Promotion and displaying of cultural heritage: Place or name?

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Abstract

Cultural heritage is a vital element for cities, regions and nations in order to attract human and financial resources. Whether some cultural heritage assets – monuments – are of great significance or not, a strategic planning for their promotion is a necessary prerequisite. However, recognition still plays an important role. This paper reports the results of a quantitative survey regarding four monuments in central Greece – 1st ancient theatre of Larissa, monument of Hippocrates, Olympus, Phthia – and how their recognition can contribute to the overall promotion of a place image.

Keywords: *heritage, displaying, theatre, Hippocrates, Olympus, Achilles.*

Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that one of the basic mental and spiritual needs of a community is the knowledge and understanding of its past which ensures its smooth operation in time. Monuments and cultural heritage in general, play a significant role in shaping a collective memory since they reflect specific notions which are transferred through time (Lavvas, 2010). It is commonly acceptable that the memory of a community or a nation is the aggregation of tangible and intangible elements which were created in time and space (Gavra and Vlasidis, 2006). If these evidences are missing, a gap in the historic continuity is created. Taking into consideration the deeper meaning that is incorporated into every monument's entity, it is understood that cultural heritage monuments are non-renewable resources (Grimwade and Carter, 2000).

In turn, monuments and memories form to some extent place identity which is something of great importance since in the era of globalization uniformity is a great danger and the preservation of identity is a difficult problem for solution. Huntington (1998) argues that the role of identity and more specifically cultural identity will become increasingly crucial in the future and the shape of the whole world will be a result from the influences of the biggest civilizations. The concept of identity is not something general and abstract but it acquires a deeper significance for people who reside in a region, especially if a region has to display something from the past. Meurs (2000) stresses that identity is the quality which is capable of transmuting an arbitrary landscape into a meaningful region.

In addition to the above, heritage assets are in position to form a heritage tourism framework. If cultural heritage is not related to social and economic development there

is a great possibility for cities or even whole regions to face extended economic recession (Yang et al., 2008). From that point of view, cultural heritage can contribute to the empowerment of cities' competitiveness and the enhancement of the local economy (Yuen, 2005) through cultural tourism. This paper presents the results of a qualitative study which took place in the Prefecture of Larissa, central Greece. The research focuses on four cultural heritage items that are distributed in different places in the Prefecture. The local authorities try to promote and display these cultural heritage assets whose reputation is known all over the world. Still, the question remains; promotion and displaying should be based on name or on landscape?

Literature review

Just like culture, cultural heritage is a vague term as well. Sofield (2001) notes that the social importance of heritage lies in the relationship with the concept of identity since it is a fundamental element which helps people, communities and nations to identify themselves and responsible for their image abroad. Identity is specific qualities of a place which are used from someone to define his/her existence (Rose, 1995). Identity though is formed by the interaction between residents and place. In fact, place identity is a subcategory of self-identity of people in relation to the place they live in and has to do with memories, ideas, feelings, attitude life (Prohansky et al., 1983). Agnew (1987) stresses that place is consisted of three locality categories. Firstly, place can be considered as location (territory on earth). Secondly, place can be considered as locale (an area for everyday activities). Thirdly, place can be considered as an identity location (personal and community attachment).

Culture through its components has been characterized as "social glue" (Warner and Joynt, 2002). It is the movement of history during which systems of values and perceptions are recorded and studies (Kalogri et al., 1986). Levinson (1998) argues that monuments are efforts, in their own way, to stop time. While the main aim of conservation and preservation of the monuments is to be inherited to the following generations saving collective memory, it is obvious that nowadays they are used in order to form a competitive advantage of a place. For this reason, the resources of cultural heritage and their preservation have been part of plans which seek region regeneration and competitiveness growth (Wang and Bramwell, 2012) and are simultaneously tools for economic growth in different scales such as local or even international level (Loulanski, 2006). Detail attention and existence of incentives can help regions that are not famous despite their historical and archaeological value (Snowball and Courtney, 2010).

The significance of cultural heritage lies in the fact that it represents to a great extent the image of a place (MacKay and Fesenmaier, 2000). The image that tourists have about destinations is of great importance (Laws, Scott and Parfitt, 2002; Tasci and Gartner, 2007) because it plays an important role on tourists' behavior (Bigne et al., 2001; Bonn et al., 2005). It is no coincidence that people choose to visit places with favorable image (Gartner, 1994). On the one hand, image is a mosaic of geography, history, art, music, famous citizens and other coherent elements (Hassan et al., 2010) and on the other hand, destination image is the ways people perceive the existence of the destination (Day et al., 2012) or a sum of impressions, beliefs, ideas and feelings accumulated towards a place over time by an individual or group of people (Kim and Richardson, 2003) or an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualisations and intentions toward a destination (Tasci, 2007).

The efforts that places make so that they can be destinations with recognition are a big challenge (Kotler et al., 2003). In the present, implementation of policies regarding the image and reputation of a city or region is inextricably bound with spatial management (Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kotler and Armstrong, 2009). Various destinations have entered the global market and thus, there is a worldwide competition among them (Riege et al., 2001). This necessitates the configuration of distinctive, unique and internationally recognized characteristics called brands (Buhalis, 2000) and although these destination brands may depict a small part of a city's or a region's potential, their discreet promotion can have great effects on tourists (Nalmpantis, 2013). A common shared vision and giving meaning to what a brand represents (Morgan et al., 2004) are two basic features for a destination's competitiveness. However, understanding the whole framework of a brand is not very easy because of its complexity (Pike, 2005).

Study area

The study area as a whole has to do with the Prefecture of Larissa which belongs to the region of Thessaly, central Greece. Prefecture of Larissa is not a famous tourist attraction in Greece and cannot be compared with other Prefectures, mainly in the southern part of the country. Despite the natural and cultural wealth that already exists, there has been not long time since the pertinent authorities decided to organize the promotion of the Prefecture's image to the external environment in order to attract tourists, both mass and cultural. The paper deals with four specific monuments that belong to this territory and until now they have not been displayed at all; three of them are known worldwide based on their names. In detail, they are the following:

♠ *1st ancient theatre of Larissa*: It is right in the heart of the urban web of the city (Image 1) and along with the vaunted Thessalian horse, they consist the emblem of the city. Its two most important characteristics, among others, are its capacity – 10,000 people – and the fact that is the only ancient theatre in Greece that was found in an urban complex (Spanos et al., 2014).

♠ *Monument of Hippocrates*: The efforts of promoting and displaying the monument of Hippocrates, the father of Medicine who lived and died in Larissa, began only the previous year (Image 2).

♠ *Mountain Olympus*: The Mountain of the twelve gods of the Greek mythology attracts arbitrarily people from all over the world who are keen on hiking and climbing. Still, there is not an appropriate management of the part of the mountain which belongs to the Prefecture of Larissa, both as natural and as cultural resource (Image 3).

♠ *Palace of Achilles*: The exact location of the Mycenaean palace of Peleus' son is characterized as the archaeological discovery of the century. According to historical evidences and the opinions of many archaeologists, ancient Phthia – the homeland of Achilles – is modern Pharsalus (Spanos, 2015), although there is no

archaeological proof. Despite this fact, many foreign travelers come and visit every year the place and together with the local inhabitants, they search for any evidence (Image 4).

Image 1: The 1st ancient theatre of Larissa.

Image 2: Monument dedicated to Hippocrates.

Image 3: The highest peaks of the mountain of the twelve gods.

Image 4: Local manifestation for Achilles at the town of Pharsalus.

Study method

The aim of this paper is to depict the views of the residents regarding the way of promoting place image based on a monument. Therefore, the main research question is "Can a monument be displayed by its own or the assistance of additional elements is needed"? For this purpose, a questionnaire was distributed to 67 people in the city of Larissa. The proposed answers were derived from the international bibliography (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Beerli and Martin, 2004; McCartney, 2008; Hassan et al., 2010; Pike, 2010; Day et al., 2012; Johann, 2014). The survey took place between 19 and 22 September 2016. The duration of the questionnaire's completion was about 10 minutes. The residents were chosen accidentally and they completed the questionnaires at that time so that possible questions could be answered at once. The results were extracted from the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Study results

Bearing in mind the desirable extroversion of the Prefecture of Larissa which is based on its cultural heritage, residents were asked which type of tourists those specific monuments can attract (Table 1). It seems that apart from the ancient theatre, emphasis is given on the category "cultural tourists". This result makes sense for two reasons. Firstly, the rest three monuments indeed address to cultural tourists since their content is specialized. This fact can be confirmed from one of the authors who guides voluntarily in summer travelers at Mountain Olympus and ancient Phthia. Secondly, although ancient theatre is a cultural heritage asset, it is treated in a different way. It is the epicentre of the whole strategic planning of Larissa so that the city can be transformed, through performances, festivals, various kinds of manifestations and conferences, into an attractive destination. The proximity to beaches near Mountain Olympus can attract also mass tourists, making the city of Larissa a destination of short holidays (city break) (Spanos, 2014).

Table 1: Percentage distribution regarding the type of tourists every monument can attract.

	Ancient theatre	Hippocrates	Olympus	Phthia
Mass tourists	6,0%	3,0%	9,0%	1,5%
Cultural tourists	47,8%	89,5%	73,1%	86,6%
Both	46,2%	7,5%	17,9%	11,9%

Source: Authors.

At a second stage, residents were asked about the motives which correspond to mass and cultural tourists or both of them in order to visit a monument (Table 2). The results show a big difference regarding the motives of the mass and cultural tourists. According to them, monument's interpretation (89.6%), architectural buildings (80.6%), other cultural sites and activities (79.1%), monument's role in forming place identity (77.6%) seem to earn high rates concerning cultural tourists on the one hand. On the other hand, residents believe that mass tourists' motives are mainly nightlife (86.6%), beaches (70.1%), climate (71.6%) and recognition of the monument (65.7%) (it is more possible for a mass tourist for example, to visit the Acropolis which is known worldwide and not any other less famous monument).

Table 2: Tourists' incentives for visiting a monument as perceived by the residents.

	Mass tourists	Cultural tourists	Both
Geographic location	73.1%	3.0%	23.9%
Climate	71.6%	7.5%	20.9%
Landscape esthetics	7.5%	58.2%	34.3%
Monument's interpretation	3.0%	89.6%	7.5%
Recognition of the monument	65.7%	6.0%	28.3%
Local customs	435%	68.6%	26.9%
Infrastructure	40.3%	7.5%	52.2%
Other cultural sites	3.0%	79.1%	17.9%
Locals' friendliness	3.0%	47.8%	49.2%
Nightlife	86.6%	0.0%	13.4%
Architectural buildings	3.0%	80.6%	16.4%
Political stability	16.4%	6.0%	77.6%
Cleanliness	1.5%	50.7%	47.8%
Local gastronomy	10.4%	62.7%	26.9%
Quality of residence	10.4%	58.2%	31.4%
Other cultural activities	4.5%	79.1%	16.4%
Beaches	70.1%	0.0%	29.9%
Forming place identity	3.0%	77.6%	19.4%

Source: Authors.

Moreover, the residents were asked which of the above factors is in position to display the four monuments according to their opinion (Table 3). Factors like "geographic location", "monument's interpretation", "infrastructure" and "forming place identity" have common great resonance. However, some differences were observed. For instance, "recognition of the monument" does not earn a high rate regarding the ancient theatre. This happens because the ancient theatre is a very important monument for the society of Larissa but with not so much reputation outside the city. Cultural tourists remember more easily the ancient theatre of Epidaurus or Dodona since these ancient theatres are known all over the global. The rest three monuments though, represent well known brands. Furthermore, nightlife and architectural buildings are factors that characterize the centre of the city of Larissa and even nowadays display, to some extent, the ancient theatre to internal tourists.

Table 3: Factors that can display the four monuments according to the residents.

	Ancient theatre	Hippocrates	Olympus	Phthia
Geographic location	97.0%	89.6%	97.0%	64.2%
Climate	11.9%	11.9%	80.6%	13.4%
Landscape esthetics	65.7%	35.8%	91.0%	47.8%
Monument's interpretation	86.6%	88.1%	86.6%	94.0%
Recognition of the monument	25.4%	77.6%	97.0%	94.0%
Local customs	77.6%	31.3%	23.9%	56.7%

Infrastructure	94.0%	76.1%	77.6%	77.5%
Other cultural sites	91.0%	77.6%	22.4%	34.3%
Locals' friendliness	47.8%	32.8%	50.7%	68.7%
Nightlife	65.7%	10.4%	3.0%	11.9%
Architectural buildings	82.1%	16.4%	7.5%	14.9%
Political stability	19.4%	10.4%	9.0%	8.7%
Cleanliness	77.6%	64.2%	67.2%	73.1%
Local gastronomy	85.1%	73.1%	35.8%	67.2%
Quality of residence	61.2%	50.7%	25.4%	26.9%
Other cultural activities	95.5%	61.2%	59.7%	83.6%
Beaches	68.7%	37.3%	83.6%	7.5%
Forming place identity	82.1%	70.1%	88.1%	92.5%

Source: Authors.

In the end, residents were asked whether these monuments can be promoted and displayed by their own or they need the contribution of other elements of the place they belong (Table 4). Apart from the ancient theatre, the other three monuments are considered by the public as cultural assets with great potential. These results become more important since there is significant statistical difference, using the Chi-square test, regarding the category of tourists that can be attracted to visit those monuments ([Hippocrates: p-value=0.040], [Olympus: p-value=0.001], [Phthia: p-value=0.000]). More specifically, the allocation showed that those people who think that these three monuments can be promoted on their own, can attract mainly cultural tourists.

Table 4: Residents' opinions about the promotion and displaying of the four monuments.

	Ancient theatre	Hippocrates	Olympus	Phthia
By its own	16.4%	68.7%	89.6%	88.1%
Assistance of other elements	83.6%	31.3%	10.4%	11.9%

Source: Authors.
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Conclusion

Monuments and archaeological sites play a fundamental role in shaping place identity and putting even unknown regions on the tourist map. However, the promotion and displaying of these cultural heritage assets depends on various factors. Sliding over infrastructure, which is a common acceptable factor for every strategic planning, recognition still plays an important role for the image of a place. Of course, any other factor can contribute to a holistic management of cultural heritage displaying. According to the residents, three of the four monuments under investigation can rely on their recognition supporting the previous view. Just like other monuments all over the global–Uluru Rock in Australia, Machu Picchu in Peru, Great Wall in China, Stonehenge in England – their reputation can attract cultural tourists at first. If the attraction of mass tourists is also desirable, taking into consideration the advantages

and disadvantages of this perspective, this concerns the local authorities and the residents wherever they are.

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Προώθηση και ανάδειξη της πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς: Τόπος ή όνομα;

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Περίληψη

Η πολιτιστική κληρονομιά αποτελεί ζωτικό στοιχείο για πόλεις, περιφέρειες και έθνη με στόχο την προσέλκυση ανθρωπίνων και οικονομικών πόρων. Ανεξαρτήτως της σημασίας του πολιτιστικού αποθέματος – στη συγκεκριμένη περίπτωση των μνημείων – ο στρατηγικός σχεδιασμός για την προώθηση του είναι αναγκαία προϋπόθεση. Η παρούσα έρευνα παρουσιάζει τα αποτελέσματα ποσοτικής έρευνας που σχετίζεται με τέσσερα μνημεία τα οποία τοποθετούνται στην κεντρική Ελλάδα – 1° αρχαίο θέατρο Λάρισας, μνημείο Ιπποκράτη, Όλυμπος, Φθία – και τον τρόπο που αυτά μπορούν να συμβάλλουν στη συνολική προώθηση της εικόνας ενός τόπου.

Λέξεις – κλειδιά: *κληρονομιά, ανάδειξη, θέατρο, Ιπποκράτης, Όλυμπος, Αχιλλέας.*