

**INTERPRETATION AT NYERI ITALIAN WAR MEMORIAL AND CULTURAL
HERITAGE TOURISM: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES.**

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Received January 2018;

Revised March 2018;

Accepted April 2018

ABSTRACT

Italian War Memorial is found in Nyeri County that is located in the colonial white highlands, characterised by rich agricultural activities in poultry farming, tea and coffee production as well as tourism activities, anchored on historical facilities namely the Tree Tops and the Ark-situated in the Aberdare national park. Kenya's Vision 2030 has identified cultural heritage as an appropriate opportunity to promote domestic tourism and cultural pluralism, diversify tourism products and differentiate Kenya's attractions from competitors. This can be realized by enhancing the tourism potentials of historical site like the Italian War Memorial; investing in product packaging and appropriate interpretation of resources to bring to fruition the Vision's intent. This article sought to examine the extent to which the existing Italian War Memorial heritage resources are packaged and interpreted. Based on deductive approach, the researchers applied qualitative methods to gather and analyse information on the interpretation practices applied at the Memorial site. Findings provide information on existing interpretation infrastructures, packaging of interpretative significances, site inadequacies and stakeholders involved in the management of the memorial site. The article also provides insights on the potential negative effects related to the repatriation of mortal humans remains from Kenya to Italy. Researchers conclude that the memorial site is a potential cultural heritage tourism site that can be enhanced through appropriate interpretation infrastructures, packaging of interpretative significances and engagement of multi-stakeholders in the site's development and management. Further the article advocates for the development of a theme that promotes an African narrative. Additionally, the paper constitutes useful academic reference material for scholars and interpreters.

Key words: *Interpretation Equation, Cultural Heritage, Cultural Significance and Cultural Pluralism*

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is one of the oldest tourist attractions (Dallen, 2011) in the history of tourism, whose development is inseparable from the Grand Tour (GT) of the 17th and 18th centuries (Page and Connell, 2009: 26, 31). Being a traditional intellectual travel idolized by the British, French, Germans, Italians and Russians, the GT involved the aristocrats and elite endowed with disposable income and time (Page and Connell, 2009: 31; Walton, 2005).

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Travellers visited selected European cultural cities including and not limited to London, Paris, Venice and Rome, where they sampled classical antiquities, unique works of architecture, arts and picturesque cultural landscapes. The travel motifs included the need to escape from the ordinary fashion and culture, to broaden intellectual capacity and interact with fashionable society (other travellers) (Page and Connell, 2009: 26, 31). Since the GT era, cultural heritage has been and still is an indispensable contemporary tourism attraction whose diverse perspectives, can only be comprehended through appropriate interpretation.

The Italian War Memorial Site located in Nyeri County is one of the many cultural heritage icons spread across the republic of Kenya. In spite of its historical significance and touristic potential, the memorial site is not popular among tourism stakeholders. Through sustainable value addition, the memorial site cannot only promote the image of Nyeri County but can also enhance cultural heritage tourism in Kenya.

Cultural Heritage

In the Kenyan context, cultural heritage comprises of monuments for example a place (Olorgesailie¹, Uhuru Gardens²) or any immovable structure of any age or any structure of public interest by virtue of its historic, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological value (The National Museums and Heritage Act No. 6 of 2006). Monument can also be works of humanity, for example, a rock painting (Abasuba rock art painting and Kwitone paintings of Mfangano Island-Homa Bay County and Kakapel-Busia county³), carving or inscription made on an immovable object or an ancient earthwork or any other immovable object linked to human creativity or even a shipwreck aged above fifty years. The Act mandates the Cabinet secretary, as per section 25 (1) (b) of The National Museum and Heritage Act No. 6 of 2006, to confer the title of a monument to an object.

Other facets of cultural heritage comprise of architectural works, monumental sculpture (statues of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, Field Marshal Dedan Kimathi, Tom Mboya and Nyayo era monuments raised in some memorial sites or streets in Nairobi) and elements or structures of an archaeological nature, unique inscriptions and cave dwellings. Cultural heritage also includes a group of separate or connected buildings whose architecture, homogeneity or place in the landscape are of outstanding historical, artistic or scientific value. Lastly, cultural heritage can refer to the work of humanity or combined work of nature and humanity that is of unique historical, aesthetical, ethnological or anthropological interest (The National Museums and Heritage Act No. 6 of 2006: Part I). The Kenyan definition of cultural heritage captures the fundamental elements advanced by other scholars including and not limited to B. McKercher and H. du Cros, T. Seaton, G. Richards and S. Medlik and the UNESCO (McKercher and du Cros, 2010; Seaton, 2009; Medlik, 2003).

Though the Kenya's Vision 2030 (the national development blue print) identified cultural heritage as an appropriate opening to promote domestic tourism, diversify tourism product and differentiate [country's] attractions from competitors, development of new and enhancement of existing cultural heritage attractions is yet to be optimised (Government of Republic of Kenya, 2012). Part of the solutions to this includes the need to empower heritage

¹ A prehistoric archaeological site known to have many stone tools (hand axe culture) used by the early man (National Museums of Kenya, 2015).

² Kenya's largest independence memorial park (birth-place)-where Union black jack (Colonial flag) was lowered and the Kenyan flag hoisted on 12th December 1963.

³ Coulson, Little and Allen, (2013).

resources' caretakers and the need to invest considerably in the packaging and interpretation the resources in order to bring to fruition the Vision's good intent. Existing memorial-cultural heritage resources are insufficiently packaged and inadequately interpreted.

The article sought to examine the extent interpretation equation is applied at the Italian War Memorial site. Insights on packaging and interpretation gaps were identified and professional ways to address them proposed. This research was guided by deductive approach and by the conventional tenets underpinning the interpretation equation concepts. The findings provide perspectives through which memorial cultural heritage tourism can be enhanced in order to benefit both the Nyeri County and the National government. Considering that the British colonial government authorised the Italian missionaries in Nyeri and Italy to preserve the mortal remains of their own nationals, the outcomes of this article will also be useful to the Archdiocese of Nyeri and the Catholic Church in general. The paper contributes to the positive image of the church and provides frameworks that can inform sustainable exploitation of the memorial site. This article discusses basic perspectives, commonly ignored by tourism developers, yet they are critical in the success and support of robust and competitive cultural heritage tourism in Kenya. The article also provides insights on frameworks that can be used to study and exploit memorial cultural heritage sites spread across Kenya, frequently cited in key economic policies but not developed.

Cultural Heritage Interpretation

The scientific, aesthetics, historic, traditional, architectural, technological and archaeological significance of cultural heritage are more meaningful to mankind through interpretation; it helps the audience to appreciate and acquire positive attitudes towards heritage hence prompting the need for its protection and conservation (Mylonopoulos *et al.*, 2012). According to the Burra Charter, cultural significances refers to the aesthetic, historic, scientific, social, or spiritual value either of the past, present and future generations (Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 2013). The values are expressed through places (geographical area), fabric (fixed materials of a place e.g. fixtures, contents, elements and objects), settings, use (function of a place), associations (relationship between heritage and people or other heritage evidences), meanings/symbolic qualities (what the place signifies, indicates, evokes and expresses to audience), records and objects.

It should be noted that cultural heritage especially historical sites confer identity to a place, region, space and people, commemorate distinguished societal personalities and events, beautify a place, denotes political, cultural, social and economic values of environment within which they are located (Larsen, 2013). Such values can only be understood through interpretation. According to Tilden, interpretation is an art through which an interpreter reveals cultural heritage significances to an audience; connects objects' significances to destination/site/landscape with the intent to excite the audience's interests in the subjects of interpretation (Tilden, 1957; National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior, 2015).

Interpretation is a service through which the spirit of a cultural heritage is conveyed to a visitor (Craig, 2007) or simply put, the process of presenting the cultural significance of a place (Burra Charter, 2013; Puzko, 2009: 229; Rátz, 2009). Its success depends on ones' ability and capacity to apply and execute, in an objective way, the basic concepts of the interpretive equation. The equation is about what is to be interpreted, who to do it, to whom, in what conditions and how it should be conducted.

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$$(KR+KA)*AT= IO$$

Where

- KR-Knowledge of the Resource
- KA-Knowledge of the Audience
- AT-Appropriate Technique
- IO-Interpretive Opportunities

Knowledge of the Resource

On one hand, cultural heritage resources could either be tangible or intangible or a combination of both. These resources exist in physical/hard form and embody cultural values, for example, historical town buildings, archaeological sites and their fabric, cultural landscapes and their contents and cultural objects and movable cultural property (portable objects) (UNESCO 2000a in Mckercher and du Cros 2010). On the other hand, intangible resources consist of the soft culture practised and/or performed by an individual or a given group of people (Mckercher and du Cros, 2010). Soft culture identifies individuals in space and time, and mirrors of their expectations and socio-cultural identity (Mckercher and du Cros 2010). Intangible heritage is also expressed through language (forms of communication), literature (literal works)), music, dance, games, myths, rituals, customs, architectural designs, handicrafts skills and knowledge and accumulated information on specific subjects.

Sound knowledge of the resource therefore implies that an interpreter understands the objectives of the resource, and the simple or complex links between time (present and past), space, people (resource owners and guests) and cultural heritage resources. The interpreter takes cognizant of the diverse significances embedded in the varied characteristics of the cultural resource. Generally, cultural heritage significance refers to values (Burra Charter, 2013) ascribed to the resources, and these may include history in time and space, aesthetical, scientific, spiritual, social, emotional, cultural and economic aspects important to a given society or a group of people (Mckercher and du Cros 2010).

Cultural heritage resource has historic values in the event its development and existence is attributed and/or associated to people and/or events in the ecosystem (Burra Charter, 2013). It bears historical records that influenced and formed both people and their environments. In cultural heritage one can observe diversity of communities and their respective identities-all of which-are irreplaceable and precious (Burra Charter, 2013). This justifies the global cultural heritage conservation efforts championed by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS, 2011). Aesthetical values are experienced through the sense of smell, vision, auditory, taste and feel (Burra Charter, 2013). When assessing the aesthetic values, visitor analyses a given cultural heritage resource's colour, texture, harmony/disharmony in space, size, details, movement (for dance), sounds, scents, inspirations associated with the resource, rarity of the resource and ingenuity expressed in the resource (Burra Charter, 2013). The interpreter's inability to connect the audience to the significance of the resource will lead to customer/client dissatisfaction. Guests leave the resource 'empty handed'-without grasping any significance of the resource.

Knowledge of the Audience

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Audience refers to guest/visitor who, physically or through printed and none print media, interacts with a resource⁴. Audience vary in terms of age, socio-economic status, characteristics, academic qualifications, interests, needs, cultural background, physical and mental capabilities⁵. Audience may visit or seek to interact with a resource for recreation, information, nostalgia, personal connection and linkage, conservation and protection. The interpreter can understand the motivation by continuously being up to date with the dynamics informing the targeted audience's trends. Constant informal or official interaction with the existing and potential audience can enhance the interpreter's knowledge of the visitors. Having sufficient and adequate knowledge of the audience enables the interpreter to satisfy the guests/visitors. Sound knowledge of the audience means that the interpreter takes cognizant of the fact that his/her understanding of the resource and audience is limited and not absolute.

Appropriate Techniques

Techniques refer to the tools used to communicate resource's values to guest/visitors. The techniques include guide-accompanied tours, self-guided tour (foot-trails), printed materials, web site, and electronic gadgets... It's imprudent for an interpreter to select a tool because it is convenient to use. Instead, the media chosen must be appropriate to the resource's (in) tangible significances/values, typology of the guests and relevant in time and space. Suitable techniques enable the audience to form personal intellectual and emotional connections with the resource thus maximizing interpretive opportunities. Techniques also concern the language, tone, and vocabulary used and how they're used. Misunderstandings are bound to occur where care is not taken into account.

Interpretive Opportunities

According to Wearing and Archer (2003), interpretive opportunities (IO) are moments of truth through which an interpreter shares resource's meanings with visitors; are the available choices/options through which an audience and interpreter interact for example-well labelled trails, information centre, designed relaxation points. IOs can also mean the available settings that allow the visitor to interact with the resource. IOs are avenues through which the guest draws personal experiences and/or lessons from the resource or appreciates it⁶, leading to satisfaction to/of the participants. Generally, interpretation opportunities are predictors of the ultimate interpretation outcomes that may include animating and enlivening the resource, inspiring and satisfying the resource user's needs, raising awareness about the resource and promoting understanding among visitors through hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, feeling and deduction (Tilden, 1957; Wearing and Archer, 2003; Ham and O'Brien, 1998). It is argued that, well-informed and satisfied audience support cultural heritage management by engaging in appropriate practices that safeguards and enhances the values espoused in a cultural heritage (McKercher and du Cros, 2010). To realize the outlined outcomes, the interpreter must have sound knowledge of the resource⁷. The four aspects of the interpretation equation (KR, KA, AT and IO) constituted the themes that guided researchers in the design and formulation of data collection questions and data analysis.

⁴ Audience include web surfers, classroom program participants, readers of printed materials, individuals sharing experience about a given resource (<http://www.nps.gov/ifora/index.htm>, consulted July 4, 2016).

⁵ <http://www.nps.gov/ifora/index.htm>, consulted July 4, 2016.

⁶ https://www.nps.gov/archeology/Ifora/tools_2.htm (consulted June 2, 2016).

⁷ <http://www.nps.gov/ifora/index.htm>, (consulted June 27, 2016).

2.0. METHODS

Research design

This article employed a descriptive design, which according to Kothari (1990) and Selltitz et al. (1959:67), is suitable for a structured problem and a study that requires specific information on investigated objects (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). In this case, the article sought information based on the specific concepts of the interpretation equation. Researchers applied this design because the investigation was premised on specific problem relating on interpretation equation from which, interview guide questions were drawn. In descriptive research design, the procedure of administering interviews and the structure and content of the questions posed are invariable (Veal, 2011). Such a standard ensures that accurate information is gathered thus minimizing bias during data collection (Selltitz et al. 1959:67; Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010:56). Reliability of the data collected was enhanced through the selection of specific sample size and pretesting of interview questions at the Our Lady of Consolata Cathedral and Maria Consolata church-Mathari both within the jurisdiction of this research.

Sample Size and Data Collection

The article was based on a restricted scope and deliberate sampling was considered appropriate owing to the descriptive research design adopted. The researchers considered only people employed at the study's sites and those involved in guiding the visitors on site. Given the specific research objectives, judgemental sampling of the respondents and study documents was the surest way to ensure the accuracy of the data gathered (Selltitz et al. 1959:67; Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010:148). In this paper, the researchers collected data through personal interviews, observations and document analysis. The use of multiple data collection tools was meant to improve the accuracy of information collected (Denzin, 1989: 651). The researchers conducted tape-recorded in-depth interviews and also undertook a critical analysis of some selected but relevant documents. Open-ended interview questions, observations and documents analysis focused on establishing interpretation process, materials used and assessing their suitability in relation to the interpretation equation. Pre-testing of data collection tools was undertaken at the Our Lady of Consolata Cathedral and Maria Consolata church-Mathari both situated in Nyeri County. The two sites were picked because of their memorial significances. The Cathedral is the final resting place of two Nyeri Diocese bishops Caesare Maria Gatimu and Nicodemus Kirima (Chacha G, 2017). The Maria Consolata church-Mathari was selected because of its significance in regard to the "Blessed Sr. Irene Stefani Nyaatha". It is in this church that her relics⁸ were kept until her beatification in May 2015 when they were moved to the Lady of Consolata Cathedral in Nyeri town. As such, the two sites have rich memorial significance.

The researchers visited the sites posing as clients and pre-tested the interview questions to evaluate the clarity and consistence of the questions in relation to the research objectives. This was carried-out in a casual manner to minimize any level of suspicion. Minor adjustments were done on the interview questions, which were then administered at the Italian War Memorial site. Those interviewed included cares takers, visitors found at the site and members of the clergy whose scope of work related to the memorial or are conversant with the history of the study site. A total of 60 respondents were surveyed of which, 20 were visitors found on site on different days-to identify visitation motivations; two caretakers-to understand the interpretation process; two clerics with-the aim of establishing history and function of the church building; an official from the Nyeri County government; an official from the Tourist Regulatory Authority and the Mount Kenya Tourist circuit official. These interviewees assisted in finding out the existing stakeholders' linkage frameworks at the

⁸ <http://consolatasisters.org/blessed-sr-irene-stefani>, (consulted January 7, 2018).

memorial site. The point of interest was to find out the available interpretation materials from the respondents. Other respondents were drawn from the general public and from where the researchers conducted random interviews to people in the environs of the Italian War Memorial site. The purpose was to establish the extent to which the memorial site is known among the public.

Data analysis

Data was analysed using qualitative techniques: content and thematic analysis methods. These methods are usually appropriate to studies based on open-ended questions where response contents differ from one interviewee to another (Bardin, 2003; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Veal, 2011). During this study, the researchers strictly focused on the study objectives and the themes covered in the interview guide. The researchers scrutinized the terms and the expressions used by respondents, categorized associated expressions/words into suitable themes based on the components of the interpretation equation. The analysis assisted the researchers to establish the missing and insufficiently considered aspects of the interpretation equation. The results pointed out the possible challenges that practitioners need to address using appropriate strategies in order to enhance cultural heritage tourism.

Study Site

The Italian War Memorial is located about five kilometres North-west Nyeri Town along the Mathari-Ihururu road and close to the Caritas (Chemweno, 2015). Built in 1952, the Memorial has three sections: the church, the pillar-like structure and the setting of the space (external layout of the compound). The memorial's collections include names and some mortal remains of about 676 fallen Italian soldiers who fought to takeover Ethiopia (a place in the sun) from the British during the World War II in 1939-1945. The Italian architecturally designed church exhibits hundreds of vaults with remains of servicemen, mostly, of Catholic faith, the battalion served and the place of death. There is an imposing bust a few steps from the entrance and a tomb near the altar. The bust represents the image of Prince Amedeo di Savoia, the Duke of Aosta and the commander of Italian forces in East Africa, whose remains are interred in the military adorned marble lined tomb near the altar (Stella, 2013). The British armies conquered the Italians leading to Amedeo's surrender with military honours in May 1941 and his subsequent incarceration in the prisoner of war camp (POW) at Ol Donyo Sabuk (Stella, 2013; Eastern African History, 2012). It is suspected that Amedeo died of tuberculosis and malaria in 1942.

The Italian War Memorial is unique in the sense that, holy mass is celebrated once per year (November) in remembrance of and honour of the departed soldiers (Stella, 2013; Gitonga, 2011). Living relatives of the dead soldiers, friends, and government officials led by Italian Ambassador in Kenya, attend the mass usually conducted in Italian. The second section of the memorial is the pillar-like structure outside the Memorial and on the right side (right in relation to somebody going out of the church) bearing the names of the pro-Italian fallen Muslim soldiers (from Somaliland)⁹ that could not be displayed in church because of religious affiliation (Chemweno, 2015; Stella, 2013; Gitonga, 2011). Since its establishment, the memorial is managed and maintained through financial support from the Italian Ministry of Defence, private contributions from the dead soldiers' relatives including Italian nationals

⁹ Italy occupied Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somaliland, so the loyal soldiers supported their colonizer (Eastern African History, 2012).

living or working in Kenya, assisted by the Catholic Archdiocese of Nyeri. (Stella, 2013; Gitonga, 2011). The Catholic Archdiocese of Nyeri supports the Italian war memorial site.



Photo 1: Italian war memorial site viewed from the gate.

3.0. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Heritage Products

Heritage tourism products manifest in both tangible and intangible forms. The Italian War Memorial Site, church and the bursts therein and the tomb are examples of tangible cultural heritage. Considered from the practice and standards of Catholicism, the church at Memorial is a house of prayer and sacrifice having all the requisite sections: the bell tower, the sanctuary, the church hall with pews and the way of the cross on the walls. Interview findings indicated that the church was frequently used for ordinary mass services between 1952 and 1969.



Photo 2: General Amadeo di Savoia bust with the sword and the crown placed in front

During this time the congregations from the environs of Mathari area used the church while the Maria Consolata church-Mathari was being constructed. Today, the church records

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minimal ordinary mass activity. And if any, such activities are limited to “prayers for the departed” and the annual mass meant to remember and honour the Italian soldiers and civilians and their sympathizers both soldiers and civilians. In fact, the mortal remains of soldiers in the church have been sacralised-considered somehow “sacred”. According to Martin (2009), location and practices relating to objects-in this case- the mortal remains, reinforces their sacralisation.

Inspired by the Italian architectural design and internally marked by high vaults, the edifice’s walls have sepulchres, each one of them, bearing the soldier’s or civilian’s mortal remains, their names, date they died, place of imprisonment for the soldiers and residence for the civilians. Sepulchres for the soldiers bear their respective ranks. Only the mortal remains of the Catholic faithful are kept “inside the church”. Apart from individual sepulchres, there is a mass grave for unidentified Italian soldiers and civilians. It is important to observe that relatives of some soldiers and civilians have had the mortal remains of their people repatriated, the recent one as at 2017 being that of 2008. For varied reasons, some relatives have been making arrangements for the mortal remains of their compatriots to be taken to Italy for burial.

There are two busts in honour of the general; the first one-whose pedestal is of imposing size in terms of height- is positioned in the middle aisle (cf. photo 2) a few steps from the main entrance, and a smaller burst on the former’s right. The platform of the majestic bust has writings in Italian. The larger burst symbolizes that the general guards his lieutenants, the same a good shephard does cf. John 10:1-6. If the general was to lead again the soldiers, he would do it from the front.

Intangible aspects of cultural heritage are manifested through the meaning expressed by the tangible elements. Based on the findings, the memorial site was developed to commemorate and honour the duke of Aosta, General Amedeo di Savoia. The Memorial site symbolizes the efforts made by the Italian government with the support of the Catholic Diocese of Nyeri to recognize and appreciate the sacrifice made by one Duke of Aosta; General Amedeo di Savoia, in serving his country. The General sacrificed the royal privileges to remain in the British East Africa and be buried among the soldiers he commanded. The sword and the crown symbolize authority and power the general commanded. The designers and developers of the site meticulously combined the Christianity, military, cultural and celebratory political themes in a seamless manner. According to the interviewee on site, the church’s sanctuary has both the Vatican I and Vatican II aspects. In the Vatican I order, the priest celebrated mass while facing away from the congregation. In other words, the celebrant faced the wall (Catholic Register, 2012). The altar-the priest used is still intact. It is important to note that, the church at the Italian memorial was completed in 1952 and the changes in the direction of the Catholic liturgy came about in the 1963¹⁰, thus paving way to the Vatican II practice. This allowed priests to celebrate mass while facing the assembly. This is the reason the altar is situated in the middle of the sanctuary. This change was significant as it led to active participation of the assembly¹¹ in the liturgy thus occasioning communal celebration (Jasper, 201 ; Banofy, s.d. ; O’Toole, 2008). At the Italian Memorial, the church mirrors the transition from Vatican I to Vatican II. In principle, the church has two altars. The Vatican II brought many changes in the Catholic Church Liturgy and practices. However, some changes have not been mentioned here because not all of them were directly linked to the objects of interest to researchers. Therefore, researchers concentrated on the change regarding the position of the altar in the transition from Vatican I to Vatican II because this aspect was significant to the study.

¹⁰ <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=9377>, Consulted, May 2, 2018.

¹¹ <https://www.ewtn.com/library/Liturgy/zlitur67.htm>;

<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=9378>;

<https://adoremus.org/1998/12/15/The-Mass-of-Vatican-II>, Consulted May 2, 2018.

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Photo 3: the Bust of the general Amadeo di Savoia's deputy.
The bust was brought from Italy by the Gruppo Vittorio Bottego

The General's relatives, friends and allied group, for example, the 1960-*Gruppo Vittorio Bottego*, visit the Memorial site to demonstrate their solidarity with the "departed souls". The group brought the second bust of General Amedeo di Savoia's deputy who commanded the military team in Italy. The group also brought a souvenir that is hung in the church. These enhancements signify the historic ties between Italy and the Memorial site. The church has linen with Italian flag colours (green, white and red) put in vantage points. In addition, some relatives do bring along photographs of the deceased or carry flowers and other decorations that they juxtapose on sepulchres. The bust in photo 3 is that of the General Amedeo di Savoia's deputy. Culturally speaking, the deputy was reunited with the General; call it a military reunion. The scarf with the Italian's flag colours denotes patriotism of soldiers to their country. In disciplined forces circles, national flag colours signify sovereignty and dignity of a country. These are the values officers are called to defend. The scarf with the flag colours is therefore a sign of respect to the deceased.



Photo 4 General Amedeo di Savoia's Tomb in the church.

The layout of the General's tomb and the aesthetic sophistication thereof, correspond to the respect that befitted the Duke. The tomb is positioned in a manner such that the head part

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stretches into the sanctuary¹² whereas the lower part extends into the church hall (nave). A few steps from the altar, there is a table like platform. The picture of the general is placed on the head part of tomb and at the end of the lower limbs; there are inscriptions that a gold medal was conferred unto Amedeo the General of the air force. The tomb has a metallic enclosure.

Attempts to interpret the layout of the general's grave can be possibly drawn from the Roman's Catholic traditions of conducting requiem mass of a member of the clergy: pope, bishop, priest and deacon. When celebrating requiem mass of a bishop/shepherd in a church, the casket is placed the head facing the altar and the legs pointing to the church hall. According to an interview in the Sunday nation of November 12, 2017, the belief is that, were the bishop to resurrect and stand up, he would face the congregation in a similar manner he celebrated mass (Nation Media Group, 2017). If the requiem were of an ordinary Christian, the head will point towards the entrance while the legs face the altar. If he/she were to resurrect and stand, he/she would face the altar from whence cometh the proclamation of God's word. Based on this interpretation and considering that Amedeo di Savoia was of a Catholic faith and a senior military officer too; it can be argued that he was buried the head extending into the sanctuary purposefully. If he (the General) were to resurrect, he would stand facing his lieutenants. If the lieutenants were also to resurrect, they would face their master. This interpretation poses a legitimacy challenge. Why was the general buried this way in a church yet he was not a clergy? Or could it be that he was one, only that it was not emphasised or talked about? And if he was not, did the Roman Catholic Church allow it? Well, researchers did not have answers to the questions!



Photo 5: General Amedeo di Savoia's grave in relation to the entire church set-up.

¹²According to catholic practice, sanctuary is the entire area where the celebrant of the mass and the team occupy. The areas include the tabernacle, the altar and the lectern.



Photo 6: Tomb guarded by two soldiers during the All Souls mass celebration on November 2017

The table like platform mentioned earlier separates the tomb from the altar. What role does the platform play? It limits access into the sanctuary. Ideally in a church, access to the sanctuary is restricted. The platform is skirted from right to left with linens bearing the Italian flag's colour. The layout of the graveside and, the position of platform in relation to the altar, underscore the superiority of the Duke of Aosta, General Amedeo di Savoia among the soldiers. The church is his home. The extension of the tomb into the sanctuary and the church hall tells it all. Whenever a mass is conducted in this church, Prince Amedeo di Savoia is the domineering figure among the deceased soldiers. This explains the reason his burst is conspicuous at the entrance. According to the Catholic faith calendar, November 1 of every year is an "*All saints day*" while November 2 is dedicated to the departed souls or simply "*All souls day*". The Italian Embassy in Kenya organizes for "*All Souls mass*" every second Sunday of November to pray for the soldiers and civilians. Preferably, bishop of Nyeri or his delegate celebrates the mass in Italian language. Throughout the mass, Italian soldiers in full military regalia guard the tomb of the Amedeo de Savoia. Military protocol dominates the whole event, that is, from the procession all the way to the climax-the ambassador's speech. The Kenyan and Italian national anthems are sung and the respective flags hoisted.



Photo 7: A Bishop sprinkles blessed water on the vaults bearing the relics of the soldiers

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Other important aspects of the church are the main entrance doors. Their sizes and the patterns summarize information that could be told in volumes and volumes of books. The doors point out spiritual, political and social dimensions of the bible. Evident books include Daniel, the four Gospels and Revelations. The doors depict varied themes including and not limited to the fall of kingdoms, the mighty and incomprehensible nature of God, human suffering and restoration. Sources indicate that the solid doors were specifically designed to embody the themes. Most of the symbols on the doors for example lamps, stars, scroll, swords, and chalice are in groups of sevens. Biblically, “7” means “perfectness” or “completeness. Could this imply that the memorial site or General Amedeo is perfect or both? This is a question that the Catholic theologians can answer in future studies.

Another aspect of the memorial site is the concrete wall constructed to commemorate the non-Italian soldiers and the sympathizers who fought alongside the Italian soldiers. The wall only bears the names and the locations the supporters were either imprisoned or resided. Most of the sympathizers are believed to have been from Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. The names inscribed on the wall suggest that the sympathizers ascribed to different faiths, the dominant being Muslim. The recognition of the non-Italians evokes the theme of military alliance or simply the colonial geopolitics arrangements.



Photo 8: Bishop Emeritus of Nyahururu Diocese Right Rev Luigi Paiaro, Italian Ambassador (on right hand side of the bishop) and President of the Italian Association (left handside of the bishop) in Kenya leave the Wall commemorating non Christians who fought alongside the Italian soldiers. @2017.

Both the Italians and their sympathizers suffered similar brutality while fighting against the Britons, who were controlling the British East Africa. Recognizing non-Italians symbolizes honesty and responsibility on the side of the Italians. In many instances and based on R. Greene’s argument particularly the 7th Law of the 48 Laws of power, when compiling national history, some countries would tend to ignore their collaborators (Greene, 2002). The developers of the memorial could have as well taken all the credit by focusing on the Italians alone. It was quiet in order to acknowledge the non-Italians, however few they might have been. Such representation fulfils the scripture in the 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. Prince Amedeo di Savoia and his 700 soldiers could not have succeeded alone in foreign territories Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. The team needed helpers (parts) to complement the skilled soldiers. They needed people who had full knowledge, understanding and wisdom about the terrains. According to Sun Tzu, the war can only be won by those with critical knowledge about the

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terrains (Sun Tzu, 2001). Italians needed teams with indigenous knowledge on weather, mountainous and plain terrains.

Acknowledging non-Italians confers to the Memorial site the theme of cultural diversity, according to B. Carson and G. Lewis, should in essence unite rather than fragment humanity (Carson and Lewis, 1999). By extension, it should spur cohesion and integration. It also depicts religious tolerance, currently, an elusive virtue to humanity, easily divided along political, and race, professional, academic and ethnic lines. The Ethiopians, Italians and Somalis assisted the Italians irrespective of their religion.

Cultural pluralism in all aspects can be harnessed to promote socio-cultural, political, environmental and economic development for the betterment of humanity. In this perspective, diversity enriches the global culture. Therefore, acknowledging non-Italians is a positive step towards cultural pluralism. There was need to give the Memorial site the African touch and this was done in an artistically magnificent manner. Whether or not the memorial wall, in its current state, will withstand the vagaries of the dynamic climatic conditions, and therefore, continue to testify of the collaborative military manoeuvre of Amedeo di Savoia, is presently hard to corroborate. But the fact remains; cultural diversity is an asset that can be exploited to create one world (Obama, 2008; Galiero, 2009).

Tangible and intangible heritage components are fragile and irreplaceable (Asfaw and Gebreslassie, 2016). Robust measures must be put in place to guarantee their socio-cultural, economic and environmental sustainability. It is equally challenging to affirm whether or not the relatives of di Savoia, the other Italian soldiers and civilians will continue to religiously patronize the site in the distant future.



Photo 9: Concrete platform honouring the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II

The Memorial site also has a concrete platform commemorating the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. This occurrence in June 2, 1953 took place one-year after the completion of church at the memorial site. This symbolizes the developers' flexibility to accommodate contemporary happenings at that time. More importantly, it was a diplomatic way to reconcile their political rivals in the British East Africa. This demonstrates the Italians' open mindedness and depicts a strategy to enhance the international image of the memorial site.

By extension, it also denotes the themes of "strategic reconciliation and political pluralism of the site. It could also signify Italians' appreciation of the fact the colonial British authorised the development of the memorial site.

In summary, the Memorial site is a key component of Kenya's rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage especially the heritage of Nyeri County. As David Lowenthal argues, mortal human remains connect one group of individuals to another, links the present to the past **MISIKO & MUGUTHU: Interpretation at Nyeri Italian war memorial and cultural heritage tourism: Opportunities and challenges.**

(Nauert, 2017). In this regard, mortal human remains promote collective memory. By extension, they link and create communication relationships between different places, especially Kenya and Italy. Lowenthal further notes that mortal human remains earn glory to a nation, neighbourhood and individuals. In this case, the Memorial site and its mortal remains earn glory to Italy, Kenya and Nyeri County. The attempts by relatives to repatriate remains of their kinsfolk to Italy encourages one to imagine that it is just a matter of time and the General Amedeo di Savoia's remains will be left alone if not repatriated as well which would be the worst-case scenario. Nyeri as a County, Catholic Archdiocese of Nyeri and Kenya all enjoy part of the glory generated by the Memorial site; therefore, the ongoing repatriation needs to be a cause of alarm. This should provoke the urgent need to explore the possible appropriate sustainable strategies that can be adopted to minimize the impending danger-deprivation of the site of its tangible heritage. It is time, the Nyeri County government, National Museums of Kenya, Catholic Archdiocese of Nyeri and the Italian Embassy engage in a conversation on the objects they can collaborate without jeopardising each other's interests. The Memorial site is located in an ideal place-close to the Consolata Fathers' seminary and the Consolata hospital-Mathari thus being within the Mount Kenya tourism circuit. Therefore, the question of what value can the iconic war memorial site add to the Kenya's tourism products, especially the Mount Kenya tourist circuit, needs to form part of the conversation.

Interpretation Techniques

Interpretation is the intermediary between the audience and the object (Asfaw and Gebreslassie, 2016). The means used to pass the information are called interpretation techniques/infrastructure. It is expected that different techniques serve to make an observer/audience interested in an object, develops curiosity and eventually understands the significances embodied in an object. Different techniques are used to reveal meanings and values at the Memorial site. The techniques include and are not limited to print materials, websites, signs and self-guided tours by a guardian/caretaker, exhibits, inscriptions, site layout, and interpretation manuals. At the Italian War Memorial different media are used for instance guided tour-caretaker/guardian; use of signage, exhibits and site layout. There seems to be no authoritative website, interpretation manual, printed explanatory materials (For example, brochures, folders, fliers, books), at the guides' disposal. Instead, there exist inconsistent fragments of diverse perspectives about the site. The absence of printed explanatory materials renders self-guided tour technique inefficient and ineffective.

An audience only understands and appreciates the Memorial site through the caretaker. The caretaker is ever available since he resides in the compound. The researchers interacted with two caretakers since the study begun. The key observable deficiency in the two interpreters was the limited capacity to reveal the significances of considerable facets of the War memorial site. This affects the variety and quality of the audience's experience despite the well thought out layout of the site. Audience's experience can be enhanced through appropriate training of the caretaker. It is true, there could be an interpreter residing at the Catholic Archdiocese of the Nyeri Secretariat, however, the first interpretation opportunity occurs when the caretaker meets the guests. At the first point of contact, interpretation must be executed in the best way possible. There is need to equip the guardian with sufficient interpretive information to ensure consistency in the revelation of meanings. Consistence and coherence of interpretation satisfies the audience (Asfaw and Gebreslassie, 2016).

The quality of knowledge and skills of an interpreter determine what the audience retains about the War Memorial site. Therefore, there is need to create opportunities for the interpreter to engage in continuous learning, research and connection to a network of interpreters. Networking allows the interpreter to interact with other professionals and living treasure, which enables him/her to continuously gain diverse perspectives of the sites

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significances. This infuses novelty in the interpretation process. Unfortunately, the two caretakers interviewed, none of them is or has ever been exposed to opportunities that encourage novelty. The memorial site is a fully-fledged tourism space; whose economic potential is under-exploited. For instance, perusal of the visitors' book signed voluntarily, the number of guests is encouraging and this number would have been higher if at all there had been formal records of all the guests visiting the Memorial site. Currently, majority do not sign the book. Therefore, the provided statistical information (cf. figure 1) only serves to confirm that the site is patronized and more ought to be done to make it more viable and accessible to more tourists both local and foreign.

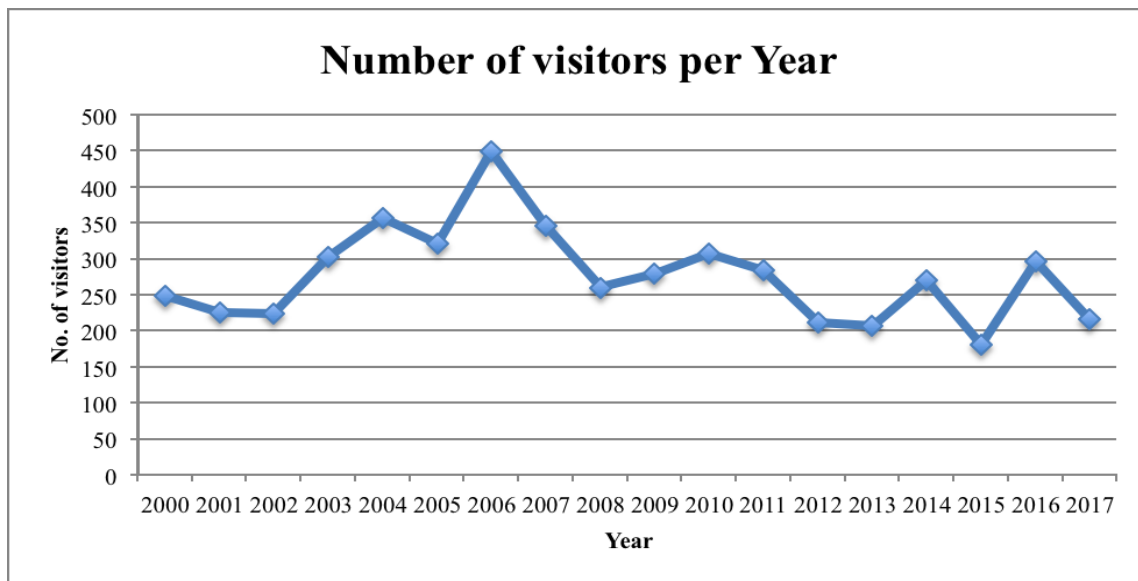


Figure 1: Visitation of the Italian War Memorial Site based on guests statistics from the visitors' book. Information is compiled irrespective of guest's nationality

If an affordable entry fee were levied on the guests, it would be easier to estimate with certainty the statistics of those patronizing the memorial. The present interpretation process falls short of the professional rigor. How beautiful would the visitation trend be if only a professional touch is incorporated in the management of the site? Among the audience who patronize the site are college students. This signifies that the site is good for heritage education and an excellent laboratory for interpretation training. These aspects need to be enhanced through the creation of acceptable content supported by sustainable management initiatives. One of such initiative is to ensure that the memorial site generates revenue that supports conservation and preservation endeavours. Investing in interpretation and the invitation of more stakeholders on-board will boost site's image and brand.

The quality of signage/label is determined by the clarity of information, its visibility, layout of information, language used, aesthetics value of the colour, location of the signage and the significances revealed (Asfaw and Gebreslassie, 2016).

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3.1. Quality of interpretation



Photo 10: Direction signage along the Mathari-Ihururu road.

The Memorial has a signage whose main focus is to signal the direction/location of the site and draw attention of the passers-by. In which case, it enhances the itinerary hence minimizing the guest's chances of getting lost. This in away contributes to enhancing guest's experience. The location of the signage is ideal and words are conspicuously written in Italian and English. Currently there exist weak linkages between the Italian War Memorial and stakeholders such as, the County government of Nyeri, the community, the Tourist Regulatory Authority, National Museums of Kenya, the Mount Kenya Tourism circuit, the Kenya Tourism Board. Involvement of external stakeholders promotes inclusivity likely to create new synergies (Appleton, 2009). The current nature of the site and its management system do not allow for collaboration and interaction with the immediate ethnic communities. As result, the Memorial is known for what it is not. To many people in Nyeri, it is a mysterious church in the sense that, it is not used frequently as it is expected of an ordinary church! It is an island among the expanding Nyeri urban populace, who misconstrue the drive behind the memorial's existence, preservation and protection agenda. This is common among the youth with limited historical information, who consider the church at the memorial as a graveside, hence a dreadful place! Given a chance, the Memorial cannot survive in the midst of the urban Kenyan population always thirsty for more land for the lucrative real estate business.

Networks with other players in the industry will promote quality interpretation especially through the word of mouth. This will create the much-needed awareness. Quality

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interpretation is supported by clearly defined code of conduct, currently absent, if not silently stated. Since the Memorial is located in Nyeri and by default the locals and Kenya as a country, are the key stakeholders. The current manner in which interpretation is conducted does not identify with Kenyans especially the youths. Key interpretation questions “what is to be interpreted, who to do it, to whom, in what conditions and how should it be conducted” seem to have not been keenly addressed. The present interpretation process lacks the force to inspire repeat visits. It is true the Memorial site’s obligations bend towards the Italian but it is also important to be aware that some Africans fought alongside the former. How relevant is and/or can the site be to Africans? At the moment, it can be argued that the African group is excluded from this site.

Going by the focus of interpretation, the caretaker talks more about the Italians soldiers than the Africans and even the Muslim who took part in the war or their names inscribed on this War Memorial. Furthermore, the annual Eucharistic celebration is conducted in Italian language despite the fact that majority are always composed of curious Kenyan-Africans. Unfortunately, many Africans, especially non-Italian speakers, leave the Memorial site without comprehending the entire sermon. Incorporating Africans will create diversity in the interpretation, which is likely to endear ‘neighbourhoods’ to the Memorial site. This potential power of dissonant heritage is yet to be harnessed. According to Nauert (2017), dissonant or discordant heritage is one that has contrasting meaning and values. The memorial site when given an African narrative will signify different values. Such differences ought to be reflected in the interpretation content, local context of the site and the available exhibits. This pluralism needs to be embraced. The Memorial site can appeal to historians, students, tourists and those who travel for fun. Again this audience can vary in terms of nationality, age . . . therefore heterogeneous interpretation is inevitable.

CONCLUSION

The need to conserve, protect, preserve and sustainably manage the site is inevitable. The repatriation of the mortal human remains is a threat to the cultural and political significance of the site. Their relocation denaturalizes the significance of the memorial. Repatriated remains are uprooted from their historical location (land) hence authenticity of the memorial site is put to question. According to the Burra Charter (2013), relocation, unless undertaken to ensure the survival, longevity and security of a heritage, interferes with the significance of a place. In other words, repatriation destroys the cultural significance of the Italian War Memorial site. This process may be appropriate to the Italians because of the very human reason that, compatriots are returned to their indigenous land but it also robs Kenya part of its rich cultural heritage deposits. This repatriation should therefore be resisted not only by the Catholic Archdiocese of Nyeri or even the Consolata Missionaries but also by the Government of Kenya.

Even though, the Italian War Memorial site is a tourist resource, its potential is yet to be harnessed. Its contents, fixtures, object and setting needs to be packaged into a historical product. This can be realized through improving interpretation process and the incorporation of “other stakeholders” other than the current custodian. This is not an easy task because the tourism objectives differ greatly from the Italian War Memorial site’s objectives. It is worth attempting than doing nothing at all!

RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion needs to be on the possibilities of accommodating diverse objectives. As it is now, the Memorial site imposes on the Nyeri community artistic, craftsmanship, unique historical significance, yet the site does not reflect the society's tastes. This is the time to create that African narrative within the confines of interpretation principles, which ought to evolve taking into account such emerging realities. The memorial site has the potential to promote cultural heritage education particularly in regard to African socio-cultural values thus promoting the spirit of African renaissance. Its only when the Italian memorial site mirrors the Africans that it (the site) will make sense to them. Cultural heritage education will go along way in enhancing awareness and acceptability of the memorial site among the African society.

The Memorial site needs to be connected to the local context it is located in and also contributes meaningfully to sustainable community growth. Such consideration will inform the conservation, protection and preservation actions to be embraced. As observed elsewhere, majority of the surrounding communities do not seem to understand the cultural significance of the memorial site. In such ignorance, it is difficult for them to participate fully in its conservation and management; and so shall be the future generation of such populace. It is important to accept that the Memorial site has both Italian and African values, and for them to sustainably coexist, an expanded stakeholder involvement is imperative. Opening up the memorial for touristic use, Italy will be enhancing its contribution to cultural heritage tourism in Kenya.

It is important to reiterate that this article has advanced frameworks to guide the packaging of the interpretation content that would lead to a touristic brand. Presently, the brand or image the public has in regard to the memorial site, is disconnected from the reality and what should be. Branding the Italian war memorial site goes beyond the work of the caretaker and the Italian embassy in Kenya. The brand needs reflect the less talked about and invisible cultural diversity that the site embodies.

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