

THE FORMATION OF THE PHYSIOGNOMY OF THE CITY OF VOLOS. THE OPINION OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

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Abstract

The present paper refers to the physiognomy of the city and is a study carried out by the Department of Economics and Sustainable Development of Harokopio University. The aim is to investigate the factors that contribute to the formation of this physiognomy and the opinion of residents and visitors on the issues in question. As a case study, the city of Volos is chosen. In order to answer the main questions of the work and to investigate the main factors that shape the physiognomy of the city of Volos a survey was carried out aimed at the residents of and visitors to the city. For the needs of the research, a questionnaire was created which included ten (10) closed-type structured response questions and two (2) open type questions, was anonymous and distributed to 155 people. The research was carried out in the months of October and November 2023. The questionnaire was addressed exclusively to adults, aged 18 to 65 years old. The paper concludes with interesting conclusions and proposals. An important conclusion is that in order to protect the special physiognomy of the city of Volos, strategies related to the more general protection of all issues related to its sustainable development should be implemented. It is proposed that both the local government, as well as the businesses of all service and production branches, work towards the protection and highlighting of the special character of the city of Volos.

Key words: *Physiognomy of the city, sustainable development, the city of Volos*

Introduction

In this paper, the physiognomy of the city of Volos will be studied and analyzed. Firstly, we are going to see what is defined as the physiognomy of a city. The word physiognomy means the set of characteristic features of a person or thing. However, the term mainly refers to humans, so by examining the physiognomy of a city, we are looking for its identity and character through an anthropomorphic approach. In this way, we form a particular opinion about this area. Therefore, as the etymology of the word defines, physiognomy is the opinion about the nature of the city. The Physiognomy of a city therefore has to do with the cultural characteristics such as poetry, art, morals, customs, natural characteristics such as the green of the city, the blue surfaces, the morphemes that all our senses offer about the city (smell, touch, taste, sound, etc.) and the ideological and mythological dimensions of the city such as historicity, accessibility, etc. Thus, through the physiognomy, the reason and the myth of the city are revealed, which concerns the rational element and is related to the degree of originality, the associations that the city evokes, with the strong images, the degree of banality, etc. (Stefanou, 2000) The current Greek city must maintain its physiognomy and resist the leveling phenomenon of globalization. A powerful capacitor of the physiognomy of a city can be its name itself, the very high degree of sociability that develops in the Greek city due to

various characteristics such as the climate or the geographical and geophysical characteristics. Another characteristic that constitutes the physiognomy of a city is the daily small pleasures for which they are famous, for example, Volos is known for its tsipouro restaurants, so the taste and smell landscape play a particularly important role in maintaining the city's special identity. This element that several Greek cities have and is decisive for the recognition of their physiognomy is the nostalgia that they provoke, reminding to the people the originality of the past years. (Stefanou, Mitoula, 2003)The physiognomy of a city must be protected, as it is directly linked to its sustainable development. This protection will ensure the appropriate conditions for the survival of the city. The city should manage its natural resources wisely and take care of the preservation and protection of the geophysical and cultural character of the urban environment. (Stefanou, Mitoula, 2003)The case examined in this paper is the city of Volos. The choice of this city was made because of its special character. It is one of the largest medium-sized urban centers in the country), located approximately in the center of Greece with easy and quick access to the two major metropolitan centers of Athens and Thessaloniki. A coastal city that beautifully encloses the Pagasetic Gulf and is inextricably linked to Mount Pelion which surrounds it. This paper aims, through research, study and critical reflection, to highlight the special characteristics of this particular city, which also constitute its physiognomy. By examining the natural characteristics as well as those that are the result of human intervention in the surrounding area, its civilization and culture through relevant bibliography, sources and the conduct of a survey with questionnaires, an attempt is made to approach and capture the physiognomy of the city of Volos.

Methodology

The methodology of the work for Part A was the bibliographical research that covered both the theoretical framework for the physiognomy and sustainable development of the city, as well as the material specifically for the city of Volos and the recording. The library of Harokopio University and the Municipal Library of Volos were the main sources of searching for the bibliography. Also, official websites of the Internet, such as that of the Municipality of Volos, played an important role in collecting the material used to record the work.

The methodology of the work for Part B was the conduct of a survey. A questionnaire was created, which included ten (10) closed-ended questions with a structured response and two (2) open-ended questions, was anonymous and distributed to 155 people. The survey was carried out in October and November 2023. The questionnaire was addressed exclusively to adults. The results of the responses were recorded, analyzed and compared with the bibliographic research of Part A.

Part A: Description of the city

1. Geographical Identification of the city

The city of Volos is the capital of the Regional Unit of Magnesia of the Region of Thessaly. It occupies an area of 387.14 km. <https://www.pedthessalias.gr/meli-tis-ped/nomos-magnisias/dimos-volou/> and the municipal unit has a population of 85,803 inhabitants, according to the 2021 census. https://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/17286366/APOF_APOT_MON_DHM_KOIN.pdf/41ae8e6c-5860-b58e-84f7-b64f9bc53ec4 It is 325 km from the capital Athens and 215 km from the co-capital Thessaloniki. (Ministry of Tourism, 2004) It borders the Regional Unit of Larissa and the Regional Unit of Fthiotida. It is connected to the main road axis of the country (PATHE) at two points, at the Velestino junction and at the Mikrotheve junction. The

residential area is surrounded to the northeast by the mountaino Pelion, to the south by the Pagasetic Gulf and to the west by the Thessalian plain. (Volos Development Company, 2014)

Map 1: Geological Map of Volos



Source: <https://www.taxydromos.gr/magnesia/volos/217592/olokliromenos-geologikos-chartis-gia-to-volo/>

2. Geophysical determination of the city

Volos is a city belonging to Greece, which has a temperate-typical Mediterranean climate with mild and rainy winters and hot and dry summers and of course with sunshine most days of the year. The individual climatic type of Volos is characterized as intense mid-Mediterranean with a prolonged dry season. (Operational Program 2020-2023 Municipality of Volos). The relief of the area is characterized by 55% plain, 12% semi-mountainous and 33% mountainous. (Volos Development Company, 2014)

Volos has two hills. First, the low hill of Goritsa two hundred meters high in the east, which is densely vegetated. Its vegetation, following reforestation carried out in the 1940s and 1950s, mainly consists of Aleppo and rough pine (*Pinus halepensis and brutia*) and scattered cypresses (*Cupressus sempervirens*) (document from the Volos Forestry Office). The hill is today an oasis in the urban landscape of the city, which residents use for exploration, recreation or sports, overlooking the Pagasetic Gulf. http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/gh351.jsp?obj_id=2674 The second hill is that of Episkopi, located in the center of Ano Volos and is a conical rocky hill, without much vegetation. https://www.kastra.eu/castlegr.php?kastro=episkopivol#google_vignette

Regarding urban green spaces and parks, which enhance the sustainability of cities as they offer a better quality of life to city residents through the promotion of the natural environment, social benefit and cultural development (Tsopouridou, 2009), the city of Volos has a negative balance in the parks that exist in neighbourhoods and a positive balance in the squares and playgrounds. (Marou, 2023)

Table 1: The largest parks and squares in the city

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| • San Constantine Park | • Freedom Square |
| • Anavros Park | • Evangelistria Square |
| • Asylum Park | • Youth Square |

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| • Karagats Park | • University Square |
| • Municipal Cultural Park or Grove of N. Ionia | • Nea Demetriada Square |
| • Chiliadou Park | |
| • OTE Park of N. Ionia | |
| • Pedio tou Areos Park | |
| • Cyprus Park | |
| • Saints Anargyroi Park | |
| • Coastal Sculpture Park | |
| • Rigas Feraios Park | |
| • Kallithea Park | |

Source: https://www.citybranding.gr/2013/03/blog-post_21.html

In general, the city, especially in its center, presents a compact form of construction, with medium density, but with a noticeable lack of public spaces. (Marou, 2023)

Blue surfaces

As mentioned above, Volos is washed by the Pagasetic Gulf, which is a closed, shallow sea at the mouth of which it meets the Volos port. Its area is 175 sq. km and has a maximum depth of 102 m. <https://www.hellenicaworld.com/Greece/Geo/gr/PagazitikosKolpos.html>. There are two rivers in the city, the Krausidon River and the Anavros River. The Krausidon River, which is the largest with a length of 12 km, is a green and oxygen lung for the heavily urbanized city of Volos. Unfortunately, the morphology of the river and the continuous discharge of sewage into the river, degrade its quality. Its sources start from the southern mount of Pelion, and its mouth is in the Pagasetic Gulf, after the river first passes through the residential zone of the city. Also, the Krausidonas River was until 2010 the natural boundary between Volos and Nea Ionia (the second largest municipality of the Magnesia Prefecture). <https://ir.lib.uth.gr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11615/45127/10535.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> The Anavros River, almost parallel to the Krausidonas River, is the natural boundary to the east, from which the Nea Demetriada region of Volos begins. It also flows into the Pagasetic Gulf and is a breath of oxygen for the area. https://el.unionpedia.org/c/%CE%92%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%82/vs/%CE%9D%CE%AD%CE%B1_%CE%94%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%B7%CF%84%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%AC%CE%B4%CE%B1_%CE%92%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%85 It is a well-known river because, according to Greek mythology, Jason, returning from Pelion, where he was trained by the Centaur Chiron, helped an old woman cross the river in Iolkos by carrying her on his back. This woman was the goddess Hera in disguise. In this attempt, Jason lost his sandal, which is why he is called “*Monosandal.*” <https://sites.google.com/site/hellasmythology/heroes/jason>

Urban Flora

In the context of protection from climate change, cities must increase their flora, as many trees play the role of purifiers of the city's air, increase biodiversity, reduce noise pollution, improve the health of citizens, etc. The urban flora of the city of Volos consists mainly of orange trees, plane trees, pine trees, cypress trees, almond trees, sour orange trees and lemon trees. (Group of Teachers of the 1st Educational Region of Magnesia, 1959) However, having

an almost identical relationship with Mount Pelion, Volos is also famous for other fruit trees that produce products of high taste and quality that have received a "protected designation of origin", such as the apples of the village Zagora of Pelion and the lemon peaches of Pelion. (Ministry of Tourism, 2004)

Urban fauna

The urban fauna of the city consists mostly of dogs, cats, seagulls, sparrows, ducks. In the Pagasetic Gulf we find sparrows, cod, bream, medlars, breams, perch. (Stergiou, 1991). It also hosts a multitude of small schooling fish such as anchovies, sardines, bream, horse mackerel, and anglerfish. <https://www.kathimerini.gr/k/gastronomos/1019546/ti-psaria-trone-oi-voliotes/>

3. *The history of the city*

The name of the city

There are several opinions regarding the origin of the name Volos. Firstly, the city of Volos is built near ancient Iolkos, which is located in the area of present-day Ano Volos, and for this reason it is believed that the word Volos came from a corruption of the ancient name Iolkos. (Iolkos > Giolkos > Golos > Volos). Secondly, the word Volos is attributed to the Slavic deity "Volos" or "Veles" which is associated with the Greek goddess Demeter, as the city was previously called Demetriada. Thirdly, there is a possibility that it was a corruption of the Italian word golfo, which means gulf, and that the city was named so because of the Pagasetic Gulf. (Group of Teachers of the 1st Educational Region of Magnesia, 1959)

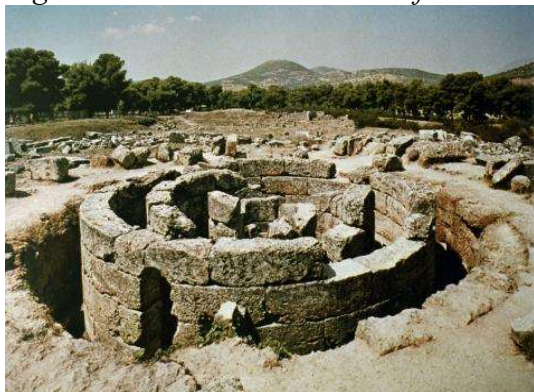
Mythology

According to the mythology of the area in Pelion, it is called the mountain of the Centaurs, as the Centaurs had their residence there. The most famous and wisest centaur was Chiron, who had students Achilles, Asclepius and Jason. The usurper Pelias, Jason's uncle, asked him to travel to Colchis and bring back the Golden Fleece, with the promise of giving him back the throne. Jason therefore becomes a shipbuilder and builds the Argo, using special woods of Pelion, as advised by the goddess Athena. In the Argonaut expedition, Jason was accompanied by fifty people, as many as the ship's oars. Among them are Hercules, the Dioscuries, Orpheus, Peleus, Laertes, but also a woman, the huntress Atalanta. <https://www.volovres.gr/%CE%B2%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%82-%CE%B9%CF%83%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE-%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%B4%CF%81%CE%BF%CE%BC%CE%AE/>

Neolithic and Mycenaean era

The Neolithic settlements of Sesklo and Dimini (8,000-7,000 BC) are considered among the largest and most important in the Balkans. Archaeological excavations have identified over 40 Neolithic settlements, many of which continued to exist during the Bronze Age (3,000-1,500 BC). Finds of Mycenaean sites have been identified in the current district of Palea Volos, on the hill of Saints Theodoroi and in Pefkasia. (Thessalian Research Society, General Secretariat of the Olympic Games, Ministry of Culture, 2004)

Figure 1: Neolithic Settlement of Dimini



Source:

<https://loveteaching.com/2017/02/%CE%BD%CE%B5%CE%BF%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%B8%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%BF%CE%AF-%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B9%CF%83%CE%BC%CE%BF%CE%AF-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%BF-%CF%83%CE%AD%CF%83%CE%BA%CE%BB%CE%BF-%CF%83%CF%84%CE%BF-%CE%B4/>

The Ottoman Empire in Volos

In 1423, the Castle of Palea succumbed to the Ottoman yoke, resulting in the transfer of all economic and intellectual activity of the region to Pelion, which was favored by the Turks. When the revolution of 1821 began, the villages of Pelion revolted, while the castle of Volos was besieged without result. In 1881, Volos and Magnesia in general were annexed to the modern Greek state. (Thessalian Research Society, General Secretariat of the Olympic Games, Ministry of Culture, 2004)

The industrial years

After the liberation from the Turks, the population of the city of Volos increased and commercial prosperity took place. The large railway and port projects contributed to the industrial development of the region, with the main ones being the tobacco, metal and food industries. At the same time, the place experienced cultural and social prosperity.

<https://www.volovres.gr/%CE%B2%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%82-%CE%B9%CF%83%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE-%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%B4%CF%81%CE%BF%CE%BC%CE%AE/>

Asia Minor disaster

In 1922, with the Asia Minor catastrophe, many refugees from Asia Minor arrived in Volos and settled in the Xirokampos area and created the settlement of Nea Ionia Volos. These people carried with them their intense culture and spread it to the city of Volos. They spread the music of rebetiko, their customs and traditions, but what they brought and changed forever the life of the city in terms of entertainment, economy, and culture was the concept of consuming the alcoholic drink called “tsipouro” accompanied by relevant food. (Ministry of Tourism, 2004)

World War II & later years

The city of Volos did not manage to emerge unscathed from both World War II and the subsequent civil war. The disastrous earthquakes of 1955-1957, which destroyed a large part of the city and were the reason for the reconstruction of the urban center, completed the bad situation. <https://www.ha.uth.gr/index.php?page=oral-archive-009>

All this situation resulted in a reduction in the number of industries from 67 pre-war to 54, while the workforce also decreased dramatically as industries such as the tobacco industry of Matsaggou and the Papageorgiou textile factory closed.

The city recovered in the following years and experienced significant industrial and cultural development. Specifically, in 1966, the Industrial Area of the city of Volos was established, which is the second oldest industrial area in the country. <https://avepevolou.gr/> Also, important buildings such as the Municipal Theater, the Municipal Conservatory, the Municipal Library were completed, while the reconstruction of apartment buildings will begin after 1980.

<https://www.volovres.gr/%CE%B2%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%BF%CF%82%CE%B9%CF%83%CF%84%CE%BF%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CE%B1%CE%BD%CE%B1%CE%B4%CF%81%CE%BF%CE%BC%CE%AE/>

4. The culture of the city of Volos

Volos is a city that has always had a strong element of culture.

The most important cultural institutions in the area are:

- The Museum of the City of Volos, which is the first modern City Museum in Greece, which began operating in December 2014. It is housed in the building of the former Papatou tobacco warehouse, which was built in 1920 and in its courtyard houses part of the wall of the castle of Palea. The museum tells the history of the city. <https://vmoc.gr/index.php/Id>
- The Athanasakio Archaeological Museum of Volos, which was built in 1909 with the sponsorship of Alexios Athanasakis. It is one of the most important Greek museums, which hosts exhibits of the region from the Neolithic, Classical and Alexandrian periods. <https://dimosvolos.gr/el/mouseia>
- The N. & S. Tsalapatas Brick and Tile Museum, of the Piraeus Bank Cultural Foundation, which is located in the old Nikolaos & Spyridonos Tsalapatas Brick and Tile Factory, in Volos, and the purpose of the Museum was to present the entire production process of bricks and tiles. <https://www.piop.gr/el/diktuo-mouseiwn/Mouseio-Plinthokeramopoieias-Tsalapata/to-mouseio.aspx>

Figure 2: Tsalapatas Brick and Tile Museum



Source:

https://el.wikipedia.org/wiki/%CE%9C%CE%BF%CF%85%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%BF%CE%A0%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BD%CE%B8%CE%BF%CE%BA%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%B1%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%AF%CE%B1%CF%82#/media/%CE%91%CF%81%CF%87%CE%B5%CE%AF%CE%BF:%CE%A0%CE%BB%CE%B9%CE%BD%CE%B8%CE%BF%CE%BA%CE%B5%CF%81%CE%B1%CE%BC%CE%BF%CF%80%CE%BF%CE%B9%CE%AF%CE%B1%CE%A4%CF%83%CE%B1%CE%BB%CE%B1%CF%80%CE%AC%CF%84%CE%B1_3743.jpg

The city also has a Municipal Theater and a Municipal Conservatory.

The most important monuments in the area are:

- The National Independence Monument, which is located on the city's coastal road. It is a sculpture that represents Winged Victory with a metal sword, inspired by the Statue of Liberty in New York and the Victory of Samothrace. It is also called the monument to the Fallen. It is the most central meeting point of the city. <https://dimosvolos.gr/el/paralia-bolou>

Figure 3: The National Independence Monument on the beach of Volos



Source: <https://www.kathimerini.gr/k/travel/792312/ta-diamantakia-toy-voloy/>

- The representation of the ship "Argo" in miniature, which is located at the entrance to the city's port, one of the first sights that tourists come into contact with. Its creator is Nikolas Pavlopoulos. <https://dimosvolos.gr/el/paralia-bolou>
- The statue of Rigas Feraios, which is located in the homonymous Rigas Feraios square, and shows the hero sitting on his chest, accompanied by the map of Greece named "Charta" and his tambourine. Its creator is Makris Memos. <https://dimosvolos.gr/el/plateia-riga-feraiou>

Figure 4: The statue of Rigas Feraios in the square of the same name



Source: <https://dimosvolos.gr/el/plateia-riga-feraiou>

The characteristic dishes of the region are:

- The dishes accompanying the drink tsipouro with anise, which consist mainly of seafood and fish. Both Volos and Nea Ionia are well-known areas for the numerous tsipouro restaurants visited by locals and tourists. <https://dimosvolos.gr/el/tsipouradika>
- Spetzofai is the quintessential Pelion food. It is made with Pelion sausage, peppers from Volos and homemade tomatoes. It has a special sweetness and characteristic aroma. It is

found in all the villages of Pelion. <https://www.pelionculture.gr/gr/Pelion-gastronomy-seven-must-eat-foods/>

Figure 5: Traditional spetzofai



Source: <https://www.andro.gr/geusi/eleni-psyxouli-speztofai/>

- Boumbari, which is essentially a sausage filled with rice and sweets and cooked in the oven with potatoes. It can be enjoyed in the villages Drakeia and Saint George in Pelion. (Ministry of Tourism, 2004) <https://www.pelionculture.gr/gr/Pelion-gastronomy-seven-must-eat-foods/>
The characteristic events of the region are:

- The Music Village-Saint Lawrence is one of the most important and largest European music communities. It was founded in 2006 and every August it is organized by the company arTREE with the help of the Ministry of Culture, the Holy Metropolis of Demetrias, etc., a festival in the village of Saint Lawrence in Pelion, where artists from all over the world meet to attend educational seminars, exchange material, present various projects, etc. <https://www.music-village.gr/the-music-village/>

The event "Volos enchants us", is the Christmas illumination of the city and related events, has become a trademark of the city over the last ten years, and there are many who choose to spend their Christmas holidays in the city of Volos because of these events. Its main points are the characteristic blue lighting of the city center, the Christmas Village and the Ice Rink in Rigas Feraios Square, the Christmas Theme Park for children as well as a multitude of entertainment events for young and old. <https://www.ovolosmagevei.gr/>

The most important sports clubs in the area are:

- The Athletic Club of Olympiacos Volos is located in Nea Dimitriada. It was founded in 1937 with the red and white colors to characterize it. The name comes from Olympiacos Piraeus as the local teams of the neighborhoods of Saint Constantine of Volos admired the team, where the club originated. It supports football, basketball, volleyball, weightlifting, swimming, wrestling and judo departments. The men's football team OLYMPIACOS of VOLOS, the most popular team of the club, is based at the EAK stadium. The team has previously won a place in the First National League. <https://www.asolympiakosvolou1937.gr/%ce%b9%cf%83%cf%84%ce%bf%cf%81%ce%af%ce%b1/>

- The Volos Gymnastics Club "Niki" is located in Nea Ionia of Volos. It was founded in 1924 with the blue and white colors characterizing it. The Asia Minor refugees who arrived in the Nea Ionia area of Volos brought with them their intense athletic character. Thus, they immediately organized themselves and created Niki the Refugee. Niki was granted a plot of land as its headquarters, which is today called Pantelis Magoulas in Nea Ionia, which is the team's stadium. Today, it includes men's football, men's and women's basketball, women's volleyball, track and field, rhythmic gymnastics, cycling, water polo and swimming. <https://nikivolousc.gr/%ce%b9%cf%83%cf%84%ce%bf%cf%81%ce%b9%ce%b1/>

Figure 6: Badge of the Victory of Volos



Source: <https://nikifc.gr/>

At this point it should be mentioned that Volos and Nea Ionia were Olympic cities of Greece for the 2004 Games. On the occasion of the football tournament, the imposing Panthessalian stadium was built in 2004, with a capacity of 22,700 seats. Today it is also used as the base of the Niki Volos football team. (Thessalian Research Society, General Secretariat of the Olympic Games, Ministry of Culture, 2004)

5. The architectural heritage of the city of Volos

From 1881 onwards, the major infrastructure projects of the railway and the port were entrusted to experienced foreign technicians, who transferred European know-how to the region. Modern Greek architecture and the trends of neoclassicism, historicism and eclecticism characterize the new city of Volos. The houses were usually two-storey, stone-built with tiled roofs with large courtyards, flower beds, fountains and pergolas.

At the same time, the Municipal Theatre and the Archaeological Museum were built and at the same time the construction of industrial buildings experienced a huge boom. The first industrial buildings were ground-floor/two-storey/three-storey warehouses built of stone and with pitched roofs. When the manufacturing industries began to be established, they had great differences in their morphology and layout, as the design of each building was shaped according to its needs.

Eclecticism continues to characterize the buildings and during the interwar period with the most important work being the "Achilleion" cinema. The construction of public buildings at that time such as the Courthouse and the Bank of Greece follow the abstract neoclassicism. With the influx of Asia Minor refugees in 1922, workers' housing began to be integrated into the urban fabric for the first time and the so-called cement houses were built in the area of Nea Ionia, consisting of ground-floor, tiled-roofed duplex houses, and later stone houses were also constructed, with better quality with two rooms and a private bathroom.

Figure 7: Achilleion Cinema



Source: <https://www.taxydromos.gr/events/688817/itan-to-kinimatheatro-achilleion/>

Figure 8: The Bank of Greece building



Source: <https://www.thenewspaper.gr/2022/05/25/volos-kleinei-to-katastima-tis-trapezas-tis-ellados/>

When studying the architecture of Volos, we have to mention the church of Saint Nicholas, the temple of the Metropolis of Volos, which is located on the commercial street of Ermou, was inaugurated in 1932 and is covered with carved brickwork with elaborate parapets, columns, stone reliefs, etc. The bell tower of Saint Nicholas was designed by Evaristo de Chirico and is a work of art.

Figure 9: The church of Saint Nicholas and the bell tower



Source: <https://proseuxi.gr/iera-mitropoli-dimitriados-almirou/>

After the earthquakes of the period 55-57, the city began to be rebuilt and the construction of apartment buildings appeared, initially to house the earthquake victims. (Thessalian Research Society, General Secretariat of the Olympic Games, Ministry of Culture, 2004)

In relation to the industrial buildings, the city of Volos took advantage of the heritage they left it and proceeded to restore many of these buildings and change their use. We mention, for example:

- ✓ The Spirer tobacco warehouse, the construction of which was completed in 1926, which today houses in the restored building, the Municipal Center for History and Documentation of the Municipality of Volos, the Central Library of the Municipality of Volos and the Directorate of Technical Services of the Municipality.
- ✓ The warehouses of Matsaggos, which were built in 1967 in Phytoko of Nea Ionia and today belong to the University of Thessaly where the School of Agriculture is housed.
- ✓ The Electric Power Building built in 1911, which is today called the Old Electric and operates as a theater.
- ✓ The Papastratos tobacco warehouse, also from 1926. The building was purchased by the University of Thessaly, its Rectorate was moved there, and this building also houses the pedagogical schools. It has an imposing appearance and is one of the most characteristic buildings of the city.

- ✓ The Tsalapatas brick and tile factory, also from 1926, which belongs to the Municipality of Volos today and operates as a modern cultural center with a museum, showrooms, exhibition spaces, recreation areas, etc.
- ✓ The Loulis flour mill from 1914, today belongs to the technical company G.E.K. and operates as a multi-purpose recreation center with cinemas, entertainment centers, underground parking, etc. (Adamakis K., 2009)

Figure 10: The Papastratos Tobacco Warehouse building on the coastal road of Volos



Source: <https://istigmes.com/odi-sta-viomichanika-ktiria-tou-volou/>

6. Personalities of the city

- **Rigas Feraios or Veletinlis**

Born in 1757 in Velestino of Magnesia, Rigas Feraios or Rigas Veletinlis, is the most characteristic personality of the city of Volos. He came from a wealthy family, which is why he went as a student to Pelion, specifically to Zagora of Pelion, where the best school in the area operated, in order to study. He also served as a teacher for a year in the Pelion village of Kissos. After 1774, i.e. the signing of the Treaty of Koutsuk-Kainartzis, he settled in Constantinople where he received more knowledge alongside the Phanariotes. Rigas Feraios was the political mind of the Greek Revolution against the Turkish yoke, but he also studied the next steps in the organization of the now free Greek state. With his most important work, anthem *Thurios*, as well as his map named “*Charta*” and Constitution, he showed the Greek people the way and the path to the Revolution, which is why he is described as an internationalist. The square where the City Hall and the Municipal Theater in Volos are located is called Rigas Feraios Square. Also a characteristic street in the city center, has been named after him. <http://www.library-zagora.gr/feraios/>

- **The painter Giorgio de Chirico**

Born in Volos in 1888. His father came from Florence and his mother from Genoa. They came in the city of Volos as his engineer father supervised the construction of the Thessalian railway. A graduate of the School of Fine Arts, he gained worldwide fame for Metaphysical Painting and for the surrealism movement that characterizes his works. His work is considered important in the history of modern art. <https://www.ertnews.gr/arxeio-afierwmata/tzortzio-nte-kiriko-10-ioylioy-1888-2/> In the city center there is a three-story building named in his honor, the Giorgio De Chirico Art Center, which hosts various exhibitions of cultural interest. <https://dimosvolos.gr/el/mouseia>

- Composer Vangelis Papathanasiou

Composer Vangelis Papathanasiou was born in Agridia of Volos, in 1943, and from an early age showed his calling in composition. His work is enormous as a musician and composer of electronic, jazz and orchestral music. He was awarded an Oscar for the music of the film "The Roads of Fire". We specifically mention that the music of his work "Mythodia" accompanied the NASA space mission "2001: A Mars Odyssey". He passed away in 2022. In his honor, the recently renovated Volos Municipal Theater was dedicated to him, which also took his name. <https://www.kathimerini.gr/culture/music/561867892/vaggelis-papathanasiou-o-monos-ellinas-poy-i-moysiki-toy-akoystike-sto-diastrima/>
<https://elculture.gr/vangelis-papathanasiou-efyge-apo-ti-zoi-o-megalos-mousikosynthetis-se-ilikia-79-eton/>

7. *The characteristic features of the city of Volos*

- ✓ The church of Saint Constantine and the park on the coast; road of Volos

In 1936, the church of Saint Constantine was built on the coastal road of Volos by the architect Aristotle Zachos. The elaborate church together with the park of the same name, which was transformed into a recreational park in the 1920s according to the designs of the architect N. Kitsikis, constitute a point of reference for the city due to their key location along the city's beach. <https://dimosvolos.gr/el/aksiotheata> In addition to green spaces, the park also hosts several monuments such as the bust of the famous writer Alexandros Papadiamantis and the full-length statue of Eleftherios Venizelos. <https://dimosvolos.gr/el/parko-agiou-konstantinou>

Figure 11: The church of Saint Constantine from a panoramic view



Source: <https://www.volosinfo.gr/churches/>

Figure 12: The church of Saint Constantine from the front



Source: <https://magnesianews.gr/volos/panigyrizei-o-naos-agiou-konstantinou-ston-volo-2.html>

- ✓ The traditional villages of Pelion with their unique architecture and cobblestone streets
As mentioned above, Volos is inextricably linked to Pelion, a fact that makes the villages of Makrinitza, Portaria, Milies, Vizitsa, Pinakata, Tsagarada, Saint Lawrence, Zagora, etc. characterize the city of Volos. These villages have common characteristics, the special architecture as both the mansions and the churches are built with Pelion stone or slab with large wooden front doors made of Pelion wood, they have skylights inside and marble stairs. The villages also have beautiful cobblestone streets, preserving the traditional character. Also, many of them have imposing squares, surrounding centuries-old plane trees. <https://www.aroundpelion.com/el/architecture>

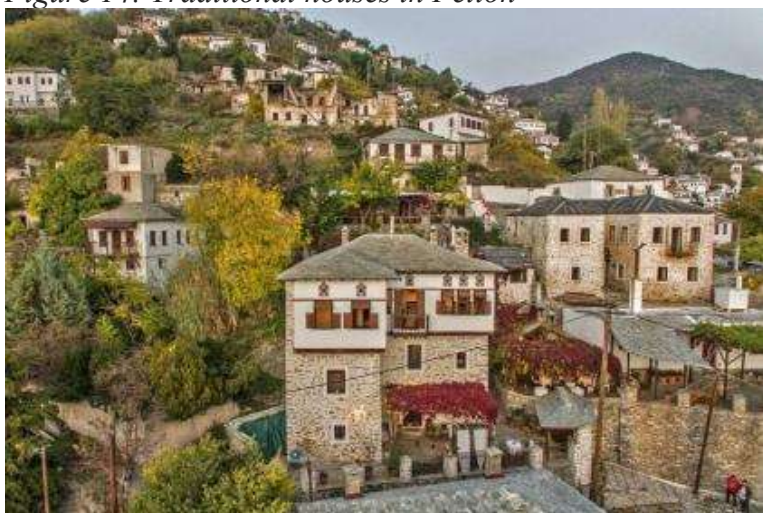
Figure 13: The square of the village of Makrinitza, Pelion



Source:

<https://www.visitpilio.gr/pilio/%CF%86%CF%89%CF%84%CE%BF%CE%B3%CF%81%CE%B1%CF%86%CE%AF%CE%B5%CF%82-%CE%B1%CF%80%CF%8C-%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BC%CE%B1%CE%BA%CF%81%CE%B9%CE%BD%CE%AF%CF%84%CF%83%CE%B1/>

Figure 14: Traditional houses in Pelion



Source: <https://www.iliaoikonomia.gr/christougenna-sto-pilio-fotografies/>

8. *Surrounding city space*

As we head towards the city of Volos either by road or by sea, what we see in the distance is the imposing Mount Pelion, which undoubtedly constitutes the surrounding area of the city. Its western slopes overlook the Thessalian plain and the Pagasetic Gulf while the eastern slopes drop steeply towards the North Aegean. Pelion has abundant water and is covered with rich vegetation consisting of beech forests, chestnut forests and Macedonian firs. We also encounter the cultivation of fruit trees such as apple, cherry, orange trees and lower olive trees. Also, grasses such as tsitsiravla, kritamo etc. are often found in various areas of the mountain, mainly in coastal areas. Regarding the fauna, Pelion is also home to several species of birds of prey such as the golden eagle and the white-tailed eagle. During the night, one can encounter mammals such as fox, badger, ferret, weasel, bats and wild boar. Pelion has been included in the Natura 2000 Network of the European Union. At the highest peak, in Chania Pelion, there is a ski resort which is a winter tourist attraction. Finally, the mountain of the Centaurs has a multitude of paths that connect the villages to each other, some of which the residents had paved with stone and created the so-called cobblestones. Today, many people explore the particularly beautiful paths. (Ministry of Tourism, 2004)

9. *Institutional framework for the protection of the city of Volos*

In accordance with the principles of sustainable development, Volos set as the main axis of its planning the "spatial and residential organization of the area and especially its coastal front, as well as the protection of the environment" (<http://epoleodonia.volos.gr>). At the beginning of the 20th century, the city's urban plan was submitted, which set such building conditions as well as avoiding intervention in critical zones in order to ensure satisfactory living conditions in the city center. Of utmost importance was the intervention in the road and railway network of the area. It was decided to strengthen the operation and importance of the city's port. In addition, the city had to comply with the concept of Integrated Coastal Zone Management, as defined in Chapter 17 of Rio Agenda 21 (1992). Specifically, for the protection of coastal areas, it participated in a European LIFE program entitled "Awareness, cooperation and conditions for the sustainable development of coastal areas of Magnesia. (Xanthou D., 2019) Also, the reduction of pollution sources (atmospheric pollution, marine pollution) was one of the main objectives of the region. In addition, since the region has a large ecological and cultural reserve, efforts were made to protect and preserve it. (Aichoros, 2023) Indicatively, we mention that many buildings in the city of Volos have been declared listed, especially old industrial buildings which were restored and their use changed, such as the Yellow Warehouse, the Tsalapatas brick and tile factory, etc. Also, we would like to mention that the villages of Makrinitza and Vyzitsa in Pelion have been declared protected, while numerous villages in Pelion have been declared Landscapes of Outstanding Natural Beauty, such as Portaria, Tsagarada, Milies, Saint Vlassis, etc. <http://www.elladosperiigisis.gr/index.php/2006/198-taxidia-stin-alli-ellada-h-200/451-449-perioxes-elladas> It is worth mentioning that a number of areas near the city of Volos have been included in the NATURA 2000 network, for the protection of nature and biodiversity. Indicatively, we mention the areas with GR1430002 Kouri Almyrou-Saint Seraphim and GR1430001 Mount Pelion and Coastal Marine Zone-Malaki and Skeponi Caves. http://www.fdkarlas.gr/Main_Info.aspx Finally, the main goal was to distribute responsibilities differently at local, regional and national levels, in order to make the governance of the Volos region more effective. In this context, the city of Volos and the wider region are trying to both preserve its environmental and cultural identity and to shield itself against the global climate crisis, making it a sustainable city. (Aichoros, 2023)

- The economy of the city of Volos

Primary sector

The fact that the western side of Volos faces the fertile Thessaly plain has contributed to the development of the primary sector through the cultivation of mainly wheat, corn, cotton and almonds <https://tee-kdth.gr/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/markatou.pdf> On the eastern side, in the areas of Agria, Lechonia, etc., we have significant production of olives, vegetable and fruit trees. (Marou Th., 2023). Pelion also holds a prominent position in the production and export of apples and pears, peaches, chestnuts, tsitsiravla greens, etc. and oil is produced from the olive groves. (Ministry of Tourism, 2004) Regarding livestock farming, in the Thessalian plain of the region there are pastures mainly with sheep, goats and cattle, while in Pelion sheep called the Pelion breed, cows and goats are raised. https://www.minagric.gr/images/stories/docs/agrotis/Aigoprobata/Files_Aigoprobato/fili_pili_ou.pdf. And finally, fishing and the processing of fishing products play an important role in the economy of the region. The fish market in combination with the fish market in the area of Palea, channel fresh products to the market of the region. (Marou Th., 2023)

Secondary sector

The Secondary Production Sector, until the time of the 2014 crisis, was an important element in the economy of the region. Having two industrial areas around the urban fabric, with factories related to metal processing, beverage and food factories, the wood industry, etc., the secondary sector offered jobs to a large number of the residents, strengthening the productive activity of the region. There are also factories producing oils, olive oil, flour and milk. (Marou Th., 2023) Here we should mention that outside the city of Volos, on the eastern side of Agria, there is the AGET-Iraklis cement factory, a factory which provided jobs to residents in the past, but due to the burning of garbage it carries out, it greatly burdens the city's air pollution. <https://www.thessaliaeconomy.gr/blog/viomixania/o-volos-kai-i-tsiminiera-tis-aget-lafarge> In recent years, many of these factories have ceased operation, which has led to the degradation of the industrial zone and led a large part of the population to unemployment. It is auspicious that investments are starting to be made again in the area. (Marou Th., 2023)

Tertiary sector

The most important branch of the tertiary sector in the region is tourism. A city with a port that connects it with the Northern Sporades islands of Skiathos, Skopelos and Alonissos, it is logical to attract visitors, especially in the summer. Also, the passage of tourists from Volos throughout the year to visit Pelion increases the number of visitors to the city. According to data from the Volos Municipality Business Plan (Phase I, 2015-2019), there are a number of tourist accommodations, restaurants and other services. Finally, the city has a number of wholesale and retail trade services, transport, health, design and consulting support.

10. Projects funded by the European Union in the city of Volos

“Expansion of the Network of Pedestrians and Light Traffic Roads in the Central Urban Area”, which was included in the P.E.P. of Thessaly 2014-2020 and is one of the largest EU-funded projects. It concerns the expansion of the pedestrian network in the central urban area of the city of Volos and the transformation of the city's central streets from traffic roads to light traffic roads. It also concerned interventions such as increasing the width of sidewalks and reducing the width of roads, installing signage and lighting, planting and creating blind lane zones and ramps to facilitate accessibility for people with disabilities. The project aimed to benefit the natural and urban environment, improve the quality of life of citizens and

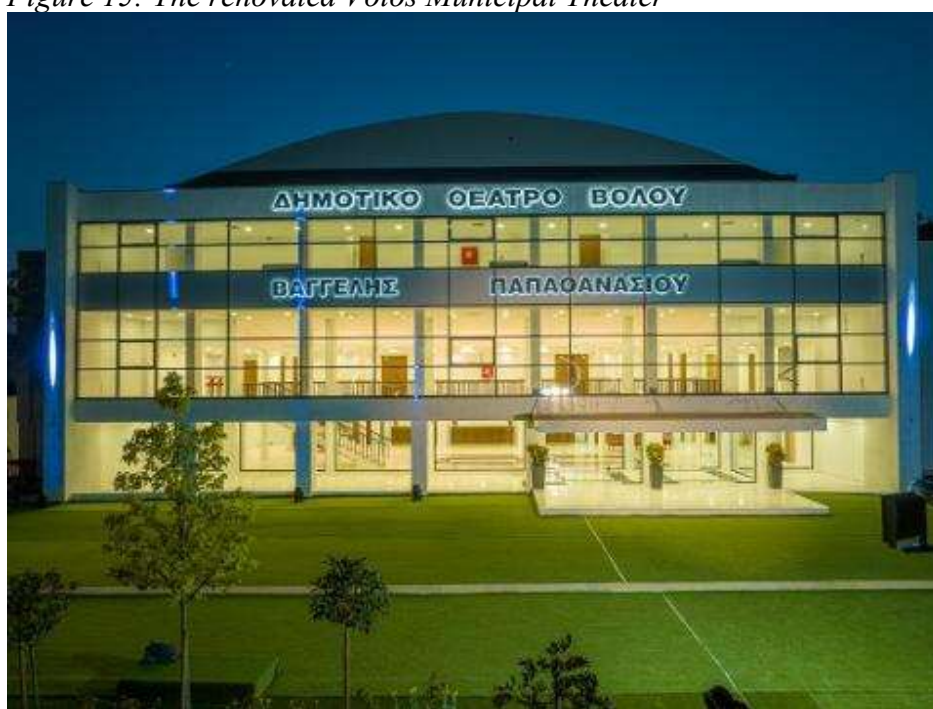
facilitate accessibility and mobility of citizens in the area. The project budget was €1,085,000.00.

<https://dimosvolos.gr/sites/default/files/%CE%A0%CE%95%CE%96%CE%9F%CE%94%CE%A1%CE%9F%CE%9C%CE%9F%CE%99.pdf>

“Repair - Reinforcement of the load-bearing structure and renovation of the Municipal Theater”, which was included in the P.E.P. of Thessaly 2014-2020 with a budget of €5,000,000.00. It is one of the largest projects in recent years in the city of Volos and concerns the renovation of the Municipal Theater, which is located in Riga Feraios Square and aims to upgrade the urban and cultural environment, enhance sustainable development and preserve the historical and cultural heritage.

<https://dimosvolos.gr/sites/default/files/%CE%98%CE%95%CE%91%CE%A4%CE%A1%CE%9F1.pdf>

Figure 15: The renovated Volos Municipal Theater



Source:

<https://i0.wp.com/ethessalia.gr/wpcontent/uploads/2023/06/theater00015.jpg?fit=553%2C414&ssl=1>

Some important social projects were also carried out, such as the “Social Grocery Store and Social Pharmacy of the Municipality of Volos” and the project concerning the “Continuation of the operation of a Shelter for Women Victims of Violence in the Municipality of Volos”

https://dimosvolos.gr/sites/default/files/%CE%9A%CE%9F%CE%99%CE%9D%CE%A9%CE%9D%CE%99%CE%9A%CE%9F-%CE%A6%CE%91%CE%A1%CE%9C%CE%91%CE%9A%CE%95%CE%99%CE%9F_%CE%A0%CE%91%CE%9D%CE%A4%CE%9F%CE%A0%CE%A9%CE%9B%CE%95%CE%99%CE%9F1.pdf

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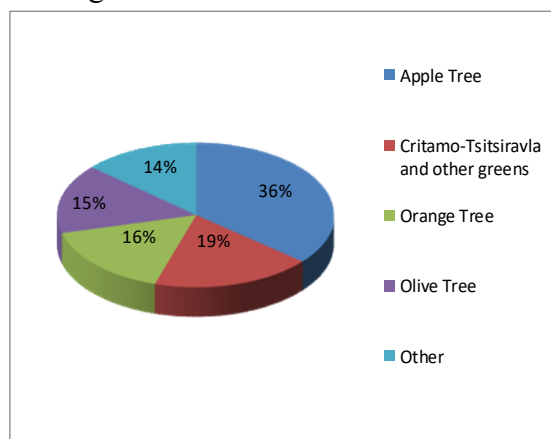
PART B: Survey on a sample of one hundred and fifty-five (155) individuals. Analysis using the method of descriptive statistics

Question 1: What is the characteristic plant of the region?

Table 2

| Options | Number of Answers |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Apple tree | 56 |
| Kritamo-Tsitsiravla e.t.c. greens | 29 |
| Sour Orange tree | 25 |
| Olive tree | 24 |
| Other | 21 |

Figure 16



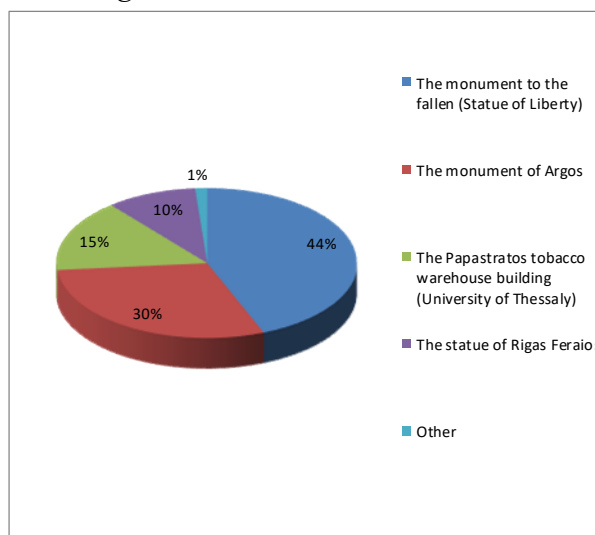
As mentioned above, although the apple tree is not a plant that one encounters in the city of Volos, the respondents nevertheless chose it as the most characteristic plant of the region with a percentage of 36% due to the famous apples of the village Zagora of Pelion. This is followed by the greens of Pelion such as tsitsiravla greens, with a percentage of 19%. In third place we see the sour orange tree with a percentage of 16%, which is a purely plant of urban Volos, as we encounter sour orange trees in many streets and alleys of the city both in the center and in the neighbourhoods. Finally, the olive tree follows with a percentage of 14% due to the olive groves that are mainly located in villages close to the city.

Question 2: What is the most characteristic monument of the city?

Table 3

| Options | Number of Answers |
|---|-------------------|
| The Monument to the Fallen (Statue of Liberty) | 68 |
| The monument of Argos | 46 |
| The Papastratos tobacco warehouse building (University of Thessaly) | 24 |
| The statue of Rigas Feraios | 15 |
| Other | 2 |

Figure 17



It is expected that in this question 44% of respondents consider the most characteristic monument of the city, the Monument of Independence, the Statue of Liberty located on the beach of Volos. The Argos Monument follows with a percentage of 30%, which is surprising since it is a small monument. The third choice is the Papastratos tobacco warehouse building with a percentage of 15%. The Statue of Liberty with the Papastratos tobacco warehouse building located directly opposite, it could also have the role of a condenser of physiognomy

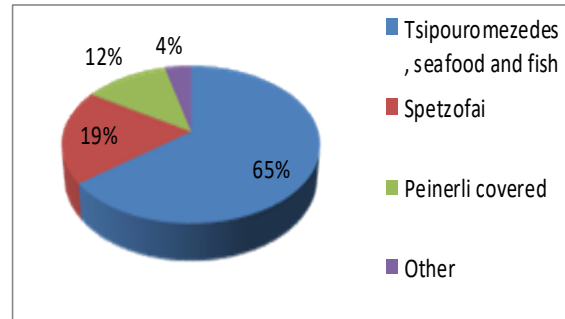
for the city. Finally, with a percentage of 10% the statue of Rigas Feraios has the last place as this statue, although imposing, is located at some distance from the city center.

Question 3: What is the typical food of the region?

Table 4

| Options | Number of Answers |
|--|-------------------|
| Tsipouro appetizers, seafood and fish dishes | 100 |
| Spetzofai | 30 |
| Covered Peinerli | 19 |
| Other | 6 |

Figure 18



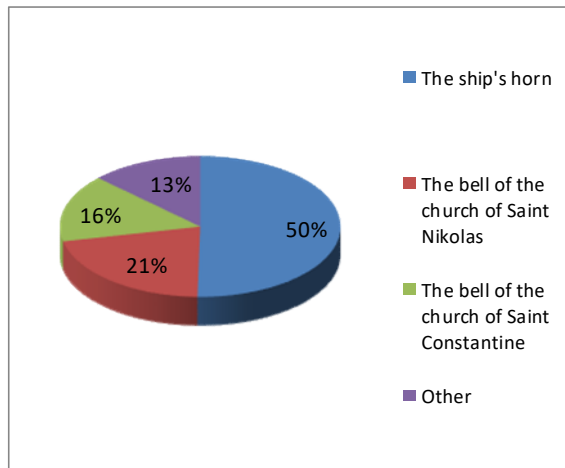
The overwhelming majority voted the food accompanying tsipouro drink, with a percentage of 65%. It is logical that as Volos is famous for its tsipouro restaurants, they are preferred by both locals, who have incorporated them into their lifestyle, and visitors to the city. Spetzofai follows with a percentage of 19%, which is special, more traditional and many visitors visit Pelion to try it. In third place comes the covered peinerli with a percentage of 12%. It is a delicacy of the city that consists of a special dough filled with cheese, cold cuts and tomato sauce. In general, it is preferred by the city's young people, so the respondents, mainly in the 18-30 age group, have chosen it as the most typical.

Question 4: What is the characteristic sound of the city?

Table 5

| Options | Number of Answers |
|---|-------------------|
| The ship's horn | 78 |
| The bell of the church of Saint Nicholas | 33 |
| The bell of the church of Saint Constantine | 24 |
| Other | 20 |

Figure 19



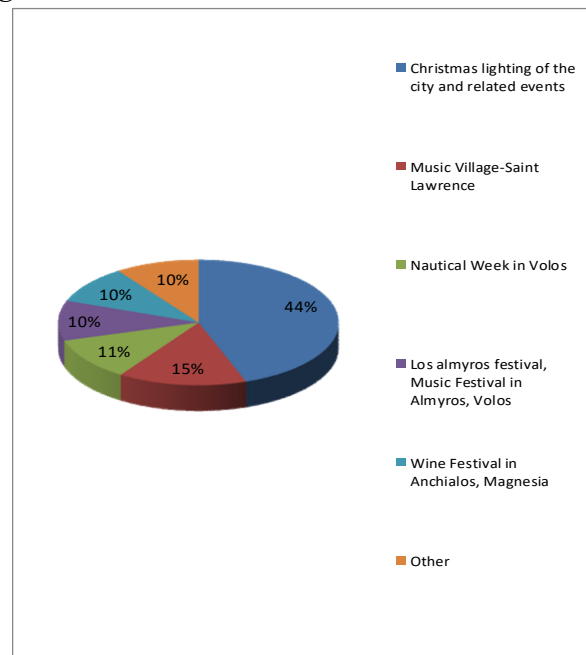
Volos is a city with a port and a developed coastal front, so 50% of respondents consider the most characteristic sound of the city to be the horn of ships when they approach the port, as it is the sound they hear on their coastal walk. This is followed by the bell of Saint Nicholas with a percentage of 21%, which is in the center of the city's commercial center, and the bell of Saint Constantine with a percentage of 16%, which we would expect to be higher since this church is a capacitor of the city's physiognomy.

Question 5: What is the most characteristic event of the region?

Table 6

| Options | Number of Answers |
|--|-------------------|
| Christmas lighting of the city and related events | 69 |
| Music Village-Saint Lawrence | 23 |
| Nautical Week in Volos | 17 |
| Los almyros festival, Music Festival in Almyros, Volos | 16 |
| Wine Festival in Anchialos, Magnesia | 15 |
| Other | 15 |

Figure 20



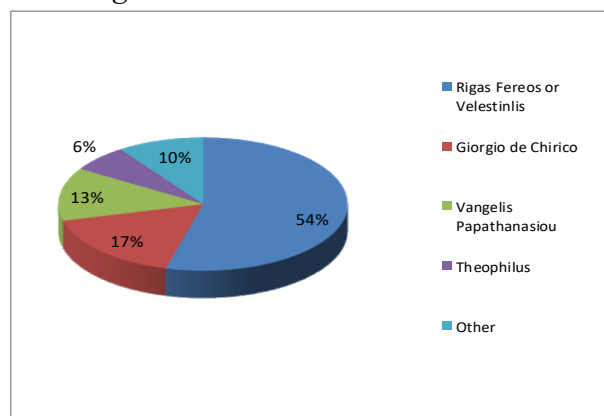
The majority of respondents, with a percentage of 44%, consider the Christmas lighting and related events to be the most characteristic event of the city. In the last decade, the Municipality of Volos has given particular importance to extroversion and attracting tourism in the context of sustainable development, the imprint of which is clearly visible in the answers. The Musical Village-Saint Lawrence follows, with a percentage of 15%, which is expected if we take into account that it is an event of European and global fame. The third place is occupied by the Volos Nautical Week with a percentage of 11%, which is not expected as it is an event that is not particularly popular among the people of Volos, although in recent years various bodies have participated in the organization (such as the Municipality of Volos, the Region of Thessaly, the Holy Metropolis of Demetrias, etc.) and it has gained ground in people's preferences. In fourth place are the Los Almyros Music Festival and the wine festival in Anchialos, Magnesia, with a percentage of 10%. One would expect the wine festival to be considered a more characteristic event as it is particularly well-known among all ages. The Los Almyros Festival, a festival supported mainly by teenagers and young people, initially had a local character but gained fame and won visitors from all over Greece.

Question 6: Who is the most characteristic personality of the city of Volos?

Table 7

| Options | Number of Answers |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Rigas Feraios or Veletinlis | 84 |
| Giorgio de Chirico | 26 |
| Vangelis Papathanasiou | 20 |
| Theophilus | 10 |
| Other | 15 |

Figure 21



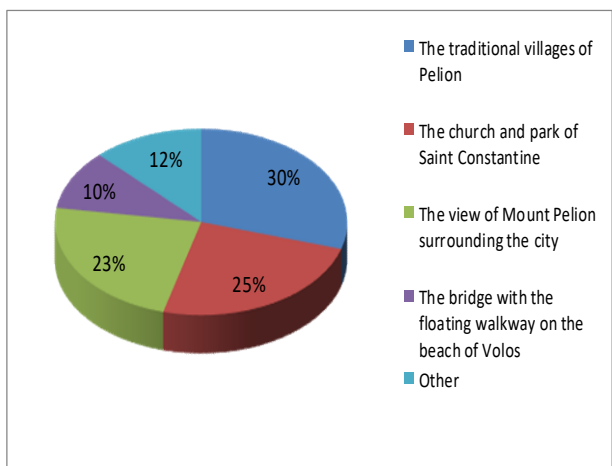
Rigas Feraios/Velestinlis is with a percentage of 54% the most characteristic personality of the city and it is logical because he was a historical and revolutionary figure with a pan-Hellenic reach. The painter Giorgio de Chirico follows with a percentage of 17%, Vangelis Papathanasiou with a percentage of 13% and with a much smaller percentage of 6%, the painter Theofilos.

Question 7: What is the most characteristic physiognomy capacitor, i.e. an element inextricably linked to the sense we have of the city of Volos and the wider region?

Table 8

| Options | Number of Answers |
|--|-------------------|
| The traditional villages of Pelion | 46 |
| The church and park of Saint Constantine | 36 |
| The view of Mount Pelion surrounding the city | 38 |
| The bridge with the floating walkway on the beach of Volos | 16 |
| Other | 19 |

Figure 22



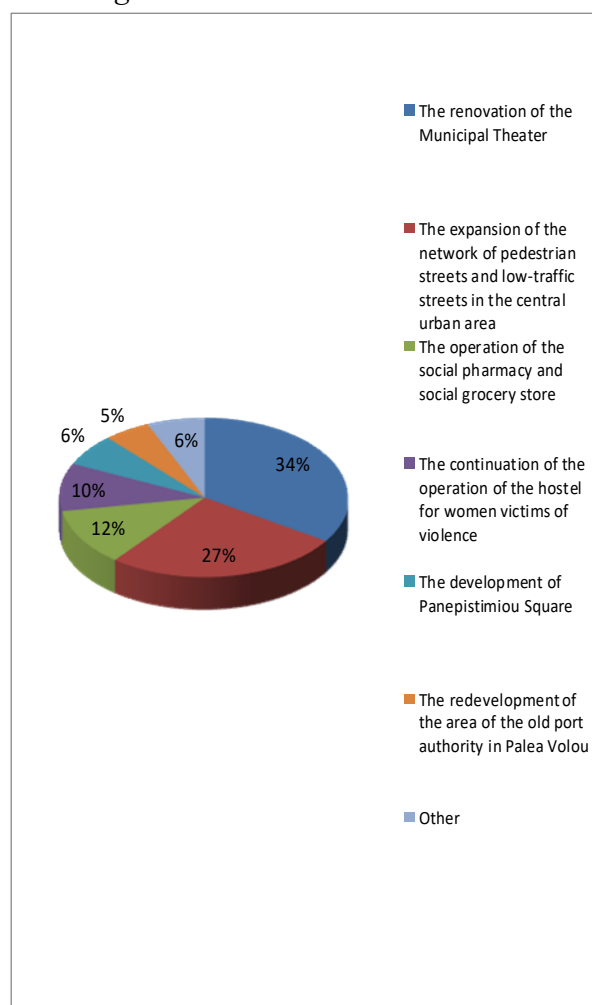
The traditional villages of Pelion with their unique architecture and cobblestone streets are the most characteristic feature of the landscape, as 30% of respondents gave this answer. Pelion again wins in second place, as 25% of respondents answered the view of Mount Pelion surrounds the city. From almost all points in the city of Volos, one can see the mountain. The church and park of Saint Constantine on the beach of Volos follow with a percentage of 23%, which is expected since walking on the beach is an almost daily habit of the locals. Finally, the bridge with the long breakwater, on the city's beach received 10% of the answers. It is striking that the largest percentages were given to answers that had to do with Pelion and not purely with Volos, which testifies to how the respondents consider Pelion an integral part of Volos.

Question 8: Which of the recent projects in the city of Volos funded by the European Union is considered to be the most important?

Table 9

| Options | Number of Answers |
|--|-------------------|
| The renovation of the Municipal Theater | 41 |
| The expansion of the network of pedestrian streets and low-traffic streets in the central urban area | 53 |
| The operation of the social pharmacy and social grocery store | 18 |
| The continuation of the operation of the hostel for women victims of violence | 15 |
| The development of Panepistimiou Square | 10 |
| The redevelopment of the area of the old port authority in Palea Volou | 8 |
| Other | 10 |

Figure 23



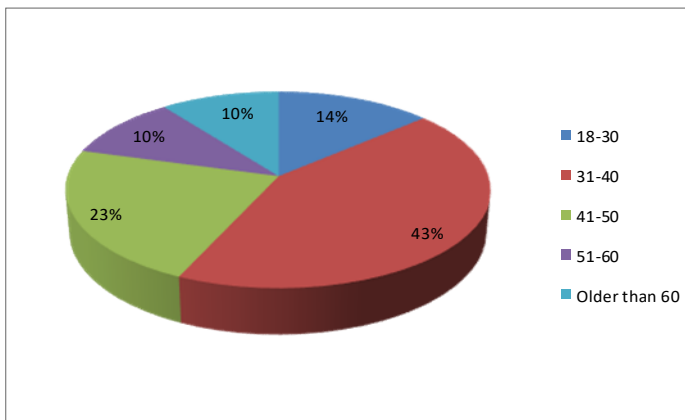
In this question, the sample considers the most important project with a percentage of 34% to be the expansion of the network of pedestrian streets and low-traffic streets in the central urban fabric, a very important project related to the sustainable development of the city and with a large budget. In second place, with a percentage of 27% comes the renovation of the Municipal Theater, which shows the importance that respondents give to the promotion of culture and the infrastructure needed for its promotion. This project also had the largest budget of the city's latest projects funded by the European Union. Next are projects related to social structures, with the operation of the social pharmacy and the social grocery store having a percentage of 12% and the continuation of the operation of a hostel for women victims of violence with a percentage of 10%. In the last positions are two regeneration projects, the one for the development of Panepistimiou Square with a percentage of 6% and the one for the regeneration of the area of the old port authority in Old Volos with a percentage of 5%, which creates concern as the city needs such regeneration areas in its center, in order to maintain its sustainability.

Question 9: What age group do you belong to?

Table 10

| Options | Number of Answers |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 18-30 | 21 |
| 31-40 | 67 |
| 41-50 | 35 |
| 51-60 | 16 |
| Older than 60 | 16 |

Figure 24



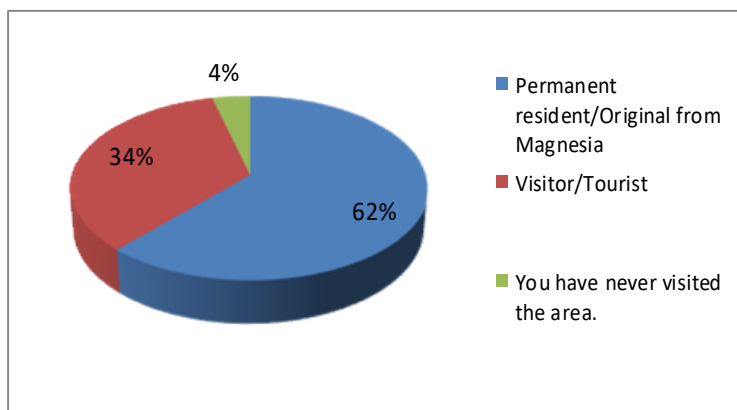
The 31-40 age group gave 43% of the answers, the 41-50 age group gave 23% of the answers, the 18-30 age group gave 14% of the answers, the 51-60 age group gave 10% of the answers as well as the 60 age group. Most respondents are middle-aged, but the sample also includes people of younger and older ages.

Question 10: Which category do you belong to?

Table 1

| Options | Number of Answers |
|---|-------------------|
| Permanent resident/Original from Magnesia | 95 |
| Visitor/Tourist | 53 |
| You have never visited the area. | 6 |

Figure 25

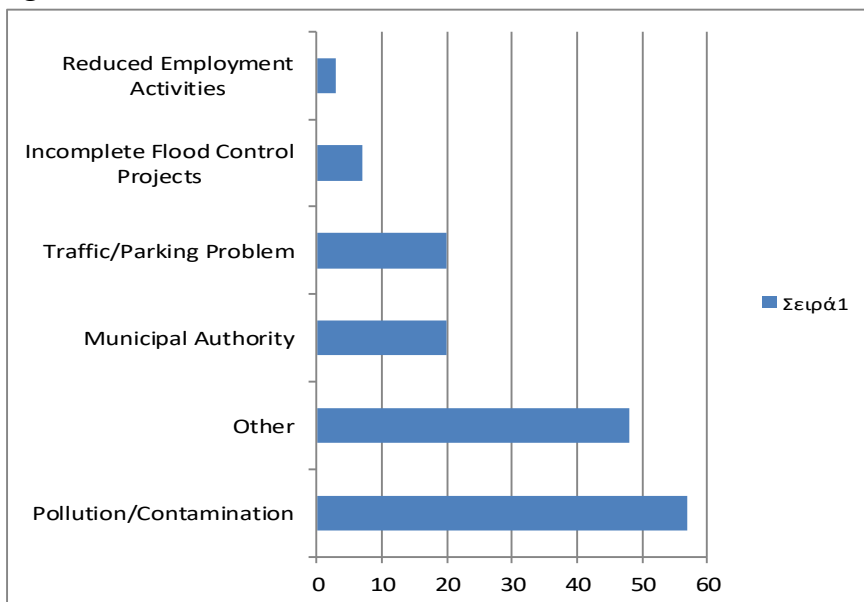


62% of the sample consists of permanent residents or people originating from the Regional Unit of Magnesia. 34% have visited the city for tourism while 4% have never visited the area. The overwhelming majority of locals gives us a relative certainty that the respondents chose among a series of answers that they knew. And the fact that a significant percentage consists of tourists is very important as visitors understand better the physiognomy of the city.

Question 11 (open-ended question): What is the most negative characteristic of the city?

An attempt was made to group the answers, as the question is open-ended. The chart shows the number of answers and not the percentage. The overwhelming negative priority is given to air pollution, which is mainly due to the city's two large factories, the AGET and the Steelworks, the pollution of the city's port and the smog that is created during the winter months. The current municipal authority of the city of Volos and the traffic problem/lack of parking spaces follow in a tie. Incomplete flood control projects follow, surprisingly, with a small percentage, if we also consider the recent floods that hit the Thessaly region in September 2023. Finally, some answers had to do with the lack of employment opportunities.

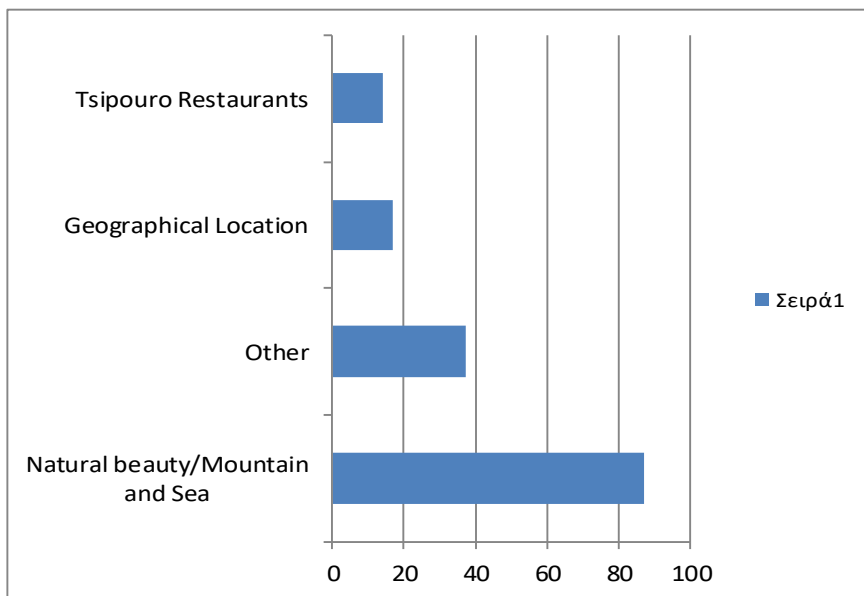
Figure 26



Question 12 (open-ended question): What is the most positive feature of the city?

An attempt was made to group the answers as the question is open-ended. The chart shows the number of answers and not the percentage. The overwhelmingly positive first place goes to the natural landscape of the area and Pelion which provides the combination of mountain and sea. The geographical location of the area follows and immediately after the tsipouro restaurants of the city.

Figure 27



Conclusions

So what is the physiognomy of the city of Volos?

It is a city with a strong character due initially to its geographical location and geophysical situation. The accessibility, the direct contact with the sea and rivers, the existence of the

liquid element in many degrees at the foot of Pelion, the altitudinal constants, the mild temperatures it has, the biorhythms determined by all these climatic conditions, the plants, the animals, etc., determine its physiognomy and maintain a stable image of the city over time. (Stefanou I., Mitoula R., 2003). Initially, the city offers quality of life. The city also has a very high degree of sociability and extroversion, a walk on the city's coastal road can take you on a journey. Pedestrianized coastal front, with monuments of unparalleled beauty and special architecture such as the statue of the fallen, the former Papastratos tobacco warehouse, the church of Saint Constantine, the monument of Argos, the modern art sculpture park, etc. throughout its entire area and with many tsipouro restaurants and cafes which are visited by locals and tourists for enjoyable moments. The city has also strongly developed the element of culture as evidenced by the infrastructures that support it. The Municipal Theater, the Municipal Conservatory, the Museums, sports infrastructures, etc. Also, the special architecture and mainly industrial heritage which it has exploited contributes to the shaping of the city's physiognomy. (Stefanou I., Mitoula R., 2003). The city's physiognomy capacitors could be many: the church of Saint Constantine, the church of Saint Nicholas, the traditional villages of Pelion, the Pagasetic Gulf with the monument to the fallen in the background and the former Papastratos tobacco warehouse. We could say that the city is "endowed", as it has all those elements that contribute to the development of the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy. It is a city that tries to maintain its physiognomy through funded projects that are implemented and aim at the sustainability of the city.

Regarding the results of the research as analyzed in the previous section, a fairly large percentage were expected and in line with the bibliographic research that was carried out. It would be appropriate to make a more extensive reference to the negative characteristics of the city and to mention that the city should protect the atmosphere and the health of its residents as due to the location of the city, due to humidity and wind direction in combination with the existence of heavy industry in the area (e.g. the two large factories the cement factory of AGET-Iraklis and the steel factory of Halyvourgia), the air pollutants of the city are in high levels. (Operational Program Municipality of Volos, 2020-2023)

Factories should operate but within an absolutely strict institutional framework in order not to endanger the health of citizens. Also, in the city of Volos that has many potentials, the sectors of the economy should be developed in such a way that the city is self-sufficient, offering new jobs to its citizens. Finally, the green spaces within the central urban fabric should be increased through funded projects as the city must breathe in all its parts.

By following the aforementioned policies, the city will maintain its physiognomy and will have sustainable development as it will manage its natural resources sensibly and protect its urban and suburban environment. After all, Volos has all the elements that can characterize a sustainable city. Sun, sea and fertile soil!

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