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Classical Antiquity, Brand Advertising, Greek National Tourist Organization (GNTO), Posters, Campaigns

ABSTRACT (English)

This paper examines the uses of Classical Antiquity in modern advertising through a revision of the posters and campaigns established by the Greek National Tourist Organization in the 20th and 21st centuries. The study shows how Greek tourism takes recourse to the notions of continuity and being the 'cradle of Western civilization' in order to promote the country as a destination brand. It also shows that Classical Antiquity is the key feature differentiating Greece from its competitors in the Mediterranean region. Images, texts and videos focus on ancient values such as hospitality, authenticity, and anthropocentrism, together with mythical, historical and artistic attributes, thus conveying a message of endurance and exceptionalism. As a result, uses of the past in Greek tourism prove to be a mirror of the current challenges to Greek national identity and Greece's relationship to other countries.



RESUMEN (Castellano)

Este artículo examina los usos de la Antigüedad clásica en la publicidad contemporánea a través de una revisión de los pósteres y campañas lanzados por la Organización Nacional del Turismo de Grecia en los siglos XX y XXI. El estudio muestra cómo el turismo griego se sirve de las nociones de continuidad y de ser la ‘cuna de la civilización occidental’ para promover el país como una marca de destino. También muestra que la Antigüedad clásica es el elemento clave que distingue a Grecia de sus competidores en la región mediterránea. Las imágenes, textos y vídeos se centran en valores antiguos como la hospitalidad y en atributos artísticos, trasladando así un mensaje de pervivencia y excepcionalidad. Como resultado, los usos del pasado en el turismo griego demuestran ser un reflejo de los retos actuales de la identidad nacional griega y la relación de Grecia con otros países.



'Visit Greece and Live your Myth'. The Use of Classical Antiquity by the Greek National Tourism Organization

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I. Introduction

When promoting itself as a tourist destination, Greece is not advertising Antiquity exclusively.¹ In fact, there are at least three features that identify the Greek product: sun, sea and ancient remains.² However, Greek tourism does rely heavily on notions of continuity with the ancient past and on the alleged privilege of being 'the cradle of Western civilization'. This paper aims to show how these two notions pervade many of the posters and campaigns designed by the Greek National Tourist Organization (GNTO),³ that is, how the past is used to promote the official Greek tourism product.

Tourism is Greece's largest service industry; consequently, building a successful destination brand has been a major concern. The Greek brand, as any tourism brand, is a powerful tool aimed at boosting the economy and promoting the image of the destination abroad. A brand's essence is defined by a set of meanings – values, culture and personality⁴ – and in the case of Greece, branding strategies clearly have a lot to do with Antiquity, for Antiquity defines Greek identity to a great extent. Despite the fact that for a large number of visitors Greece is just a summer destination, Greek tourism constantly resorts to the allure of the past. In fact, some studies have shown that even though Greece does not receive a predominance of exclusively cultural visitors,⁵ it benefits from the cultural attractions that are seen as a

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- 1 This study was funded by the research project *Marginalia Classica Hodierna. Tradición y recepción clásica en la cultura de masas contemporánea* (FFI2015-66942-P; MINECO/FEDER). The author would like to thank the reviewers for their helpful and constructive comments that greatly contributed to improving the final version of the paper.
 - 2 Bonarou (2009) 332.
 - 3 Ελληνικός Οργανισμός Τουρισμού (EOT).
 - 4 Kotler (2001) 188. A closer look into the branding concept and process will follow in the next section.
 - 5 Kalogeropoulou (1996).

differentiating advantage from its competitors in the Mediterranean region.⁶ For that reason, dealing with notions of identity in modern Greece is relevant to the study of tourism advertisement. Moreover, although tourism is linked to discourses of identity and the negotiations of power everywhere, its impact on identity seems greater in countries like Greece, where the archaeological remains of the past have been crucial to the national imagination, as Hamilakis' seminal work *The Nation and its Ruins* proved.⁷

We shall begin by connecting the fact that Great Britain and Germany⁸ are the two major markets for Greek tourism today, with the fact that those countries – together with France – were responsible for shaping the Greek ideal in the late 18th century, when “the idea that Hellas is the harmonious origin of civilization became popular in the West”.⁹ Artemis Leontis has argued that the *topos* of Hellas is a construct of Western thought, which developed gradually as more and more Western travellers visited the newly-founded Greek state in the 19th century. Travel writing, painting and photography produced by those early visitors to Greece promoted a “stereotyped perception of Greece focusing on antiquities and historical sites”¹⁰ that still prevails. What visitors see in contemporary Greece has a lot to do with the very myth that both tourists and locals have chosen to create, believe and reinforce about the country. Greek tourism campaigns in the 20th and 21st centuries are the natural evolution of this kind of discourse, as we will see.

One of the most powerful myths in Greek identity is the myth of continuity, which lies at the very foundations of the modern Greek state. Since “contemporary Greeks were descended from ancient ones and [...] Hellenic

6 However, Greece is not alone in taking advantage of Greek Antiquity: Cyprus' official logo, for instance, features not only representations of the sea and the sun, but also of Aphrodite. On the other hand, Cyprus Tourism Organization's website 'Visit Cyprus' (<http://www.visitcyprus.com/index.php/en/> [28/02/2018]) shares both name and aesthetics with GNTO's 'Visit Greece' portal (<http://www.visitgreece.gr/> [28/02/2018]).

7 Hamilakis (2007) on tourism 18-19.

8 GNTO (2013a). According to Butler (1935) 6, Germans were the supreme example of “Greece's spiritual tyranny”. Constantine (1984) 1, also stated that Germans were “the most passionate believers of the Idea of Hellas and German writers were Europe's best exponents of it”.

9 Leontis (1995) 4.

10 Panayotopoulos (2009) 184.

culture has persisted without rupture since Antiquity”,¹¹ it seemed only too logical that European countries and Philhellenes should help Greeks become independent. Another powerful myth is the idea that “everything that is best about Western civilization (democracy, rationality, progress, industry, philosophy, and art) was dreamed up by the Greeks”.¹² It may be a myth, but it has real consequences. As Joanna Hanink has shown, in virtue of this idea it is claimed that the West is indebted to Greece.¹³ This is how Greece, for instance, became a member of the European Union from the very beginning, despite not meeting the standards, and why it remains such in the face of the economic crisis. The crisis, in turn, reinforced a reciprocal relationship where Europe owes Greece its very foundations, and Greece owes Europe its bailout. Greek tourism has always been aware of the implications of the Classical debt and has taken advantage of it in order to promote itself as the cradle of civilization. At the same time, they have been very cautious about handling the idea of indebtedness after the financial crisis.¹⁴

As for the state of the art, a huge bibliography on the question of Hellenism or the Greek identity directly links the burden of the past with modern Greece,¹⁵ or tackles issues of colonialism¹⁶ and early traveling to Greece.¹⁷ Some of these works deal with the impact of photography on the construction of the image of Greece; these studies have been particularly relevant to this paper. Photography is a key feature for understanding the Greek identity, but also for tourism and promotion.¹⁸

11 Hanink (2017) 105.

12 Hanink (2017) 18.

13 In *The Classical Debt*, Hanink studies how the idea of a cultural debt to Greece developed and what the implications are for Greece after the economic crisis. Another very recent contribution to the impact of the crisis in cultural politics is *Greece in crisis*, edited by Dimitris Tziouvas (2017).

14 In the context of the financial crisis the organization was worried about online reputation management and thus established brand monitoring mechanisms in order to promote a more positive image of the country through video spots, web testimonials, and reviews. Their aim was to tell “The true story about Greece”. See GNTO (2012c).

15 Gallant (2001); Harloe (2013); Tziouvas (2014).

16 Hanink (2017); Hertzfeld (2002); Leontis (1995).

17 Constantine (1984); Harlan (2009); Harrigan (2008); Sutton (1996).

18 Carabott / Hamilakis / Papargyriou (2015); Osborne (2000); Panayotopoulos (2009); Picard / Robinson (2009); Szegedy-Maszak (2005).

There are relevant studies of tourism in general,¹⁹ as well as more specific works on tourism and myth, otherness, cultural tourism or mass tourism.²⁰ Also, there is background information on tourism promotion, which involves branding strategies in general and how they have been applied to Greece in particular.²¹ Special mention must be made of Christina Bonarou's PhD dissertation, where she studies the handling of historical memory within the tourism context. Bonarou examines the representations of Greece in modern tourist postcards, but she also takes into account travel guides, photography, cinema and official tourism campaigns. Not surprisingly, she demonstrates that all these practices "consolidate stereotypes and symbolic codes of representation".²²

Finally, there are a few studies dealing with advertising in Greece.²³ These show that the evocation of Antiquity is not exclusive to the tourism sector, but a customary way of seducing target groups in and outside Greece, for Antiquity confers an aura of status to the product advertised.²⁴

Taking into account this state of the art, the present study focuses on the GNTO's marketing campaigns in the 20th and 21st centuries. It addresses posters as well as paratexts²⁵ and videos, thus taking a multimedia approach.²⁶ A philological perspective is applied to the advertising slogans and body copy texts in combination with interdisciplinary analysis of images and videos. Documentation on the GNTO's advertising and branding strategies is reviewed whenever available.

Most of the data were taken from the GNTO's website (<http://gnto.gov.gr/el> [26/02/2018]), published in 2000 and available only in Greek. The site offers an overview of the organizations, investment,

19 Franklin / Crang (2001); MacCannell (1989); Urry (2002).

20 Brown (1996); Carlà / Freitag (2015); Galani-Mutafi (2000); Kalogeropoulos (1996); Selänniemi (2001) and Stebbings (1996); Boissevain (1996); Obrador Pons / Crang / Travlou (2009).

21 Kotler (2001); GNTO (2008, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2013a, 2013b); Koutsovasili (2015); Vazou (2014).

22 Bonarou (2009) 340.

23 Papapolyzos / Martzoukos (1997); Nicholas (2002); Yagou (2012) 112.

24 Papapolyzos / Martzoukos (1997) 73.

25 Those 'thresholds' of the text where pragmatics and strategy take place "at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it". Cf. Genette (1997) 2.

26 However, this article does not deal with the use of the Internet and social media for tourist promotion, which has been extensively studied by Vazou (2014).

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marketing, legislation, media room, statistics and insights. On the other hand, the official portal Visit Greece (<http://visitgreece.gr> [26/02/2018]) was published in 2004 and provides visitors with information in English²⁷ on tourist destinations inside the country as well as tips, brochures and maps for the traveller, and newsletters.

The catalogue of the GNTO 2007 exhibition *Greek Tourism Posters: A journey in Time through Art* ought to have been a key source for this study.²⁸ However, it was a limited edition and it is not easily available. Fortunately, Bonarou gives a detailed account of some of the studies it contains.

As for the structure of this paper, an initial brief history of the GNTO and the shaping of Greece's brand is followed by a deeper look into the older posters and most recent campaigns, focusing on those that make use of Antiquity both in images and texts. The results of the research are assessed in every section and they show a ubiquitous presence of the past in tourism marketing in Greece. This presence raises a number of questions such as how does Antiquity relate to the European identity of modern Greeks, how do myths about the country shape an stereotyped image of it, what is the role of the past in the narrative of the financial crisis, how has the model of sea and sun plus ancient remains affected tourism development, what efforts are being made to promote different sectors, how values such as hospitality, anthropocentrism or authenticity are linked to ideas of the past, or what use of mythical and philological elements does the GNTO make in slogans and campaigns. As summarized in the conclusions, despite political, ideological and strategic changes, Antiquity remains a major asset of the Greek brand. This destination brand has built its identity in terms of continuity, responding to the expectations of the West and developing the notion of being its birth place.

27 The official portal does not provide the same information in other languages, although there are alternative Visit Greece sites where it seems that some contents will be translated into German (<http://www.visitgreece.com.de/> and <https://www.visitgreece.com.gr/de/> [26/02/2018]) and Russian (<https://www.visitgreece.com.gr/ru/> [26/02/2018]).

28 GNTO (2007).

II. Brief history of the GNTO and Greece's brand

The GNTO²⁹ establishment dates back to Eleftherios Venizelo's 1929 government, when this newly founded organization was placed under the Ministry of Economy. From the very beginnings of official tourism management, special weight was given to the natural landscape and in particular to the monuments of Antiquity,³⁰ showing a tendency to advertise the country abroad as a timeless destination, that is, a destination unchanged by the passage of time.

Between 1936 – when the GNTO was tacitly suppressed under the Metaxas regime (1936-1941) – and 1951 – when it was symbolically re-established after parliamentary elections in the country – tourist competences shifted hands a number of times. Those changes were due to instability in the context of the two World Wars, the German Occupation of Greece (1941-1944) and the Greek Civil War (1946-1949).

From the 1950s to the present, several institutions were founded and changes were made to the GNTO. The state, seeking to promote the image of Greece as the cradle of Western civilization with all its grandeur, turned to the remains of Classical Antiquity.³¹ As a consequence, foreign tourism after 1970 was not only drawn to formerly preferred destinations such as Athens, Rhodes, Mykonos or Corfu, but also to places with renowned archaeological sites and cultural resources, such as Crete or the Peloponnese.

After the Military Junta (1967-1974), democracy was restored in Greece and tourism was included in the state's development plans. Administrative arrangements transferred tourist competences from the Ministry of Economy to the Ministry of Tourism over the decades. Since 2010 the GNTO belongs to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, headed by Elena Kountoura of the Independent Greeks' party, who took office in 2016.

In this brief account of the organization's history, one can observe a considerable number, though not all, of the changes in tourism management in Greece. But despite its turbulent history – matching the country's troubled 20th century politics – the GNTO perseveres in asserting itself as the agent of

29 Information available at <http://gnto.gov.gr/el/history/> [11/11/2017]. Bonarou (2009) 257-267 also gives a detailed account of the development of Greek tourism in the 20th century.

30 Blachos (2007) 8, quoted by Bonarou (2009) 258.

31 Bonarou (2009) 262.

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a unified effort to promote Greek tourism over the decades. This attempt at continuity is paralleled by the idea of Hellas as a single entity, whose characteristics remain unspoiled through the ages.

An official video by the GNTO may serve as proof of this statement. In 2012 the organization was celebrating 60 years since its re-establishment. For this occasion, they chose the motto “A journey into history”,³² which contained a clear reference to the myth of the Greek uninterrupted history. It also alluded to the archetypal journey of the *Odyssey*. The three-minute video³³ begins with a series of archaizing images from Nelly’s 1929 posters (on which see below). It quickly moves on to name the achievements of the GNTO from 1951 to the present and highlights the link between tourism and culture. Despite the gap between the first establishment of the organization and the present, the continuity of Greece as a tourist destination is further enhanced at the end with images of ancient sites and the text “from Nelly’s poster in 1929 to Twitter today”.

The introductory paratext on Visit Greece’s YouTube channel insists on the notions of continuity and exceptionalism:

Since 1951 the GNTO has undertaken a number of initiatives so as to address tourism in a new perspective. Those initiatives comprised launching advertising campaigns, and publishing posters and literature carrying images of the unique beauty of Greece to the world, thus reinforcing the desire of the tourists to visit the cradle of the European culture. This is how the GNTO created a demand among international travellers for the emerging Greek tourist product.³⁴

There is no need to comment further on the crucial role attributed to Classical Antiquity, given that the organization in charge of tourism recognizes that visitors are almost naturally attracted to the idea of getting to know the ‘cradle of European culture’. What we need to explore in the next sections is how Greek tourism has taken advantage of the ancient heritage, both drawing from pre-existing stereotypes and contributing to their consolidation.

32 Ένα ταξίδι στην ιστορία.

33 Video available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEaftkL7Gj8> [11/11/2017].

34 Text available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEaftkL7Gj8> [26/02/2018].

The first stage will be Antiquity itself, because, as Johanna Hanink has shown in *The Classical Debt*,³⁵ most of the ideas that today we relate to Greece as a brand are in fact derived from Classical Athens and its early propaganda. But, what is a brand? The American Marketing Association defines brand as:

A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors. In essence, a brand identifies the seller or maker. Whether it is a name, trademark, logo, or another symbol, a brand is essentially a seller's promise to deliver a specific set of features, benefits, and services consistently to the buyers.³⁶

According to marketing studies, a brand is a complex symbol that can convey up to six levels of meaning: attributes, benefits, values, culture, personality and user. The brand's identity needs to be successfully anchored to one of those levels: a common mistake would be to promote only attributes, whereas a smart strategy would be to define the brand's essence in terms of enduring meanings such as its values, culture and personality.³⁷

It is evident that Greece has been successful in building its brand: values such as being the cradle of civilization or having a long and rich history differentiate it from its competitors in the Mediterranean region, where most countries sell the same product (sea and sun). In addition to this, Greece has been able to offer its ancient ruins, and a promise to visitors that leans on Greece's exceptionalism. Later we will see how modern marketing strategies build on this in order to promote Greece as a destination brand. But now, it is important to look deeper into the past and to see how Athens was a pioneer in shaping both the narrative of Western identity and Greece's brand.

Scholars of Classical Antiquity know well enough that Athens' (and by extension Greece's) continuing influence today owes much to "the staying power of the city's ancient propaganda"³⁸, including effective celebration,

35 Hanink (2017) 32-69.

36 Kotler (2001) 188.

37 Kotler (2001) 188.

38 Hanink (2017) 34.

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commemoration and documentation of their achievements. As Hanink notes, “it is the Athens suggested by sun-bleached ruins and glorified in so many ancient literary works that has become the West’s secular Eden”.³⁹ It has also been stated that Athens managed to build this image in the Classical period itself, when certain brand attributes were developed: “1. Athens saved Greece from ‘barbarians’, 2. Athens is unique, 3. Athens is the home of the arts, 4. Athens is the product of exceptional ancestors”.⁴⁰ And these messages are still so interwoven with Greece’s essence that, in fact, they are delivered by the GNTO in one way or another in every campaign. Western visitors are already familiarized with them since they have been the pillar of education for a long time. And even those who did not have such education are acquainted with the prestige and alleged exceptionalism of the ancient Greeks.

However, these messages are not always in Greece’s best interest. The counterpart of attribute 4 “Athens is the product of exceptional ancestors” is that ‘Athens (and by extension Greece) was much better in the past’ and so it becomes extremely difficult for the Greeks to live up to the expectations of Western visitors. The disappointment expressed by travellers over the centuries has become proverbial,⁴¹ while at the same time Greeks have developed a complex love and hate relationship with their Classical ancestors. This is what has been dubbed “the burden of the past”.⁴² Tourism is well aware of the fact that Classical Antiquity is a doubled-edge sword; hence, advertising campaigns have been dealing with it carefully and skilfully. Nevertheless, we will see how at least in one instance the ‘myth of Greece’ has come back as a boomerang against itself.

III. Posters

39 Hanink (2017) 35.

40 Hanink (2017) 36-37.

41 The *topos* of decline and the paradox of ruins is also a constant aspect recalled by travellers to Rome. Yet this notion acquires a distinctive ‘Greekness’ from the time when one of the most influential modellers of the Hellenic ideal, German art historian Johann Winckelmann, conceived such an ideal at a distance, without visiting the country. After him many considered that a visit to Rome was enough to get to know Antiquity, and those who ventured visiting Greece would measure it against what they had seen there, getting further disappointed. Constantine (1984) 3.

42 Hanink (2017) 64-69.

Our first step in exploring Greek tourism marketing will be the posters issued by the GNTO from 1929 to 1999. For this purpose, the best repertoire is the catalogue of the exhibition organized in 2007, *Greek Tourism Posters: A Journey in Time through Art*, displaying 170 posters at the Zappeion Hall in Athens,⁴³ but it was unfortunately published as a limited edition and is not easily available. We must therefore resort to the GNTO's webpage, where posters of each decade since 1929 are displayed inside a multimedia gallery.⁴⁴ It is unlikely that this gallery contains all posters issued by the organization (the past decade, for instance, clearly lacks posters from most campaigns), but nevertheless it constitutes the largest accessible repertoire of images and information from 1929 to 1999. The following years (1999 to the present) will be addressed in the next section where campaign taglines and documentation are analysed in detail. All images reproduced in this paper belong to the GNTO, whose Head of Publications and Audio-visual Department kindly granted permission for their use and selected these from the many that contain Classical iconography.

It should be remarked that just as Greece as a destination is identified by sea and sun plus ancient remains, it is not just the latter that serve as symbols for the country, but a series of motives – some of them clearly related to summertime assets: monuments, archaeological sites, antiquities, flowers, suns, natural landscapes of mainland Greece, island settlements and harbours, boats, white Aegean Sea steps and small churches, windows and a little desk overlooking the sea, mosaics, traditional embroidery and hand-weaving, all can be seen in the GNTO's posters.⁴⁵ However, the allure of Antiquity is pervasive in most of them in one way or another, as it will be in the more recent campaigns.

The online image gallery contains only one image for the decade of 1920-1929, but it is a very remarkable one. It is a picture of the Parthenon taken by Greek female photographer Nelly's, and it stands out as the first poster ever to be issued by the GNTO [Fig. 1].

Nelly's, whose real name was Elli Sougioultzoglou-Seraidari (1899-1998), is the author of a vast and much celebrated record of photographic work on the Greek landscape, monuments, and people. Nelly's iconography of Greece

43 Cf. <http://www.lifo.gr/mag/features/173> [13/12/2017]

44 Available at <http://gnto.gov.gr/el/posters#ad-image-8> [11/11/2017].

45 Bonarou (2009) 333-334.

has been studied by Katerina Zacharia,⁴⁶ who reveals how she contributed to the myth of continuity between ancient and modern Greece: she photographed the Delphic Festival in 1927, the nude dancers at the Parthenon in 1925 and 1930; and promoted the state's early tourism activities through the Under-Secretariat of Press and Tourism, having received the assignment to photograph "the country's treasures and beauty spots".⁴⁷ Although in the context of the Metaxas' regime she proclaimed "her purportedly artistic independence from any external influences or socio-political agendas",⁴⁸ both her personal relationships⁴⁹ and her work speak for themselves about her proactive involvement with Greek fascism. Apart from official posters with her pictures of the Parthenon, her photographs were featured in *La Grèce actuelle* (a publication by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the regime's magazine *Neolaia*, the tourist periodicals *In Greece (En Grèce/In Griechenland)*, and the fashion magazine *La Mode Grecque*. Finally, her collages were displayed at the New York 1939 World's Fair Greek pavilion.

In those collages, Nelly's established a series of parallelisms between the physiognomy of ancient Greeks and contemporary ones that were ideologically charged in two ways. First, as Panayotopoulos explains,⁵⁰ in her portraits comparing shepherds and village maidens with ancient Kouroi and Korai she was subconsciously searching for 'Aryan' features and becoming herself something of a Riefenstahl director.⁵¹ Second, she was asserting the myth of continuity that, according to Zacharia, was essential to the official discourse of the Metaxas' regime: "a national image of contemporary Greeks as descendants of the ancient Greeks, and as perpetrators and preservers of their ancient Greek heritage".⁵²

46 Zacharia (2015) 233-256.

47 Stathatos (2015) 41.

48 Zacharia (2014) 197.

49 As Damaskos notes, "Nelly was on friendly terms with the whole spectrum of the Greek political scene" (2008) 334.

50 Panayotopoulos (2009) 194. Cf. Zacharia (2014) 196 ff.

51 According to Markessinis (2016), Nelly's requested that Goebbels recommend her to UFA to be trained in shooting documentaries, presumably due to her admiration for Leni Riefenstahl's work and met her while the latter was filming for the 1936 Olympic Games. Damaskos (2008), on the other hand, discusses the acquaintance between the two women, and the parallels between their ideology and aesthetics.

52 Zacharia (2014) 188. Both Zacharia and Panayotopoulos study possible influences from the Nazi ideology on Nelly's work and her relationship with Greek fascism.

Nelly's work proves that Greece's era of fascism relied deeply on ancient Greece, and the statistics show that the state's efforts in promoting tourism paid off.⁵³ Yet, the GNTO's gallery contains only six images for the decade of 1930-1939, so it is not easy to deduce the extent of the use of Antiquity in that period by other artists. The most Classical of all posters in the gallery is a colourful drawing combining a human figure dressed in red peplum and a running horse in the forefront, with a ship and a temple at the top of a mountain in the background. The combination and style of these elements confers a mythical quality upon the image, which resembles the work of surrealist painters of the period. In fact, it has been claimed that artists like Nelly's and Yorgos Varkitzis (1923-1988), among many others working for the GNTO from 1930 to 1960, are in various aspects "connected to the aesthetic quests of the generation of the 30s, which draws its main themes from places such as mythology, folk tradition and contemporary European painting",⁵⁴

In the next decade, 1940-1949, there are eleven posters. It is a period marked by the German Occupation and the Civil War, so most of them come from the later years, when Greek tourism resumed its development. As if untroubled by recent events, posters present the country once more as an ideal tourist destination. Classical Antiquity is represented by *The Charioteer of Delphi*, the *Blue Birds Fresco* and the interior of the *Palace of Cnossos*. In order to understand why Minoan art seems to have a sudden leading role in this period, it is worth noting that the 4 volumes by Sir Arthur Evans, *The Palace of Minos*, were published between 1921 and 1936, exerting a huge influence on European readers, artists and travellers alike.

With fifteen out of twenty-one posters making reference to ancient Greece, 1950-1959 seems to be a highly 'Classical' decade. In fact, it's been noted that in this period there is an increased emphasis on presenting Greece as the cradle of Western civilization.⁵⁵ The 1950s are also a period of burgeoning economy, since "improved living standards and internal communications and the development of mass air travel led to a rise in

53 In 1926 there were 27,550 tourism arrivals to the country, whereas in 1937 that number reached 154,513. Cf. Bonarou (2009) 259.

54 Kritikou (2007) 10. Quoted by Bonarou (2009) 329-330.

55 Bonarou (2009) 330.

tourism towards the end of the decade".⁵⁶ That period of prosperity in Greece lasted until the 1970s.

It is precisely in 1951 that the GNTTO indicates its post-Civil War reestablishment. In the series of posters from that decade (the majority of which are paintings rather than photographs) there are well-known Classical attractions, such as the Parthenon in Athens, Greek vase painting, the Acropolis of Lindos in Rhodes, the Lions Gate at Mycenae, and the Apollo sculpture at Olympia. In almost every instance the word 'Greece', 'Grèce', or more rarely 'Hellas', seems to amount for the very message of the posters.⁵⁷ The Apollo image [Fig. 2] is an example of this. It was designed by Yorgos Vakirtzis, considered a remarkable artist in the advertising industry, who would work with the GNTTO and design many posters from 1963 to 1967.⁵⁸

In the Acropolis of Mycenae poster [Fig. 3], it is interesting to note the tiny human figure under the Lions Gate. The man wears the folk costume of the Greeks (Albanians also claim it as their traditional dress): white *fustanella*, dark-blue jacket and red fez. His location among the ancient remains places this painting within the iconographic tradition of Hellenism. From the early travellers in the 17th century to the first photographers in the 19th and 20th centuries it was customary to add a touch of local colour to the image by including a native in it. Around 1850, photographs began to include local population as 'decoration' with traits of Orientalism, as well as showing the continuity of the Hellenic spirit.⁵⁹ But human presence is most generally excluded. According to studies, the photographers' intention was "to remove from their pictures any unseemly intrusion from the present day that might disrupt the viewer's contemplation of the ancient world".⁶⁰ The Acropolis of Mycenae poster was issued in 1952, when it was most unlikely that a Greek villager would be wandering around the ancient site of Mycenae in such fashion and it shows just how firmly stereotypes are bound to representations of Antiquity. This style of orientalising representation of Greece has disappeared completely from contemporary advertising and the reason is clear: Greeks do not want to be seen as the 'other' anymore. When local

56 Nicholas (2002) 2.

57 Kritikou (2007) 11. Quoted by Bonarou (2009) 330.

58 Nicholas (2002) 5.

59 Stathatos (2015) 28.

60 Szegedy-Maszak (2005) 14. Cf. also Hanink (2017) 97.

people appear in modern campaigns they do so in the guise of friendly Mediterranean families who enjoy eating and drinking along with tourists. Locals may appear somehow ‘exotified’,⁶¹ yet visitors must not feel threatened by their difference. When tourists themselves feature in the posters, they are either couples at the beach, beautiful ladies on board yachts, or friends and families at taverns or archaeological sites. The idea is that everyone can recognize themselves in those images.

In the 1950’s section there are also three posters advertising Greek theatre performances at Epidaurus, and other three for the Athens Festival taking place at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus. The relevance of festivals in today’s Greece is directly linked to their ancient significance. In the past, “Athenian drama served to showcase the city as one that valued and cultivated art and beauty”, in fact, as “the very wellspring of art and civilization”.⁶² Modern Greek tourism has invested greatly in the staging of ancient drama in a bid to establish a link with the celebrated theatre festivals of Antiquity. In turn, ancient Greek theatres have been promoted as visual images of Greekness⁶³ by the GNTO.⁶⁴ Both in Epidaurus and Athens, the masterpieces of ancient Greek tragedy and comedy can be relished every season by Greeks and foreigners alike (today there are electronic subtitles for every function). Thus, Greece preserves the brand’s attribute of being “the home of the arts”.⁶⁵

The 1950s Classical posters do not end here. Two posters promote sightseeing of ancient destinations in motor coach tours that are organized by the GNTO: one of them contains icons for each of the twelve destinations covered, while the other shows a painting of an ancient charioteer operating this sort of ‘Grand Tour’. Classical images are used in this manner also to promote ‘*croisières en Égée*’ on board a trireme, and mineral springs where tourists can indulge in health tourism surrounded by ancient sculptures and instruments.

In the 1960-1969 section, there are forty-eight images. Most of them are still drawings, although photographs are also found in increasing number.

61 Bonarou (2009) 333-334.

62 Hanink (2017) 61.

63 A concept that has shifted names and evolved over the centuries, ‘Greekness’, ‘Hellenism’ or even ‘*Romiosyne*’, accounts for the cultural and sometimes ethnical identity of the Greek people. For an exploration of a variety of Hellenisms see Zacharia (2008).

64 Lalioti (2009).

65 Hanink (2017) 55-64.

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Greece seems to be promoted by the GNTTO mostly as a summer destination and a picturesque romantic paradise,⁶⁶ even if many posters explicitly refer to Classical Antiquity. There are six advertising the Athens Festival, as well as six for the Epidaurus Theatre, and thirteen more dealing with different ancient topics such as the Temple of Athena Nike, an Archaic Kore, the Cretan Serpent Goddess, a Minoan seal [Fig. 4], and the Lenormant Relief [Fig. 5] – a piece from the Acropolis showing the rowers of an Athenian trireme. Both the Minoan seal and the rowers posters were designed by Michalis Katzourakis (1933-), who was Artistic Advisor to the GNTTO from 1960 to 1967.⁶⁷ They share a common feature of combining ancient and modern design, together with Greece's marketing appeal as a country of sea, sun and ancient remains. On the one hand, both posters contain the realistic picture of an ancient (Minoan/Classical) motive. On the other, that picture is transformed into a more abstract design: a bright-yellow sun in figure 4 and two consecutive lines of schematic rowers in figure 5. Skilful visual blending of ancient and modern features is present in these posters, together with the promise of the key assets that the country is selling to summer visitors, that is, sun and sea.

Finally, some posters in the 1960s are dedicated to ancient sites: Delos, Delphi, or Olympia, where the lighting of the torch ceremony is re-enacted by a couple dressed in ancient Greek costumes.

From 1967 to 1974, Greece was under the Regime of the Colonels or the military Junta. Lacking popular legitimacy, the regime found in tourism a means to create political consensus and the main vehicle for growing GDP. However, instead of extolling the ancient Greek heritage, their strategy was to present Greece as 'The New Place' and as a consumers' paradise much in contrast to Junta's ideologues.⁶⁸ Trying to accommodate to the contemporary trends in tourism, the emphasis shifted "from one stressing historical past to one highlighting cosmopolitan hedonism and folkloristic revival".⁶⁹

66 Bonarou (2009) 330.

67 In 1962 Michalos Katzourakis and Freddie Carabott co-founded K & K Advertising Centre of Athens. According to Nicholas (2002) 7, "this agency produced highly creative work of the utmost aesthetic quality and is regarded by practitioners as one of the most important agencies in the history of Greek advertising". In this period other outstanding collaborators of the GNTTO were Dimitris Charisiadis and Nikos Tombazis.

68 Nikolakakis (2017) 436.

69 Nikolakakis (2017) 438.

During the Colonels' regime, tourism was disentangled from pre-dictatorial structures and controlled by the military, so it is basically after 1974 that the GNTTO resumed its activity by launching an advertising campaign based on easily recognizable images.⁷⁰ Between 1970 and 1979 Classical Antiquity became again a major attraction as can be deduced from the posters issued by the organization: indeed, twenty-one out of forty-three posters make use of ancient elements. Eight posters from the 1970s include Minoan sites and ancient temples, ancient sculptures (like *The Calf Bearer* [Fig. 6]), or a combination of seaside tourism with ancient remains. Athens Festival promotes itself on six occasions by means of Antiquity, Epidaurus in four instances, and the Festival Sound and Light in three [Fig. 7].

By the 1970s, the Acropolis Sound and Light Festival was already an institution in Greece. Established in 1959, it consisted of a display of sound and lights on the Acropolis celebrating the achievements of the Classical period and especially Athenian democracy – excerpts from the funeral oration of Pericles included. Elisabeth Marlowe⁷¹ has studied this show as part of Greece prime minister Konstantinos Karamanlis' campaign for the country's entry into the European Common Market and in the context of the Cold War. The production ran for more than forty years, three times a night in high tourist season and sponsored by the GNTTO.⁷² As is evident, Karamanlis was strongly committed to Greek tourism and by means of the Sound and Light Festival he reinforced the message of continuity with ancient Greece. According to Hanink, it is largely to his vision "that we owe today's travel agent plugs for Greece as a land of island paradises, incomparable light, and ruins that still bear witness to Western civilization's early days".⁷³

Things do not seem to have changed much in the following decade, when photography took on a leading role in the design.⁷⁴ In 1980-1989, out of forty-four posters, twenty relate to Classical Antiquity. There are, logically, posters for the Athens Festival (seven) and Epidaurus Theatre (four); there are Ancient temples and sculptures. As far as we know, for the first time the GNTTO delivered posters in Italian, after decades where the main target were

70 Bonarou (2009) 331.

71 Marlowe (2001) 581.

72 Hanink (2017) 180.

73 Hanink (2017) 182.

74 Bonarou (2009) 332.

French, English and German speaking visitors. The poster in Figure 8 features the Golden Crown of Philip II of Macedon, found during the excavations at Vergina in the 1977/8 season. These findings would become iconic in reclaiming the Greekness of the Macedonian region in the 1990s. More recently, in 2014, the discovery of the tombs at the Macedonian town of Amphipolis led to a 'biopolitical' use of Classical Antiquity helping to create a new sort of post-crisis governmentality in Greece.⁷⁵

The 1980s are also the period when the famous Greek actress and singer Melina Mercuri⁷⁶ took her place as Minister of Culture. Tourism was one of her competences and she advocated for the cultural sector: not only did she call for the return of the Parthenon Marbles to Greece, but she also was behind the 'European Capital of Culture' program. No wonder that in 1985 Athens became the first city to win the designation. As Hanink notes, "the supposed wellspring of Western civilization thus became Europe's first official poster child".⁷⁷

In the 1990-1999⁷⁸ section, the gallery contains fifty-six images, twenty of which are Classical. Apart from the Athens Festival (five posters), there is a significant emphasis on the Macedonian region (three posters [Fig. 9]) and other regions are also advertised, such as Dion, the Peloponnese, Olympia, Epirus, Delos, Delphi [Fig. 10], Cnossos, and Athens. The remarkable interest in the Macedonian region is a consequence of the ongoing dispute over the use of the name 'Macedonia'.⁷⁹ The issue has been a concern for the Modern Greek state ever since the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) became an independent state in 1991 and called for recognition as the Republic of Macedonia. To this day, Greece has opposed this designation,

75 Plantzos (2017) 67.

76 Maria Amalia Mercouri (1920-1994) was a highly successful Greek artist whose work had impact on an international scale. In her facet as politician she acted as an ambassador of Greek culture and managed to promote the country abroad, supporting, for instance, Athens to host the Centennial Olympic Games, and the European Union's cooperation with Eastern Europe. She promoted access to culture inside Greece (free access to museums and archaeological sites for Greek citizens), organized exhibitions of Greek cultural heritage and modern Greek art worldwide, supported the restoration of buildings, and launched many more initiatives.

77 Hanink (1017) 187.

78 Media planning was awarded to Grey's MediaCom in 1995. Cf. Nicholas (2002) 22.

79 For a detailed study of the issue from the Greek perspective, see Kofos / Vlasidis (2005).

arguing that the ancient kingdom of Macedon falls mainly on Greek territory.⁸⁰ In this context, the GNTO made a big effort to present the Macedonian region as part of Greece in the eyes of the international community.

The last decade included in the media gallery is 2000-2009, when the use of internet and social media had already substituted the poster as an advertising tool.⁸¹ There are only fifteen posters and just five are related to Classical Antiquity: four advertise the Athens and Epidaurus Theatre Festivals, while another contains a picture of the Athens Acropolis as seen from the Philopappos hill. The picture is taken at the time “when the young Dawn with finger tips of rose lit up the world”⁸² so that the monuments are rose coloured. The same tonality covers the sky and the sea in the background of the poster. The composition is as simple as the message: once more the word ‘Greece’ stands as a synonym for seaside holidays and ancient remains. Yet there is a nod to the Classically trained visitor who will recognize the Homeric significance of the rose tint of the poster. It is an example of the multiple readings and levels of interpretations that these images offer.

The posters chosen by the GNTO to illustrate each decade are a clear testimony to the critical role of Classical Antiquity in Greek tourism over the years. However, the analysis would be incomplete without attention to more recent advertising campaigns, where not just images, but words and video, are put to the service of promoting the country’s brand.

IV. Campaigns

This section considers some of the more recent campaigns by the GNTO, where slogans and imagery have been linked to reinforce the messages of continuity and exceptionalism. The period chosen is 1991 to the present. Nevertheless, emphasis will be placed on the years when more information is

80 The two countries are currently negotiating, and an agreement is expected in the coming months. Reuters recently informed that the suggestions by Prime Minister of FYROM Zoran Zaev are Republic of North Macedonia, Republic of Upper Macedonia, Republic of Vardar Macedonia and Republic of Macedonia (Skopje). See Jones (2018).

81 Vazou (2014) 38. However, the GNTO continues its collaboration with outstanding photographers and painters. Cf. Bonarou (2009) 333.

82 Hom., *Od.* 9, 331-332. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald (2007).

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available, i.e., from 2004 onwards.⁸³ That year clearly marked a turning point for Greece as host of the Olympic Games, thus positioning itself in the international scene. The next key element (badly) affecting Greek tourism would be the financial crisis from 2009 onwards. However, neither the Olympics nor the crisis will be the object of detailed analysis, for each of them would require a monographic study.

The first thing that stands out in campaign posters – and especially from the 2000's to the present⁸⁴ – is the predominance of the blue colour: recalling the Greek flag, the blue stands for the sea and the sky, whereas white is associated to ancient marbles and Mediterranean villages. The second is the consolidation of the slogan as an advertising tool, and its variety. In the last twenty-six years, at least seventeen taglines and campaigns were released by the GNTO. Changes in strategy were often the consequence of political instability, with more than nine different Ministers of Tourism in the ten years between 2005 and 2015.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, Classical Antiquity was a key element in most of the campaigns. As we will see, even when the message is not straightforwardly related to the past, there is often a possibility to interpret the message from a classicist perspective that reveals the idea of continuity with ancient Greece and the notion of being the cradle of Western civilization. The language of all slogans and campaigns is English. However, in some cases posters and other advertising materials have been issued in different languages, such as German or Russian, markets that needed to be reinforced or opened.

“Greece – Chosen by the Gods” (1991-1993)

The connection with ancient Greece is obvious in this tagline, where the ‘gods’ are none other than the deities of the polytheistic ancient Greek pantheon. Moreover, the notion that Greece is a land chosen by the gods originates in ancient Greek mythology, at a time when deities used to live close to humans, often interfering in their daily lives, having love affairs with them and taking part in their wars. The campaign seems to imply that if the gods themselves have chosen Greece, a tourist should be easily persuaded to do the same.

83 In fact, posters from 1991 to 2004 are not available for study.

84 Koutsovasili (2015).

85 Papadas (2015).

On the other hand, it is only with the gods' involvement that the 'Greek miracle' could have taken place. Le '*miracle grec*', as it was coined (or at least used) by 19th century scholar Ernest Renan, refers to "a thing which has existed only once, which had never been seen before, which will never be seen again, but the effect of which will last forever, an eternal type of beauty, without a single blemish".⁸⁶ The remarkable flowering of philosophy, literature, art, architecture, and democracy in Classical Greece could only be explained by means of the numinous.

"Greece – the gracious host" and "Come as a tourist, leave as a friend" (1994)

The ancient value of hospitality, as can be seen in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, is an idea packaged into the Greek brand. It derives from the above-mentioned belief that gods used to mingle with people: guests should always be treated nicely because they could be deities in disguise. The 1994 campaign "Greece – the gracious host", as well as its variant "Come as a tourist, leave as a friend" reveals how an idealistic and romantic approach to tourism seems to have penetrated the Greek psyche and the concept of *filoxenia*: "the cultural capital of Greece had to be promoted, the ancient Greek spirit had to be revived, and together with it the idea of hospitality, with Greek people assuming like hosts the responsibility to present to foreign 'pilgrims' both the past and present of Hellenism".⁸⁷

The GNTO's campaign does not imply, of course, that Greeks would be receiving tourists as guests or friends in the 1990s. In fact, studies indicate that already in the 1960s the *xenos* of Greek mythology was seen as a client paying for the services offered by their host.⁸⁸ What this campaign indicates, once again, is the will to attribute ancient values to modern Greeks and thus to underpin the notion of endurance.

"Greece makes your heart beat" (1995)

It has been already noted that many visitors are attracted to Greece by the promise of a prototypical sea and sun holiday. Rather than Classical Antiquity, the 1995 campaign seems to be focused on the kind of sensual tourism that

86 Renan (1883) 151.

87 Yalouri (2001) 128.

88 Zarkia (1996) 164; Bonarou (2009) 265.

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entices visitors to Greek islands like Mykonos when looking for a party destination, and Santorini when searching for a romantic getaway: both music and love can “make your heart beat”. In either case, the target of this campaign seems to be the kind of mass tourism that is “thin on meaning and ideological narratives and very dense on physicality and sensuality”.⁸⁹ This type of tourism – which is also mainly young tourism – is significant for Greece, but not the aim of this study.

“Greece – never-ending story” (1996)

In the “never-ending story” campaign we find a theme from popular culture. However, in the case of Greece this theme resonates with the echoes of the country’s long and rich history and it presupposes the idea of timeless connection to the past. Mythical and magical attributes of the Greek brand are also implicit in the tagline.

“Greece – the authentic choice” (1997)

The 1997 campaign turned to the value of authenticity, which has been a hallmark of Greek tourism ever since.⁹⁰ The slogan seemed to state that by choosing to visit Greece, one was choosing the right country and not a substitute. It also seemed to claim that there is only one wise choice to make, because in Greece you make a journey into the past and the roots of civilization, getting to know the authentic values of freedom, truth and beauty. Moreover, the sense of authenticity and choice appealed to cultural tourists who want to see themselves as traveller rather than *turistas vulgaris*.⁹¹

The GNTO’s choice of the motto was wise in itself, for tourists are always in a quest for authenticity. In the MacCannellian⁹² sense, authenticity is found in other times and the lives of other people, but also by means of the journey of discovery of one’s authentic self.⁹³ So choosing Greece could mean to

89 Obrador Pons (2009) 3.

90 In 2008 the campaign “Greece –The true experience” was launched.

91 Warning against the risk of treating them scornfully as a foreign species, Franklin / Crang (2001) 5 use the term *Turistas vulgaris* to refer to those “only found in herds, droves, swarms and flocks”.

92 MacCannell (1989).

93 Brown (1996).

travel into the past, into the ancient values that contemporary Greeks supposedly embody, and last, but not least, to ‘know thyself’ as the Delphic maxim mandates.

“Greece – that’s life” (1999)

At its most basic level of interpretation this tagline is based on a stereotype that Greece shares with other southern countries: life on the Mediterranean is easy, lazy and sensual. There is, of course, a very sensual dimension of Greece – sandy beaches, *retsina*, ouzo, bouzouki and *syrtaki* dance, for instance – that is often reflected in tourism marketing imagery.⁹⁴ Such attributes appeal to those who seek relaxed holidays by the sea and are less inclined toward cultural outlets. Yet, if combined with an intellectual understanding of the Greek character, these same attributes are not without a Classical and more profound understanding.

In his *History of the Art of Antiquity*, art historian Johann Winckelmann claimed that the later Greeks, being prone to self-indulgence, “yielded to their natural inclination to idleness and revelry” and that artists sought out ‘the soft and pleasing, as the nation in its state of indolence sought to flatter its senses’.⁹⁵ What was – and still is – criticized as a supposed Greek character flaw, was interpreted nonetheless as a sign of nobility by another giant of German Hellenism. Friedrich Nietzsche considered the joy of life as a superbly bold trait of ancient Greeks: “Oh, those Greeks! They knew how to live. What is required for that is to stop courageously at the surface, the fold, the skin, to adore appearance, to believe in forms, tones, words, in the whole Olympus of appearance. Those Greeks were superficial –*out of profundity*”.⁹⁶ The reader, the traveller, the tourist, can take whatever they see fit for their understanding of the slogan; the possibility of interpreting it in the light of ancient Greece lies at their disposal.

94 Galani-Moutafi (2000) 210.

95 Winckelmann (2006) 305, 312.

96 Nietzsche (2010) 38.

"Beyond words" (2002-2003)

According to studies, tourism went through a major crisis in the period of 2001-2004.⁹⁷ However, Greece was experiencing an economic boom that lasted almost a decade, and its gross domestic product increased by more than 250 percent.⁹⁸ During those years the GNTO once again took recourse in the Classical heritage, but this time the strategy was rather original, for it concentrated on words.

With a clearly philological approach, this campaign aimed to show the presence of Greek values in Western civilization through language. There were posters specifically aimed at different countries, explaining the legacy of Greek in their vocabulary. An example is the German '*Taktik*' poster, a conceptual superstructure which included: *Logic, Euphoria, Magnetism, Phänomen, Eros, and Mathematik*. Each concept was illustrated by a picture, yet those pictures were not necessarily or predominantly Classical – nor related to the idea represented by the word –, but beautiful images of beaches and natural landscapes.

"Beyond words" was a campaign that used *logoi* to transcend meaning and to remind the Western world of its Greek roots. The promise to visitors was that they could enjoy an indescribably beautiful summer destination with great cultural relevance attached. Once more, Greek tourism authorities were speaking to both the regular tourist and the more educated traveller and taking advantage of Classical Antiquity as an asset that differentiates Greece from other Mediterranean competitors. Tourists looking at a poster from this campaign could feel the privilege of being related to Antiquity by means of the Greek language and thus take part in the Greek miracle.

"Your best time yet" (2004)

Obviously focused on the Olympic Games, this campaign's main theme was "On your marks, get set, visit". There was no need to include any Classical image or text, since the Games were already associated with Antiquity. However, Athens 2004 mascots were inspired by ancient dolls known as *daidala*. The organizing committee explained that "Phevos and Athena

97 Tsiotsou / Gouri (2010) 336.

98 Hanink (2017) 149.

represent the link between Greek history and the modern Olympic Games [...] Above all, the two children showcase the everlasting Greek value of human scale”.⁹⁹

The 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens were not the first that the city hosted. In fact, the revival of the Olympics began in 1856 thanks to the vision of Greek businessman Evangelos Zappas. Since the War of Independence from the Ottoman Empire, Greece had had a great interest in restaging the Games, and was able to establish the modern Olympics from 1896 to date,¹⁰⁰ thus placing Athens among the most popular destinations for American and European tourists in the beginnings of the 20th century.¹⁰¹ The 1896 Olympics were a major tourist attraction and the international debut of the Acropolis, where archaeological works had just finished that cleared the site of non-Classical elements.¹⁰²

The 2004 Games were a success and provided the tourist sector with ‘Olympic lessons’,¹⁰³ where the notion of continuity was paramount. As Nicholas notes, advertising was able to “beautifully and effectively promote the 2004 Summer Olympic Games in Athens and Greece’s healthy tourism industry through sophisticated, clean advertising and distinctly Greek themes such as light, optimism and the endurance of the human spirit”.¹⁰⁴

“Live your Myth in Greece” (2005)

After Athens 2004, Greece went through a golden era in terms of international impact. Not only did the country successfully organize the Olympic Games, but it also showed accomplishments in other popular fields: the country’s football team won the Euro league in 2004, and Helena Papparizou the 2005 Eurovision contest. Greek tourism benefited from Athens 2004 with an 8% increase of tourism arrivals in subsequent years and a positive legacy of the Games including tourism infrastructure and a post-Olympic marketing strategy by the Ministry of Tourism.¹⁰⁵

99 Athens Olympic Committee (2004).

100 Exceptionally, 1916, 1940 and 1944 Games were cancelled due to World Wars I and II.

101 Bonarou (2009) 257.

102 Hanink (2017) 175.

103 Bonarou and Dermetzopoulos (2008).

104 Nicholas (2002) 28.

105 Tsiotsou / Gouri (2010) 336-337.

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To entice visitors, Greek authorities designed a campaign under the successful advertising slogan “Live your Myth in Greece”. Tourists arriving in the new Eleftherios Venizelos Athens International Airport were confronted with this motto on their way to the city centre in the brand-new Metro line. The use of the Greek word ‘myth’ was a clever choice: it alluded to Classical mythology, which is one of the most attractive attributes of Greece. Furthermore, appealing to the sensuality of the country, the myth in 2005 campaign was not presented as a category of the past, but as something you could actually experience. Myth was thus placed within the reach of everyone. In this sense, studies on the adaptation of myth to the context of the theme park have shown that myths have some characteristics “that make them easily accessible to and productive also in popular culture”. Among them there are its potentiality to speak to all people, its flexibility, the presence of magic elements and a successful narrative structure in which humans interact with divine figures.¹⁰⁶

Taking into account the images chosen for the “Live your Myth in Greece” campaign, it becomes quite clear that the promise of sea and sun plus ancient remains constituted once again the principal idea. However, the mythical dreamlike character of the country was emphasized in the posters, and three of them contained Classical references in one way or another. Always in blue and white, they showed a Gorgon or Mermaid next to an ancient temple, Eros aiming his darts at a young couple in a fancy swimming pool, and Aeolus blowing over a sunbathing young woman. Images were digitally treated to be bright and lively, and the little Mermaid, Eros and Aeolus’ rather childish figures were equally placed at the top right overlooking the scene. The most widespread poster was the one with the Siren [Fig. 11], a half-human half-fish figure, having little to do with Ancient Greek tradition or the original half-human half-bird Sirens of the *Odyssey*. The figure in the poster may have puzzled a few, but it appealed, nonetheless, to the vast majority of visitors and their common idea of what a Disney-ish little Mermaid should look like. The unrealistic temple, on the other hand, is inspired by a picture of the Columns of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, taken by Nelly’s in 1927.¹⁰⁷ Interesting to note, also, is the inversion of sea and sky: the little Siren swims in a cloudless sky where the sun shines. The image certainly projects an image of Greece

106 Carlà / Freitag (2015) 148-149.

107 Bonarou (2009) 337.

that seeks to differentiate itself from what other countries may expect, while at the same time perpetuating certain stereotypes and Greek assets.

“Live your Myth in Greece” was the campaign that marked the prosperous years after the Olympics. Not only tourists were able to live their sea-sun-marble myth when visiting Greece, but the country itself seemed to be living its own myth: a period of self-confidence for the Greek people, who could rely on their Classical heritage in order to cast themselves as a first-class country in the eyes of the entire world; a period of romance between Greece and Europe. The myth of Greece created in those years would be shattered by the economic crisis within a short time and it is no coincidence that the 2004-2005 slogan was to be remembered with both bitterness and anger.

In the critical summer of 2011, when demonstrations and riots were taking place in Greece on a daily basis, a distortion of this motto from the golden years appeared in graffiti: “Live your Greece in Myth.” Although it has been painted over walls on several occasions [Fig. 12], the image in Figure 13 is the most widespread one. It has been echoed in various media, from the CNN I-Report in 2011¹⁰⁸ until recently. In that 2011 I-Report, a 19-year-old Greek student who left her country to study abroad argued: “As my fellow Greeks wrote on a wall during last week’s protests, we can only do it this way: Live OUR Greece in myth and not the other way round. We can’t live our myth in Greece since it’s not possible to even live in Greece!” In 2016 Panos Mavrikis posted an entry in *Just Landed* (a blog connecting and giving advice to expatriates) entitled “Leave your myth in Greece” and illustrated by the same image. Talking about those people who are forced to leave the country in search of a better future, he laments: “You know they will not be the same again even if they do find a good life abroad. They will not be the same after leaving their myth in Greece”.¹⁰⁹

In both instances, there is the realization that “Greece had lived a new dream, however illusory, as a European success story”.¹¹⁰ In this dream the Greeks had managed to embody the Western myths about their country. Unfortunately, it was not Greece’s but Europe’s dream, and as Gilles Deleuze warned, to be caught in someone else’s dream bears undesirable consequences.¹¹¹

108 CNN (2017).

109 Mavrikis (2016).

110 Hanink (2017) 149.

111 “si vous êtes pris dans le rêve de l’autre, vous êtes foutu”: Deleuze (1987).

"Greece: explore your senses" (2007)

In the year 2007 there were still no signs of the events to come. Tourism was strong and the GNTO focused the next campaign's motto on the sensuality of the Greek experience: "Come to explore the harmonious colours of the sun, the sea and the sky, the beauty of nature, the inspiring culture of the past and the present, the joy of life. Explore all your senses in Greece".¹¹²

Despite the claim that such experience was an exploration of all senses, in fact every activity described in the paratext was related to just one of them: sight. Exploration was equal to contemplation of natural and cultural attractions. Emphasizing this, each poster was dominated by a female eye reflecting a different topic, which was presented below in bigger size. Two posters contained Classical monuments: Cape Sounio at sunset in not very natural orange tones, and the Caryatides under the blue Attic light [Figs. 14 and 15].

The use of Classical Antiquity in this campaign motto does not seem as obvious as in other instances, for emphasis was put on the senses. However, the only sense that was truly addressed was sight, which is a very Classical sense indeed. Its importance in Antiquity is witnessed by the fact that knowledge was considered to be acquired through seeing. The verb "to know" was οἶδα, the perfect tense form of the verb ὁράω "to see", literally meaning "I have seen". The underlying logic is that "I have seen" and, therefore, "I know".¹¹³

In the posters, antiquities appeared to be 'spectacularized' by the tourist gaze,¹¹⁴ a gaze that is capable of shaping perception of the landscape and to create myths about a destination.¹¹⁵ The concept is related to the idea of sightseeing, the activity par excellence of tourists visiting a country which is rich in history and ancient monuments. It was Pausanias who established in the 2nd century CE the first routes for visitors to Greece, directing their view

112 The impact of this slogan in the destination's brand building was addressed by Kampa / Rigopolou (2010) 309-313.

113 This connection between sight and wisdom might have been widespread in Indo-European thinking, because the English word 'wisdom' is in fact related to the same root of Greek οἶδα and the Latin *vidi* "I have seen". In Latin and some Romance languages, by contrast, the sense that provides knowledge is taste: Latin and Italian *sapere*, Spanish *saber*, meaning both "to know" and "to taste".

114 Urry (2002).

115 Crang / Travlou (2009) 78.

to specific places that would be seen in specific ways. His *Description of Greece* became a travel guide for generations of Europeans in the modern times, having a tremendous impact on our present vision of Greece. Hanink has argued that “as much as these travellers sought to apprehend Antiquity with their own senses, they still relied heavily on the descriptions preserved in ancient literary sources. That kind of methodology inevitably left ‘the observer more impressed by an ancient past than what was actually present’”.¹¹⁶ So the GNTO’s “Explore your senses” campaign may invite visitors to see Greece with their own eyes, yet it is unavoidable that the Greek landscape, ruins and people be viewed through the lens of a large tradition. Thus, the Greek landscape, “conceived as eternal and timeless, in its continuous existence since ancient times”,¹¹⁷ merges with images coming from ancient literary sources, contemporary marketing, filmic and touristic industries, who create desirable images which are sought and reproduced by tourists. Thus, the big eye in the poster is, in fact, a passive observer reflecting what was already there for it to see.

“Greece. The true experience” (2008)

In 2007 PRC Group, THR International Tourism Consultants, and MRB Hellas designed a new branding strategy for Greece aimed to change the focus from the sensuality of the experience to its authenticity. The idea had already been exploited in the 1997 campaign “Greece – the authentic choice”, but ten years later the tourism industry had developed much more sophisticated methods of advertising. Branding designers for the 2008 campaign built a pyramid with eight levels – from bottom to top: sector, features, attributes, benefits, emotional, experience, visitors, and essence – and they studied thoroughly how to work in each of them.

The cultural sector was the most directly related to Classical Antiquity and it was to be exploited together with the rest of existing sectors (seaside and nautical), whereas new sectors were to be developed (urban and nature among them).¹¹⁸ Mapping the desired brand image evolution for this sector¹¹⁹, the

116 Hanink (2017) 84-98, quoting Harrigan (2008) 129.

117 Carabott / Hamilakis / Papargyriou (2015) 5.

118 PRC, THR, MRB (2007) 62.

119 PRC, THR, MRB (2007) 128. This is a selection of elements related to ancient Greece. The whole content is on p. 128 of the branding strategy.

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pyramid highlighted culture as the essence, while it envisioned visitors strolling around the New Acropolis Museum and experiencing 'eternal Delphi.' On the emotional level there were belonging, and self-fulfilment, among others; and benefits included dream fulfilment, inspiration, and cultural edification. On the level of attributes, the strategy focused on: cradle of civilization, rich in antiquities, unique in cultural richness, mythical, long and rich history, magical, hospitable, and authentic. Relevant features were history (including ancient Greek philosophy, science and mythology), archaeological sites, prehistoric sites, sites of pagan mysticism, pagan mysteries and cults, or revived ancient theatres. In the sub-sectors special mention was given to heritage and target regions.

The features that the 'true experience' campaign highlighted are remarkable in that they are less about the idea of authenticity of the ruins, and of the spot, and much more about the authenticity of the experience: rather than visiting a site, the emphasis is on experiencing it. Authenticity is thus extended from the material objects and places to folklore and traditions.¹²⁰ Even if those may be themselves deliberate re-enactments of ancient customs, the authenticity of the experience will depend more on the context of the observer than on the actual originality or pastness of the site. This means that its "perceived pastness" or "the way it allows the past to be experienced"¹²¹ are more valued than other aspects.¹²²

The first GNTO campaign following implementation of this new branding strategy was 2008's "Greece. The true experience".¹²³ The main theme for the cultural sector was: "5000 years. 5000 Landmarks." And the related body copy read:

Culture. Sophisticated and classy? Visit eternal Delphi, 'the womb of mother Earth', and drive through the cosmopolitan village of Arahova. Citizen of the world? Travel to one of world's most famous destinations, Mykonos Island and pass across the Island of Delos, where the monumental avenue of lions will take your

120 Holtorf (2005) 113.

121 Holtorf (2005) 127.

122 One such example are the pagan worshippers carrying out 'authentic celebrations' around a Stonehenge replica monument in Washington, cf. Holtorf (2005) 122.

123 The campaign is further analysed in GNTO (2008).

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breath away. Just one example of creative holidays... Greece! The true experience!

The cultural sector was promoted with two main images: a family cherishing the Tholos at Delphi [Fig. 16] and an elegant couple contemplating the lions' sculptures at Delos. In both cases blue colour for the skies and white-grey for clothing and ruins were predominant, and the overall impression was that of an elegant yet rather unreal experience for the visitor. In figure 16 it is also interesting to note that the viewer of the poster takes the perspective of the photographer. In contrast with the previous campaign, the eye is replaced by the camera. Instead of addressing the senses, this one is mediated and 'framed' like a performative spectacular experience.¹²⁴

"Greece: A Masterpiece you can afford" (2009)

Still within "The true experience" framework, the motto in 2009's campaign was "Greece: A Masterpiece you can afford." The emphasis relied, on the one hand, on the prestige of Antiquity as a masterpiece and, therefore, on luxury. On the other hand, Greece was presented as a value for money destination, and, therefore, as affordable. The main theme in this campaign, "Greece: 5000 years old", added to the idea of Antiquity as a value in itself. Moreover, the logo where the main theme appeared was a fully decorated rectangle resembling an emblem [Fig. 17].

Two posters in this series contained ancient monuments: The Acropolis with the Parthenon and Lycabettus hill in the background in one of them [Fig. 17], and Sounio Cape Temple in the other. In both cases antiquities were artificially illuminated as the skies were darkening at twilight. Thus, the marble took on a golden tonality that contrasted with the cerulean blue of the skies and acquired the character of a piece of jewellery.

Athens stood out in these posters as the most valuable masterpiece with all its greatness, nobility and honour unmarred. In addition, the campaign coincided with the opening of the New Acropolis Museum in June 2009. Just like the 2004 Olympics, the event was an opportunity to advertise worldwide Greece's brand image as "a white-washed fantasy of the Classical past".¹²⁵

124 On the role of framing in photography and tourism cf. Picard / Robinson (2009).

125 Hanink (2017) 150.

"Greece: You in Greece" (2010)

The GNTO developed a *Communication Strategy of Greece* for the 2010-2013 triennium.¹²⁶ Their own balance of previous advertising campaigns from 1999-2009 is worth considering. Criticism included the inconsistency of logos and mottos,¹²⁷ making it impossible to create a distinguishable national identity. They acknowledged a "lack of consistency in the messages communicated for Greece – no singular narrative – creating a fragmented image of Greece as a destination" and pointed out that they had been delivering "different messages every year with a different promise to visitors, but all selling the same product (sea & sun / ancient ruins)".¹²⁸ Fearing that the Greek experience be limited to those three features, they began to work on a more comprehensive brand image. That image would not be restricted to summer tourism, but would diversify its target groups and seasons.

The 'new vision' was anthropocentric, for its goal was to place man at the centre of the Greek experience and to highlight authentically Greek values.¹²⁹ The 'new mission' was to "promote the richness of Greek anthropocentric values and lifestyle to the world",¹³⁰ meaning that Greek people, spirit, nature, lifestyle and products should be at the centre, moving the country beyond the seaside model. This was probably the first serious attempt to become a year-round destination. However, it is clear that even when trying to abandon previous models and transcend stereotypes, Greece would still preserve its Classical essence: anthropocentrism was, of course, a genuinely ancient value as expressed by Protagoras' famous statement "Man is the measure of all things".¹³¹

The anthropocentric vision of this campaign translated into web advertising where visitors shared their impressions of Greece. The cultural

126 GNTO (2011).

127 GNTO (2011) 17.

128 GNTO (2011) 12.

129 Among them: harmony, moderation, human scale, simplicity, cleanliness, lucidity, spirit, spirituality, depth, freedom of thinking, ideas, innovation, light, society, hospitality, sharing, communication, compassion, openness, warmth, family creativity, freedom, action, participation, joy and spontaneity. GNTO (2011) 20.

130 GNTO (2011) 27.

131 Πάντων μέτρον ἄνθρωπος.

topic included testimonies such as: “This is the birth of Western civilization” (Bob, US), “Culture, mythology, history, loved it. Loved it!” (Marisa, AU), or “We wanted culture, history... and also to get to the beach” (Paige, USA).¹³² The notions of continuity and exceptionalism, which we have been dealing with, are clearly noted by visitors. The promise of three or four S’s (sea, sun, sand and sex), on the other hand, does not go unmentioned. “You in Greece” also incorporated press kits in English, German and Russian portraying visitors in different contexts; Classical Antiquity was either the main theme or a key feature in most of them.

However, the main factors that determined the campaigns in the period of financial crisis were not so much visions and missions about the national brand as they were the low budget, debt in key international media, and a negative image of Greece as a country prone to instability, strikes, insecurity and lack of credibility.¹³³ In the 2012-2013 campaign the GNTO was aware of the need to re-establish the image of Greece¹³⁴ for countries such as the UK and Germany and restore a good opinion of the Greek people. The strategy for those years in general,¹³⁵ and the online strategy in particular,¹³⁶ focused on crisis management. The desirable image/identity of Greece should be based on authenticity, humanity, simplicity, spontaneity, and historicity,¹³⁷ that is, on ancient Greek values and/or stereotypes about the country.

“Greece: All Time Classic” (2014)

After the “You in Greece” campaign, Greek tourism seems to have switched once again to a more Classicist approach, establishing “All Time Classic” as the motto for the Greek brand.¹³⁸ Values according to the *Brand Management Manual* are: democracy, philosophy, music, theatre, architecture, and Olympism – all deeply connected with the notions of continuity and being the cradle of Western civilization. The brand image is a simple blue rectangle with the motto in white letters inside [Fig. 18]. Colours and disposition recall the

132 GNTO (2011) 79.

133 GNTO (2011) 31.

134 GNTO (2011) 84.

135 GNTO (2012a).

136 GNTO (2012b).

137 GNTO (2012b) 4.

138 GNTO (2013b).

Greek flag. As in previous campaigns these colours are recurrent not just because they are reminiscent of the marbles of Antiquity, and the blue seas and skies, or the Aegean islands with their white-washed houses and blue domes, but because a nationalistic undertone goes attached. The country's name is written in a very Classical font-type, whereas the "All Time Classic" slogan is displayed in more modern types. Thus, the GNTTO emphasizes both the intrinsic value of Antiquity and its contemporaneity.

The brand promise in this campaign is "Welcome Home". This interesting tagline recalls the previous "1951 homecoming year", which was probably the first attempt in the history of the GNTTO to reinforce the meaning of images with words.¹³⁹ Moreover, by welcoming visitors back home the campaign speaks on several levels: it evokes the mythical journey of Odysseus and the sense of nostalgia, and it appeals to visitors as family rather than tourists or guests. While asking them to come back after the years of the crisis, when the tourist numbers dropped, this slogan also and in a subtle way recognizes without acrimony that Greece belongs to Europeans and Greeks alike.¹⁴⁰ We could speculate further and say that the idea behind it is the famous statement by British Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley in the preface of his play *Hellas* (1821): "*We are all Greeks*. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece".¹⁴¹ When it was first asserted, it served as a call to help Greeks in the struggle for independence. Therefore, it could be employed now to raise awareness of the need for solidarity with crisis-stricken Greece.

The posters in figures 19 and 20 show two icons of Greece. The first one summarizes the history of the country: ancient Acropolis, a byzantine church, an old mosque, Plaka and the metro in Monastiraki square. The second concentrates on a sunny view of Cnossos. In both of them, words are prominent, and the slogan and motto coexist with the names of Greece, Athens and Crete.

This campaign is still in force and it incorporates a wide range of advertisements. Some of them are videos, where a renewed focus on Antiquity

139 Koutsovasili (2015).

140 This is connected to the idea of Greece as the object of a form of colonization "in which the history and ideology, rather than territory, of another country have been claimed, invaded and annexed". Cf. also Leontis (2015): "colonialism of the mind"; Hertzfeld (2002) 900: "crypto-colonialism".

141 Shelley (1822) viii. Emphasis in original.

is more than evident. “Greek Tourism. An eternal journey!”¹⁴² was released in 2014 commemorating a hundred years of tourism in Greece.¹⁴³ The title is a direct reference to the *Odyssey* and the myth of continuity from ancient to present times. The description of the spot in Visit Greece’s You Tube channel reads:

Tourism. Greece’s oldest industry... an industry of dreams.
1914. The 1st National Tourism Organization.
Greece’s fame spreads around the world!!!
10,000 tourists in 1914
17.5 million in 2014
Greece, a small piece of heaven on earth.

The video begins with an image of the Poseidon bronze sculpture being taken out of the sea. The narration is full of clichés and perfectly summarizes how the GNTO has been making use of Classical Antiquity over the decades:

Greeks, great dreamers, travellers, hosts. Odysseus, the eternal traveller. Herodotus, the first tourist. Pausanias, the first travel guide. Tourism, an idea created by the Greeks. Tourism, to wander, to wonder. Tourism in Greece: a heritage of pilgrimage. Tourism in Greece: for the body, Olympia, the games; for the mind, Athens, the philosophers; for the spirit, Delphi, the oracle, Delos, the mysteries, Epidaurus, the drama. [...] ‘the isles of Greece, the isle of Greece, where burning Sappho loved and sang’ Lord Byron. The light: legendary, dazzling, luminous, soft, tangible, infinite, intimate. ‘That ultimate violet light which makes everything Greek seem holy, natural and familiar’ Henry Miller. The land and light transform us as we journey. For 3000 years, the same miraculous place, the same timeless values. ‘Man is the measure of all things’ Protagoras. Hospitality: Greece’s oldest art form, the stranger for the Greeks is sacred, welcomed, accepted,

142 Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpKlUIDf4oY> [13/11/2017].

143 Although the GNTO was established in 1929, the Office of Foreigners and Exhibitions dates back to 1914, when it was instituted “to manage foreign travel to Greece”: cf. Zacharia (2014) 190.

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cherished, remembered. 'The gods visit us disguised as strangers'
the *Odyssey*, Homer.

Another video titled "Gods, Myths, Heroes"¹⁴⁴ and presented at the World Travel Market 2014 deserves mention. Its presentation text reads: "Every Greek destination is the birthplace of an ancient god, every place in our country hides a myth, a magical story, the energy of which is kept alive until today! Let's discover it...". The invitation is followed by a fourteen-minute piece where a Western businessman takes on a journey to Greece in a quest for his childhood heroes, the gods of Olympus. As Tziovas notes, "in a period of crisis this video celebrates the light and the landscape of Greece, creating the illusion that the country is inhabited by gods, not real people".¹⁴⁵

These, and other GNTO materials focused on Antiquity, belong to the period of the New Democracy Prime Minister Antonis Samaras, who took office in 2012. His government clearly made an effort to promote the Classical heritage of Greece until 2015, when Alexis Tsipras' Syriza coalition won the elections. The political turn to the left did not result in a radically different approach to tourism, but it did foster a widened scope of what was already envisioned by the GNTO in the 2014-2016 strategy. The 'new vision' of Greek tourism is to turn the country into a Classical-anthropocentric-traditional-authentic destination for every season of the year.¹⁴⁶

Although the pillars of the communication strategy cover a wide range of topics related to Greece as a tourist product,¹⁴⁷ Classical Antiquity still plays a fundamental role. This can be seen in the video published by Visit Greece on September 2017 under the title "Greece – A 365-Day Destination".¹⁴⁸ Despite the emphasis on diversity, the myth of continuity underlies the images of ancient remains and the ideas associated with Greece. Diving in the summer, for instance, is promoted by the comment: "under a hundred kinds of blue, ancient cities and sailors, Poseidon's hidden kingdom". Visiting vineyards in autumn not far from ancient temples becomes a mythical experience, with girls treading the grapes wearing white skirts with fretworks. Spring in turn brings "Miles of memories, the journey is the joy". Finally, a view of

144 Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L0jzITm9ug> [13/11/2017].

145 Tziovas (2017) 41-42.

146 GNTO (2013) 2.

147 Seaside, Culture, Diving, Health and Wellness, Luxury, Nautical, City Breaks, Business and Touring. Cf. GNTO (2013) 2.

148 Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7YVZw6IcoU> [11/11/2017].

Monastiraki, Plaka and the Acropolis closes the spot with the invitation: “This is our Greece. Come share it with us”.

V. Conclusions

This paper has reviewed the uses of the Classical past in Greek tourist advertising. The analysis has shown that the notions of continuity and being the cradle of Western civilization, together with the alleged Greek exceptionalism, have been paramount in attempts to entice visitors to Greece. This is not to say that Greek tourism relies exclusively on Antiquity, for Greece is mainly identified as a seaside summer destination. However, the allure of the past is an asset that differentiates the country from the majority of its Mediterranean competitors and has consequently been exploited in almost every instance.

In the posters, campaigns and videos, the presence of the past is not always straightforward. Some of them require the receptor to be acquainted with Classical sources. Most messages, nonetheless, are easily interpreted by the lay person, even if they include references that might elude them. Greece is a mass tourism destination and cannot afford to rely exclusively on the cultural sector. The specific uses of Classical Antiquity in advertising, on the other hand, depend on the historical context and the predominant ideology of each period. As a consequence, the past is appropriated whenever needed not just to promote tourism, but also to make political statements and to shape Greece’s identity.

In fact, the identity of the country is so interwoven with its past that there is no way tourism can escape from a long tradition of representation, imagination and appropriation of Greece. The role of the GNTO has proven to be decisive in shaping the country’s personality and brand identity, yet it has not invented them. The successful branding of Athens already in Antiquity projected an image of power and beauty that has been exploited by the West and the Greeks alike over the centuries. Travel writing and photography, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries, exerted a great influence on contemporary representations and perception of Greece. Modern advertising strategies, in turn, draw from stereotypes of the past and contribute to reinforcing them.

Among the many attributes and assets of the Greek brand, those related to Antiquity seem to maintain a leading position along with the sun and the

sea. In the posters and campaigns analysed in this article, notions and values of the past are consistently revisited: authenticity, myth, Olympism, the endurance of Greek language, and even the joy of life are examples of this. In addition to them, two of Greece's 'comparative advantages' have been widely exploited: one is the proverbial hospitality of the Greek people, the other is ancient monuments and history. All of these stem from the same essentialist idea that unique, ancient Greek values live on within the people and among the ruins of modern Greece.

This bond with the past holds huge implications for Greece, and cannot be addressed properly in this brief paper. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that the 'burden of the past' is both a blessing and a curse. Emphasis on the country's status as the birthplace of Western values helped Greece in crucial moments (e.g. independence, entry in the EU), yet it also forces Greeks to be measured against an idealized past. What is more, the Greeks believed that myth themselves, saturated as they were with messages of continuity with a glorious Antiquity,¹⁴⁹ and suffered the consequences. However, the 'Greek myth' is so powerful, that it seems only logical that tourism would exploit these ideas and seek to reflect the exact image that Western visitors are after.

Consequently, the Greek brand uses Classical attributes, but avoids controversial messages; the Classical heritage belongs to Greece, yet Greece shares it with the world. In the more recent campaigns, it becomes clear that the official discourse does not criticise management of the crisis, nor blame anyone for being culturally and financially colonized. It is as if there was a tacit pact between Greece and its former benefactors, who would have earned the right to intervene in Greek affairs by safeguarding its ancient legacy for centuries.¹⁵⁰

Maintaining the sense of connection with "a Western fantasy of Antiquity"¹⁵¹ has other disadvantages for Greek tourism. In the case of Athens in particular, it prevents foreigners from learning about the changes that the capital has experienced over the years. On a wider scale, by "favouring the glorious past over the discordant or diverse present"¹⁵², a substantial part of Greece's identity is discarded. This is why contemporary tourism is trying

149 Gallant (2001) 72-74.

150 Hanink (2017) 107.

151 Hanink (2017) 149.

152 Panayotopoulos (2009) 188.

to avoid overreliance on the past. Recent campaigns have made special emphasis on selling a diversified, 365-day product. However, while the GNTO is after a more modern image of Greece, it still relies on ancient landmarks, trying to display their timeless charm.¹⁵³ On the one hand, the international community seems to be demanding that the country maintain its sea and sun plus ancient ruins tourism base. On the other, National Tourist Organizations all over the world are seeking to draw cultural tourists to their countries, considering them “mythical visitors” and “more affluent and cultured persons”.¹⁵⁴ As a consequence, it is expected that the use of the past in Greek tourism advertising will not diminish.

In conclusion, it has been proven that tourism is more than an industry, for it both reflects and informs the identity of the Greek society and the image of the country abroad. Since Classical Antiquity is a hallmark of the national image, advertising the Greek destination brand shows a clear tendency to entice visitors by means of Classical Antiquity. Certain attributes of an idealized past are touted by the GNTO as the essence of Greece’s brand, thus sending the message of continuity with the ancient values reputed to have shaped the Western world.

153 Kritikou (2007) 190, quoted by Bonarou (2009) 333.

154 Boissevain (1996) 3.

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Illustrations



Fig. 1: E. Seraidari (Nelly's), *Parthenon*, 1929.

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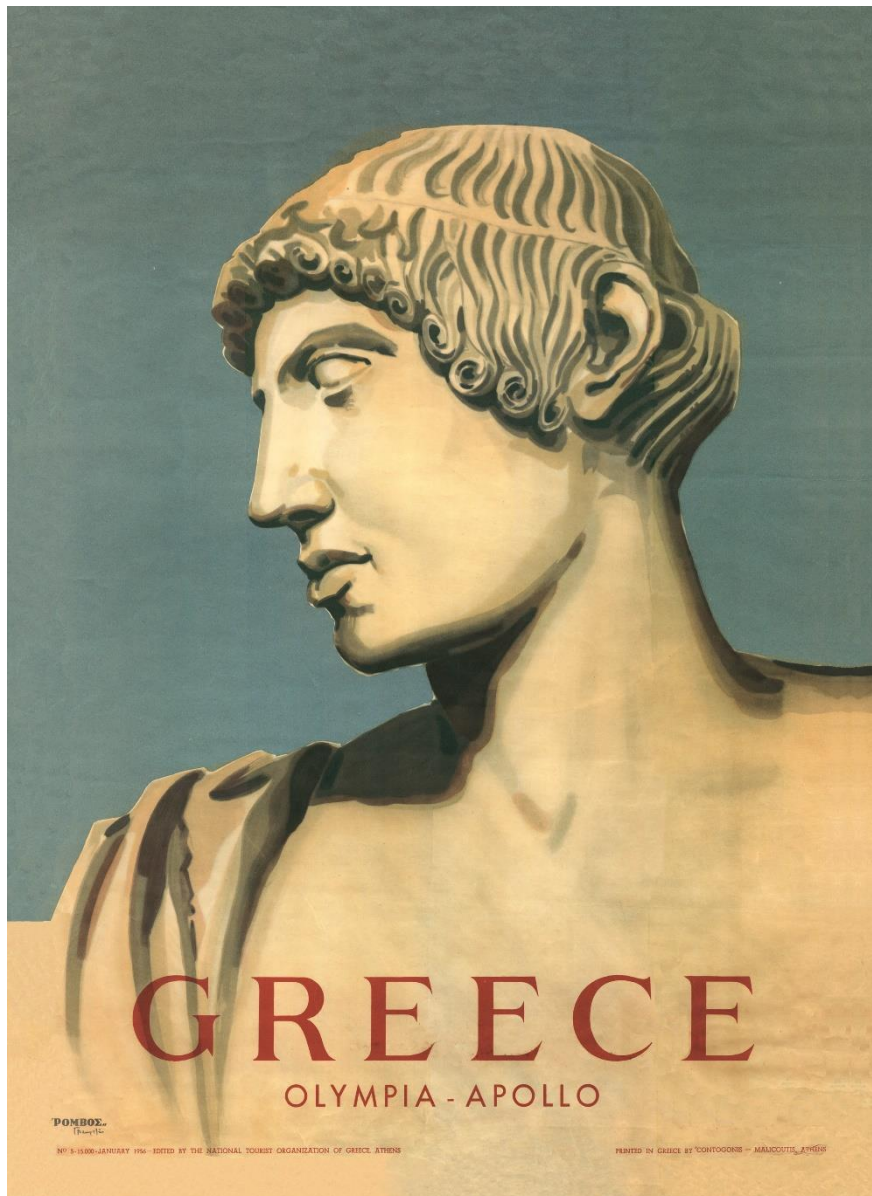


Fig. 2: Y. Vakirtzis, *Olympia - Apollo*, 1956.

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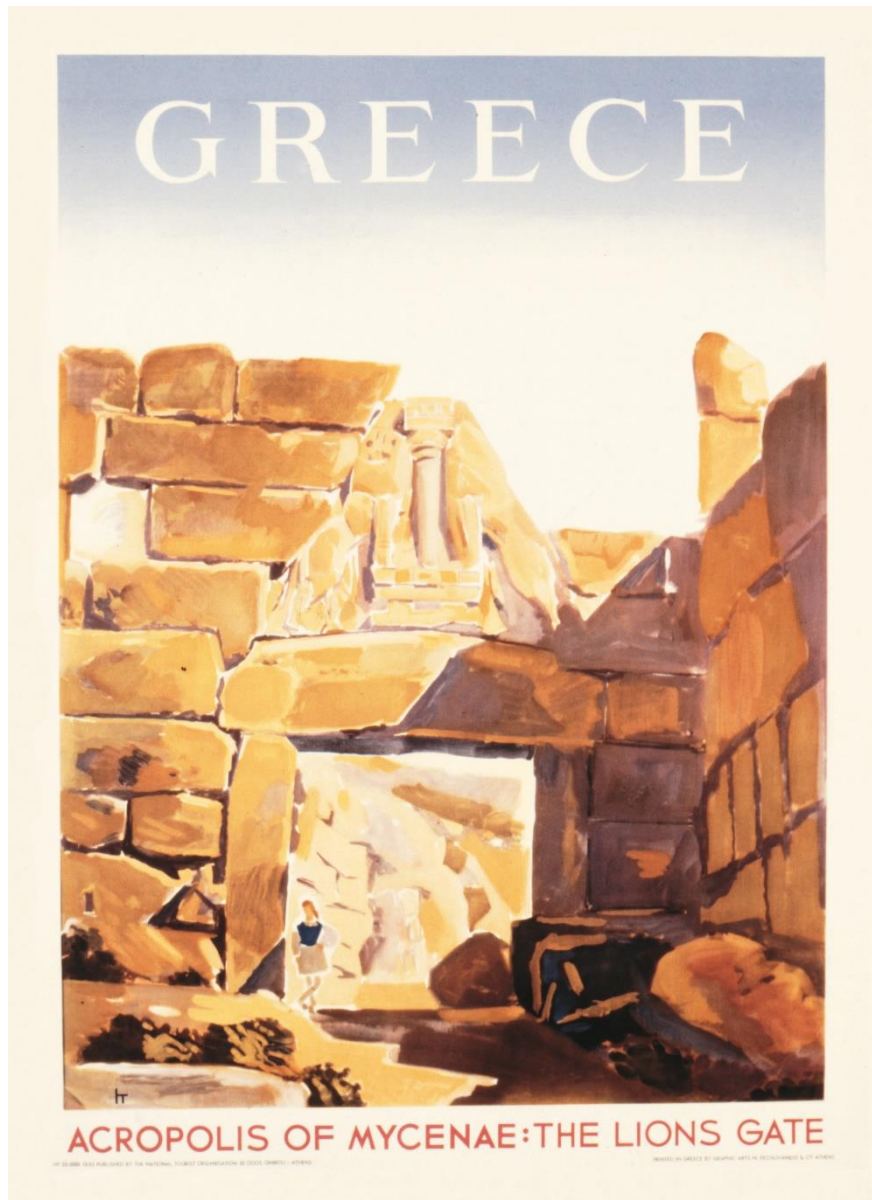


Fig. 3: GNTO, *Acropolis of Mycenae: The Lions Gate*, 1952.

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Fig. 4: M. Katzourakis, *Minoan Seal*, 1960-62.

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Fig. 5: M. Katzourakis/N. Tombazis, *Lenormant Relief*, 1962.

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Fig. 6: N. Kostopoulos/N. Stournaras, *The Calf Bearer*, 1975.

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Fig. 7: N. Kostopoulos, *Sound and Light Festival*, 1970.

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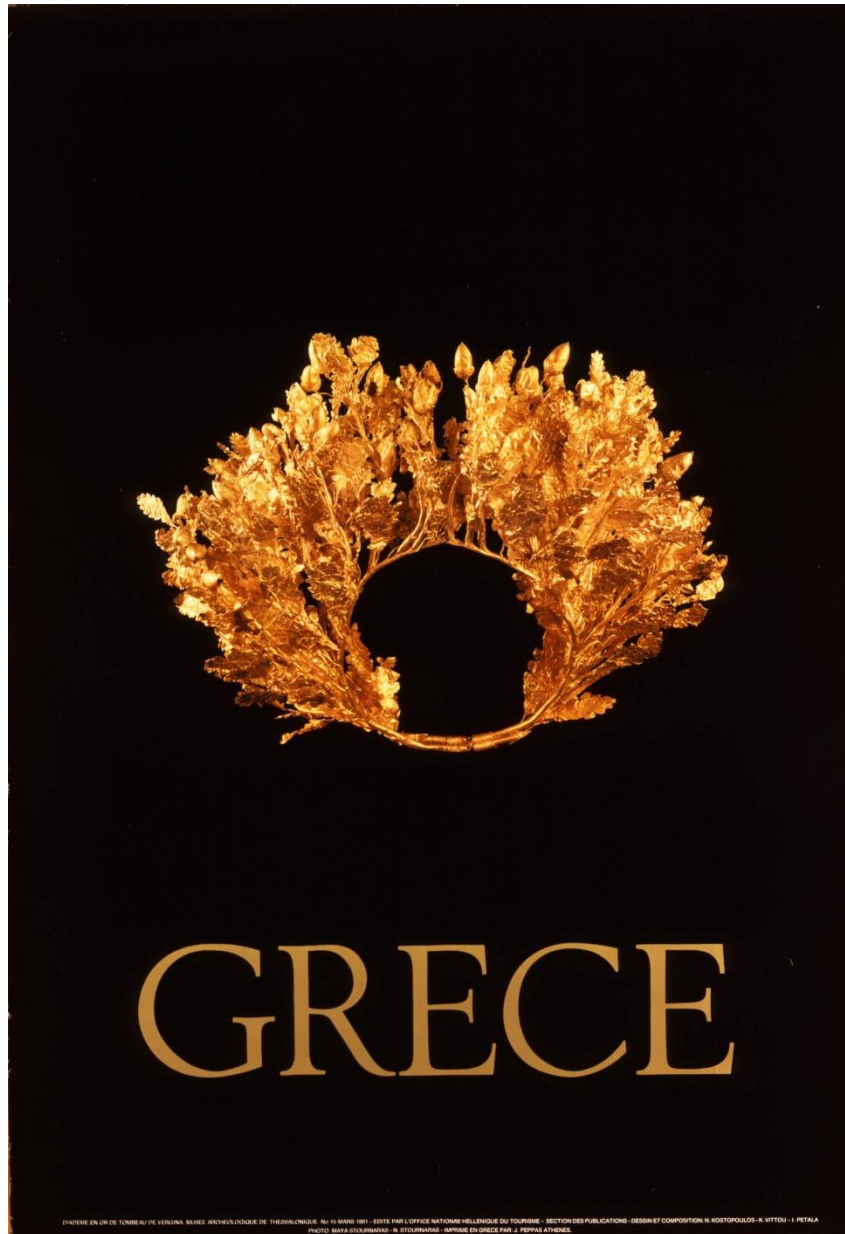


Fig. 8: N. Stournaras, *Golden Crown*, 1981.

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Fig. 9: N. Kostopoulos, *Pella*, 1992.

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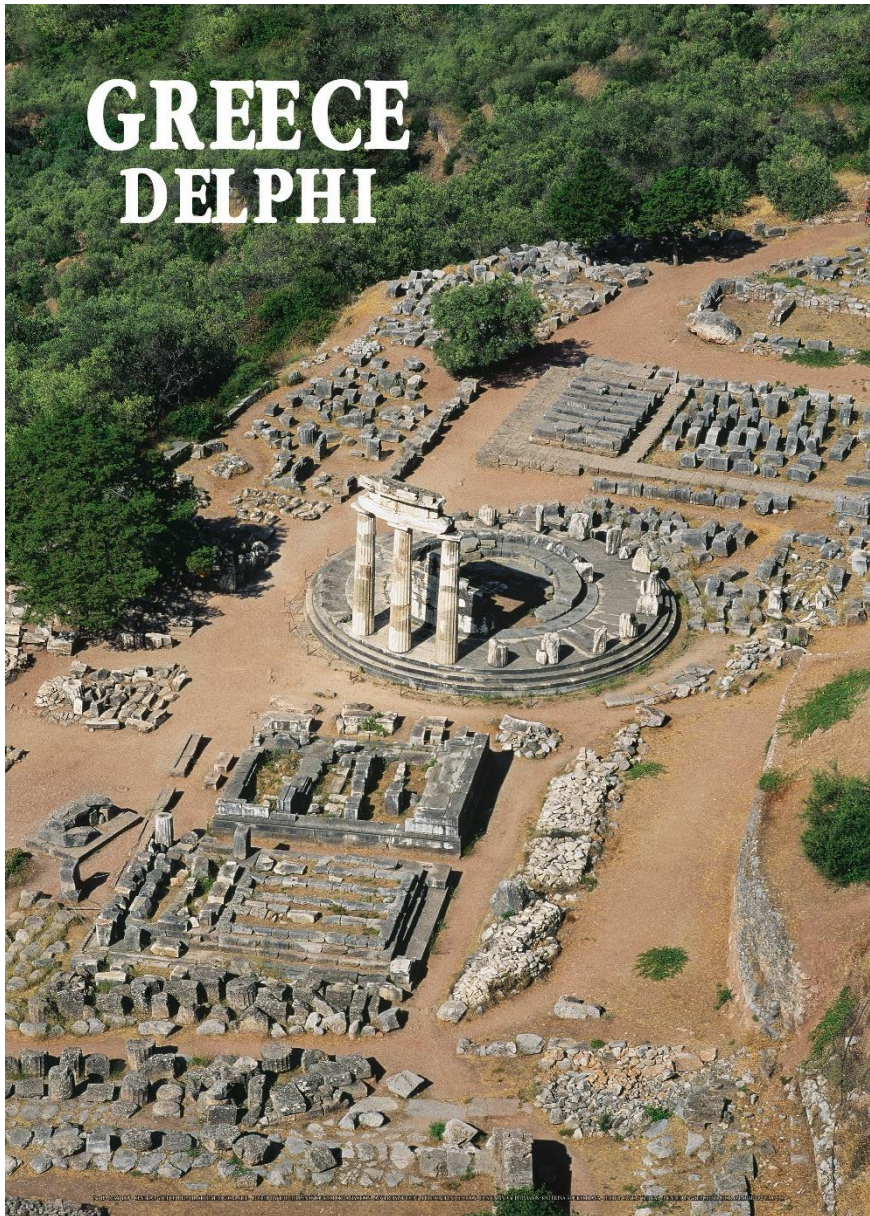


Fig. 10: K. Kourembana/K. Vergas, *Delphi*, 1999.

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Fig. 11: GNTO, *Live Your Myth in Greece*, 2004-2005.

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Fig. 12: *I Live your Greece in Myth*, 2011.



Fig. 13: *Live your Greece in Myth*, 2011.

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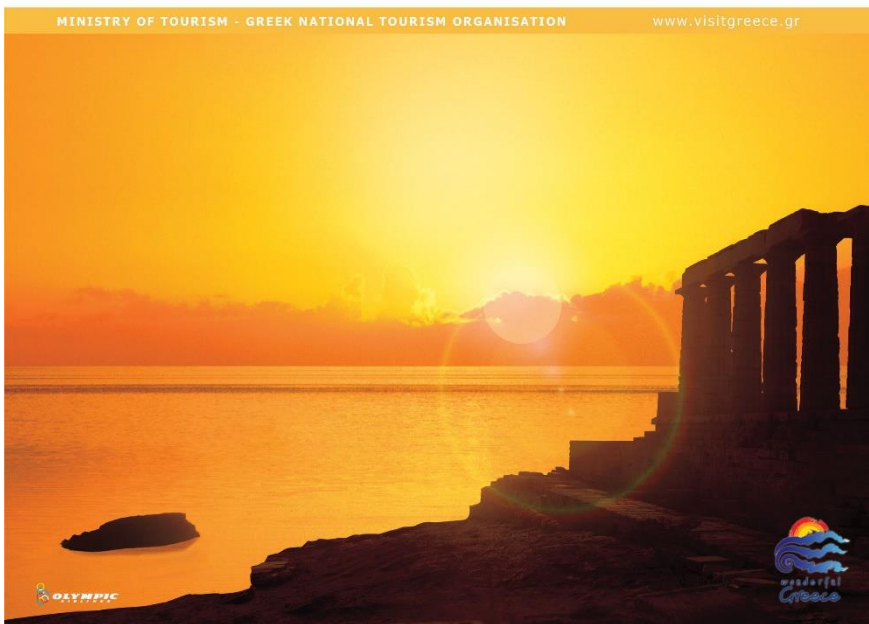


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Fig. 14: GNTO, *Sounio*, 2007-2008.

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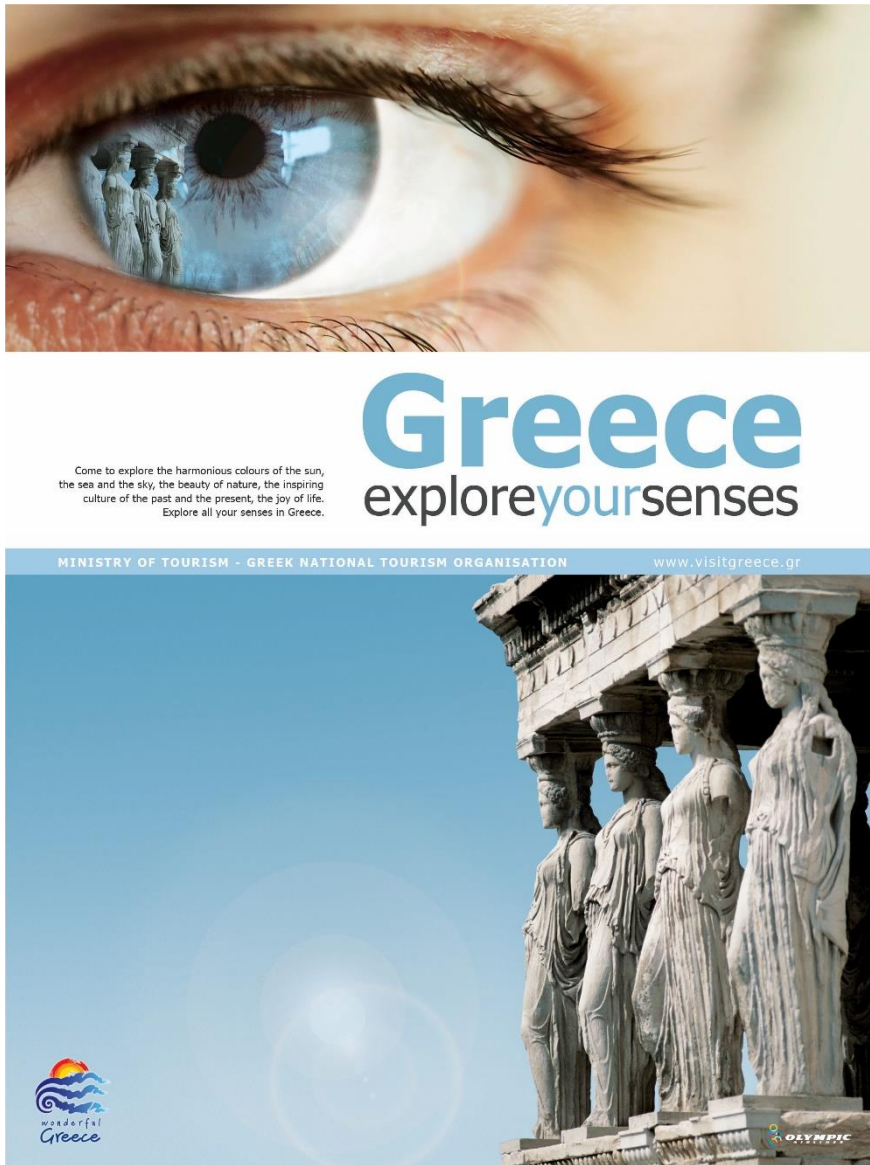


Fig. 15. GNTO, *Caryatides*, 2007-2008.

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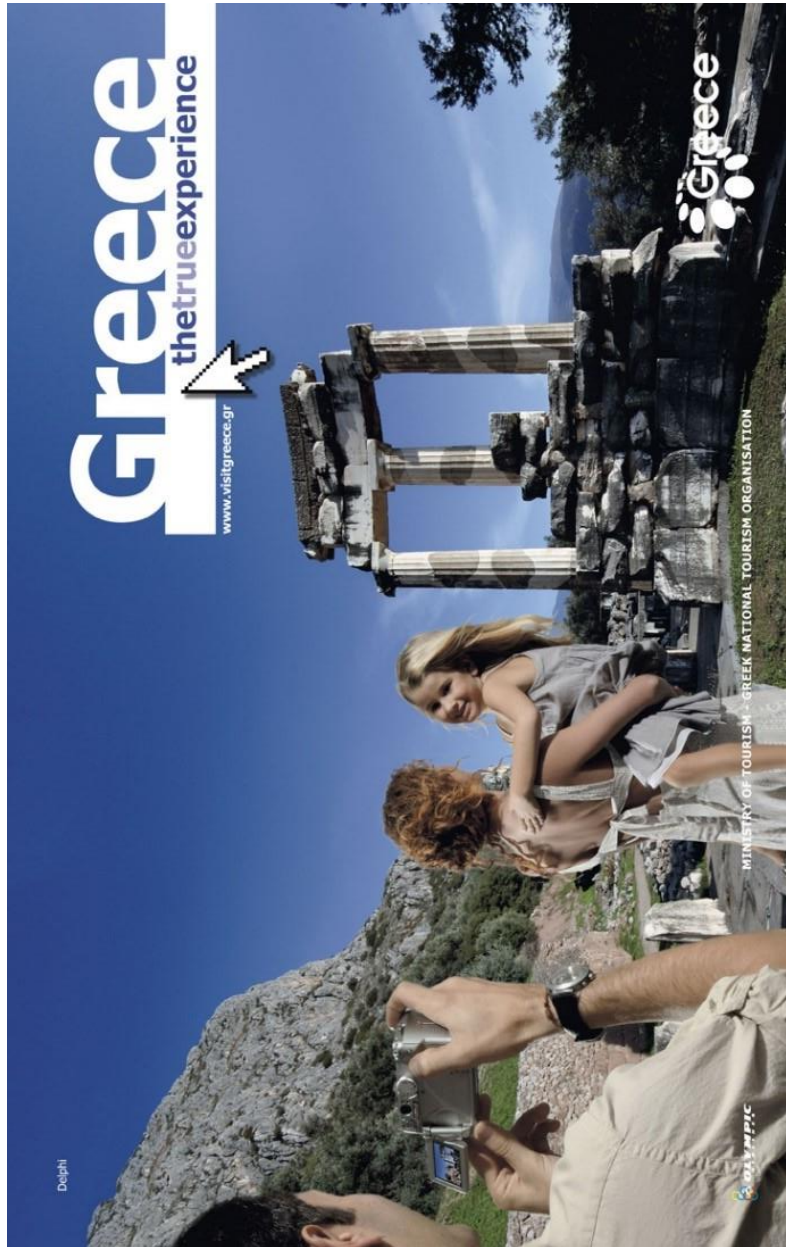


Fig. 16: GNTO, *Delphi*, 2008.

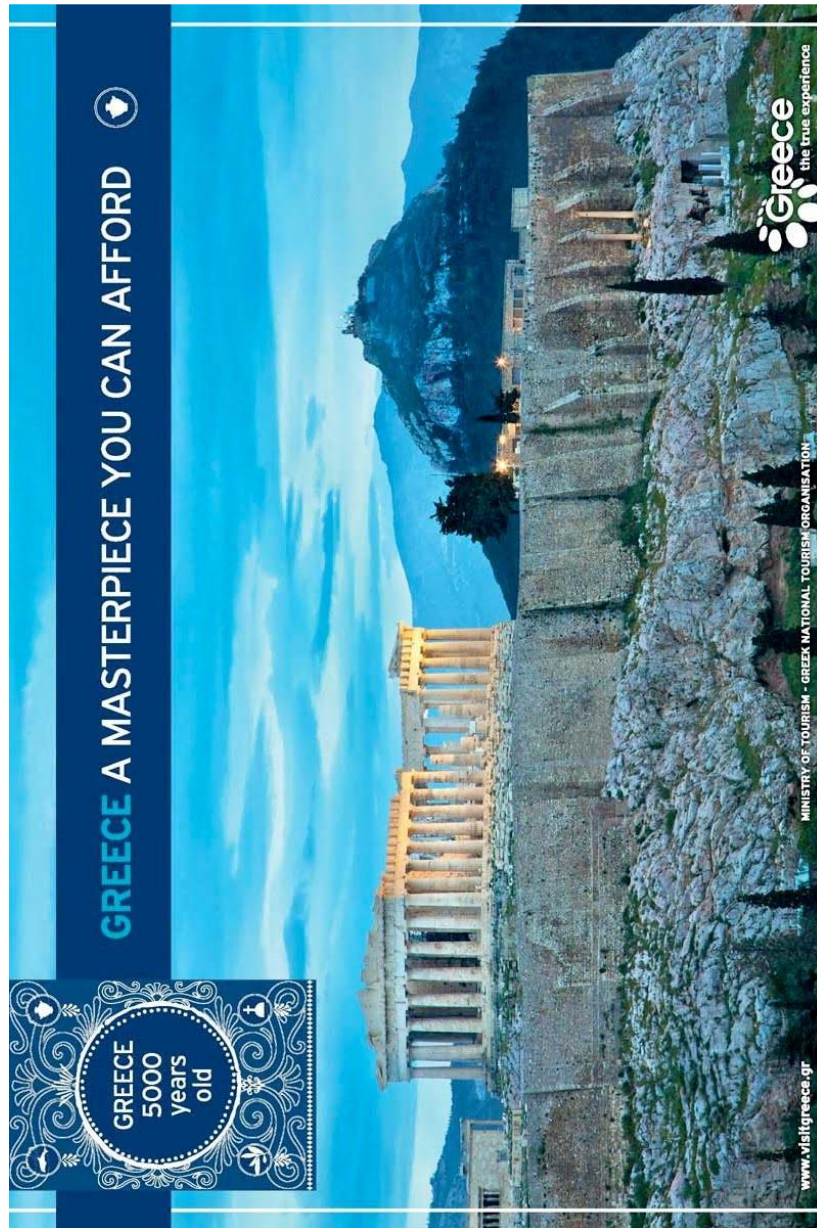


Fig. 17: GNTTO, *Acropolis*, 2009.

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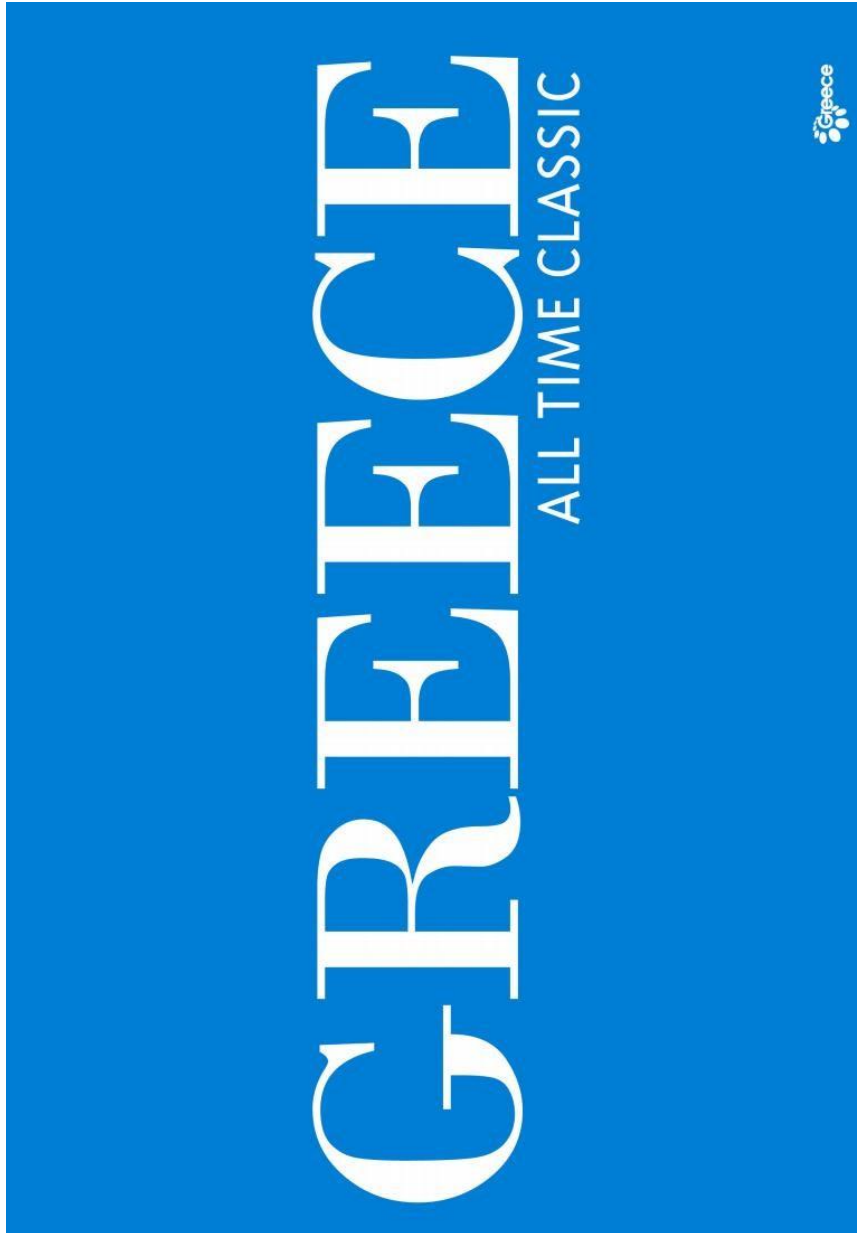


Fig. 18: GNTO, *All Time Classic*, 2014.

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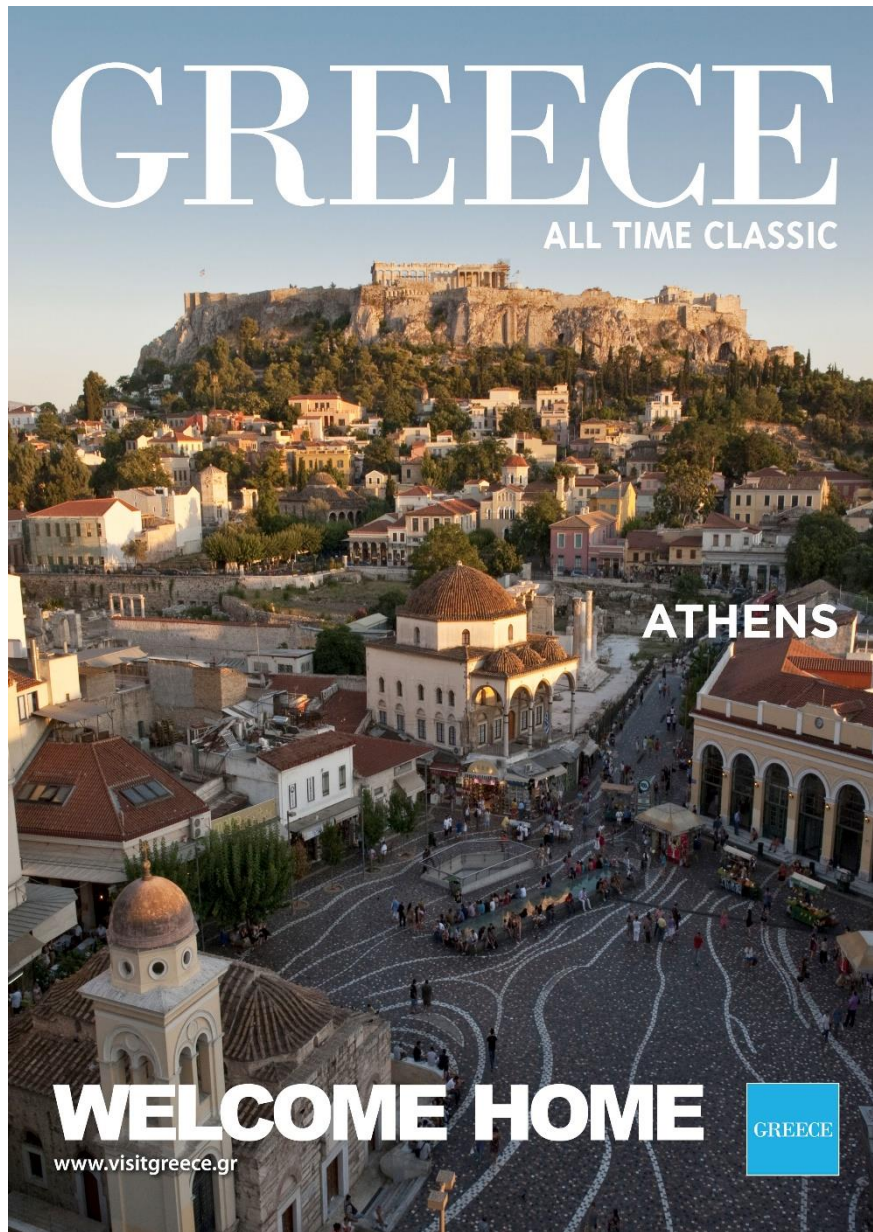


Fig. 19: GNT0, *Monastiraki*, 2017.

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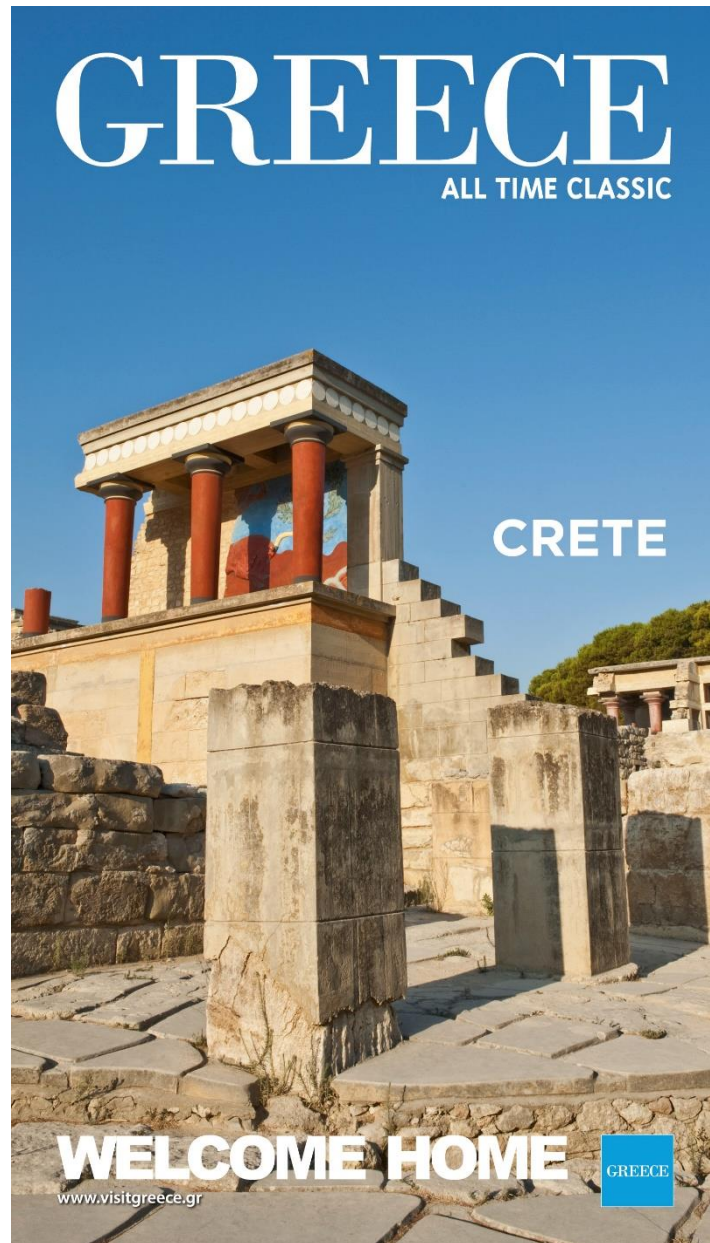


Fig. 20: GNTO, *Knossos*, 2017.