

**Heritage Tourism, Identity and Advertising
of Religious Sites in Greece:
Towards a Conceptualisation Framework**

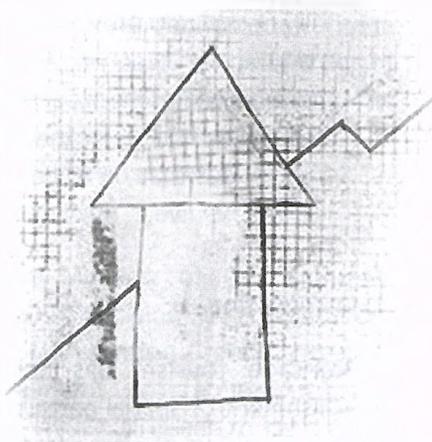
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Heritage Tourism, Identity and Advertising of Religious Sites in Greece: towards a conceptualisation framework

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Περίληψη

Το άρθρο αποτελεί μία εμπειρική έρευνα για τον τρόπο με τον οποίο ο τουρισμός μπορεί να συμβάλει στην παρουσίαση της εθνικής ταυτότητας. Εξετάζεται η σημασία του διαφημιστικού υλικού του Ελληνικού Οργανισμού Τουρισμού (ΕΟΤ) για τη διατήρηση της 'φανταστικής κοινότητας' από μία πολιτιστική-κοινωνιολογική προσέγγιση. Συγκεκριμένα, εξετάζει την παρουσίαση πολιτιστικής κληρονομιάς εξαιρετικής σημασίας μέσα από τα μνημεία που έχουν εγγραφεί στην Λίστα Παγκόσμιας Κληρονομιάς, όπου το Ελληνικό κράτος ορίζει την Ελληνικότητα περιλαμβάνοντας Βυζαντινά Πολιτιστικά Μνημεία. Σε θεωρητικό επίπεδο, διαφαίνεται ότι υπάρχει εξάρτηση του κράτους και συγκεκριμένα του Ελληνικού Οργανισμού Τουρισμού (ΕΟΤ) από τον συμβολισμό που σχετίζεται με αυτά τα μνημεία για τη δημιουργία της τουριστικής τους προώθησης και διαφήμισης. Το άρθρο καταλήγει ότι ο ΕΟΤ έχει ένα σύνθετο ρόλο να διαδραματίσει στον πολυεθνικό κόσμο που ζούμε.

Abstract

This article is an empirical study of the way the tourist perspective may contribute to the presentation of national identity. The paper illustrates the significance of the advertising material of the Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO) for the preservation of an 'imagined community' from a heritage-sociological approach. In particular, it examines the presentation of heritage of outstanding

value, sites nominated to the World Heritage List, where the Greek state defines Greekness by including Byzantine Heritage Sites. It is argued at theoretical level that there is actual dependence on symbolism associated with these sites by the state organisation's activities -GNT0- in the creation of the tourist literature. The article concludes that GNT0 has a complex role to fulfill in the multinational world we live.

1. Introduction

Heritage tourism has developed as an important sector in the establishment of spatial patterns of tourism. Heritage tourism is associated with the visiting of sites, monuments and cultural artefacts on display in museums that are deemed to be of significance and which have passed from one generation to the other. Among other heritage tourism attractions, religious buildings are included (Williams, 1998, p. 182; Vukonic, 1996).

Sites are part of the national identity and they are manifestations and signifiers of the iconography of nationhood offering a sense of continuity and belonging for a population (Smith, 1991, p. 77; Feilden & Jokilehto, 1993, p. 77; Hall & McArthur, 1993, p. 3; McCrone et al, 1995, p. 7, 181). Reinforcement of symbols of national identity may take place through their presentation to the public. Associations of heritage with national identity, are strengthened through their tourism promotion (Palmer, 1999; Pritchard & Morgan, 2001).

This, though, means that space is not a physical location for leisure and tourism. It is associated with discourses. Places and their presentation through tourism may be viewed as a visible manifestation of perceptions and images where the construction of tourist places is part of a socio-cultural process (Hall, 1994, p. 180; Palmer, 1999, p. 316; Williams, 1998, pp. 172-173). This article contends that tangible sites may take meaning and related to symbolism with the contribution of tourism. However, research related to the political impacts of interpretation and tourism has received relatively little attention (Hall & McArthur, 1992, p. 157; Hall & Jenkins, 1995). Thus, there is lack of critical analyses of image representation in tourism (Pritchard & Morgan, 2001: 168).

The issue that is then raised is on the role of a state organisation, in the specific article GNT0, in the presentation of identity as is manifested

through World Heritage Sites. A state's aims are based on rational decisions which do not need to include symbolic attachments. World Heritage properties nominated to the World Heritage List (WH List) are properties of outstanding universal value according to the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1983)¹

2. Tourism Bureaucracy and the role of symbolism

GNTO, founded in 1951, is under the Ministry of Development. Directorates of Research & Development, Advertising & Presentation, Tourist & Creative Activities are in charge of presenting Greece nationally and internationally and design and implement programmes for the presentation of Greece (Presidential Decree, 1996). It needs to be pointed out that priority is given to the economic returns that may come from tourism while the presentation of archaeological sites is considered to be only one part of the responsibilities of GNTO (GNTO, 1997, p. 5). Sites are seen by GNTO as 'tourist resources' that can be used when Greece is presented.

This paper provides the possibility for arguments to be drawn for the influence and in fact, dependence of the tourism organisation on specific heritage forms. There lies, on the one hand, the rational represented by the tourism industry while on the other, the symbolic is reflected on the sites. Herzfeld (1992) argues that while bureaucracy –associated with the function of the state- is related to the rationality of law, accountability and equality for all the members of the community, it may also depend on symbolic forms for the decisions made.

Herzfeld mainly associates his proposition with abstract symbolic elements. This paper takes Herzfeld's argument a step further: given the fact that the World Heritage Sites are tangible and material symbols and not abstract forms, we may then seek to understand the power of such tangible symbols. There are relations that these sites may sustain. The article seeks to examine the communication through promotional material created for these heritage sites by using primary sources of data from GNTO.

Sites which are visible and recognisable and which make palpable the abstract ideas that may carry are at the forefront (Smith, 1991, p. 77). "The

1. The World Heritage Sites that Greece has nominated to the List as of 2002 are presented in Appendix I.

material cultural heritage is particularly suited to helping to develop the population's awareness of a shared historical identity" (Herrmann, 1989, p. 35). It is then that the role of tourism emerges. There is a blend between tourism, nation and archaeology since national identity identifies with sites and archaeological finds, promotes them through tourism, which is a source of income for the state, and consists of the vehicle to promulgate the symbols and the sites of the country's distinctiveness (Evans-Pritchard, 1993, p. 27). The tourism industry uses features of myth as collective symbols and these myths help to construct national identity in the imagination of the visitor (Lowenthal, 1994, p. 49; Palmer, 1999, p. 316). The presentation of sites with symbolic power can take place through tourism. Tourism uses such symbols not purely as sites of entertainment but also as reflections of identity with implications for how they are perceived.

Given the fact that the World Heritage Sites are tangible and material and not abstract forms, the power of such tangible sites and the relations they may sustain when presented by GNTO is critically analysed. The perspective in the Greek tourism industry will, thus, be broadened if it is considered that the interpretation of data for the meaning given to the World Heritage Sites is examined in the light of the fact that GNTO is part of a bureaucratic system that nonetheless, is influenced in the decisions made for the presentation of heritage of outstanding value by the socio-historical processes. This, though, allows us to argue for the way identity may be constructed. Before presenting the way the sites are presented by GNTO, the way Greece was associated with religion and religious sites is presented.

3. The influence of socio-historical processes on tourism's activities

Briefly presenting the historical processes that led to the prevalence of specific cultural forms –as is religion for Greece- one should take into consideration that the creation of the nation in Greece and also in the South-Eastern Balkans was pro-religious (Georgiadou, 1995, p. 300; Liakos, 1999, p. 23) where Orthodoxy came to define Greek-speaking populations. The state's nationalisation of the Church in the 18th and 19th century, but also the adoption of religious beliefs into the ideology of the state since the emergence of the Greek state in the 1820s, led to the association of Byzantine Orthodoxy with Greek identity. Smith (1988, p. 16) referring to

the case of Greece mentioned that "In a clearer illustration of the continuing power of self-definitions and self-renewals inspired by reshaped ethnic myths of descent and the golden age can be found" where on the one hand, there is the secularism of a state based on Western principles, and on the other, there were the ethno-religious claims of the Church.

"If identity can be tied to the concrete reality of churches and universities and law courts, it becomes far harder to be blown away at will" (Reicher & Hopkins, 2001, p. 123). How, then, is this identity tied to the people's minds? At a more abstract level, Anderson has discussed the belief of a people in their distinctiveness with the terminology of the imagined community where a sense of coherence exists between its members who feel a sense of belonging to the same group (1991). The issue that is raised for Anderson's imagined community is related to the ways in which there is preservation of the imagining in the population (Schlesinger, 1991, p. 163; McCrone, 1998, p. 6) which needs to be considered. Hobsbawm (1983: 13) although from a constructionist's point of view, argues that there is selectivity and reinterpretation in the national symbols, but recognises the existence of 'genuine traditions'. In that way, it is acknowledged that traditions may not be wholly imaginary and get meaning from the sense of a common past. Gellner (1964, p. 168) also agreed that nations use some pre-existing elements that derive from the past for their creation even if he argued that nations were created in the modern era (Gellner, 1983, pp. 49, 55). He uses Greece as an example to refer to its continuity with Byzantine heritage (Gellner, 1996, p. 369) associated with the Eastern Orthodox Church, which is part of an existing 'navel' for Greece as Gellner argues. The issue is not to argue on the way identity is created but how it is presented by a state organisation, in the specific case by GNTO.

The relationship of Greece and Byzantium up to the present day has not been denied nowadays although it is understated that during the Ottoman Empire, the Orthodox Church was associated with the Christian populations in the Balkans in terms of religion and not in terms of nationality. These ideas for Greece are not easily separated although national identity is different from religious identity (Herzfeld, 1992; Pollis, 1992). The benefit of the state from having the Church on its side was double because of the influence of the Church on the people. Thus, what initially was an obstacle for the creation of the Greek state, became a motive for forging national identity within the modern Greek state (Kitromilides, 1989, p. 162; Kofos, 1990, pp.108-109). The state incorporated Orthodoxy as a characteristic of

Hellenism and religion was forged as a national tradition although it was in direct contrast with ancient Greek values (Sugar & Lederer, 1969; Kitromilides, 1989; Liakos, 2000).

Religious symbolism influences secular aspects of Greek life, and, although national and religious identity have been separated in Greece, national identity may be defined by religious elements (Herzfeld, 1992, pp. 43, 93; Pollis, 1992, p. 179; Georgiadou, 1995, p. 299) indicating the interdependence of the state and Church and still today the assumption that a Greek citizen has Orthodox faith which is reinforced at times of political instability at national or international level. Examples of such reinforcement took place a) in the late 1980s; then, the importance that was attributed by Greek Orthodox citizens to the Church over political institutions and parties led governments to retreat from their position in relation to the Christian ideas of the Church (Kourvetaris & Dobratz, 1987, p. 3; Georgiadou, 1995, pp. 309, 313); b) in 1992-1993 when controversial issues over the historicity of Macedonia were intensified (Danforth, 1994; Mouliou, 1996). It was in 2001 that the state indicated a procrastination to leave cultural elements such as religion from the definition of Greekness. The Greek state aimed to establish the creation of new identity cards on which the religion of the person would not be written as used to be the case. Leaving out such data as the bearer's religious allegiance from the identity cards has created a lot of disagreement with the Church and the Orthodox faithful. The presentation of these symbols may contribute to the social cohesion of a population who may feel distinct and special because of these distinct sites. The paper argues that GNT0 has a role to play in presenting specific values in Greek society. In fact, GNT0 depends on the symbolism of these religious sites.

4. Approaching the advertising material of GNT0

Printed promotional material from the last 14 years was examined since the first nomination of Greek properties took place to the WH List, a representative period to explore occurrences or changes in the presentation of the heritage sites and the values associated with heritage properties. Brochures, and advertising inserts are among the main tools for the presentation of the tourist literature by the GNT0 since there are economic constraints which limit the possibility of advertising campaigns on an annual basis. In-depth interviews with officials in GNT0 are also used as another technique which offered ground to identify and explain the

purposes and reasons for the implementation of decisions related to the presentation of Greek cultural heritage. Decrop (1999) specified the use of triangulation in areas of tourism research and proposed it as a way to verify findings emerging from different sources. The texts are not seen as neutral readings, but the role of discourse analysis is to interpret the social world which is there (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Mason, 1996, p. 109).

The identification of topics for the creation of the categories of the system were based on the perspectives found in processes and actions presented in data and recurrent phrases that characterised the actors' practices were sought. Issues that emerge in the data and are repeated create patterns (Yin, 1989; Forster, 1994, pp. 150-152; Robson, 1993, p. 404; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; May, 1997). Comparisons and connections across cases from the presentation of the World Heritage Sites in the official discourse are made to illustrate themes which occurred across cases from the presentation of the World Heritage Sites in the official discourse. The data is then linked in an attempt to understand data in context by looking at relationships that connect statements and events within a context, a process called contextualising (Maxwell, 1996). The data are put into the socio-political context related to Greece. "A purely literal reading is not possible, because the social world is always already interpreted" (Mason, 1996, p. 109). The researcher sought the broader implications and considerations keeping in mind to explore the socio-political context within which the process of the presentation of the specific sites took place.

5. The social organisation of attachment with heritage by the tourism industry

A glorious past is unveiled when reference is made to Greek heritage in tourism brochures. It is a strategy implemented aiming at connecting specific sites to specific territories. The emotional ties of people to specific heritage (Feilden & Jokilehto, 1993, p. 18) may be reinforced through myths related to heritage. The process by which shared memories are attached to particular territories to become historic homelands (Smith, 1996, pp. 453-454) is one which was identified in the printed promotional material of GNTO. Religion is an important aspect of the Greek community and religious events provide the motive for the development of further promotion and the reinforcement of ties with Orthodoxy. In that way, it is decided that

heritage sites that are related to Byzantine heritage are presented in the Greek versions of the promotional material.

The World Heritage Site of Patmos belongs to the Dodecanese, a group of 12 islands located in the Eastern Aegean. Religious ceremonies that date back to the early Christian times are still being practised. Patmos constitutes a Greek Orthodox pilgrimage centre with the Cave of the Apocalypse where Saint John the Theologian wrote both the works of the Gospel and the Apocalypse between 95 and 97 AD. On September 1995, the 1900 anniversary was celebrated. In 1995, a new brochure for the Dodecanese was published and Patmos was the first of the 12 islands to be presented. Such a publication might not be considered a coincidence. The very first words that were mentioned in the brochure were: 'Jerusalem of the Aegean Sea' is one way of describing Patmos or Patnos, as it was referred to in one inscription of the 5th century" (Tourist Brochure, 1995).

Patmos is metaphorically presented as Jerusalem, the Holy Place of Christianity. By bringing the past into the present, the perceived roots with antiquity and the continuity in time are provided. Patmos provided the motive for the creation of material with religious content for the September 1995 celebration of 1900 years, at national level. Special editions of posters related to Orthodox religious events for Patmos, which were published in Greek, were not produced in English as a matter of informing the tourists for the events held in the sites. The officials in the Directorate of Advertising and the Publications Department of GNTO mentioned that they are not published in English due to the fact that points of Orthodoxy would be lost on members of other religions (personal interviews). It should be borne in mind that among tourists objectives are economic gains by attracting segments of tourist demand. The target market, then, that GNTO aims to cater for has a role to play in the promotion of heritage sites, the commodification of culture and of how identity is defined.

Mount Athos, another site of Orthodoxy, is located in the region of Greek Macedonia. A separate section on Mount Athos was included in a brochure created in 1993 and which emphasised history and elements of Greek national identity from the first page. The brochure intensified a sense of continuity which has existed in the Monastic State of Mount Athos which was seen as the bastion of Orthodoxy since Byzantine times (Tourist Brochure, 1993). The following quote provides information on the way the Byzantine art of the World Heritage Site of Mount Athos is presented to the Greek population.

"When viewing all these specimens of Byzantine art, the visitor acquires the feeling that he has been examining rich Byzantine museums and leaves with a sense of satisfaction that there was an opportunity to live, even though for a brief spell only, in a sacred world and hermetically sealed off in legend and religious tradition" (Tourist Brochure, 1993).

The visitor is invited to the 'satisfaction' offered when s/he visits the site; the descriptions made are used to motivate readers' imaginations although only men are allowed to visit the site. Reference to the Christian Orthodox religion is explicitly made. The significance of the Byzantine art is presented. It is worth mentioning that the English version of the same brochure, typically, did not mention this phrase. Communicating an idea to a group is made easier when this idea consists of a notion familiar to that group (Fine, 1981, p. 95). Nonetheless, the officials of GNTO too readily assume that, what people want and how they feel about cultural heritage, is what is of interest to the experts themselves. Religion –as earlier presented- continues to be taken for granted that is associated with Greek identity.

Another phrase mentioned in the promotional literature for the region of Macedonia: "In Macedonia the relationships of the inhabitants with Byzantium and antiquity are readily discernible" (Tourist Brochure, 1989). Symbolic value was given to the region of Macedonia and the heightened promotion of the area took place. Intensification of historical information took place aiming at attaching symbolic meaning to specific sites from specific areas. Given the socio-historical context of the period, where disputes were created between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and controversial issues over the historicity of Macedonia exist (Danforth, 1994), presentation of Byzantine heritage from the area associated with religious sentiment took place to assert notions of Greekness. This safeguarded the objectives of the state to rally the population at a period of political instability within the state (Triandafyllidou, 1998).

The role of sharing common beliefs within a society contributes so that meanings and messages about religion are used to be transmitted to the people sharing the same language and the same traditions. Religion and its symbolic meaning is perceived to be an important part of Greekness and it is presented as such, allowing little space to the reader to feel otherwise. It is upon the officials in charge of the creation and presentation of the promotional material to present the sense of belonging to the imagined community.

The state employs this ideology when promoting the World Heritage Sites to join the population under cultural unity. The social construction of the community's distinctiveness is transformed to a cultural distinctiveness that is reinforced by the state's organisation attempt to promote World Heritage Sites from the borders of the state where differences with other countries exist.

Mount Athos and its ecclesiastical utensils, Patmos and the cave of the Apocalypse, in other words, tangible but also symbolic forms of Orthodoxy, and therefore of a specific religious identity, were found to initiate the communication activities of GNTO. Promotion which takes place at specific times was found to be important by the Director of the Advertising Department in GNTO who referred to the religious or archaeological content that provides a motive for the creation of promotional material (personal interview). Events related to a cultural identifier such as religion are used for the presentation of Greece and, what is more interesting, they determine the material produced by GNTO. Intensification of historical details takes place and heritage sites are used to sustain the belief in a people's distinctiveness. These also consist of the motivating forces which provide meaning in the tourism organisation's activities. In fact, GNTO not only promotes the official ideology but actually depends on the symbolism of the nation which indicates the state organisation's dependence on symbolic elements associated with sites while the state organisation functions under the rule of law and rationality.

6. Presenting byzantine heritage at international level

It is typical to mention that the English version of printed publications describing Byzantine Heritage Sites do not mention concepts associated with religion as they do in Greek brochures (Tourist Brochure, 1994). Advertising of pilgrimage tourism has only been recently intensified for the international market –late 1990s- in order to reach people with interests in cultural, religious or natural content (GNTO, 1998: 1-2). Such activities should also be associated with the financial contribution of the European Union and the Second European Regional Development Fund (Ministry of Development/MoC, 1998). National pride may exist when the international community shares these heritage values, while this heritage is presented as national.

Another case with regard to the way in which the presentation of

heritage is written was critically analysed in the brochure about the World Heritage Site of Meteora. Meteora is inaccessible sandstone peaks where monks settled from the 11th century AD on. Twenty four monasteries were built although there existed great difficulties. Their 16th century frescoes are a fundamental stage in the development of post-Byzantine painting. The earliest information in 1983 provided for Meteora mentioned: "Igrey stalagmites rising towards the sky, they seem to be nature's gift to the pious who have opted for monasticism and for a life totally dedicated to the worship of God" (Tourist Brochure, 1983).

This is a quote that is very much oriented towards religion. The way that the World Heritage Site of Meteora is presented might attract a specific number of people because of the presentation. The latest version of the brochure for Meteora for the international market mentioned: "grey stalagmites rising towards the sky, they appear as nature's gift to the pious who, driven by faith, have opted for solitude and a life of worship" (Tourist Brochure, 1998a).

The text, which uses less religious idiom, was later published and is less oriented towards monasticism. The religious element is still presented but not to such a degree that it might discourage some from visiting the site. In that way, the description made for Meteora in the 1998 brochure aimed at attracting more visitors and presented the site in a more accessible way for the visitor. The later edition of the brochure is more tourist oriented and it does not present Meteora from an ascetic and monastic point of view. In that way, there is an effort to include a wider variety of people. It is an element that shows the way tourism organisation functions justifying different objectives of the state depending on the segments of people that will receive the information of the advertisements. A variety of objectives, thus, can be fulfilled from the presentation of heritage sites, associations that at times may be related to economic gains –especially when aiming at international level- but also the construction of identity and the role of religion as is manifested through such presentation defining Greek identity at national and international level.

The officials of GNTO present notions of Greekness that are related to the sites as being nationally and internationally significant. National pride may exist when the international community shares these heritage values, while this heritage is presented as national. It is of interest to note that there was not a single reference in the material of GNTO about the nominations of the World Heritage Sites to the WH List in the Greek or the

English versions. Mystras, a World Heritage Site inscribed on the List in 1990, was built as an amphitheatre around the fortress in 1249 by the prince of Achaïe, William Villehardouin. The association of Mystras to Byzantium is praised.

"As you approach Mystras, you feel as though you're making a pilgrimage to Byzantine Greece" (Tourist Brochure, 1998b).

Visits to specific sites are considered to be a 'pilgrimage' made to Greek terrain and GNTO acts as if it is called upon to present not only Greece but also the perceived feelings of the people. In that way, the sites gain a sacred character which may justify the visit to them. It is implied by GNTO that every person, Greek and foreigner, should visit them.

There was also specific reference made by the Greek state with regard to the cultural heritage in the Conference of the International Association of Travel Agents in Athens in 1995. It shows the official point of view of the way GNTO perceives heritage and the cultural values that it embraces:

"Mythology, our history, our archaeological sites, our churches, our folklore traditions, consist of symbolic codes which carry the gravity of centuries. These cultural elements of Greeks consist of the tools for the preservation of our national existence and they consist of our unique playing card in the international arena of competition. They are, for we Greeks, forever connected with our conscience and our national identity" (GNTO, 1995, p. 2).

Sites provide a tool for the differentiation from other nations which also bring economic benefits to the country from international tourism. At the same time, there is symbolic power of heritage sites and the meaning they are given by the bureaucratic state organisation of GNTO. Heritage is described with emotionally charged words which may also imply the continuing role that heritage may have in the passage of time.

It is interesting to note that national identity is explicitly presented as being connected to the sites. It should be noted though, that identity is presented as 'an essence' when it is the outcome of transformations and processes. Our focus, then, is based on the social organisation of Greek identity as was found from the promotion of the Byzantine World Heritage Sites by the tourism organisation of GNTO. This also indicates the dependence of a state organisation on the presentation of symbolism associated with religious sites.

The onus is on the officials in charge of the creation and presentation of the promotional material to present the sense of belonging to the imagined

community. Who is included in this sense of belonging in the multicultural world we live? It can, then, be argued that it is not only the populace involved in nationality; this paper addresses the process whereby ideas of the imagining of belonging to a community are being worked and fed back to the people.

8. Conclusion and implications for management

GNTO is a state organisation which provides a mechanism which may contribute to the preservation of the sense of distinctiveness in a people's minds. Tourism serves to preserve artifacts for promotion (Hall, 1994, p. 180; Urry, 1990) but also uses features of myth as collective symbols for establishing identity (Hall, 1994; Herbert, 1995; Palmer, 1999, p. 316). Political interests of the state are fulfilled but also GNTO depends on the power of the World Heritage Sites and the values associated with them. Institutions, thus, have a role in that imagining and the way in which a state organisation, as is GNTO, may contribute to this imagining. GNTO, although associated with rational issues, shows its dependency on symbolism by presenting religion and religious sites.

The striking issue is that the tourism organisation uses the ideology of the nation and takes for granted the 'constituent elements of Greekness' as they are promoted with the World Heritage Sites. This, though, presents, a predestination for a specific identity and in that way predetermines that a Greek citizen is associated with Orthodox religion (Herzfeld, 1992; Pollis, 1992). The presentation of the World Heritage Sites was found to be important in taking place at specific times where religious or archaeological content provides a motive for the creation of communication programmes. This, then, illustrates the significance attached to socio-cultural dynamics which influence the way the world is presented. It also allows space for the argument of the social construction of identity and the role of tourism.

Interpretations given to the sites by GNTO should present contested meanings for the representation of Greek Orthodox religion in the advertising material. GNTO has a complex role to fulfill in the multinational world we live, where cultural elements should not determine the definition of citizenship. Greece has experienced immigrations from Eastern countries after the fall of Communism which made their presence visible in the mid

1990s (Triandafyllidou, 2000 p. 374). The implications of history -attractive to different cultures- need to be examined and not just advertising specific aspects of the past and relating Orthodox religion with Greek identity. The tourism industry should consider these issues and allow for more critical presentations to take place.

Challenges exist for the public administrative sector in being able to adjust to the needs of the multicultural societies in which we live (Makridimitris, 2000). Greek Law 2636/1998 (Law 2636) for the Creation of Associations for the Organisation of Creative Activities and the Management of the Property of GNT0, the creation of National Council of Tourism introduced the operation of GNT0 under the rules of private economy. This institutional change aimed at administrative modernisation and the functional flexibility, in the organisation, of the cultural activities, their production, presentation, promotion and their timely planning. These Associations may provide an alternative way, sought by the state, to initiate a pluralising outcome in the presentation of heritage and thus the presentation of identity associated with it.

Further research could be directed towards the long term examination of the presentation of these activities which would function under the rules of private economy and study how these sites are promoted in the future. It remains to be seen the way in which cultural elements are promoted where management activities should consider that heritage is associated with values which may change depending on the present day interpretation. It would be a misunderstanding, though, for us to assume that the way in which World Heritage Sites are presented indicates the absolute power of the state and that the public are passive recipients of such policies. The problem with GNT0 is that it does not have a clear strategy and it does no research to the public to inform its decisions. Research could provide proof for that.

These sites exist and GNT0 could take advantage of the resources and promote their significance at a national level but also at the international level in association with other sites of importance from different civilisations. This is an issue that has to be borne in mind by the people in the tourism industry if they want to act on a professional basis. The international tourist market is a significant source of revenue in the Greek tourism industry and cultural tourism associated with religious sites may provide a way of attracting part from that market share with economic gains.

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Appendix I: THE WORLD HERITAGE SITES THAT GREECE HAS NOMINATED TO THE LIST²

Temple of Apollo Epicurius at Bassae, 1986,
 Archaeological Site of Delphi, 1987,
 The Acropolis, Athens, 1987,
 Mount Athos, 1988*,
 Meteora, 1988*

2. <http://www.unesco.org/whc/heritage.htm#debut>. The world heritage sites with the asterisk are those belonging to the Byzantine era (4th-17th century AD).

Paleochristian and Byzantine Monuments of Thessaloniki, 1988*,
Archaeological Site of Epidaurus, 1988,
Medieval City of Rhodes, 1988,
Archaeological Site of Olympia, 1989,
Mystras, 1989*,
Delos, 1990,
Monasteries of Daphni, Hossios Loukas and Nea Moni of Chios, 1990*,
Pythagoreion and Heraion of Samos, 1992,
The Archaeological Site of Vergina, 1996,
The Archaeological Sites of Mycenae and Tiryns, 1999,
The Historic Centre (Chorá) with the Monastery of Saint John "the
Theologian" and the Cave of the Apocalypse on the Island of Pátmos,
1999*

