Tourism Product Development: Rediscovering the Ancient Thracian City of Seuthopolis in the context of the natural and cultural assets of the Valley of the Thracian Kings in Central Bulgaria for National Unity ‘Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage’ under the ‘Seuthopolis’ National Initiative

or

Tourism Product Development of Seuthopolis

Thesis

I hereby declare that this thesis is wholly the work of Aneliya Taneva. Any other contributors or sources have either been referenced in the prescribed manner or listed in the acknowledgments together with the nature and scope of their contribution.

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PREFACE

I have been keeping myself informed about everything which is going on around the initiative of National Unity "Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage" ever since I understood about the project about a year and a half ago. It provoked my professional interest not only because it is situated in my home country, but also due to its modern architectural design and cultural significance. Since I was following the development of the initiative, I noticed that nobody was really thinking in depth of the future tourism product which would occur in case the project is realized. This is how my wish to participate and contribute to its development was born. Moreover, the courses at NHTV which were related to product development have always been of special interest to me and I would like to gain experience in this field. In my opinion, involving myself in the Seuthopolis project is a great opportunity to learn more at this subject and put it into practice. Working on an actual project motivated me to the utmost and even though the process was not easy, I put all my will, efforts and responsibility in it. Furthermore, I feel obligation towards my home country and would like to commit my final Bachelor study work to enhancing the tourism product of Bulgaria. I also realize that if Seuthopolis begins operation according to the proposition for tourism product development which I have written, this would be a big first step in building my career as a tourism consultant. Wholeheartedly, I wish and believe that I will witness how Seuthopolis welcomes its guests in the near future.

Aneliya Taneva
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was written for the purpose of completing my bachelor studies of International Tourism Management and Consultancy at NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences. It was powered by the academic knowledge and practical experience which I have gained during the last four years. That is why I would like to express my gratitude to all lecturers who have contributed to them and have inspired me. I owe many thanks to my supervising lecturer Mrs. Lucette Roovers for her guidance and advice.

My work on this project would not have become reality without the acceptance, positive attitude and immense assistance of my commissioner National Unity ‘Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage’. Thank you for trusting me and giving me the great opportunity to directly contribute to the ‘Seuthopolis’ initiative. I would like to express my special thanks to Mr. Andrey Stoychev who provided me with any information I needed and helped me in the difficult process of primary research. During my field research I met Mr. Kosyo Zarev – the principal of Museum ‘Iskra’ in the town of Kazanlak. I would like to express my gratitude for his attention and kind cooperation.

Last but not least, I thank my parents who have always been supporting me during my studies and took care of me throughout the long process of thesis writing.

Thank you.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The tourism industry is the fastest growing one on a global level. Respectively, it is one of the most developing businesses in Bulgaria, contributing not only to the country’s economy, but also to its popularity as a tourism destination internationally. Bulgaria’s tourism has undergone turbulent development and improvement in the recent years of capitalist economy and globalization. However, it remains quite simplistic due to the mostly basic types of tourism taking place in the country. “Despite the excellent conditions in the country for cultural heritage tourism”, no progress has been achieved in this branch (George Prohasky Ph.D., 2005).

The ancient Thracian city of Seuthopolis, which is the major subject of this paper, is situated in the heart of Thracia – one of the recently defined tourist regions by the State Agency for Tourism in Bulgaria. This is namely the Valley of the Thracian Kings. Seuthopolis is the most famous underwater archaeological site in Bulgaria, situated on the bottom of the Koprinka dam. It was found by the Thracian ruler Seuthes III in 323 B.C. and became the capital of the Odrysian Kingdom – the best developed Thracian city. After its discovery and research in 1948-1954, it was sunk by the waters of the artificial lake due to the impudent attitude of that time ruling communist system towards the unique cultural heritage.

Architect Tilev’s modern project to rediscover the unknown secrets of Seuthopolis holds a great potential to reveal vast significant knowledge about Thracia and to create a unique tourism product. It suggests the possibility to uncover, preserve and partially reconstruct the city while making it publicly accessible in situ. “The ancient city is taken back from the water through a circular dam wall, resembling a well on the bottom of which, as on a stage, is presented the historical epic of Seuthopolis”. For the management of the Seuthopolis project is responsible the Bulgarian NGO, National Unity ‘Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage’, who has assigned the author of this work to develop a tourism product which would turn architect Tilev’s project into an internationally famous tourist attraction.

The overall goal of this paper is to: Help National Unity “Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage” in the preservation and development of the Bulgarian cultural, historical and social values, while developing a well-planned and (inter)nationally competitive tourism product for the “Seuthopolis” project. The result is a proposition for the development of the tourism product of Seuthopolis in the context of the natural and cultural assets of the Valle of the Thracian Kings. In order to complete this paper, the following research questions had to be answered throughout the working process:

1. Do Bulgaria and the Valley of the Thracian Kings in particular have potential for cultural tourism development?
2. Which are the desired target markets? What are their needs and preferences?
3. Who would be the main competitors of Seuthopolis?
4. What do the potential clients expect from Seuthopolis?
5. What should be done to make visiting Seuthopolis a memorable experience?
6. What are the unique selling points of the Seuthopolis tourism product?
7. What conclusions and recommendations for further development can be given?
The thorough analysis of the cultural tourism potential of Bulgaria and the Valley of the Thracian Kings indicates a clear superiority of cultural tourism demand to supply of such products in the country. This issue is obvious: starting from the major public institutions exercising power over the development of cultural tourism – the Ministry of Culture and the State Agency for Tourism, seeing the development level of the common and tourist infrastructure in the Valley, and witnessing the need for stronger local participation. The high visitation of Thracian cultural sites by both Bulgarian and foreign residents is a fact despite the missing market approach and special tourism product design. Still, it appears that the increasing demand for cultural tourism products from abroad is gradually “opening the eyes” of tourism businesses, and those which are mainly engaged in large-scale tourism developments, are now redirecting their forces towards this growing tourist segment.

The target market segments, which were taken into consideration when designing the tourism product of Seuthopolis, were chosen as a result of a detailed overview of the characteristics of the tourist flows in Bulgaria. According to the statistics on the socio-demographic profile and travel behavior of foreign tourists of the State Agency for Tourism, the most durable and reliable segments are: couples between the age of 26 and 35; families with young children between the age of 36 and 45; and empty nesters at the age of 56 and above. It also becomes clear that most important foreign cultural tourist markets come from the UK, Spain, Italy and Japan. When the same analysis approach was applied to the domestic tourist flow, it became evident that people between the age of 26 and 46, together with school children share the highest propensity to visit cultural sites. An interesting market segment which is of great importance to Seuthopolis turned out to be those Bulgarians who are residing abroad. A primary research indicates that those Bulgarians living abroad, who are aged above 56, visit cultural sites the most and respondents between the age of 26 to 35 and 36 to 45 are equally interested in combining both types of tourism, but are still more interested in cultural sites in general. Another survey, conducted in relation to people’s expectations from the development of the project demonstrates their positive attitude, personal perceptions and specific wishes. They form one common idea of self improvement through knowledge delivered by means of authenticity, culturality, interactivity, modernity and experienceship.

From the evaluation of Bulgaria’s cultural tourism competition it can be concluded that it is a country which is so culturally rich that if proper investment, marketing and management is implemented, it can outrun even the success of Greece and the potential of Turkey – its two major competitors. Still, these countries, including Bulgaria, can also be good partners due to the borders and Balkan culture they share.

The proposition for tourism product of Seuthopolis demanded a deep insight into the above answers. A central role plays the methodology of the “Imagineering Academy” for experience design. Sharing one common vision, concept and a theme, six attractions comprise a well-thought tourism product. Their names have been formulated in a way appealing to the potential visitors and only suggesting what a certain attraction may be like. Seuthopolis has extremely high potential to revive the tourism in the region. But it surely cannot exist in isolation from the rest of the heritage in the Valley of the Thracian Kings. That is why it is appropriate to form a heritage network in the precinct in which Seuthopolis will
play the role of a central attraction. Important natural and cultural assets of the Valley have been analyzed. In case the tourism product of Seuthopolis will be developed according to this proposition and included in the context of a heritage network within the Valley of the Thracian Kings, it will acquire a few Unique Selling Points (USPs):

- An ancient culture
- In situ exposition
- Authentic experience
- Modern presentation
- Diverse regional tourism attractions

The tourism product proposition was developed in accordance with the thorough literature review, research and analysis conducted in this thesis, which comes to say that if it will be applied, Seuthopolis will quite surely succeed in achieving its goal. But in order to guarantee its success, this proposed tourism product needs to be supported by well-thought management and marketing plans. In order to facilitate the project work, all involved institutions need to improve the coordination within and among each other. The Seuthopolis project should be prioritized and treated as an action from which not only the preservation of cultural heritage will benefit in the future, but also the local population, Bulgaria’s tourism industry and image as a whole. Infrastructure improvement is crucial to the development of the project, as well. The provision of data and analysis of the tourist flow by the State Agency for Tourism should also be enhanced. This heritage site must be treated with great care and attention. Preserving, exposing and delivering it as a tourism product is a complicated process demanding responsibility by a number of parties whose coordination is of vital importance for the future of Seuthopolis.

In the course of completing this thesis, a variety of research techniques have been applied. Such are meetings, consultations, interviews, surveys, observation, literature review on various theoretical topics and academic studies. The commissioner of this assignment – NU ‘Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage’ - contributed to the work by providing necessary information from secondary research prior to my involvement in the project, as well as facilitating the primary research through its public relations. A visit to the Valley of the Thracian Kings made a big and important part of the primary research possible.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION
In this first chapter brief background and explanation of the fundamental reasons and personal motives for the completion of this paper are given. It places the topic of the thesis in its context, states its purpose in a clearly defined goal, followed by the main research questions, answered throughout the paper. The thesis’ structure, methods applied and limitation of research findings in the course of writing are also presented.

1. Background and project rationale

1.1. Bulgaria’s tourism product

It would not be credible to write about a tourism product, concerning the tourism development of a whole region in Bulgaria, without discussing the context, in which this product would be shaped. Therefore, the recent state and progress of the country’s tourism product are taken into consideration in this section.

The tourism industry is the fastest growing one on a global level. Respectively, it is one of the most developing businesses in Bulgaria, contributing not only to the country’s economy, but also to its popularity as a tourist destination internationally. Bulgaria’s tourism has undergone turbulent development and improvement in the recent years of capitalist economy and globalization. However, it remains quite simplistic due to the mostly basic types of tourism taking place in the country. The branch is very much mono-structurally developed (Assoc. Prof. Vania Kuzdova Banabakova, 2007), predominantly famous for sea and mountain recreation among foreigners. Consequently Bulgaria’s tourism suffers greatly from the seasonality of its product and the all-inclusive cheap packages offered.

As the “Annual Report on the Condition and Development of SMEs in Bulgaria, 2004” concludes, “the alternative perspective types of tourism that could offer more opportunities for attracting richer tourists are weakly developed” (George Prohasky Ph.D., 2005). It also admits that the specialized forms of tourism in the country like rural and adventure tourism have improved significantly. But the report also clearly states that despite the “excellent conditions in the country for cultural heritage tourism”, no progress has been achieved in this branch.

Just recently the Bulgarian State Agency for Tourism (SAT) has developed a plan (corresponding to one of the objectives in the National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development) for creating several tourist regions which divide the whole country into territorial clusters. Their aim is to “unify the local and entrepreneurial initiatives within in the boundaries of greater regional destinations in order to overcome the existing problems of localized tourism product development and limited resource for development of the SMEs and local communities and to improve the marketing activity” (Aneliya Krushkova, 29 May, 2008). Thus, Bulgaria can also be presented as an aggregate consisting of eight tourist regions (destinations within the country), each of which is specific, has its own image, unique resources and possibilities for various types of tourism. They will be developed and marketed as separate tourism products which would serve better to various tourist market segments. One of these territorial clusters is namely the Thracian region (Thracia) in Central Bulgaria (appendix 1, figure1). According to the same plan, the main specialized type of tourism which would be best suitable to this
cluster is the cultural – educational one. SPA, balneo- and wellness tourism, wine tourism, rural tourism and festivals are pointed out as additional to the main tourism product for the region. The ancient Thracian city of Seuthopolis, which is the major subject of this paper, is situated in the heart of this tourist cluster. This is namely the Valley of the Thracian Kings. A combined map of the territorial tourism clusters of SAT and the lands of present Bulgaria in ancient times is provided in appendix 1, figure 2. It locates Seuthopolis and the Valley of the Thracian Kings. The following section clarifies the nature and significance of this Thracian cultural heritage.

1.2. Seuthopolis – the city

Seuthopolis is the most famous underwater archaeological site in Bulgaria – it is the only completely studied Thracian city in the country. It is not only unique as an archaeological and historical site, but it is also a “treasure-house” containing vast knowledge about the everyday life of the Thracians. The city of the Thracian king Seuthes III, and the capital of the ancient state of Odryssia, (end of IV c. BC.) was discovered and explored in 1948 - 1954 during the construction of the Koprinka dam near Kazanlak, Central Bulgaria. Seuthopolis was thoroughly studied and photographed before it was sunk by the waters of the Koprinka dam. Seuthopolis was founded by the Thracian ruler Seuthes III in the heart of Kazanlak region in 323 B.C. The city quickly developed into a political, economic and cultural center of the Thracian state. It was the capital of Seuthes’ state until 270 B.C.

The archaeological excavations revealed that the town consisted of a fortified settlement on an area of 5 hectares and several suburbs. It was built over the ruins of an older palace complex and a Thracian settlement. Some of the numerous archaeological monuments were: the palace-temple complex, the temple of Dionysus and the Temple of the great Thracian gods. The incredible scale of the construction of Seuthopolis is testimonial to the economic might of Seuthes’ capital and its political significance for the region. According to the opinion of archaeologists, in the town planning of Seuthopolis stand out principles of the Greek city of the same era, but it had many specifics, which made the town different than the other ones in Thracia. Its vivid economic and cultural relations with the great urban centers in the Greek world and its highly developed indigenous crafts made Seuthopolis the most significant center of Thracia. Many elements of the Greek culture can be noticed, but Seuthopolis retains a number of special features, distinctive for the Thracian culture. Seuthes III was the Thracian ruler who started producing Thracian coinage. During the research of Seuthopolis were discovered 2000 coins of which 800 have the face of Seuthes. The archaeologists also discovered many luxurious Greek ceramic vessels, jewels, fragments of stone statues, amphorae and other precious artifacts.

The above information has been adopted from the website of the "Seuthopolis" National Initiative (http://sevtopolis.suhranibulgarskoto.org/en_obekt.php) by National Unity (NU) ‘Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage’. This is a non-governmental organization, which, in cooperation with “Tilev Architects”, has undertaken the initiative and responsibility to manage the only project, which proposes rediscovery of the city of Seuthopolis. This project is briefly presented in the following section 1.3.
1.3. Seuthopolis – the project

Architect Tilev’s project to rediscover the unknown secrets of Seuthopolis holds a great potential to reveal vast significant knowledge about Thracia and to create a unique tourism product. According to architect Tilev - one of most prominent architects in Bulgaria:

The project for exhibiting Seuthopolis suggests the possibility to uncover, preserve and partially reconstruct the city while making it publicly accessible. Through the project the exceptional historical, educational, cultural and touristic value of Seuthopolis is realized in a unique architectural structure in the natural environment. The ancient city is taken back from the water through a circular dam wall, resembling a well on the bottom of which, as on a stage, is presented the historical epic of Seuthopolis. Approaching the surrounding ring by boat from the shore Seuthopolis is completely hidden for the eye. But the view from the wall is breathtaking – with its scale, comprehensiveness and unique point of view; from the boundary between past and present. The possibility to see the city from the height of 20 meters allows the perception of its entirety – an exceptional possibility for excavations of such a scale. The movement with the panoramic elevators providing access to the ground level further enriches this impression.

(http://sevtopolis.suhranibulgarskoto.org/en_proekt.php)

For a more detailed description of the project and picture material, please refer to appendix 2, presenting the project information booklet of “Tilev Architects”.

As mentioned earlier, for the management of the Seuthopolis project is responsible the Bulgarian NGO, National Unity “Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage”. “Main goals of the organization are the preservation and development of the Bulgarian cultural, historical and social values, and the integration and development of the European values in Bulgaria. The activities of National Unity ‘Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage’ are orientated towards the participation and involvement of young people in campaigns, programs and initiatives at local, national and international level. The organisation partners successfully with many Bulgarian and foreign governmental and non-governmental organizations” (http://www.sevtopolis.info/).

It has launched the “Seuthopolis Initiative” to make this project a national campaign and to popularize it on an international level. Its aim is to “take back the first and best preserved Thracian city in Bulgaria into the treasure house of the global cultural heritage” (http://www.suhranibulgarskoto.org/bg_initiatives.php).
2. Problem analysis and purpose of study

2.1. Problem analysis

After having researched the published information about the city of Seuthes and the national initiative dedicated to it, prior to the beginning work on this paper, I realized that nothing has been done and written on this subject so far. National Unity "Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage" is successfully working on creating public awareness and support. The modern architectural project design is there, together with some ideas for tourist services and facilities, but the tourism product has not been developed yet. That is why I contacted the Unity, responsible for the management of the project, to make sure that my conclusion is correct and to offer them my help in this activity. After exchanging some information, it became clear that National Unity is looking for someone to help them with exactly what I had noticed was missing in the project planning. We both agreed that in order to complete this well-sounding project, the tourism product of Seuthopolis must be very well discussed and designed in advance. When doing so, the region’s potential for tourism development (discussed in chapter Three) must be taken into consideration. As a result of our talks, National Unity ‘Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage’ became my commissioner and assigned me to develop the tourism product of the above-described project under the following title:

Tourism Product Development:
Rediscovering the Ancient Thracian City of Seuthopolis
in the context of the natural and cultural assets of
the Valley of the Thracian Kings in Central Bulgaria
for National Unity ”Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage”
under the ‘Seuthopolis’ National Initiative

Seuthopolis could play the role of a central attraction, which would contribute to the region’s tourism development. The project could bring together the main natural and cultural attractions of the region in order to create cooperation among them, and not compete with them. In this way, the uniqueness of the site and the fact that it will be taken back from the waters of Koprinka dam would not cast a shadow above the rest of the places of interest in the region. Moreover, it would help the region develop economically through tourism by establishing partnerships with various stakeholders. In addition, such a network would draw attention and create public awareness of the region’s significance, which would also boost the communities’ pride. This kind of cooperation may also change the opinion and attitude of those who do not believe in the success and/or value of the project due to competitive reasons. The project already has many supporters, but also a few detractors - scientists who work on other Thracian sites in Bulgaria, seeing a problem in the mega potential of the Seuthopolis project.
2.2. Thesis goal

The overall goal of this paper is to: Help National Unity “Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage” in the preservation and development of the Bulgarian cultural, historical and social values, while designing a well-planned and (inter)nationally competitive tourism product for the “Seuthopolis” project.

The expected result is a proposition for the development of the tourism product of Seuthopolis in the context of the natural and cultural assets of the Valle of the Thracian Kings. Such a proposition would increase the chance of this significant heritage site to become an (inter)nationally recognized tourist attraction. Resulting from this would be the improvement of the tourism product of Bulgaria as a whole due to the cultural importance and uniqueness of Seuthopolis.

Due to the complexity and volume of the project, the commissioner of this work NU ‘Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage’ and its author came to the conclusion that financial matters related to the tourism product of Seuthopolis should be dealt with in a separate paper.

3. Research questions

In order to make the present paper complete, the following research questions will have to be answered throughout the subsequent chapters:

1. Do Bulgaria and the Valley of the Thracian Kings in particular have potential for cultural tourism development?
2. Which are the desired target markets? What are their needs and preferences?
3. Who would be the main competitors of Seuthopolis?
4. What do the potential clients expect from Seuthopolis?
5. What should be done to make visiting Seuthopolis a memorable experience?
6. What are the unique selling points of the Seuthopolis tourism product?
7. What conclusions and recommendations for further development can be given?

4. Report organization

The report is organized according to the above research questions. The second chapter of the thesis summarizes the theory and good examples utilized in the course of work. Chapter Three analyses the cultural tourism context in which the future tourism product of Seuthopolis will be placed. Further on, the cultural tourism potential of the Valley of the Thracian Kings is thoroughly examined, including the expectations of potential clients from Seuthopolis. Chapter Four comprises the proposition for tourism product development of Seuthopolis and its unique selling points. In the final fifth chapter conclusions and recommendations are provided.
5. **Methodology**

In order to answer the research questions from section 3, relevant academic literature and reports on tourism product development have been reviewed. A variety of research techniques have been applied such as meetings, consultations, interviews, surveys, observation, literature review on various theoretical topics and academic studies. The commissioner of this assignment – NU ‘Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage’ – has provided me with all necessary and available information from secondary research prior to my involvement in the project. Moreover, they helped me with conducting the primary research which I had planned in advance. For this purpose I have taken interviews and surveys related to the market analysis. A visit to the Valley of the Thracian Kings made a big part of the primary research possible. I have also performed an extensive desk research on the following topics:

- Cultural tourism in Europe and Bulgaria – supply and demand
- Tourism product development
- Tourism supply and demand of the Valley of the Thracian Kings
- Direct competitors analysis for Seuthopolis
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW
Chapter Two presents a theoretical overview of the main questions raised in this paper. It defines essential terms and discusses important processes within the tourism industry, which are directly related to the assignment of the thesis. In Chapter One it has already become clear that Seuthopolis is a unique ancient city with very high cultural significance. Moreover, the proposed project for rediscovering the archaeological site holds a great potential for turning Seuthopolis into a central tourist attraction and develop the tourism in its region. The natural assets of the area will also be taken into consideration due to their abundance and quality, but the project emphasizes the cultural aspect of its future tourism product. That is why this chapter begins with the concept of cultural tourism.

1. Cultural tourism

1.1. Defining cultural tourism

It is not necessary to explain how complex the term tourism is by itself. Experience has shown that no single opinion can be formulated and the reason for this is the variety of activities and experiences involved in the act of tourism, confirmed by McKercher and Cros (2002): “There are almost as many definitions or variations of definitions of cultural tourism as there are cultural tourists.” They have studied a number of definitions, which have been placed into four categories: tourism derived, motivational, experiential, and operational.

According to the first category of tourism-derived definitions, cultural tourism is “a special interest tourism, where culture forms the basis of either attracting tourists or motivating people to travel (McIntosch and Goeldner 1990; Zeppel 1992; Ap 1999)”.

A purely motivational definition is the one given by UNWTO, which positions cultural tourism as “movements of persons essentially for cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other events, visit to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages” (UNWTO 1985:6).

The experiential definition is of special interest to the subject of this paper, because it is directly related to the development of tourism products or experience creation. According to McKercher and Cros:

“Cultural tourism is also an experiential activity, with many people feeling it also includes and aspirational element. As a minimum, cultural tourism involves experiencing or having contact of differing intensity with the unique social fabric, and special character of places (TC 1991; Blackwell 1997, Schweitzer 1999). It is also hoped that by experiencing culture, the tourist will become educated as well as entertained (VICNET 1996), will have a chance to learn about the community (IDCCA 1997), or will have an opportunity to learn something about the significance of a place and its associations with the local community, its heritage, and a cultural or natural landscape (AHC and TCA 1999). Some people even liken cultural tourism to a quest or search for greater understanding (Bachleitner and Zins 1999; Hannabas 1999). These people suggest that by leading the observer into a cultural past, cultural tourism can help them see the present from a different viewpoint.”
Operational definitions are most often used because they can be found within the other definition categories. They clarify the purpose of a trip, characterizing it by participation in a very wide range of activities and experiences.

Richards (1996, p.21) states that tourism can be defined either conceptually, or technically (Smith, 1988). Therefore, cultural tourism can also be seen through these two perspectives. After conducting a Cultural Tourism Research in 1991, the European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) formulates the following two definitions for cultural tourism:

**Conceptual Definition**

*"The movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs".*

**Technical Definition**

*"All movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence".*

In order to remain credible and tolerant in the tourism product development of Seuthopolis, both meanings of cultural tourism will be taken into account further on. They are also related to the existing types of cultural tourists, which will be discussed later in this section. Richards also provides a list of types of cultural sites and attractions, which exert a pull force on the tourist (ECTARC, 1989):

- archaeological sites and museums
- architecture (ruins, famous buildings, whole towns)
- art, sculpture, crafts, galleries, festivals, events
- music and dance (classical, folk, contemporary)
- drama (theatre, films, dramatists)
- language and literature study, tours, events
- religious festivals, pilgrimages
- complete (folk or primitive) cultures and sub-cultures

From the above list and the project background information on Seuthopolis, given in Chapter One of the thesis, it can be concluded that the first two types of attractions will be inevitably present at the site. According to McKercher and Cros "cultural tourism’s principal building blocks are a community or a nation’s cultural heritage assets". Since one of this project’s aims is to preserve Seuthopolis as an important heritage asset, it would be correct to also see what heritage stands for. “ICOMOS (1999) defines heritage as a broad concept that includes tangible assets, such as natural and cultural environments, encompassing landscapes, historic places, sites, and built environments, as well as intangible assets, such as collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge, and living experiences” (McKercher & Cros, 2002). Still, it is important to note that there is a vast difference
between a cultural asset and a cultural tourism product. This topic will be discussed later in this chapter, when the tourism product will be defined. But before making the important step towards product development, the tourism potential of the region must be assessed.

1.2. Assessing tourism potential

Prior to the project proposition by architect Tilev, archaeologists, scientists and other specialists have researched the state of the ancient Thracian city of Seuthopolis, in order to assess the value of the asset. From the fact that the Seuthopolis project is going on, it becomes evident that the research has shown a positive result, giving the initiative a “go”. For this reason the thesis will make no further attempts to assess its potential. Still, in Chapter Three a thorough examination of the tourism potential of the city’s region is conducted, emphasizing on its cultural aspect.

First of all, in order to be able to assess the tourism potential of the region, the term ‘tourism resource’ must be taken into consideration. Cooper and Hall (2008) define the tourism resource as the “component of the environment (physical or social) which either attracts the tourist and/or provides the infrastructure necessary for the tourist experience (Hall 2007:34)”. Further on they identify four types of resources which need to be present in order to attract a tourist to a destination:

- Resources in the form of physical and cultural attractions to induce people to visit.
- Resources in the form of facilities and services, including human resources, that enable them to stay at the destination.
- Resources in the form of infrastructure and services that makes the destination accessible as well as the various attractions, facilities and services within the destinations accessible.
- Information provision so the consumer actually knows about the destination and its resources. (Cooper & Hall, 2008)

There are a plenty of methods and audits published on the assessment of tourism potential. In the case of the Valley of the Thracian Kings in Central Bulgaria, the European Commission’s guidelines for “Using Natural and Cultural Heritage for the Development of Sustainable Tourism in Non-traditional Tourism Destinations, Assessing Tourism Potential” (European Commission, 2002, p.33-44) will be applied. The guidelines have been developed especially for European destinations and concerns “primarily leisure rather than business tourism and focuses on rural areas rather than on urban or already popular coastal or mountain resorts”. In this sense they fit very well the area’s situation and level of tourism development. Moreover, they are very well structured and therefore will lead the thesis towards clear results. According to the European Commission, in order to verify if tourism development can be justified, the supply and demand of tourism must be analyzed in detail. “This should be done over a geographically or socially distinguishable area and not necessarily according to administrative boundaries” (EU-Commission, 2002). Due to the fact that The Valley of the Thracian Kings is located in several administrative districts, it will be analyzed as one precinct which is not related to the administrative units of the country. In the thesis this will be done in a structure borrowed from the
above-mentioned guidelines. The following issues will be considered in this situation analysis of the Valley of the Thracian Kings:

**Tourism supply**
- Natural features
- Cultural features
- Area as a whole
- Stakeholders
- Infrastructure
- Legal and policy context

**Tourism demand**
- Use of existing resources
- Current and potential markets
- Target market segments
- Competitors

For a more detailed list of the situation analysis contents, please refer to appendix 3. After completing the research, all features will be given one of three possible levels of tourism interest, defined in the guidelines as:

- strong tourism interest, strong enough to incite people to come to the area
- moderate tourism interest, which can complement the primary attractions and diversify the offer
- little or no tourism interest

### 1.3. The cultural tourist

In order to complete the picture of cultural tourism, two very important questions must be answered: who is the so called cultural tourist; and what does the cultural tourist want.

#### 1.3.1. Who is the cultural tourist?

McKercher and Cros (2002) have analyzed this issue and offer an extensive overview of various sources. According to their work “Cultural Tourism - The Partnership between Tourism and Cultural Heritage Management” a cultural tourist is “someone who visits a named cultural or heritage attraction, a museum, art gallery, historic site, goes on a cultural or heritage tour, attends a festival, sees a live performance, or participates in some other defined activity at some point during their trip, regardless of the reason for visiting the destination” (McKercher & Cros, 2002). In this definition, it is clearly noticeable how unimportant the original purpose of the trip is, in order to classify someone as a cultural tourist. But there must be made a differentiation among cultural tourists, because in this case a visit to any of the above-mentioned attractions does not specify the tourist’s motives to participate. For this purpose, McKercher and Cros have identified five types of cultural tourists, “based on the importance of cultural tourism in the overall decision to visit a destination and depth of experience”. They are presented in figure 2.1., where the horizontal axis shows how important the cultural element of the destination is in the decision-making process, and the vertical axis represents the depth of experience sought. The importance of cultural tourism may vary from low to high and the experience sought – from shallow to deep.
Depending on their positions on the axes, these two dimensions formulate five existing types of cultural tourists, who are defined as follows:

- **Purposeful cultural tourist** – cultural tourism is the primary motive for visiting a destination, and the individual has a deep cultural experience.

- **Sightseeing cultural tourist** – cultural tourism is a primary or major reason for visiting a destination, but the experience is more shallow.

- **Serendipitous cultural tourist** – a tourist who does not travel for cultural tourism reasons, but who, after participating, ends up having a cultural tourism experience.

- **Casual cultural tourist** – cultural tourism is a weak motive for visiting a destination, and the resultant experience is shallow.

- **Incidental cultural tourist** – this tourist does not travel for cultural tourism reasons but nonetheless participates in some activities and has shallow experiences. (McKercher & Cros, 2002)

They can be found simultaneously at the same destination. Still, the numbers of each type of cultural tourists fluctuate according to the destination’s popularity, type of asset and visitors’ origin. The authors note a tendency towards larger amounts of cultural tourists as a whole at popular cultural or heritage destinations, especially from the purposeful, sightseeing and casual types. The picture somewhat changes at less-known destinations, which appeal to either the purposeful cultural tourist, or the opposite – to the types with weaker cultural motives and shallower experience than the sightseeing visitor. McKercher and Cros also find a connection between the “intensity of experience and the effort required by the individual to gain satisfactory experience”. Thus, for instance, purposeful cultural tourists are more likely to be found in museums and art galleries than the other types; and other cultural attractions offering more entertainment and freedom are attractive to those seeking shallower experience. It is also worth noting that the larger the cultural difference between the foreign visitors’ and the local culture, the bigger the chance to attract purposeful cultural tourists. The opposite, though, counts for the domestic visitors, whose intensity of experience grows with the similarity of national or cultural core values. It is understandable that all tourists to a destination bear different reasons in mind and pursue different experience. It is interesting to point out a few facts, which would close up the question “Who is the cultural tourist?” Research has shown that cultural tourists are older, are well-
educated and spend more than the mass tourist. The length of their stay is longer and they participate in more activities while at the destination (Richards 1996b). Dickinson (1996) and Sugaya and Brooks (1999) claim that aging baby boomers hold the highest potential to visit many cultural tourism attractions. Lowenthal (1985) and Dickinson (1996) argue that “as people age, they become more interested in their cultural roots, in things historic, and in developing a greater understanding of the past... the over-fifty market and seniors are felt to hold the greatest potential for growth in cultural tourism”. A similar correlation is found between a person’s educational level and willingness to participate in cultural tourism. The higher the level of education, the greater the “desire to learn about... alternative lifestyle and to experience different things” (McKercher & Cros, 2002).

In the context of the relation between people’s age and travel behavior it would be appropriate to mention the thirteen truths about travel behavior of baby boomers according to the Association of Travel Marketing Executives (ATME, www.atme.org). Baby boomers:

- consider travel a necessity, not a luxury
- have traveled more than their predecessors
- see themselves as forever young
- want to have fun
- demand immediate gratification
- are not passive
- think they are special
- like creature comforts
- are time deprived
- will pay for luxury, expertise and convenience
- are skeptical of institutions and individuals
- like to associate with people like themselves
- are not homogenous (Ross, 2008)

The Mintel International Group Ltd reported a research on cultural tourists conducted by ATLAS in 2002, which points out the following characteristics:

- Not all visitors to cultural sites are tourists – about 36% of the respondents were locals and less than 36% were foreigners, which leads to the conclusion that the domestic market is of vital importance.
- Most cultural tourists fall in the age group of 39-59
- They are generally better educated,
- Are experienced travelers
- Seek quality products
- They are environmentally and socially concerned
- Often take holidays outside the peak season
“The 2002 ATLAS research reports that younger people are a very important segment of the total audience. The single largest age group is in the 20-29 age group, and almost 40% of visitors are under 30. The report points out, "The youth market is important for cultural tourism not only because people visit cultural attractions when they are young (and many use youth discount cards to do so), but also because the cultural experiences they have in their youth may influence their future tourism behavior as well." (Mintel, 2004)

1.3.2. What does the cultural tourist want

In order to make sure a tourism product is developed according to the needs of its (potential) visitor, the market for this product must be well-researched. In the following paragraph an overview of some common features of the cultural tourist are presented.

The first and probably most surprising one is the need for controlled experiences (McKercher & Cros, 2002). No matter how much people nowadays strive for independency of their perceptions, the undemanding presentation and therefore “easy consumption” of the asset happens to be of greater importance. The reason for this unexpected tendency is that entertainment and recreation in most cases play a central role while having a break. Thus, for instance, the casual cultural tourist do not like to be educated while at the destination, whereas purposeful tourists would expect a higher “degree of challenge”. Another important feature is the “stereotypical image of the destination” which has been formed in the visitors’ mind prior to their arrival and which they expect to be confirmed on the spot. This means that many of the tourists remain ignorant to the asset and its meaning and presentation. But what impresses them is the contrast between the ancient past and today’s modern society. Last but not least, witnessing “authenticity” makes the cultural tourist’s experience full and worth the time spent. Unsurprisingly though, the destination does not have to present the asset in its fully realistic form. This relates to people’s escapist behavior while being away from their everyday life matters. In order to clarify this position, the issue of “authenticity” needs to be discussed.

The term “authenticity” has raised debates for many years, which have made it very relative and broad. McKercher and Cros note that “the word is of Classical Greco-Roman etymological origin and was used initially to indicate a sense of a true, sincere, or original element in a historical context”. In the context of heritage and asset evaluation, “authenticity” has become important in the process of conservation. Due to the “mass production and a greater homogeneity of material culture in the twentieth century”, the preservation of heritage highlighted the significance of the original asset. For this reason, heritage assets with minimum alternations were most highly valued. However, nowadays conservation practices strive to present assets wholly and not necessarily originally. Such procedures, though, should be performed only if a detailed monitoring of the asset is conducted before and after the conservation actions. When it comes to tourism, the issue becomes even more complex due to the commoditization of assets, needing them to be authentic at the same time. As it was explained above, the majority of cultural
tourists prefer an authentic experience to rough originals. A good explanation of their choice is offered by McKercher and Cros: “Contemporary society uses past in the following ways: as a commodity (particularly in tourism); to control, confirm, or confront present beliefs, for leisure, education, and profit, and for articulating national pride or group identity”.

In his work 'Understanding the Behaviour of Cultural Tourists: Towards a classification of Dutch cultural tourists’, Isaac (2008) reviews studies dedicated to gaining insight into the motivation of cultural tourists to travel. He reveals that due to the variation in perceptions and attitudes towards certain cultural sites and attractions, the motives driving visitation differ from person to person. Even though, Isaac finds a common thread in their travel behavior.

*However, many tourists and particularly ‘cultural tourists’ still look for the enhancement rather than the avoidance of self. They subscribe to Nietzsche’s view of travel that it should be a steady process of knowledge-seeking and self-improvement.*

... 

Rather than the simple aimless pleasures of mass tourism, the cultural tourists are those who go about their leisure in a more serious frame of mind. Meethan states, to be a cultural tourist is to attempt, to go beyond idle leisure and to return enriched with knowledge of other places and other people even if involves “gazing” at, or collecting in some way, the commodified essence of otherness.

(Isaac, 2008)

Isaac (2008) has also reviewed a joint research of ATLAS and the International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC), stating that “discovering other cultures” was the strongest driving motivation expressed by young travelers. He comes to the conclusion that “youth market is indeed important for cultural tourism not only because people visit cultural attractions when they are young (and many use youth discount cards to do so), but also because the cultural experience they have in their youth may influence their future behaviour as well (Richards, 2003)”.

The above clearly stated trends and preferences will be very influential when choosing the target markets for the tourism product of Seuthopolis. In the case of these tourists, the only obstacle to participating in cultural tourism is again the time budget. Natural wonders and physical outdoor activities are often on top of the list.
2. The Tourism Product

First of all, in order to be able to write about tourism product development, what a tourism product is must be defined. This is no easy task since many opinions on this topic exist. This part of the chapter reviews literature which clarifies the content of the tourism product, how it is developed and augmented. This theoretical framework would facilitate the professional development of the tourism product of Seuthopolis further in the thesis.

2.1. Defining the tourism product

The tourism product is a very complex notion, for the explanation of which, two main approaches have been formed through the years. As described by Middleton & Clarke, 2001, p. 122, there are “two different dimensions for understanding the tourism product, one of which is the product perceived by customers and the other is the narrower view of products taken by marketing managers of individual tourism businesses.” The first dimension presents the tourism product as one whole set of components, which together make up the complete experience of the visitor. The second one defines tourism products as separate services, which are delivered by a variety of businesses. Due to the fact that Seuthopolis will be viewed in the context of its region, it is impossible to take into account all present single businesses and the services and goods they offer. NU “Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage” is no destination management or marketing organization to be able to control all elements of a whole region as a tourist destination. Moreover the focus will be set on Seuthopolis itself and the attraction which is going to evolve from it. For this reason, the experience which Seuthopolis will offer to the customer is much more important to NU “Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage” than each one service delivered. There will probably be multiple businesses present within Seuthopolis, as well, which at this stage of the project makes the view through the second dimension very difficult. Furthermore, the overall occurrence of Seuthopolis is very important to be defined at the stage prior to the project implementation. That is why the tourism product of Seuthopolis will be developed as a single experience and this approach is explained further in this section.

First of all, in order to clearly define the tourism product as experience, a few sentences by Middleton & Clarke, 2001, p. 122 should be kept in mind:

“Any individual product is composed of a series of elements or processes that combine to satisfy the purchasers’ needs.”

(Middleton & Clarke, 2001)

“As far as the tourist is concerned, the product covers the complete experience form the time he leaves home to the time he returns to it… the tourist product is to be considered as an amalgam of three main components of attractions, … facilities at the destination and accessibility of the destination’.

(Medlik and Middleton, 1973)
It is important to note that the so called product conceptualization has found broad application worldwide. The key components listed above are discussed in the following paragraph.

According to Middleton & Clarke, 2001, p.125, the first component – the attractions and environment – are the driving motive which influences the customer’s destination choice the most. They are grouped into four types of attractions:

- **Natural attractions:** landscape, seascape, beaches, climate, flora and fauna and other geographical features of the destination and its natural resources.
- **Built attractions:** buildings and tourism infrastructure including historic and modern architecture, monuments, promenades, parks and gardens, convention centers, marinas, ski slopes, industrial archaeology, managed visitor attractions generally, golf, specialty shops and themed retail areas.
- **Cultural attractions:** history and folklore, religion and art, theatre, music, dance and other entertainment, and museums; some of these may be developed into special events, festivals and pageants.
- **Social attractions:** way of life and customs of resident or host population, language and opportunities for social encounters.”

When writing about the cultural tourism product in its regional perspective, McKercher and Cros (2002) begin with this same component and characterise it in the following way:

“**Attractions are the demand generators that give the customer a reason to visit a destination and, further, usually form the central theme for the visit. Ideally, they should be experiential, unique, exciting, one-of-a-kind encounters that appeal to the target market** (EPGC 1995). No destination can succeed a suitable breadth and depth of attractions, first to draw the tourists and second to retain them in the region for long periods.”

(McKercher & Cros, 2002, p. 101)

**Facilities and services** at any destination make the stay possible. Together they make up the supporting element. Without them it is very likely that the customer would not be satisfied with the tourism product. Such are:

- **Accommodation units:** hotels, holiday villages, apartments, villas, campsites, caravan parks, hostels, condominiums, farms, guesthouses.
- **Restaurants, bars and cafes:** ranging from fast-food through to luxury restaurants
- **Transport at the destination:** taxis, coaches, car rental, cycle hire (and ski lifts in snow destinations).
- **Sports/interest activity:** ski schools, sailing schools, golf clubs and spectator stadiums; centers for pursuit of arts and crafts and nature studies.
- **Retail outlets:** shops, travel agents, souvenirs, camping supplies.
- **Other services:** information services, equipment rental, tourism police.”
The last key tourism product component is the destination accessibility. It addresses directly the transportation to the desired place and it has a public and private aspect:

- **Infrastructure**: of roads, car parking, airports, railways, seaports, inland waterways and marinas.
- **Equipment**: size, speed and range of public transport vehicles.
- **Operational factors**: routes operated, frequency of services, prices charged and road tolls levied.
- **Government regulations**: the range of regulatory controls over transport operations. (Middleton & Clarke, 2001)

In the case of the tourism product of Seuthopolis, accessibility issues will be taken into account mainly from a private point of view due to the site’s specific location and environment. The same approach has been adopted by Gilbert (1990), who defines the tourism product in the following way:

> “An amalgam of different goods and services offered as an activity experience to the tourist” (Gilbert 1990:20)

(Cooper & Hall, 2008, p. 27)

Cooper and Hall though, make a difference between Gilbert’s tourism “product as an experience”, which is from the viewpoint of the customer, and “tourism products developed and engineered as experiences”. Such products bring the customer an authentic experience and are especially designed for this purpose. They are “manufactured” in what Pine and Gilmore (1998) call the ‘experience economy’. According to them, the need to show self-actualization while undertaking a trip has altered consumers’ values. As it can be concluded from figure 2.2. below, commodities, goods and services can no longer satisfy their needs. A product of a higher level is necessary and this comes to be the staged experience. This is exactly the tourism product which Seuthopolis will offer.

![Figure 2.2. Welcome to the Experience Economy, Pine & Gilmore, 1998](image-url)
It would be now appropriate to ask what an experience according to this theory is. It “occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event. Commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible, and experiences memorable” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). They offer a clear economical distinction among commodities, goods, services and experiences, presented in figure 2.3.

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<td>Factors of demand</td>
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Figure 2.3. Economic distinctions, Pine & Gilmore, 1998

A major difference between an experience and the other economic offerings is the level of involving a person’s senses and how much he/she takes the product personally. Thus, commodities, goods and services keep the consumer distant from the product matter, whereas experiences aim at as deeper involvement as possible “on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level”. In order to classify experiences, Pine and Gilmore place them in two dimensions. One of them ‘test’ the guest’s participation level on an axis from passive to active, and the second one – the “environmental relationship” or “connection” between the guest and the product, varying from

Figure 2.4. The Four Realms of an Experience, Pine & Gilmore, 1998
absorption to immersion (see figure 2.4.). Accordingly, experiences are categorized in four realms – entertainment, esthetic, educational, and escapist.

So as to not fall into details describing these four categories, they can be related to the cultural tourist typology of McKercher and Cros (2002), discussed in the first part of this chapter. As it was already explained, the level of experience sought and the importance of the specific activities vary. Therefore the desired cultural tourists can be classified in the four experience realms as follows:

- **Entertainment** → *Incidental cultural tourist; Casual cultural tourist*
- **Esthetic** → *Serendipitous cultural tourist*
- **Educational** → *Sightseeing cultural tourist*
- **Escapist** → *Purposeful cultural tourist*

Pine and Gilmore have come to the conclusion that “the richest experiences... encompass aspects of all four realms, forming a “sweet spot” around the area where the spectra meet”. Finding this “sweet spot” is the main task of the tourism product of Seuthopolis. But in order to do so, we must get acquainted with the process of ‘experience product’ development, which is examined in the following section.

### 2.2. Tourism product development

As it has become clear, the tourism product of Seuthopolis is going to seek experience in each aspect of its existence. In other words, experience will be the core of the product. That is why the process of experience design is presented on the first place.

**2.2.1. Experience design**

In their literature review on “Experiences as tourism products”, Cooper and Hall (2008) have come to a very valuable conclusion concerning important issues related to destination development.

“For the destination, delivering and engineering the experience involves infrastructure, narrative content and a context, each of which are heightened by technology. Effectively, engineering these experiences demands that destinations and operators migrate to experience-oriented tourism strategies, where the common thread is authenticity, delivering experiences that are perceived to be real, unsullied and rooted in the destination... It is delivery and dimensions of authenticity that will be central to the maturing of the experience economy at the destination level and will begin to influence the buying decision.”

(Cooper & Hall, 2008, p. 30)
Pine and Gilmore (1998) have recognized five principles that underpin experience design, which will be utilized throughout the process of tourism product development of Seuthopolis. They are:

**Theme the experience**

The experience is staged by envisioning a well-defined theme. It is the foundation of the experience. The theme defines both the overall design and the design details and creates a ‘story line’ which characterizes the environment for the customer.

**Harmonize impressions with positive cues**

“**Impressions are the ‘takeaways’ of the experience, they fulfill the theme. To create desired impressions, companies must introduce cues that affirm the nature of the experience to the guest.”** Such cues, for instance, are signs, architectural features, visuals, etc., which support the theme, make the stay easier, but also more pleasant.

**Eliminate negative cues**

“**Experience stagers must eliminate anything that diminishes, contradicts, or distracts from the theme**”. Such cues can be unnecessary signs or ones that call unpleasant associations. Another example is bad service, which for sure will be a memorable experience, but not of the desired kind.

**Mix in memorabilia**

Memorabilia are all those “physical reminders” which guests would buy in the form of a souvenir, a t-shirt or any other good attached with a sentimental meaning about an experience. The richer the experience, the more memorabilia is sold.

**Engage all five senses**

“**The sensory stimulants that accompany an experience should support and enhance its theme. The more senses an experience engages the more effective and memorable it can be.”** Still, the combination of sensations must be carefully picked. Otherwise some cues might end up being negative.

Creating a strong theme is a complicated process itself. As it became clear, it is the most important principle among the five because it creates consistency within the whole experience. Likewise, Vink (2006), a member of the “Imagineering Academy” finds a relation between a common concept within a product and staging a memorable experience. His definition of a concept seems to be very similar to a theme’s function:

“A concept is a leading principle. It acts as an umbrella for the development of experiences. Strong concepts are often represented by logo’s or slogans.” (Vink, 2006)

The methodology of the “Imagineering Academy” follows three stages towards the creation of memorable experiences, presented in figure 2.5.: **Vision ➔ Concept ➔ Memorable experiences.**
The process begins with building a **Vision**, which expresses a coherent future view provoked by past practice, supports the organization’s vision, but establishes a strong connection with the target market. Three main steps lead to the creation of such a **Vision**:

- Step 1: to have knowledge of the subject or sector
- Step 2: to create a coherent view
- Step 3: formulate a visionary image and a firm statement

The final formulation, though, requires a situation analysis of the supply and demand side of the market. According to Vink (2006), the topics, which need to be researched are:

- What is already on the market, compare different supply
- Observe people, trace their passions and needs, read articles, do market research
- Look at leisure products: what is attractive, what inspires people, which emotions are involved
- Formulate an opinion of your own
- Is this opinion shared by others

The next stage in the process of experience creation is the choice of a **Concept**. It “leads to coherence in order to reach certain targets or aims”. A concept is developed in order to fulfil the desired experience, touch the values of the guest, and last but not least, to make the experience memorable. The question of how an experience is staged has already been discussed in the five guiding principles of Pine and Gilmore. One of them can be recognized in the methodology of the “Imagineering Academy” and this is namely the five-senses-stimulation. In the presentation of Vink, **Memorable experiences** can occur when a person is provoked physically and mentally. Naturally, the “five-senses” approach comes to be the physical stimulus – hear, sight, touch, smell and taste. Emotions evoke experiences mentally. Vink splits them into two groups as follows:

**Primary**
- Joy
- Sorrow
- Anger
- Fear
- Surprise
- Disgust
- Love
- Guilt
- Shame

**Secondary**
- Pride
- Envy
- Jealousy
In order to guarantee the memorable nature of the experience, a well-thought mix of physical and mental stimuli must be drawn. The “Imagineering Academy” suggests the application of the UNIQUE technique, which stands for:

- Unexpected
- New
- Inspiring
- Qualitative
- Unconventional
- Educating

The two approaches of Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Vink (2006) to staging memorable experiences will be combined and implemented in the process of tourism product development of Seuthopolis.

2.2.2. Developing cultural tourism products

The presence of cultural assets in any region surely does not mean that it already has a tourism product. McKercher and Cros (2002) offer a few strategies to development of cultural tourism attractions. Due to the complex idea of the tourism product which Seuthopolis holds, and the variety of its precinct’s tourism assets, a combination of these approaches is necessary. For this purpose, a compatible blend of the most appropriate ones will be applied. The available strategies are briefly presented in the following paragraphs.

**Purpose-built primary attraction** may happen when a region possesses:

- Resources
- Innate tourism appeal
- Proximity to major markets
- Themes around which an attraction can be built: of existing but undeveloped heritage asset or cultural heritage theme parks. (McKercher & Cros, 2002)

Due to the costly process of converting assets into tourism attractions, very often the effort is left either to the public sector or to a no-profit community based-organization. In such a case, building a primary attraction is justified by the benefits which it would bring to a society like boosting community pride, educational prospects, employment opportunities and economy diversification. Private businesses may also undergo development, e.g. lodging establishments, retail and food and beverage services.

Within the development of cultural tourism products, **bundling** combines “a variety of similarly themed products and experiences” and promotes “their collective consumption to the visitors... bundling helps create a theme for a place, creating a stronger sense of destination”. Such an approach suggests wider distribution of economic benefits due to the greater number of assets included in the product.
Cultural tourism precincts are similar to bundled products but in greater proportions. The product is offered and consumed more easily due to the direct benefits it realizes for both sides. Resulting from this is a higher tourist attendance which facilitates the development of supporting services and attractions. Moreover, the powerful consumer demand creates economic opportunities and drives conservation works.

Heritage networks may be composed by cultural assets of similar or complementary character. This strategy relies on the stronger pull power of the destination facilitated by the variety of its assets and the more of benefits it offers to the consumer. Thus, touring routes make a destination more appealing.

Festivals and events “serve to concentrate a wide array of activities into a condensed time frame, creating a critical mass of products for tourism consumption”. They have the potential to become products of strong brands which are associated with positive experience.

As Pine and Gilmore offer principles for staging a memorable experience, McKercher and Cros provide eight useful tactics for converting cultural assets to tourism products. They are listed below without explanations attached. A description and justification of the tactic or combination of tactics, which will be applied on the tourism product of Seuthopolis, are included further in the thesis (see Chapter Four).

- Mythologize the asset
- Build a story around the asset
- Emphasize its otherness
- Show a direct link from the past to the present
- Make it triumphant
- Make it a spectacle
- Make it a fantasy
- Make it fun, light, entertaining (McKercher & Cros, 2002, p. 128)

There is an obvious link between a staged experience and its guest. The following section presents a viewpoint supporting the marketing approach to tourism product development.

2.2.3. A marketing approach to product development: cultural tourism

Most probably it has already become evident that tourism demand will play a central role in forming the tourism product of Seuthopolis. As all used methods in this thesis, the marketing approach to product development stems from the theoretical review on this topic. It is not a secret that the majority of marketing managers have already accepted this approach as a law. Middleton and Clarke (2001) have emphasized on Levitt’s statement (1969): “People do not buy products, they buy the expectation of benefits. It is the benefits that are the product”. In the same line of thought they have also included Kotler’s judgment (1976:25): “The customer is looking for particular utilities. Existing products are only a current way of packaging those utilities. The company must be aware of all the ways in which customers can gain the sought satisfaction. These define the competition”. The same counts for tourism products.

McKercher and Cros relate this theory to the experience design.
“Tourism products must be shaped to satisfy the needs and wants of the consumer. Designing the tangible product to deliver a certain type of experience enables the attraction both to meet visitor expectations and to control the experience. The failure to do so can result in an asset being overwhelmed by tourists.

It is better to appreciate what product is being consumed and to manage the experience accordingly than to ignore this fact.

Tourism is the quintessential example of a sector that must adopt a marketing approach to products; by its very nature, it sells dreams and experiences that satisfy the consumer’s needs, wants, and desires.”

(McKercher & Cros, 2002, p. 104:106)

A few benefits of the marketing approach have been outlined. By designing the experience in line with the needs of the target markets, unwanted tourists will be likely to stay away from this product. This does not mean that the various types of cultural tourists would not be satisfied with their experiences. They will most probably be just different and will depend on the level of participation of the visitor. Of greatest importance is the similarity in their core needs. Practice has proved that targeting everyone is a secure way to failure in satisfying consumers. Having in mind the last two points, it can be concluded that there is a single way to avoid unsuccessful product design – compatible target marketing. Cooper and Hall (2008) have a good grip on the change in tourism markets, which is interest of the tourism product of Seuthopolis:

“… the tourism market has changed as a result of increased travel, shifting values and perceptions and demographics. Feifer(1985) has termed these new consumers ‘post-tourists’. They are experienced, discerning and caring of the places that they visit, demonstrating ethical consumption and behavior at the destination. Post-tourists demonstrate changing values and preferences, increasingly seeking authenticity and well-managed, tailored individual experiences that allow them to both get closer to and also participate in the intimacy of the destination…”

(Cooper & Hall, 2008, p. 35)

Chapter Two has extensively presented the theoretical framework which is put into practice in the following parts of this paper. The concepts of cultural tourism and the tourism product have been discussed. Guidelines for assessing tourism potential have been adopted. The process of product development in the form of staging experiences has been explained. Principles for developing cultural tourism products in particular have been reviewed.
CHAPTER THREE

SITUATION ANALYSIS
The third chapter of this thesis gives comprehensive information and a thorough analysis of the context in which the tourism product of Seuthopolis will be situated. First of all, a general picture of the development of cultural tourism in Europe is presented, followed by an overview of opinions on Bulgaria’s cultural tourism potential, backed up by market analysis of the State Agency for Tourism (SAT) in Bulgaria. The last and main part of the chapter comprises an analysis of the tourism development potential of the Valley of the Thracian Kings based on the guidelines of EU’s “Using Natural and Cultural Heritage for the Development of Sustainable Tourism in Non-traditional Tourism Destinations” (2002), discussed in Chapter Two.

1. Tourism in Europe - the old continent’s place in the cultural tourism industry

It is a well-known fact that Europe holds a great proportion of the World’s history and cultural heritage which makes it a popular cultural destination. In order to sustain the credibility of this paper, the state of tourism development and particularly of cultural tourism in Europe must be researched. For this purpose, reports on this topic have been briefly reviewed.

In its “Tourism 2020 Vision, Global Forecast and Profiles of Market Segments” (2001), the World Tourism Organization states that destinations within Europe will be confronted with severe competition due to economic, political, social and technological factors. The currently most visited part of the old continent, which is namely Western Europe, is expected to have the least tourist arrivals, losing market share to the other sub-regions (see appendix 4, figure 4).

“Arrivals in the Central/Eastern subregion are expected to grow the fastest, and by 2020, Central/Eastern Europe will attract almost 40 million more visitors than Western Europe”.

... The highest growth rates for the 1995-2020 period are forecast for Croatia (+8.4 per cent a year on average), the Russian Federation (+6.8 per cent), Slovenia (+6.0 per cent), Turkey (+5.5 per cent) and Bulgaria and Romania (both +4.6 per cent).” (UNWTO, 2001)

For more details, see appendix 4, figure 5. It is important to notice Bulgaria’s presence in the list of the fastest developing tourism regions. The aging of Europe’s population cannot be omitted from the significant factors influencing the tourism industry. In the “Renewed EU Tourism Policy” (2006), the Commission of the European Communities points out the changes in the demographic structure in the EU. According to the Commission, even though the number of people above 65 will continue to grow, they are experiencing less health problems. Thus, due to the higher life expectancy, in a combination with the greater spending power, people over the age of 50 who travel more in general, are supposed to increase. Moreover, “there will be a change in public demand with regard to types of tourism. Health tourism and tourism relating to cultural and natural heritage are expected to undergo the most
significant growth”. (A renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism, 2006)

Another interesting market development is the forecasted growth of tourists coming from East Asia and the Pacific, which in 2020 will outnumber the current largest generating tourist market for Europe – the Americans (see appendix 4, figure 6).

Richards (1996) notes the significance of Europe’s place on the world’s map as a cultural destination. He pays special attention to the role of cultural tourism in the economic and social change on the continent. “The cultural and tourist industries appear to be advancing in all European nations and regions” (Richards, 1996, 2005, pp. Corijn & Mommaas, 1995). An increasing number of regions are adopting development strategies which would promote them as cultural destinations. Thus, the increased emphasis on cultural assets has led to a bigger amount of cultural attractions and therefore to a more competitive supply of such. In this sense, the supply of cultural tourist attractions will correspond to the market forecasts of UNWTO.

“The opening up of new cultural tourism destinations in Eastern and Central Europe will add to the growing supply of distractions for the European cultural tourist in future.” (Richards, 1996, 2005)

Even though no exact data of European cultural tourism exists, many specialists have observed a steady increase of demand through the years. “A large number of tourism studies have identified cultural tourism as a major future growth area both in Europe and elsewhere (Januarius, 1992; Zeppel and Hall, 1992; Boniface and Fowler, 1993; Richards, 1996).”

For more information on Europe’s significance in the cultural tourism industry, please refer to appendix 5 which presents an abstract from the “Malta Declaration on Cultural Tourism: Its Encouragement and Control”.

Isaac (2008) also discusses the development of cultural and heritage tourism. In his study he comes to the conclusion that “Many regions and destinations are on the move or would like to be on the move to developing cultural and heritage based tourism”. One of the numerous examples is the case of Malta which is “moving from Blue to Grey Tourism: Reinventing Malta(Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2005)”. It is assumed that cultural tourism is the “future market growth”. It provides an ideal opportunity to convert heritage into tourism destinations while ensuring good economic growth.
2. Bulgaria in the context of cultural tourism development

2.1. Cultural institutions and partnerships related to cultural tourism development

Logically, in this section are presented the two main public institutions, which have legal tools for exercising power over the development of cultural tourism – the Ministry of Culture and the State Agency for Tourism in Bulgaria. It also informs about other organizations and associations concerning tourism industry partnerships in the country which could have an impact on the tourism product development of Seuthopolis.

First of all, it would be good to keep in mind the historical background of Bulgaria’s cultural policies and instruments, which have been a constraint for the development of an appropriate socio-cultural environment and thus for the relevant type of tourism. Since this is not of central interest to this thesis, such information is provided in appendix 6. The text presents an abstract from the Council of Europe/ERICarts, "Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe, 10th edition", 2008. The most decisive factor for the retreat rather than progress of European cultural values among Bulgarians has been the strong communist ideology dictated in the course of 45 years (Arkova & Andreeva, 2008).

Today the Ministry of Culture consists of eleven directorates, of which several are directly related to the development of cultural tourism in the country. These are the directorates of “Theatre, Variety and Circus Arts”, "Music and Dance" “Museums, Galleries and Visual Arts”, “Immovable Cultural Monuments’ Preservation”, "Legal Affairs and Property Management" and "European Union and International Co-operation". Due to the above-mentioned reasons, most of the processes which take place within these bodies are slow and the working methods – outdated. Attempts are being made to adapt the “machine” of the Ministry to the modern European approaches to cultural development. This is one of the obstacles which the mega-project of Seuthopolis will probably face in its course of action. Thus, for instance, the Law for Cultural Monuments and Museums (1969) is one of the most outdated regulations within the legislative framework of the cultural and historical heritage sector. Moreover, there is no clear programme for cultural heritage preservation. Another existing issue is the discrepancy between the “Law for Organisation of the Territory” and the “Law of Cultural Monuments and Museums”. For example, the latter one indicates who is entitled to the management, supervision, investigation and protection of cultural monuments. “However, the division between their competences causes some problems in practice, for example, one immovable cultural monument comprises of great number of movable ones, which may be under the responsibility of a different administrative body” (Arkova & Andreeva, 2008, p. 37). The main issue in such situations is related to state financing. Private cultural monument owners are not relieved or funded by the Ministry, but are required to maintain and guarantee quality and access to their property. To mention one more key power concern which relates to Seuthopolis, is the lack of specialized state bodies throughout the administrative regions of the country, resulting in mad site management. Such core problems make the realization of Bulgaria’s cultural potential into cultural tourism projects quite complicated.
Apart from the Ministry of Culture, other institutions responsible for the protection and development of culture are the variety of **NGOs**. According to Arkova and Andreeva (2008), they have been formed due to the need for such bodies in the course of decentralization of power. They are mainly two types – operational and community NGOs, represented by “**alliances, societies, associations, foundations, funds, unions, committees, centers, festivals, academies, Chitalishte, trustees, independent theatres, federations, institutes, etc.**” (Arkova & Andreeva, 2008, p. 45)

Since the Ministry is aware of the weaknesses of its legislative framework, it has begun to promote and take part in partnership between the governmental and non-governmental cultural institutions, especially when it comes to financing. Resulting from this is the increasing interest among private businesses in partnership and sponsorship of projects dedicated to cultural development. This is a very important progress for the tourism product development of Seuthopolis because among the most financed projects are such related to festivals and preservation of valuable cultural-historical heritage. To this conclusion has arrived Soros Arts Centre after researching the "**Business support for culture and art in Bulgaria**" among 100 Bulgarian and foreign companies (Arkova & Andreeva, 2008, p. 46).

When discussing the recent cultural policy issues and debates, Arkova and Andreeva mention the developments in the cultural and creative industries concepts in Bulgaria. According to them, "**in the period 2003-2004, 19 regional projects were implemented under PHARE (BG 0102.03) - "Development of Cultural Tourism in Bulgaria" with a total budget of 4 726 000 euro**" (Arkova & Andreeva, 2008, p. 23). This is a fact, which shows that cultural tourism has not been completely excluded from the Ministry’s agenda. What is important is to make such actions a tradition and facilitate the development of projects like Seuthopolis.

There is an issue which is directly related to the construction and development of the Seuthopolis project and the solution of which depends entirely on the Ministry of Culture. It was supposed to establish a working committee to approve the project and to announce an international tender for the election of an engineering company by 30 September, 2008 (Nurden, 2009). The author of an article in “**Vagabond**” Magazine for foreigners in Bulgaria reveals the slowdown in the process due to the Bulgarian Government. He continues as it follows:

“So far nothing happened. Neither is the ministry making public the ongoing findings of its committee that was set up to establish the technical aspects of the project such as gathering data about soil composition and geological conditions, including the possibility of seismic activity. A Bulgarian Institute of Oceanography submarine was due to start surveying the reservoir this past winter. But the government still seems to be lukewarm about the issue.

Time will tell whether the government eventually pulls its finger out and lends its support. Surely this is one instance in which party politics can take a back seat. Or is Bulgaria forever going to be blighted by suspicions about corruption and demeaning self-interest?”

(Nurden, Vagabond Magazine, 2009)
The above words clearly define the political situation in which the development of a so much economically, culturally and socially significant project is supposed to happen. Not only does not the government facilitate the project by executing its obligations, but also prevents it from further and quick actions. It must be taken into account that the longer administration work lasts, the more expensive the development process of the project will become and thus, the more difficult to implement. Even though the members of the NU “Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage” are determined to succeed in it, governmental support is probably of greatest importance in this situation.

The issue of infrastructure improvement not only in the popular tourist regions of Sofia and the Black Sea Coast, but also in other parts of the country has been much discussed in the recent years. Even though it does not address cultural tourism directly, it would be appropriate to mention it due to its importance for the tourism development of Bulgaria as a whole. The Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW) and the Ministry of Transport have been suffering big critics due to this existing problem. In July 2008 infrastructural EU ISPA programme funds for Bulgaria were frozen due to corruption. “The European Commission made a decision to terminate the funding for infrastructure projects from the cohesion funds of the ISPA program” said the EC chief spokesman Leitenberger (SofiaNewsAgency, 2008). Just a few days ago on May 12 the European Commission unlocked 115 M of the ISPA funds for infrastructural projects. This comes to say that efforts have been done and most probably transparency in EU money matters will continue improving. This is very crucial for the Seuthopolis project because NU ‘Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage’ partially relies on EU funding. Moreover, the improvement of the infrastructure in the region of Seuthopolis is also dependent on these funds.

As it was pointed out in the Introduction of the thesis, Seuthopolis is a unique city which contributes not only to the cultural treasure of Bulgaria, but via the proposed project for its rediscovery, it can also become an (inter)nationally significant tourist attraction. That is why the institution which is responsible for the tourism development in the country and its actions are surely relevant to the future tourism product of Seuthopolis. In short, the State Agency for Tourism (SAT) in Bulgaria:

- Works out short-term concepts and programs for tourism development and proposes a strategy for tourism development to the government
- Organizes and coordinates the quality control over the tourism product of Bulgaria; registers tour operators and tourist agencies; categorizes tourist cites

(SAT, 2006)

“The priority actions of SAT in 2008 have been the sustainable tourism development, following the world tourism trends and the presentation of Bulgaria as an attractive year-round tourism destination.” (SAT, Report on the Actions of SAT, 2009)

According to the same report, Bulgaria’s membership in the European Union has a positive impact on the partnerships in tourism of the country. A detailed monitoring of concepts, programs and the strategy for tourism development of Bulgaria has been conducted. It has shown that many international organizations and institutions were interested in Bulgaria’s tourism development and product. This is a
fact of very high importance to the project of architect Tilev, since support and financing are expected from foreign companies and external political bodies. Moreover, except marketing support, the Agency has relations in the sphere of tourism which could be beneficial to the Seuthopolis project.

Speaking of marketing, it is SAT’s responsibility to present Bulgaria as a tourist destination at home and abroad. Thus, the Agency fulfills its obligation by a variety of tools, which Seuthopolis can take advantage of. These are:

- International tourism expositions and fairs
- Bulgarian and foreign medium, including familiarization trips, printed advertisement, film advertisement, etc.
- Seminars and presentations
- Advertisements in the World Wide Web
- Tourist information centers
- Brochures and souvenirs
- Specialized campaigns

(Arkova & Andreeva, 2008)

It is important to note the positive attitude and expectations of the Head of SAT, Mrs. Aneliya Krushkova, from the discussed project. According to her the realization of the Seuthopolis project would lead to a “tourist boom” in Bulgaria (InfoTourism, 2008). Even though SAT is one of the few official political supporters of the project, the Agency has not initiated any practical participation in creating public awareness of it.

Of course there are other institutions in the country which work in the sphere of tourism and therefore most of them are relevant to the tourism product development of Seuthopolis. There are three existing specialist product-based associations in Bulgaria:

- Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism (BAAT)
- Bulgarian Association for Rural and Ecological Tourism (BARET)
- Bulgarian Association for Cultural, Ecological, and Rural Tourism (BACERT)

For a longer list, typology and description of the key tourism organizations in Bulgaria please refer to appendix 7.
2.2. Bulgaria’s potential influencing cultural tourism development

The Introduction of this paper already gave a hint about the asset-potential for cultural tourism development in the country. Surely there are numerous positive opinions on this topic. The aim of this section is to present a few of them and support the result with general information on Bulgaria’s cultural assets.

Specialized types of tourism are still a novelty in Bulgaria due to the predominant large-scale developments in the sector which have been taken place for a long period of time. The same counts also for the initial attempts to promote the vast cultural heritage contained within the borders of the country. According to Bulgarian National Radio’s reporter Veneta Nickolova, the cultural tourism in Bulgaria has an "untapped potential", which could be turned into a “paying industry” (please refer to appendix 8 for further information on Bulgarian cultural heritage). This conclusion has been derived from discussions during the 5th edition of “Cultural Tourism” exposition in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria in 2008. Businesses in the sector have assessed this failure as a result from the insufficient efforts of state and branch organizations. “Despite rising interest in cultural tourism, only 17% of Bulgarians practice it and only 11% of foreign tourists coming to Bulgaria visit cultural and historical sites, according to relevant statistics” (Nickolova, 2008). The author points out two very problematic sides of tourism in Bulgaria as a whole, which logically have an impact on cultural tourism – “inferior promotion and lack of information”. What directly concerns the Seuthopolis project is the opinion of archaeologist Prof. Nikolay Ovcharov: “The interest in Bulgarian culture is all too evident and Bulgarian archaeologists must take great credit for this because of their awesome discoveries in most recent years”, “It is no sheer chance that such authoritative international publications as “National Geographic” Magazine, “The Independent” and “Guardian”, “Le Figaro” and “La Republica” newspapers keep publishing features on Bulgarian cultural monuments” (Nickolova, 2008). The city of Veliko Tarnovo has been announced the cultural capital of Bulgaria. Mr. Daniel Panov, the municipal tourism agency managing director, claims that the cultural tourism season lasts much longer (from mid-March until late November) than the few months of the traditional mass tourism. This is clear evidence for the ability of this form of tourism to bring year-round benefits to businesses and local residents of cultural destinations across the country (Nickolova, 2008). In her earlier report (2007), Nickolova points out the positive influence of Bulgaria’s EU accession on the interest of other member states’ citizens in the country’s history, traditions and folklore. The following sentences indicate facts related to this tendency which are of great importance not only to the future development of cultural tourism in Bulgaria, but also to the Seuthopolis project – the central issue of this thesis.

“Foreign tourists are interested in monuments of culture put on the UNESCO heritage list, including the breathtaking Sveshtari Thracian tomb from 3rd c. BC and the unique Kazanlak tomb from the 4th-3rd c. BC. According to Boyan Manev from the Sunshine Tours Travel Agency recent finds of ancient tombs and gold treasures in Bulgaria have revived interest in “Specialized audiences opt for the new findings of the Thracian and Byzantine culture in Bulgaria,” Mr. Manev says. “Many people go to visit the ancient rock sanctuary in Perperikon, in the Rhodopi Mountains. Another key attraction is the
A collection of gold treasures found in the Valley of the Kings in Kazanlak, southern Bulgaria."

(Nickolova, travelguide-bg, 2007)

In confirmation of the above opinion, here is the answer of Mrs. Sokolova, President of Board of the Directors of the Bulgarian Association of Travel Agents (BATA), to the question if Bulgaria’s accession to the EU will influence the country competitiveness in the international travel market:

“Bulgaria will certainly continue to be an interesting destination not only for Europe, but also for overseas countries like Japan. Theme events like the rose festival, the newly discovered Thracian tombs, tours round well-known Bulgarian monasteries, wine tours, bird watching, city breaks, etc. will become increasingly immediate and topical in the light of Bulgaria’s admission as a part of Europe, such as it has always been.”

(Kirekchiev, 2006)

It appears that the increasing demand for cultural tourism products from abroad is gradually ‘opening the eyes’ of tourism businesses, and those which are mainly engaged in large-scale tourism developments, are now redirecting their forces towards this growing tourist segment. This is also the case of Sunshine Tours Travel Agency. Mr. Boyan Manev admits that the tourists from the EU member states represent the highest number of cultural tourists in Bulgaria due to their significant knowledge of the old continent’s history and heritage, most of which are from the UK, Italy and Spain. Still, the tourist agent notes the recent rise of guests from the Far East – especially from Japan.

Nowadays, in the planning and development of any tourism product, especially if it is a big one as Seuthopolis, the impact of the much discussed World Economic Crisis cannot be omitted. Tourism is experiencing a breakdown globally, as well. Still, it seems like most influenced is conventional tourism, which in Bulgaria is the best developed type. What is of greater interest to this chapter is if Bulgarian cultural tourism is or will be shaken by the crisis. The answer to this question gives Mrs. Aneliya Krushkova, Head of the State Agency for Tourism during the sixth annual “Cultural Tourism” in the Bulgarian city of Veliko Tarnovo this year for Sofia News Agency.

“At the opening ceremony, the Chair of Bulgaria’s State Tourist Agency, Aneliya Krushkova, said that cultural tourism was one of the few sectors that have not been affected negatively by the global financial crisis. Krushkova informed that while Bulgaria’s winter resorts registered a 6.5% reduction in the number of tourists this season, 2.5% more people have visited Veliko Tarnovo’s historical sites.”

(SofiaNewsAgency, 2009)

Therefore, from the above clear statement becomes quite clear that the demand for cultural tourism products is not and probably will not decrease in the course of the World Economic Crisis. This piece of news sheds a light upon the future development of this very important tourist segment for Seuthopolis.
2.3. Characteristics of tourist flows in Bulgaria

Just in the recent years SAT has initiated segmentation of tourist markets not only according to their nationality, but also to their age, sex, level of education, occupation, types of tourism, length of stay, means of transport, booking behavior and travel partners. This sort of information on a national level is important to understand the basic tendencies of tourist flows in the country and would facilitate the final choice of tourist market segments prior to the tourism product development of Seuthopolis. The key elements are presented in this section. The strong seasonality issue of the Bulgarian tourism product was reviewed in Chapter One. This is namely the reason why SAT has conducted two separate studies on summer and winter tourists, where cultural tourism activities are present only in the former one. Conclusions on tendencies will be derived from the research on tourist flows in 2007 and 2008. Another important and quite interesting tourist segment within the tourist flows in Bulgaria is represented by Bulgarians living abroad who visit the country and meanwhile travel for tourism and leisure purposes. Official data for this tourist segment does not exist, but evidence of its presence has been derived from desk research, personal experience, observation and knowledge and by an open-question survey.

2.3.1. Foreign tourist flow in Bulgaria

To begin with, the tourists’ socio-demographic profile of foreigners will be presented with reference to the figures in appendix 9 in order respective to the data below (SAT, Holiday tourists - summer 2007, 2008), (SAT, “Analyzing tourists in Bulgaria, summer 2008”, 2009). As it can be observed from figure 7, in 2008 German tourists have comprised the greatest proportion of all other nationalities (22%). It is difficult to claim the same for the former year due to the difference in the list of representative countries in the research. Even though in 2007 Balkan countries were the leading generators of tourists for Bulgaria, followed by Germany, the number of countries comprising this region must be taken into consideration. Moreover, according to Tourist Media (www.tourismedia.info) the majority of tourists to Bulgaria from the neighboring countries, especially from Greece, are interested rather in winter holidays than visiting the country during the summer season. This is quite understandable due to the geographical situation and climate of Greece. So, even though the Greek market was the second largest one on a yearly basis for 2008 (DAT), it is not essential to this study. On figure 7 we can also observe a significant increase of British and Scandinavian tourists. Another noticeable difference is the detached presence of Romanians, Czechs and Ukrainians in the more recent pie chart of the two.

The percentage of foreign tourists between the age of 26 and 35 was the highest and in both years (27% +) with a slight tendency to increase at the account of those between 18 and 25. The second place was taken by the age group 36-45. The elderly guests over 56 years of age have undergone a significant increased by 4.8%. The number of foreign tourists with higher level of education has risen enormously from 2007 to 2008 (by 16.5%). The change is from 48.6% to 63.1%. The statistical data also indicates that the majority of foreign tourists visiting the country are working (66-67%), the amount of students have
increased by 5%, and the retired ones – by 1.5%. Higher attention should be paid to the following classification which presents the participation in various types of tourism. Even though the way of classifying the types is similar, there are still some changes mainly in splitting cultural tourism into several components according to the various activities practiced and adding a couple of more types (figure 11).

From the specified ones, in 2007 cultural tourism was in the first three with 17.6% after beach and SPA tourism, which is a substantial amount for an underdeveloped specialized form of tourism for the country. In 2008 cultural tourism was presented by a few forms due to the complexity of the cultural tourism product – ethnographic, architectural and archaeological – which together make up 47.7%. Please note that water sports and extreme water sports were separated into a different class which comprises 100% by itself. Unfortunately, there is no specific data of SAT about tourism type preferences of the various tourist segments which would have given a clearer direction in the choice of target markets. In 2007 though, such a division has been made regarding the main purpose of the trip (figure12). It shows that 69% of all foreign visitors have come to Bulgaria for a holiday break, which surely includes cultural tourism, followed by business tourists (13%). Figure 13 shows another perspective of foreign tourist flows in Bulgaria in 2007 – the amount of new and repeat visits. It is not surprising that guests from the Balkan states, which most probably come from the bordering countries, show highest repeat visitation (82.6%) due to the relatively close distance and easy access. It is not clear whether transit tourists have been included in the statistics. On the other hand, the most new tourists for Bulgaria who come from further states, are known of their strong economies, and are likely to have
greater spending ability. These are namely the North Americans, Russians and Western Europeans. Of these Russians predominantly come for summer holidays, seeking sun, sea and sand.

The foreign tourist flow travel behavior analysis of SAT for 2007 shows that the above-discussed market segments equally prefer to travel either in the company of their family or of their partner or spouse - 27% for each option (figure 14). Friends are on the third place, followed by a surprisingly high percentage of people who travel alone (almost 12%). Most foreigners visiting Bulgaria either do not have children, or they do not take them during the trips. The majority of those who do, bring one child. Please observe figures 15 and 16 in appendix 8. It is very likely that the reason for low participation of children is due to the high percentage of people in the age group of 26-35. Some still do not have children at this time or if they do, it is probably one child who is still quite young. Those who bring two children are probably in the age of 36 to 45.

From the above analysis of the foreign tourist flow in Bulgaria, it is necessary to sift out those segments which will play a key role in the decision-making process related to the development of the tourism product of Seuthopolis. Thus, according to the statistics on the socio-demographic profile and travel behavior of foreign tourists in Bulgaria, the most durable and reliable ones in general are:

- Couples between the age of 26 and 35
- Families with young children between the age of 36 and 45
- Empty nesters at the age of 56 and above

Of course, in the context of the Seuthopolis project, the emphasis will fall on those who seek exploration, authenticity and cultural experience.

In fact, a list of the “Other” generating countries comprises the highest percentage in this tourist distribution. In the previous section a few opinions on the development of cultural tourism in Bulgaria were reviewed. As it was mentioned, specialists have observed a significant interest from EU member states, particularly from the UK, Italy, Spain and from Japan. Since these are the most important generating markets in the focus of this study, more attention will be paid to their development in the past six years. The data has been obtained by the National Statistical Institute (NSI) and personally translated and transformed into tables by the author, which are shown in appendix 10 (tables 1 through 6). It must be taken into account that these markets, with the exception of the Britons, do not present the common mass tourists for Bulgarian tourism. We can observe a steady increase in all chosen markets in comparison to each previous year. Thus, for instance, in 2004 all of them mark a striking rise by over 20%. Supposedly, the reason for this is the pre-accession agreement between the EU and
Bulgaria, which has made the country more discussed and therefore popular in the European medium. For the consecutive year the tourist markets have kept growing, though at a slower pace. Only Spain has registered higher percentage than the rest of the countries. An important event marks the development of tourism in Bulgaria in general. This is the separation of a State Agency for Tourism (SAT) from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The newly established Agency had the difficult task to begin the international marketing of Bulgaria from scratch and therefore could not show positive result in the following months. In the year of 2006 a substantial slowdown of the growth of all listed cultural tourist market segments has been marked. There are two main political factors which have influenced the development of tourism as a whole. One of them was the election of the socialist party for the formation of a new government at the end of 2005, which surely has had an impact on Europeans’ impression of Bulgaria as a backward country. The second and no less important factor was the postponing of Bulgaria’s EU accession with one year due to the issues within the national law, health and criminalist systems of the country. The latter reason has played a trick on Bulgaria’s image as a tourist destination within the EU by calling associations of a still unsafe country. 2007 was a very successful year regarding the chosen tourist segments, apart from Britons. This time the tourist flow is positively influenced by the accession of Bulgaria as a full-right member state of the European Union. Thus the law of free movement of persons has been accepted, making the country much more easily accessible for EU citizens. When it comes to the fall of tourists from the UK, their already established habit of buying second homes in Bulgaria has decreased because of the higher prices of real estate properties. Another factor adds up to their low visitation - the widely discussed boom of construction business at the Bulgarian seaside, which has made their stay less pleasant. This trend though, does not have much to do with the development of cultural tourism which is of central interest to the thesis. In 2008 the tourist numbers continue to grow. Even though SAT expected higher percentages of increase in comparison to the previous year, one event of international importance has influenced tourism globally. The most discussed destination for the year was China – the host of the 2008 Olympic Games.

After the above foreign market analysis of the cultural tourist markets for Bulgaria, it is time to evaluate their consumption of cultural products and services. The information on the European markets is obtained from the country profiles of UK, Italy and Spain by Compendium Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe (www.culturalpolicies.net). In order to remain consistent and be able to compare the results of the different nationalities, the museum attendance percentage is taken into account. This seems to be the most relevant or even similar activity to the future cultural tourism product of Seuthopolis among the other activities given in the reports. Of course, they cannot be completely compatible due to the greater size, attractiveness and significance of the ancient city. Still, museum attendance would give some indication of how interested the markets would be.

To begin with, the behavior and cultural consumption patterns of Britons will be examined. Before all, it must be explained that the available information is not directly related to tourism products but mainly to arts. Figure 16 in appendix 10 shows that 43% of all population of the kingdom attend art events. The rest are mainly not interested in such activities. Of these 43%, 12% acclaim they are enthusiastic about their attendance and 4% - voracious. These both markets, which together comprise 16% of UK’s population, are of primary importance to this study due to their high potential to be interested in
cultural tourism products. The country profile states that the main factors influencing art attendance are level of education and social status. “The higher an individual’s level of education and social status, the more likely they are to have high levels of arts attendance” (Leyssen & Fisher, 2008). According to the report, elderly people are more likely to attend such activities and events than young people and women do so more than men. Also, families with younger children are less prepared to attend arts. This trend though, is probably closely related to the certain types of art and moreover, is not relevant for visiting cultural tourism sites. It must be taken into consideration that young children would rather enjoy visiting an outdoor cultural attraction, which is capable of calling a child’s attention, than for instance an indoor art gallery or an opera performance. Income level have minor influence on arts attendance, which is a positive clue regarding expenditure on cultural product. The biggest barrier to participation is said to be rather psychological than actual, relating mostly to social status and lifestyle. People say: “the arts are "not for people like me". As we can see on table 7, more than 30% of all visitors to museums and galleries in the UK attendant such 3-4 times per year. Additionally, 7.5% participate each month. This is a rather high percentage and, as we it was shown in the begging of this paragraph, the focus will be put on those markets which are enthusiastic and voracious attendants. Even better news bring figures 17 and 18, which show that 70% of all citizens of the UK visit historic environments, being the highest of among all activities, even higher than museum attendance. Moreover, the interest and visitation of children towards to such places is also quite high. Historic sites take third place with over 70% and museums, even though lowest among all, engage 50% of the children between the age of 10 and 15 years f age (UK Statistics Authority: www.statistics.gov.uk). For Britons it can be concluded that the most beneficial tourist market for the Seuthopolis project would be the earlier defined empty nesters at the age of 56 and above and families with children between the age of 36 and 45.

For Italians similar data is available. According to the Compendium Country Report of Italy, museum attendance is defined as relatively high (Bodo & Bodo, 2008). In 2006 almost 28% of all population of Italy attended a museum exhibition, which is the second most practiced type of cultural activity after the popular cinema attendance (table 8). In general the percentage is lower than Britain’s, but it must be noted that Great Britain consists of a few states and has larger population. It is clear that Italians have natural affinity to culture due to their own vast cultural heritage. This makes them a strong cultural tourist market for Bulgaria, also due to the presence of ancient sites. Unfortunately, data on the cultural travel behavior of Italians does not exist in order to surely place them into one of the three defined segments. But due to the fact that Italy has magnificent summer and winter resorts, it is logical to attract people between the age of 26 and 35 in the off season, when those resorts are not as much popular. Elderly people can also contribute to the visitation of cultural tourist sites. As we have witnessed with the British market they are more interested in cultural participation in general. Not much can be said about the young families with children, but it is very likely that parents are busy working throughout the low season.

Museum attendance is quite high in Spain. Even though the percentage of Spaniards who have visited a museum has been fluctuating through the years, nowadays more than 31% of the population is engaged in this type of cultural activity, which is a comparatively high figure (table 9). The situation is similar with the attendance of monuments and even shows better results – 34%. Participation at cultural centres is
also a popular activity, attracting almost 23% of all Spaniards (Villarroya, 2008). Therefore, as cultural tourists of Bulgaria, they are likely to appreciate the character of the tourism product of Seuthopolis. Thus, the Compendium Country Report of Spain confirms a strong resemblance in the attitude of Italy and Spain towards culture. That is why the same tourist segments will be taken into consideration: couples between the age of 26 and 35 and empty nesters at the age of 56 and above.

**Japan** is another important cultural tourist generating country for Bulgaria. That is why their travel behavior is of primary interest to this study. According to an Australian website dedicated to examining Japanese lifestyle (www.japanelifestyle.com.au, 2008), Japanese tourists mostly prefer package tours. It is interesting to note that many of them have begun to participate in so called 'study' tours. They not necessarily include strict learning but are rather for “**having new experiences... People can join a short private course such as gardening, natural therapy, pottery, and so on**”. The Mintel Group report “**Japan Outbound - October 2007**” claims that even though Japanese people are the fastest aging in the world, and the propensity to travel decreases with age, young people between 20 and 30 years of age “**today are more likely to travel than their parents and grandparents when they reach the same age because they are often more experienced travelers and want to continue doing so**”. The same report also declares that single women, married men and women aged between 18-39 years are most willing to travel overseas, of which 70% have expressed desire to travel abroad. Still, elderly people are not out of the study’s focus, because the growth in overseas travelers among them is speeding up. This is due to the so called “2007 problem” which demanded mandatory retirement of all citizens at the age of 60. But this is not a problem from the viewpoint of overseas destinations. On the contrary – the retirement time for Japanese Baby Boomers has come and more than 50% of them intend to celebrate this period by travelling. Moreover, the most popular destination for this purpose is Europe (31.6%). This segment is also financially important. “**More significantly, first-generation Dankai (the baby boomers in question) hold substantial financial assets, and coupled with the lump-sum payments they are entitled to upon retiring, gives this group considerable financial clout**”. Thus, those aged 55-59 usually spend almost 13.5% of their household income on package tours. This percentage increases for seniors between the age of 60-64 and 65-69 respectively to 16% and 16.3%. (MintelGroup, 2007) As we saw earlier in this chapter, Japanese people definitely have affinity for travelling to Bulgaria, and in particular for Thracian culture, as Kirekchiev (2006) has noticed. But the question is what are the specific preferences of the above-mentioned age-groups. The report gives an answer to this, as well.

“The Japanese are generally not very adventurous by nature, preferring to visit destinations with an established reputation... A significant number of Japanese are now seeking less crowded and less well known destinations... 26.4% of respondents were seeking places rarely visited by tourists. Men, both single and married, were more likely than women to want to visit emerging destinations... In 2007, 75.6% of the respondents in the JTM survey added that they prefer to relax at just one or two destinations during their trip abroad. Just 21.6% will try to see as many countries as possible during their stay.”

(MintelGroup, 2007)
Japanese overseas travelers can be attracted both during the high and the low season. They travel mostly in February-March, August-September and throughout the autumn season in the months of October-November (see figure 19). So, from all this information, it can be concluded that **all three defined tourist markets are identified among Japanese travelers** as beneficial for the future tourism product of Seuthopolis.

2.3.2. Bulgarian tourist flow

2.3.2.1. Domestic tourist flow

Analyzing Bulgarian *domestic tourism* is an entirely new approach of SAT. The first data of such character was obtained in 2008. First of all, it would be appropriate to have in mind the relatively low income of Bulgarians in comparison to the other EU citizen’s. This explains why many of them prefer to spend most of their holidays, excursions and short breaks in Bulgaria. This does not mean that domestic travelers are not interested in cultures and the relevant type of tourism. Even though Bulgaria is a small country, it has a varied cultural composition which forms a highly diversified tourism product of this kind. Moreover, Bulgarians are aware of the historical and ethnic richness of their land which they are proud of and what is more important – it increases their will and curiosity to get to know it. Much of the historical and archaeological heritage included in the educational programme of students of all levels, become subject of tourist visit during school or family trips. Let’s take a look at the data which DAT offers on the general domestic tourist flow of Bulgarians (see appendix 11, figures 20 and 21). Similarly to foreign tourists, the age group of **26 to 35 years** comprises the highest proportion and is almost equal to the **36-46** one with a difference of only 2%. The vast majority of the tourists have a secondary or higher level of education (97.2%), which may lead to a conclusion that in general their interests and preferences for tourism are varied due to their competence in different spheres. Therefore, they can be an important target market for the project of Seuthopolis, as well.

From this recent data on the domestic tourist flow, it is visible that **school children** of all ages are the youngest cultural tourist segment to be targeted for the tourism product of Seuthopolis. They would visit the site either with their teachers or parents, who both fall into the age groups of other primary interest: **26-35** and **36-45**. Higher education students would also be interested in such a site, depending on their personal and academic interests.

So as to retain the consistent character of this situation analysis of Seuthopolis, the consumption of cultural products on a national level must be reviewed. The major source of information used in this section is the country profile of Bulgaria published by the Council of Europe: “*Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe*”. The data for this report presented below has been obtained from the National Statistical Institute (NSI) of Bulgaria. Even though no specific information about the travel habits and preferences of the population in this aspect exists, the consumption of cultural products can give a general picture of how much cultural tourism is attractive on a national level. In 2005 the National
Centre for Research on Public Opinion examined the "Cultural attitudes and consumption of cultural products in Bulgaria" by means of semi-standardized interviews. Unsurprisingly, this was the first thorough analysis of the matter for 15 years. As it was explained in the historical background of Bulgarian cultural policies, such topics and issues have been of minor significance and discussion during the communist regime in the country. Consequently, the sad results from this attitude to the cultural life and education in Bulgaria are evident in the study in question. Naturally, the most popular leisure activity is watching TV (57.4%), followed by book reading (8%) and listening to music (6%). But the most worrying is the tiny 1.4% of the population who regularly visit the theatre, movies, opera, ballet or exhibitions. Of course, no matter how much forgotten and out of everyday life the last activities are, this does not mean that people are not curious or interested in participating. The limited access to cultural involvement has now 'pulled the trigger' of patience and the suppressed interest in namely such events is now constantly growing (10.4%). This means that the proportion of real and the potential audience is 1:10. Supporting the above picture are the reasons why the interviewed do not visit cultural events. 32% stated that this is due to the low participation of such in their social environment and 17% admitted: "I feel unprepared for this type of cultural entertainment". Therefore, conclude Arkova and Andreeva (2008, p. 51), “the leading factor in low participation rates is more related to socio-cultural factors, such as family, friends, and the environment”. They also add that education, especially at a young age, also has decisive influence on the cultural consumption habits. The outdated education system in the country, incompatible with young people’s needs, has also played a major role in this aspect, leading a reduced demand for cultural products in the last decade. It can be observed on figures 22, 23 and 23 in appendix 11.

Despite the mainly negative results, the fact that Bulgarians are curious and eager to participate in cultural activities brings a ray of light within the domestic tourist tendencies. As usual, well-educated people should fall in the focus of Seuthopolis.

2.3.2.2. Bulgarians living abroad

Even though no official data is available about the travel behavior of this tourist segment, it cannot be omitted due to its high propensity to travel in Bulgaria. The reasons for this are complex, but mainly related to:

- Nostalgia
- Visiting friends and relatives
- Business
- Holiday
- Internal need to get to know their own land if they have not done before emigrating
- To enjoy its cultural and natural heritage of which they are proud of, etc.
- To show these to their foreign partner, friends and colleagues

Just recently the Head of DAT, Mrs. Krushkova, has expressed her opinion on the potential of this tourist segment:
She believes advertising Bulgaria as a tourist destination should focus on a few main markets, one of the main targets being the Bulgarians abroad. She cited Morocco as an example as the country advertises their tourist product into six priority markets. Five of them are other countries and the sixth - the Moroccans abroad. "We advertise Bulgaria in 50 destinations abroad, we invest tremendous efforts and funds and the results are trifling," Krushkova said. The Bulgarians abroad, with regards to tourism, possess huge potential, which must be used.

(paper.standartnews.com, 2009)

A rough estimation of this market can be made. The total amount of Bulgarians residing abroad is about 3.5 million (www.dnevnik.bg, 2006). If we assume that half of them visit Bulgaria due to one of several of the above-mentioned reasons, this means that 1750 000 people are potential tourists who might undertake trips within the country. If only half of those Bulgarians participate in the inbound tourism of the country, this market segment amounts 875 000, which outnumbers the second largest foreign tourist market for Bulgaria – Greece. The percentage of those Bulgarians residing abroad who are active travelers and particularly visit cultural sites was checked via a survey among a hundred people by the author of this thesis. The respondents took part in forum discussions on websites or social networks dedicated to Bulgarians living abroad – Facebook Group: Bulgarians abroad and Virtual Bulgarian Society: Bulgarians Abroad (http://bgabroad.ning.com/). Respondents residing in eleven different countries contributed to the research. The biggest amount of participants lives in the USA, followed by Germany and the UK. The country of residence, though, does not concern the information which the survey aimed to obtain. In order to have a representative result, twenty respondents for five age-groups were included. Please refer to appendix 12 for a sample of the survey and graphs representing the outcome of all hundred responds.

From figure 25 it is worth mentioning four things. First of all, about 43% of the respondents living in Italy stated that their stay in Bulgaria lasts more than 30 days. These are a rather high percentage and a long stay. Even higher is the percentage of those visiting the country for 7 to 14 days. Therefore, the average stay of this group is not the longest. This appears to be the group of Bulgarians living in Israel, where the two longest periods comprise about 39% each. The reason for this may be the minimal choice for mode of transport, where flights are the only (convenient) option and moreover, there are no low-cost flights. It seems that the same logic cannot be applied for Bulgarian tourists from the USA, because they do not stay as long as those from Israel do, despite the long-haul flights. Still, a significant percentage of them stay in the country for a period between two and four weeks. Similar is the situation with Bulgarians residing in Spain. Cheap flights between the two countries have been introduced just in the recent couple of years. Obviously short are the stays of those arriving from Belgium, Ireland, the UK and Denmark. An explanation for this can be sought in the presence of flying low-cost carriers to Bulgaria allowing frequent but short visits, except from Denmark. On the other hand, Denmark is relatively closer to Bulgaria than the other three countries and can also be reached quickly by car or by bus.

Figure 26 reveals how much more cultural sites are preferred to natural ones during the tourism trips of nationals visiting the country. In total 70% of all respondents visit cultural sites and 54% visit natural
Given that 24% combine both types of sites while traveling, this explains why the sum exceeds 100%.

Figure 27 comes to prove the statement of Lowenthal (1985) and Dickinson (1996) that “as people age, they become more interested in their cultural roots, in things historic, and in developing a greater understanding of the past... the over-fifty market and seniors are felt to hold the greatest potential for growth in cultural tourism”. Here becomes evident that those Bulgarians living abroad, who are aged above 56, visit cultural sites the most. A gradual increase of affinity to cultural tourism shows parallel development with age. Respondents between the age of 26 to 35 and 36 to 45 are equally interested in combining both types of tourism, but are still more interested in cultural sites in general.

The last figure in appendix 12 shows the type of company in which the respondents usually travel by the age group in which they currently fall. We can notice that the earlier defined market segments are confirmed by the results from this survey. For instance, during their trip those aged between 26 and 35 travel mostly with their partner and thus confirm the market segment of couples in this age group. Apparently, Almost 50% the respondents who fall in the next group dedicate most of their time to their family during their trips in the home country. On the contrary, empty nesters above the age of 55 travel mostly with their spouse or with friends, most probably their peers. Of course, due to change in values and interests, the latter hold the greatest potential to be a stable market segment for Seuthopolis.

2.3.3. Cultural heritage tourism for children

The site of Seuthopolis is expected to be visited also by children from Bulgaria and from abroad. It is a well-known fact that their perception and viewpoint often differs from those of adults. That is why the tourism product of Seuthopolis should call their attention in a special way. Cultural sites may often appear boring to them due to inappropriate presentation and interpretation for their age. That is why children should be engaged in illustrative, practical and creative activities, which would surely be more attractive and entertaining for them. In this way involving children in the ancient past can also contribute to their common knowledge, without giving them the feeling of school education. Here is what Jovana Tripkovic and Kristina Penezic conclude from the workshop held at Vinca archaeological site for a few days with children from local elementary schools:

“Designing specific programs with aim to present cultural heritage to certain target groups, such as children is a necessity. Challenge with designing such programs lays in simplifying, interpreting and defining the presented past for them. Presenting any archaeological knowledge without being theoretically predefined is difficult but can’t be avoided. Place we chose to start is an authentic environment where children could think and imagine what one Vinca child could experience.

One thing we, as grown-up individuals and researchers, are deprived of is a basic truth that we overgrew childhood, and therefore are not quite able to see things from a child’s
perspective. Our past is populated not only by adults, but by children as well, whose growing up we are not quite able to grasp."

(Penezic & Tripkovic, 2007)

As a result becomes clear that children should be treated very carefully as a tourist market segment, especially when it boils down to culture, archaeology and learning.

### 2.4. Direct cultural tourism competition for Bulgaria and Seuthopolis

This section analyzes the competing destinations for cultural tourism with Bulgaria in order to demonstrate the general rivalry context in which the tourism product of Seuthopolis will be developed. Competing cultural destinations within the country are also reviewed.

It would be very difficult to find a concrete source of information which clearly states which destinations are major cultural tourism competitors for Bulgaria, which is due to the immaturity of this type of tourism product. The presence of ancient cultures as attractions within Europe will be taken into account due to their direct link with the cultural heritage character of Seuthopolis.

One way of evaluating the cultural tourism competitiveness of Bulgaria is to take a look at its geographically and culturally closest countries, known as the Balkan states. The ones which are considered to be important cultural tourism destinations within Europe, will be reviewed.

Bulgaria is a Balkan state. Even though this part of Europe is widely taken by Westerners as one whole destination where a single type of culture exists, this stereotype has slowly begun to fall apart in people’s mind. The same opinion was expressed by George Dutchev, the editor-in-chief of Property Xpress, who provides daily news on South East Europe for [www.Reedmidem.com](http://www.Reedmidem.com). He writes the following:

“Despite being close to each other, Balkan countries have a number of differences in terms of tourism development and perspectives. From the well-developed Greece and Turkey, to emerging Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania to the “rising stars” Montenegro and Albania, forces driving the development of each of these markets are all different, varying from sunny coastlines and snowy mountains to business trips.”

(Dutchev, 2008)

The enlargement of the European Union has played a key role for the appreciation of the existing cultural differences within the peninsula. Thus, along with the political discussions and accession of Bulgaria to the big European family, the cultural side of this land is being evaluated internationally as a part of the Union’s integration programs. It is no secret that nowadays in Western Europe still little is known specifically about the country as a result from the lack of information during the communist regime in Bulgaria. It is very likely that the “untapped potential of cultural tourism” in Bulgaria, as BNR
reporter Veneta Nickolova defines it, is probably the outcome namely of political history. But past is past and we must not only learn from it, but also see it and make use of it as an opportunity for future developments.

This competitor analysis cannot be fulfilled without the use of reliable information about the main tourism competitors of Bulgaria in general. Moreover, specific data on other preferred cultural tourism destination than Bulgaria does not exist. That is why further conclusions are to be assumed according to previous knowledge and additional sources. Appendix 13 begins with a map of the Balkan peninsula which helps situate Bulgaria’s competitor destinations according to data of SAT from figure 30. The most culturally close ones to Bulgaria in general are Macedonia and Croatia. Due to the fact that Macedonia is still in the development phase prior to emerging, it will be excluded from comparison. The reason for Macedonia’s rank three on the competitor list is most probably its variety of cultural assets. Macedonia and Croatia fall out because no ancient cultures of high significance form a cultural tourism product there. Even though Turkey, Greece and Romania are bordering countries for Bulgaria and the cultures at times merge, the cultural distance is bigger due to language, religious and ethnical differences. Even so, Turkey and Greece are primary competitors for Bulgaria regarding the presence of cultural heritage sites and attractions. Despite Romania’s joint accession with Bulgaria to the EU which has raised tourists’ interest to both countries, it will also be excluded from the analysis due to lack of similar kind of ancient cultural sites of major importance on its territory. Thus, the list of cultural tourism competitors on the Balkans shortens down to two – Greece and Turkey.

To conduct a fair benchmark, these Balkans states are compared according to their Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (2009) from the World Economic Forum. The focus is put on the 14th pillar in the country profiles - cultural resources available in the countries. In order to have a clear point of view, Bulgaria is weighed against all its competitors simultaneously by making use of figures 31 and 32 in appendix 13. In this way becomes evident that Bulgaria’s strongest competitors among the Balkan states are Greece and Turkey. This result is not surprising because, as it was mentioned earlier in this section, the tourism products of these two countries are well developed.

Greece is one of the richest and most experienced destinations regarding cultural heritage and its management. This fact is confirmed by Richards (1996). He claims that the most important attractions of Greece have always been the archaeological sites and their associate museums, which have established the country’s image as a cultural destination. More recently its tourism product has been enhanced by popularizing modern Greek culture. Similarly to Greece, this cultural aspect is of great significance to the diversification of the tourism product of Bulgaria, because the massively demanded sun, sea and sand are also in the core attributes of both countries. Richards declares that “classical sites act as a major attraction for incoming tourism to Greece” (Richards, 1996, 2005, p. 134). Even though most of those sites are situated outside the big cities and close to rural areas, tourism activity is concentrated mostly near “major urban centres, such as the Acropolis (Athens) and Knossos (Heraklion)”. Richards also notes that one very important factor which influenced the growth of cultural tourism in Greece has been the development of many festivals and cultural events, located in ancient open-air theatres. This has been very attractive to the tourists. The perspectives for cultural tourism development in Bulgaria are quite
similar to the way Greece has achieved this strong image of a cultural destination. Even the ancient Hellenic and Thracian cultures at times intertwine, still each of them possessing their unique features, being of primary importance for the world civilization progress. This is a reason to foresee an eventual partnership in the development and diversification of the cultural tourism product of both countries, rather than being severe competitors. A couple of European trans-border tourism-related projects for cultural integration have already been realized.

Even though in recent days *Turkey* has been perceived rather as a beach holiday destination, its cultural resource ranks it high on the World Heritage List. In this sense it faces the same problem as Bulgaria. Mass tourism has a great impact on Turkey’s image, as well. The strong potential of cultural and faith tourism of Turkey has been recognized in the recent years, as it has been in Bulgaria. This neighboring country similarly needs improvement of infrastructure and serious investments in this specialized form of tourism in order to develop and realize its potential (Turkish ministry of culture and tourism, 2006). Even though both countries have similar issues to solve, our cultures are actually quite different and therefore attract tourists with different interests. Moreover, the territory of Bulgaria is much smaller where cultural monuments and architectural sites are densely located and because of this can be accessed more easily and quickly. Southern Bulgaria is partially populated by Turks which is a cultural asset because it can demonstrate their culture and religion for those who are eager to experience it.

From the above evaluation of Bulgaria’s two real competitors in cultural tourism it can be concluded that it is a country which is so culturally rich that if proper investment, marketing and management is implemented, it can outrun even the success of Greece and the potential of Turkey. Still, these three countries can also be good partners due to the borders and Balkan culture they share. Moreover, the cultural significance and uniqueness of Seuthopolis, and the project which will reveal them, has no equivalent worldwide. This will be Bulgaria’s ‘business card’ for cultural tourism in modern times.

There is one competitor outside the borders of the Balkan Peninsula which cannot be omitted in this analysis. This is namely Italy with its top rank on the World Heritage List, which can be seen on figure 31 in appendix 13 - *Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum*. It is a well-known fact that the ancient Roman archaeological sites and cultural treasure which Italy holds are of extreme significance and popularity not only in Europe, but also on the globe. That is why Bulgaria cannot be compared to Italy at all. Maybe this is the only cultural tourism destination in Europe which Bulgaria cannot outshine with its ancient cultural heritage. But instead, it can learn precious lessons in the development of cultural tourism.

The presence of potential cultural tourism competitors for Seuthopolis within Bulgaria should not be omitted. Even though SAT does not provide information on the attendance of major cultural destinations, they can be clearly pointed out. First of all, this is the Thracian town of Perperikon in Southern Bulgaria which already attracts a lot of visitors despite the lack of appropriate tourist facilities. The manager and main archaeologist professor Ovcharov actually has expressed his negative attitude
towards the project of architect Tilev because it would directly compete with Perperikon. There are other Thracian sites in the same region for which the picture seems to be the same. But it looks rather positive for Seuthopolis since it would be much more attractive not only due to its greater significance, but also to its location and modern vision. Moreover, they can also be assumed as contemplating each other’s products rather than competing with one another. As it was mentioned in the beginning of the first chapter of this thesis, Bulgaria has been recently split into tourist regions by SAT, one of which is Old Bulgarian Capitals. They can also be considered to be competitive, not only for the domestic, but also for the foreign market. These are the cities of Veliko Tarnovo, currently marketed as the cultural capital of Bulgaria, Pliska and Preslav. They are all situated in Northern Bulgaria right across the Balkan Mountain Range. It happens quite often that tours through Bulgaria starting from Sofia and visiting these places are offered. Sometimes though, Thracian sites like for instance the famous Kazanlak Tomb are included in the programs of tour operators. This suggests that Seuthopolis would most probably be a popular cultural site among them. Additionally, the city of Plovdiv should also be considered as one of the major cultural tourism destinations in the country, most popular for its Roman background and well-preserved architecture of its old town from the National Revival period. A little further away from the Valley of the Thracian Kings are situated a few old Roman towns which in present times are better known due to their location at the Black Sea Coast. These are Sozopol, Nessebar, Pomorie and Balchik. The first three can be thought of as competitors for Seuthopolis because they are situated much closer to it. On the other hand, though, in order to reach them travelling from one end to the country to the other, one should pass very near Seuthopolis. Thus, it can become an important site attraction for them. Alternatively, those who are staying in this area of the Black Sea Coast may also be interested in taking a trip to the ancient city. Despite the numerous options for cultural tourism in Bulgaria, it is obvious that due to its central location and attractiveness, Seuthopolis has the potential to attract visitors not only as a major destination, but also for day visits.
3. The Valley of the Thracian Kings – Tourism Development Potential

This last point of Chapter Three analyzes the potential of the Valley of the Thracian Kings in Central Bulgaria. As pointed out in the literature review for assessment of tourism potential, the European Commission’s guidelines for “Using Natural and Cultural Heritage for the Development of Sustainable Tourism in Non-traditional Tourism Destinations, Assessing Tourism Potential” (European Commission, 2002, p.33-44) is applied. The overall structure for assessment is adopted. For the purpose, both primary research via interviews and questionnaires at the destination and desk research have been applied.

3.1. Natural features

Even though the natural features of the Valley of the Thracian Kings are not of central interest to the thesis, but rather of supporting character, they are very important to the overall experience. The natural features of the precinct create the physical environment which inevitably has an impact on the tourist’s trip. The physical context, in which the product of Seuthopolis will be developed, is quite varied, but emphasis will be put on the most significant features. First of all, the surrounding waters of the Koprinka dam are already an irreplaceable peace of the natural resource. It has the potential for the development of a wide range of side activities, which would enrich the core product. Therefore, a number of SMEs and local entrepreneurs can benefit from these.

The region is quite popular also as the Valley of the Roses. Rosa Damascena was brought from Asia to the lands of today’s Bulgaria centuries ago. The in XIX century it “became the greatest wealth of the Kazanlak region and a symbol of Bulgaria” (tourism.kazanlak.bg, 2007). The rose oil extracted from this special sort is broadly used in all kinds of industries, mostly in culinary, cosmetics and perfumery. It is the basis for many famous perfume and cosmetics brands. Nowadays, together with the Thracian culture, the plantations of Bulgarian roses are the most prominent of all natural assets of the region. There is a museum dedicated to it and of course the famous rose fields and distilleries, where the rose oil is extracted. The traditional rose-picking in June and the Rose Festival held every year attract guests from all over the world. There exists great potential for further development of tourism products related to this great combination of natural and cultural resource. An evidence for this is also the Rose Museum situated in Kazanlak.

Right next to the Koprinka dam is situated the small and quiet resort town of Pavel Banya which offers balneology procedures and thermal springs. Nearby is situated an aqua park, which provides one more possibility to both enjoy and enrich the tourist’s experience.

Last but not least, the proximity of Central Balkan National Park offers the opportunity to combine the visit to Seuthopolis or any other of the surrounding places of interest with a hike in the well-preserved nature of the park. Its management is well-suited to the visitors’ needs and provides authentic experience among the varied flora and fauna. It is a must to mention that Central Balkan National Park is a PAN European Park which gives extra added benefit to its guests. Wildlife and pristine nature are becoming more and scarcer in Europe. Moreover, the name of the park itself prompts to the foreign
visitors that they are having a trip through the heart of the Balkan Peninsula. This is also an important historical place with a number of monuments holding memories from the war for Bulgaria’s liberty from Ottoman rule. In the region there are also two natural reserves – Kamenshtitsa and Leshnitsa.

3.2. Cultural features

Certainly, the number one cultural feature in the region is the Thracian culture as a whole, which is evident in the numerous tombs scattered throughout the Valley of the Thracian Kings. Only 100 of all 1000 tombs have been examined and a few of them are accessible for tourists. The Kazanlak Thracian Tomb is “a part of the UNESCO world heritage and one of the most attractive tombs, with its magnificent frescoes, depicting a Thracian burial rite”. Golyama Kosmatka temple-tomb is “the latest home of the Seuthopolis ruler - Seuthes III. There have been found the golden cup, wreath, horse harness and battle accoutrements, as well as the bronze head from the ruler’s statue”. Golyama Arsenalka’s architecture represents the Thracian idea of the world with the Sun in the center and the remainder - the nether world, the human world and the heavens. The Shushmanets temple is unique on the Balkan Peninsula and it represents the mythological model of the world (tourism.kazanlak.bg, 2007). There are four more accessible tombs also dating from IV and V century BC, in which have been found precious golden and daily life objects which Thracians have used. Obviously, only a tiny amount of the Thracian heritage has been excavated. The potential to reveal more of the Thracian secrets is literally vast. Archaeological works are going on and discovering so much about this ancient culture, that it provokes enormous interest to witness these authentic temples. Of course, after the excavation of the city of Seuthopolis, they will remain the inextricable link between the Thracian capital, the ancient civilization and this culture’s rituals and beliefs. The museum ‘Iskra’ in the nearby town of Kazanlak holds a rich collection of objects which have been excavated from the tombs, including a newly created vault keeping the most precious ones safe. This is the coordinating body for tourist visits to the Thracian tombs, the Rose Museum, Ethnographic Complex ‘Kulata’ and Museum ‘Iskra’ itself.

There are a few festivals happening throughout the year in Kazanlak. They are related to the two main prides of this part of the country and are named after them: the Rose Festival and Celebrations in the Valley of the Thracian Kings. These themed events are especially attractive due to the significance of the cultures they are dedicated to. They are visited by Bulgarians, as well as by foreigners willing to join the authentic Bulgarian experience happening right in its heart.

Of course, local culture and customs are also quite interesting not only to observe, but also to take part in. In Kazanlak there are seven galleries and museums which present the historical background of the local population and works of prominent Bulgarian and foreign artists. Kazanlak is a town of well-expressed creativity, supported by the unions of archetiers and of fine arts. Guests are invited to take part in workshops which teach and demonstrate to the curious visitors.
3.3. Area as a whole

The Valley of the Thracian Kings is situated between two mountains – the Balkan Mountain Range and Sredna Gora, which are the region’s natural walls, making it less vulnerable to external influence but more attractive for the eye. They also create the specific climate of the valley which offers a rather mild winter and warm humid summer to which contribute twenty micro-dams. The surrounding environment of the Valley of the Thracian Kings is definitely not poor when it comes to attractions, but they seem rather minor in comparison with the significance and might of the Thracian civilization. Of course they have their own charm and reasons to visit. For instance, there are numerous villages, which are appropriate for rural tourism, offering relaxed and traditional atmosphere and also genuine Bulgarian cuisine. A few archaeological sites and ethnographic complexes can also be found in the nearby settlements. Thus, the variety of possible activities, in which the guest of the region can participate, becomes even richer. The fertile lands in the valley are broadly used for alternative agricultural plantations like roses, lavender, cotton, vines, peanuts, hop, honeybees, etc. Such cultures are very attractive to see - the way they are grown, harvested, processed and packaged until they reach the customer which, eventually, is also the tourist.

3.4. Stakeholders

The public body responsible for the tourism promotion of the region is the Tourism Department in the Municipality of Kazanlak. After a personal meeting with the Head of the Tourism Department and Tourism Office of Kazanlak, Mrs. Rositsa Nikolova, it became clear that the Municipality of Kazanlak gives its full support to the Seuthopolis project and considers it as the main catalyst for the tourism within this precinct. The tourism business in the region is developing but is definitely not saturated by numerous tourist agencies. The region offers good opportunities for tourism entrepreneurship in a few types of tourism. Such are, as defined by SAT, the SPA, balneology and wellness tourism, wine tourism, rural tourism and festivals. The region also offers good opportunities for hunting and fishing tourism. All of these, of course, would fall into the highly cultural context of the Valley of the Thracian Kings. There are about fifty Bulgarian and foreign tour operators which work on the territory of the municipality of Kazanlak. According to the Head of the museum ‘Iskra’, Mr. Kosyo Zarev, their number becomes higher each year. Therefore, one very important interest group is developing positively, which brings higher visitation to the Valley of the Thracian Kings. According to him, the proposed project for the excavation of the Thracian city will bring also higher investments in further archaeological works in the valley, which is of primary interest to the museum. From the direct interviews conducted in the town of Kazanlak, becomes clear that the attitude of the local population to the Seuthopolis project is well positive. People are curious towards the site itself, but also realize that this project would create many opportunities for starting off small businesses directly or indirectly related to tourism. It would also be beneficial for other economic sectors due to the necessity for infrastructure development and various services. Last, but not least, as Mrs. Rositsa Nikolova declared, the tourism product of the Valley of the Thracian Kings needs
diversification. The region’s tourism potential can be gradually realized by implementing architect Tilev’s project supported by a well-thought, organized and managed product. In its responsible development is expected to take part Kazanlak Sustainable Tourism Association (www.kazanlaktour.com).

The closest city to Kazanlak is Stara Zagora, which is one of the oldest settlements in Europe with an eight-thousand-year history. Situated on a crossroad, it is the best developed city in the region. It possesses cultural heritage from many ages: Prehistoric, Roman, Byzantine, Bulgarian, and Ottoman, until now in modern Bulgaria. Nearby, only 87km. away, across the Balkan Mountain Range to the north is situated Bulgaria’s capital during the Second and Third Bulgarian Kingdoms - Veliko Tarnovo. It holds the traditional style architecture of houses which is presented in a very interesting way due to the steep relief. Veliko Tranovo is most famous for the architectural – museum reserve ‘Tsarevets’ fortress.

Another adjacent city is the third biggest city in Bulgaria – Plovdiv. It also incorporates the same cultures as Stara Zagora. There has also been found traces of Thracian culture, but it is obvious that it has not been a culturally and economically important centre as Seuthopolis. Plovdiv is well-known for its beautiful old town which combines Macedonian and Byzantine fortress walls, a Roman theatre and National Revival architecture styles. All these cities have already established relations with big international and national tour operators and agencies. Due to the relatively well-developed cultural tourism there for the country, the tourist flow is increasing and gradually creating balance in the seasonality of the Bulgarian tourism product. A central attraction like Seuthopolis would not only contribute to the alternative tourism force of the product, but can also benefit from the established tourist market flow of these destinations.

3.5. Infrastructure

The infrastructure in the region is relatively well-developed but does not offer much comfort. The accommodation establishments are not many, but new ones are being built or adapted for this use. Hotels are mostly 3-star ranked. The majority of lodging facilities are guest houses and family hotels, many of which are developed in the local traditional folklore style either in Kazanlak or in the nearby villages. In the town of Pavel Banya there is also a private centre for rehabilitation which has modern medical equipment. There are also quite a few hotels which offer SPA and Wellness procedures. It is evident that people realize the tourism potential of the Valley of the Thracian Kings, foresee its development and show initiative to take part in it. In 2004 the total bed capacity of the Municipality of Kazanlak was around 1000. Restaurants are not many, as well, but the locals and visitors are mainly satisfied with the quality of the cuisine and service. Even some hotel & restaurant establishments are rather visited for their ethnographic value. There are other F&B establishments which are popular among the local population for quick lunch but not necessarily offer fast food. There are a few shops in Kazanlak, which sell variety of traditional Bulgarian souvenirs, but most popular in the region are the products containing rose oil like cosmetics, perfumery, rose jam, etc. Most hotels have their own souvenir shops.
The Valley is “geographically situated in the center of Bulgaria and the town of Kazanlak is the center of the Valley. Buses run regularly to and from the villages and most of the roads are convenient and accessible with all kinds of transportation” (tourism.kazanlak.bg, 2007). The region has a well-developed road network which serves the access to and within the destination. The closest situated international airport is in the city of Plovdiv – 121km. away from Kazanlak. Even though this airport is not broadly used for international flight landing, there exists a project for its expansion in order to improve the direct accessibility of Central Bulgaria from abroad. Despite the fact that it has long been discussed but not initiated, a major attraction as Seuthopolis would contribute to the acceleration of the process. The other two closest international airports are the ones in Sofia and Bourgas – one of them in the far west of the country and the other – at the Black Sea coast. The distance to Kazanlak from both of them is almost 200km by road. We can see that despite the good accessibility of the Valley of the Thracian Kings, tourism has not undergone turbulent development. This is due to the strongly polarized mass tourism product of beach and mountain tourism in the country, the conditions for which are equally distanced from the region. The potential for cultural tourism development, though, is high namely in this precinct and its accessibility will be of favor to it. Opportunities for traveling and tourism in Valley of the Thracian Kings are promoted by the Tourist Information Centre governed by the Municipality of Kazanlak.

3.6. Legal and policy context

The Seuthopolis project is fully supported by a number of municipalities in Bulgaria, including the Municipality of Kazanlak where the site is situated. A closer look will be taken at its regional development strategy in relation to tourism. It is legally and priority compatible with the ‘National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development’. The general assessment of the cultural tourism potential given by this document highlights the fact that the resources are not fully utilized. This is due to the absence of the tourism sector in the structural importance in the municipality economy. Tourism within the boundaries of the municipality of Kazanlak is growing steadily but not as fast as the mass tourism in the country. It needs an overall tourism development strategy and investments in the improvement of the tourism infrastructure, with a special emphasis on lodging facilities. (Municipal Development Strategy of Kazanlak, 2007-2013)

According to the Regional Operational Programme in the ‘National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism Development’, Kazanlak is among the municipalities in the country which possess “high quality tourism resources which have been realized on weak or average level” (Municipal Development Strategy of Kazanlak, 2007-2013). Two of the Regional Operational Programme priorities are focused namely on the future development of the tourism. They are:

Sustainable tourism development:

- Development of tourist attractions and infrastructure
- Support for the development of tourist services
- Development of the tourism products and destination marketing
Integration and creation of opportunities for regional and local initiatives for development:

- Regional initiatives and international cooperation
- Strategic and organizational plans, identification and development of projects
- Integrated local participation and development
- Cooperation with European regions (Interreg IIIC).

(Municipal Development Strategy of Kazanlak, 2007-2013)

The tourism department of the Municipality does not have a clearly defined marketing strategy for which are accused the public institutions responsible for organizational planning, control and investments in public infrastructure. Even though, the Municipality of Kazanlak is determined to facilitate the tourism development in the Valley of the Thracian Kings and valorize its precious heritage by prioritizing the following aspects:

- Synchronization of the actions of the cultural institutions and improvement of their material and technical resources.
- Improvement of their accessibility and interpretation
- Creating new forms of cultural activities available both for the local population and for tourists

(Municipal Development Strategy of Kazanlak, 2007-2013)

From the above priorities it becomes evident that the Municipality of Kazanlak will focus on the development of the tourism industry in the Valley of the Thracian Kings, especially emphasizing on its cultural resource. This is extremely important for the Seuthopolis project and the desired high quality experience of the visitors to come.

3.7. Tourism demand

The tourist flow in Bulgaria was broadly discussed in section 2.3 of this chapter where the major markets for cultural tourism in the country were defined. In this last part of the assessment of the tourism potential of the Valley of the Thracian Kings, an analysis of the tourism demand will be drawn up in order to compare the cultural tourism markets on a national and regional level. It will verify if the already defined markets are compatible with the demand in the region. Emphasis will be put on the two main resources – the roses and the Thracian culture and the places of interest related to them. The quantitative data on the attendance of these is obtained from the coordinating body of these attractions – Museum ‘Iskra’ in the town of Kazanlak. Specific data about the tourist markets was obtained via an extensive interview with the Head of the Museum, Mr. Kosyo Zarev. Primary research has also been conducted in order to collect an overall opinion on people’s attitude and expectations from the tourism product of Seuthopolis.
Unfortunately, it is not a common practice in Bulgaria to create detailed data bases on the tourist flow, especially in regions where the tourism business has not undergone major development. This is the situation in the Municipality of Kazanlak, where the only institution which has rough information for the last four years is Museum ‘Iskra’. Appendix 14 presents this information in tables and figures.

From table 10 can be concluded that the most visited site through the years has been the tomb of Seuthes III, despite the fact that the most easily accessible one is the Kazanlak Thracian Tomb, which is a UNESCO site. The attractiveness of the former one leads us to the conclusion that the ancient city of Seuthopolis, named after Seuthes III, would enjoy great popularity among tourists. According to Mr. Zarev, the fluctuation in the attendance of all sites through the years is due to the higher interest caused by newly excavated sites, followed by slight decrease in the consecutive year. It is very likely that the popularity of these will rise in the following years because active marketing abroad has been conducted just in the last year in important European capitals like Madrid, Brussels, Rome and London and outside of Europe in Japan. Informative brochures and books on Thracian culture and the rose tradition have been published by Museum ‘Iskra’ in six languages in order to make the sites more easily appreciated by the main tourist markets. From figure 33 becomes clear that the attendance to the main places of interest is higher for Bulgarians and is relatively stable. Even though less visits have been generated by foreigners, the development of this market is more optimistic because they show steady increase except in 2008, when fall in attendance has been registered at all sites. Despite the lack of quantitative data on foreign visitors by nationality, Mr. Zarev has observed strong presence of Italian, Spanish, British and Japanese tourists through the years in the peak months from May until October. For instance, an English professor organizes trips for British citizens with specialized interests in ancient cultures each month. This is just one additional relation to the 50 Bulgarian tourist agencies with which Museum ‘Iskra’ cooperates.

The overall percentage of all tourists who are willing to repeat their visit to the Valley of the Thracian Kings is between 30% and 50%. As we can see, the cultural tourist market segments in this precinct are fully compatible with the cultural tourists on a national level and therefore no further qualitative research is necessary regarding the overall demand. In general, it can be said that the region in which the Southopolis project is about to happen is fully representative for the demand for cultural tourism products on a national level. But in order to be even more precise in the assessment of the tourism demand for Thracian cultural sites, it would be relevant to take a look at the demand side of another significant Thracian settlement in Bulgaria. The only one, which could be roughly compared to Southopolis, is the ancient Thracian town of Perperikon in South-Eastern Bulgaria (www.perperikon.bg). Even though it has not been such a key cultural and economic centre as Southopolis, the tourist numbers on its visitation are growing each year. Only for 2008 it has attracted about 225 000 tourists, while in 2007 they were just 185 000 (TouristMedia, 2009). This significant increase was reached despite the fact that the site is not very easily accessible (only by private car or organized bus trip), does not offer any interpretation except for guiding and no actual marketing campaign has been conducted abroad. The construction of a tourist centre has been initiated this year (2009) in February. The fact that a ‘raw’ tourism product of purely Thracian cultural character has achieved such high visitation despite the lack of even basic facilities can only lead us to the conclusion that Southopolis probably has the potential to attract at least double amount of tourists. Actually by estimation of NU ‘Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage’ the future tourist attraction is supposed to generate about 500 000 visits.
From the above analysis, according to which the tourism development potential has been assessed (please refer to appendix 15 for a detailed evaluation), the Valley of the Thracian Kings has a rather strong tourism interest in order to incite people to come to the area. The average result from the assessment shows that cultural features score the highest among all categories. Stakeholders are aware of the assets of the precinct and are willing to cooperate and take part in the development of tourism. Demand for tourism is rather strong in relation to the present facilities. Interest particularly in Thracian cultural sites is quite vivid despite the low contribution of public bodies to tourism development in the area. Still, future priorities are beneficial to the revival of tourism in the Valley of the Thracian Kings.

4. Seuthopolis project – primary research results

Since no other work apart from this paper has been initiated regarding the tourism product of Seuthopolis, primary research on people’s expectations from the development of the project had to be conducted. For this purpose, the opinion of a group of people acquainted with the project had to be collected. The only forum which guaranteed the fulfillment of this condition was the one on the Seuthopolis project’s Facebook profile (http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=9008653751&ref=ts). It both informs and urges the group members to discuss related issues and opinions. Receiving replies of concrete survey questions turned out harder than it was expected. Despite the large number of group members (over 1000 people), only 14 of them gave detailed descriptions of what they would like to witness during their stay in the tourist complex. Often used key words and expressions in the answer to the question ‘What do you expect to see/experience during your visit?’ were:

- Thracian
- Unique
- Archaeological
- Lifestyle
- Culture
- Architecture
- Reconstructed buildings
- Replicas of tools and weapons
- Living history
- Get in touch with the past
- Interactive presentations
- Involvement
- Architectural miracle combined with history
- Studios for jewelry
- Fighting classes
- Enactments
- Competitions
- Arts and crafts
- Thracian theme
- Guided tour
- Beautiful panorama
- Exciting experience
Even though this piece of information was obtained from a small amount of respondents, it demonstrates their positive attitude, individual perceptions and specific wishes. We should not forget that these opinions are strongly personal but they also form one common idea of self improvement through knowledge and experience delivered by means of interactive communication with the consumer. That is why these must be applied in the tourism product development of Seuthopolis.

5. Conclusion

The demand for cultural tourism on the Old Continent has been steadily increasing in the recent years and cultural tourists continue to be one of the fastest growing tourist segments. If the ancient Thracian city of Seuthopolis is rediscovered by implementing the modern architectural project of architect Tilev and a well-thought tourism product is developed, it has full potential to become one of Europe’s most significant and attended heritage sites. Two Bulgarian institutions play a major role in the excavation and preservation of heritage sites in the country, and in the provision of convenient accessibility for tourists and proper marketing campaign. These are respectively the Ministry of Culture and the State Agency for Tourism. They both express their support and appreciation for the Seuthopolis project but need to take further actions in order to facilitate its implementation. The context in which this tourism product will be developed determines a quite beneficial environment due to the growth of cultural tourism supply and demand in Bulgaria and increased interest in the consumption of cultural products as a whole. From the analysis of the inbound and domestic tourist flows three main tourist segments for cultural tourism were recognized: couples between the age of 26 and 35; families with young children between the age of 36 and 45; and empty nesters at the age of 56 and above. All of them have their significant share in at least one of the following tourist markets: British, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and Bulgarian – domestic and incoming VFR. Of course, Bulgaria is placed among cultural tourism competitors on the Balkan Peninsula, of which the strongest ones are Greece and Turkey. Despite this fact, opportunities have been recognized to establish partnerships in order to learn from the experienced Greek heritage tourism managers and to reach high market share. The analysis of the tourism potential of the Valley of the Thracian Kings in the last part of this chapter has shown quite positive results. Even though improvements in the infrastructure of the region must be implemented, the high tourism potential of the Valley has been recognized by the Municipality of Kazanlak and tourism product diversification is being sought. It fully supports the Seuthopolis project and perceives it as an exceptional chance to revitalize the tourism development in this precinct by involving its natural and cultural assets. Moreover, the markets for cultural tourism in this region are completely compatible with those which were recognized and analyzed on a national level. Last but not least, important information on people’s preferences and expectations from the Seuthopolis project was obtained. It gave rather specific clues and direction towards which its tourism product should be oriented. The need for authenticity, culturality, interactivity, modernity and experienceship were confirmed.
CHAPTER FOUR

PROPOSITION FOR TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT OF SEUTHOPOLIS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS OF THE VALLEY OF THE THRACIAN KINGS

TO BE USED ONLY IN RELATION TO THE “SEUTHOPOLIS” JOINT NATIONAL INITIATIVE OF NATIONAL UNITY “TREASURE THE BULGARIAN HERITAGE” BY PROJECT OF ARCHITECT JEKO TILEV
1. Vision

Seuthopolis will engage its guests in the fully authentic environment of the centre of the Thracian civilization in the context of the natural and cultural heritage of Valley of the Thracian Kings. It will present the ancient Thracian culture in an entertaining, educational and interactive way, making it a rich, exciting, unique and memorable experience. It will be a brilliant example of the tourism industry’s powerful capacity to present the ancient world through the perspective of today’s modern society.

2. Concept

*A modern vision of ancient truths*

Vink was cited earlier in this work, stating that a good concept “leads to coherence in order to reach certain targets or aims”. This is the approach to the development of this concept. It presents the tourism product of Seuthopolis in a simple but intriguing way. It states the main aim of the site – to present the ancient times, making them accessible by means of modern interpretation of true scientific data about the cultural and historical development of the Thracians. It gives a possibility of an optimal appreciation of the historical and aesthetic side of Seuthopolis. The concept suggests an experience which involves the visitor through a variety of methods which are still to be witnessed. The phrase “ancient truths” gives the concept a mystical cue - a glimpse of a most distant civilization. It also reveals that the ancient spirit of Seuthopolis will be experienced in its authentic appearance. Thus, the message refers simultaneously to visitors at different ages and having diverse interests. It also communicates the idea that today both ancient and modern cultures can co-exist without interfering into each other’s values but proving themselves in the contrast of their differences. Still, in the context of the tourism product of Seuthopolis, the concept emphasizes the importance of cultural heritage. It is a fact that the “modern vision” is expressed to a great extent through the technologies and engineering decisions facilitating the rediscovery and presentation of the ancient city in situ – on the bottom of the Koprinka dam. This is the only way to correct the absurd mistake of flooding the unique site and abandoning it underwater for over fifty years after its discovery.

3. Tourism Product of Seuthopolis

3.1. Theme

*Ancient Thracian Civilization*

The central theme of the tourism product of Seuthopolis will be the *Ancient Thracian Civilization*. It will govern the whole experience in all its aspects – from the major attractions, services, facilities and access to the city, to the smallest details enhancing the product. In order to give a feeling of authenticity in the otherwise modern construction, the Thracian culture and style of living will be evident everywhere. The majestic spirit of this ancient civilization will be entangled into each and every moment of tourist’s
experience. In order to gain an insight into it, please refer to appendix 16 which offers an abstract from a non-scientific text of SAT. Of course, it is mean to give the reader an overall image of the Thracians. In order to guarantee the authenticity of the tourism product, its main components and supporting elements will be carefully designed by a Thracologists – specialists in the Thracian civilization.

3.2. Attractions

The tourist complex of Seuthopolis will be an abundant amalgam of attractions which will engage the visitors on various levels. During this exciting journey in the world of Thracia, all five senses of the guests will be stimulated in order to guarantee the richness of their experience. They will have the unique opportunity to see, touch, hear, smell and taste this ancient culture within the boundaries of a single heritage site. The spacious tourist complex will be divided in two areas – an archaeological and entertaining part (respectively on the bottom of the dam and up on the circular surround wall), both of which will be indisputably authentic. The latter one will surely not disrupt the scientific matter of archaeology so as to keep the professional approach to presenting the site. Still, the artifacts will be interpreted in a way understandable and interactive enough to maintain good contact with the visitors. Thus, having witnessed the original and partially reconstructed Thracian heritage, they will also have the chance to participate in a variety of activities confirming and supplementing the ancient experience. Certainly, the attractions will be suited to the broad spectrum of interests and needs of the target markets within the various types of cultural tourists. Certainly, some of the ideas for attractions and mainly facilities have already been generated during the work on the architectural project by Dr. Tilev which is presented in appendix 2 (chapter One). It states the following:

*The surrounding wall integrates the ancient city of Seuthopolis in a unique modern tourist complex. The ring is a pier for boats and small ships, an animated street, a park, a panoramic walkway. It will be filled with many programmatic elements - restaurants, cafes, shops, rent a bike points, various recreational, sports and fishing facilities. In the ring-wall are housed museum, conference halls, restaurants with view to the city and the dam, hotel complex, service offices, medical offices, elements of the technical infrastructure, etc. The landscaped terraces convert the wall into a park with hanging gardens, places for recreation, flower parterres, open-air exhibitions. The city of Seuthopolis receives the status and qualities of a national and world historical and cultural center with the possibilities for hosting various national and international cultural activities - symposia, exhibitions, concerts, festivals, etc.*

(Tilev, 2005)

Keeping in mind these and personal ideas, a number of attractions were designed in this work. Some were slightly re-modified in order to fit into the theme *Ancient Thracian Civilization*. Of course, the city itself is already present and therefore is an inevitable part of the tourism product.
3.2.1. Seuthopolis – the Odrysian capital

Naturally, being the reason for the development of the project, the ancient city of Seuthopolis will be the most important attraction of all. Covering an area of 50 510m², the Odrysian capital will be presented in situ according to its three main components – Fortification, Urban planning and City architecture. The visitors will have the opportunity to have a walk in the city itself, witnessing and learning interesting facts related to the capital’s economy, lifestyle and culture. This is a decision of the working group for the Seuthopolis project, consisting of the most prominent archaeological experts from the Institute of Thracology – Bulgarian Academy of Science (Chichikova, 2009). According to the plan they have developed, the ancient city will be exposed as follows:

**Fortification**

This is the first major and biggest part of the city to be exposed. It includes the fortifying walls encompassing Seuthopolis. They follow the pentagon shape of the peninsula, formed by the Tundzha river. The city can be approached from two gates, guarded by a bastion and five towers. Making use of appropriate modern materials, they will be conserved and some of them - partially reconstructed in order to appear authentic to the spectators.

**Urban planning**

The main components of the urban planning of the city will be conserved and restored, as well. These will be the King’s quarter, the main square and the street network.

**The King’s Quarter** will present to the visitors the monumental spacious building of his palace which is also guarded by two towers. An especially interesting part of it will be the throne hall which is richly decorated and houses the altar used for performing rituals and sacrifices dedicated to the Thracian gods. There are two more rooms which constitute the temple of the Great Samothracian Gods, where have been discovered another big altar and a marble plate telling about the formal relations between the dynasties of Seuthopolis and Kabile. In order to present the palace in the most credible way, conservational and restoration work needs to be performed, as well as creating fine copies of the altar and plate which will be placed at the originals’ places.

**The City Square** or the so called agora is the second most important area in the urban planning of Seuthopolis. Logically, it is the place where public life has been concentrated in this cultural and economic center of Odrysian Kingdom. Two stone bases of the square altar and the stone plate encrypted with a dedication of a Thracian priest, which are currently kept in museum ‘Iskra’ in Kazanlak, will be returned.

It will be fascinating to take a walk in Seuthopolis, knowing that these same streets were walked by this ancient people back in the IV-III century B.C. There, the visitors will be able to see a clear evidence of how the Greek and Thracian cultures and styles of life have gradually mixed. For instance, the **Street Network** has been developed according to the Hellenic urban system principles.
City architecture

The architecture of Seuthopolis includes mainly complexes for living and farm use, of which have been discovered twelve. The level of development of the city is evident from the large size of the buildings, many of which have fenced backyards. Of course, reconstruction of some houses will be required in order to be able to provide the guests of the city with a fuller image. Moreover, the artifacts, which have been found during the excavation of Seuthopolis upon its discovery, will be returned in their original places, which will surely give the visitors’ imagination an even more precise picture. In order to satisfy more special interests, the construction technique and materials used in these buildings will be demonstrated entirely.

3.2.2. Museum of Authentic Evidence

The second most important attraction will be the so called Museum of Authentic Evidence, which will expose artifacts which cannot be placed in the city itself. The working group, which has been assigned to compose the exposition, has defined two major topics for it – Society and Culture of Seuthopolis, and Thracian Cultural Heritage in the Valley of the Thracian Kings (I millennium BC). Though, in order to ensure that the visitors will experience a fine transition between the modern facility and the world of archaeological findings, a hall dedicated to the latter one must be created.

The exposition will begin with History of the archaeological research. Actually, the topic of ‘life after death’ of Seuthopolis will be split into two parts – the sensational discovery of the capital city and its ‘rebirth’ related to the Seuthopolis project. Of course, this part of the museum will tell the visitor the story of how Seuthopolis was found during the construction work of the Koprinka dam and the rescue actions which were undertaken for the conservation of the most important artifacts. The most interesting materials from that time will be shown in a way which would best reveal the strenuous and exciting archaeological work. It will also explain what has happened to the ancient city after it was researched and why. Further on, the amazing process of ‘excavating’ Seuthopolis from the waters of the dam will be presented by means of picture and film material in order to show how modern society has developed and contributes enormously to the preservation of its own cultural heritage. The construction of the tourist complex – will also be exposed through a variety of visual materials, starting from the Seuthopolis project of architect Tilev to movies explaining the methodology of work, the difficulties which have been met in the course of action and a model of the complicated facility.

The space dedicated to the Society and Culture of Seuthopolis will present the city as the major economic and cultural centre of the Odrysian Kingdom during its early Hellenic period (IV – III century BC). The lifestyle and cultural characteristics of the capital will be presented thematically in within the following sections:

- Economy and crafts: Here, for instance, original products of the Thracian pottery and metal processing will be witnessed; other ceramics and stamps documenting trade relations with Greek centers will be shown, as well as the examples of the well-developed Thracian coinage.
- Arts and culture: ancient marble works, terracotta and texts documented on stone plates
- Religion: original city sanctuaries and home altars will be exposed
- Funeral rituals and facilities used in the nearby necropolises: reproduction of human and horse funerals with original and reconstructed materials

The **Thracian Cultural Heritage in the Valley of the Thracian Kings** will represent a few time periods:

- Old Iron period: various findings dating from XII-IV century BC will be exposed
- Classical period: accidental findings like coins and a mail
- Hellenic period: Seuthopolis and fifteen tombs of its time and after it will be presented according to in chronological order, by type and by construction materials.

### 3.2.3. Odrysian Trail

There will be a 15 meters-broad alley which will be formed on the top of the circular dam wall surrounding Seuthopolis. As it was mentioned earlier, this space will be used for rather entertaining and interactive activities for the tourists with a variety of attractions happening on it.

The Odrysian Trail will be a place where the visitors can view a **Panorama** of the city from twenty meters height, giving them a chance to see it as one whole picture. In this way they will be able to comprehend the significance and meaning of Seuthopolis, witnessing its size, structure and organization which have been quite advanced for the times when it was a part of the Odrysian Kingdom. Being on the Odrysian Trail, the people will be able to see the city from each angle they wish to. The view towards Seuthopolis will be enhanced by the natural green color of the inside of the wall which will be densely planed. Moreover, the alley will be surrounded by the stunning natural landscape of the Koprinka dam and the Balkan Mountain range. This would be an exciting experience for the visitors because they will be standing on a ‘bridge’ between nature and culture of new architectural value. For the purpose of full enjoyment of the environment in which the tourist complex will be placed, sightseeing coin-operated binoculars will be installed on both sides of the Panorama alley with views to Seuthopolis and its natural surroundings.

For those visitors, who are interested in painting and would like to memorize this eye-pleasing Panorama, will be designed special areas – **Painters’ District**. They will offer private places which will be reserved upon request. The reservation will include basic necessary instruments.

Enhancing the experience of the tourists will be the **Thracian chariots**. These will be rickshaw-like vehicles especially designed to look exactly like the chariots Thracians have used. They will be available for rent not only for pleasure and enhancing the authenticity of the experience, but also as a means of transportation on the 1272 meters long alley. In order to avoid complications and unwanted accidents the chariots will be run by peddling instead of horses. Of course, the traffic of people and chariots will be regulated in a way ensuring a calm atmosphere.
A major attraction on the Odrysian trail will be the so called *Living Past District*. It will entertain and interact with the guests in a variety of reenactments, activities and visualizations by means of real-size models borrowed from the Thracian everyday cultural and religious life. This will be a truly unique opportunity to make their experience exciting, authentic and educating at the same time. The District will offer a rich mixture of activities where tourists from all selected market segments and more will find the interesting part for themselves. They will take place within one building in different rooms each of which will have an appealing topic and name. Entering the building, the visitors will follow a path going from one thematic room to another without leaving the District. In this way the wholeness of the experience will be guaranteed. The transfer from one topic to another will be supple but contrasting and interactive, creating one complete amalgam of five-sense involvement. The authentically designed tools and costumes for the presentation of the topics will naturally enhance the experience.

Prior to entering the Living Past District, there will be information boards with short explanations about the matter and significance of the Thracian culture in a few languages. It will be meant for those who have not visited the Museum of Authentic Evidence and will surely be little enough in order to keep the surprise from the coming experience. In front of the gates the visitors will be welcomed by Thracian warriors who will be in charge of ticket control. Thus, the negative cue of such a check will be eliminated by offering live contact with the warriors. The opening of the gates of the District will immediately excite the tourists with a lively scene from the *Thracian Warriors School*. The most attractive side of it will be the reenactments of battles and fighting techniques which will be presented by especially trained personnel. They will engage the participants in their activity by provoking their fighting instinct in a fair battle with specific weapons of special safe design. Those who would like to will have the chance to try passing through characteristic Thracian boldness tests.

After generating some adrenaline the visitors will be led into the contrasting calm atmosphere of the *Visiting Orpheus* room. Thus, the dual character of the Thracians will be emphasized. They were not only prominent fighting qualities, but also affinity for arts as for instance the music of Orpheus. The sound of the legendary lyre music will overwhelm the guests with its beauty. It will be accompanied by a hand-shadow image powered by technical equipment. The silhouettes will present the thrilling stories in Orpheus’ life.

The *Deities and Rituals* will be presented by means of a model in motion empowered by technical equipment. It will show to the visitors a variety of Thracian customs which have been performed at different stages of their lives according to specialists’ opinion, like for instance birth, wedding, wine production, funeral ceremony. Suitable musical arrangement will be played for the different occasions. Another attractive element will be the depiction of the Thracian celestial calendar and beliefs in deities on one of the room’s walls. Next to each celestial body there will be a drawer containing stone blocks with engraved secret information about the Thracian beliefs related to it.

The room of *Female Secrets* will reveal curious details of the Thracian women’s life. Entering this space, the guests will first witness the production methods of aromas, jewelry, textile and accessories. They will be demonstrated by staff women. The visitors will be able to take part in these processes.
Moreover, a multi-walled mirror facility will give them the unique opportunity to see themselves as Thracian women. The visitors will stand behind special costume-covers organized in a circle, each one reflecting in a mirror. In this way every guest will see only him/herself dressed in the mirror. The costumes, for instance, will show a person dressed in different ritual costumes, finery and other surprising outfits. Thus, the visitors will be entertained and educated about the Thracian culture simultaneously.

The guests will enter Seuthes’ hall for Royal Feasts. They will be surprised by the still environment which will be awaiting them. The statues which will look like they have feasted a minute ago will also be still. These will be Seuthes himself, his advisors and servants. In a moment a sound signal will announce a beginning and suddenly the statues will start moving and continue their noisy feast, revealing to the visitors that they are actually alive. Music and dances will involve the guests, inviting them for a glass of Thracian wine. As surprising as the beginning, will come the end of the feast marked by the same signal. The Thracians will freeze in their positions, the music will cease and the doors leading out of the building of the Living Past District will open up. The visitors will be invited by the Thracian warriors to proceed to the last part of the District which will be outdoors.

The Market-place will be a truly interactive environment where the tourists will have the opportunity to participate in the production and decoration of various objects used in the everyday life and rituals of the Thracians. It will be possible to buy those or other ready-made objects like utensils, jewelry, Thracian robes, warrior equipment and weapons, copies of various objects part of the Thracian treasures for collectors, people with special interests or those who just would like to have an original souvenir from Seuthopolis. The market will also offer some smaller memorabilia like key holders, postcards, cups, etc. This will be the only commercially oriented place within the whole tourist complex and will be open to all visitors and not only to those who have come to the Living Past District.

3.2.4. Fishermen’s District

This district will actually be a small quay above the deep waters of the Koprinka dam. It will offer about twenty fishing places for reservation. In the package the guests who enjoy the sport of fishing will receive also equipment in case they have not brought their own. They will have to pay additional price per fish if they would like to keep it. If not, the fishermen and women will have to release their catch. Those who would like to consume the fish will have the opportunity to visit the restaurant belonging to the tourist complex and have it cooked for them against payment. Otherwise cooling service for the fish will be provided until the visitors leave the complex.

3.2.5. Flotilla

Being in the immediate environment of the dam, the opportunity for water trips should not be omitted. A thematic ship will be available for this purpose. It will be designed according to the legend of the Argo ship searching for the Golden Fleece on which Orpheus has been one of the Argonauts. Of course, this particular design will be defined by specialists. The oarsmen of the ship will be dressed in suitable robes in order to contribute to the authenticity of the atmosphere. The tourists who would like to will also
have the chance to try rowing themselves. Lyre music will be played to strengthen the association with the presence of Orpheus on Argo. Apart from this ship, other boats with navigators will be available for rent for private trips.

3.2.6. Legendary Stage

The tourist complex will also offer the visitors a programme of performances on its Legendary Stage. They will be chosen by a special management team in order to guarantee their suitability to the theme of the tourism product. They will enrich the experience of the visitors with their cultural agenda. For instance, such performances will be the dancing and music spectacles of ‘Orpheus and Eurydice’, ‘Two Worlds’, and the Thracian spectacle-rituals from Kazanlak – ‘Mysteries in the Valley’ and ‘Honoring the Holy Protector’. These performances are quite popular among national and foreign audiences. The last two have even been sponsored by Dutch and Japanese companies.

3.3. Facilities and services

3.3.1. Seuthopolis Boutique Hotel

The hotel belonging to the tourist complex of Seuthopolis will be featured with the environment of the ancient Thracian capital. Its interior design will emphasize elements of the Thracian architectural style in its decoration. Of course, such details are to be defined and designed by Thracologists and architects. The location of this boutique hotel will be absolutely unique. It will be situated in the wall surrounding the city and thus offering two magnificent views – to the waters of the Koprinka dam and to Seuthopolis itself. The quality personnel taking care of the guests’ experience will have appropriate outfit for the theme of the hotel. The luxurious Seuthopolis Boutique Hotel will also have a multimedia hall for meetings and conferences. Its usage for special study and professional purposes will have priority reservation. Such can be archaeological, history-related and architectural conferences and projects. Of course, no limit for use will be set for groups outside the specialized ones. The hotel will offer also a deluxe restaurant for its guests and visitors of the complex. It will offer an atmosphere and Thracian-sounding menu. Of course, it will attempt to maximally use products characteristic for the Thracian cuisine like regional wines, honey, herbs, rose jam, etc.

3.3.2. Food and beverage

Additionally, the tourist complex will have a high-quality service restaurant and a café bar for use of all visitors wishing to try out some good local products typical for the Valley of the Thracian Kings. They will also be thematically designed to contribute to the overall experience of the tourists. This is the restaurant which will prepare the catch of the fishermen upon request. They will be able to choose from a variety of special recipes. The café bar will offer refreshments for those who have chosen to have their meal somewhere else in the region.
3.3.3. Tourist centre

The tourist centre of the Seuthopolis complex will be situated right next to the arrival point. First of all, there the tourists will buy the tickets to the complex. A convenient offer would be to have a set of attractions which are included in the basic price and each visitor will be able to choose which of the remaining attractions to visit. In order to remain consistent with the purpose of building the tourist complex, the basic ticket should include the attractions which are the core of Seuthopolis and are a part of the rediscovered cultural heritage. In the case of this proposed tourism product, these attractions should be:

- Seuthopolis – The Odrysian Capital
- Museum of Authentic Evidence
- Panorama
- Market-place

Of course, in order to participate in the production and decoration of products offered on the Market-place, the tourists will need to pay certain amounts for each activity. The access to the market, though, will be free of charge and everyone will be welcome to come and see what it offers.

Another function of the centre will be to provide information on the character of each attraction within the tourist complex, as well as natural and cultural sights and activities within the Valley of the Thracian Kings. The aim of informing the visitors will be rather to raise their interest and curiosity than overloading them with details. Those, who wish to learn more about the sights and attractions apart from what they have witnessed in the tourist centre, will be able to buy books on various topics related to Seuthopolis and the Valley of the Thracian Kings.

Of course, this will also be the place where the visitors hire competent guides. They will walk with them through the centre, tell them curious facts and interesting stories about the Thracian culture and civilization and answer their questions. case of any physical accidents a Medical Care service will be offered at the tourist centre. Paramedics will provide trauma and pre-hospital care if necessary.

Special attention will be paid to the children visiting Seuthopolis who would like to spend some time with their peers instead of visiting the museum with their parents, for instance. The tourist centre will offer a room for educational entertainment on Thracian culture. By playing a variety of games, the animators will guarantee not only fun time for the children, but also acquired knowledge through interactive methods. In Tourist supervision

Unfortunately, like in every tourist place visitors may face unpleasant incidents related to theft, quarrels among each other, etc. In order to avoid such moments, the complex will be guarded by tourist supervisors. They will be in charge of the security, ticket control and directions help within Seuthopolis. Naturally, security guards and any type of control do not call positive associations within people’s mind. That is why these tourist supervisors will be dressed as real Thracian warriors with special outfit in order to be easily recognizable but will not be as intrusive as normally looking guards.
3.4. Accessibility

As it has become clear, the tourist complex of Seuthopolis will be situated in the Koprinka dam where its waters reach twenty meters depth. That is why the tourists will need to approach it by water. A first class Trans-European road passes along the dam. In order make the access to it convenient, a special parking lot for private automobiles and tourist buses will be created. For those visitors who choose to reach the tourist complex somehow else, it is recommendable to provide a bus ride free of charge from the nearest public transport terminal. A small shuttle ship will be run from the shore of the dam in scheduled time intervals. It will pick the tourists up from the shore of the dam and take them on a trip to the complex. The price which they will be charged will be included later on in the basic ticket. So as to lead the guests into the theme of the Ancient Thracian Civilization, the boat will be modified in a way which would emphasize it. The personnel present on the boat will be dressed in Thracian-looking gowns. Thus, experiencing Seuthopolis will begin while the tourists are still travelling. In order to avoid crowding at the information desk of the tourist centre, the voyagers will be told about the attractions and services which they can find within the complex. Some games and a lottery with small Thracian prizes can be organized in order to increase the excitement before arrival in Seuthopolis. Once the boat is parked, the visitors will come ashore on the special dock, awaited by Thracian personnel members who will lead them to the tourist centre. A short musical or warrior performance can be organized upon arrival which will welcome the guests of Seuthopolis and announce officially the beginning of their memorable experience.

4. Heritage Network – the Valley of the Thracian Kings

As it was pointed out in the previous chapter, the Valley of the Thracian Kings is a precinct rich of natural and cultural assets and attractions which together make it an appealing tourist destination. Its high tourism potential was proved by assessing the numerous elements of the existing tourism supply and demand of the region. In this sense the region and Seuthopolis complement and diversify each other’s product. As we already know, tourism in the Valley is not well-developed and needs a catalyzing core attraction which Seuthopolis has the right to be. It has extremely high potential to revive the tourism in the region. But it surely cannot exist in isolation from the rest of the heritage in the Valley of the Thracian Kings. That is why it is appropriate to form a heritage network in the precinct in which Seuthopolis will play the role of a central attraction. It will simultaneously promote and offer touring routes within the Valley which will certainly be organized by tour operators and agencies. Most of the existing attractions in the region have established relations and already work with a number of such companies. Logically, this is a factor which would facilitate the development of the heritage network among them. By offering such heritage tours the tourism product of the Valley will emphasize not only on the Thracian culture, but also on the Bulgarian folklore which is also one of its best assets. The same counts for the natural heritage of the area which, despite its high significance on a European level, is not treated with any special attention and is rarely combined with the nearby cultural sites. It is not necessary to mention the natural and cultural assets in the Valley. Their high tourism potential has already been assessed in Chapter Three. Moreover, these are just some of the most important ones. This comes to say that more regional undiscovered beauties and little known meaningful sites are to emerge.
5. Stakeholders

The following stakeholders are of crucial importance to be addressed when implementing the Seuthopolis project in relation to its tourism product:

- Tourist Information Centre Kazanlak - [http://tourism.kazanlak.bg/](http://tourism.kazanlak.bg/)
- Kazanlak Sustainable Association – [www.kazanlaktour.com](http://www.kazanlaktour.com)
- Bulgarian Association of Travel Agents - [http://www.batabg.org/](http://www.batabg.org/)

Other industries involved like textile, souvenirs, and others related to the service part of the product.

Local residents

6. Unique Selling Points

In case the tourism product of Seuthopolis is developed according to this proposition and included in the context of a heritage network within the Valley of the Thracian Kings, it will acquire a few Unique Selling Points (USPs). Thus, Seuthopolis will become an amalgam of:

- An ancient culture
- In situ exposition
- Authentic experience
- Modern presentation
- Diverse regional tourism attractions

Having namely the combination of the above USPs, it can be concluded that the tourism product of Seuthopolis is

- Unexpected
- New
- Inspiring
- Qualitative
- Unconventional
- Educating
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The ancient Thracian city of Seuthopolis, currently under the waters of the Koprinka dam, is one of Bulgaria’s most culturally and scientifically precious heritage sites. The Seuthopolis project proposed by architect Jeko Tilev and managed by National Unity ‘Treasure the Bulgarian Heritage’ holds a great potential to turn the Odrysian capital into a unique tourist attraction on an international level. Inevitably, this will take place in the context of the Bulgarian tourism product. The demand for cultural tourism in Europe and particularly to Bulgaria is increasing and will continue growing in the coming years. The two major responsible bodies for its development in the country are the Ministry of Culture and the State Agency for Tourism which both support the Seuthopolis project. It is compatible with the National Tourism Strategy of Bulgaria and the Development Plan of the Municipality of Kazanlak in which the ancient Thracian city is situated. In order to facilitate and speed up the project work, though, all these institutions need to improve the coordination within and among each other. The Seuthopolis project should be prioritized and treated as an action from which not only the preservation of cultural heritage will benefit in the future, but also the local population, Bulgaria’s tourism industry and image as a whole. Even though Bulgaria is placed among strong and experienced cultural tourism competitors, it is quite advisable to work towards partnerships with them. Bulgaria’s potential to withstand and even outrun its competitors becomes even more realistic when having in mind the tourism product of Seuthopolis. From the tourism potential assessment of the Valley of the Thracian Kings became clear that together with the legal and policy context, its weak point is the infrastructure. Therefore, the responsible bodies for it must keep in mind the fact that the Municipality of Kazanlak intends to revive the tourism in the region. That is why infrastructure improvement is crucial to the development of the Seuthopolis project, as well. A careful look was taken into the tourist flow to and in Bulgaria in order to decide which tourist markets should be targeted. This turned out to be a hard task due to the lack of specific data on cultural tourism for the recent years. The availability of such would have improved the precision needed when working on big and important projects like Seuthopolis. That is why the State Agency for Tourism should take a step further in this sense. This matter concerns many potentially successful tourism destinations in Bulgaria. The British, Spanish, Italian and Japanese cultural tourist markets were selected among the foreign arriving tourists to Bulgaria. The market of national citizens was divided into domestic and Bulgarians residing abroad who visit the country and take trips during their stay. In order to enhance the credibility of the target market decision and define certain segments, the cultural consumption of the most significant cultural tourist markets for Bulgaria was explored. Having this information at hand, three tourist segments were picked: couples between the age of 26 and 35; families with young children between the age of 36 and 45; and empty nesters at the age of 56 and above. Special research was conducted on the issue of young children and cultural heritage tourism, aiming to clarify their special needs. Research on the expectations of people familiar with the Seuthopolis project confirmed the need of cultural tourists for interactive presentations, authentic and themed experience. These and more research results were taken into consideration when formulating some specifications of the tourism product of Seuthopolis. The proposition was developed in accordance with the thorough literature review, research and analysis conducted in this thesis, which comes to say that if it will be applied, Seuthopolis will quite surely succeed in achieving its goal – becoming an internationally important cultural site and a famous tourist attraction. But in order to guarantee its success, this proposed tourism product needs to be supported by well-thought
management and marketing plans. Appropriate management is the only way to realize the complicated organization required to turn each visit to Seuthopolis into a memorable experience. The development of a relevant marketing plan is more than crucial so as to attract the chosen tourist market segments mentioned earlier. This heritage site must be treated with great care and attention. Its cultural value should not be violated or distorted by any means. Its magnificent potential for tourism development must be dealt with very wisely. Preserving, exposing and delivering it as a tourism product is a complicated process demanding responsibility by a number of parties whose coordination is of vital importance for the future of SEUTHOPOLIS.
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APPENDICES
Chapter One

Appendix 1

Figure 1 Tourist Regions in Bulgaria according to the Bulgarian State Agency for Tourism

Figure 2 Map of the territorial tourism clusters of SAT and the lands of present Bulgaria in ancient times
Appendix 2
Seuthopolis, the city of the Thracian king Seuthes the IIIrd, and the capital of the ancient state of Odrissia, (end of IV c. BC.) was discovered and explored in 1948 - 1954 during the construction of the Koprinca dam. Unfortunately, after the dam was filled with water the first and the best preserved Thracian city in modern Bulgaria remained on the bottom of the artificial lake. This mistake, from the times of historical and national nihilism, can be corrected today and Seuthopolis can be returned into the treasure house of world cultural heritage.

The project for exhibiting Seuthopolis suggests the possibility to uncover, preserve and partially reconstruct the city while making it publicly accessible. Through the project the exceptional historical, educational, cultural and tourist value of Seuthopolis is realized in a unique architectural structure in the natural environment. The ancient city is taken back from the water through a circular dam wall, resembling a well on the bottom of which, as on a stage, is presented the historical epic of Seuthopolis. Approaching the surrounding ring by boat from the shore Seuthopolis is completely hidden for the eye. But the view from the wall is breathtaking - with its scale, comprehensiveness and unique point of view; from the boundary between past and present. The possibility to see the city from the height of 20 meters allows the perception of its entirety – an exceptional possibility for excavations of such a scale. The movement with the panoramic elevators providing access to the ground level further enriches this impression.
The ring of the surrounding wall has a neutral (absolute in relation to time and space) circular form with an outside diameter of 420 meters, circumscribed around the pentagon shape of the ancient city. The ring as contemporary architectural intervention has the meaning of a boundary - between past and present, history and contemporaneity, land and water, up and down. It both separates and integrates the city of Seuthopolis with the surrounding environment in a new architectural synthesis. It exhibits, assesses and rethinks history through its contemporary form and function. The architectural frame of the green wall is transformed in an inverted Thracian tumulus, containing and preserving in itself the city of Seuthopolis.
The surrounding wall integrates the ancient city of Seuthopolis in a unique modern tourist complex. The ring is a pier for boats and small ships, an animated street, a park, a panoramic walkway. It will be filled with many programmatic elements - restaurants, cafes, shops, rent a bike points, various recreational, sports and fishing facilities. In the ring-wall are housed museum, conference halls, restaurants with view to the city and the dam, hotel complex, service offices, medical offices, elements of the technical infrastructure, etc. The landscaped terraces convert the wall into a park with hanging gardens, places for recreation, flower parterres, open-air exhibitions. The city of Seuthopolis receives the status and qualities of a national and world historical and cultural center with the possibilities for hosting various national and international cultural activities - symposia, exhibitions, concerts, festivals, etc.

Museums structure like that can naturally exist in a region so rich with archeological and natural treasures. The unique way of exhibiting the only well preserved Thracian city will turn it into the culmination of the cultural and historical routes in the valley of Kazanlak. Connected with the valley of the Thracian rulers, with its tumuluses, temples and treasures, the historical and cultural complex of Seuthopolis will enrich the cultural, tourist and economic potential of the region and the country and will become an emblem of the rich past, creative potential and realized future.

At night the shining aureole visible from the shores, on the background of the water, the surrounding mountains and the sky will show that the city of Seuthopolis is reborn, present.
### Chapter Two

#### Appendix 3

**Figure 3** EU Commission guidelines for assessing tourism potential

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<td>- Flagship species or habitats (e.g. bears, dogs)</td>
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<td>- Other interesting, unusual or representative wildlife</td>
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<td>- Diversity of ecosystems</td>
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<td>- Protected areas: nature reserves, national parks, etc...</td>
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<td><strong>Cultural features</strong></td>
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<td>- Gastronomy (local products, recipes, production methods, etc...)</td>
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<td>- Surrounding landscape</td>
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<td>- Main land uses</td>
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<td>- Climate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stakeholders (who, views, capacity)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Public bodies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Interest groups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Tourism businesses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Land owners and other economic sectors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Local residents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accommodation, restaurants, existing attractions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Access and proximity to cities, airports, other destinations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Transportation within destination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other facilities and services (shops, etc...)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Current channels of information and marketing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legal and policy context</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- National or local tourism strategy and NTA priorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Policy priorities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Planning laws and zoning according to economic interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Environmental legislation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism demand</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use of existing resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Market segment surveys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Benchmarking competing destinations</td>
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</table>
Chapter Three

Appendix 4

Figure 4 Tourist Arrivals by Sub-region, Market Share, 1995-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-region</th>
<th>1995</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>East Mediterranean</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central/Eastern</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Tourism Organization (WTO)

Figure 5 UNWTO Tourism 2020 Vision; Average Annual Growth of Selected Destination Countries (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>Total Europe</td>
<td>338.4</td>
<td>717.0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>96.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>116.7</td>
<td>185.2</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>106.1</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central/Eastern</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>223.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Russian Federation</td>
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<td>48.0</td>
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<td>6.7</td>
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<td>Czech Republic</td>
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<td>44.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
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<td>Hungary</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<td>Bulgaria</td>
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<td>10.6</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<td>Romania</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>177.0</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Mediterranean</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: World Tourism Organization (WTO)
Appendix 5

Europa Nostra Congress, 16-20 May 2006

Abstract from the *Malta Declaration on Cultural Tourism: Its Encouragement and Control.*

- Cultural tourism is one of the key drivers of European economic growth and development and plays a vital role in fostering greater understanding of the rich diversity of regional cultures of Europe and a deeper appreciation of the common European heritage;

- European cultural heritage is a distinct feature of the European identity which should be safeguarded through maintaining high standards training and professional practice in the conservation and management of the cultural heritage for the benefits and well-being of people in the host communities, who should be made more aware of the need to sustain their cultural heritage, as well as those engaged in cultural tourism;

- Cultural tourism is among the foremost means of cultural exchanges between the people of European countries and among the most valuable instruments of inter-cultural dialogue;
Appendix 6


In the late 19th and early 20th century, the climate for culture was constructed of values and goals towards self-affirmation, harmonization with European culture, openness to foreign cultural influences, enlightenment and, to some extent, emulation. Cultural institutions were regarded as a means to boost the self-confidence of the nation and assert the values of European culture.

This atmosphere changed when the Communist regime took over in 1948. During 45 years of communist rule, cultural policy was characterized by:

- total centralization of cultural processes within the state administration;
- ideological monopoly over the promotion of cultural values; and
- the extensive development of totalitarian cultural institutions.

The arts were regarded as a means of education and enlightenment rather than as entertainment and therefore responsibility for the arts and culture was declared as the exclusive domain of the state. Totalitarian cultural institutions were created covering all spheres of cultural life. The social system consistently advocated and practiced political and cultural protectionism from the perspective of communist ideology.

The regime change marked the end of any form or participation of private enterprise in the dissemination of cultural values and works of art.

... The creative unions (tvorcheski suyuzi) became a transmitter of the state monopoly on culture and controlled the entire process of creation and dissemination of works of art, virtually eliminating individual expression. Artists, who were closely connected with the state even before the establishment of totalitarian rule, now became wholly dependent on the Communist Party-State and de facto turned into civil servants.

By the early 1950s, the system of state cultural institutions was fully established and running smoothly. Each element of this system was hierarchically subordinated and subject to dual – State and Communist Party – control. The cultural policies pursued at the time were ideologically orthodox, and any form of dissent from the official line was penalized.

It was only after 1956 that the echo of Khrushchev's reforms brought about a certain thaw in the ideological climate, trumpeted by the ruling Bulgarian Communist Party as its "April Policy", which was promptly abandoned after the "Prague Spring" in August 1968. The subsequent period of stagnation was extolled as a period of "flowering socialist art". In the early 1970s there was a move to introduce the so-called "public-cum-state principle" in the administration of culture, which presupposed the involvement of all governing bodies and a radically extended range of people, in decision-making processes. The Bureau and the Presidium of the Committee for Culture were elected bodies, but their heads and members could not take office without the approval of the National Assembly and the State Council. Public
participation in cultural debates soon turned into a ritual designed to provide legitimacy to decisions already taken. The promotion of "the public-cum-state principle" as a democratic achievement of Bulgarian cultural policy proved to be a demagogic propaganda campaign: despite the proclaimed participation of governing bodies in culture, the real decision making took place in the Communist Party.

Nevertheless, Bulgarian artists as a whole had won a significant amount of creative independence by the end of the totalitarian period. State control over creative unions loosened and they became a kind of safe haven for members. Instead of brutally suppressing criticism, the creative unions began granting certain privileges and financial security to a selected few. Under the influence of Soviet perestroika in the mid-1980s, some of the creative unions turned into opposition associations of intellectuals and their 1989 congresses became forums for attacks against the communist system.

**Bulgaria's new cultural policy model after 1989**

Culture was one of the spheres worst affected by the economic and spiritual crisis during the course of transition. At the same time, the ongoing reforms in society have had a particularly positive impact on culture. During the transition period, cultural development in Bulgaria was searching for the best way forward. Concepts frequently changed. Few activities of the different levels of government were followed up. There was little coordination between different levels of the administration. Main responsibilities for financing culture were decentralized and then recentralized. The private business sector had little interest in supporting cultural activities.

Over the last few years, things are starting to clear up. New regulations are being implemented which clearly define the responsibilities of the different administrative levels of government. Considerable steps forward are being taken by civil society. The third sector is consolidating and the business sector is starting to show signs that they are willing to adopt a new attitude of partnership. Bulgaria's new cultural policy model is still developing, but its most important elements are already in place:

- the ideological dependence of artists and cultural institutions and censorship have been abolished;
- cultural institutions have become a mediator between artists and the public;
- the local authorities are increasingly independent in the pursuit of their own cultural policies, as well as taking decisions on their co-financing and development;
- new actors have emerged on the cultural scene: foundations, private cultural institutions, new professional associations, etc.;
- minority groups can now participate in the general cultural process without having their identity threatened;
- the goals for the accession of Bulgaria to the European Union have been met. In 1993 Bulgaria became a candidate for EU membership which entailed substantial legal and administrative reforms towards decentralization, democratization, improvement of access, promotion of cultural diversity, protection of copyrights, internationalization and facilitation of artists' mobility, protection and development of cultural heritage and its sustainable use etc.; and
- Bulgaria started its pro-active participation in the work of the key intergovernmental institutions (Council of Europe, UNESCO, CEI etc.) and became an equal player at international scale.

(Arkova & Andreeva, 2008)
Appendix 7

Abstract from *Briefing Notes on Tourism Policy and Institutional Framework*

**State Agency for Tourism, Bulgaria**

Key tourism organizations include:

- **The Bulgarian Association of Travel Agents (BATA)** – founded in 1992 to assist, represent and protect the economic interests of travel agencies and tour operators in Bulgaria. Regular members of BATA can be any Bulgarian tour operators and/or travel agents. Associated members of BATA are other tourism-related entities. At present, the Association includes more than 250 members.

- **The Bulgarian Tourist Chamber (BTC)** – a non-profit organisation that brings together national, regional and local tourism organizations, hotels and restaurants, tour operators and travel agents. Founded in March 1990, BTC was the non-government tourist trade association in Bulgaria. One of the priorities of the Chamber is to actively cooperate with the Bulgarian government in drafting tourism legislation in line with EU directives and international practice.

- **Bulgarian Hotel and Restaurant Association (BHRA)** – a non-profit organisation which coordinates and encourages the development of private hoteliers and restaurateurs. It is concerned with promotion of professional ethics, capacity development and improved standards.

- **The National Hospitality Management Club (NHMC)** – established by owners and general managers of hotels and restaurants from all over Bulgaria. Among the founders were leading hotels and hospitality related companies such as The Sheraton Sofia Hotel Balkan, The Radisson SAS Hotel Sofia, Tour Marketing, Ltd, etc.

In addition to these national level organizations there are five key regional trade associations:

- **Pirin Tourism Forum**
- **Tourism Association of Rhodopes**
- **Bourgas Tourism Association**
- **Regional Tourism Association**

Specialist product-based associations include:

- **Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism (BAAT)** – a non-profit association, which assists the development of alternative types of tourism – rural, agrarian, eco-, and mountain tourism; ornithology, religious, etc.

- **Bulgarian Association for Rural and Ecological Tourism (BARET)** – a non-profit association, whose tasks relate to the promotion of rural and ecological tourism. The Association has developed the ‘Bulgarian ecopaths’ national programme.

**Bulgarian Association for Cultural, Ecological, and Rural Tourism (BACERT)** – a non-profit legal entity, which seeks to assist the development of cultural, ecological, and rural tourism.

Members of BACERT are tourist agencies whose programmes in Bulgaria feature visits to major cultural monuments and interesting natural sites, wine tours, spa visits and so on.
Appendix 8

Abstract from SAT Culture and Traditions:

http://www.bulgariatravel.org/eng/view_rubric.php?r=cult

The Bulgarian lands have rich and most diverse cultural heritage. Inhabited since prehistoric times, they keep lasting traces from different ages with rich traditions. Their location on a crossroads explains the intertwining, mixing, the mutual influences of the culture, mores, and religions of tribes and peoples, having lived and crisscrossed the region. Getting in touch with the thousands of cultural messages, bequeathed to us by those living before us is very exciting indeed. Invaluable is the cultural and historical heritage of ancient Thracians, Greeks, Romans, of generations of Bulgarians leaving through their achievements intriguing and useful information about their lifestyle, traditions and their spiritual enlightenment.

One of the earliest traces from Antiquity were found in the Bacho Kiro Cave close to the Dryanovo Monastery. These are flint and bone implements of labour and pottery from the middle and late Paleolithic Age. Of value to science are the finds from the settlement mounds near the village of Hotnitsa (Hotnitsa treasure) and the village of Karanovo (Karanovo settlement mound). The gold objects found in the Varna Chalcolithic necropolis have been described as the oldest processed gold in the world. The most ancient copper mines in Europe have been found in the vicinities of Stara Zagora. Featuring among the preserved masterpieces of the late prehistoric art in the Balkan Peninsula are the unique cave drawings in the Magoura Cave (northwest of Belogradchik).

Among the most precious relics unearthed in the Bulgarian lands has been the cultural heritage of the Thracians, who had produced incredible artistic and architectural masterpieces. The Thracian art, passing through a long and complicated path of development from the beginning of the late Bronze Age to the end of Antiquity has left remarkable treasures, temples, sanctuaries and cities. The magnificence of the Thracian treasures is stunning. Standing out among them are the Panagyurishte gold treasure, the Rogozen treasure, the Vulchitrün gold treasure, the Borovo silver treasure, the Vratsa treasure, Kralevsko gold treasure, the Letnitsa treasure, the Lukovit treasure.

Listed among the favourite sites of cultural tourism in Bulgaria are the Kazanluk tomb and the Sveshtari tomb, included in the list of the UNESCO-protected world cultural heritage. Of interest is the Alexandrovo tomb (near the village of Alexandrovo, Haskovo region) with valuable murals, the Mezek Thracian tomb (Haskovo region). Intriguing details of the building technique and artistic methods from Antiquity can also be identified in the remains of the royal Thracian cities of Kabile (in the vicinity of Yambol) and Seuthopolis (under the waters of the Koprinka Dam near Kazanluk), as well as in the Greek Black Sea coast colonies of Odessos (Varna), Apollonia (Sozopol), Messembria (Nessebur), Dionysopolis (Balchik), to mention just a few. Quite a few of which developed over old Thracian settlements. The region of the Kazanluk valley (known as the Valley of Roses) became particularly popular in the 1990s, as new tombs were unearthed there, presenting the evolution of the Thracian culture in the 5th–4th century BC. Bulgaria and the world started to speak about the Valley of the Thracian kings.

Traces of structures from Roman times can be identified to this day: fortress walls and forums, temples and thermae, amphitheatres, stadiums and buildings of various assignment in the ancient cities.
Aneliya Taneva
Tourism Product Development of Seuthopolis, 2009

Philipopolis/Trimontium (present-day Plovdiv), Serdica (present-day Sofia), Odessos (present-day Varna), Pautalia (present-day Kyustendil), Diocletianopolis (present-day Hissarya), Abritus (present-day Razgrad), Nicopolis ad Istrom (north of Veliko Turnovo), Nicopolis ad Nestrum (east of present-day Gotse Delchev), Novae (next to Svishtov), Sexaginta Prista (present-day Rouse). Many of them, partially restored and adequately presented, give an idea of the skills of the builders and architects of yore. Among the best known are the ancient theatre in Plovdiv, the Roman thermae in Varna, the museum display in the open of Sexaginta Prista in the central part of Rouse, the impressive remains of ancient thermae (the Asclepion of Pautalia) in Kyustendil and many more. Very interesting and highly valuable are the late Antiquity floor mosaics from Augusta Trajana (present-day Stara Zagora), the Roman and early Byzantine mosaics of what had once been Martianopolis (an archaeological reserve), the mosaics in the Mosaics Museum, the only one of its kind, in Devnya. Dated to that same age are: the Silistra vaulted tomb, the Pomorie domed tomb, the Hisarya family tomb, known for its original frescoes.

When in the 4th century A.D. the Christian religion gained equal rights with the rest of the religious confessions, the construction of Christian temples began in the Bulgarian lands. Interesting from a scholarly point of view and very frequented are the early Christian churches of St Sophia and the rotunda of St George in Sofia, the Church of St Sophia (the old Bishopric) in Nessebur, the Chervenata [Red] Church near Perushtitsa and some others.

There is keen and fully justified interest in the cultural and historical monuments that have survived from the time of Danubian Bulgaria, founded by Khan Asparouh. The stunning remains of Pliska and Veliki Preslav (the first and the second capital of Danubian Bulgaria) are living evidence of the traditional building skills, brought by the old Bulgarians. Their grand architecture is kind of a symbol of the political, economic and cultural upsurge of the medieval Bulgarian state. The reign of Simeon the Great, marked by an exceptional political upsurge and the flowering of culture and letters, has been referred to as a Golden Age of Bulgarian Culture.

The Madara Horseman rock relief is the most significant Early Medieval item of Bulgarian monumental art and the only one of its kind in the European cultural history (located near the village of Madara, Shoumen region). It has been included in the list of the world heritage under UNESCO protection.

Veliko Turnovo has been the living symbol of Bulgarian statehood over the ages. It is one of the most visited towns in Bulgaria. Part of the city territory has been declared a museum reserve. The brilliant capital of the Bulgarian Kingdom during the 12th-14th centuries, Turnovo was among the largest cities in terms of area and population in the Southeast Europe of that time. What has survived to date (partially or wholly restored) takes us again to the time of the regal Turnovgrad city, when magnificent palaces, monasteries, churches, fortifications, bridges and big buildings were erected. The flowering of the remarkable Turnovo School of Art was directly related to the economic and political strengthening of the kingdom, with the large-scale construction and intensive literary activities in the royal court, in the bishopric and the monasteries. Among the peak artistic achievements are the book miniatures, some of which can be seen to this day (in the Gospel of Ivan Alexander, the Manases Chronicle, the Tomichov Psalmbook and some others). The most remarkable cultural achievement in the late Middle Ages in Bulgaria and the most remarkable Bulgarian literary phenomenon during the 14th century was the Turnovo Literary School, connected with the activities of Patriarch Euthymius.

Featuring among the cultural monuments that have survived from that period are the murals in some of the Turnovo churches, the icons in the churches in Nessebur and elsewhere. Worthy of special attention are the unique frescoes in the Boyana Church and the Ivanovo rock churches, appreciated for their true value and included in the list of the world cultural heritage under the protection of UNESCO. Church murals painted during the period of Ottoman domination can be seen in the churches
of the Kremikovtsi, Dragalevtsi and some other monasteries in what has been referred to as the Sofia (Small) Mount Athos near the city of Sofia; in the Orlitsa Nunnery of the Rila Monastery; in Arbanassi and other churches and monasteries.

The exclusive upsurge in architecture and the fine arts, accompanying the National Revival Period, found expression in the erection of remarkable housing and public buildings, in representative churches and monasteries. The remarkable art schools of Samokov, Tryavna and Bansko came into being in that serene period rife with constructive energy. Their representatives produced extraordinary pieces of woodcarving, icon painting and painting.

Objects of cultural tourism are both a number of settlements and town districts, having preserved the atmosphere of the National Revival period like Koprivshitsa, the Old Plovdiv, Veliko Turnovo, Arbanassi, Zheravna, bozhentsi, Tryavna, Bansko, Melnik and some others (some of them have the status of cultural and historical reservations), as well as remarkable monasteries and churches, among which are the Rila, Bachkovo, Troyan, Rozhen, Preobrazhenski [Transfiguration] monasteries, the Church of the Holy Virgin in Pazardzhik, the Church of the Holy Trinity in Bansko and some others.

The period following Bulgaria’s Liberation (1878) was characterized by sweeping construction. Urban development plans were made en masse, the town and city centers were shaped, solid buildings of a new, European look were put up, decoration of the urban houses was modernized. Special saloons, deluxe cafes and clubs came into being, where topical matters, associated with the culture and policy of post-liberation Bulgaria were discussed in an agreeable and refined atmosphere. The European influence spread increasingly more tangibly both in the lifestyle and customs of the people and in the architectural outline of the newly built structures. Cities like Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Rouse, Bourgas and others were undergoing rapid and visible changes over the years.

A great number of the present-day Bulgarian cities naturally combine their centuries-long history and the artistic samples from various ages with the living and noisy presence of contemporary life. Some of them are university centers focusing the lively cultural life of our time, while others are fashionable resorts, offering fine conditions for holidaymaking, convenience and entertainment. And no matter where they are located - in the mountains, in the fields or at the seaside - they are attractive because of their most varied and unexpected opportunities of cultural tourism in the country.
Appendix 9

Sources: State Agency for Tourism analyses of tourist flows

“Holiday tourists - summer 2007”

“Analyzing tourists in Bulgaria, summer 2008”

**Figure 7** Comparison of foreign arrivals by generating country in % 2007-2008

**Figure 8** Comparison of foreign tourists by age group in % 2007-2008
**Figure 9** Comparison of foreign tourists by level of education in % 2007-2008

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<tr>
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<td>63.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second.</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foreign tourists in Bulgaria by level of education in %, 2007-2008

**Figure 10** Comparison of foreign tourists by occupation in % 2007-2008

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<th>Occupation</th>
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<th>2008</th>
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<td>20.4</td>
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<td>Retired</td>
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<td>3.8</td>
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<td>Housekeep.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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Foreign tourists in Bulgaria by occupation in %, 2007-2008
Figure 11 Comparison of types of tourism practiced by foreigners in %, 2007-2008

<table>
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<td>SPA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
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<td>Rural</td>
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<td>Balneology</td>
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<td>City break</td>
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<td>Eco</td>
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<td>Golf</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horseback</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yachting</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of tourism practiced by foreigners in %, 2007-2008

Figure 12 Main purpose of trip of foreigners in %, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holiday break</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical service</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFR</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main purpose of the trip of foreigners in % 2007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 13 New against repeat visits by nationality in %, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>New visit</th>
<th>Repeat visit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavia</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>53.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. Europe</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkan states</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Europe</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. America</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New visits against Repeat visits of foreigners by nationality in %, 2007

Figure 14 Preferred company during stay of foreigners in %, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner/Spouse</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foreign tourists by preferred company while Bulgaria in %, 2007

Figure 15 Presence and number of children during foreigners' trip in Bulgaria in %, 2007

Presence of children during the trip in Bulgaria in %, 2007

Number of children present in %, 2007
Appendix 10

Tables 1 through 6: Arrivals of tourists from selected countries to Bulgaria by purpose of visit and by nationality 2003 through 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Tourism Total 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>170 775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>9 910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>42 364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far East</td>
<td>14 326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Tourism Total 2004 to 2003 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>+36.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>+35.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>+24.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far East</td>
<td>+20.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Total 2005 to 2004 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>+36.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>+38.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>+13.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far East</td>
<td>+6.07</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Total 2006 to 2005 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>-15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>+20.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>+11.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far East</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Total 2007 to 2006 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>-15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far East</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Total 2008 to 2007 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far East</td>
<td>8.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 16 Patterns of arts attendance in the UK

Table 7 Frequency of attendance at museums / galleries during the past 12 months, 2005-06, UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of visits</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Range (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>57.0 58.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>41.6 43.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 28 067

Frequency of visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of visits</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Range (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times a year</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>59.4 61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 times a year</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>30.3 32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least once a month</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>6.9 8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least once a week</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4 0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0 0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 11 373

Figures 17 & 18 Engagement in cultural and sport sectors by adults and children

Table 8 Participation in cultural activities and entertainment, in %, 1993-2006, Italy
Compendium Cultural Policies Report, Country Profile of Italy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Museum Participation in %</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 People who in the last year made or attended certain cultural activities in Spain, in % of total population, 1990-2007; Compendium Cultural Policies Report, Country Profile of Spain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities heavily subsidized by the state</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monuments</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural centres</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 19

Japanese overseas travellers by month, 2000-06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>% point change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>2000-06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>+0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>+0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>+0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>+0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>+0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>+0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: JTB Report 2000-07: All About Japanese Overseas Travellers; Publisher: JTB Corp;
Appendix 11

**Figure 20** Level of education of domestic tourists for Bulgaria, 2008

```
Figures
Higher: 52.5
Secondary: 44.7
Primary: 2.8

Domestic tourists by level of education in %, 2008
```

**Figure 21** Domestic tourists for Bulgaria by age group, 2008

```
Age Group
18-25: 7.2
26-35: 38.8
36-45: 36.7
46-55: 13.7
56+: 3.6

Domestic tourists by age group in %, 2008
```


**Figure 22** Theatre attendance in Bulgaria, 1997-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theatres</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of theatres</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seats</td>
<td>28 500</td>
<td>28 700</td>
<td>30 500</td>
<td>30 277</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>30 105</td>
<td>29 977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows</td>
<td>12 700</td>
<td>12 000</td>
<td>12 500</td>
<td>10 465</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>10 776</td>
<td>10 951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits to theatres</td>
<td>2 100 000</td>
<td>1 900 000</td>
<td>1 600 000</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>1 475 323</td>
<td>1 636 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 23 Cinema attendance in Bulgaria, 1997-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cinemas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cinemas</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in towns</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in villages</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of screenings</td>
<td>97 419</td>
<td>100 074</td>
<td>84 314</td>
<td>103 876</td>
<td>136 422</td>
<td>157 247</td>
<td>140 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in towns</td>
<td>96 697</td>
<td>99 633</td>
<td>84 080</td>
<td>103 488</td>
<td>136 143</td>
<td>157 154</td>
<td>139 977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in villages</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>3 186 000</td>
<td>3 204 000</td>
<td>1 923 000</td>
<td>1 860 484</td>
<td>3 530 595</td>
<td>2 580 000</td>
<td>2 631 682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in towns</td>
<td>3 165 000</td>
<td>3 189 000</td>
<td>1 909 000</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>3 508 000</td>
<td>2 578 000</td>
<td>2 627 458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- in villages</td>
<td>1 000</td>
<td>15 000</td>
<td>14 000</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>2 595</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket sales (million BGL)</td>
<td>4 388.6</td>
<td>10 730.0</td>
<td>8 000</td>
<td>7 327</td>
<td>13 680</td>
<td>9 312</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 24 Museums and galleries attendance in Bulgaria, 1997-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitors (in '000)</td>
<td>4 268</td>
<td>5 646</td>
<td>5 053</td>
<td>3 938</td>
<td>3 554.5</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>3 925.2</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>4 060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- of which to art galleries</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>1 685</td>
<td>1 503</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>590.6</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>395.6</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 12

Travel behavior of Bulgarians living abroad – Survey; Aneliya Taneva

1. How old are you?
   - 18-25
   - 26-35
   - 36-45
   - 46-55
   - 56+

2. In which foreign country do you live?

3. How much time do you usually spend in Bulgaria?
   - 7 to 14 days
   - 15 to 30 days
4. Do you travel in Bulgaria for tourism and leisure purposes?

5. Whom do you travel with?
   - Family
   - Friends
   - Alone

6. What type of sites do you visit – of cultural or natural character?

7. Name a few cultural and historical sites or precincts which you have visited during your last two stays in Bulgaria.

Figure 25

Length of stay in Bulgaria of Bulgarians living abroad - survey results
Figure 26

Type of site visited in Bulgaria by Bulgarians living abroad in % - survey results

Figure 27

Visitation to Bulgarian sites by type of site and by age group of Bulgarians living abroad - survey results
Figure 28

Accompanying during trip in Bulgaria of Bulgarians living abroad by age group - survey results
Appendix 13

**Figure 29** The Balkan Peninsula, 2009; Source: [http://www.europe-map.org/images/balkans.gif](http://www.europe-map.org/images/balkans.gif)

**Figure 30** Competitor destinations among foreign markets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Market Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>17.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>11.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>11.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>10.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>9.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main competitor destinations among foreign markets for Bulgaria in %, 2007

Main purpose of trip - Holiday
### Figure 31 Countries by number of World Heritage Sites
Source: Tourism Competitiveness Report 2009; World Economic Forum

#### Number of World Heritage cultural sites (hard data)
Number of World Heritage cultural sites and Oral & Intangible Heritage | August 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country/Economy</th>
<th>Hard Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Korea, Rep.</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 32 Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Economy</th>
<th>Cultural resources competitiveness index rank*</th>
<th>Cultural resources competitiveness index score**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Rank out of 133
** On a scale 1-7 where 1 is the highest score
Appendix 14

Source: Statistical data of Museum ‘Iskra’ in Kazanlak

Table 10 Attendance of places main places of interest 2005-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Museum ‘Iskra’</strong></td>
<td>26 555</td>
<td>19 961</td>
<td>25 581</td>
<td>19 908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kazanlak Thracian Tomb</strong></td>
<td>15 337</td>
<td>18 079</td>
<td>19 674</td>
<td>19 456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seuthes III Tomb</strong></td>
<td>26 456</td>
<td>30 096</td>
<td>28 995</td>
<td>25 568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rose Museum</strong></td>
<td>10 309</td>
<td>12 802</td>
<td>15 845</td>
<td>16 836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>‘Kulata’ Ethn. Complex</strong></td>
<td>11 809</td>
<td>10 063</td>
<td>8 601</td>
<td>10 571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>90 466</td>
<td>91 001</td>
<td>98 696</td>
<td>92 339</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 33 Bulgarian and foreign attendance to the main places of interest in Kazanlak, 2005-2008
### Appendix 15

**Figure 34** Tourism development potential of the Valley of the Thracian Kings according to EU standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Situation analysis for determining tourism potential</strong></th>
<th><strong>ASSESSMENT</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantification</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Characteristic and attractive landscapes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Flagship species or habitats (e.g. bears, bogs)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other interesting, unusual or representative wildlife</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Diversity of ecosystems</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Geological features such as lakes, rivers, cliffs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Protected areas: nature reserves, national parks, ...</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural features</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Built heritage (monuments, ruins, castles, churches, etc...)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Small heritage features (fountains, chapels, walls, etc...)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vernacular buildings</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Heritage objects (tools, clothes, furniture, tapestries, ...)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Traditions (skills, know-how, customs, ...)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gastronomy (local products, recipes, production methods, ...)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Events and festivals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area as a whole</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Surrounding landscape</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Main land uses</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Location and land tenure re potential attractions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Climate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders (who, views, capacity)</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Public bodies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interest groups</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tourism businesses</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Land owners and other economic sectors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Local residents</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accommodation, restaurants, existing attractions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Access and proximity to cities, airports, other destinations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Transportation within destination</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Other facilities and services (shops, etc...)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Current channels of information and marketing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal and policy context</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- National or local tourism strategy and NTA priorities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Policy priorities</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Planning laws and zoning according to economic interests</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Environmental legislation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism demand</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use of existing resources</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Market segment surveys</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Benchmarking competing destinations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total average</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Four

Appendix 16

Thracians


Coming second after the Hindus, the Thracians are the most numerous of all peoples. The Thracians have numerous names, each tribe, depending on its country. But they all have approximately the same customs and rituals, wrote Herodotus (5th century BC) - the Father of History.

The Thracians (of Indo-Europeans by origin) were a large people. Brave and fearless, they were highly valued as hired warriors in the armies of Ancient Greece, as well. The Thracians were the most horrendous gladiators in Rome. One of them was the famous Spartacus, the leader of a big uprising of the slaves in 74-71 B.C.

The Thracians cultivated wheat, barley, rye and millet; they had highly developed viticulture. The Thracian grain and the Thracian wine were famous throughout the whole ancient world. The Thracians were skilled stockbreeders, too. Their horses were on demand in Antiquity.

The rich and fertile Thracian lands drew the eyes of the ancient Greeks. From the 7th century B.C. they started establishing colonies along the Black Sea coast, most famous among which were Apollonia (present-day Sozopol), Anhialo (present-day Pomorie), Mesembria (present-day Nessebur), Odessos (present-day Varna), Dionysopolis (present-day Balchik). These colonies became crossing points of different ancient cultures, evidence of which have been the rich archaeological finds.

The earliest Thracian states appeared during the 1 millennium B.C., reaching their flowering during the 6th century B.C. Most powerful was the Kingdom of the Odryssa, named after the Odryssain dynasty. Around the 5th century B.C. the Kingdom of the Odryssa was the largest state in Europe; its territories extended from the Danube to the Aegean and from the river Strouma to the Black Sea.

The Thracians worshipped the Great Mother Goddess and her son - the Sun. Among the deities they honored was the so-called Thracian Horseman, a horseman-hunter depicted on stone slabs. The cult for him was so powerful that it was continued and developed into the image of Christian Saint George.

The most popular in the Thracian religious doctrine was the mythical singer and spiritual teacher Orpheus. He had been an unsurpassed musician, and even the wild beasts listened in to his music. Another legend has it that he had descended in the Underworld, in search of his beloved Eurydice. The legendary Orpheus became part of the mythology of the ancient Greeks (the myth about the campaign of the Argonauts); he was often a character in the plays of the Old Greek playwrights.

The Thracians believed in life after death. They buried their dead joyfully and merrily; they organized gorgeous feasts with wine, and different contests. Archaeologists often uncover magnificent table sets, used by them in feasts. Featuring among them are the treasures from the village of Borovo, from the village of Rogozen. Reminiscences of the Thracian wine holidays are now embodied in the feast day of Trifon Zarezan, annually celebrated at the beginning of the month of February.

A Thracian burial feast is depicted on the central frieze of the famous Kazanluk Tomb, one of the masterpieces of Thracian burial architecture that has survived to our time. Presumably, it reflects the funeral feast of Seuthes III (330-300 B.C.), the great Thracian king of the Odryssa.