain place or heritage attraction, the special feature for which tourists come to see the asset. A parallel exists with the tangible dimension of a tourist product: the expected experience people come to enjoy.

- **Make a story around the asset**: This is an effective means of connecting to tourists. Be the story based on fiction or historical evidence, it certainly helps to create understanding and mutual benefit and is an important part of heritage interpretation.

- **Emphasize its difference**: This tactic has gained awareness especially in ethnic tourism. The tourist experience is successful as long as the Other still relates to his frame of reference, i.e. as long as he is able to rank and appreciate the difference in experience.

- **Link the past to the present**: This point helps in avoiding the danger of “fossilising” the past, bearing no or only little resemblance to the present and actual demands of visitors.

- **Make the asset a triumph, a spectacle and a fantasy**: Again, this involves featuring the outstanding and the spectacular over other, more mundane aspects of the heritage attraction. Providing for fantasy tales also appeals to tourists wishing to escape reality.

- **Wrap it up in fun and entertainment**: The majority of people visiting cultural heritage sites are not engaged in a deep learning experience. They like to enjoy themselves and look for something interesting to do while on holiday. If properly seized and managed, this is a chance to get an important part of the cultural heritage message across to the customer.

Over the last few paragraphs, it has constantly been shown that cultural tourism production and the tourist experience have developed to be intrinsically linked.
Therefore, another remaining point to deal with in considering today’s issues in cultural heritage tourism is to take a closer look at the demand side and find out whether “experience” really is at the centre of today’s forms of cultural and heritage tourism.

4.5 The Characteristics of Demand in the Context of Cultural Heritage Tourism

In their study about the major constraints and imperatives relating to the long-term management of built heritage attractions, Garrod/Fyall (2000, p. 686) identify several criteria that make up successful heritage attractions, those being:

- Inexpensive and visitor-friendly;
- Physically and intellectually accessible;
- Balance between the needs of the visitors and the need for conservation;
- Authenticity and integrity;
- Value for money.

Looking at the above enumeration, all of the elements identified relate directly or indirectly to the visitor, placing him at the core of what is deemed heritage tourism. Arguably, however, there are always two sides to a story. Timothy/Boyd (2003) have written about both the supply and the demand perspective in heritage tourism, where the first one concerns the range of different heritage attractions on display, and the second one the characteristics of the demand for visiting such heritage places. Demand for heritage-related experiences is set to grow in relation with the proliferation of the “heritage industry”. However, there is a need to look at what exactly constitutes this demand.
4.5.1 Changing Points of View

Traditional characteristics of demand for heritage tourism have long focused on socio-demographic and motivational criteria, attributing “heritage tourists” a certain age, education, income, social status, willingness to learn, etc. (Prentice et al. (1998); Richards (1996); Swarbrooke (1994)).

However, with the advent of the so-called “experience economy” (Pine and Gilmore (1999)), there is a need to reconsider this traditional way of pigeon-holing tourists.

Following a study conducted by Prentice, Witt and Hamer (1998, p. 1), the core product of tourism is the beneficial experience gained from it. In their main conclusions, the authors (ibid., pp. 15-20) state that the same tourist product might be experienced in different ways, hence a necessity to address the various dimensions of experience that are found in today’s visitors at heritage attractions. New visitor segmentation techniques do apply, which in turn can lead to the identification of specific product features for the benefit of target marketing.

This view is taken up by Voase (2003, pp. 257-60), who sees changes in the way the “new visitor” experiences attractions as a result of what is termed “cultural post-modernization” (Urry (1990), n.p.a quoted in Voase (2003), p. 257). As the travelling population becomes more informed, he argues that alternative interest groups emerge in favour of traditional categories such as nation states, class or gender. They challenge the way tourists are depicted, which furthermore has changed the way tourists consume attractions: “object authenticity” or the inherent meanings of physical objects, as discussed in previous sections, is abandoned in favour of meanings created at the very point of the consumption of the experience.
4.5.2 Emphasis on Demand and the Personal Heritage Experience

In a series of research papers, PORIA, BUTLER and AIREY (2003, 2004, 2006) have argued that heritage tourism is essentially a phenomenon based on demand, i.e. based on the tourists’ perceptions of certain site attributes rather than the attributes themselves. Those who perceive the site as part of their own heritage are at the heart of what is called heritage tourism, as opposed to those visitors coming for a learning experience or simply “because the attraction is there” (Poria et al. (2003), p. 247). Their argument is therefore in sharp contrast with traditional views of heritage tourism for which heritage and the heritage tourist product is the core of the attraction (Swarbrooke (1994), p. 222).

In the 2003 research paper (Poria et al. (2003), pp. 244-50), it is argued that a distinction needs to be made between “heritage tourists” and “tourists at heritage places”, implying that there are two main markets for demand in a heritage tourism setting: those who come for a learning experience and to be entertained (well-known motivations for visiting according to CRANG (1996)), or those who come to be personally and emotionally involved in an experience. These tourists are different from the first ones in terms of their behaviour, i.e. in their intention to revisit and their average length of stay.

Similarly, in a study conducted by the same authors in 2004 (ibid., p. 24), tourist motivation or demand for heritage has been found to be based on the involvement in a:

- Recreational Experience;
- Cultural and Educational Experience;
- Heritage and Emotional Experience.

PORIA ET AL. (2004, pp. 25-27) hence suggest that there are three main reasons for visiting a heritage site. The first one has to do with tourists wishing to be entertained, to have “a good day out”, to see a world-famous site or simply to relax. The second and third reasons have something in common, but are different
on the grounds of perception. Those visitors looking for a cultural or educational experience are motivated by a desire to learn, the physical attributes of the site and its background. The other ones, it is argued, are looking for a personalized heritage experience as a means to achieve an emotional involvement with the site. This has clear implications for the management of heritage sites, particularly where marketing and interpretation is concerned. There could be more of an effort made not just to educate visitors, but to provide for an emotional involvement during the visit.

In a later report, PORIA ET AL. (2006, pp. 324-25) claim that emphasis needs therefore to be put on the link between the tourist and the heritage site, rather than taking the two of them separately. Different tourists should be provided with different experiences: some want to be emotionally involved and educated, whereas others simply want to relax and pursue a less serious activity. This may be done by having different guides at the same site. As far as overall motivation is concerned, it was found that visiting a heritage attraction is more correlated with learning as opposed to mere leisure pursuit, indicating a priority in the spectrum of visitors to a heritage site.

The last point to deal with in the context of cultural heritage tourism is sustainability and ways to achieving sustainable development. Indeed, it can be argued that it is the only viable form of tourism in the future, and clearly at stake where an environment as sensitive as heritage is concerned.

4.6 Sustainable Development

Perhaps the most challenging, but arguably the most honest starting point for the discussion on sustainability in tourism is to admit that “the best tourism can ever achieve is a move towards sustainability, though never fully achieving it” (Butler (2005), p. 41). The debate starts over what is considered as “sustainable tourism”. The term “sustainable development” has been introduced in 1987 with a publication of the World Commission for Environment and Development (WCED),

According to WALSH ET AL. (2001, pp. 196-97), traditional definitions of sustainable tourism have been expanded to include concern for cultural and community diversity as well as fairness and stability. Local residents need to be involved in planning, development and implementation of this over-arching principle in tourism (Cole (2006), p. 630), since in many cases, they are what constitutes the tourist experience. WALSH ET AL. (ibid., pp. 197) argue that they are the pillar of creating local identity and the so-called “sense of a place”, represented by what is unique and therefore worth conserving.

“Empowerment”, according to COLE (ibid., p. 640), represents the top ladder in the participation process of the local community in sustainable development. She claims that local people have to be given the chance to understand tourism as well as the needs and wants of tourists, and to consider their development options.

Furthermore, as suggested by WALSH ET AL. (ibid., pp. 200-12), sustainable tourism should always be inscribed in an ethical framework, where social equity can be achieved through stakeholder collaboration or so-called “societal marketing”: marketing that takes into account not only the needs of the visitors, but also addresses the well-being of the host community. The importance of authenticity is also underlined in this context, since it creates a degree of respect and appreciation of the uniqueness of a certain destination.

This is supported by BOYD (2001, p. 195), arguing that for a product in the heritage context to remain sustainable, it should focus on:

- Authenticity of product and experience;
- The provision of a learning environment where interaction is stimulated;
- Conservation and protection of resources;
- Partnerships between visitors, managers and stakeholders.
4.6.1 Principles of Sustainable Tourism Development

It is important to state at this point that sustainable tourism is not a special or discrete form of tourism, but rather an overall, guiding principle in the development of all forms of tourism. In a collaborative report between the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the World Tourism Organisation (UNEP/WTO (2005), p. 12), sustainable tourism is defined as:

“[…] tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”

Worldwide, according to both organisations (ibid., pp. 2-3), tourism has grown by 25% in the last ten years, summing up about 10 per cent of the world’s global economy. Since, however, the tourism industry is very fragmented, considerable coordination effort is required on the part of local and national governments in moving it towards sustainability. Its main principles emphasise local determination and the implementation of measurable policies and actions.

The following figure (see Figure 12) shows an integrative model of environmentally, economically and socially sustainable tourism. It argues that for tourism to become sustainable, three main conditions need to be fulfilled (ibid., p. 20):

- It must be environmentally sound;
- It must be socially responsible;
- It must be economically viable.
4.6.2 Sustainable Development in the Context of Cultural Heritage Tourism

Returning to the context of cultural heritage tourism, DU CROS (2001, p. 166) argues that first of all, two main questions have to be answered in considering sustainable tourism: (1) Which are the most appropriate cultural heritage places to be developed and marketed for tourism? (2) What is the best way to manage them in a sustainable manner? The answers to these questions are arguably subject to debate. However, the model that was developed earlier in this chapter (see Figure
8) can help to pinpoint the tourism potential of a site and to take further management actions in line with the principles of sustainable development.

TIMOTHY/BOYD (2003, pp. 178-80) have hinted towards the creation of a sustainable heritage tourism development framework, involving principles, planning and management considerations. The key principles in this framework are authenticity, interpretation, access to heritage as well as inter- and intra-generational dialogue and equity. Planning, they argue, should focus on long-term conservation benefits, whereas management is there to ensure the implementation of zoning plans and acceptable limits of use, i.e. its social and environmental carrying capacity. Furthermore, it should take on a participatory approach, i.e. involving and “educating” the visitor so as to ensure a certain degree of respect towards the site.

Finally, GARROD/FYALL (2000, pp. 683-85) challenge why yet so little academic attention has been paid to the relationship between heritage tourism and sustainability, since, generally speaking, both of them deal in conserving assets of the past (or present) for future generations. They argue that one sustainable strategy for heritage tourism is by applying the “user pays principle” (ibid., p. 684). Not only are admission prices a means to generate the so-much needed funds to sustain (built) heritage, they can also help to limit and control visitor numbers at places already threatened by severe overcrowding at peak times. Arguably, it is admitted that this can lead to negative impressions such as the commodification of an asset for tourism and the possible non-attendance of the local population, who are not willing to pay for what they consider needs to be freely accessible.

4.7 Summary

The previous chapter has provided relevant information for the understanding of the most important issues in cultural heritage tourism. Several important points could have been retained, such as the shift in the perception of authenticity away
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from an object-related to a subjective, personal one, or the balance between commodification and conservation of cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the importance of the tourist experience has been underlined both in the context of interpretation as well as in the context of demand.

The last point has dealt with the principles of sustainable development, both generally and within the context of the present research area.

It has therefore provided for a useful discussion of the theoretical concepts that are to provide the basis for the upcoming two case study analyses.
5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at explaining the research methodology used in order to arrive at the findings of this thesis. As already mentioned in the Introduction, the thesis follows a qualitative research approach, which is expressed in the use of two case studies as well as a focus group discussion.

According to CARSON ET AL. (2001, p. 65), the qualitative research methodology is best useful when seeking an in-depth understanding of a certain situation. Although the use of qualitative research methods limits the thesis' findings from being generalised, quantitative data alone would never have produced such a volume of information, especially where the particular situation of the two abbeys used for case study analysis is concerned. This also holds true for the focus group discussion, whose methodology is explained in more detail later on in this chapter.

The following section is dedicated to an outline of the case study research, explaining both its design, the methods used for data collection as well as the procedure for analysis.

5.2 Case Studies

The case study research method has proven to be the most suitable method for the purpose of discussing the two practical examples in this thesis since according to YIN (1993, p. 31), it enables the researcher to study a particular phenomenon within the very context of its occurrence.

For the scope of the following two case studies that have been used for analysis, this translates into studying several phenomena in the local context of cultural and
heritage tourism to Mont Saint Michel and its abbey in France as well as Stift Melk in the Wachau valley in Austria.

Based on a later work from Yin (2002, pp. 19-21) and Veal (2006, p. 111), a research design is needed in the first place to ensure the case study research meets tests of validity and reliability. This acts as a plan to make sure the evidence collected addresses the initial research questions by focusing on data collection methods and ways to interpret the findings.

5.2.1 Research Design

The research questions that are to guide the structure of the present case study research are listed in the following. They are in accordance with the theoretical issues that have been developed over the course of the last chapter and ultimately aim at providing an answer to the research question laid down in the first chapter.

- Which tourist products exist in the context of this World Heritage Site? How are they developed, and what are their characteristics?
- How is cultural heritage marketing done at the site? What are the most important characteristics and results?
- How is the heritage presented made accessible to the public through interpretation? In how far does it focus on demand and the tourist experience?
- What are the characteristics of demand? How can they be used to stimulate further, sustainable tourist product development?
- What are the levels of commodification at the site? What is done to enhance its authenticity?
- What are the approaches to sustainable development at the site as well as its immediate surroundings? How can this relate to and integrate the above-mentioned issues?
5.2.2 Methods for Data Collection

As stressed by Yin (2002, p. 85), using multiple, not just single sources of evidence, and maintaining a logical chain of thinking from the initial questions to the research findings, is primordial for producing high quality case studies. This is supported by Veal (2006, p. 108), who argues that the variety of data sources (both quantitative and qualitative) is a key feature of the case study method.

In order to find answers to the before-listed research questions, the research on the two cases has focused on three main sources of evidence:

- Documentation;
- Expert Interviews;
- Direct Observation.

It is important to note that all data has been collected with the prior agreement of the person or organization involved.

The documentation mainly contains items such as internal reports, documents, press releases, visitor surveys, quantitative data (statistics), selected editions from newspapers, guide books, brochures and little booklets. This has been useful to provide answers mainly with regards to product development, marketing, characteristics of demand and approaches to sustainable development at the particular World Heritage Site concerned.

Furthermore, three expert interviews have been conducted: two of them in the case of Mont Saint Michel, and one of them at the Abbey of Melk. According to Meuser/Nagel (2005, p. 72), expert interviews are suitable to generate in-depth accounts of a person's beliefs, understandings, experiences and practices in the organisational context the person is situated in. The status of an expert is assigned by the researcher, depending on the specific research focus. In general, it is argued that experts are those who have a privileged access to information as well as contextual knowledge about a certain topic or process (ibid., p. 73).
Methodology

As for the expert interviews concerning Mont Saint Michel, one of them took place directly on-site, at the Mont Saint Michel Tourist Office. The other one was held in Paris with the Responsible of the regions Normandy and Bretagne for the National Cultural Monuments Organization MONUM that manages the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel for tourism. Both persons were assigned the role of an expert based on their long experience in dealing with the Mont Saint Michel, either through its representation at the tourist office or at the national cultural organization MONUM. The two interviews were conducted in November last year, 2006. This was due to the reason that the author stayed in France for a period of six months, spending her second practical training semester in Paris.

Finally, the expert interview in the case of Stift Melk was held in March 2007 following two earlier, exploratory interviews held in May 2006 and January 2007. Pater Martin, who is in the charge of the department of “Kultur & Tourismus” at the Abbey of Melk has been assigned the role of an expert in this case, based on his long-time experience of dealing with cultural tourism at the abbey.

In addition, the support of another expert could have been prompted from this interview. Since one of the goals of this thesis is to focus on a practical example for sustainable tourism development in the case of the Abbey of Melk (see side note 7.9.1 of this thesis), the expert interview with Pater Martin could have been extended to include comments made by the building master of this project, Mr Griebaum, in a separate discussion between the two speakers and the author. This discussion took about 20 minutes and has been recorded and transcribed separately, following prior agreement of both experts. Presented in a side note under Chapter 7, the findings from this “expert discussion” explain the sustainable development action that lies in opening up the “Nordbastei”, the former defensive tower at the northern gate into the abbey, for tourism. This integrates issues of product development, demand orientation and sustainable development. Mr Griebaum is therefore considered an expert for his knowledge on the building work of the “Nordbastei”. His insights are of special importance to this work.

9 The exploratory interviews have supported the development of additional in-depth questions in the creation of the interview guideline for the expert interview in March 2007.
Methodology

All expert interviews have been conducted using a partly structured interview guideline.\textsuperscript{10} Core sections relating to the key issues in cultural heritage tourism have been established, resulting in observational criteria relevant for the evaluation of the single expert interviews (Meuser/Nagel (2005), p. 82). Individual questions relating to the specific context of each respondent have been raised additionally where appropriate, increasing the depth of the findings. All respondents have been sent an outline of the main questions outline so as to guarantee for the preciseness and value of the responses. Research ethics were adhered to and all experts agreed for the interview to be digitally recorded, enabling a later transcription of the interview. During this process, transcription rules have constantly been maintained.\textsuperscript{11}

The aim of these expert interviews was to go into an in-depth discussion of the above-mentioned research questions. They proved to be a very valuable source of information for the scope of the above mentioned research questions.

Finally, direct observation has been used as a research tool to a limited extent, following a two-day excursion to the Mont Saint Michel at the end of November 2006 as well as several visits to Stift Melk in May 2006, January 2007 and March 2007. These findings mainly relate to the on-site perception of authenticity and commodification as well as ways of interpreting and marketing cultural heritage at Mont Saint Michel following an active participation in several of the guided tours available in both sites.

\textbf{5.2.3 Analysis}

The following two chapters are dedicated to the findings of the case study analysis. They are guided according to the research questions that have been developed earlier in this section, which in turn are based on the theoretical findings

\textsuperscript{10} See interview guidelines in Appendix I.
\textsuperscript{11} See transcription rules in Appendix III.
presented in Chapter 4. The results from the case study analysis have been extracted from the resources available based on their practical relevance for each of the aspects dealt with. The interpretation of the findings is therefore based upon quoting the relevant source of information as it relates to the case study research questions. Care has been taken to ensure a substantial variety of sources so as to provide for as objective an analysis as possible.

In this way, the issues in cultural heritage tourism described in Chapter 4 are challenged on their practical relevance for the two World Heritage Sites. As the current situations at Mont Saint Michel and Stift Melk are depicted, the objective of the following two chapters is to move towards finding possible answers to the research question laid down in Chapter 1. Conclusive evidence on this is to be gained from the comparative SWOT analysis and competence areas in Chapter 8.

### 5.3 Focus Group Discussion

According to the leading public opinion and attitude survey research company in the United States (Responsive Management (2007), n.p.a.), “focus groups are an established and accepted research technique for qualitative explorations of attitudes, opinions, perceptions, motivations, constraints and behaviours”. They are conducted in a small group of participants, which normally range from six to ten people. Participants are interviewed at length about a number of selected topics, allowing for probing, extensive follow-up questions and increased understanding through the possibility of interaction with the moderator.

CARSON ET AL. (2001, p. 114) argue that “group interaction” is the distinguishing feature of focus groups, as are depth of understanding and flexibility. Their use as a research methodology is further justified by the possibility to collect information, to create an in-depth understanding of a certain situation, and to show flexibility.

According to VEAL (2006, p. 138), the role of the moderator is crucial for the results of a focus group discussion. He is there to ensure the discussion stays within the designed parameters and rather becomes the discussion’s “facilitator” than its
direct moderator. This leads to focus groups being “non-directive group discussions [allowing to expose] spontaneous attitudes of small groups” (Responsive Management (2007), n.p.a.).

The reasoning for including a focus group discussion into this thesis comes from the fact that, while considering issues of product development, marketing or interpretation at (World) heritage sites, there is a specific need to look at the characteristics of demand. As stated in the literature review (see Chapter 4), the tourist experience is crucial to the success of any product being offered. Some authors, like SMITH (2000, p. 462), even argue that the tourist product equals the tourist experience. On the one hand, the focus group discussion therefore serves as a tool to explore the needs and wants of potential visitors to heritage attractions such as Mont Saint Michel or Stift Melk. On the other hand, its use is justified by discussing all the issues that have been identified for the case study research. The following section deals with the research design of the focus group discussion.

5.3.1 Focus Group Design

The first step in the focus group design, according to CARSON ET AL. (2001, p. 117) is to express the issue as a concise question for discussion. In a second step, they argue, the number of participants, the length of the session, their location and timing as well as the recruitment of the participants needs to be fixed.

The purpose of the focus group discussion in this thesis is twofold: First of all, it is aimed at answering the following central question:

- What are the characteristics (expectations, attitudes, needs and wants) of demand with regards to cultural heritage attractions such as Mont Saint Michel or Stift Melk, and how can they be integrated into sustainable product development?
In answering this question, the discussion relies on the fact that each participant is a potential visitor to those attractions and has already had experience in visiting similar attractions or perhaps even one of the two used in this thesis.

Second, it serves as a tool to discuss the other key issues that have been dealt with over the course of literature review and the two case studies used for applied research: authenticity, heritage interpretation, product development, marketing and sustainable development. The reason for including these aspects in the discussion was to elucidate the participants’ point of view on these topics, thereby trying to provide answers to any open questions that have been identified over the course of literature or applied case study research.

### 5.3.2 Setting up and Conducting the Focus Group Discussion

A total of six participants have been recruited for this discussion. On the basis of socio-demographic characteristics, they differ with regards to age, gender occupation and income. However, all of them share a common interest in the field of cultural heritage tourism, and it is the “variety of their opinions” (Carson et al. (2001), p. 119) that has been sought for gaining a better understanding of the specific issues at hand.

The focus group discussion took place in Krems at the office building of the TTG (Tourismus Technologie GmbH). The meeting room of the company has been made available for this discussion, so as to provide for a work-like surrounding.

The moderator of the discussion was the author of the thesis herself. Her purpose was to introduce the main topics and questions described in the focus group design in such a way that all participants are prompted to respond. The challenge lay in balancing opinions of dominant participants with those of introvert or private thinkers (Carson et al. (2001), p. 123).

Additionally, three topics served to trigger discussion before starting off with the main topics. They were concerned with a rather general discussion on cultural
tourism and the characteristics of cultural tourists, tourism and religion-based heritage attractions as well as the topic of World Heritage.

The focus group was conducted in German language, since all participants are local inhabitants of Krems and the surroundings. Research ethics were adhered to and the entire discussion has been digitally recorded following the agreement of all participants. During the later transcription, all the required transcription rules have been applied.\textsuperscript{12}

5.3.3 Analysis

The analysis of the focus group discussion has followed a thematic coding process in order to classify various chunks of data. The list of codes has been derived from the key themes that were addressed during the discussion, enabling an objective and systematic procedure of content analysis (Carson et al. (2001), pp. 127-28). This is important in order to meet tests of validity and reliability of the findings. For this purpose, a coding tree and a coding table including the most important statements made under each of the key categories have been constructed.\textsuperscript{13}

The results are presented in Chapter 9 following the discussion of the findings from the case study analyses in Chapter 8. The ultimate purpose of the results is to build them into and support the thesis’ recommendations for further action given in the final chapter of the work.

No claim to generalize the findings is made, since the participants are not fully representative of the entire target population. However, the advantage of this applied research method lies in having an additional tool to discuss key issues of the thesis, not only via applied case study research, but also via a “focused group discussion”.

\textsuperscript{12} See transcription rules in Appendix III.

\textsuperscript{13} See coding tree and coding table of the Focus Group Discussion in Appendix IV.
6 MONT SAINT MICHEL

6.1 Introduction

The first case study is concerned with the World Heritage Site of the Mont Saint Michel in France. The reasoning for including this remarkable international site in the case study analysis is to allow first of all for an international perspective on the developments currently taking place at Stift Melk. What is more, the use of this case study in France results from a twofold effect: It is used to show the similarities as well as the differences from the case study in Austria, and therefore allow for a more critical examination of the findings in both cases.

6.2 Location and Historical Context of Mont Saint Michel

The Mont Saint Michel is located in the French Normandy, at the border to the neighbouring province of the Bretagne. It forms part of a natural bay that stretches over 40 000 hectares on the Atlantic coast line and has been classified among “The Most Beautiful Bays in the World” (2007, n.p.a.), a club that has been founded ten years ago to protect natural and cultural heritage of bay sites as well as to ensure sustainable tourism development in bay locations.

According to a guide about Mont Saint Michel (MONUM (2001), p. 1 and p. 8), the total length of the Mont Saint Michel village is only about a kilometre. Its highest building point reaches up to 80 m (the original rock rose only 40 m from sea level).

In its description of the Mont Saint Michel, UNESCO (2007d, n.p.a.) argues that constantly throughout history, the architects of both the Mont Saint Michel village and its abbey had to adapt themselves to the forces of nature, creating impressive building works on top of which today thrones the Gothic-style Benedictine abbey.
Mont Saint Michel

The following image (see Image 1) shows the Mont Saint Michel and part of its bay. It makes it clear why all the issues that are addressed in this case study research focus on the abbey as well as its village, located on the same rock.

Image 1: Mont Saint Michel and its Bay

According to the Mont Saint Michel guide published by MONUM (2001, pp. 1-9), the history of this ancient place of worship goes back as far as the 8th century. The archbishop of Avranches had a first chapel build there after a revelation of the archangel Michael. From that time on, it continued to grow as an important centre for medieval Christian pilgrimage. Benedictine monks have settled there, constantly enlarging the religious building parts and adding defensive structures during times of the Hundred Years War with England in the 14th and 15th century. One of the most prominent examples is the “Merveille”, an ingenious building structure on the confined and steep ground of the original rock of the island. The moving history continues throughout times of religious wars with the Protestants and the time of the French Revolution, whose leaders have closed down the
Abbey and turned it into a state-owned prison. Parts of the ancient torture instruments can still be seen during a visit today. It wasn't until 1874 that the Mont Saint Michel Abbey was finally declared a historic monument. Ambitious restoration works succeeded, many of which continue throughout this present day.

The course of the 20th and the 21st century saw some fundamental changes taking place at Mont Saint Michel, most of which have to deal with its ever increasing appeal as a major national and international tourism destination. The most important restoration works could have been finished at the beginning of the 1980s. At almost the same time, the site was put on the World Heritage List.

6.3 World Heritage

Following a UNESCO resolution in 1979, the Mont Saint Michel and its bay were the first French site to be inscribed on the World Heritage List (ICOMOS (1979, p. 3). This was for three main reasons (ibid.).

1. Mont Saint Michel constitutes a unique aesthetic realization which may be attributed to the unprecedented union of the natural site and the architecture.

2. Mont Saint Michel is an unequalled ensemble, as much because of the co-existence of the abbey and its fortified village with the confined limits of the small island, as for the originality of the placement of the building which confer on its unforgettable silhouette.

3. Mont Saint Michel is one of the most important sites of medieval Christian civilization.

In 2003, the World Heritage Committee made a follow-up note on the project for the re-establishment of the maritime character of the Mont Saint Michel, in which it congratulates the State Party for their continuous commitment to the protection of this World Heritage Site (UNESCO (2007d), n.p.a.). Nevertheless, the organisation also encourages the involvement of the local residents in the implementation of the project, and requests a periodical progress report about all the local developments.
This large project will still be of interest when considering the practice of sustainable development at the Mont Saint Michel, although in a first step, the re-establishment of the maritime character of the bay takes on a more ecological rather than a cultural dimension. A side note about this development is therefore provided.

6.4 Tourism at Mont Saint Michel

The Mont Saint Michel has acted as a visitor magnet throughout the course of its entire history. According to a report by Isabelle Le Dorner (2005, p. 1), who is in charge of promoting the abbey for tourism, visitor numbers went up as high as reaching three million in 2004.

While today’s mass tourism activity is certainly a modern phenomenon, pilgrims have been visiting the Mont Saint Michel ever since. This tradition has definitely marked the hospitality aspect in the Mont Saint Michel village, with “modern” facilities such as souvenir shops, hotels and restaurants actually looking back on almost nine centuries of tradition.

According to the same report of Le Dorner (2005, p. 1), the Mont Saint Michel is the second-most visited site in France after the Eiffel tower today, and the most visited location in France after Paris. Contrary to the international flair attributed to Mont Saint Michel, it is important to note that only one out of five visitors comes from abroad. The study furthermore found that one out of five French visitors are residents living less than two hours away from the Mont Saint Michel. The economic activity generated from tourism to this site sums up to a surplus of more than € 370 millions for the local administrative department of La Manche; and the bay of Mont Saint Michel offers a total of almost 100 000 beds for tourism.

According to the Austrian Chamber of Commerce (2006, n.p.a.), this is more than the total hotel bed capacity of Austria, which is about 90 000 beds according to estimates of the Austrian Chamber of Commerce.
6.5 Tourist Product Development at Mont Saint Michel

The origins of early development for “tourism” purposes can be said to be the merchants and hoteliers that settled on the rock and provided shelter, food and souvenirs to the ever increasing numbers of pilgrims. Today still, many of their descendants continue to do business in the village surrounding the abbey to the south. The massive onrush of tourists, however, now asks for new strategies to meet the current level of demand. These are being implemented, in part, by the “Centre des Monuments Nationaux” (MONUM), the national agency for the protection of historic monuments, which is in charge of developing and marketing the abbey for tourism.

6.5.1 Examples for Tourist Product Development at the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel

As mentioned above, the organisation MONUM is in charge of coordinating the activities taking place at the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel. Under the auspices of the French Ministry for Culture, a report on its activities (2006, p. 10) explains that the mission of MONUM is to open up and improve the visiting quality of the national monuments for as large a public as possible. With over 200 cultural events per year, the organisation seeks to participate actively in promoting culture and tourism in France. Moreover, according to the report, it edits a whole number of publications about national heritage in the form of tourist guides and scientific publications. Its annual budget is € 75 million, largely generated through its own means: ticket sales, book sales and various author rights. The report concludes that almost 8.5 million people visit the monuments that are taken care of by MONUM. More than one million, or one out of eight visitors, are visitors to the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel.
Generally speaking, there is always something going on in and around Mont Saint Michel, be it the popular marches across the tidelands or a cultural or tourism event at the Abbey.

As for the Abbey, according to a press release of 2006 (MONUM (2006), pp. 1-3), probably the most popular event is the “Parcours Nocturne” in the summer months, a night-time walk through the Abbey featuring light shows and classic music. Two years ago, it had been reduced to a minimum so as to enhance the feeling of exception and personal immersion in the historic monument. According to the information published, the doors remain open from 7.00 p.m. – 11.30 p.m. all the way throughout July and August, except on Sunday. The full price for this event is € 8.

Image 2: A successful Product Offer of the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel

Source: Brochure distributed by MONUM at the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel (2006)

Following a different press release (MONUM (2006), p. 1 and p. 10), the Mont Saint Michel Abbey annually hosts a Concert of Baroque Music in conjunction
with the second-largest pilgrimage event taking place on September 29th each year. In 2006, two prestigious partners could have been won for this concert: the Centre of Baroque Music at Versailles, responsible for its intonation, and the French cultural event agency MBF, specialised in organising events that relate to the staging of long-lost masterpieces in extraordinary settings of French national heritage sites.

The places for this concert remained limited, but one part was made available to the general public. Isabelle Le Dorner (2006, n.p.a.), who is in charge of public relations and marketing at the Mont Saint Michel Abbey, is very much in favour of ensuring this kind of accessibility, since everybody who wants to visit a Baroque concert should also be offered access to it. In the end, she argues, this evokes curiosity and reflection, and entices visitors to come back for another cultural manifestation.

Additionally, during the summer period from June to October, the cellar of the abbey is dedicated to providing a room for contemporary exhibitions. Since two years, Le Dorner (2006, n.p.a.) argues that this exhibition is about the re-establishment of the maritime character of the Mont Saint Michel, the “Opération Grand Site” (large construction site). It is in response to people feeling unsure of what to make of the building works that are to transform the bay and render the Mont Saint Michel back its insularity. Therefore, she argues, it was felt important to establish the discussion around Mont Saint Michel also at the abbey.

Last but not least, another successful example of tourist product development at the Mont Saint Michel Abbey are the literature walks taking place on three consecutive Saturdays in October (MONUM (2006), n.p.a.). According to the press release on this series of events, the main purpose is to allow for yet another different channel of access to the Mont Saint Michel and its abbey, namely via spiritual, imaginative, poetical and historical readings made by various authors that have visited the site throughout the centuries.
As far as the characteristics of these types of developments go, it is important to note some of the constraints and opportunities that are present at the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel.

Concerning the opportunities, Le Dorner (2006, n.p.a.) argues that the reduced edition of the night-time walk as opposed to earlier ones featuring contemporary art exhibitions has brought about a better valorisation of the monument in itself. The light, music and mirror effects, limited in their use, should help to enhance the historical parts of the Abbey, not override them. According to her, the experience created for the visitor is therefore more of a personal, solitary one; with the monument gradually opening up to its visitors. Also, as far as the Baroque concert goes, she claims that there is a chance of better access to the public than there used to be before with Baroque art and music. Partnerships are important in this context, all the more because they create a regional stimulus and make the history of the monument come alive in a different context.

The constraints she mentions to these developments are the already high number of visitors at Mont Saint Michel, especially during the summer months, as well as the costs: organising a concert or an exhibition is very expensive, and makes the search for art patrons or exhibition partners indispensable. Additionally, Le Dorner (ibid.) noted a need to coordinate all activities with the local community as well as the “Fraternité de Saint Jérusalem”, a group of Catholic monks and nuns reassuring the spiritual presence at the Abbey since the last decade.

In the future, she concludes, the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel might host a photo exhibition organised in conjunction with UNESCO about sacred mountains. However, this is still in the phase of planning, and official confirmation has not been received yet.
6.5.2 Examples for Tourist Product Development at Mont Saint Michel and its immediate surroundings

The Mont Saint Michel and its bay provide rich targets for tourism. Despite most of the tourists going directly to Mont Saint Michel, the surrounding countryside provides a lot of interesting opportunities, too. This will still be dealt with in the section about sustainable development with a focus on regional development opportunities.

A well-accepted example of a tourist product in the immediate surroundings of the Mont Saint Michel are the “Chemins de la Baie”, or bay walks, in the traditional sense of the pilgrim routes that have dominated the access to the Mont Saint Michel throughout the centuries.

Image 3: An impression of a combined product offering featuring natural and cultural elements in the Mont Saint Michel bay

According to information published in this guide (Chemins de la Baie (2006), n.p.a.), tourists receive a professional guide through the tidelands surrounding the Mont Saint Michel. The aim is to discover the natural and cultural heritage of the bay either through a traditional, commented walk or through a themed excursion with a focus on fauna and flora, legends, sunset or night walks, discovery of the abbey and the village, etc. The guide mentions walks that are organised all year round, with their distances varying from one to 20 kilometres.

At the village itself, four different museums can be visited before walking up to the abbey. According to information from the local tourist office (Office du Tourisme (2006), n.p.a.), these are historical and maritime museums, which can be visited at a full price of € 18 all together. They are aimed at creating a historic route throughout the village of Mont Saint Michel.

However, as with everything else in the village, they run the danger of being increasingly commoditised for the purpose of dealing with mass tourism.

6.6 Heritage Interpretation and Marketing Activities

Interpretation can help to avoid the danger of commodification through creating interest, understanding and curiosity. It can also entice visitors to deal with the heritage presented into more depth and to foster longer presence at the site.

6.6.1 Heritage interpretation at the village and the abbey

According to the interview conducted with a representative of the local tourist office at Mont Saint Michel (Loqué (2006), n.p.a.), the two main approaches to interpreting heritage at Mont Saint Michel are the four museums in the village and the various tours that are being offered at the abbey. She argues, however, that critics have been voiced over the high prices of the museums and the low claim of presenting culture rather than making money from tourists in the village.
This is arguably quite true (€ 18 for all the museums combined, with one full entrance ranging between € 7 and € 9). However, both interview partners (Le Dorner (2006), n.p.a.; Loqué (2006), n.p.a.) agree that the developments relating to the re-establishment of the maritime character of Mont Saint Michel might question the presence of these museums, since there are plans for one large information point at the entrance of the future gateway bridge to the village, similar to a heritage centre.

In the past, Loqué (2006, n.p.a.) argues that an attempt has been made by the tourist office to create a new offer relating to heritage interpretation of the Mont Saint Michel village. Guides have been called into place to explain the history of the village to its visitors. The only problem was that the guides had been ordered on demand, and that many times, the visitors did not show up for the time fixed. As a consequence, the tourist office had to withdraw this proposal from its agenda.

MONUM, as the official organisation responsible for the care of the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel, offers various interpretational tools for a visit to the abbey (MONUM (2007), n.p.a.). According to the depth of learning experience sought, a total of six different “modes of visit” are provided.

Following information from the homepage of MONUM (2007, n.p.a.), there are unaccompanied tours where visitors are free to follow a small guiding booklet (available in 12 different languages), audio-guided tours, guided tours with a professional guide and so-called lecture tours, which provide the most in-depth information. Times vary from approximately one to three or four hours in the case of full lecture tours. Additionally, there might be groups with their own guides (either a teacher in the case of school classes, or a foreign travel group). Night-time or “prestige” tours apart from the official opening hours are also offered on request and according to the season.

The tourist interaction and his or her experience of the monument through the interpretational means provided go from shallow to deep, based on the tour chosen as well as the season. Fortunately for the aim of this work, the author herself has witnessed both events, namely a one-hour unaccompanied tour during the summer season amidst hundreds of other people as well as a lecture tour.
during an off-seasonal weekend in November, lasting four hours. The difference in the overall experience and understanding of the monument as well as its religious and cultural heritage could not have been any greater. However, it also becomes clear that a considerable effort on part of the visitor, i.e. being “mindful” (Moscardo (2001, pp. 13-15) is required to follow this extensive lecture tour. In any case, the opportunity of sustainable development through increased understanding and active participation in the experience is certainly fostered through this kind of visit.

6.6.2 Marketing

Ranging among the top targets on the French cultural landscape, the Mont Saint Michel and its bay are largely marketed as a cultural and natural tourism destination in France as well as abroad. In terms of World Heritage, it could be called an “icon site” (Pedersen (2006), n.p.a.), a must-see when travelling to the northwest of France. Currently, the most important foreign markets for the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel and its village are tourists from Great Britain, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy. Emerging markets such as China and Japan are likely to play a greater role in the future.

The following two pages are taken from the technical sales manual listing all the national monuments entrusted to MONUM. It addresses French and international tourism professionals and contains the most important information relating to each one of the monuments.
Abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel
A unique site and architecture.

The Abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel was a major pilgrimage site from the 11th to 18th centuries and is one of the most exceptional examples of religious and military architecture from the Middle Ages.

RECEPTION
Subject to modification.
- Open
  > 2nd May to 31st August: from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
  > 1st September to 30th April: from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.
  Last admission 1 hour before closing time.
- Closed
  > 1st January, 1st May and 25 December
  > Number of floors visited during the tour: 3 (many stairs)

FACILITIES
- Seating available during the tour
- Lavatories
- Gift shops
- Function room rental
- Parking for coaches 500 m
  Check with the site for car park availability.
  Car park spaces for disabled visitors.

ACCESS
- 9 km north of the Caen-Rennes and Caen-Saint-Malo main roads.
- 22 km southwest of Avranches and 9 km from Pontorson.
- From Saint-Malo: exit 2 via D155 Pontorson along the coast road.
- From Caen: exit 8 via RN175 Rennes to the D43 Le Mont-Saint-Michel

INFORMATIONS
Abbaye du Mont-Saint-Michel
B.P. 22
50170 Le Mont-Saint-Michel
- Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
  tel.: (33) (0)2 33 89 80 00
  fax: (33) (0)2 33 70 83 08
- Booking service:
  abbaye.mont-saint-michel@monum.fr

www.cmn.fr/tourisme
The sales manual is available in nine different languages. All the necessary information to arrive at Mont Saint Michel as well as an overview of the facilities, tours, rates and useful addresses are given.

Source: MONUM (2007)
Furthermore, the marketing activities of MONUM in the case of the abbey of Mont Saint Michel relate to the following (Le Dorner (2005), pp. 28-33):

- Production of 220,000 tourist brochures and booklets produced in 2006, distributed at over 1170 different points in the Normandy and Bretagne
- Internet site at www.monum.fr/tourisme informing about the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel, and from which the sales manual can be downloaded
- Regular contact with the local and regional press as well as with international journalists (e.g. Japan, Spain and Germany in 2005)
- Membership in the Club Châteaux, Maison de la France (national tourist board), Club of Monuments and Sites in the Normandy, Historical Route of Abbeys in the Normandy, …
- Promotion of selected events, such as the night-time walk or the Baroque concert in local and regional press (newspaper, radio and television)
- Partnership with the local hotel association, for which tickets to the abbey are sold in advance and educational tours for the members are organised
- Partnership with the Gîtes de France, who held their national assembly at the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel in June 2005
- Organisation of so-called “éductours” aimed at tourism professionals from the local region as well as tour operators and travel agencies from abroad in order to become familiar with the heritage of the Mont Saint Michel and its abbey and to include them in their tourist proposals (Le Dorner (2006), n.p.a.)

Based on the marketing report from Le Dorner (2005, pp. 24-27), the French administrative department of La Manche, part of which is Mont Saint Michel, makes great use of the site for its marketing purposes. Very often, it argues, the Mont Saint Michel dominates the first or last pages of brochures or guides to draw public attention to its offers. In 2005, half of the packages sold by the tourist board of La Manche take place in the bay of Mont Saint Michel, and 30% of them include
a visit to the abbey. Just as strong is the presence of the image of Mont Saint Michel in the marketing activities of its administrative region, the Normandy (presentation on the Internet, exhibitions, workshops, press releases, proposed tourist circuits, etc.).

The review of these regional brochures and guides has produced an interesting conclusion: the fact that the Mont Saint Michel is a World Heritage Site is rather used as a marketing tool in nationally or internationally distributed guides than in local guides or those distributed by MONUM.

6.7 Characteristics of Demand

According to a visitor study conducted by the Mission Mont-Saint-Michel in 2004 (Le Dorner (2005, pp. 27-28), the average visitor to Mont Saint Michel is 41 years old, arrives with his family or partner (68%), stays an average of three hours at Mont Saint Michel (including the abbey) and is likely to have a higher education. The study furthermore argues that more than half of the visitors (53%) come into the region because of a visit to the Mont Saint Michel, and for almost as many (43%), it is their first time.

As already mentioned earlier, visitor numbers at Mont Saint Michel are enormous. Over the past five years, they have developed to reach more than one million in 2006\textsuperscript{14}. However, one needs to distinguish between those only visiting the site of Mont Saint Michel, and those also entering the abbey, whose number is estimated at about a third of the total number of visitors to Mont Saint Michel. As a consequence, \textbf{about three million people} visit the Mont Saint Michel each year.

The following graph gives an overview of the development of visitor numbers at the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel over a period of the last seven consecutive years.

\textsuperscript{14} Counting only those people that actually visit the Mont Saint Michel Abbey.
Table 1: Visitor Numbers at the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Visitors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1.070.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1.078.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1.007.403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1.086.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1.053.975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1.132.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1.056.039</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Numbers vary from one year to the next, reaching a low in 2001 and a high in 2004. The numbers of last year equal the average achieved over the seven year period, which is about 1,070,000 visitors.

The seasonal variation in visitor numbers is a non-negligible factor, too. The following graph shows the differences in visitor numbers registered at the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel between the months of July and December over the last consecutive years of 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Table 2: Seasonality Graph of Visitors at the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel

Mont Saint Michel

The before-mentioned graph shows a remarkable difference in visitor numbers during the months of July and August. The most striking difference was achieved in 2004, with almost six times as many visitors in July than in December. In 2006, there were still about five times as many visitors in summer than in winter. The highest number of visitors per month was reached in July 2004: 177,646 visitors at the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel.

The reasons for this growth are said to be, by the representative of the tourist office (Loqué (2006), n.p.a.) an increased presence of the media (mostly print and television channels) as well as the introduction of the 35-hours-week by the French government. According to her, this change has encouraged people to take more of a weekend or short holiday trip, whose presence is felt especially in the mid or low seasons. As an immediate response to controlling or managing visitor impacts, the tourist office therefore recommends tourists another season than the summer months for their visit to Mont Saint Michel, which in turn helps to stimulate demand during the lower seasons.

An interesting point to consider when talking about the characteristics of demand to Mont Saint Michel is the fact that only about a third of all visitors are truly visiting and entering the abbey. The following questions are linked to this phenomenon: Is this because most of them are not concerned with a “deep learning experience”? Are they simply motivated by having “a good day out”? Or are they simply deterred by the high entrance fee charged at the abbey (full price: € 8 per person)? A quantitative and qualitative visitor study conducted at Mont Saint Michel in 2004 (Mission Mont-Saint-Michel (2005), n.p.a.) shows that only 56% have a declared intention to visit the abbey; however 70% are in favour of guided visits including the abbey, its small gardens, the city wall and the village. In any case, the factor price is likely to have an influence on the decision to visit the abbey, especially where repeat visits to the site are concerned.

There is another peculiar phenomenon regarding demand: When talking to Isabelle Le Dorner (2006, n.p.a.) it was revealed that, on the one hand, under 18-year-olds are permitted free entrance to the abbey, whereas on the other hand, families do not come in large numbers to take a visit of the abbey. Le Dorner
explains this in part by the fact that culture is still perceived by many people to be “out of their league”. Many parents, she argues, still prefer to take their kids to the zoo rather than into a historic cultural monument. However, she concludes that there are future plans for designing a tour especially adapted to the needs and expectations of families with young children, so as to evoke and foster an interest for culture and improve its accessibility.

The project “Produit Journée”, she explains, tells a similar story. It is equally aimed at bringing people closer towards the history and culture at the abbey of Mont Saint Michel, but including a whole day programme with several other activities apart from a visit to the abbey: discovery of the region, of the natural fauna and flora in the bay region and of the regional territory (sought after by almost 90% of visitors according to the study of the Mission Mont-Saint Michel (2005, n.p.a.). Creating a day product of only visiting the abbey and local cultural museums, such as the Scriptorial d’Avranches which hosts all the holy scripts of the Mont Saint Michel Abbey, is not really what people are immediately looking for according to Le Dorner (2007, n.p.a.).

However, she claims that there are goods news with regards to the demand for culture, too. 90% of visitors are eager to learn about the history and architecture of the Mont Saint Michel (Mission Mont-Saint-Michel (2005, n.p.a.), which confirms Le Dorner (2006, n.p.a.) in saying that the lecture visits, the longest and most in-depth tours of the abbey featuring history, architecture and religious symbolism, are increasingly in demand. This is why in January 2007, there has been a recruitment for English lecturers apart from only the French ones. A lecture visit, she explains, really allows for a different approach to the monument away from the superficial, shallow mass tourism experience, and its demand is likely to continue to develop. What is more, she has also found a renewed demand for so-called “prestige visits”, visits apart from the normal opening hours creating an exceptional experience and perception of the monument.

This confirms the findings of literature on the characteristics of demand in heritage tourism, claiming that people are looking to deal in extraordinary, emotional experiences combined with a learning environment and something which teaches
them meaning (Poria et al. (2006, 2004, 2003); Voase (2003); Prentice et al. (1998)).

This is ever more important in the constant conflict between on the one hand the claim of sustaining culture and heritage at the Mont Saint Michel and its abbey and, on the other hand, making it accessible for and ensuring a structure of mass tourism. This issue is addressed in the next paragraph.

6.8 Authenticity and Levels of Commodification

In this part of the case study research on Mont Saint Michel, the author comes to speak of her own experience and interaction with the site, as well as several discussion points led during the expert interviews regarding Mont Saint Michel.

To start with, the village of Mont Saint Michel, through which one reaches the abbey, appears to be strongly commodified for the purpose of tourism. Fully adapted to serve the needs of tourists, it hosts about 25 different souvenir shops (Loqué (2006), n.p.a.), five restaurants, mainly crêperies, one tourist board, four different museums, eight hotels (4 3-star, 3 2-star and one not classified), a bank, a post office, and some telephone booths. This information follows the review of tourist brochures from 2006 as well as personal notes during a visit in November 2006.

The aspect of commodification in the village is enhanced especially during the summer months, where large masses of tourists move up the only road in the village towards the abbey, with the “only sight during the ascent being the shoulders and the head of the person in front of you”\(^{15}\) (translated by the author). Especially in the summertime, when people are on holiday and arrive in tens of thousands, despite having less of a quality during their visit and the highest prices at the hotels, the ambiance that dominates the Mont Saint Michel is a

\(^{15}\) “Donc vous- vous ne passez votre montée qu’à voir les épaules, les cheveux de la personne qui est devant” (Le Dorner (2006), n.p.a.).
“[…] system of multi-nationality and of saying to oneself: I have been there. I went to Mont Saint Michel. […] And rarely, except from the French maybe, the people who’ve come have been disappointed because there were so many people. It’s like ‘Oh, there’s been a lot of people, but – we have been there’”16 (translated by the author).

Following the interview with the representative of the Mont Saint Michel tourist office (Loqué (2006), n.p.a.), it is confirmed that “authenticity is compromised in the village, and one cannot say that the village of Mont Saint Michel is an authentic site any more”17 (translated by the author).

However, according to Le Dorner (2006, n.p.a.) the atmosphere is set to change as people start questioning “whether their presence is not harming the monument itself, and whether thirty thousand visitors in a street five metres broad is still coherent”18 (translated by the author).

The degree of authenticity at Mont Saint Michel also revolves around the question of whether it continues to be perceived as a cultural rather than a tourism destination. As far as the abbey is concerned, the scope of its authenticity is enhanced through means of heritage interpretation, i.e. the guided and more in-depth lecture tours at the abbey, as well as thoughtful product development strategies, such as the night-time walk deliberately reduced in audiovisual effects in order to provide for a more reflective, personal exchange with the monument.

However, with only about a third of total visitors to Mont Saint Michel entering the abbey and the growing pressure of mass tourism during the summer months, the question arises whether the site as a whole does not cease to be authentic after all. Provoking a shift in this balance could include plans to reintroduce the guided...

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16 “A ce moment, il y a surtout un système de multi-nationalité et de se dire : J’y ai été. J’y suis allé. Et, je pense que jamais, ou rarement, à part les Français qui commencent à- mais rarement, les gens qui viennent ont été déçus, il y avait tellement de monde c’est- ‘oh, il y avait du monde, mais-on y est allés” (Le Dorner (2006), n.p.a.).

17 “Mais au niveau du village c’est sûr, c’est compromis. (2) Bon on ne peut plus dire que le village est un lieu authentique” (Loqué (2006), n.p.a.).

18 “[…] c’est qu’il y a un moment où les gens commencent à se demander est-ce que c’est pas […] au détriment du monument, du site? C’est-à-dire que, est-ce que trente mille de visiteurs dans une rue qui fait cinq mètres de longue- de large, c’est bien cohérent?” (Le Dorner (2006), n.p.a.)
tours of the village by locals, who explain their history and heritage apart from that found at the abbey and thereby answering the question provided by Loqué (2006, n.p.a.) as to “why the Mont Saint Michel is there” (translated by the author).

In any case, the values for which the site had been inscribed on the World Heritage List seem to have in part been undermined by the excessive tourism developments taking place. It is a present-day challenge to claim that the Mont Saint Michel is not only a tourism destination, but also a place of history, culture, religion and pilgrimage. On the question of authenticity versus commodification, Le Dorner (2006, n.p.a.), says that

“[…] we are constantly under the dilemma of finding ourselves between [mass] tourism and [high] culture, but should we therefore stop acting like everyone else and quit going to Mont Saint Michel? Isn’t it really the moment of this- this return to authenticity? More and more often, people stay at private guest houses; they want to know again how to make cheese, how to make cider. Isn’t this the moment to restart all over again? And we see here, for example, a renewed interest in art since the lecture visits [at the abbey] are more and more demanded” (translated by the author).

The following matrix presented in the theoretical part of the thesis shall be used to visualize the situation of the Mont Saint Michel Abbey and its village on the continua between robusticity (of the heritage attraction against the impacts of mass tourism) and its appeal to the market. This is done according to the perception of the author following two different visits to the site in 2006.

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19 “Alors pourquoi le Mont est là?” (Loqué (2006), n.p.a.)
20 “[…] mais c’est vrai que c’est, c’est toujours- on est toujours sur le fil du rasoir entre se trouver sur cette offre touristique et la culture, mais est-ce qu’on veut pas faire comme tout le monde et arrêter d’y aller? Est-ce que c’est pas le moment justement où il y a cette- ce retour à l’authenticité? Les gens vont de plus en plus en chambres d’hôtes, veulent de nouveau savoir comment on fait le cidre. Est-ce que c’est pas le moment de recommencer? Et on voit bien, par exemple, ce regain d’intérêt à l’art puisque les visites conférences sont de plus en plus demandées” (Le Dorner (2006), n.p.a.).
The abbey of Mont Saint Michel shows a medium to high robusticity to the impacts of mass tourism, whereas the village increasingly runs the danger of becoming commodified, i.e. a lower range on the robusticity scale. Both places continue to show a high appeal for the tourism market. This means that the situation of the village needs to be improved for the purpose of future, sustainable development. The abbey is still quite well positioned in this matrix, mostly thanks to the initiatives taken to manage and enhance its cultural heritage, which allow for a higher position on the scale of robusticity.

### 6.9 Indicators for Sustainable Development

This section is called “indicators for sustainable development”, since it is hard to speak of a densely visited destination such as the Mont Saint Michel to become fully sustainable over a certain period of time, for all the different reasons already mentioned above.
Two different perspectives are used here: sustainable development from a regional perspective, i.e. the entire Mont Saint Michel bay region as well as its back country, as well as from a local perspective taking place at the site itself.

According to a report published by the administrative authorities of La Manche and Ille-et-Vilaine (Conseil Général de la Manche/d’Ille-et-Vilaine (2001), n.p.a.), the first, and arguably the most prominent action to mention at this point, is the so-called “Opération Grand Site” (OGS), a national action programme developed for the Mont Saint Michel and its bay by the French Ministry for Spatial Planning and Environment. In this report, it is mentioned that the requirements to become eligible for support as part of this programme are for a site to be classified as a natural or cultural site, to be of national or even international significance and to suffer from degradation following periods of heavy visitation. In 1995, the Mont Saint Michel and its bay gained support from the French government for their project on the re-establishment of the maritime character of the bay. Subventions for the project have at that time been calculated to run up to 50 million Francs, or roughly eight million Euros. The double objective presented in this report is to preserve the ‘magic’ and authenticity of the natural and cultural sites in the bay region, as well as to turn the great interest and visitor numbers to the Mont Saint Michel into an economic driving force for the entire back region.

The following are examples for sustainable development actions that inscribe themselves in the parameter of the objectives of the OGS.

6.9.1 Examples for Sustainable Development in the bay region of Mont Saint Michel

- Integrated Management of the Coastal Zone: In 2005 and 2006, the monthly edition of the Journal on the Baie du Mont Saint Michel (2007, pp. 2-5) argues that several meetings of citizens, local and regional delegates, members of associations, the tourism industry, the scientific community and the state administration took place in order to discuss the
ecological and economic priorities of action in the context of the project “Opération Grand Site”: landscape and urbanism, links between sea and land, service and product quality, establishing and promoting the bay without regional or political borders, etc.

- **Natura 2000**: As of 2006, the bay of Mont Saint Michel forms part of the European network of “Natura 2000” sites, distinguished for their great ecological importance. In 2008, a plan of action shall be brought forward by scientists, delegates, industry and association representatives so as to develop this award for the region. (ibid., p. 6)

- **Association “Pro Baie”**: Following a report from its constitutive meeting in 2006 (Association Pro Baie du Mont Saint Michel (2006), n.p.a.), the aim of the association is to enhance the common representation and influence of tourism professionals in the bay of Mont Saint Michel. It serves as a lobby and a forum for knowledge exchange in line with the goals of moving the tourism offer towards more quality and sustainability in the bay region. The activities have included organising so-called “Journées de la Baie” (Baie du Mont Saint Michel (2007), n.p.a.), or day tours in the bay, with the aim of promoting specific regional cultural and natural heritage to its participants, mostly tourism professionals in the region. In 2007, according to the journal, the focus will be on installing two working groups, one with the goal of developing activities along the “Green Route” that is to link the local districts from East to West along the bay, the other about the creation of an interregional tourist office representing entire bay region.

- **Route de la Baie (Bay Route)**: Following the report from the authorities of La Manche and Ille-et-Vilaine (2001, pp. 4-6), two departments have chosen to inaugurate a tourism route through the bay of Mont Saint Michel in June 2001 in order to foster interregional cooperation in tourism. In total, 34 different tourist sites are promoted together in this project.

- **Maisons de la Baie (Heritage Centres)**: The homepage of the Maison de la Baie (2007, n.p.a.) explains that along the coast of the bay, four
different houses have been established aimed at promoting culture and
nature in the bay through various interpretational activities, such as
guided walks, exhibitions, film shows, etc. They act as heritage centres
and are increasingly popular among tourists.

• **Villages Patrimoine (Heritage villages):** According to a report and a
tourist brochure on the Villages Patrimoine (2006, p. 5; 2006, n.p.a.), the
“Villages Patrimoine” were created as an official brand in 2003. It is a
network of 21 different rural villages situated in the interior of the Mont
Saint Michel bay. Together, they seek to promote their cultural heritage by
offering 24 different circuit tours for tourists through a common marketing
platform. According to the report, plans have been formulated to develop

All of these initiatives are important for a more sustainable cultural and natural
tourism development in the Mont Saint Michel bay region. Last but not least, they
can help to achieve a better visitor balance between the site of Mont Saint Michel
as well as the surrounding coastal region, which would classify as an important
indicator for sustainable development. Furthermore, the initiatives described above
as well as in the following contribute to leaving visitors more satisfied with their
experience, since they stand to gain a more holistic perception of the entire bay
region and its rich natural and cultural heritage. In the following, some of the
actions for sustainable development taken at the level of the site of the Mont Saint
Michel are described.

### 6.9.2 Mont Saint Michel and its Abbey in the context of sustainable
development

An important point to mention in this context is the fact that the average time of
visit to the Mont Saint Michel is less than three to four hours, a visit to the abbey
included (Le Dorner (2006), n.p.a.; Loqué (2006), n.p.a.). Prolonging the average
time spent at Mont Saint Michel helps to create a more in-depth experience, an understanding and a wish to engage in activities that are not to the detriment of the monument or site visited. Examples are for instance the “Bay Walks”, tours with local guides where people learn about the rich natural and cultural heritage of Mont Saint Michel and its bay and gain the feeling of becoming themselves pilgrims to Mont Saint Michel. This view of the author was supported in the expert interview with Isabelle Le Dorner (2006, n.p.a.)

Another important objective, as brought forward by Le Dorner (ibid.) is that all the activities aiming at enhancing the rich heritage present at the abbey of Mont Saint Michel (night time walks, concerts, exhibitions, etc.) stay truly in relation to the monument and the various interest and stakeholder groups. She suggests that what would still be needed in this context is a sort of association reuniting all the local partners (the town office, the tourist board, the association Pro Baie, MONUM, etc.) at Mont Saint Michel under one roof. As part of the current OGS project and the restructuring of access to the Mont Saint Michel and its abbey, there is a chance to do so over the next few years.

The following explains two different partnerships the Abbey and the village of Mont Saint Michel have created with other regional and national sites. They form part of sustainable tourism planning since they deal with the question of how to alleviate visitor flows to only one single spot.

- **Abbayes Normandes (Normandy Abbeys):** According to information published on their website (Route Historique des Abbayes Normands (2007), n.p.a.) and an online guide book (Guide Groupe (2007), p. 1), this network of 32 different abbeys located in the Normandy is animated by different route suggestions, cultural and music activities and a common guide featuring all the necessary information for tourists or tour operators regarding opening hours, visiting conditions, access, etc.

- **Villes Sanctuaires (Sanctuary Towns):** Based on information taken from their website (Villes Sanctuaires en France (2007), n.p.a.) as well as tourist brochure (Villes Sanctuaires (2006), n.p.a.), cities (tourist boards)
and sanctuaries are working together in this association in order to provide the best offer to greet tourists and pilgrims. Nine French cities or villages from part of this network, among which are Chartres, Lourdes, Nevers or the Mont Saint Michel. Two different routes are suggested throughout France, the northern and the southern route. A common Internet platform provides information regarding the routes and the single stops, supported by the brochure.

Conclusively, one can say that partnerships can definitely play a role in fostering sustainable development, not only at the site level, but within the entire region. Care needs to be taken to ensure all stakeholders have their say, which is arguably a difficult task where an area as large as the entire bay region of Mont Saint Michel as well as its back country is concerned.

As far as the abbey is concerned, creating extraordinary experiences such as night-time walks or special interest lecture tours may also help sustainable development, since they allow for a reflective, personal approach to the monument, the culture and heritage it represents. Mass tourism is currently a threat, but the initiatives for restructuring visitor flows in the bay region are certainly promising.

6.9.2.1 Side note: The re-establishment of the maritime character of the bay of Mont Saint Michel in the context of sustainable ecological development

This paragraph is aimed at understanding the reconstruction works currently under way as part of the OGS in order to give the Mont Saint Michel back its insular character. It will also influence the development of future cultural heritage tourism to the site, since there are plans for building one single regional information point, a sort of heritage centre, at the entrance of the bay (Loqué (2006), n.p.a.; Le Dorner (2006), n.p.a.). The aim is to inform visitors about current activities taking place at the village and the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel as well as the surrounding
department. Furthermore, it should include the possibility to start a walk across the tidelands to Mont Saint Michel from there (Le Dorner (2006), n.p.a.).

In June 2006, the first construction works have been started, including the building of a hydraulic dam where the river Couesnon enters the bay (Baie du Mont Saint Michel (2007), p. 11). According to the team of architects who have won the tender for the project (Feichtinger Architects (2007), n.p.a.), this should enhance the effects of the river of pushing out the sediments away from the bay and into the open sea, and therefore stop the actual sanding up of the bay. The entire project, it says on the webpage, is likely to cost as much as 135 million Euros, including plans to deconstruct the actual dam and the car parking spaces in favour of a new passenger gateway to the Mont Saint Michel featuring electronic shuttle buses and pedestrian walkways.

Image 5: Access to Mont Saint Michel in 2006 via the actual dam

Source: Personal photograph taken in November 2006
6.10 Concluding Remarks

This section outlines the main points from the first case study research in line with the research questions that have guided its analysis. Furthermore, the strengths and weaknesses of the case study on Mont Saint Michel are presented.

Certainly, as far as product development, marketing and heritage interpretation at the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel are concerned, there is a strong focus on enhancing culture, history and religious heritage. This appears to be less true of the village, which has become increasingly commodified for the purpose of serving mass tourism activity. Another issue that still needs to be addressed in this context is the short average length of stay (approximately three to four hours) at the Mont Saint Michel, which currently ranges amongst its major weaknesses. This calls for
actions to make a longer stay at the site as well as its immediate surroundings more attractive. It is the current focus of the interregional planning activities in the Mont Saint Michel bay region to develop also the cultural and natural assets of the back country. First successful examples have just been presented above under indicators for sustainable development.

As the implications of the national project of re-establishing the maritime character of the Mont Saint Michel are far-reaching, it would have been futile to speak only of the local developments at the Abbey or village of Mont Saint Michel. With the advent of a real construction site to foster sustainable development for the Mont Saint Michel, there are clearly repercussions for cultural heritage tourism. Visitors to Mont Saint Michel are increasingly aware of their impacts, also in the cultural domain. They want to contribute by learning and create understanding. Lecture, prestige or night-time visits to the abbey attest both a willingness to engage with history, culture and religion as well as a desire to create a personal, more memorable experience on the part of the visitor.

In the case of Mont Saint Michel, product development for tourism does lead to achieving more of a sustainable development so long as authenticity and quality of the offer are maintained. Interpretation and marketing can furthermore act as a bridge between offer and demand, and it is important to manage the link between the tourist and his individual perception and experience of the site.

The final strength of the Mont Saint Michel is its potential to act as a catalyst for a more balanced tourism to the entire region. There is already a large, excessive number at visitors at the site itself, so the need for redirecting those flows is imminent, and certainly a great opportunity for the entire Mont Saint Michel bay region.
7 STIFT MELK

7.1 Introduction

The second case study analysis deals with the Abbey of Melk as part of the Wachau World Heritage Cultural Landscape in Lower Austria. It follows the same structure like the previous chapter on Mont Saint Michel. Again, the case study research questions laid down in Chapter 5 will be addressed over the course of the following sections.

The analysis starts by outlining major historical events that have led to the foundation of the abbey, forming the basis for the cultural heritage tourism activities taking place there today.

7.2 Historical Development of Stift Melk

Stift Melk is located on a granite rock at the Western stretch of the Wachau valley, almost exactly between the Austrian cities Linz and Vienna. Its mighty silhouette, attesting one of the most impressive, homogeneous Baroque buildings north of the Alps (Rotheneder (2007), p. 1), can already be seen from afar. According to the guidebook of Stift Melk (1998, pp. 5-8), prior to being an abbey, the site was home to a castle reigned by the Babenberger dynasty in the 10th century. It was one of the strongholds of the Roman province “Marca Orientalis”, which became known under the more well-known name “Ostarrichi”. The history of Melk is therefore closely related to the history of Austria itself, stressing its importance as a heritage site of national and international significance.

As far as the construction of the abbey goes, the guidebook (ibid.) mentions that it was only towards the end of the 11th century that Benedictine monks were allowed to settle there. Since 1089, however, a community of Benedictines has perennially
been present at Stift Melk, marking a period of spiritual history of more than 900 years.

According to Pater Martin, a member of the present Benedictine community who is in charge of culture and tourism at the Abbey of Melk (Rotheneder (2007), pp. 2-3), two highlights have marked the history of Stift Melk: the so-called “Melker Reform” of Benedictine abbeys throughout Austria and the south of Germany, as well as the construction of the extensive Baroque abbey complex by the famous Austrian architect Jakob Prandtauer during the 18th century. Another feature of Stift Melk is the abbey high school with currently about 940 pupils. The school is an integral building part of the abbey, and its origins date back to the 12th century.

At the beginning of the year 2007, Pater Martin (ibid., p. 4) mentions that 30 Benedictine monks form part of the convent of Stift Melk. Their scope goes from spiritual guidance to work at the school, the guest house or the cultural tourism domain. This area has become especially important as a major source of income for the abbey. The revenue generated is increasingly used to finance ever continuing renovation and construction works. Thanks to these, Stift Melk is able to present itself as follows.

Image 7: Stift Melk and its Town in the Wachau Valley

Source: Stift Melk/Pater Martin Rotheneder (2006)
7.3 World Heritage

In 2000, UNESCO (2007e, n.p.a.) has inscribed the Wachau valley, a stretch of the Danube valley, on the World Heritage List. This includes the abbeys of Melk and Göttweig as well as the historic centre of Krems.

According to the document of application compiled by the Bundesdenkmalamt (1999, p. 4), Stift Melk as well as its town have been included in the core zone of the World Heritage Cultural Landscape of the Wachau, which geographically is delimited by the hill ridges along the Danube river.

On the justification for inscription, UNESCO (ibid.) mentions two criteria:

“The Wachau is an outstanding example of a riverine landscape bordered by mountains in which material evidence of its long historical evolution has survived to a remarkable degree.

The architecture, the human settlements and the agricultural use of the land in the Wachau vividly illustrate a basically medieval landscape which has evolved organically and harmoniously over time.”

In its application for inscription, the Bundesdenkmalamt (1999, p. 9) furthermore refers to the abbeys of Melk and Göttweig on the notion of authenticity:

“[…] of note is the landscape pattern created by vine terraces, picturesque villages and fine individual monuments of global significance, such as the abbeys of Melk and Göttweig. […] The entire Wachau […] is a big and lively Gesamtkunstwerk which, unaffected by any industrialisation-induced modifications, boasts a high degree of authenticity.”

According to the expert interview with Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.), the World Heritage certificate had been handed over to the region in the course of a ceremony taking place at the abbey in 2000. Currently, the document is exhibited at the abbey museum of Stift Melk. Initial interest on integrating a World Heritage Centre to the Baroque building complex has been rejected following local protests. A World Heritage Centre is now planned at the boat landing stage in Melk. In the future, there might be plans to host a temporary exhibition on World Heritage and the Wachau Cultural Landscape directly at Stift Melk.
7.4 Tourism at Stift Melk

There is no doubt that Stift Melk is one of the major visitor attractions in the cultural heritage tourism domain in Austria. Following a report on the cultural heritage and historical monuments of Austria (Häfele (2005a), p. 9), Stift Melk is only topped in terms of visitor numbers by Schloss Schönbrunn, the Festung Hohensalzburg or the Hofburg (Emperial Rooms and State Silver). According to information from the department “Kultur & Tourismus” at Stift Melk (Prüller (2007), n.p.a.), visitor numbers have been estimated in 2006 at about 470 000, of which 70 000 alone have visited the abbey during the month of August. This makes Stift Melk the most visited cultural heritage attraction in Lower Austria.

Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.) argues that tourism has consciously been put on the agenda of economic activities at the abbey through state-of-the-art visitor facilities (large parking lot, abbey restaurant in the former orangerie, modern interpretational facilities including multimedia applications, etc.). What is more, the attractiveness of the abbey has further been enhanced through the opening of the abbey park in 2000, hosting a large number of concerts and events ever since. Its Baroque garden pavilion has been restored and is now used for an increasing number of receptions and concerts, adding to a lively exchange of the monument, the artists and the visitors, especially during the summer months.

7.5 Tourist Product Development at Stift Melk

According to a presentation about the cultural heritage of Austria (Häfele (2005b), n.p.a.) cultural heritage sites are a central element of the cultural offer of Austria. In its European survey, ATLAS (2004, n.p.a. quoted in Häfele (2005b), n.p.a.) names the top categories of cultural attractions visited by tourists to be “historic sites, museums, monuments and religious sites”. Stift Melk combines all of these categories in its offer, underlining its significance and success on the Austrian cultural heritage market. Stift Melk is a national monument, a major historic site in
terms of Austrian history, home to one of the most modern abbey museums of Austria (Stift Melk (2007a), n.p.a.) and a major spiritual centre of the country since its early beginnings as a monastery in the 11th century.

Given the multifaceted dimensions of the offer at Stift Melk, it comes as no surprise that tourism development has taken on quite substantially over the past few decades. According to visitor statistics (Stift Melk/Kultur & Tourismus (2007a), n.p.a.), annual visitor numbers have skyrocketed in 1980, 1989 and 2000 following major regional exhibitions of the province of Lower Austria as well as the abbey itself, celebrating 900 years of Benedictine tradition in Melk in 1989 (with almost 600 000 visitors). Regarding product development for tourism, Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.) argues that

“Well, this has really developed. Ten years ago, it was so to say still possible to count [the number of events]. And then ah, about five years ago, it all went very rapidly, so that we now already have to say ‘too little time, too many things’. This is getting quite delicate now. […] Furthermore, we have deliberately not only developed large highlights, but also smaller events like for instance at the garden pavilion outside” (translated by the author).

The last statement refers to the two-sided cultural event policy that has marked the profile of Stift Melk on the cultural tourism market. On the one hand side, the abbey enacts “international high culture” (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.) through events such as the advent concerts in the abbey church organised by the Austrian Broadcast Organisation (ORF), in 2000 and 2001 (Stift Melk (2007b), n.p.a.), or the “Internationale Barocktage”, a series of musical events featuring well known artists performing music from the Baroque Age. It is held each year towards the end of May, over the course of four consecutive days, and is a witness to a successful partnership of musicians and the abbey for almost 30 years now.

22 „Also, das hat sich sehr entwickelt. (1) Vor 10 Jahren war es sozusagen noch möglich dass man’s mitgezählt hat. Und dann, seit fünf Jahren, ist es also sehr in die Höhe gegangen mit all den Dingen, sodass wir bereits Terminprobleme haben, dass wir bereits sagen müssen (1) zu knapp hintereinander, zu viele Sachen. Das wird schön langsam heikel. […] wir haben dann auch bewusst nicht nur auf große Highlights gesetzt, sondern auch kleinere Sachen zum Beispiel im Gartenpavillon draußen“ (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).
On the other hand side, Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.) mentions that Stift Melk also offers a series of events featuring popular culture such as musicals or theatre productions, mainly enacted through pupils of the local abbey school.

In between, the spectrum is full of various differing events, such as international advent choirs, contemporary art exhibitions, Lower Austrian State Exhibitions (in 1960, 1980 and 2000), summer or night-time concerts at the abbey park, the pavilion or the abbey church, or themed months or years like 2006, which had as an overall theme “Mozart was Here”. Its feature was a “Mozart Path” in the abbey park, film evenings, concerts, readings and other kinds of related events following the 250th anniversary of Mozart and his visits to the abbey in 1767 and 1768 (Stift Melk (2007c), n.p.a.).

What is more, Pater Martin (ibid.) argues that the abbey does not only host its own cultural events, concerts or conferences (e.g. the international garden symposia in 2006 and 2007), but also makes room for outside organisers by renting out available facilities. In the past, these have included medical congresses as well as the international conference of the Waldzell Institute.
What is more, there is a growing number of jazz concerts too. They do not only feature internationally well known artists, but also new, emerging artists from the local surroundings. One example of this is taking place in March 2007, where renowned jazz artists stage a concert and former pupils of the abbey school play the introduction. The concert is recorded by the ORF and transmitted during the “Jazz Night” on the radio station Ö1. Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.) mentions that

“And this is really important to me that there are always new things- not only reproduction, but that culture is actually produced, that something new [comes out] of these young artists, and in this case both gets together […] well-known artists and the others in the pre-programme”

(translated by the author).

Over the past few decades, the cultural profile as well as the significance of the abbey of Melk for contemporary art and cultural production has been raised consistently (Stift Melk (2007d), n.p.a.). What has marked this development is openness and readiness to deal with modern, contemporary cultural movements at Stift Melk. Religion is not a borderline to these. According to Pater Martin (ibid.), the border has to be drawn where developments were to move in a cynical direction disrespecting human life and values. The strength and convincing argument of the abbey in cultural tourism product development therefore lies in its open, sometimes controversial, dialogue with past and present, a theme which is dominated throughout the building: “From Past to Present – Stift Melk in History and Modernity”

(translated by the author), which is the theme of the guided tour throughout the abbey museum.

23 „Und das ist mir ganz wichtig dass immer wieder neue Sachen- nicht nur Reproduktion, sondern dass auch wirklich Kultur produziert wird, dass was Neues von diesen jungen Leuten […] in dem Fall kommen da beide zusammen ganz bekannte und, die anderen im Vorprogramm“ (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).

24 „Unterwegs vom Gestern ins Heute – Stift Melk in Geschichte und Gegenwart“ (Stift Melk (2007e), n.p.a.).
7.6 Heritage Interpretation and Marketing Activities

There is no doubt that heritage interpretation contributes a lot to the success story of Stift Melk, and arguably, it is what most of the visitors come for: to learn about and experience the culture and art history of this renowned World Heritage Site in terms of Baroque architecture and Austrian history (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).

A great deal is done to ensure that visitors are left satisfied with their visit to the abbey, and this includes providing them with a memorable experience during their visit. The key factors as to how and why heritage interpretation has taken on such a successful development are laid down over the course of the following paragraph.

7.6.1 Heritage Interpretation at Stift Melk

At some point during the expert interview (ibid.), Pater Martin argues that the

“[…] principal motivation [for visitors to come] does not matter; the main thing is for them to come and then we can work on providing them with an experience, something that might exceed their expectations” (translated by the author).

This statement already hints towards the pro-active policy that Stift Melk follows in creating an experience for their visitors to the abbey. Heritage interpretation starts where visitors enter the abbey at the Imperial Staircase to follow a guided tour through the redesigned abbey museum. Its features are the Imperial Rooms, designed for a visit of the Austrian Emperor Joseph II, the Marble Hall, the Terrace, the Library, the Abbey Church and the Coloman Courtyard.

25 „[…] die erste Motivation ist wurscht; Hauptsache (2) sie kommen einmal und dann (1) müssen wir dran arbeiten dass sie was erleben können, etwas das vielleicht über ihre Erwartungen hinausgeht“ (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).
After hosting the Lower Austrian State Exhibition in 2000 (“The Search for a Paradise Lost – European Culture as Reflected in its Monasteries” (Stift Melk (2007a), n.p.a.), a new concept for the abbey museum had been designed in conjunction with a renowned architect and theatre director. The aim was to create a more contemporary museum exhibition, thereby using different light, sound and tactile effects (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).

Multimedia techniques designed by the Ars Electronica in Linz are furthermore used to enhance the presentation of the historical objects. For instance, one room is equipped with a computer that is used to show the different building phases of the abbey from its origins as a Babenberger castle to its present state as a Baroque building. The most ingenious combination in the process of using multimedia techniques for heritage interpretation at Stift Melk is a treasure chest with a 1000-years-old coin: The coin can be touched, which then “introduces” itself on a nearby computer screen and explains its epoch in four different languages.

Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.) concludes that perhaps multimedia may once be used as an interpretational tool in the library, too, opening up the rich world of ancient books to its visitors. However, the use of this technique in the future is limited to the extent of available space. Care needs furthermore to be taken not to override the original message and value of the ancient objects. The last room of the exhibition of the abbey museum has arguably achieved this balance. It shows a short film about the present-day responsibilities of the abbey:
the school, the visitors, the parishes, the agricultural properties. The film runs in silence at the back so that the guide can continue his or her explanations. In this way, the sequence is merely supportive to the individual narration.

In 2006, Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.) mentions that there has been one day where 87 guided tours have been held, plus external tour guides coming in with their own groups. Substituting guided tours for example with audio guides or simple text brochures guiding the visit is therefore not possible, since the guide “also has to ensure discipline, not only interpretation”\(^{26}\) (translated by the author).

Last but not least, and out of a necessity in dealing with national and international visitors, the abbey museum features all room descriptions in four languages (German, English, French and Italian) and all object descriptions in two languages, German and English. Adapting oneself to the needs of demand is therefore ever more important. This is also true of the marketing activities, which are described over the course of the next paragraphs.

7.6.2 Marketing

Stift Melk is a living abbey, and one that continues to evolve in the traditional sense of one of the spiritual and cultural centres of Lower Austria. Just as well, “modern” phenomena such as marketing and Public Relations (PR) are taken over by the abbey itself, following the creation of the department “Kultur & Tourismus”.

The office, run by Pater Martin Rotheneder (ibid.) together with several other people, does a great deal of work in public relations and marketing, organising and coordinating the range of events, answering to individual queries and wishes, etc.

According to Prüller (2007, n.p.a.), advertising efforts (of events) are not aggressively pursued, but sensitively managed following the long tradition of hosting national and international cultural events at Stift Melk. This has also got to

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\(^{26}\) “Also, der Führer hat auch eine Ordnungsfunktion, und nicht nur die Erklärungsfunktion” (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).
do with the ever growing number or requests for additional events at the abbey. Flyers about ongoing concerts are sent out regularly to individual subscribers, together with the annual overview at the beginning of each year. Contacts are closely kept, e.g. through a proper cultural index (“Kulturkartei”) of regular visitors.

Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.) agrees that direct mailings are of a growing importance to Stift Melk. In addition, he explains that the marketing activities of the abbey are supported through regional and interregional activities, such as the promotion of Stift Melk as one of the top destination targets in Lower Austria, the “Top-Ausflugsziele Niederösterreich”\(^27\), or its promotion along with many other cultural and natural attractions as part of the “Niederösterreich-Card”\(^28\), another Lower Austrian marketing initiative.

Regarding trade fairs, Stift Melk is present either by itself or together with other abbeys as part of the “Klösterreich”\(^29\), an association of Austrian abbeys, monasteries and fraternities. Recently, Stift Melk had been present at several tourism trade fairs, such as the Austrian Travel Business (ATB), the “Internationaler Bustouristik Verband e.V.” (RDA) and the “Internationale Tourismus Börse” (ITB). According to Pater Martin (ibid.), this is useful for tending to both business to client (B2C) and business to business (B2B) contacts.

According to the homepage of “Klösterreich” (Klösterreich (2007a), n.p.a.), the association has been founded several years ago as a marketing platform for Austrian abbeys, convents and fraternities promoting their spiritual and cultural heritage to their visitors. Currently, it counts 21 members, including one in Hungary, two in the Czech Republic and the rest in Austria. The virtue of this membership for Stift Melk lies in increased market presence and a logical support of the abbey’s activities through the association’s goals. Its homepage provides visitors with general information, current offers, ideas for excursions as well as ongoing events at each of the abbeys. Furthermore, a sales manual for travel

\(^{27}\) See [http://www.ausflug.at/partner/topausflug/](http://www.ausflug.at/partner/topausflug/) for further information

\(^{28}\) See [http://www.niederoesterreich-card.at/noecard/](http://www.niederoesterreich-card.at/noecard/) for further information

\(^{29}\) See [http://www.noe.co.at/kloesterreich/](http://www.noe.co.at/kloesterreich/) for further information
agencies and tour operators interested in Stift Melk can be downloaded from the homepage, including all the necessary information to plan an organised visit to the abbey.\textsuperscript{30}

Concluding, one can say that marketing and heritage interpretation at Stift Melk follows a well thought out strategy that aims at appealing to its visitors, both in terms of information as well as experience (e.g. the redesigned abbey museum).

A key success factor that mirrors the development in all the areas already treated (product development, heritage interpretation and marketing) is the abbey’s conscious engagement to allow for a modern perspective towards its heritage, successfully creating a bridge between present-day demand and offer.

\section*{7.7 Characteristics of Demand}

According to visitor statistics provided by Stift Melk (Stift Melk/Kultur & Tourismus (2007), n.p.a.), \textbf{more than 14 million people} have visited the Abbey of Melk over the course of the last 40 years (1968 – 2006). An all-time high during this period could be reached in 1980, where the second Lower Austria State Exhibition (“Kaiser Joseph II und seine Zeit”) triggered 660 000 visitors in one year. In 2006, 474 401 people visited Stift Melk. This is about 30 000 visitors more than in 2005, prompted by increased levels of visitors during the months of April, May, October and December 2006.

Generally speaking, the effects of seasonality are just as strong at Stift Melk as at Mont Saint Michel. The months from May to September dominate with 74\% of all visitors to the Abbey of Melk in 2006. As a consequence, \textbf{three out of four visitors are present during the summer months}.

The following table (see table 4) shows the development of visitor numbers since the year 1980.

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Visitors \\
\hline
1980 & 660 000 \\
1981 & 630 000 \\
1982 & 640 000 \\
1983 & 650 000 \\
1984 & 660 000 \\
1985 & 670 000 \\
1986 & 680 000 \\
1987 & 690 000 \\
1988 & 700 000 \\
1989 & 710 000 \\
1990 & 720 000 \\
1991 & 730 000 \\
1992 & 740 000 \\
1993 & 750 000 \\
1994 & 760 000 \\
1995 & 770 000 \\
1996 & 780 000 \\
1997 & 790 000 \\
1998 & 800 000 \\
1999 & 810 000 \\
2000 & 820 000 \\
2001 & 830 000 \\
2002 & 840 000 \\
2003 & 850 000 \\
2004 & 860 000 \\
2005 & 870 000 \\
2006 & 474 401 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\begin{center}
\textsuperscript{30} An illustrative copy of the sales manual of Stift Melk (2007/2008) can be found in Appendix V.
\end{center}
Table 3: Visitor Numbers at the Abbey of Melk

The point years are summarised in the following (ibid.):

- 1980: Lower Austrian State Exhibition: 660 000 visitors;
- 1989: Exhibition “900 Jahre Benediktiner”: 594 831 visitors;

Another noticeable development is the number of visitors to the abbey park renovated in 2000 and reopened for visitors in 2001. At the time, little more than 7000 visitors had visited the “Stiftspark”, whereas in 2006, this figure had nearly doubled to reach 13 500 visitors.

“When we renovated the park, I wasn’t aware that like in a chain reaction, everyone was to jump onto this bandwagon! […] and all of a sudden, the ‘garden’ and ‘park’ theme exploded! This is also due to the initiative of the Landesrat Sobotka [of Lower Austria], “Natur im Garten”, which has evolved as an independent area and became really important to us”31 (translated by the author).

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31 „Wie wir den Park restauriert haben, hab ich gar nicht gewusst, dass das so- wirklich lawinenartig alle dann auf dieses Thema aufspringen! […] und plötzlich ist das Gartenthema, das Parkthema explodiert! Auch durch den Landesrat Sobotka mit seiner Initiative Natur im Garten ist das auch wirklich eine ganz eigenständige Sache geworden, und also für uns ganz ganz wichtig“ (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).
According to Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.), the majority of the visitors are motivated to visit Stift Melk for reasons such as culture and art history. Stift Melk symbolises a highlight of the Baroque Age as well as an exceptionally rich site in terms of Austrian history.

As a consequence, many visitors come to engage in a learning environment. The real challenge, Pater Martin (ibid.) mentions, lies in providing them with an experience that surpasses their expectations. And this is where the redesigned abbey museum as well as the number of additional cultural events at Stift Melk come in: They really provide an additional feature to the overall offer in terms of an extraordinary, memorable experience. Since many visitors to Stift Melk can be called ‘mindful’ (see Moscardo (2001), pp. 13-15), i.e. engaged and eager to learn, they are captivated at the point where their visit is further enhanced by an emotional experience, such as a night-time concert or a state-of-the-art, multimedia abbey museum.

What adds up to this fact is that visitors can now explore the carefully renovated abbey park, too. Furthermore, according to Pater Martin (ibid.), it took about five years to create that knowledge that the Abbey of Melk can always be visited, in summer and in winter. This new awareness has in turn contributed to a longer average time of visit: up to half a day, including a visit to the abbey park.

7.8 Authenticity and Levels of Commodification

One of the duties of Pater Martin, with whom the expert interview at Stift Melk was conducted, is to take care of the liturgy at the abbey, apart from culture and tourism.

“And there, it is our example that at noon all the bells start ringing, the organ starts playing, the monks that are in the house hold their midday prayers, and that people who are in the church are invited [to participate]. And I think, once a day this should really take place, so that people can still
feel the original reason for why this building had been built (translated by the author).

This is a strong emphasis of living authenticity at Stift Melk, enhanced by the knowledge that a 900 years tradition is enacted in this act of midday prayers. An openness to consider visitors is given by the fact that the abbey church is not closed for visits during this time, but rather that people are invited to participate in the liturgy or to pass quietly in the background (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).

Furthermore, authenticity is also enhanced in the abbey’s museum, where the history of the abbey and the origins of the life of the holy Benedict, the founder of the Benedictine rule, are depicted in a lively and timely manner, knowing that a group of monks continues to live to these rules to this present day (ibid.). This really is a strong motivator for people looking for and valuing authenticity at Stift Melk. Pater Martin (ibid.) argues that

“and here we try, without being missionary – at this point, our community really is very open – [...] that they [the visitors] leave with changed ideas of how things were when they were arriving.”

However, he admits that the issue of mass tourism, especially during the peak season in the summer months, is endangering the possibility of a full, undisturbed experience of the abbey and that people leave knowing they haven’t seen much of the abbey except for other people.

As the Abbey of Melk has evolved into a “must-see” for tourists of the region, the aspect of commodification is enhanced when peak visiting times are achieved. This includes shoving people through the museum during guided tours, which at peak times may be departing every five minutes (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).

32 „Und da ist es unser Beispiel dass es um 12 Uhr mittags ist, dass da die Glocken zum Bimmeln anfangen, die Orgel spielt, dass dann halt die Mönche die im Haus sind ein Mittagsgebet halten, und dass die Leute die in der Kirche sind eingeladen werden. Und ich finde, einmal am Tag soll das wenigstens sein, dass man merkt aha, da ist auch noch die ursprüngliche (1) der ursprüngliche Zweck, warum das Gebäude gebaut wurde, zu spüren“ (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).

33 „Und natürlich versucht man, ohne dass man Missionar sein will – da ist unsere Gemeinschaft wirklich sehr offen – [...] dass sie anders gehen als sie gekommen sind“ (ibid.).
Apart from that, the looks of the abbey and its premises (the courtyards, the abbey park) do not appear to have been commoditised for serving the purpose of mass tourism. This is different to what has been constituted in the case of the Mont Saint Michel in France, whose village has suffered from the commercialisation aspect caused by the onslaught of almost three million tourists each year.

“Personally, I hope that this entire thing [mass tourism] still continues to work just as well over the course of the next five years. [...] And then there will be new demands to satisfy. You cannot really fix on something for ever. This does not work” \(^{34}\) (translated by the author).

As in the case of Mont Saint Michel, the following matrix (see Figure 14) presented in the theoretical part of the thesis is used to visualize the situation of Stift Melk in terms of authenticity versus commodification. \(^{35}\) It is based on the perception of the author following three main visits to the abbey.

Figure 14: The Abbey of Melk in a Tourism Environment

Source: adapted from du Cros (2001), p. 168

\(^{34}\) “Also sehr persönlich hoffe ich, dass das Ganze noch vielleicht fünf Jahre so intensiv gut funktioniert. [...] und dann wird’s neue Bedürfnisse geben. Man kann so schwer sozusagen jetzt etwas festlegen für ewig. Das funktioniert nicht” (ibid.).

The figure shows the abbey of Melk situated in the upper right hand corner of this matrix. This judgment of rather high robusticity (of the heritage resource against the impacts of commodification) and its high market appeal for tourism is based on a number of individual factors described earlier in this chapter. In the future, care needs to be taken that this high level of robusticity is not compromised under the further impacts of mass tourism.

7.9 Indicators for Sustainable Development

In the case study of Stift Melk, the analysis of the indicators for sustainable development primarily focuses on the abbey itself, including its immediate surroundings. This is slightly different to the case on Mont Saint Michel, where the recent developments relating to the re-establishment of the maritime character of the Mont Saint Michel bay have provided for a wider point of departure.

In addition, this section is used to introduce the sustainable tourism development project at the Abbey of Melk, which is presented later on in a side note. Its aim is to conclude the case study on Stift Melk by means of an applied example of how product development can lead to producing sustainable results in the future, not only in terms of tourism, but also in terms of the local abbey’s heritage itself.

One sustainable action in terms of encouraging the local population to become messengers of their own heritage and that of the abbey was the fact of having one day in November 2006 where the locals (the inhabitants of the administrative district Melk) were given free access to visit the abbey. According to Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.), it was quite a successful event, with a few hundred people joining in from the nearby area. In the future, offering such a day might be targeted especially at regional multiples, such as hotel or restaurant owners, similar to the example of Mont Saint Michel and its “éductours” of the abbey, aimed at local tourist professionals.

This recent initiative confirms the findings from literature on sustainable tourism development, where Walsh et al. (2001, pp. 197) have argued that local
inhabitants are the pillar of creating local identity and so-called “sense of a place”, underlining their importance for any consideration of sustainable development.

As far as regional partnerships and networking are concerned, Pater Martin (ibid.) mentions that there are combination tickets for the Abbey at Melk and two other historical monuments in the region, namely the castles of the Schallaburg and Artstetten. Like this, visitors are encouraged to benefit from more than one attraction in the surrounding region. When recommending these partners in the offer of Stift Melk, it is of primordial importance that the same level of quality is maintained throughout the single attractions.

“Everything needs to be of a certain quality, I guess. […] This is what people like and expect! You can hardly send them to a place where they have nothing but 20 yellowed photographs! This needs to fit”36 (translated by the author).

In addition, Stift Melk is integrated into the marketing activities of the top destination targets of Lower Austria together with eight other abbeys (Top Ausflugsziele (2007), n.p.a.). The platform offers detailed and up-to-date information for visitors to plan their trip as well as further excursion targets in the local surroundings, encouraging people to stay in the respective destination.

A similar networking approach is taken by the “Klösterreich” (2007a, n.p.a.). Their offer is designed to bridge tradition, culture, spirituality and modernity in a combined effort to open up the abbeys’ heritage for tourism. This is done through the common promotion of the following topics (ibid. (2007b), n.p.a.):

- Abbey gardens and parks in the “Klösterreich”;
- Activity themes throughout the “Klösterreich”, such as “Art Treasures”, “Baroque”, “Library” or “Painting”;
- Abbeys for children and the youth (“Kloster for Kids”, educational tours designed for children, projects and experience);

36 “Aber äh, das muss alles irgendwie eine gewisse Qualität haben. Das haben die Leute gern ja! Man kann sie schwer wohin schicken, wo 20 vergilbte Fotos hängen! Das muss stimmen.” (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.)
• Wine culture in Austria and the role of the abbeys;
• Health in the “Klösterreich”;
• Celebrations and conferences.

According to authors such as Timothy/Boyd (2003, pp. 178-80), authenticity, interpretation, access to heritage, inter- and intra-generational dialogue as well as long-term planning and participatory management are at the forefront of sustainable development in the cultural heritage tourism domain. Stift Melk has done a great deal to ensure that these aspects are followed and applied in their policy towards dealing with visitors to the abbey, as the last sections have shown. A future threat to sustainable development at the abbey may come in the form of increased mass tourism, unless prior action is taken to soothe its impacts. The following side note is going to show a possible answer to this future threat.

7.9.1 Side note: The Opening up of the “Nordbastei” at Stift Melk for Tourism

“Our future goal in tourist innovation lies in the project on our bastion”\(^{37}\) (translated by the author).

The project of opening up the “Nordbastei” at the main entrance to Stift Melk from the West is considered an innovative solution to deal with the impacts of ever increasing visitor flows to the abbey. The following paragraphs are aimed at explaining this project in more detail.

\(^{37}\) “[...] was in Zukunft geschehen soll, um wieder touristische Innovation zu setzen [...] ist unser Basteiprojekt” (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).
7.9.1.1 Original Idea

The idea which lies at the heart of the “Nordbastei” is for it to work as a key turning point for visitors to the abbey park as well as the abbey itself. Its strategic location in the entire building complex is illustrated by the following image (see image 10):

Image 10: The “Nordbastei” as a Central Hub between the Abbey and its Park

Furthermore, according to Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.), room was needed in order to create a new waiting area, a new shop area as well as a new, centralised information spot (ticket sale, additional information, book shop, etc.). He explains that this was found in the “Nordbastei”, which originally had been built in the Baroque Age out of symmetry reasons with its southern equivalent, the “Südbastei”. Since then, it remained idle up to this present day. Now, plans for rebuilding and using this tower have taken a large leap: They have both been agreed to internally by the fraternal convent at Stift Melk as well externally by the Bundesdenkmalamt, the Austrian State Office for the Protection of Historical Monuments.
7.9.1.2 Development and Finance

The actual time frame for the development of the “Nordbastei” is given by approximately 18 months, with building works scheduled to start at the end of 2007 (Griebaum (2007), n.p.a.). Financial aid is provided by the Lower Austrian Economic Development Agency, “EcoPlus”, the Federal State of Austria and the Lower Austrian Regional Government (Pater Martin (2007), n.p.a.). A feasibility study has already been conducted by “EcoPlus” at the beginning of 2006, which resulted in an approval for financial support of the project.

7.9.1.3 Planning Issues

Initial discussion related to tourism issues has focused primarily on the question of access, namely where to place the entrance(s) to the tower (Griebaum (2007), n.p.a.; Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).\(^{38}\) According to the experts, the “Nordbastei” offers three main floors: the ground floor, the first floor and the roof terrace. Two entrances are planned for the ground floor. The original proposition focused on ‘forcing’ visitors of the park through the newly created shop area on the ground floor of the building. However, this was thought of as being not very elegantly. A new solution focused on placing the main entrance at an entirely different spot facing the outside square. This is the main arrival point for visitors to Stift Melk, who choose to access either the abbey, the park, or both, from there. The new entrance should therefore act like a funnel: through the use of an eye-catcher, its aim is to draw visitors into the shop and exhibition area of the “Nordbastei” and stimulate their interest for further activities (e.g. a visit of the upper floors, of the abbey and its museum or the park).

According to Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.), the first floor, or “Gallery”, as well as the roof terrace, should only be accessible against a charge. Otherwise, \(^{38}\) See Appendix VI for architectural plans (horizontal and vertical cross sections of the building).
he felt, people could argue that they had already seen everything and were not willing to choose to enter the additional exhibition rooms after all.

In order to make these facilities accessible for tourists, a new lift and staircase are going to be added to the centre of the tower (Griebaum (2007), n.p.a.). A modern glass construction, this new building feature will allow for more light to penetrate the building. In addition to providing for a modern contrast to the ancient tower vaults, its purpose is to ensure a warmer and more welcoming atmosphere, too.

7.9.1.4 Content and Offer

The first floor of the “Nordbastei” serves as additional space for exhibitions, concerts or other types of contemporary events at the abbey, i.e. an extension of existing cultural activities (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.). The name “Gallery” was actually suggested by the building master (Griebaum (2007), n.p.a.) to make the room stand out from the rest of the available facilities at Stift Melk. In principal, the theme of the gallery is to be varied constantly, reflecting the temporary nature of its exhibitions (e.g. modern art, religious themes or the topic of World Heritage) (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.). An opening theme related to Nature and Creation, perhaps in connection with the abbey park, has already been thought of by Pater Martin (ibid.).

The roof terrace (260 m²) is equally opened up for visitors, lending itself to activities such as summer concerts, open air cinemas, events including catering, or other types of activities (Griebaum (2007), n.p.a.).

Along the border of the roof terrace, glass walls including plates with images and explanations of what can be seen in the surroundings are planned (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.):

“Well there needs to be a glass wall so that people can’t jump over or climb around. And this can perfectly be used to explain the nearer and further surroundings. This would really provide for a good pedagogical and tourism
effect. And people are drawn to stay longer while reading, interested ones are drawn to stay while reading” 39 (translated by the author).

7.9.1.5 Visitor Flows

The second entrance to the “Nordbastei” is from the inner courtyard of the abbey. Especially during the late spring and early autumn periods, when pupils and large tourist groups fill up the grounds of the courtyard, the additional rooms provided by the “Nordbastei” could come in as the saving anchor for the problem of congestion. According to Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007, n.p.a.), future hopes for the project are linked to deflecting visitor flows away from the main congestion areas, so that a good third or quarter of the annual visitors (about 170 000) can be calculated for the rooms of the “Nordbastei”.

Following the explanations of both experts (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.; Griebenbaum (2007), n.p.a.), the inner courtyard, or “Torwartehof”, is often congested due to the enormous number of visitors at peak times. The project of opening up the “Nordbastei” and creating a new entrance towards this courtyard could entail the possibility of restructuring the area of this inner courtyard, the “Torwartehof” with 3.000 m², too.

Regarding demand, the entire area of the “Nordbastei” is planned to be accessible in a barrier-free manner for handicapped people (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.). The tower is really to be turned into an example of how to successfully combine state-of-the-art visitor facilities and access with existing, traditional building structures.

39 “Denn es muss ja eine Glaswand geben, damit die Leute nicht hinunterhupfen und herumklettern. Und das könnte man toll verwenden, um die nähere und weitere Umgebung genauer zu erklären. Also das wäre noch ein schöner touristischer und pädagogischer Effekt den man da oben anbringen kann. Und die Leute verweilen beim Lesen, Interessierte verweilen beim Lesen” (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.).
7.9.1.6 Sustainable Development Action

The following statement made by Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.) sums up the central issue of the project on opening up the Nordbastei for tourism.

“Well the thing is: On the one hand side, individual tourists should be given more information, and on the other hand side, the contact area between the groups and the Abbey of Melk, especially the abbey, should be enlarged. And thus [its principal aim is to] prolong the average time of stay (translated by the author).

The major goals of the project are therefore to:

- Provide visitors with more information and an enhanced experience to their stay at the Abbey of Melk;
- Increase the contact area between the abbey and the group/mass tourists in an attempt to make them stay longer on the premises and provide for a more in-depth dimension to their experience.

7.10 Concluding Remarks

Similarly to the case study on Mont Saint Michel, the last section in this chapter is used to sum up the main points of the previously treated issues. It relates to the research questions that have guided its analysis, and furthermore explains the strengths and weaknesses that could have been identified in the case of Stift Melk.

As already outlined several times over the course of the preceding chapter, the major strength of the Abbey at Melk lies in a holistic, open-minded approach to the issues regarding its cultural and tourism development. Translated into its policy for

40 “Also es geht darum, dass wir unsere Individualtouristen einmal mit mehr Informationen beschenken und dass wir auch die Kontaktfläche der Gruppen mit dem Stift Melk, konkret mit dem Stift Melk, vergrößern. Und dadurch die Aufenthaltsdauer verlängern” (ibid.).
product development, this means encouraging a dialogue between past and present, and openness towards the influences from the modern world (e.g. contemporary art exhibitions, concerts and events). At the same time, the Benedictine rule guiding the religious principles at the abbey is rigorously maintained, enhancing authenticity through the living enactment of a tradition more than 900 years old.

Heritage interpretation is enacted following a similar way. Its roots are in the past, but its output is in the present. The presentation of the heritage of Stift Melk is honest and impressive in terms of history and historical artefacts; however the presentation techniques are clearly influenced by modernity. This is vital in order not to lose the connection to today’s visitors, and it has become a characteristic of the modern travelling society to at expect at least some of these developments when visiting a cultural heritage attraction like Stift Melk.

Marketing supports these developments, too. It is not pursued aggressively, but persistently, maintaining high quality of the offer and marketing partnerships.

As far as the impacts of mass tourism are concerned, this is clearly a threat to an abbey like Stift Melk, similar to the one presented in the case study on Mont Saint Michel. It may result in a weakness if nothing is done to counteract its negative tendencies, like commodification and shallow mass tourism visitor experiences.

However, the last example of the opening up of the Nordbastei, a step forward into a more sustainable product development environment, can be taken as an early response to alarm bells in the future. Sustainability is clearly desirable for a living attraction like Stift Melk, and it needs to incorporate both tourism as well as the concerns of the local community (of Benedictine monks and the surrounding population). The future is going to tell how well this example is going to succeed in achieving its mission.
8 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter is concerned with presenting the findings and conclusions from the two case study analyses. Since the focus group discussion is only going to be relevant for the development of the thesis’ recommendations for further action, its findings and conclusions are presented as part of the following chapter (see chapter 9 on the results of the focus group discussion), leading up to the final recommendations for action.

The chapter is structured in two main areas. First of all, the findings from the case study analyses are summed up in a comparative SWOT analysis. This is useful to pinpoint the major strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in each of the two cases in a detailed and succinct way.

Second, the SWOT analyses are used to draw relevant conclusions from them. They are presented as the main competence areas of each of the two World Heritage Sites with regards to their experience and know-how in dealing with cultural heritage tourism. Ultimately, these are to build up the strategic recommendations for action in key issues of cultural heritage tourism, presented in Chapter 10.

8.1 SWOT Analysis of Mont Saint Michel

The following table (see Table 4) is concerned with the SWOT analysis of the Mont Saint Michel. Both tables (the one on the Mont Saint Michel as well as the one on Stift Melk) have been designed in the same way, allowing the reader an immediate comparison of the main statements made.
**Table 4: SWOT Analysis of Mont Saint Michel**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ 1st World Heritage Site of the French territory</td>
<td>- Large congestion during peak times (cars, people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Second-most visited site in France</td>
<td>- Limited average time of visit of the site (3-4 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Emblematic image on a national and international scale</td>
<td>- Imbalanced visitors flows to the surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Classified among the Most Beautiful Bays in the World</td>
<td>- Limited interest for visiting the abbey out of a visit to the Mont Saint Michel (declared intention to visit the abbey: 53%; actual figure: about 33%) (^{41})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Professional State Organization (MONUM) responsible for the management of the abbey for Tourism</td>
<td>- High prices (abbey, restaurants, hotels, museums, souvenirs, …)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Product Development at the abbey and in the surroundings actually meets demand (night-time visits, classic concerts, bay walks, etc.)</td>
<td>- Increased commodification of the site due to the impacts of mass tourism, especially during the summer months (peak period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Range of interpretational facilities at the abbey (guided tours, lecture visits, prestige visits etc.)</td>
<td>- Added interpretational facilities in the village (not really in place)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ National and international marketing activities (press releases, press trips, “éductours”, partnerships, etc.)</td>
<td>- Involvement of all stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Heritage partnerships, bay routes, increased networking to promote the entire region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Increased demand for exceptional experiences, such as the night-time, prestige and lecture visits to the abbey</td>
<td>➢ Impacts and effects of mass tourism at the abbey and in the village of Mont Saint Michel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Better valorisation of the abbey as a historic monument through minimalist edition of the night-time</td>
<td>➢ Natural erosion of the site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Sanding up of the bay through the constructed dam, diminishment of the tidal effects of the sea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{41}\) Based on the visitor report of the Mission Mont-Saint-Michel (2004), n.p.a.
Discussion of the Findings and Conclusions

- Search for personal, emotional experiences (extraordinary visits to the abbey at night or after the normal opening hours)
- Developments in the course of the Re-Establishment of the Maritime Character of the Mont Saint Michel Bay
- Redirection of visitor flows to Mont Saint Michel to benefit the entire region/back country

Source: Proper Construct

8.2 SWOT Analysis of Stift Melk

The following table (see table 7) is concerned with the SWOT analysis of Stift Melk. It follows the same structure like the one on the Mont Saint Michel.

Table 5: SWOT Analysis of Stift Melk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Historical significance of the site of Stift Melk in relation to the history of the Republic of Austria (&quot;Ostarrichi&quot;)</td>
<td>- Limited average time of visit, especially by group or mass tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Living tradition of religion and culture that continues throughout this day (&gt;900 years Benedictine community)</td>
<td>- Limited space to visit on the premises of the abbey building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Among the most-visited heritage attractions of Austria</td>
<td>- Single areas on the premises, such as the inner courtyard or separate rooms of the abbey museum especially susceptible to congestion during peak times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ World Heritage since 2000 (part of the Wachau Cultural Landscape)</td>
<td>- Coordination at the entrance between information and ticket sale departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Emblematic image on a national and international scale (jewel of</td>
<td>- Limited resources for dealing with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion of the Findings and Conclusions

- Baroque architecture
  - Product Development as a bridge between the past and the present (high culture and popular culture)
  - Successful partnerships (Internationale Barocktage, cooperation with the region, networking with other Austrian abbeys)
  - Heritage interpretation adapted to suit the needs of demand in terms of experience design
  - Authenticity
  - Abbey park and garden theme (trend topic in Lower Austria)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building project of opening up the Nordbastei for tourism (increased contact area with visitors, turning point to link the abbey with its garden park)</td>
<td>Impacts and effects of increasing mass tourism at the premises of the abbey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broader market appeal through the combination of past heritage with contemporary art and cultural production</td>
<td>Carrying capacity of the site runs the danger of being exceeded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong motivational factors for visiting Stift Melk, such as the search for personal or meaningful experiences</td>
<td>Aspect of commodification under increased visitation (authentic, peaceful visitor experience may become threatened or disassociated with Stift Melk after all)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public awareness for issues of sustainability (benefit in terms of personal involvement and opportunities for product development</td>
<td>Increasing costs of conservation and renovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional networks to enhance the quality of the offer at Stift Melk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Proper Construct
8.3 Conclusions from the Case Study Analyses

After presenting a discussion of the findings from the two case studies, the aim of the following sections is to draw conclusions based on exactly these results. They are presented as the “Main Fields of Competence” in each of the two cases. A discussion of the requirements and possible answers to the research question laid down in Chapter 1 is provided afterwards.

8.3.1 Main Fields of Competence in the case of Mont Saint Michel

Based on the case study analysis as well as the comparative SWOT analysis, the following components have been identified as the key competence areas of the Mont Saint Michel:

- **Professionalism** of dealing with tourism at the Abbey of Mont Saint Michel (product development, marketing activities, range of interpretational facilities);
- **Successful promotion** as one of the most important, most striking and most exceptional cultural heritage treasures on a national and international scale;
- **Fulfilling the needs of demand** through a variety of pro-active measures in product development and heritage interpretation;
- **Networking initiatives** to open up the back country of the Mont Saint Michel bay region for other cultural heritage tourism activities (deflecting visitor flows away from only travelling to the Mont Saint Michel alone);
- **State project** to re-establish the maritime character in the bay region around Mont Saint Michel, affecting the future of sustainable development and the building up of the necessary awareness for future action in the entire bay region.
In the case of the Mont Saint Michel, sustainable development of its cultural heritage resources is intrinsically linked to the development of both products and offers for tourism. This is true because it creates a more refined network of activities that tourists can use, not only at the abbey or the village of Mont Saint Michel, but also – most importantly for future sustainable development – in the back region of its bay country. In a second step, it provides the managers of this local heritage with the opportunity to earn money from these product development actions, which in turn can be used to the benefit of conservation and heritage preservation.

The customer, or visitor, is certainly key to this process, since very often and especially in the case of the Mont Saint Michel, his or her demands are taken as a stimulus for the creation of new products. The entire relationship of offer being tied to demand and vice versa is certainly crucial for sustainable development action. What is more, it can draw on the current sensibility of people for preserving the heritage resource they visit.

8.3.2 Main Fields of Competence in the case of Stift Melk

As in the case of Mont Saint Michel, the before-mentioned statements are used to draw conclusions with regards to the key competence areas of Stift Melk:

- **Authenticity and market presence** through the fact of Stift Melk being a living abbey that is rooted in the past but continues to evolve in the present;

- **Combined strengths** in presenting cultural heritage and tradition with contemporary art and cultural production (enactment of both traditional high culture and modern popular culture to suit the current levels of demand);

- **Persistent and cooperative marketing** to develop and enhance the position of Stift Melk on the market;
Discussion of the Findings and Conclusions

- **Modern accents in the field of heritage interpretation**, which captivates the attention of a broad audience and is used to transfer tradition, cultural treasures and knowledge to the attention of a modern-day society;

- **Tourist innovation** in developing the offer at Stift Melk: renovation of the abbey museum and the abbey park, opening up of the “Nordbastei” at the entrance into the abbey in order to fuel interest for the range of activities and cultural treasures Stift Melk has to offer and to prolong the average length of stay.

Similarly to what has been said in the case of the Mont Saint Michel, the Abbey of Melk is faced with the challenge of linking offer to demand in order to encourage sustainable development actions of both the local heritage resources as well as tourism. The combination of past and present in its range of activities proposed for visitors is certainly in favour of the sustainable preservation of its heritage, since key values such as authenticity and meaningful heritage interpretation are at the forefront of visitors’ demands to attractions such as Stift Melk.

Sustainable action can also come from innovative solutions in tourist product development, as the opening up of the “Nordbastei” at the Abbey of Melk exemplifies. This leads to sustainability being encouraged in a twofold sense: First of all, visitor flows are deflected away from the main congestion areas and the contact area between the visitor and the abbey is increased. Second, the need for more information and add-on experience is answered, leading to a better overall reflection of the visitor away from the superficial mass tourism experience.
9 RESULTS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

9.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents the findings from the focus group discussion, whose principal aim is to investigate into the needs and expectations of current demand related to cultural heritage attractions. Its ultimate goal is to build in and stimulate the recommendations for further action presented under Chapter 10.

For the purpose of this discussion, six participants have been interviewed. They are classified as non-experts since “demand” for heritage attractions such as Mont Saint Michel or Stift Melk entails, in principal, everybody with an interest for or personal relation to art, history and culture. Participants have been selected on the ground of personal knowledge to the author, and it is “the variety of opinions that [is going to make] most contribution to the greater understanding of specific issues” (Carson et al. (2001), p. 119).

The following table (see Table 6) is going to lay down the exact name and relevant details of each one of the single participants (P1 – P6) in the focus group discussion. Care has been taken to ensure a mixture of backgrounds and personalities in order to obtain as varied opinions and results as possible.

Table 6: Participants in the Focus Group Discussion

| P1     | Cornelia Kleinberger | • Originally from Melk  
|        |                      | • French and Tourism Management Studies  
|        |                      | • Experience as a tourist guide at Stift Melk for 10 years  
|        |                      | • Current position: Tourism at Stift Göttweig  
| P2     | Gabriele Harrer      | • Originally from Krems  
|        |                      | • Owner of “Gärtner Reisen” (incoming group and incentive travel agency) in St. Pölten  

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P3</strong></td>
<td>Gerhard Fischer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many years of experience in customer care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Originally from Dürnstein (Wachau valley)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tour Guide in the Wachau valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25 years of experience in dealing with visitors to the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P4</strong></td>
<td>Manuela König</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employee of the TTG GmbH in Krems (Tiscover)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Current Position: Customer Care, Creation of Websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong interest in cultural and arts tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P5</strong></td>
<td>Heidrun Haag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employee at the Raiffeisenbank in Langenlois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mother of two children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Travel experience, especially with regards to families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P6</strong></td>
<td>Severin Pimperl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fellow Student of the author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thesis in cultural tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has recently visited Stift Melk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Proper Construct

### 9.2 Main Findings

The following subsections relate to the main findings from the focus group discussion. Following personal knowledge and interest, the participants often decided to focus on Stift Melk for their practical discussion of the issues that were introduced during the discussion. This point is especially relevant and useful for the author, since the findings from the focus group discussion are to be built into the thesis’ recommendations for valuing the needs and expectations of demand in cultural heritage tourism.

In the following, each discussion point is given a separate headline, under which the general outcome of each topic brought up by the moderator is summarised.
Results from the Focus Group Discussion

This is underlined, where appropriate, by direct quotations of the most important statements made by individual participants.

For a start, the author used three different introductory questions (so-called “ice-breakers”) to make participants familiar with the research area. These were related to cultural tourism and the characteristics of cultural tourists, the dialogue between religion, culture and tourism and the subject of World Heritage.\(^{42}\)

9.2.1 Cultural Tourism, Religious Heritage and World Heritage

Cultural tourists were discussed by the participants to include:

- Backpacking tourists (young people) visiting cultural heritage attractions;
- Higher educated, more wealthy tourists travelling to see “good old Europe” (i.e. authentic, historical and well-tended buildings);
- 50plus tourists getting “younger” in spirit as well as more agile.

One participant raised the point of “culture”, or “cultural tourism”, being different things to different people, ranging from popular culture (e.g. young people visiting concerts) to high culture (e.g. 50plus people visiting a monastery):

“[…] everybody who undertakes a cultural journey may well decide for himself what he understands by culture. That means that if a teenager goes to a pop concert, that’s basically just as much culture than a 50plus person going to visit a monastery”\(^{43}\) (translated by the author).

This underlines the difficulty of defining “culture”, or “cultural tourism”, already in the literature. Up to this present day, differences in opinions continue to exist.

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\(^{42}\) See moderator’s guideline of the focus group discussion in Appendix II.

\(^{43}\) „[…] jeder, der eine Kulturreise unternimmt, kann ja für sich selber entscheiden was er als Kultur empfindet. Das heißt, wenn ein Jugendlicher auf ein Popkonzert geht ist das eigentlich genauso Kultur wie ein etwas älterer 50plus sich ein Kloster anschaut“ (P6).
Regarding religion, culture and tourism, it was generally argued that culture remains at the forefront of the motives for visiting religion-based cultural heritage attractions such as the abbeys of Melk or Mont Saint Michel. However, it has to be ensured that room is left for both. The needs of those looking for meditation and retreat as well as of those who are travelling chiefly for cultural or other reasons have to be equally addressed. The participants found that a problem was arising in the case of mass tourism, especially with regards to authenticity and religious cultural heritage.

On World Heritage, the discussion focused around the question whether famous national and international attractions, such as Mont Saint Michel or Stift Melk, ‘needed’ something like the World Heritage designation when already faced (in part) by the mass tourism phenomenon. Internationally, it was argued in favour:

“[…] especially on the international […] that they [the visitors] just read ‘World Heritage’ and say ‘Well that’s where we need to go’ (translated by the author).

Apart from that, the “World Heritage” brand was not really considered a necessity for drawing tourism to an already well established destination or attraction (e.g. Stift Melk). At the same time, however, another important aspect was brought up: the issue of protection and preservation through the World Heritage designation.

Finally, the question was concluded by discussing the two-edged situation faced by a lot of World Heritage Sites: On the one hand, they need a lot of money to sustain the very values they were originally inscribed for; money that is hardly available to one single private person. On the other hand, it was argued that (cultural and heritage) tourism could indeed provide for such a value base, taking into account all necessary effects and impacts.

44 “[…] vor allem international […] dass die halt einfach Weltkulturerbe lesen und sich denken ha, da müssen wir hin!” (P4)
9.2.2 Authenticity in Cultural Heritage Tourism

As already discussed over the course of literature, authenticity is a central issue at the heart of cultural heritage tourism. This viewpoint has been confirmed by the participants of the focus group discussion, who consider authenticity to be a decisive factor for visitors to a region such as the Wachau valley or Stift Melk.

“I think it leaves me with a more lasting impression if I know that it has really been like this” (translated by the author).

“Authenticity to touch is crucial, especially for the children” (translated by the author).

On the example of the Abbey of Melk, where a community of Benedictine monks continues to live throughout this present day, it was argued that

“Well it really is like that, it attracts people enormously” (translated by the author).

“They really live there, in Melk. That is the part of the abbey you cannot visit. That is in [the abbeys of] Göttweig and Melk the area that they own, and also the garden. This is therefore truly authentic” (translated by the author).

A negative point was mentioned concerning the desire to remain authentic and at the same time having to deal with the impacts of mass tourism activity. This may also lead to colliding opinions from different kinds of visitors: those who arrive with a historical background valuing detailed information and authenticity, and those with a stronger emphasis on recreation and entertainment.

“Each tourist also has a different perspective I think. There is I’d say [...] the clichéd American who does not care really, who wants to be entertained

45 “Ich finde, es hinterlässt einen bleibenderen Eindruck wenn ich weiß, dass das eben wirklich so war” (P4).
46 „Das Authentische zum Angreifen ist sehr wichtig, speziell für die Kinder“ (P5).
47 “Also es ist wirklich so, es zieht wahnsinnig Leute an” (P1).
48 „Die wohnen ja wirklich dort in Melk. Das ist ja der Teil vom Kloster den man nicht besichtigen kann. Das ist ja in Göttweig wie in Melk der Bereich den sie haben und auch der Garten. Das ist also absolut authentisch“ (P3).
 results from the focus group discussion

[...]. And then there is the cultural tourist looking for high culture, who is extremely responsive to [the question of] authenticity\(^{49}\) (translated by the author).

This already emphasises another point that is followed up over the course of the next section: namely that different types of visitor segments need to be addressed in this context, and that authenticity nowadays needs to be evaluated in terms of individual visitors' expectations and beliefs.

9.2.3 Expectations on Heritage Interpretation

On the question of heritage interpretation, the discussion again confirmed the findings from literature as well as the two case studies, namely that heritage interpretation needs to be \textit{targeted at the visitor}, to \textit{focus on experience} and to consider the \textit{different types of interest} in the visitors.

“[...] We have been at the ruin of Aggstein two years ago with the kids. [...] This is where they offered us these electronic guides. [...] And then this squire started talking about what he did at the castle. And that of course was amazing for the kids [...] the entertainment factor\(^{50}\) (translated by the author).

“Well I think the good guide tries to establish a relationship with his group. [...] And there it is especially important that you tell people what they would like to hear. [...] One has to take care of their possibilities, and tell the ones [that would like to hear it] more about culture, history and culture [and the others more about other things]\(^{51}\) (translated by the author).

\(^{49}\) Ich glaub jeder Tourist sieht das in gewisser Weise auch anders. Es gibt glaub ich- der Klischee-amerikaner, dem ist es wurscht glaub ich der möchte unterhalten werden [...]. Und es gibt wieder den Kulturtouristen der auf die höhere Kultur achtet, dem ist es sehr sehr wichtig dass das Ganze authentisch ist” (P6).

\(^{50}\) “[...] Wir waren da auf der Ruine Aggstein vor zwei Jahren mit den Kindern. [...] Und da gibt's eben diese elektronischen Führer. [...] Und dann hat der Knappe erzählt was er in dieser Burg macht. Und das war für die Kinder ja so toll [...] der Unterhaltungscharakter” (P5).

\(^{51}\) “Ja ich glaube der gute guide stellt sich auf seine Gruppe ein. [...] Und da ist es also auch ganz wichtig, dass man den Leuten erzählt was man meint dass sie hören wollen. [...] Man muss auch Rücksicht nehmen auf deren Möglichkeiten, und ihnen halt mehr über Kultur, Geschichte und Kultur, erzählen” (P3).
A problem, as with authenticity in cultural heritage tourism, was again found to be the overwhelming impact of mass tourism, as this does not allow the guide to continue focusing fully on the group. Furthermore, according to one of the participants, it restricts the possibility of having different types of visits for different kinds of target groups (e.g. pupils, adults) simply because there is not enough space or time to deal with all of them in full.

However, another participant in the discussion mentioned that thanks to a disguised “Roman” enacting living heritage interpretation at the archaeological park of Carnuntum, she was still able to remember perfectly what the house of this ‘Roman’ in Carnuntum looked like. The rest of the archaeological park, however, she argued was reduced to “just another heap of stones”, i.e. not being made alive to the visitor through interpretation.

This reflects another statement made by one of the participants:

“[…] well one has to deal at a level where the one person does not yet get bored and the other has not already been asked too much for”\textsuperscript{52} (translated by the author).

9.2.4 Expectations on Offer and Product Development

Another issue that was raised by the moderator during the discussion was the one concerned with tourist product development and expectations on the cultural and tourism offer of a certain destination or attraction, like Stift Melk in the Wachau valley or Mont Saint Michel in France.

It was generally felt that simply offering guided tours would no longer be sufficient in the future. Instead, the key phrase in this context was said to be ‘adding value’.

“Well it [the offer at Stift Melk] is already good [and] I think it will continue to grow in the future. A guided tour will no longer be sufficient. You need a surrounding. […] This is what the Americans have demonstrated us quite impressively […] you need a good shop, top gastronomy, that is really

\textsuperscript{52} “[…] da muss man sich halt auf einem Level bewegen, wo sich der eine noch nicht fadisiert und der andere noch nicht überfordert ist” (P3).
Results from the Focus Group Discussion

important. Everything that adds value, I think, can only be positive […]\(^{53}\) (translated by the author).

At this point, the desire for **regional products** in the offer has been mentioned, too, both in terms of tangible goods, e.g. those available for sale in a shop, or other additional services, which add value to the attraction.

Another aspect was the discussion of **quantity versus quality of the offer**. Here, it was felt that individual time and attention span are very important and need to be considered in designing or developing tourist products and offers.

“This entire issue [of offers for tourists] is always a question of time. This is quite important and I always tell it to the travel agencies, too: Less is often more. […] Because you can easily pride yourself on travelling to five, seven different places […]. But then you [end up saying] I haven’t had time for anything”\(^{54}\) (translated by the author).

Stift Melk, which successfully combines historical ambiance with for example the development of contemporary art exhibitions or modern jazz concerts, was very much approved of as an example during the discussion. One participant said:

“Well of course I am totally in favour combining old and new. **If old, then in combination with new**\(^{55}\) (translated by the author).

On the question of correlation in the motive to see the traditional offer of Stift Melk (i.e. the abbey museum, the historical parts) together with, for example, contemporary concerts, one participant found that this correlation was limited to extent of the regional or national (Austrian) population. An international tourist with a desire to visit Melk, it was argued, is still left with the problem of having no time

\(^{53}\) “Ja gut ist es jetzt schon, ich mein es wird in Zukunft immer mehr. Die Führung alleine genügt nicht. Man braucht ein Umfeld. […] Das haben uns die Amerikaner sehr eindrucksvoll gezeigt […] man braucht einen gescheiten Shop, man braucht eine super Gastronomie, das ist ganz wichtig. Alles was Mehrwert hat kann glaube ich nur positiv sein […]” (P2).


\(^{55}\) “Na ich bin auch total für die Kombination von Alt und Modern. Also wenn Alt, dann in Kombination mit modern” (P4).
for additional point events, such as concerts or exhibitions. However, focusing on the **contemporary aspect** in tourist product development was found to be vital in **ensuring a dialogue** with the local and regional population of Stift Melk.

### 9.2.5 Personal Expectations

When prompted for personal expectations and needs in the cultural heritage tourism domain, the following list of expectations could have been derived based on the ground of previous experience and examples known to each one of the participants:

“Historical facts. Authenticity, of course. [...] Having authentic, historical tools at your display. This is quite important”\(^{56}\) (translated by the author).

“Well for me it would be important, when I visit an abbey or a castle, that it is interesting for the kids. That [...] you can see, maybe touch- touching is I think very important for the children. [...] Then, having a guide is important, too [...]”\(^{57}\) (translated by the author).

Other points that were mentioned are:

- **Experience and storytelling:** Captivating visitors by telling stories, e.g. explaining the historic origin of day-to-day proverbs and thereby creating a bridge between the visitor and the cultural heritage offer on display;

- **Creating added value:** Infrastructure, in a non-obtrusive way to the heritage resource being presented, is considered important (e.g. additional shops or gastronomy) so to create a more lively atmosphere;

- **Care of the historical ambiance** through tidiness and well-tended appearance of the local surroundings;

---

56 “Sachinformation. Natürlich Authentizität. [...] dass man echte, historische Gebrauchsgegenstände hat. Das ist schon wichtig” (P3).

57 “Also für mich wär's jetzt wichtig wenn ich in so ein Stift oder in eine Burg fahr, dass es interessant ist für die Kinder. Dass man [...] sieht, vielleicht angreifen kann, angreifen ist ja für Kinder ganz wichtig finde ich. [...] Und es ist ein Führer aber schon auch sehr wichtig [...]” (P5).
• **Preparation and presentation** of the heritage being presented, either through stories, interactive means, well thought-up content presentation, suitable infrastructure accompanying the main offer, etc.;

• **Explanation and information** to create meaning and understanding, and for visitors to be actively involved in the heritage they are visiting.

One participant in the discussion went into details regarding his recent experience of a visit to Stift Melk, giving his opinion and expectations before and after the visit:

“And yeah well I thought it would surely be nice to see [...] for the first few minutes, and then it will probably be quite boring, and that’s it. This is what I thought in the first place. Of course I was hoping for more, and I must say that I have been positively surprised because it is really very well presented. The combination [of old and] modern, the rooms [...] where one has experimented a great deal with colour [...] and I think this is also important for people who might think well, culture is maybe rather boring, looking at some churches- they think it is great [...] This was really important to me personally"\(^{58}\) (translated by the author).

9.2.6 Challenges for Sustainable Development

The last aspect that was treated in line with the main topics of literature and the two case studies was the one on sustainable development. After attempting at a definition of “sustainable” development, participants were prompted to talk about examples for fostering sustainable development actions at heritage attractions such as Stift Melk.

First of all, what was mentioned was the need for captivating people’s interest for the heritage presented, and by doing so, encouraging repeat visits to the region or

\(^{58}\) “Und ich hab mir eigentlich gedacht so naja das ist sicher ganz schön anzuschauen [...] für die ersten paar Minuten, und dann wird’s wahrscheinlich recht langweilig, und das war’s. Äh, erhofft hab ich mir natürlich mehr, und wurde dann auch positiv überrascht weil das eben sehr schön aufbereitet wurde. Kombination Moderne [...] diese Räume [...] wo mit Farben viel gearbeitet wurde [...] und das ist denk ich auch für viele Leute die denken Kultur ist vielleicht eher nur langweilig und irgendwelche Kirchen anschauen- die fanden das toll [...] Das war mir persönlich sehr wichtig" (P6).
attraction. In response, the necessity of continuously evolving in terms of the offer was picked up on by one of the participants. This, however, was also met with criticism:

“I think this is the great challenge for the business. […] You always need to surpass yourself and, well, this gets really difficult […] a competitive challenge [for yourself]” (translated by the author).

Another proposition related to focusing on being interactive and creating value for the visitors:

“[…] activities where people can really get to grips with the cultural heritage, maybe are able to work on something individually, and have a thought of the environment coming up [in all this], which is quite important considering this whole issue of sustainability […] just as well, one should not forget to focus on authenticity, ask visitors what they expect […] what could be done better, what could be more important for them in the future, something like that” (translated by the author).

At the same time, the discussion brought up the fact that sustainability, or sustainable development, was a term difficult to define. In terms of “sustaining”, or maintaining the heritage attraction for the future, it was felt important that people take some value out of it and learn from it, i.e. that they are involved as much as possible.

Furthermore, the entire attraction needs to be well integrated into its local surroundings, including arrival and parking possibilities, and not be at the cost of the local population. On the contrary, they should be among the main ones to benefit from it.

The following message made by one of the participants is key in this context:

59 “Ich glaube das ist eben die große Herausforderung be idem Betrieb. […] Man muss sich ständig neu übertreffen, also das ist sehr schwierig […] ein großer Konkurrenzfaktor” (P1).

60 “[…] Aktivitäten wo die Leute sich auch wirklich mit dem Kulturgut beschäftigen können, vielleicht sogar selber etwas erarbeiten können, einen Umweltgedanken irgendwo einfließen lassen der ja bei der Nachhaltigkeit ein sehr großer ist […] eben auch diese Authentizität nicht außer Acht lassen, Gäste auch befragen was sie sich erwarten […] was man besser machen könnte, was also jetzt in Zukunft für sie wichtig wäre, so was in etwa” (P2).
“I think it is a tightrope walk, because you always engage into more and more, you always make more of an experience. But somehow, you have to remain faithful to your local heritage; you mustn’t for example take off at the abbey. […] I think this is where you need to ask yourself: What is my philosophy, what do I want to signal to other people? Even if there were more and more possibilities, and a lot more action- but where at this point do I remain faithful to myself?” 61 (translated by the author)

This last statement is especially valuable since it makes reference to what has already been discussed during the expert interview with Art Pedersen (Pedersen (2006), n.p.a.) from the World Heritage Programme on Sustainable Tourism. He also argues that, first of all, you need to define the core message that is to be conveyed to tourists,

“[… ] and then, everything else falls into place for- you know, there’s problems of course, but everything else then, you can hang on that” (ibid.).

This last phrase is really at the heart of considering sustainable development now and in the future, since it relates to the message of the attraction being rooted in tradition, but at the same time allowing for growth and continuous evolution. From the point of view of demand, mindful tourists (Moscardo (2001), pp. 13-15) are a great support to this concept, since they are interactive and eager to deal with the information and aspects presented to them.

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61 “Ich glaube es ist ein bisschen eine Gratwanderung auch, weil man macht immer mehr und mehr und mehr, man macht immer mehr ein Erlebnis. Man muss aber auch dem Ort irgendwie gerecht werden; ja also man kann jetzt im Stift nicht abheben. […] ich glaub man muss da halt auch immer fragen: Was ist irgendwie meine Philosophie, was will ich weitergeben an die Leute, auch wenn es vielleicht viel mehr Möglichkeiten gäbe, wesentlich mehr action- aber wo bleib ich mir da selber treu?” (P1)
9.2.7 Future Development and Success Factors

The last point that was brought up by the moderator in order to bring the focus group discussion to an end was the question of success factors and future developments for cultural heritage attractions such as the Abbey of Melk.

Interestingly enough, participants again ranked the World Heritage designation among the success factors for a cultural heritage attraction like Stift Melk. Other aspects include quality, authenticity, the combination of past and present as well as years of successful marketing.

The following list could have been derived based on the final discussion round:

- World Heritage designation;
- Quality of the offer;
- Combination of tradition and modernity;
- Positive word-by-mouth marketing in smaller as well as in larger circles;
- Balancing the ‘spirit of a place’ with the impacts of mass tourism;
- Authenticity, self-awareness and the creation of a lively atmosphere;
- Years of presence on the market (building up an image).

Regarding future developments, it was thought that the Abbey of Melk would certainly have to come up with solutions in order to meet the increased mass tourism activity, especially during peak day times. On the constraints of already suggesting alternatives, one participant explains:

“It’s just- some excursion targets are simply top. This is what Melk definitely is […] and you cannot come round to including it in your offer”\(^{62}\) (translated by the author).

\(^{62}\) “Es ist halt einfach- gewisse Ausflugsziele sind halt einfach top. Das ist einfach Melk […] daran komme ich hier beim Angebot nicht vorbei” (P3).
As far as future outlook for the Abbey of Melk is concerned, the following statement was selected to summarise general agreement towards the end of the discussion:

“But I think that up until now, they balance it really well. You really have to say this. And I think that, so long as Pater Martin holds the reign, this will continue to develop. Because they are simply present on the market, they-they are a living abbey”\textsuperscript{63} (translated by the author).

9.3 Summary

This chapter has brought a lot of useful insights for the results of the thesis. All the main points that have been treated over the course of this work up until now, either in the theoretical or the empirical part, have had a chance to be critically examined in the course of the discussion, whose major merit has been a substantial variety of different opinions. Wherever appropriate, critical statements made by the participants were included in the text via translations of the most important direct quotations.

It is important to state that the findings cannot be generalised with regards to the entire population, since they are limited to an expression of attitudes and beliefs of the single participants involved in the discussion. Nevertheless, as it has been the clear objective of the author to engage into an in-depth study of all the issues from the demand’s point of view, the focus group discussion has certainly proved to be a useful tool in answering the research question formulated under the focus group design in Chapter 5.

Last but not least, emphasis was put on linking the findings from the discussion to earlier results derived from the review of literature. Therefore, the theoretical points regarding demand and expectations have both been exemplified and illustrated further over the course of the last chapter.

\textsuperscript{63} “Aber ich finde, sie schaukeln es bis jetzt sehr gut. Das muss man einfach sagen. Und ich finde ja, solange der Pater Martin das in der Hand hat, wir das in die Richtung weitergehen ja. Weil’s einfach präsent sind, die sind- es ist ein lebendiges Kloster” (P1).
10 GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As outlined in the Introduction (see Chapter 1), the objective of the last chapter of this thesis is to establish general and practical recommendations for action based on conclusive evidence from both theoretical and empirical findings. The structure of the recommendations follows the same practical guideline that has been used since the course of Chapter 4, namely that of addressing the key issues in the research area of cultural heritage tourism. This structure has been adhered to consistently over the course of the two case study analyses as well as the focus group discussion, providing for a rich base of knowledge to be discussed in the final chapter of the thesis.

The last point is made up by the practical recommendations for the specific development project at the Abbey of Melk, which is the applied focus in this thesis. Those are presented in the final section of this chapter.

10.1 Tourist Product Development

In the Encyclopaedia of Tourism, SMITH (2000) writes that the tourist product equals the tourist experience, since no homogeneous production process exists in the tourism industry. Similarly, MOSCARDO (2001) argues that the outcome of the tourist’s interaction (mostly through the form of interpretation) with the heritage resource presented can be called the tourist product or tourist experience. Both authors have thus assigned the tourist a central role in this context.

This is picked up by McKERCHER/DU CROS (2002), who argue that successful product development keeps in mind the needs and requirements of the customer. The main elements to this are authenticity and quality of the product, ensuring a participatory and relevant experience to the tourist and making the heritage come alive, e.g. through form of a story. Furthermore, aspects of planning, management and control apply when cultural heritage assets are used as tourism products.
General Conclusions and Recommendations

The fact that the customer is key to the tourist product development process has been underlined over the course of both case studies, which provide successful tourist product examples that are tailor-made to suit a specific clientele or need in a certain market segment. Furthermore, combining a contemporary focus with traditional cultural heritage assets has emerged as a major success factor in the case of Stift Melk. In the focus group discussion, this is expressed by what is called “adding value” to the attraction in the form of developing tourist products and offers adapted to suit demand. Moreover, the need to consider things from a regional approach, the desire for quality products as well as the need to reduce quantity in favour of quality has been mentioned in the course of this discussion.

The following strategic recommendations apply:

- Before all tourist product development action can start, the need for careful strategic and operational planning is given. This is all the more important where an environment as sensitive as cultural heritage is concerned. It also relates to the future development goals of the attraction, which should follow the principles of sustainable development.

- In developing heritage products for tourism, attention needs to be paid to selecting the right type of resource for the development of these products, i.e. one which is both “robust” to the influences of tourism and has good potential or appeal to become marketed for tourism.

- As the practical example of World Heritage Sites moves in, care needs furthermore to be taken with regards to other interests or third party stakeholders in the product development process (public and local community interests, non-commercial organisations such as UNESCO or the national agency for the Protection of Historical Monuments, tourism developers, destination managers, etc.).

- In any case, tourist product development should focus on the tourist and address the various dimensions of experience that are desired by the target segment to the attraction. In this way, a balance is achieved between the inherent qualities of the offer and the expectations and requirements of demand.
• For any offer in the cultural heritage tourism domain to become or remain successful, it must stay faithful to the notion of quality and authenticity, since tourists travelling in this market segment are especially keen on having both of these aspects fulfilled. This also involves the experience dimension, since quality and authenticity may be experienced in a number of different ways depending on the individual tourist and his or her motivations and expectation for the visit.

• Last but not least, success in cultural heritage tourism production often comes from the fact of enhancing traditional heritage assets with contemporary accents, which in the eyes of modern-day visitors is definitely adding value to the attraction. Moreover, this can lead to sustainable development of the heritage resource through added interest of the local population as well as additional funding.

10.2 Marketing

Marketing presents another challenge in the field of cultural heritage tourism. Derived from the constructed engagement between the resource, the product and the market (Herbert (2001)), McKERCHER/DU CROS (2002) have argued that marketing in cultural heritage tourism is crucial in that it can lead managers to targeting the “right” or desired kind of visitors to the site. For a global World Heritage attraction like Mont Saint Michel, this has certainly come to include both an international as well as a local focus, as the experience from the case study research has shown. The case of Stift Melk has shown that marketing sometimes does not need to be pursued aggressively, but rather persistently in order to fulfil its mission. Both cases have revealed the need for professionalism in marketing, since no successful heritage attraction will benefit from frustrated or disappointed visitors, and vice versa.

The following strategic recommendations apply:
• Marketing in the cultural heritage tourism domain should first of all be given a **clear mission**, which can either be to draw a certain number of tourists to the site, to pool strengths with other successful heritage attractions in the form of marketing co-operations, or simply to make the heritage attraction known to the public. Again, issues of planning, monitoring and control apply in this context.

• Second, and most important of all, marketing must make use of the opportunity to **address the specific or desired target segment(s) through appropriate strategies** in order to create a win-win situation for both the visitor and the attraction. This means that marketing holds the potential of addressing the “right” type of visitor to the attraction: the one that is desired by management. Marketing should therefore follow clear and well thought-up strategies to become successful.

• **Partnerships** can help to implement such strategies: they are an effective marketing tool that should definitely be pursued by attractions in the cultural heritage tourism sector. Aligning with others in the same sector signals quality and coherency of the offer and provides visitors with additional ideas for their visit in a certain destination. However, attention must be paid to the fact that the same level of quality is maintained!

### 10.3 Heritage Interpretation and Experience Design

This section is called “heritage interpretation” and “experience design”, since today, the buzzword in heritage interpretation is the design and construction of tourist experiences (Schouten (1995)). Again, issues of planning and professional management (ICOMOS/WTO (1993)) are at stake if tourists are to be left satisfied with their experience of the heritage they visit. A win-win situation between the heritage interpreter and the visitor arises in the case of “mindful tourists” (Moscardo (2001)), who actively question new information so as to create a personal, meaningful experience for them.
Clearly, the empirical findings did not differ much from the previously outlined concepts. As the case studies have shown, heritage interpretation is successful at the point where the visitor and his or her experience are directly addressed. This involves bridging the gap between past and present through modern interpretational techniques (such as multimedia installations) or simple interpretive stories revealing past meanings to present-day visitors. This idea has furthermore been supported by the focus group discussion, whose participants have argued that interpretation should address the various types of interest segments and focus on the revelation of meaning.

The following strategic recommendations apply:

- Successful heritage interpretation needs to be considered as a **two-way flow of information**. This is why guided tours still continue to be so popular: they are the perfect opportunity for visitors to draw a meaningful experience out of their visit because they get the chance to actively ask questions and probe for understanding of the information they receive.

- The dimension of **experience and entertainment** must not be neglected, either. However, this must not happen to the detriment of the original message of heritage presented. This is where heritage interpretation needs to step in and create a successful balance between the original meaning and the current mind-sets of its visitors.

- Visitors should be left to their own ways in their individual desire what they choose to learn from the experience. Therefore, a range of different interpretational facilities **addressing the various dimensions of interest** found in each of the single visitors should be in place.

- Last but not least, heritage interpretation should be given the desired attention in tourist product development, too. Since **many offers cannot be presented without an adequate level of information and interpretation**, the challenge lies in involving visitors to the point where they become interested in further issues that lie at the heart of the cultural heritage attraction, such as sustainable development, conservation and preservation.
10.4 Authenticity and Commodification

Undeniably, authenticity is a strong motivational factor in the cultural heritage tourism sector. This is agreed upon in practice, as the results from the focus group discussion have shown, as well as in theory. Key authors in the field, such as Cohen (2004) and Wang (2000), argue that nowadays, objective authenticity recedes in favour of subjective authenticity, whose meaning is socially constructed. McKercher/Du Cros (2002) and Boyd (2001) argue that, since cultural heritage attractions are often altered, renovated or rebuilt, care needs to be taken that they continue to convey their “feeling value” to tourists. This is arguably subjective, since the determination of authenticity relies on different social and cultural values (Cohen (2004), McKercher/Du Cros (2002).

Much can be said on the aspect of commodification, too. There certainly is a thin line between the positive and the negative impacts in the field of cultural heritage tourism. However, this depends a lot on the context as well as on the attraction itself and how “robust” (McKercher/Du Cros (2002)) it is to withstand the aspect of commodification through tourism.

Empirical findings from the two case study analyses as well as the focus group discussion have confirmed the importance of authenticity in cultural heritage tourism. In the context of the Mont Saint Michel, this has a lot to do with ensuring an image of a cultural, historical and spiritual place, as opposed to just a site for tourism and recreation. This is also true for Stift Melk, where 900 years of tradition of Benedictines has contributed to uphold the idea of an authentic experience.

The following strategic recommendations apply:

- Today, **authenticity and the experience of something as authentic lies more and more in the eye of the beholder.** Objective authenticity still continues to be important, but also gives way to the subjective experience of authenticity by tourists. Therefore, **there is a need to know an attraction’s market segment(s)** as well as the importance they assign to authenticity in order to remain competitive on the market.
**General Conclusions and Recommendations**

- Generally, **authenticity** in cultural heritage tourism should equal the concept of **quality**, as this is certainly valued and required across all market segments. This is especially important, since quality products are often assigned the attribute of authenticity.

- Since authenticity today is a decisive factor for many people visiting cultural heritage attractions, equal attention should be paid to the principles of **honesty and care**. This is important, since tourists are quick to decipher false messages or neglected details. As a consequence, the experience value of the entire attraction may be lessened.

- As empirical findings have confirmed, a real threat to authenticity is given by the impacts of mass tourism, such as highly congested or densely visited areas during peak times. The **danger of commodification** needs to be **met with clear strategies**, such as the management of visitor flows or even de-marketing in order to avoid further congestion at site level.

**10.5 Meeting the Needs and Expectations of Demand**

Regarding the demand for cultural heritage tourism attractions, the findings from literature argue that traditional market segmentation techniques, such as socio-demographical segmentation, no longer apply. Instead, the various dimensions of experience via specific product features need to be addressed (Prentice et al. (1998)). This is supported by **PORIA ET AL.** (2003), who argue that there is a shift in balance from offer to demand, and that individual perception of heritage attributes is key to the phenomenon of heritage tourism.

Practical research in the two case study analyses has shown that those offers which deal in extraordinary experience and exceptional settings stand the best chance to be remembered and sought after by tourists. For the entire experience to remain successful, such add-on experiences like night-time concerts or prestige visits certainly need to fit the offer overall.
This has been confirmed largely over the course of the focus group discussion. Personal expectations of the participants relate to experience and emotion, added value creation, interpretation and presentation techniques, authenticity and care of the premises as well as their surroundings.

The following strategic recommendations apply:

- As already mentioned several times over the course of the last few sections, the **visitor and his or her needs certainly are a central element** to any successful cultural heritage attraction. Resources and efforts should therefore be put in detailed visitor surveys, both quantitative and qualitative, in order to find out what exactly constitutes the demand for one site or attraction.

- The **experience dimension** must not be neglected either, since the **need for personalised, emotional experience** is likely to grow further in the future. Many people in the cultural heritage tourism sector travel in order to have meaningful experience of past traditions in today’s society. This can be addressed to create awareness for sustainable development action, too.

- Success is achieved **where the various dimensions or expectations of visitors are addressed** by the heritage place they visit. Some might come in order to learn, some merely to be entertained whereas others expect a deep and intensive involvement on a personal level. This should hence be involved in any considerations for tourist product development.

- **Quality and authenticity of product and place** are always necessary in meeting the needs and expectations of demand for cultural heritage tourism attractions. Therefore, they should be given special attention by management.

- **Innovation** is certainly a buzzword, but worth another consideration at this place. It relates to the fact of surpassing people’s expectations, to tie them to their experience. It can come either in the form innovative product development, marketing, interpretation or other type of attributes.
10.6 Encouraging Sustainable Development Action

Traditionally, sustainable development has focused on environmental considerations, whereas now the focus has shifted to include economic and socio-cultural concerns, too. Local involvement (Walsh et al. (2001)), empowerment (Cole (2006)) as well as authenticity are important in this context, since they help to create respect and appreciation of the values of a certain destination. The key words regarding sustainable development in cultural heritage tourism are named by TIMOTHY/BOYD (2003) as authenticity, interpretation, access, dialogue, equity and a participatory approach between management and visitors in order to educate and foster respect towards the heritage resource presented.

Findings from the empirical part of research have concerned these aspects on sustainable development in cultural heritage tourism, being mostly related to the creation of networks and partnerships, the involvement of the local population as well as interpretation in order to create awareness and respect on behalf of visitors to the attraction. Participants from the focus group discussion have furthermore argued that value needs to be created for the visitor, so that he or she can take a meaningful, personal experience out of it. As for the attraction, it is important to define the core values that are to be transmitted in order to remain faithful to the attraction and to encourage sustainable development now and in the future.

The following strategic recommendations apply:

- The principle of **having an attraction's core values defined and passed on to tourists** in a meaningful, entertaining and participatory approach is certainly key to encouraging sustainable development action in cultural heritage tourism. The point of remaining faithful to one’s values is a key consideration for future development in this case.

- Sustainable development must furthermore **consider the tourist**. There is a great chance to be taken out of the current sensibility of the general population towards issues concerning the environment and culture, so an honest presentation of actual measures can definitely create value.
• **Authenticity** is another consideration in this context, and a one which continues to reiterate throughout this chapter on strategic recommendations. It is a mistake to believe that authenticity necessarily equals sustainability, but it definitely is a milestone in its achievement.

• Finally, the **necessary degree of involvement of all stakeholders concerned** needs to be ensured. It is also a mistake to believe that one person or organisation alone can create sustainable development action. If, however, a single action or development plan is inscribed in the major goals of the destination or attraction it is placed in, then more than one person can decide about its outcome and responsible action.

### 10.7 Practical Recommendations for the Opening up of the “Nordbastei” at the Abbey of Melk

The final set of recommendations in this thesis is geared towards producing practical recommendations and strategies for action concerning the future development of the “Nordbastei” at the Abbey of Melk (see Chapter 7.9.1 for a detailed description of this project). The aim is to produce concrete development suggestions for the scope of this project based on the thesis’ findings, conclusions and recommendations as well as the practical know-how of the author following the expert interview with Pater Martin (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.) and Mr Griebaum (Griebaum (2007), n.p.a) at the Abbey of Melk in March 2007.

The recommendations follow the global aim of the thesis, which lies in showing how product development, through addressing key aspects such as authenticity, interpretation and demand, can lead to encouraging sustainable development.

As described in Chapter 7, the building of the “Nordbastei” has three main floors that are susceptible for ideas on the development of its offer: the ground floor, or shop area and waiting room, the first floor, or gallery, and the top floor, the roof terrace with a view over the surroundings.
Concerning the ground floor, further to selling the usual range of books, postcards or other kinds of souvenirs, the shop area can be equipped to include products from the abbey's private ownings, such as wine or juice from its vineyards, as well as local and regional products, as these are clearly desired by individual as well as group tourists.

Both the shop as well as the waiting area, including the spot where access to the upper floors is provided against a separate charge, should be dedicated to a concentrated presentation of the abbey's cultural activities, as well as information of what can be seen when visiting the upper floors of the “Nordbastei”. This can come either in the form of simple posters or announcements for future events taking place at the “Nordbastei” or in the abbey complex, or more sophisticated in the form of a multimedia booth allowing visitors to “browse through” the various corners and attractions the abbey has to offer (both in the main building complex as well as at the “Nordbastei”!). This is important in a twofold sense: First of all, visitors who have not already visited the abbey feel inclined to do so after a preview of possible events and attractions. Second, it makes use of the potential that lies in the area’s designation as a waiting room: An appealing presentation of the multimedia booth certainly makes visitors use the booth and “discover” the abbey of Melk.

Concerning the first floor or gallery, the major aim of the rooms is to provide space for temporary exhibitions (Rotheneder (2007), n.p.a.). A multitude of different topics is possible. The following suggestions are a selection of these based on core values of the Abbey of Melk:

- **Baroque architecture** (Abbeys north of the Alps, Sacral buildings by the building master Jakob Prandtauer, Baroque Age in Austria, Baroque architecture and art history, Baroque artists and philosophers, Benedictines and Baroque, etc.);

- **Nature and Abbey Parks** (development and restoration of the park at the Abbey of Melk, historical development, abbey parks and gardens in Austria (“Klösterreich”), etc.);
• **World Heritage** (information on the designation, on UNESCO and the World Heritage List, on the procedure of application, on Stift Melk as part of the Wachau valley, on other abbeys and monasteries being part of World Heritage in the neighbouring countries of Austria or entire Europe);

• **Klösterreich im Stift Melk** (creation, development, current and future goals, presentation of single abbeys such as those of Lower Austria or the neighbouring countries, the Czech Republic and Hungary, possibilities for tourists, themes proposed by the Klösterreich, etc.).

In the presentation of these temporary exhibits, a strong contrast to the vaults and building structure of the tower can again be provided by using different light, sound, tactile or multimedia effects to enhance the presentation of simple pictures and factual information. Recommendation for these is given based on the actual degree of experience demanded by visitors today. Perhaps the same architect and designer of the abbey’s museum can again be won to create one or two of the future temporary exhibitions. Other partnerships can be recommended, too: perhaps the future can see a possible exhibition of the entire “Klösterreich” in the gallery of the “Nordbastei”, or of the “Top-Ausflugsziele” of Lower Austria in the closer surroundings to the Abbey of Melk.

In addition, the rooms of the gallery may be used as an additional space to host different types of events, such as evening or day-time concerts, or themed guided or special guided tours for school classes depending on the nature of the actual exhibitions. This can be extended to the roof terrace, which provides the possibility to extend such tours or events for the benefit of added experience.

The idea of adding images and information to the glass walls bordering the roof terrace giving detailed accounts of the surroundings is strongly supported here. Since much of what can be seen from the tower are parts of the abbey buildings and its park, having this additional information can help to create a more lasting impression among visitors of their visit to the Abbey of Melk.
General Conclusions and Recommendations

What is important in the overall realisation of the project of the “Nordbastei” at Stift Melk can be summed up by the following three main points:

- It should remain **faithful to the core values represented by the Abbey of Melk in presentation and design.** That is to say that modern influences like multimedia applications or contemporary features in terms of building and design are certainly welcomed and allowed, so long as they do not override the original message the abbey wants to convey to its visitors. If a new feature to the building provokes discussion and added contact area between the visitor and the entire building, then increased interest and better awareness can lead to more sustainable thinking and action, too.

- Besides, the development of the offer should naturally focus on **key values such as authenticity and quality in design, concept and presentation.** The provision of an authentic experience for visitors may not only come from exhibiting historical artefacts, but also from timely and lively means of **heritage interpretation.** An interesting dialogue can be expected from the modern restoration of the ancient building parts of the “Nordbastei”. Quality in this context relates to the successful combination of past and present in the newly created exhibition rooms of the tower.

- Finally, developing and opening up the “Nordbastei” for tourism should focus on the issue of **experience design, meaning the creation of an offer that appeals to the current expectations of tourists who visit it.** This includes thinking about what the different visitor segments to the abbey are and what their main motivation in a visit to Stift Melk is. So long as it keeps being culture and art history, the future challenge certainly continues to be a successful combination of contemporary accents with traditional cultural heritage, like past experience at the abbey has shown.

Sustainable development exists where all of these dimensions are given the necessary attention in planning, management and control. Like this, the Abbey of Melk certainly benefits from this new opportunity for its cultural heritage tourism.
10.8 Limitations and Further Research

One of the limitations this research has faced is the non-generalisability of its findings, which is a direct result of the qualitative research methodology. This is certainly true of the case studies, whose results have been based on the review of relevant sources available to the author at the time of their preparation. The research bias has been reduced by using a substantial variety of sources from different persons or organizations. The same principle applies to the results of the focus group discussion, whose statements are based on the individual opinions and beliefs of its participants at the time of the discussion.

However, the development of the strategic recommendations earlier in this chapter has followed conclusive evidence from both literature and practical research. As a consequence, the quality of the findings has been enhanced.

Another limitation to this work is the translator bias occurred during the trilingual research phase. The data for the empirical part of the thesis was collected in French, English and German. It follows that great care has been taken to ensure statements are translated properly, from French into English and from German into English.

Suggestions for further research naturally move in the direction of quantitative research in order to generalise the nature of the findings. This is actively suggested in the case of Stift Melk, which has ensured the utmost practical focus in this thesis overall. Recommendations for further quantitative studies can be given in conjunction with the opening of the “Nordbastei”. After some time, the findings may be used to stimulate further qualitative research, especially with regards to the issues that have been treated over the course of this thesis. Further studies resulting in an in-depth research on the various dimensions in cultural heritage tourism — authenticity, heritage interpretation, product development and sustainable development — are strongly encouraged. Moreover, studies on consumer behaviour and satisfaction are deemed useful in the future.
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APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES OF THE EXPERT INTERVIEWS

Interview Guideline | Art Pedersen (UNESCO World Heritage Committee)

Q1) Mr Pedersen, you are in charge of the Tourism Programme at the World Heritage Committee here in Paris. Could you first of all tell me what the actual scope of your job is?

Q2) The second question relates to your work and the documentation you sent to me. Could you tell me what you mean by the “Sustainable Tourism Conservation Equation”?

Q3) In your paper, you furthermore talked about developing local community products, and the public/private sector involvement in developing tourism at WHS. Could you tell me of a case where the tourism contribution has indeed led to achieving sustainability?

Q4) Based on your work and experience, what are the main characteristics of tourism at WHS today?

Q6) How and since when do you trace cultural heritage tourism? Can you name any important developments as to this phenomenon? According to your opinion, why has it become so popular?

Q7) What are the processes for determining visitor limits at WHS? Is it possible to determine the moment from which on the visit becomes more of a nuisance than a pleasurable experience?

Q8) Since we were talking about visitors to WHS, it is of course important to sensitize them to the issues relating to World Heritage. What would be, according to your work and opinion, the “right” tourism market for sacred sites such as Mont Saint Michel or the Abbey Melk in Lower Austria?

Q9) How should interpretation be done at sacred sites? During the participation at the European Summer School in the Val de Loire about World Heritage, I heard of
a European programme called “Transnational Quality Management in (World) Heritage Sites”, with evidence being shown from a site in Greece and the adequate presentation of religious information to day-to-day visitors. What has your experience shown you?

Q10) Since currently the demand for such sites / “products” is on the rise again (consumer quest for authenticity, finding one’s true self), how does the World Heritage Tourism Programme recognise this increased demand for authenticity and personalised, fulfilled holiday experience? Isn’t there a great chance for the future of World Heritage in that?

Q11) Are there limit values for commodifying local culture or in this case rather spiritual heritage, and how should one go about finding these?

Q13) According to your opinion: Is providing for authentic visitor experiences intrinsically linked to being sustainable?

Q14) How can tourist product development become a vector for sustainable management at World Heritage Sites?

Interview Guideline | Isabelle Le Dorner (MONUM Mont Saint Michel)

Q1) Pour commencer, pourriez-vous me dire ce que sont parmi vos fonctions en tant que responsable de la commercialisation et du développement de l'offre des régions Normandie/Bretagne ?

On tourist product development :
Q2) Le concert dont vous m’avez parlé dans votre documentation a été mené en partenariat avec MBF, une société de conseil spécialisé développement de l’image et de la notoriété des entreprises. Le parcours nocturne alors, selon ma compréhension, est parti de l’idée de M Simonnet. Quant à la création des nouveaux produits culturels / activités et manifestation, est-ce que l’on cherche désormais plutôt les partenariats? Et lesquels, surtout, dans le cas du Mont Saint Michel?

Q3) Dans votre documentation, j’ai également vu que vous vous aviez mis pour but un travail de concertation et de collaboration avec les institutions culturelles, les directions régionales et les collectivités territoriales. Pour l’abbaye du Mont
Saint Michel, vous songez de mettre en place encore quel type d’événementiel, et en partenariat avec qui?

Q4) La création des journées groupe en collaboration avec le CDT me paraît également une bonne idée en termes de produit : vous essayez de prolonger la durée moyenne de visite, c’est ça? Est-ce que ce projet a pu être réalisé jusqu’à ce date-ci?

Q5) Selon vous, est-ce que le développement de l’offre à l’abbaye du Mont Saint Michel est plutôt marqué par la consistance ou par la diversification ? Quels sont les enjeux présents à cet égard-là?

On issues of authenticity and commodification:

Q6) Lors de mon séjour au MSM ce dernier week-end, j’ai entendu parler de la problématique de la dégradation de l’offre au « pur business », dont les effets sont certainement encore renforcés par la forte saisonnalité des mois juillet/août. Quelles sont les démarches de contracte à ce constate, à ce phénomène-là?

Q7) Concernant encore l’offre : les éléments constituant l’identité du Mont Saint Michel - foi, art, culture et architecture – ne se retrouvent-ils pas en fort contraste avec l’aspect de la commercialisation dégagée par le tourisme de masse d’aujourd’hui?

Q8) Selon vous, comment est-ce qu’on peut assurer une expérience authentique et de qualité au Mont Saint Michel aujourd’hui? Qu’est-ce qui devrait être encore mis en place, qu’est-ce qui marche bien déjà?

On visitors and demand aspects:

Q9) Grâce à votre documentation, j’ai déjà réussi à me faire une bonne idée de la côté demande et diversité des publics au Mont Saint Michel. Ma question porte surtout sur l’aspect qualitatif : selon ce que vous avez pu constater, les motivations de venir à l’abbaye portent-elles plutôt sur la culture ou l’entretien / les loisirs ? Les différents modes de visite, cherchent-ils bien à s’adapter à ces attentes différentes?

Q10) Selon ce que j’avais pu entendre le week-end de ma visite au Mont Saint Michel, il existe une « Mission Mont Saint Michel » qui a réalisé des études sur le tourisme et le profil des visiteurs au Mont Saint Michel. Est-ce que vous en avez connaissance, est-ce que vous vous servez de vos propres outils?
On sustainable development:
Q11) La question clé que je vois ici, c'est de comment intégrer mieux les alentours de l'abbaye du Mont Saint Michel, voire du Mont lui-même ? Quelles sont les actions prises qui parlent en faveur du développement durable, tant au niveau de l'abbaye qu'au niveau du village et de l'environnement immédiat?

Q12) Vu que le Mont Saint Michel lui-même vit déjà de son image, est-ce que l'on pourrait imaginer quelqu’un au sein de l'abbaye, du Mont ou de l'OT, qui serait chargé juste avec la promotion des alentours du Mont ? Cela n'aurait-il pas non plus des retombées positives sur le MSM lui-même?

Q14) Dans votre documentation, vous avez aussi parlé de « potentialiser la collaboration avec les institutionnels ». Est-ce que cela rentre dans le cadre de la durabilité au Mont Saint Michel et son abbaye?

Q15) Quels sont les visions futures sur le Mont Saint Michel ? Qu’est ce que l’on souhaite créer par le future?

Interview Guideline | Karine Loqué (Mont Saint Michel Tourist Office)

Introduction:
Q1) Madame Loqué, tout d’abord, est-ce que vous pourriez me dire ce que c’est votre fonction en tant qu’Office du Tourisme au Mont Saint Michel? Pourriez-vous me décrire ce que sont parmi vos fonctions et tâches?

On tourist product development :  
Q2) Est-ce que l’office du tourisme est un moteur quant à la création de nouveaux produits ou du développement de l'offre touristique? Est-ce que, selon vous, l’offre au Mont Saint Michel et à l’intérieur est comparable / peu ou mieux développé?

Q3) Au niveau de la stratégie de l’office de tourisme, où est-ce que vous voyez par rapport aux autres acteurs touristiques du Mont ? Vous ne vous intégrez qu’en tant de point d'information et de promotion, ou est-ce qu’il y a peut-être encore autre chose?

Q4) Qu’est-ce que vous souhaitez encore développer dans l’avenir en termes de l’offre?
On issues of authenticity and commodification:

Q5) Concernant la saison touristique, je me suis rendu compte qu’il n’y avait pas vraiment de saisons au Mont Saint Michel. Lors de ma visite à l’abbaye hier, on m’a parlé du fait du « pur busines » qui règne sur le Mont. Est-ce que c’est bien comment ça, ou comment est-ce que vous voyez les choses?

Q6) Comment est-ce que l’on peut mettre en valeur l’unicité du site et la spiritualité du lieu aujourd’hui sous les effets d’un tourisme de masse?

Q7) Est-ce que l’on peut toujours parler d’un développement culturel au Mont Saint Michel en faveur d’un développement purement touristique?

On demand and visitors:

Q8) Qu’est-ce que l’on met à place pour alléger les flux de visiteurs pendant la saison touristique la plus forte? Quelles sont les actions prises par vous?

Q9) Est-ce qu’il faut baisser le niveau culturel ou intellectuel pour garantir l’accès des divers publics? Comment est-ce que vous voyez cet aspect?

On sustainable development:

Q10) Est-ce que vous croyez que l’Opération Grand Site va contribuer à un développement plus durable de la Baie du Mont Saint Michel? Comment est-ce que ça se passe, selon vous?

Q11) Est-ce que l’on intègre les locaux quant à la prise de décisions? Comment est-ce que ça fonctionne?

Q12) Comme le Mont Saint Michel vit fortement de son image, est-ce que vous croyez qu’au Mont Saint Michel il y aura toujours du monde, n’importe? Comment est-ce que vous voyez les enjeux de l’avenir?

Q13) Quelle est votre possibilité d’intervention concernant les enjeux futurs?
Interview Guideline | Pater Martin Rotheneder (Stitt Melk)

Q1) Zu Beginn: Pater Martin, würden Sie bitte Ihre Aufgaben im Rahmen der Abteilung Kulturtourismus des Stift Melk näher beschreiben? Wofür sehen Sie sich verantwortlich, wie sind Sie zu dieser Tätigkeit gelangt?

On tourist product development:
Q2) Welche Richtung geht man bei der Angebotsgestaltung im Stift Melk? Welche Wege werden seit 5-10 Jahren beschritten, wie sieht im Gegensatz dazu die Zukunft in der Angebotsentwicklung aus?

Q3) Wie und wodurch ergibt sich die Ideenfindung? Wie viele Veranstaltungen gibt es ca. pro Jahr, wie sieht die Entwicklung aus?

Q4) Geht man eher den Weg der Konsistenz oder der Variation, sprich auch neue Impulse werden gesetzt, oder eher Traditionelles wird fortgeführt?

On marketing and interpretation:
Q5) Was das Marketing angeht: Was sind Ihre Zielmärkte / Zielgruppen und welche Ihre Marketingaktivitäten? Was ist das Bild, was man dabei transportieren möchte?


On demand and visitors:
Q7) Was ist die Entwicklung bei der Nachfrage während der letzten 10 bis 15 Jahre? Was zeichnet die Besucher aus, was erwarten Sie sich, und wohin geht die Reise im Stift Melk?

Q8) Suchen die Besucher mehr das Erlebnis, mehr den Sinngedanken, sind sie rein kulturtouristisch interessiert, wie stark spielt die Spiritualität eine Rolle? Wofür, wenn man zusammenfasst, steht Stift Melk in den Augen der Besucher?
On authenticity and commodification:
Q9) Wie wird Echtheit und Authentizität im Stift Melk signalisiert und kommuniziert? Welche Rolle schreiben Sie der Authentizität beim Erschließen der Nordbastei zu, worauf soll man bei der Gestaltung achten?

Q10) Wo droht Gefahr durch Kommerzialisierung, worauf wird man in Zukunft verstärkt achten müssen wenn die Zahlen aus dem Tourismus weiter steigen, man sich das einzigartige Angebot aber bewahren möchte? Welche Entwicklung sehen Sie da?

On sustainable development:
Q11) Was sind Ansätze einer nachhaltigen Entwicklung vor Ort und in der Region? Wie integriert sich Stift Melk in seine bestehende Umgebung?

Q12) Welche konkreten Schritte wurden bereits eingeleitet? Welche Partnerschaften hat man bzw. strebt man am Stift Melk an?

Q13) Wie sehen Sie Nachhaltigkeit am Stift für die Zukunft? Was wird wichtig, was unabdinglich sein?

Final in-depth questions:
Q14) Wie sieht die Entwicklung Stift Melk und Welterbe aus? Soll es zur Entwicklung eines Welterbezentrums kommen, braucht Stift Melk das Welterbe, und wie setzt es diese Auszeichnung konkret um/ein?

Q15) Thema Religion – Kultur - Tourismus – wie stehen Sie diesem Spannungsfeld in Zukunft gegenüber, worauf wird man bei einem erfolgreichen Dialog der drei achten müssen?
MODERATOR’S OUTLINE FOR THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Part I – Introductory Discussion Questions (Ice-Breakers)


Q3) Weltkulturerbe – beide in der Diplomarbeit behandelte Fallstudien sind Weltkulturerbestätten. Die Welterbeauszeichnung lenkt die Aufmerksamkeit der Besucher auf sich. Stift Melk und Mont Saint Michel sind bereits national und international anerkannte Reiseziele im Kulturtourismus: Brauchen diese Stätten überhaupt so etwas wie eine Welterbeauszeichnung, wird dadurch der negative Effekt des Massentourismus nicht noch mehr verstärkt? Wie kann man die Auszeichnung besser und aktiv zum Wohle der Stätten nutzen?

Part II – Discussion of the Key Issues addressed during this thesis

In meiner Fallstudie zu den beiden Welterbestätten Mont Saint Michel und Stift Melk behandle ich fünf Kernthemen, die ich hier ebenfalls gerne mit euch diskutieren möchte. Alle spielen eine große Rolle im Bereich Kulturtourismus und Kulturerbetourismus, und sind ebenfalls für die Untersuchung der beiden Fallstudien herangezogen worden.

Q4) Das erste Thema lautet „Authentizität“, ein bekanntes und umstrittenes Thema im Bereich Kulturtourismus. Wie empfindet ihr Echtheit bei eurem Erlebnis, wie sehr ist euch dies wichtig, was muss für euch gegeben sein?
Q5) Das zweite Thema ist ebenfalls zentral – Interpretation, Vermittlung von Kultur und Kulturerbe im Tourismus. Erfolgreiche Vermittlung findet dort statt, wo auf den Besucher und sein Erleben eingegangen wird, also auch der Unterhaltungswert betont wird. Stimmt ihr dem zu? Sollte es generell verschiedene Führungen für verschiedene Zielgruppen geben (Historiker – Kinder, etc.)? Wie sehen eure Erfahrungen dabei aus?


Q7) Stichwort Nachfrageorientierung – ein Kernpunkt dieser Diskussion. Wie würdet ihr eure Erwartungen bezeichnen, was den kulturtouristischen Bereich angeht? Was ist euch wichtig, weniger wichtig, was absolut erforderlich, was ein Zusatznutzen? Worauf würdet ihr achten, wenn ihr eine Attraktion wie das Stift Melk besucht? Beispiele sind gefragt!

Q8) Letzter Punkt – nachhaltige Entwicklung. In den beiden von mir behandelten Welterbestätten geht es dabei vor allem um ein Auseinandersetzen mit der Kultur vor Ort sowie verschiedenen Aktivitäten zur nachhaltigen Entwicklungen (Partnerschaften, Netzwerke, stärkere Kundenbindung, längere Verweildauer, etc.) Wie sieht für euch eine nachhaltige Entwicklung aus, was gehört hier dazu?

Part III – Discussion of Final Points related to success factors and future development perspectives

Q9) Was sind eurer Meinung nach Erfolgsfaktoren einer Welterbeattraktion wie des Stift Melk?

Q10) Wohin wird für euch die zukünftige Entwicklung gehen?
TRANSCRIPTION RULES FOR THE EXPERT INTERVIEWS AND THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

- (0,2): pauses – within and between speaker turns, in seconds.
- **Word**: underlining - shows emphasis
- **Aw:::**: extended sounds - sound stretches shown by colons, in proportion to the length of the stretch
- **Fish-**: hyphen - word/sound is broken off
- **WORD**: capital letters - increase in amplitude
- (words…): parentheses – uncertain transcription, including the transcriber’s “best guess”
- Space for coding (margin!)
- Single-space when the same person is speaking
- Double-space between speakers
- Double-space between paragraphs of the same speaker
APPENDIX IV

CODING TREE AND CODING TABLE OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Thematic Coding Tree

Part I – Introductory Questions
- Cultural Tourism
  - Tourism, Culture and Religion
    - World Heritage

Part II – Key Issues addressed in the course of the thesis
- Authenticity
  - Heritage Interpretation
    - Product Development and Marketing
      - Demand and Personal Expectations
        - Sustainable Development

Part III – Success Factors and Future Development
- Success Factors
  - Future Development Actions
## Coding table with key statements of the focus group participants

| Cultural Tourism | • Cultural tourists: young people, backpackers, but also elderly, more educated ones  
| Cultural tourists: young people, backpackers, but also elderly, more educated ones  
| Difficulty to define the terms “culture” and “cultural tourism” (popular culture/high culture) |
| Culture, Tourism and Religion | • Culture at the forefront of religion-based heritage attractions  
| • Room needs to be left for both types of visitors (religiously and culturally motivated ones)  
| • Problem in the dialogue between culture, tourism and religion under the effects of mass tourism |
| World Heritage | • Internationally renowned brand  
| • Issue of protection and conservation  
| • Money for protection to be raised from tourism |
| Authenticity | • Decisive factor for visiting cultural heritage attractions  
| • Conflict under the impacts of mass tourism  
| • Different types of visitor segments (with different expectations on authenticity) |
| Heritage Interpretation | • Focus on experience  
| • Consideration of the different types of interests in the visitor  
| • Important for a bridge from past to present |
| Offer and Product Development | • Make offer and demand meet: adding value  
| • Focus on regionality and regional products  
| • Quality versus quantity of the offer  
| • Dialogue between tradition and contemporary offerings |
| Demand and Personal Expectations | • Historical facts and authenticity of product and experience  
| • Experience and storytelling |
### Appendix IV

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| Care of the historical ambiance | • Care of the historical ambiance  
                                  • Preparation and presentation  
                                  • Explanation and information |
| Sustainable Development       | • Captivating interest: encouraging repeat visits  
                                  • Focus on being interactive and creating value  
                                  • Integration into the local surroundings/population  
                                  • Remain faithful to one’s core product or offering |
| Success Factors               | • World Heritage as an international brand and protective status  
                                  • Quality of offer and product  
                                  • Combination of past and present influences  
                                  • Authenticity and preserving the “spirit of a place”  
                                  • Presence on the market (image creation) |
| Future Development Actions    | • Solutions to combat the effects of mass tourism  
                                  • Leading personality to ensure ongoing success |
APPENDIX V

SALES MANUAL FROM KLÖSTERREICH FOR THE ABBEY OF MELK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stift Melk</th>
<th>A-3390 Melk, Abt-Berthold-Dietmayr-Str. 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orden: Benediktiner</td>
<td>Tel: 02752/555-225 Fax: 02752/555-226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:kultur.tourismus@stiftmelk.at">kultur.tourismus@stiftmelk.at</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.stiftmelk.at">http://www.stiftmelk.at</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ansprechpartner:**

| Bereich Tourismus und Kultur  | Pater Martin Rotheneder, Maria Prüller,      |
|                               | Brigitte Kobler, Gerhard Fuchs               |
| Tel: 02752/555-225, Fax: 02752/555-226 | e-mail: kultur.tourismus@stiftmelk.at        |
|                                | marketing@stiftmelk.at                       |
|                                | erreichbar: ganzjährig Montag – Freitag 9 bis|
|                                | 16                                            |

**Führungen und Besichtigung**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elisabeth Alscher, Sabine Amon, Brigitte Kobler, Christine Wilhelm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tel. 02752/555-232, FAX: 02752/555-249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:tours@stiftmelk.at">tours@stiftmelk.at</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zeitlich erreichbar:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April und Oktober 8 -16 h, Mai – September 8-17 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November – März 9 - 16 h (Journaldienst)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Beherbergungsmöglichkeit**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Kloster auf Zeit&quot;</th>
<th>Gastpater: P. Adolf Marker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tel.+Fax: 02752/555-460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:gastpater@stiftmelk.at">gastpater@stiftmelk.at</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Gastronomiebetriebe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stiftsrestaurant Melk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pächter: Gerhard Rieß</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-3390 Melk, Abt-Berthold-Dietmayr-Str. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel.: 02752/52555, Fax: 02752/54444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:stiftsrestaurant@stiftmelk.at">stiftsrestaurant@stiftmelk.at</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Öffnungszeiten: Mitte März – Ende Dezember, 8-19 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>650 Sitzplätze + 150 Sitzplätze auf der Gartenterrasse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Klosterladen/Shop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gerhard Fuchs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tel.: 02752/555-225, Fax: 02752/555-226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:gerhard.fuchs@stiftmelk.at">gerhard.fuchs@stiftmelk.at</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stiftsgymnasium Melk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direktor: Mag. Anton Eder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sekretariat: Frau Huber, Frau Hofmarcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-3390 Melk, Abt-Berthold-Dietmayr-Str. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tel. 02752/555-411, Fax: 02752/555-414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-mail: <a href="mailto:direktion@gymmelk.ac.at">direktion@gymmelk.ac.at</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Erreichbarkeit des Stiftes

| Mit PKW/BUS: über A1, B1 Ausfahrt Melk |
| Mit öffentlichen Verkehrsmitteln: |
| Bahn – Bahnhof Melk; Schiff – Anlegestelle im Donauarm; Linienbusse – Bahnhof Melk |

### Kurzbeschreibung:

**APPENDIX V**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stiftsbesichtigung in der Sommersaison:</th>
<th>Besichtigung von Prälaten- und Kaiserstiegen, das neue Stiftsmuseum mit der Ausstellung „Unterwegs vom Gestern ins Heute – Stift Melk in Geschichte und Gegenwart“ in den ehemaligen Kaiserzimmern, Marmorsaal, Altane mit Blick auf die Donau, Bibliothek, Stiftskirche und Stiftspark.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Modernes, zeitgemäßes und repräsentatives Stiftsmuseum mit der Ausstellung „Unterwegs vom Gestern ins Heute – Stift Melk in Geschichte und Gegenwart“ in den ehemaligen Kaiserzimmern. |
Benediktusweg im Stiftspark | **Besichtigung mit oder ohne Führung möglich**  
Mai bis September: 9 – 17:30 Uhr (Einlass bis 17 Uhr)  
31. März bis 30. April und 1. Oktober bis 4. November: 9 – 16:30 Uhr (Einlass bis 16 Uhr)  
**Führungen für Individualreisende:**  
täglich nach Bedarf  
Mai bis September: ab 10 Uhr bis 16 Uhr  
April und Oktober: ab 10 Uhr bis 15 Uhr  
**Führungen für Gruppen:**  
täglich nach Voranmeldung in D, E, F und I möglich  
Mai bis September: ab 9 bis 16:30 Uhr  
April und Oktober: ab 9 bis 16 Uhr  
**Dauer der Führung:** 1 Stunde  
**Führungen für Gruppen bitte unbedingt vorher anmelden!** |
In der Mitte des Tages – Tägliches Mittagsgebet in der Stiftskirche, Dauer: 15 min | **Eintrittspreise Sommer 2007 pro Person:**  
**Von 1. Mai bis 31. Oktober 2006 ist auch der Stiftspark Melk mit dem barocken Gartenpavillon ohne zusätzlichen Aufpreis mit der Eintrittskarte zur Stiftsbesichtigung zugänglich.** |
| **Eintrittspreise Sommersaison 2007 pro Person:**  
**Von 1. Mai bis 31. Oktober 2006 ist auch der Stiftspark Melk mit dem barocken Gartenpavillon ohne zusätzlichen Aufpreis mit der Eintrittskarte zur Stiftsbesichtigung zugänglich.** | **Erwachsene:**  
€ 7,00 ohne Führung, € 8,80 mit Führung *)  
**Gruppen ab 20 Personen:**  
€ 6,60 ohne Führung, € 8,40 mit Führung *)  
**Schüler/Studenten** (bis 27 Jahre, mit Ausweis):  
€ 4,10 ohne Führung, € 5,90 mit Führung *)  
**Schüler im Klassenverband** pro Person:  
€ 4,00 ohne Führung, € 5,00 mit Führung |

*) Führung nur in den Stiftsräumen. Der Stiftspark ist ohne Führung zu besichtigen.

Die Eintrittspreise enthalten 10 % Mehrwertsteuer.

[www.stiftmelk.at](http://www.stiftmelk.at)
### Familienkarte (Eltern + ihre Kinder bis 16 Jahre):
€ 14,00 ohne Führung, € 17,60 mit Führung *

Führungskarte: € 1,80

### Zuschlag für Kleingruppenführungen:
€ 40,00 (für Gruppen unter 20 Personen)

### Pauschale für Volksschulklassen:
- mit Stiftspark: € 50,- inkl. Führung *)
- ohne Stiftspark: € 40,- inkl. Führung

### Stiftspark und Gartenpavillon

**Eintrittspreise 2007 für Stiftspark und Gartenpavillon:**

Der Eintritt in den Stiftspark ist mit einer Eintrittskarte für die Stiftsbesichtigung ohne zusätzlichen Aufpreis möglich.

**Eintritt nur in den Park (ohne Stiftsbesichtigung):**
- Erwachsene: € 3,- pro Person
- Studenten: € 2,- pro Person
- Kinder (6-16 Jahre): € 1,- pro Person

Die Eintrittspreise enthalten 10 % MWSt.

### Benediktusweg im Stiftspark

**Ohne Führung zugänglich:**


Stiftspark (siehe Öffnungszeiten)
### Stiftsbesichtigung in der Wintersaison:

Besichtigung des Stiftes Melk in der Wintersaison nur im Rahmen einer Führung möglich!

|---|---|

### Führungen:

- für Individualreisende täglich um 11 und 14 Uhr (in Deutsch und Englisch)
- für Gruppen nach Voranmeldung täglich zw. 9 und 16 Uhr (in D, E, F, I) möglich.

**Führungen für Gruppen müssen bitte unbedingt vorher angemeldet werden!**

**Dauer der Führung:** ca. 1 Stunde

### Eintrittspreise Wintersaison 2007/2008 pro Person (inklusive Führung!):

| Erwachsene | € 8,80 |
| Gruppen ab 20 Personen | € 8,40 |
| Schüler/Studenten (bis 27 Jahre, mit Ausweis) | € 5,90 |
| Schüler im Klassenverband | € 5,00 pro Schüler |
| Familienkarte (Eltern + ihre Kinder bis 16 Jahre) | € 17,60 |
| Pauschale für Volksschulklassen | € 40,00 |
| Zuschlag für Privatführungen (für Gruppen unter 20 Personen) | € 40,00 |


www.stiftmelk.at
### Spezialführung für Kinder

| Pauschalen für Volksschulklassen inklusive Führung!  
Eigener museumspädagogisch gestalteter Sonderraum für Kinderführungen. |

### Unterkunft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Kloster auf Zeit&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Gastpater: P. Adolf Marker  
Tel.+Fax: 02752/555-460  
e-mail: gastpater@stiftmelk.at |

### Seminar/Auftritt

| Seminarraum im Gästetrakt: für ca. 30 Pers.  
Ausstattung: Tische, Pinwände  
Tagungsräume: für ca. 200 Pers.  
(mit Tischen ca. 90 Pers.)  
Ausstattung: Video-Großbildprojektor, Videobeamer, Lautsprecheranlage, unterteilbar auf drei kleinere Räume  
Kolomanisaal: bis zu 400 Personen  
Dietmayrsaal: für 70 – 100 Personen  
in beiden Sälen Lautsprecheranlage, Bühne, Verdunklungsmöglichkeit, Videobeamer, Leinwand |

Auskunft: Kultur & Tourismus  
Tel: 02752-555-225  
Fax: 02752-555-226  
e-mail: kultur.tourismus@stiftmelk.at |

### Allgemeine Veranstaltungen

| Internationale Barocktage Stift Melk zu Pfingsten  
Nächtliche Konzerte an den Sonn- und Feiertagen im August |
**Sommerkonzerte im Gartenpavillon an den Samstagen im August**

Internationales Adventsingen an den Adventssonntagen
zahlreiche weitere Konzerte während des Jahres
im Jahr 2007: Benediktusweg im Stiftspark

**Jugendvespern**

**Spezielle Orgelkonzerte**
Nur nach Voranmeldung für Gruppen möglich!

15-minütige Orgelvorführung in der Stiftskirche im Anschluss an eine Führung
Kosten: € 100,- pro Orgelvorführung
(Preis gültig für 2007)

**Weinprobe**
Weinprobe im Stiftsrestaurant Melk

Weine aus stiftseigenen Rieden (Wachau, Gumpoldskirchen)
Auskunft und Anmeldung dazu im Stiftsrestaurant (Adresse siehe unter Gastronomiebetrieb)

**Spezielle Gottesdienste**

Sonntagsgottesdienste in der Stiftskirche
um 9.30 Uhr

teilweise Gottesdienstgestaltung mit Stiftschor und -orchester oder Gastchören


2007: täglich von 1. April bis 31. Oktober, 12.00 Uhr
„In der Mitte des Tages“

**Mittagsgebet in der Stiftskirche**

Dauer ca. 15 Minuten

jeweils am 2. Sonntag des Monats
19.00 Uhr in der Benediktuskapelle


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hauptfeste im Kloster</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. März 2007:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Festgottesdienst zum Fest des hl. Benedikt mit den Schüler/innen des Stiftsgymnasiums</td>
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<tr>
<td>Festgottesdienst</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Besichtigungen in Klosterumgebung</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ausflugsziel:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wachau,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schloss Schallaburg,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schnitzaltar Mauer bei Melk,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schloss Artstetten,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruine Aggstein,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stift Göttweig,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schifffahrt auf der Donau zw. Melk und Krems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sportliche Aktivitäten:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Österreichischer Jakobsweg – Abschnitt Göttweig-Melk Donauradweg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campingplatz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wachaubad Melk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tennisplätze</td>
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<td>Sportzentrum Melk</td>
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APPENDIX VI

ARCHITECTURAL PLANS CONCERNING THE PROJECT OF OPENING UP THE “NORDBASTEI” AT STIFT MELK FOR TOURISM