

TOURIST ATTRACTION THROUGH ODYSSEY AND ITS THEATRICAL PLAY IN MODERN GREECE: THE VIEWS OF CULTURALLY AWARE TOURISTS FROM ATHENS

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Abstract

The works of literature and the messages they carry can influence tourist destination choices, at least for a part of tourists. An author has the power, through his own writings, to make its audience passionate about visiting a place, especially if his or her writings are amongst the most recognized in literature, if they have significant influence in letters and international literature, if they convey true, unanimously shared, global values and messages that excite people's imagination or if they act as a source of information of cultural patrimony and value.

One such piece of literature whose historical significance, ecumenical character and cultural influence resists in time for more than three millennia, influencing mankind all over the world, is Odyssey. The present article examines if and to what extent Odyssey is a reason attracting tourists in modern Greece and whether some specific to Odyssey activities can be held for tourist attraction purposes. A questionnaire is addressed to culturally aware tourists in places of ancient cultural patrimonies at the city of Athens. The answers come from tourists of different country of origin, sex and educational level. After examining their basic knowledge about Odyssey, tourists are asked if Odyssey has influenced their choice to visit Greece and the places that it refers to, and to what extent performing outdoors some plays of rhapsodies from Odyssey (or the full poem) - in public spaces at the streets of Athens- could attract further tourists in the city of Athens, acting to their entertainment. They are also asked to indicate other means that could possibly help to explore the simultaneous cultural and touristic value of Odyssey.

Key words: *Odyssey Cultural tourism Tourist attraction Theatre Literature Sustainable Development*

1.Introduction

Local, regional and national economies have increasingly started to benefit from cultural tourism over the last decades. A large proportion of them across the world schedule their tourist policies and branding in relation to their cultural sites and monuments, aiming to establish a permanent link of association of tourists with their own civilization and cultural traditions. Such policies influence positively their sustainable development but sometimes also negatively (Mitoula and Kaldis, 2018; Mitoula et al., 2008).

Cultural tourism, as a distinct form of tourism, emphasizes the importance of visiting cultural monuments and heritage sites in tourist destinations, of getting to know people's and place's cultural habits and patrimony, as well as of sharing local, regional or national cultural experience. With its origins dating back in the Grand Tour, it has been claimed to be the oldest form of organized tourism (Richards, 2003). While it also promotes other forms of tourism, it simultaneously fosters a two-directional link between tourism and the cultural and creative industry, by giving birth, strengthening or shaping cultural and creative jobs, networks and relationships. The benefits for local, regional and even national economies can extend further if the use of local facilities is explored and the ties between these two industries involve entrepreneurship and new venture creation, following an -as much concise as possible- identification of job opportunities.

The present research aims to lay down a bridge between the past and the modern Greek civilization by investigating the prospect to explore the use of a historic piece of Greek classic tradition, *Odyssey*, for tourist and cultural purposes. The case study is Homeric *Odyssey*, the long poem by Homer, and tangible cultural entrepreneurial opportunities are investigated from scratch in relation to *Odyssey*, for the attraction of cultural tourists in the city of Athens. The article initiates a link between the work of *Odyssey* on the one hand, its global reception and knowledge about it, and various opportunities offered to local cultural firms on the other hand that could better associate and set-up cultural research projects about *Odyssey* and create jobs. The opportunities acknowledged at the present article are mostly made in reference to theatre and theatrical enterprises. This is because the city of Athens that contains many theatres, some of which ancient, and a long tradition in theatrical performance, can better explore such opportunities. It thus seeks to highlight how visiting a place for tourist purposes can intermix with the existing cultural foundations and work conducted at this specific place, in a more sustainable manner.

The interest for the present research extends beyond the national (for Greece) local (for the city of Athens) or regional (for the region of Attiki), since *Odyssey* can be played in theatres all over the world, and using theatre to attract cultural tourists is still a field in development all over the world. Finally, this piece of research sets within the academic debate for the revival of classic studies (see Hanson and Heath, 1999), thus creating the vision of a new cultural bridge between Athens, Greece and other places of the world where *Odyssey*, an ecumenical piece, is read, studied or played.

2. Towards a bridge between the past and the present in the Greek civilization

In countries like Greece, with more than four millennia of history and civilized development at its territory, and at least a dozen of distinct, well recognized civilizations, tourists are attracted for cultural purposes from all over the world. Many pieces of Greek civilization resulting from domestic historical processes of formation, and especially those in written form, have been admired by other civilizations, have become ecumenical, and are now being shared among all civilizations and considered part and parcel of global heritage. As opposed to this,

other pieces have been lost, damaged or permanently ruined, interrupting the links between the past and the present.

Cultural tourism in Greece has undergone a phase of development in parallel with the development of policies for the protection of Greek cultural heritage. Ever since the formation of the modern Greek state in 1821, the Greek society and all consecutive governments have historically and collectively espoused and acknowledged the significance of restoring ancient places and sites of historical and archeological wealth, such as ancient theatres, palaces, temples, churches and many other, have decided their preservation and their exhibition into the eyes of the public.

The collective effort undertaken for the protection, preservation and appropriate exhibition of cultural patrimony has been immense over the decades, because the Greek territory has been a birthplace for many distinct civilizations and at the crossroad for many other. To name but a few, the Mycenaean, Minoan, Ionian, Dorian, Achaean, Cycladic, Athenian (of the glory days of Pericles), Spartan, Macedonian, Latin, Byzantine, Ottoman, Venetian, Genoan, Italian and modern Greek, have all left their own cultural footprint at the Greek territory. The remnants of older civilizations have been discovered and protected by the modern Greek state, even if many historical sites and monuments remain damaged or ruined. Naturally, the immaterial aspects of most of the aforementioned civilizations have been lost throughout the elapsing of centuries, being left unprotected or neglected, especially those deriving from the most ancient Greek civilizations.

As opposed to this reality, which is common in many other civilizations across the world, many immaterial aspects have been saved in the ancient Greek classic literature and poetry, which had been influential over the centuries and still remains significant, despite that a great part of it has been lost. Two of the most known written pieces left are the works of Homer, Iliad and Odyssey. They have been saved for more than three and a half millennia and their saving was the collective outcome of efforts taken by many civilizations over the centuries, not just those residing at the modern Greek territory, and especially of the Byzantine and Roman. The latter has transferred these works in many other civilizations through latin, making the work of Homer an ecumenical piece of patrimony that is now being studied in the secondary education, at the majority of states across the world. It has also been the outcome of the collective effort of the development of classic studies at the UK, Germany, France and many other European states, the USA, Australia, as well as several other English-speaking countries.

3. Associating tourism with culture: from literature and poetry to theatre

The origins of tourism and its spread as an organized activity associate to people's desire to visit other places. Such desire is intrinsic in human nature and the interest to learn about other civilizations. People wish to discover more about other customs and traditions, share other cultural experiences and witness, in their own eyes, the cultural artefacts and achievements of other civilizations, material or immaterial, at least those that had not perished and descend from ancestors. The first verses of Odyssey, which illustrate Homeric Ulysses as a hero who "saw the cities of many men and knew their thought" summarize the archetype of a traveler and visitor of other places, as well as the reason why many people keep travelling.

As a specific form of tourism, cultural tourism offers distinct business opportunities and jobs, locally or regionally. Multiple examples exist where new enterprises are formed and job opportunities opened in the tourist industry or in creative and cultural industries that profit from cultural settings, monuments or existing cultural experience. For example, hotels add tourist guides in their services for cultural visits, local museums and tourist companies cooperate and organize specific cultural trips etc. Culture itself inspires entrepreneurs and offers

many opportunities for new ventures, such as private museums, galleries and exhibition projects, the restoration and management of old industries and buildings used for cultural purposes, etc. More recently, culturally-oriented enterprises seek ways to benefit from the diffusion of internet, new technologies and the provision of new technological experience (enhanced, in 3-D environments, etc.) (see Ikononou, 2017).

Cultural tourism takes place to enjoy an artistic event or a piece of art in another country or place, and to visit its cultural monuments, settings and areas, as well as share the experience of local culture and existing cultural patrimony, material or immaterial. All forms of arts in culture can become part of cultural tourism, such as in music, painting, theatre, including poetry and literature that hold an eminent position among the arts, as well as the newest forms of arts, such as cinema and the digital arts. Concerning literature, a specific form of tourism has been developed within the field of tourism studies, literature tourism, over the last two decades (see Manola, 2022; Manola and Koufadakis, 2022). The works of literature and the messages they carry can influence tourist destination choices, at least for a part of tourists. An author has the power, through his own writings, to make its audience passionate about visiting a place, especially if his or her writings are amongst the most recognized in literature, if they have significant influence in letters and international literature, if they convey true, unanimously shared, global values and messages that excite people's imagination or if they act as a source of information of cultural patrimony and value (Manola, 2022). Many initiatives are taken at the local level to promote the association of tourism to literature. These comprise the organization or integration of literature in cultural routes (Manola, 2022; Manola and Koufadakis, 2022). Tourism associates to literature in a dialectic relationship, which helps to unveil the significance of the works of literature that is often neglected.

One of the ways through which a piece of literature or poetry and its significance are revealed at a wider audience is through another form of art, mostly through cinema and theatre (Manola et al., 2024; Manola, 2022). The influence of another form of art upon a piece of literature depends on which form of art is used. Theatre in particular may exercise an extended influence for promoting a piece of literature transferred on it. Such influence is seen from various perspectives.

A theatrical play of a piece of literature or a long poem may be played indoors or outdoors, not just in modern but also in ancient theatres, if available. It also takes place at schools, museums or archaeological sites (Papageorgiou, 2002). Along with cinema, theatre has the power to make literature or long poems look alive. This is the case with many pieces of literature that have been transferred in theatre and are being played consecutively for many years; for example, Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Phantom of the Opera* on Broadway or Agatha Christie's *Mousetrap*, played in London's West End for 65 consecutive years (Santamarta, 2019; Manola et al., 2024). Many more are played in Festivals, such as the Festival Theatre at Edinburgh, the Cambridge Shakespeare Festival or the Athens Epidaurus Festival, which originates back in 1955.

Many private sector companies are already involved in theatrical plays across the European capitals, such as the Stage Entertainment company in Madrid that produces *El Rey Leon* (the Lion King) or the Theatre of Paris (Santamarta, 2019). A new theatrical play offers new job opportunities for various professionals from creative industries involved in theatrical projects, such as actors, costume designers, sound and music engineers, theatrical producers, theatrical script writers etc. In tourist destinations with large tourist influxes, such as national capitals, their direction towards a theatrical performance could activate local theatres, create a circuit of local economic activity and contribute in the revival of local theatre and other cultural and creative activities. This is conditional on the identification and provision of

tangible opportunities for entrepreneurs in order to decide to get involved in the organization of such theatrical plays.

Developing the association between theatre and tourism has been conceived within the city branding architecture (Bennett, 2005; quoted in Santamarta, 2019). It has been referred as the "Tourism & Theatre" phenomenon and associated to specific strategies (Santamarta, 2019). These strategies were considered to depend on available national assets (such as existing theatres, including ancient theatres), products (such as an available theatrical play), offers (for products promoted outside their own location) and markets, which consist of a segment only of tourist markets (Chias, 2005, as referred in Santamarta, 2019).

The role of theatre in tourism is not confined in the entertainment of tourists and the promotion of local and national culture but extends much further. Theatre cultivates broader moral, ethical and pedagogical values. Theatre is an innovative dynamic in the field of education and its application has been successful in terms of upgrading pedagogic and teaching skills with an orientation towards the release of creativity of the learners. In such cases, a theatrical play can enrich knowledge, skills, emotions, and beliefs of tourists and other actors involved on it (Parousi and Tselfes, 2012).

A theatrical play or performance is as an experiential activity that can be based on embodied learning. The embodied learning, is one of the contemporary pedagogical learning theories, in which the protagonists of the educational practice, teacher and learner, holistically use the fourfold mind, emotions, body and movements within it (Smyrnaïou, 2018). In a theatrical act, the learners -such as tourists- can either take on roles assigned by the teacher, or improvise for a concept that can be given to them, or play pantomime (to extract, for example, specific verbs). Sometimes they rely on a play / text to create a script and make up their own dialogue and then act it out and sometimes they may read a text without preparation, the next time with preparation and in a third phase enrichment with facial expression and body language in general. The participants create images that reflect on how they perceive a situation (Cahnmann-Taylor and Souto-Manning, 2010).

The tourists can become active participants, by taking an energetic role as learners. The cognitive process in such cases of embodied learning is better promoted and knowledge is better assimilated for the participants, as opposed to the suggestions made by classic cognitive theories that the mind is computational and offers, if not frames, the rules and the logic (Coward, 2004).

Therefore, the experience of a theatrical play extends much further from the narrow boundaries of an entertainment, its organizational elements and its feedback to the audience - that may include tourists too- by offering a learning experience, where actors perform as teachers and the audience -including tourists- act as learners.

4. Odyssey: The myth, its significance, its transformation and some of its particular features

Odyssey, the classic masterpiece by Homer, most likely composed in the 8th century BC, has been considered to be the most influential book and piece of literature before the advent of the Bible (Minguel, 2008). As opposed to the Bible -which has offered the teachings of a single religion- Odyssey addressed many dissimilar audiences, all over the world. It has become an ecumenical piece of literature, shared among civilizations, and naturally inspiring the full range of arts throughout the history of mankind. Numerous authors, poets, painters, sculptors and other artists have been based on the myth of Ulysses (Odysseus), either by reproducing them at another form of art -including the contemporary forms of poetry- each time or by transforming the myth itself (Oikonomou, 2016). Its publicity was enhanced by the other work of Homer, Iliad, which refers to a historic event, the war of Troy. Both are considered to

form the beginning of literature, even though they are essentially poems (Nicolson, 2014; Medelsohn, 2017; Oikonomou, 2016) and to represent fundamental pieces in Bloom's Western Canon of literature. Their power is such that they still inspire and influence contemporary literature and other forms of arts (Oikonomou, 2016; Nicolson, 2014).

The word *Odyssey* holds an autonomous meaning in the dictionary; it became a synonym of someone's difficulties, adventures or suffering, irrespective if he or she has travelled back home, as the main character of *Odyssey* -Ulysses- has done so. The journey back home, a main element of the book of *Odyssey*, is not necessary for using metaphorically the word *Odyssey*; or it takes itself a metaphorical meaning, as the short poem "Ithaca" by Kavafis has splendidly elucidated.

Ulysses holds historically the position of one of the most famous characters in fiction and literature throughout the history of literature. He benefits of course from his appearance in *Odyssey* for the second time, after his debut in *Iliad*, where he made his presence quite significant for the purpose of the Greeks; he has used his cunning intelligence to find a way to conquer the city of Trojans after ten consecutive years of war, through his idea for the Trojan Horse. In *Odyssey* though, Homer presents Ulysses as another man, one suffering from a God's rath, Poseidon (a brother of Zeus and God of the seas). His guilt appears to be his arrogance, as he recklessly chooses to remove himself outside the comfort shadow of being "nobody" and uncovers his true identity loudly to one of the sons of Poseidon, Cyclop, after escaping from his cave and having turned him blind.

This is the starting point of his sufferings. Poseidon raises many obstacles to Odysseus on his way back to Ithaca and takes him outside the seas of Aegean, in -hard to locate in the map- places, where Scylla and Charybdis and many other scary and traumatic experiences make Odysseus, a man, look like a toy in the whims and rath of a God, which is a central point in ancient Greek religious spirit of the times (as opposed to what Christianity has brought a millennium after, as an understanding of what is a man's -or a woman's- position at the cosmos). Odysseus, a pre-Christian man, unaware of Christ's teachings, is, as the narrative of his life shows, a person strongly believing in himself, his own powers, his own capacity, including his capacity to change and influence the world, and his genuine spirit and cunning intelligence; He is the true winner of the Troy, whose idea of (Trojan) Horse was a "check mate" move in the history of the war against Trojans, a man who could have claimed to have significantly influenced the history of mankind, against the willingness of -some- Gods; a man who is going to personify and take the whole glory from the Trojans and the Greeks. A central therefore question coming out of *Odyssey* and the sufferings of Ulysses is "what is a man without God's will?"; "what can he actually achieve (without God's will)?"; "how far can he go (without God's will)?"; "what features or qualities does he need to have?". One can similarly transfer this question to every person, not only for Ulysses.

But one can see behind the adventures of Ulysses that stamina and inner qualities of one's self are required for someone during his life to resist sufferings and achieve his ultimate purpose (the return back home), especially after he has contributed to a change in history. *Odyssey* then turns to a piece of literature that refers to human and inner qualities of oneself (Medelsohn, 2017; Nicolson, 2014; Pitsili, 2014).

The setting of *Odyssey* is shared between islands (of Circe, of Cyclops, of Phaeacian) and seas that have not been accurately traced on the map so far. Several views exist on which are the places mentioned in *Odyssey*, and how far they are from the sea of Aegean and the contemporary borders of Greece, extending to other parts of Mediterranean or even beyond it. While it has been impossible to identify these places precisely, the journey of Ulysses is a historical fact, following the war of *Iliad*, and has become a journey full of symbols and metaphors, since the words Scylla, Charybdis, Ithaca, Circe, Kalypso have been used metaphorically and gained their place in human vocabulary.

4.1 *Odyssey reproduced or transformed*

Odyssey itself represents the second -after Iliad- piece of literature that contains many significant elements required to write a story. It follows a certain plot, it is based on realistic, well-described characters and unfolds parallel stories along with that of the main character. It is also the first piece of literature in history that uses *in media res*, a significant for the unfolding of one story, introductory technique.

With all these qualities, it is no coincidence that the myth of Odyssey has been carried over the centuries. This was achieved in several ways. The first and most important way is through its exact reproduction, by translating the book in new languages, new civilisations or new generations of readers, over and over again. It has also been transferred or adapted at the theatre, the opera or as a movie, played in television, on-line or at the cinema. The adaptations of the myth may be limited to a single rhapsody or a combination of some rhapsodies only.

The myth has also been transformed in various forms of arts over the centuries. Thousands of poets have focused on specific rhapsodies or scenes, discovering new meanings and symbols; Ithaca, by the Greek poet Kavafis, is one of the most known but many poems were written about the Sirens and their silence (by Rilke, Brecht), about the companions of Ulysses, for example Elpenor and others (by George Seferis) and the mythological figures of Odyssey (Scylla, Charybdis, Cyclops) have been used extensively as symbols in poetry and literature in general (Oikonomou, 2016).

The follow-up of Odyssey was also attempted. Dante (in his Canto 26 of Inferno), Plinius, Solino, Tennysson (1942), followed by Graf and the Italian poet Pascoli have focused on what has happened after Ulysses had returned back to Ithaca (Oikonomou, 2016). According to this story Ulysses is supposed to have left Ithaca again, and return back to the destinations described in Homer's Odyssey or towards new destinations, beyond Gibraltar. Similarly, Nikos Kazantzakis, more famous for his Zorba, has written his "Odyssey", a text remarkably rich in words of the Greek language that he considered as his magnum opus (Beaton, 1996). In his story of Ulysses, an immense work of 33,333 verses and of the longest, if not the longest in history of literature, Ulysses leaves once again from Ithaca and travels towards the South, Crete, Egypt, Africa and the South Pole, after taking with him Helen of Sparta (Beaton, 1996).

One of the most known among all the transformations of the myth in literature is the work "Ulysses" by James Joyce that represents a complex piece of literature, now considered to be a masterpiece in English language and literature. The story of "Ulysses" takes place in Dublin, during a single day, the 16th of June 1904; its main character, Leopold Bloom is paralleled to Ulysses, his wife, Molly Bloom, to Penelope, and the second character, Stephen Dedalus, to Telemachus, while each chapter is named after Odyssey (Oikonomou, 2016).

As with many other pieces of literature, transforming the characters or the myth of Odyssey could disrespect the true myth and become dubious or debaFigure. In cinema, Jan Luc Godart has used Odyssey in his movie the Contempt (Mepris), to discuss marital separation and divorce. Camille divorces her husband Paul, a playwright, when he chooses to comprise and accept the amendment of the play of Odyssey for commercialization purposes after the request by an American sponsor, who wishes to present Penelope as an unfaithful woman. Camille, a female character, respects the myth of Odyssey, defends the personality of Penelope who is a historical symbol of female faith and integrity and, by doing so, she keeps her own integrity (Oikonomou, 2016).

Critics and historians of literature agree that this particular movie by Godard is in dialectic relation with "2001: A Space Odyssey" that was produced by Stanley Kubrick in 1968. This is witnessed at the very first scene, since the former ends with a white square,

while the latter starts with a black square, symbolizing the darkness of Universe (Oikonomou, 2016). In remaking a book by Arthur C. Clarke, the “2001: Space Odyssey” filters some elements of the myth of Odyssey that are being transferred in space, which consisted of an unknown space at the time. The Mediterranean sea of Odyssey is being now replaced by space, where human civilization will have to wander and explore new places and face new fears and challenges (Oikonomou, 2016).

All these pieces of literature, influenced by Odyssey, have reached an international, ecumenical audience, making many civilizations and people all over the world acquainted with the original myth of Odyssey. Ulysses has expanded the boundaries of Odyssey and has become a figure admired for his strength and stamina to overcome difficulties and proceed on his journey, full of adventures. However, such aspects as the explosion of artistic production over the last decades, aided by new technologies, the access of artists to new means and methods, and the change in content and themes selected in arts, reduce the interest for classical studies and the Greek ancient history and mythology all over the world.

4.2 The use of Odyssey in theatre

Odyssey has been transferred in theatre, either by respecting and presenting the complete myth or part of it. Due to the long size of the poem, theatrical writers and script writers have adjusted the play in theatre. For example, the Greek novelist Kazantzakis has written his own theatrical play of Odyssey (that differs from his aforementioned “Odyssey”), focusing on several rhapsodies only, mostly the final. Many efforts have been made to present the poem in theatre and the work remains a challenge for many theatrical producers and writers. James Joyce’s Ulysses has also been played at the theatre. Due to the multiple meanings Odyssey carries, the script writers of a theatrical play of Odyssey may wish to reveal some parts of the work against some other. Hence, there is a room to shed light in various aspects of Odyssey and features of the main characters through theatre.

As a piece of literature that is being transferred in theatre, Odyssey reveals the significance of various theatrical techniques that relate to the qualities of the personality of its characters. Those watching or participating at its play can better understand the motives and behaviour of characters and extract valuable elements about the society of the Homeric world, through interpreting human action and studying the actions of heroes. They can become acquainted with a main feature of Ulysses, his cunningness or associate themselves with multimodal thinking (“*πολύτροπον*”) and the nostalgia (“*νόστος*”) to return home (Grammatas, 2014).

Thus, they can get emotionally involved with their role and experience the dramatic situation while cultivating their imagination and retrieving feelings and personal experiences creatively connected to the life and experiences of the characters they play (Imellou, 2016).

5. Methodology: Culturally aware tourists, their knowledge on Odyssey and their interest about the play

The present research has addressed a questionnaire to a sample of tourists visiting Athens from November to December 2023. The focus of the sample was on culturally aware tourists, who were more likely to be aware of Odyssey and appreciate its significance. To isolate this tourist audience, questionnaires were filled outside the Museum of Acropolis in Athens, which is situated underneath the hill of Acropolis, and where it is more likely to find culturally-aware tourists because they are more abundant. The sample was filled in by 88 tourists.

Its initial questions examined extensively to what extent tourists are aware of Odyssey. For this purpose, they were asked whether they had read Odyssey themselves, whether they had seen it in theatre or cinema, and questions about the main characters of Odyssey, the places referred in it, and the symbolic meanings of Odyssey and Ulysses. Then, more specific questions were made on how Odyssey can be explored for promoting tourism in Greece or abroad, offer cultural experience to tourists, especially related to theatre.

Questions were placed at a certain order to avoid a bias in answers. The sample was spread across age and gender. 53.6% of respondents had a bachelor degree, 16.7% and MSc or Ph.D. and a 29.8% had a high-school educational level (Figures 1-3).

Figure 1

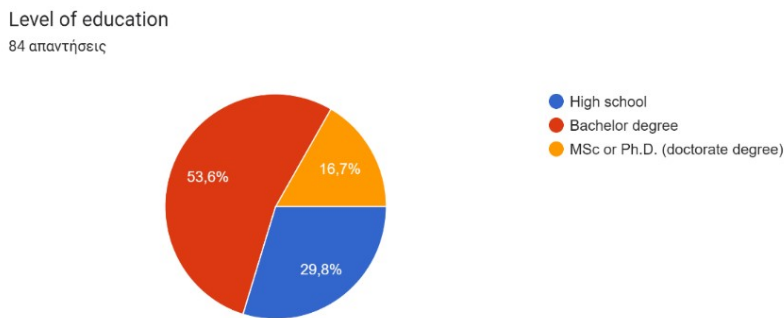


Figure 2

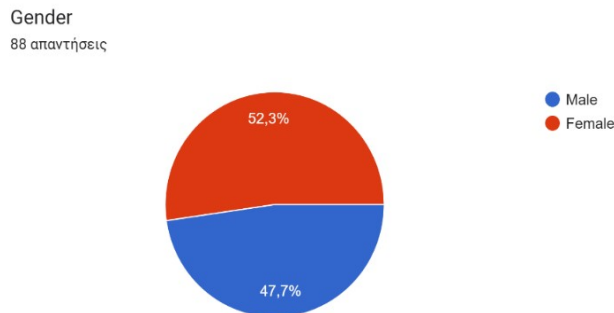
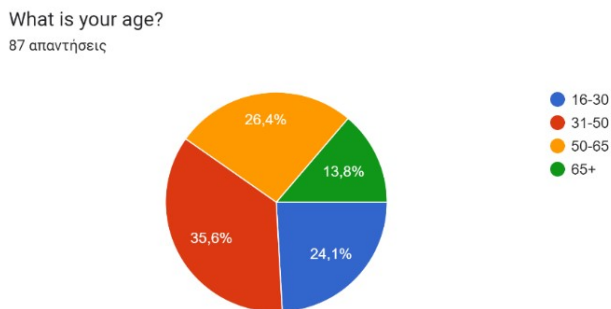


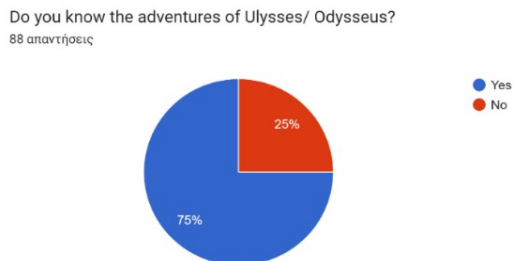
Figure 3



Research findings

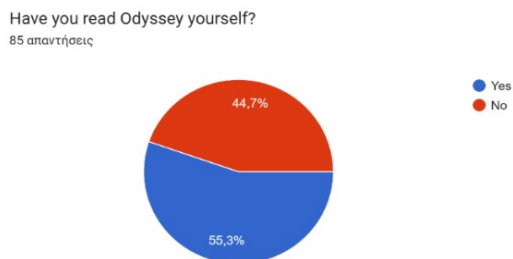
Three-fourths of the sample knew the adventures of Ulysses and only one fourth did not (Figure 4).

Figure 4



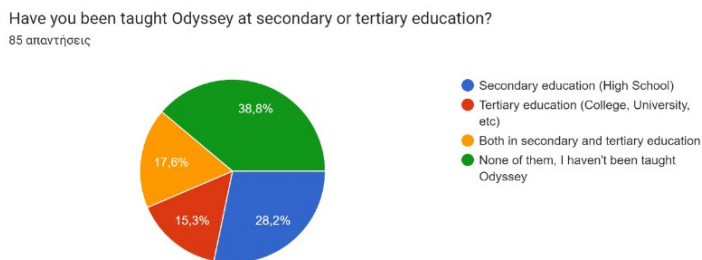
More than half of the sample (55.3%) have read Odyssey themselves but the percentage of those who had not was also quite high (44,7%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5



More than one-third had not been taught Odyssey at the secondary nor the tertiary education. The accumulated percentage of those taught Odyssey is high, at 61.2%. 28.2% out of it had been taught Odyssey at the secondary education, 15.3% at the tertiary (college, University or other type) and 17.6% both at the secondary and tertiary education. These percentages remind the significance of Odyssey as an educational material across the world (Figure 6).

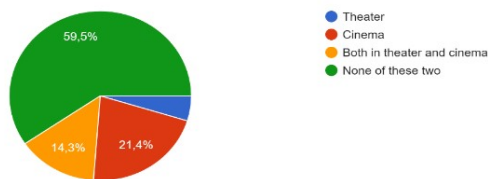
Figure 6



A great proportion, 59.5%, have not watched Odyssey at the theatre nor at the cinema. 21.45% have watched Odyssey only in cinema, 14.3% in both cinema and theatre, and only 4.8% only in theatre. The accumulated percentage of those who have watched Odyssey in theatre is 21.1%, i.e. almost one out of five and the respective for cinema is 35.75% (Figure 7).

Figure 7

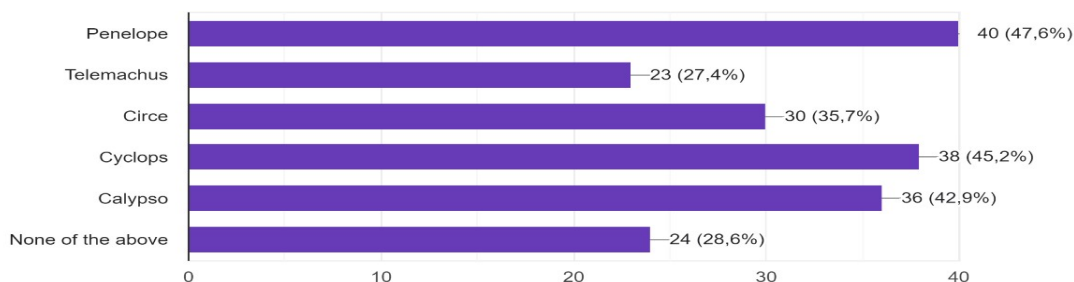
Have you watched Odysseus at the theater or the cinema?
84 απαντήσεις



Concerning the poem, the tourists asked were mostly familiar with the character of Penelope (47.6%), Cyclops (45.25%) and Calypso (42.9%) (Ulysses was excluded from this question for obvious reasons). More than one third were familiar with Circe (35.7%), while Telemachus -the son of Ulysses- was less known (27.4%) and more than one fourth of respondents were not familiar with the aforementioned characters of Odysseus (without including Ulysses) (Figure 8).

Figure 8

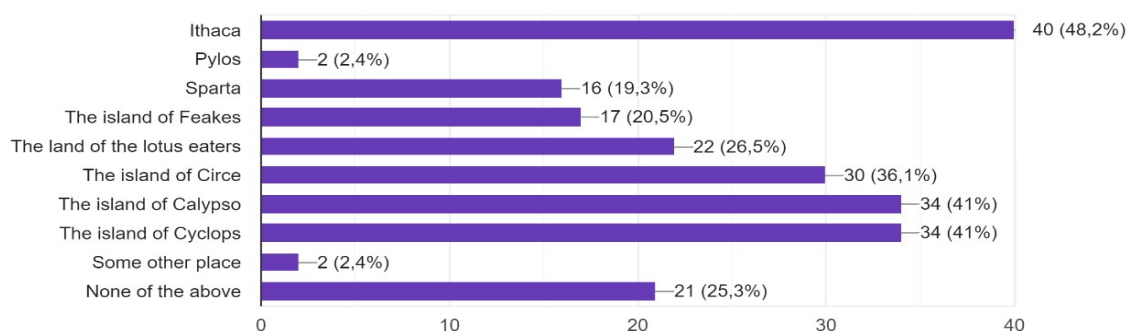
Which of the following faces are familiar to you from Odysseus? (one or more answers)
84 απαντήσεις



From the most known places referred in Odysseus, almost half of the respondents could recall Ithaca (48.2%), and a significant part the islands of Kalypso and Cyclops (41% each), as well as the island of Circe (36.1%). The island of lotus eaters (26.5%), the island of Feakes (20.5%) and the places where Telemachus visited when he searched for his father, Sparta (19.3%) and Pylos (2.4%) were less remembered. One-fourth of respondents (25.3%) could not recall any of the aforementioned places (Figure 9).

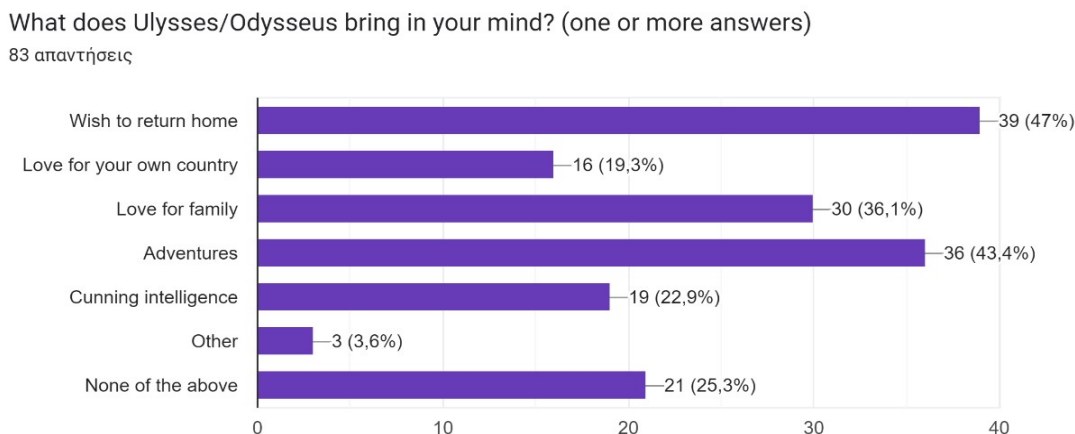
Figure 9

Can you remember some of the places from Odysseus? (one or more answers)
83 απαντήσεις



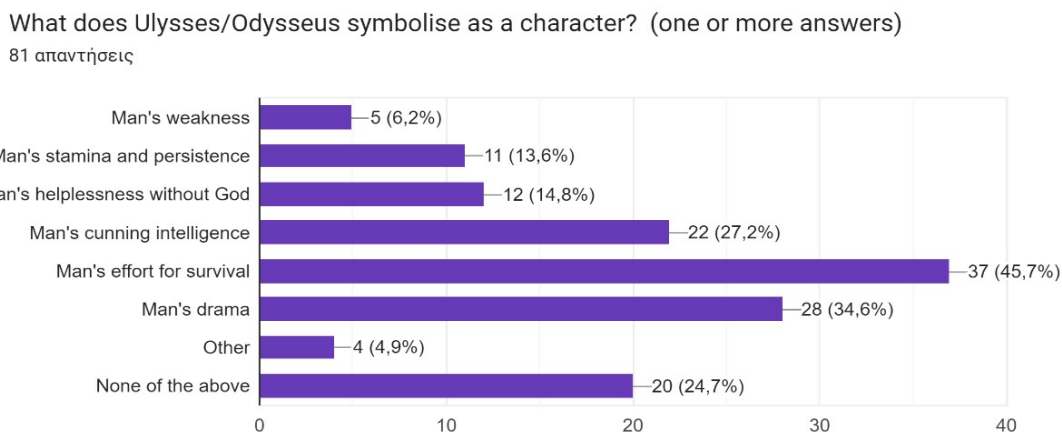
Almost half of the respondents (47.5%) associate in their mind Ulysses with the wish to return home and 43.4% with adventures. 36.1% associate Ulysses with love for family. The cunning intelligence of Ulysses and the love for your own country were less provided as an answer (22.9% and 19.3% respectively). Almost one-fourth (25.3%) had not associated Ulysses with any of the aforementioned answers. This finding appears to be consistent with previous answers of lack of awareness of Odyssey and Ulysses (Figure 10).

Figure 10



Ulysses is viewed mostly as a symbol of man’s effort for survival for a percentage close to half (45.7%) and as a man’s drama for one-third (34.6%). Another symbolic aspect of Ulysses is his cunning intelligence (27.25%). To a lesser extent the character of Ulysses is viewed as a man’s helplessness without God (14.8%) and man’s stamina and persistence (13.6%), while man’s weakness is less considered (6.2%). Almost one fourth (24.7%) replied that none of the above symbolizes Ulysses (Figure 11).

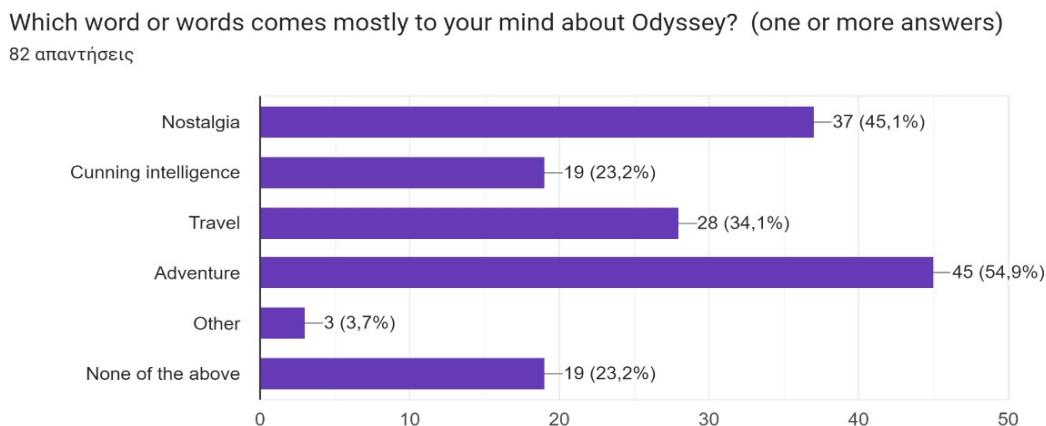
Figure 11



Odyssey is associated in the mind of tourists mostly with adventure (for more than half of them, 54.9%), and nostalgia (45.1%), a main theme in Odyssey («νόστος» in Greek). More than one-third associate it with travel (34.1%), which unveils as a finding its interest for tourism and tourist studies, while 23.2% with cunning intelligence. Only 3.3% have associated Ulysses with something else (named as “other”), which suggests that the

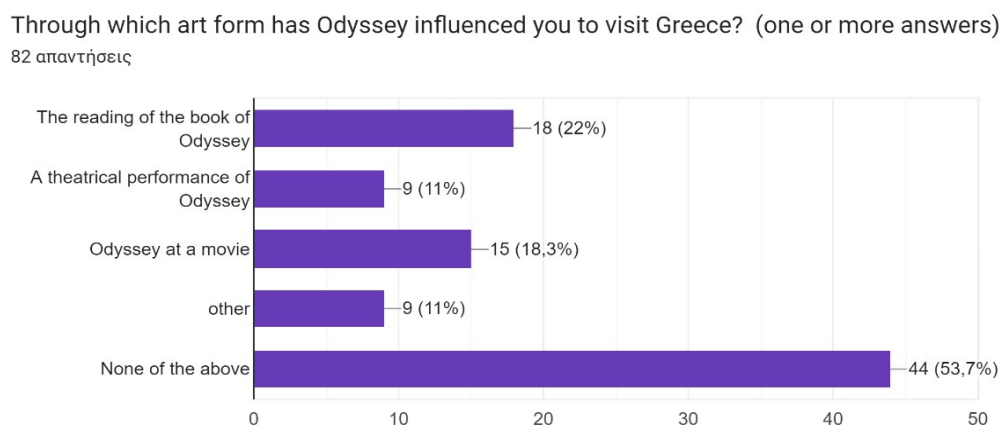
aforementioned associations are the most significant. A steady percentage of respondents (23.2%) do not associate it with any of the above (Figure 12).

Figure 12



Concerning the influence of Odyssey on tourism and the choice to visit Greece, more than half of tourists (53.7%) have replied that it did not influence somehow their choice to visit Greece. More than one-fourth of tourists have examined that they have been influenced by the reading of the book of Homer, 18.3% that they were influenced by the movie itself and 11% by a theatre they saw on Odyssey. 11% of tourists were also influenced by something else. In association with previous findings, these replies suggest that Odyssey is less a motive to visit Greece and also that the play of Odyssey in cinema and theatre has some importance in influencing tourists to visit Greece (Figure 13).

Figure 13

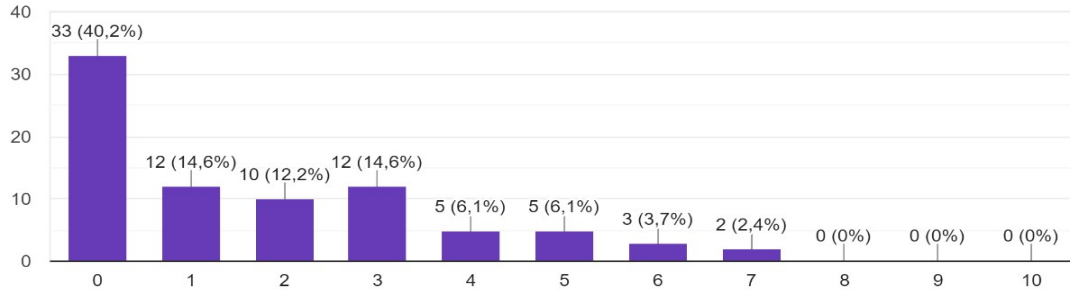


Odyssey does not appear to contribute significantly to the choice of tourists to visit Greece. No one has responded that Odyssey has contributed in the choice to visit Greece more than 7, in a scale from 1 to 10. On the contrary, 40.2% had responded one (1) in the relevant scale, and 93.9% five or less. However, if seen as an additional reason to travel in Greece, 32.9% of respondents judge that Odyssey has contributed from 3 to 7 in their choice to visit Greece (Figure 14).

Figure 14

On a scale of 0-10, to what extent Odyssey has contributed to your choice to visit Greece? (10 is the maximum)

82 απαντήσεις

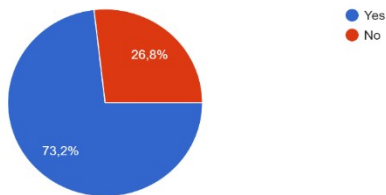


Despite this lack of significance, 73.2% suggested that Odyssey promotes knowledge about ancient Greece over the world (Figure 15).

Figure 15

Do you think Odyssey promotes knowledge about ancient Greece over the world?

82 απαντήσεις

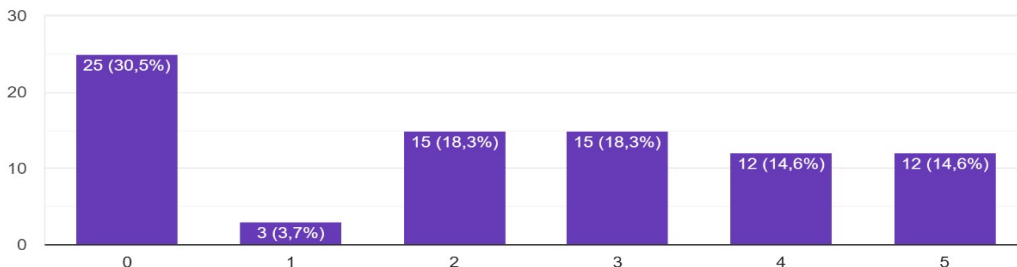


At the same time, tourists associate ancient Greece to modern Greece. Measured in a scale from 1 to 5, a quite high, accumulated percentage of tourists associated ancient to modern Greece that is 47.5% in total from 3 to 5 at the relevant scale. 30.5% had replied the lowest score at the scale, meaning that it is not associated but the percentage at the middle of the scale (for scores 2 and 3) is higher, at 36,6% (Figure 16).

Figure 16

On a 0-5 scale, to what extent do you associate ancient Greece with modern Greece?

82 απαντήσεις



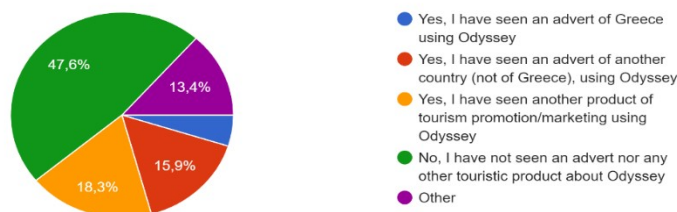
Almost half of the tourists, 47.6%, have not seen any advert or other tourist product about Odyssey in their country. On the contrary, only 4.9% have seen an advert of Greece using

Odyssey. 15.9% have seen an advert of another country (not of Greece) using Odyssey. 18.3% have seen another product of tourism promotion using Odyssey (Figure 17).

Figure 17

Have you seen any advertisement of Greece related to Odyssey in your country of origin or any other product using Odyssey for tourism promotion and marketing purposes?

82 απαντήσεις

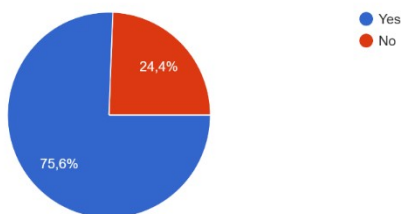


More than three-fourths of tourists (75.6%) were willing to pay to watch events from Odyssey’s rhapsodies (with translation in their language) and only 24.4% responded that they would not (Figure 18).

Figure 18

Would you be willing to pay to watch theatrical events from Odyssey rhapsodies in Greece (with translation in your language)?

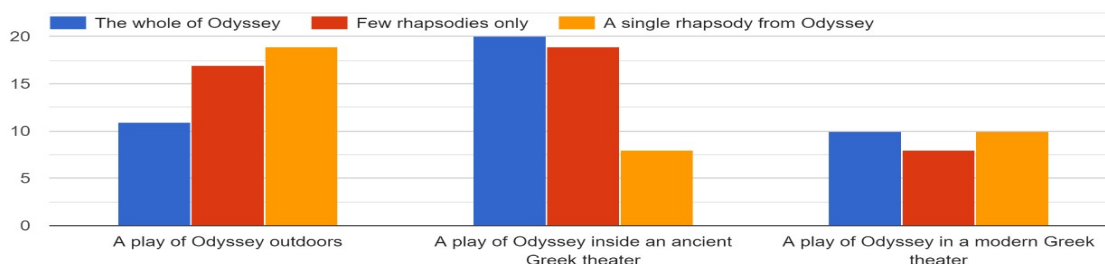
82 απαντήσεις



Tourists would prefer either watching Odyssey outdoors (47 out of 88) or in ancient theatres (again 47 out of 99) rather than in modern Greek theatres (28). Most of those wishing to watch Odyssey outdoors would prefer to watch a single rhapsody or few rhapsodies, while the majority among those wishing to watch Odyssey in ancient theatres would prefer to watch the whole of Odyssey or few rhapsodies (Figure 19).

Figure 19

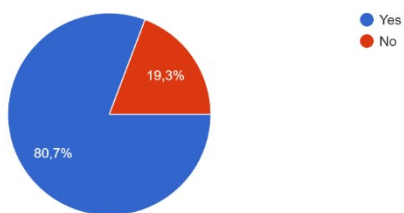
Which type of theatrical performance of Odyssey would you be interested to watch in Greece?



A very large proportion, more than four-fifths (80.7%) were willing to watch Odyssey in their countries (Figure 20).

Figure 20

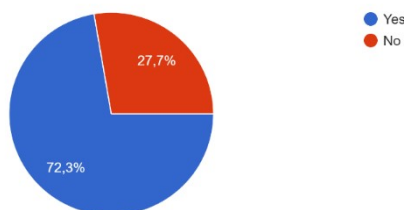
Would you be willing to watch rhapsodies from Odyssey in outdoor events at your country?
83 απαντήσεις



72.3% of respondents replied that Odyssey can be used in their country to promote Greece as their destination and only 27.7% suggested the opposite (Figure 21).

Figure 21

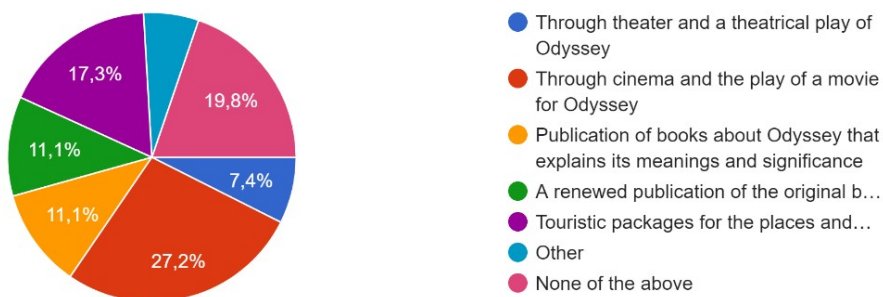
Can Odyssey be used in your country to promote Greece as a tourist destination?
83 απαντήσεις



Concerning the ways to promote Greece as a tourist destination through Odyssey, 27.2% opted for cinema, 17.3% for tourist packages for the places and history of Greece that contain information about Odyssey and only 7.4% through theatre and a theatrical play of Odyssey. The publication of a book about Odyssey, explaining its meaning and significance and the renewed publication of Odyssey was answered by 11.1% in both cases. A 19.8% replied that none of the above can be used to promote Greece as a tourist destination while 6.2% replied “other” (Figure 22).

Figure 22

Which ways do you think can be used to promote Greece as a tourist destination through Odyssey?
81 απαντήσεις



6. Conclusions

The analysis of findings has shown that, while three-fourths of culturally aware tourists knew about *Odyssey*, 55.3% have read it and 61.2% were taught *Odyssey* at the secondary or tertiary education, almost 59.5% have not watched it as a theatrical play nor as a movie, and it had little impact on their choice to visit Greece. While tourists consider that *Odyssey* promotes knowledge about ancient Greece, at the same time they generally associate ancient to modern Greece.

A great part, 49.6%, have not seen any advert about *Odyssey* promoting Greece as a tourist destination, and it is only a 4.9% that have seen such an advert. 72.3% believe *Odyssey* can be used in their country to promote Greece as a tourist destination but they also prefer as a mean to promote cinema and less theatre. These findings highlight that there is a room for using *Odyssey* in tourism marketing promotion and campaigns of Greece.

What is more, more than 80% will be willing to watch *Odyssey* played outdoors in the streets of Athens and 75.6% would be willing to pay for this. Similarly significant is the interest to watch *Odyssey* in ancient theatres but it rather concerns the whole of *Odyssey* or a great part of it. These results all together witness a significant entrepreneurial opportunity for theatrical businesses to organise such plays. Other entrepreneurial opportunities exist for tourist businesses since 17.3% of tourists would be interested to be offered tourist packages for the places and history of Greece that contain information about *Odyssey*, as well as for publishing businesses, since 22.2% would be interesting for new publications of *Odyssey* or about *Odyssey*.

Overall, it appears that *Odyssey* is a rather neglected chapter in the promotion of Greek tourism abroad and could be better integrated in policies for the promotion of cultural tourism in Greece. Setting-up and organising from scratch theatrical performances of *Odyssey* in Athens either outdoors or preferably at its ancient theatres could benefit cultural tourism and the city's local development. Apart from the involvement of local and regional authorities, there is also a room for exploring entrepreneurial opportunities with respect to *Odyssey*, such as in theatre, cinema or other forms of arts.

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