

## **Educating a new generation of tour guides for the forthcoming era at A.U.Th (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Faculty of Engineering, Interuniversity Postgraduate Programme (IPP) “Museology-Cultural Management”, A.U.Th)”**

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### **Abstract**

*The year 2012 proved to be of great importance for the history of Tourism Education in Greece. The Greek State decided to -temporarily- pause the traditional State Schools for Tour Guides, after approximately 60 years of unceasing operation. The Greek government's decision to involve University Schools in the venture of educating tour guides through “Intensive Courses for Professional Guides”, represents a really innovative step.*

*According to the ministerial decision no 18062/20.12.2012 (Φ.Ε.Κ. 3401 Β'), Human Studies graduates such as archaeologists, historians, archaeologists - historians, art historians, ethnologists, social anthropologists etc are eligible for becoming officially licenced tour guides after having successfully attended the Academic Course. The candidates are given a great opportunity to orientate their already university solid knowledge and skills towards a new direction. This new breed of tour guides is deeply aware (apart from History and Archaeology) of Contemporary Cultural Theories, Audiences' approaches, foreign languages, Pedagogy, Museology, Architecture, Arts etc.*

*Above all, they are in a position to communicate intimate interpretations, illustrating the intrinsic aura of objects, monuments, stories, in their original contexts. As Greece has a strong presence to a rapidly growing segment of the total tourist market, defined as Cultural Tourism this new kind of tour guide comes as the ideal professional expertise for performing a fully updated experiential narrative, concerning Heritage in all aspects. A smart tourism market willing to develop and improve it's impact on economy should embody such a professional branch as a tool for a qualitatively profitable effect.*

**Keywords:** *Human Studies Graduates - Tour Guides, interpretation of tangible and intangible culture, experiential narratives, constructivist model, Cultural Tourism, Cultural Heritage Communicator.*

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**JEL Classification:** Z39

### **1. Introduction**

The field of history of Tourism Education in Greece entails really interesting aspects, although, if not absolutely excluded, still remaining on the margins of research. This paper aims to address this intriguing scientific conversation, focusing particularly on tour guiding education. Concerning tour guides, referred to

for decades up to even today, as "the ambassadors of greek culture", the subject matter gets even more critical, as a current issue in the recent agenda of greek tourism policy, especially since 2012.

It is very important to focus on the key role that Human Studies graduates - tour guides could hold, concerning the development of a new kind of tourism narrative, in accordance to the current tendencies. Tour guides should not be considered a trivial factor in the huge global mass market. They are potentially connected with the creation of an invaluable tourism product, the experiential narrative, widely accepted as a necessary tool in a story-driven market (Richards, 2011, p.15).

As Richards marks: "The narratives and images attached to the destination become an important determinant of the value of places to the consumers and therefore their decision-making in terms of destinations and willingness to pay". (Richards, 2011, p.3). So, as a dynamic part of tourism industry, having a discreet though catalytic impact on the consumers' attitude, tour guides should be directly connected with economy numbers.

The paper focuses on the philosophy, methodology and scientific instruments, exploited at the Interuniversity Postgraduate Programme "Museology-Cultural Management" A.U.Th, in order to empower the perspectives for a new tourism professional in Greece: a Cultural Heritage communicator, combining a solid knowledge not only of cultural and tourism products but also of the audience - visitors to perceive them.

## 2. Tour Guides' Education in Greece

### *Then and now*

Returning to the subject in question, tour guides' education, it would be useful to briefly review the profile of a tour guide in the early decades of the emergence of this brand new professional, in the fifties and sixties, when tourism industry in Greece was still in its infancy.

The first State School for Tour Guides, based in Athens, operated under the umbrella of the first government-run organization for tourism education, called "ΣΤΕ" [Σχολή Τουριστικών Επαγγελμάτων / School of Tourism Professions, established in 1937. Later on the School (2002) has been renamed as "ΟΤΕΚ" (Οργανισμός Τουριστικών Επαγγελμάτων / Organization for Tourism Professions.

Since then, for more than fifty years in row, State Schools for Tour Guides had operated as post-secondary / unrated high school education, providing their graduates with an official professional Licence. State Schools for Tour Guides operated also in Thessaloniki, Corfu, Lesbos, Rhodes, Crete. Guiding in Greece has been exclusively connected with the educational programme as implemented in the frame of State Schools (Legislative framework: Ν. 710/1977, ΦΕΚ 1375/2002, Ν. 3105/2003). The basic defined attendance requirements for the candidates were:

- Entry Exams (through national exams) for High School Graduates,
- in the following topics: Foreign Languages, Essay, Greek History, Geography of Greece.

Attendance was compulsory and lasted two and a half years, while the educational schedule included lectures, visits on sites and outdoor excursions all around Greece (110 days).

In detail, the Programme Course of Study included lessons as follows: Ancient Greek History (50h), Medieval Greek History (50h), History of Modern Greece (50h), Prehistoric Archaeology (class hours: 80, museum hours: 20h, preparation for excursions: 50h), Classical Archaeology (class hours: 120h, museum hours: 60, preparation for excursions: 130h), Medieval - Post Medieval Archaeology and Frankish Occupation in Greece (class hours: 120h, museum hours: 30h, preparation for excursions: 70h), History of Art (class hours: 100h), History of Modern Architecture & Rythmology (class hours: 30h, preparation for excursions: 10h), History of Theatre (30h), History of Religion (40h), Mythology (20h), History of Ancient Greek Literature (30h), Modern Greek Literature (20h), Folk and Traditional Greek Culture (30h), Geography (Nature, Tourism, Travelling, 30h), Ecology-Environment (60h), Geology - Palaeontology - Speleology (20h), Archaeological Legislation (20h), Tourism Development - Tourism Legislation (30h),

Travel Agencies & Hotel Issues (30h), Tourist Psychology (20h), First Aid (20h), Speech Training (10h), Tour Guiding Techniques (30h), Bus-touring (class hours: 30h, preparation for excursions: 130h).

It is important to mention here that university graduates from the department of History and Archaeology could enter the State Schools without taking exams in History and Essay, as they had already been successfully tested during University Examinations. However, they were obliged to fully attend and take exams in History and Archaeology during the semesters.

The Programme Course, compiled by a Scientific Committee consisting of Academics, was obviously oriented to History and Archaeology as those two topics represent the core of knowledge for a Greek tour guide who intends to be professionally activated all around the country.

In addition, other topics such as History of Religion, Legislation, Theatre, Ecology, Geology, Tourist Psychology, Tour Guiding Techniques etc, contributed to a manifold awareness, concerning a variety of topics, questions and challenges that tour guides confront in their everyday working experience. The philosophy of tour guide education during this first period, could not but correspond to the need behind; a top priority was given to producing a new breed of professionals, speaking the basic European Languages as a means to transfer information about Greek Culture.

At this point an interesting question arises: to what extent could a high -school graduate get acquainted with History, Archaeology, History of Arts, History of Architecture etc, so as to be in the position to communicate it with the audience, and not just acquire a mere, personal contact with the body of knowledge.

Given that Greece is full of archaeological monuments, museums and historical places, fields such as History, Archaeology, Architecture, Folk and Traditional Greek Culture, hold a key role for a solid background of knowledge, which goes much further than thirty, forty, fifty or even a hundred hours in a classroom or an outdoor approach.

The theoretical and practical aspect of knowledge, as basic instruments represent just a plain challenge for a tour guide. The most intriguing part of the venture is the involvement of audience. Nowadays, the relationship between a person who communicates culture and audiences, involves a crucial scientific conversation which comes under the branch of Museology and Cultural Management. (Kelly, 2008), (Kelly, 2006), (Housen, 1987), (Cross, 2002), (Σκαλτσά, 1999, σ. 117-128).

Before elaborating on this questioning, it is necessary to refer to the changes that occurred concerning tour guides' education during the last four years. In 2012 the Greek State decided to -temporarily- pause the traditional State Schools for Tour Guides, after approximately 60 years of unceasing operation. This decision was taken due to a variety of factors (political, social, financial) relevant at least partly, to the recent greek crisis.

According to the ministerial decision no 4093/2012, [Medium - Term Fiscal Strategy 2012-2015], Human Studies graduates such as archaeologists, historians, archaeologists-historians, art historians, ethnologists, social anthropologists etc, are eligible for becoming officially licenced tour guides, after having successfully attended the “Intensive Courses for Professional Guides”.

Attending intensive 300hours lessons and practical Seminars, exclusively organised, scheduled and implemented by academics, deeply experienced in the interpretation and presentation of Greek Culture and Civilization, the candidates are given a great opportunity to orient their already university solid knowledge and skills towards a new direction. They get acquainted with the crucial aspect of building and performing tour narratives, concentrating on the extremely important relationship between cultural/tourism products and their audiences/consumers.

Thus, via a political decision, the greek government highlighted an extremely interesting scientific issue, that could be summarized here in a brief question: what should the profile of a person that produces tour narratives for audiences in nowadays Greece be? The same decision discloses a hidden aspect, related to the neglected role of Human Scientists in communicating Culture with audiences. This latter perspective is in fact part of what is defined as Public Archaeology in the international literature. (Merriman, 2004a, p. 3, 5).

Before presenting the content of the “Intensive Courses for Professional Guides”, it is important to mention that A.U.Th. was the first that ran this Programme in 2013 (May-July) and then successively for the next two academic years, 2014 (February to April) and 2015 (March to May).

The assignment of “Intensive Courses for Professional Guides” to the Interuniversity Postgraduate Programme (IPP) “Museology-Cultural Management”, proved to be the most appropriate one for running the

task. In fact, it was a great opportunity for an Academic Programme to house a speciality that could be an autonomous Master itself, as a branch of Museology. Furthermore, Museology provides the suitable scientific infrastructure that sets the basic principles for the implementation of the Course.

### **3. The "Intensive Courses for Professional Guides" Programme**

*What kind of tour guides?  
The Philosophy*

According to the current Theories of Culture, Public Archaeology, Museology etc, tangible and intangible culture (historical places and sites, monuments and museums, traditions, morals and customs, songs and music) is a communicative medium, involved in social practice, being a social product itself. Culture is, in fact, "speech" incorporating messages, that are built through microrelations and macrorelations between signs. (Tilley, 1994, 69-70).

So, if culture products constitute a communication system, it is obvious that the need for meaning making is present. To this point the conversation goes much further, including terms as: interpretation, presentation, interpreter, visitor. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999, 35-36).

As Thompson marks (Copeland, 2004, p.132), interpretation is in part an educational function, requiring a clear distinction between information and understanding. This latter notion, "understanding", as the ideal for communicating Cultural Heritage, brings to light an unstudied scientific issue.

Until today tour guiding has followed a positivist approach where the public was told what to see in a linear way instead of being inspired through the polysemy of interpretation (Tilley, 1994, p.72). However, the constructivist perspective could be particularly appropriate to exploring the nature of interpretation and presentation of culture to the public. A constructivist approach is congruent with the notion that interpretation must connect the topic or place "to something within the personality or experience of the visitor" (Merriman, 2004a,p. 10,11), (Copeland, 2004, p.133,135), (Hein, 1999 p.73-80), (Hein, 1998). As Von Glasersfeld marks "What we make of experience constitutes the only world we consciously live in". (Copeland, 2004, 134).

Current theories of museum education emphasize non-linear, self-directed "learning", where proximity to "truth" is not the ultimate goal. According to Thomas "people are less ready to accept the "authorized" view of the past, preferring to choose for themselves what kind of past they wish to believe in" (Thomas, 2004, p. 191). The basic principle here is that museums and cultural environments in general, should perform themselves in such a way so as to stimulate feelings like wonder, awe, mystery, nostalgia (Richards, 2003), "otherness" etc, that is a creative, poetic, anti-rational approach revealing the individual aura of objects and notions (Merriman, 2004b, 101).

In any procedure, related to cultural products' reception, individuals are constantly constructing and reconstructing meanings through the interaction of senses, perceptions, memories of previous experiences and cognitive processes, which shape understandings and events. In any activity such as a tour guiding, they create experience and meaning to a form of personal construction of the world. Touring Cultural Heritage is a negotiation, an interaction between visitors' carried patterns and the presentation parameters. (Copeland, 2004, 135-137).

The constructivist model of presenting tour guiding obeys in specific methods, widely accepted by all specialists, related to the management of cultural heritage audiences. (Copeland, 2004, p.140-142), (Ham, 1999, p.161-164), (EdCom, 2001). Building cultural narratives and presentations is not at all an easy task. In fact it is a combination of a strictly scientific field comprising accuracy and communicating structure. It constitutes a conceptual framework, demanding precise methodological steps.

There should be rules involving terms like; story format, plot structure, theme and topic, feedback-loop, vehicles with which the narrative is to be developed and a solid analogy between introduction, body, conclusion (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999, p. 35), (Ham, 1999, p.165). A lot of theoretical work, concerning the core of information to be shared and the audience-receiver of it, has to be done before the practice on the field (museum, archaeological site, historical place etc).

A crucial factor in reference to meaning making is the social dimension of it (Copeland, 2004, p.140), (Richards, 2003). Individuals involve themselves in touring, not only for the sake of history, knowledge, learning etc. Above all they pursue social contact. People like to interfere and interact with each other, using culture products as a pretext for doing so. This challenging balance between individuals, objects, interpretations and the interactions between them, needs an animator - facilitator to orchestrate the procedure through a two-way traffic of ideas and responsiveness. In fact, the encouragement of a “dialogue” (Copeland, 2004 p. 142), might be a suitable term to describe the process.

Constructing communication along with creating meaning is a dual challenge, involving the term “polysensuality” (Merriman, 2004a, 10). As more and more people are relying on their feelings and emotions in their everyday lives, meaning and value might need different means to be produced.

Merriman uses the term “informed imagination” (Merriman, 2004b, 103) to describe a poetic approach to the produced narrative or activity taking place during an interpretative procedure, like a guiding tour. Such a product is an emotional, experiential narrative which draws on poetry and fiction, inviting visitors to construct their own stories.

The role that Human Studies graduates - tour guides could serve in such a procedure of presenting heritage to the public, is really catalytic. Having a deep knowledge of the proper scientific instruments and methodologies they are in the position to animate and inspire the creation of cognitive dissonance (Public Archaeology, 134) as an “artistic” activity which aims at revealing meanings and relationships behind objects, monuments, notions, audiences and narratives.

Another important contribution of Human Studies graduates - tour guides, is their intimate relationship with the political nature of History, Archaeology, Anthropology, Arts etc. Many archaeological sites, historical places, personalities, notions and objects are strongly debated, as directly connected with national affairs. A scientist-guide, as a Human Studies graduate, can certainly manipulate issues of high national importance in the most accurate and integrated way. It is crucial to have in mind that tour guiding as part of Public Archaeology is a serious matter of ethics. (Merriman, 2004a, p.13). (Χαμηλάκης, 2007), (Damaskos, 2010).

Also, the new generation of tour guides is aware of the museums and cultural spaces as “constructed sites”, “theatrical places” that deeply comprehend behind the scenes. Consequently, they are in a position to introduce the inner part of it. In this frame, they can perform guided tours behind the scene revealing how to use the aspects of cultural products in the best way. In addition, they can sufficiently deal with topics like museum architecture (Communication in Theory and Practice, 41), management, politics, code of ethics dealing with preservation, conservation, presentation of the Cultural Heritage etc.

Digital technology, material in store, debates about the ethics of collecting, disposal etc could also form part of the presentations so that the visitors have the great, fascinating chance to question the fundamentals of what, why, how archaeologists, curators, museologists and related specialties, do.

Also, a Human Study graduate - tour guide considers audio, visual, tactile interpretation techniques and other representation formats as necessary means for being effective. Above all though, the main priority should be to engage visitors’ emotions, if they are to make a lasting impression and create true value.

It is important to mention here -no matter how utopian it may sound- the key role that the new guides could play as tour operators, designing and producing narratives for alternative destinations that should have been in the touristic agenda a long time ago. The potentials for building a new touristic map in the country are infinite, as during the last fifteen years a body of notably important monuments, museums and sites were added to the cultural fund of the country. The discussion about the contribution those new scientists-guides could have in the improvement of the touristic product could be really interesting. Having on the one hand a new cultural infrastructure consisted of monuments and, on the other hand, consisted of human resources we could really optimize the whole venture of tourism creating a new starting point for the forthcoming decades.

Human Studies graduates - tour guides represent a great combination of well grounded skills and qualifications that form a top kind of a professional facilitator. They can effectively distinguish instruction from provocation, information from inspiration, experiential from procedural, when organizing a guiding for a wide demographic profile of their audiences.

The decision of giving Human Studies graduates the opportunity to become professional tour guides, proves to be really challenging. They constitute a new form of tourism professionals (cultural heritage

communicators) properly qualified to fill in the gap of a tour guide model, corresponding to the demands of a nowadays tourist market. In fact they can exploit all the basic principles of the current museological theory, related to the culture and the public in the most solid, effective way. It is exactly this prospect that determined the whole philosophy of “Intensive Courses for Professional Guides” at A.U.Th.

#### **4. The “Intensive Courses for Professional Guides” Programme**

##### *A new generation The Methodology*

It is obvious that this new generation of tour guides, as described above, have already conquered a great deal of valid theoretical knowledge, concerning culture and civilization, during their academic training. Also, they have participated in many days' educational activities and excursions all around Greece, South Italy, Sicily as part of their compulsory and voluntary outdoor archaeological and excavating courses.

So, the question is what should their training include, in order to complete an already integrated, qualitative level of knowledge, related to Cultural Heritage. The challenge here would be a path for the connection between culture and visitors, which, in fact, reflects the need to project the “touristic face” of Archaeology, Museology, Anthropology, Ethnology, as academic disciplines.

The Programme was scheduled according to the notion that all necessary fields for tour guide experts should fit in 300 hours. The prevailing priority was to combine a basic theoretical approach with all the practical aspects of a professional training. All the three years of implementation included nine thematic fields, as follows:

- Tourism and Sustainable Development Principles.
- Tourism Legislation. Archaeological Legislation.
- Geography - Natural and Human Made Environment.
- Cultural Heritage Management.
- Interpretation - Presentation of Tangible / Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- Guiding and Museum Education.
- Tour Guiding Techniques.
- Orthophony - Speech Training.
- First Aid.

The Programme also included four educational trips that functioned as a simulation of the real field work. The candidates, themselves, were asked to fully organize the whole trip; narrative body, points of interest, stops, bus-touring during the travel, visual material, cooperation with the Travel Agency etc.

A closer examination of the thematic fields would be useful to comprehend the methodological steps, adopted in scheduling the Programme. The first field, “Tourism and Sustainable Development Principles” deals with topics such as; Tourism Industry, Greek and International Tourism Market, Types of Tourism, Alternative Tourism, Tourism and Sustainability, National Parks, Natural Heritage, Obligations of Travel Agents and Tour Operators, Consumer Rights of Tourists”.

This field also includes topics such as “Psychology and Tourism. Social Psychology of Tourist Behaviour”, “The Public; treatment methods”. Dealing with issues, related to audiences and visitors, the field “Psychology and Tourism Behaviour” provides candidates with a different point of view, as it broadens the typical discussion about the “general public”, at least as it is known in the frame of Museology.

The second field, Tourism and Archaeological Legislation is necessary for all professionals of Cultural Heritage, especially tour guides who deal with the everyday experience of it. Given that the origins of greek monuments is directly connected with classical antiquity, Archaeological Legislation is a field that Human Studies graduates - tour guides should be fully aware of. On the other hand, Greece is a typical tourist destination, demanding deep knowledge of Tourism Legislation on the behalf of all those interfering with Tourism Market.

It is interesting to note that, until 2012, archaeologists willing to enter the traditional State Schools for tour guides should take exams in Greek Geography, a topic they were not familiar with, at least in its contemporary aspect. Geography - Natural and Human Made Environment, constitute the necessary frame to incorporate the essence of guiding.

The fourth thematic field, Cultural Heritage Management defines and presents tangible heritage and the scientific methods for its preservation and presentation to the public. The introductory part sets the frame, the basic principles and the International Guidelines - Code of Ethics on Conservation, Restoration, Preservation, Presentation of Sites and Monuments.

The field also includes topics of great importance for guiding, such as: History of Museums, Museums and Monuments in Contemporary Greece, Museum Collections, Contemporary Art in Greece, Archaeological Sites, Traditional Settlements and Communities, Historic Cities, Industrial Heritage, Science and Technology Parks, Cultural Centres.

As it is clear, almost all aspects of Cultural Heritage are embodied in the Course, so that the variety of greek culture is highlighted, setting the challenge for a touristic approach of places and monuments that, until today, remained unexploited.

The fifth field, Interpretation - Presentation of Tangible / Intangible Cultural Heritage refers to the core of the philosophy the Course follows. As shown above, interactive interpretation illustrates the scientific tool for a constructivist model of tour guiding, where the public actively participates in an experiential dialogue among objects, people and narratives.

At this point it is necessary to underline the great importance of embodying interpretation theories to an extroverted field of public speech about culture and monuments, like tour guiding. Although, at least initially, one could consider those two topics absolutely irrelevant, their combination could be revolutionary for the production of tour narratives. This latter ascertainment is also of great importance for the purely scientific part of the discussion. As part of Public Archaeology tour guiding will be sometime in the near future an issue in the scientific agenda of Museology, Pedagogy etc.

The field “Interpretation - Presentation of Tangible / Intangible Cultural Heritage” contains crucial theoretical approaches of great interest, such as: Contemporary Economical and Social Issues, Modern History, Politics, Regime, Historical Consciousness, Contemporary Theories for the Interpretation of the Past.

Furthermore, two courses of this specific field are directly related to the subject “tour guiding”. The first deals with “Techniques for organizing interpretative and interdisciplinary guiding activities” while the second covers the practical aspect of the procedure under the title: “Designing visual methodological tools for tour guiding”.

Also, the field “Interpretation - Presentation of Tangible / Intangible Cultural Heritage”, included two weeks of outdoor practice, where candidates scheduled and organized their own narratives, according to the interpretative core of guiding. The whole experience resulted in a corpus of urban tours that constitute integrated -ready to sell- tourism products themselves.

Equally renovative was the idea of connecting Guiding with Museum Education. Museums, particularly the archaeological ones, hold a large portion of tour guiding in Greece. As we have already discussed, there is a whole body of knowledge concerning Museum Communication, Museum Education, Museum Audiences, Museum Exhibitions, Museum Narratives etc, that is clearly related to tour guiding. For the first time in Tourism Education, candidates tour guides were taught and practiced Museum Education as an integral part of guiding speech.

Apart from theoretical approaches in the classroom, the candidates are taught methods for organizing guiding tours, adapting to diverse audiences, like children, teenagers, adults, minorities, elderly and disabled people.

The next thematic topic, “Tour Guiding Techniques”, constitutes the applied field of tour guiding in all aspects. Practical subjects like: various kinds of tour guiding (private, groups, land tours, cruises etc), means for delivering and communicating tour narratives, design and management of digital technology in museums and archaeological sites, cooperation with tour operators and travel agents, methods, tools and means for organizing bus-touring, designing tour narratives for specific destinations, the role of tour guide in the frame

of a specific audience, basic principles and ethics of public speaking (Andrews, Andrews, Williams, 2002, p. 10-25) etc are examined in the frame of the topic.

In fact the field “Tour Guiding Techniques” is the most crucial of the Course as it completes the solid, academic knowledge of the candidates in a practical orientation. It is worth to mention here the importance of providing a combination of academic with a professional training, especially in reference to the fields: Interpretation - Presentation of Tangible / Intangible Cultural Heritage, Guiding and Museum Education, Tour Guiding Techniques. Those three fields deal with the same topics from an entirely different point of view. They set the same questions, suggesting methodological tools around a common correlation of concepts: museums, monuments, culture, audiences/visitors.

Last but not least, the course contents six introductory hours to Orthophony and Speech Training. The candidates have the chance to comprehend the importance of using their voice, an invaluable expressive means, in a proper way so as to become attractive speakers. In the short duration of six hours they are taught exercises that can perform and practice alone afterwards, improving their appealing to audience senses (Andrews, Andrews, Williams, 2002, p. 257-278, 281-306).

Originated from an academic environment most of Human Studies graduates are not familiarized with being exposed to the audiences. On the contrary, until recently they have not treated their relationship with the public as something which merited their scientific attention. Especially archaeologists must come to terms with the idea that communication is a specialized field with its own disciplinary framework, directly connected with the interpretative nature of Heritage.

However, the role of a facilitator, “transmitter”, docent and so on (Βελένη, Γεωργάκη, Ξανθοπούλου, 2010, σ. 203) is inherently incorporated into the scientific identity of archaeologists, anthropologists, art historians, curators, museologists etc. The “Intensive Courses for Professional Guides”, is the means of converting academic information, concepts and theories into intelligible words, images, experiences as a “popular” aspect of Cultural Heritage, existing anyway in its profound nature.

A basic contribution of “Intensive Courses for Professional Guides” to Tourism Education and, by extension, to tourism market, is exactly the opportunity for Human Studies scientists to expand their communicating skills for the sake of monuments, research, audiences and the quality of life itself.

The academic frame of the Interuniversity Postgraduate Programme (IPP) “Museology-Cultural Management” can provide all the validated scientific methodological tools for educating the new tourism professional, a Cultural Heritage communicator.

## **5. The “Intensive Courses for Professional Guides” Programme**

### *Human Studies Graduates - Tour Guides and Cultural Tourism*

This new professional branch described as a Cultural Heritage communicator fulfills an emerging tourism trend defined as “cultural tourism” (ICOMOS, 1999) or “cultural routes” in the best way for the country. Cultural tourism is considered a high level leisure activity, taking place especially in Mediterranean and Southern Europe.

According to the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR) there is a range of trends, identified as prevailing preferences by cultural tourists: art exhibitions, organized museum tours, industrial heritage sites, sites of memory, architecture sites, historic parks, local celebrations etc.

Cultural tourism is a rapidly growing segment of the total tourist market, considered a high spending tourism, consumed by highly educated individuals, who search for special cultural experiences in the destination. With its roots in the Grand Tour (Richards, 2003) is one of the forms of tourism that most policy makers seem to be betting on for the future. According the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), Cultural Tourism accounted for 37% of global tourism and forecast that it would grow at a rate of 15% per year. In addition, the number of people visiting cultural attractions has also grown. According to the European Heritage Group (European Commission 1998) attendance at museums, historical monuments and

archaeological sites has doubled between 1977 and 1997. Also, the attendance at museums and monuments across Europe grew by about 25%.

In a general perspective, cultural tourism is widely viewed as a grown market. At the same time it is important to underline the growth of cultural attractions by over 100% in the past 20 years in Europe, outstripping the growth of demand. In addition, in five years, between 2004-2009, there were around 375 million international cultural trips. (Richards, 2003), (Richards, 2011).

In the current experience economy of tourism, where ideas and feelings are tourism products, story-telling proves to be the ultimate tour service for the forthcoming era. Self-actualization is now the greatest need. As Richards marks: “Story-telling will become one of the major drivers of the dream economy in the future” (Richards, 2011). Indisputably, value creation in tourism market is about stories, narratives, feelings, ideas, experiences, not anymore pre-packaged, but co-created with the tourist.

So, what is needed is “a shift from the simple provision of information and services towards the creative co-creation of experiences, narratives and dreams” (Richards, 2011) in other words a shift from static museums and monuments towards interactive experiences and intriguing, imaginative narratives.

As Richards ascertains, apart from the cultural fund a “producer of creativity” is needed as a co-creator of knowledge, innovations and spiritual experiences (Richards, 2011). In the same vein the, academically cultivated, ability of this new branch of professionals to schedule and organize narratives, stories, destinations (place-making) is more than an interesting perspective. Human Studies graduates-tour guides can perform cultural tourism “not as a passive activity but as a means of creating places” (Richards, 2011).

As mentioned above, this new generation of tour guides consist a new kind of high - potential tour operators that could change the map of greek cultural tourism. This new scientific professional team could set new destinations and “sell” new culture brands by projecting a monumental fund, remaining so far unexploited. In a growing market the design of competitive products is a great challenge that could lead us far beyond the typical tourist scenery: Acropolis, Olympia, Delfoi, Crete etc.

During the last decades Greece has been embellished with a number of renovated archaeological sites, museums and places of historical interest that could become a great chance to renew the repertoire of the tourist product. In the frame of the current conjuncture such a policy could be of crucial importance for improving the quality of greek cultural tourism.

## **6. Conclusion**

The operation of “Intensive Courses for Professional Guides” has changed not only Tourism Education in general, but also the educational and professional perspectives of tour guides.

Since 2012 a new breed of professionals has emerged in the tourism market, endowed with a great deal of skills and potentialities, yet not fully realized. A multidisciplinary kind of scientists, who can be transformed to animators, entertainers, infotainers etc, able to produce experiential narratives that broaden the approach to Cultural Heritage, represent an entirely different profile for tour guides.

Currying a solid background of knowledge, concerning Cultural Heritage, they provide a new qualitative service in the tourism industry, addressed to special audiences that pursue more than plain information. The Course aims to complete and update the already conquered body of awareness through strengthening the communicative, extroverted part of candidates’ qualifications.

The basic core of the educational process exploits the Constructivist Model of cognitive comprehension. In this frame “learning” and “knowledge” are built gradually via an experiential procedure based on dialogue, mutual communication and socializing with the catalytic contribution of emotions and senses. In this “synergy” between objects, monuments, stories, History, people, emotions etc, the tour guide, a “*primus inter pares*”, holds a key role, as the person who is called to orchestrate an accurate balance.

In this new educational aspect, three thematic fields, for the first time simultaneously delivered, make the difference: Interpretation - Presentation of Tangible / Intangible Cultural Heritage, Museum Education, Guiding Techniques. The academic origins of the two of them (Interpretation, Museum Education), along

with the practical field of Techniques, provide a great context for obtaining a pioneering contemporary training for tour guides in a Tourism Market update.

This new breed of tour guides is deeply aware, (apart from History and Archaeology), of Contemporary Cultural Theories, Audiences' approaches, foreign languages, Pedagogy, Museology, Architecture, Arts etc. Above all, they are in a position to suggest intimate interpretations, comprehending the intrinsic aura of objects, monuments, stories in their contexts.

A tour guide coming from such an educational background is a professional who not only informs, but provokes and enlightens, not only shows but performs, not only transfer but inspire, not only speaks but narrates, not only address but communicates, not only explains but stimulates and initiates, always following validated scientific methods.

A smart tourism market willing to develop and improve its impact on economy should embody such a professional branch as an alternative tool for a qualitatively profitable effect. A great deal of national monumental fund stands infertile. It is more than crucial to staff and vitalize those monuments with the proper professional crew having also in mind the changes the tourism anthropogeography has been subjected to, during the last decades. Visitors, their interests and demandings, their financial possibilities, have rapidly changed. Naturally, tour guides should follow.

UNWTO projects a positive 2016 for Tourism in Greece and forecasts that the country will maintain a powerful image worldwide as a major tourism destination, consolidating its growth in 2016, as shown by booking trends. Also, according to the forecast issued by UNWTO international tourist arrivals are expected to increase in a long-term forecast by 3.8% a year for the period 2010 to 2020. (1). The diversification of the touristic offer and the development of new destinations, among other priorities, could directly involve this new breed of Human Studies graduates - tour guides, in an effort to broaden the offered services, concerning Cultural Tourism in Greece.

A balanced, healthy market should provide a variety of possibilities for different kind of interests. In fact, all kinds of professionals are absolutely needed and there is enough space for anyone who wants to tackle. Diversity in tourism products and professionals who produce and deliver them, is the key for the -so strongly- expected development.

There couldn't be a more favourable environment than the current one, for this new generation of tour guides, to bring forward their qualifications for the sake of greek tourism, identified with the sake of greek economy.

## Endnotes

1. See UNWTO Press Release. Retrieved from: <http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2015-07-08/international-tourist-arrivals-4-first-four-months-2015>. Accessed the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2016, at 16:40.

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