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## Transinterpret II: Transnational Quality Management in Heritage Interpretation Within the Framework of C. I. Leader+. The Case of Greece

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"TRANSINTERPRET II: TRANSNATIONAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN HERITAGE INTERPRETATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF C.I. LEADER+. THE CASE OF GREECE."

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## 0. Abstract

*Natural and cultural heritage is commonly recognized as the major capital for sustainable tourism development. Many rural regions throughout Europe recognised the necessity to investigate widespread shortcomings and factors of success for the valorisation of local and regional heritage. Transinterpret I has been a successfully implemented transnational cooperation within the framework of C.I. Leader II that has established standards and recommendations concerning the quality of heritage presentation in a recreational learning environment. Transinterpret I managed to improve practical applications in the field of heritage interpretation, especially in a visitor-friendly heritage presentation field with cognitive tools, validated by praxis and data. Transinterpret II, a transnational cooperation within the framework of C.I. Leader+, develops projects concerned with Heritage Interpretation according to the standards and recommendations of a dynamically evolving database, providing all interpretive projects and services developed according to collected specifications with a quality log. All projects and applications are subjected to professional evaluation offered by checklists of the database and highly specialized human resources. The development of an international quality label for a visitor-centric Heritage Interpretation and further development of curricula related with interpretation as a sub-discipline of heritage management is also a significant aim of the joint project.*

**Key Words:** Heritage Interpretation, Transinterpret I and II, Multilateral Cooperation Agreement, Local Action Groups (LAGs), Know-How Transfer, Virtual Centre des Ressources (VCdR), Regional Competence Centres (RCC), Interpretive Planning, Cognitive Processing

## 1. Introduction

Natural and cultural heritage is commonly recognized as an indispensable capital for sustainable tourism development, building the main travel motive for the majority of visitors. Apart from a few exceptions European rural heritage although incredibly rich in bio- and cultural diversity has not yet succeeded to establish a tourism image beyond regional boundaries. In addition many in rural areas have been demographically depopulated and socio-economically degraded during the sixties and seventies- due to a massive employment seeking exodus in central-western urban Europe. Local heritage remains thus often unrecognized. Communities detached from local history, suffer a severe cultural discontinuity, especially obvious in the attitude of younger generations and among descendants of repatriated Europeans. To a great extent alienated from its roots, traditions and historic past, living in a globalizing world, rural population at local level is not aware of its natural and cultural heritage, treating the historic environment as a liability rather than an asset. Defined as the actions of man within natural, built and spiritual environments, the historic environment testifies human action in space and time composing distinctive local and regional identities. Historic monuments, natural or built, are dynamic information sources, a key to the historic memory of creators, guardians and visitors, enclose entire systems of relations, which urge to be decoded and read. Immovable and irreplaceable as it is, the historic environment, if properly valorized, builds a revival source for the regeneration of rural areas using tourism as a vehicle of progress.

Concerning sustainable tourism development in European rural areas, an innovative and effective Heritage Management is urgently required. A decentralized process within a transnational and multidisciplinary framework, able to guarantee for high-added value products is not necessarily a utopia. Transinterpret II has pioneered a new form of co-operation between research and rural development, managing successfully information with tourism value in virtual and in situ environments by applying communication policies with the public in recreational learning environments and interpretive heritage presentation methods.

## 2. Methodology

This paper consists of seven sections:

**The first section**, “*Introduction*”, reflects the main consideration for the necessity of transnational cooperation in Heritage Interpretation within the EU. **Section 2**, “*Methodology*”, analyzes how this paper is structured. **The third section**, “*Economic and Social Potential of Heritage Resources*” reflects upon the necessity of sustainable uses of rural heritage resources and their potential to become the main travel motive and a lucrative tourism generator. **Section 4**, “*Heritage Interpretation in Continental Europe: Habemus papam ante portas*” is concerned with issues regarding Heritage Interpretation as a tourism planning instrument and an essential component of Heritage Management. It introduces to the concept of “interpretation-hermeneia”, and defines Heritage Interpretation as a multidisciplinary communication process for non-captive audiences. Further it explores the role of Interpretive Planning as attitude formatter for responsible visitor behavior, discusses briefly the role of learning in recreational environments and concludes with the consideration that in properly executes Interpretive Planning is inherent a Tourism Planning instrument. **Section 5**, “*Institutionalizing Heritage Interpretation in Continental Europe*” is entirely dedicated to the identity, structure and special features of Transinterpret II. **Section 6**, “*Transinterpret II, The Case of Greece*” discusses the Greek partnership as a whole, examining the partners’ profile and analyzing the process of project development. It also discusses the specific features that resulted as specific requirements and need of the Greek partners within the framework of Transinterpret II and the steps taken to adapt methodologies to the needs and requirements of the nine partner areas in Greece. The paper concludes with **section 7**, “*Conclusions*”.

## 3. Economic and Social Potential of Heritage Resources

The mere existence of heritage items is valued even if it is not directly consumed (existence value). The will to preserve the option of possible future consumption (option value) and striving to bequeath the assets to future generations (bequest value) leads us to protection and conservation measures, an essential component of Heritage Management (Serageldin 1999:25-28, Throsby, 2000:11-12). But unless certain meanings and values are revealed, interpreted to us, heritage will not be taken care of. Heritage” whatever this may mean, cannot stimulate to traveling, unless potential visitors signify it with certain meanings and values.

What may render heritage assets to successful tourism products is a mix of factors deriving from demand and supply side: the visitors’ perception of a place, personal interests and beliefs, globally acknowledged values, a well marketed destination image, market and social trends, visitor centric Heritage Management. Successful heritage attractions are visitor-friendly, physically, intellectually and economically accessible. They meet visitors’ needs and markets’ requirements, create the tourist experience, recoup value for money, while at the same time maintain their authenticity and integrity (Garrod and Fyall 2000:686). Concerning rural heritage throughout non-English speaking Europe, these prerequisites are not met. Heritage managers and local authorities and institutions, who consider themselves guardians of regional and national assets, are external to the tourism business. They do not have distinct communication policies to convey local cultural image to visitors, creating in this way place’s identity and place bonding. Tourism uses, carrying and service capacity are not prior to their considerations, although the future of the attractions as public goods depends greatly on financial solvency (Garrod and Fyall, 2000:684, Coccossis and Mexa 2004, Masters, Scott and Barrow, 2002:8 ff). Should heritage resources be offered to tourism without having been valued and signified for locals and visitors, they then enter the tourism market below cost. Should again heritage resources remain external to markets they cannot be conserved. While local and national tax-payers must carry the burden of sustaining quality, tourism pressure contributes further to its decay Serageldin, 1999:23-36, Mourato and Mazzanti, 2002:51-54, Throsby, 2002:102ff)

On the other hand emerging destinations are not aware how to attract visitor flows. In order for this to happen, they need to develop a unique profile, which would not be presented to the outer world as an economically exchangeable commodity- as it is the case in many tourism operators’ brochures and catalogues. Creating heritage tourism attractors from a supply side perspective means to include heritage particularities and other distinctive and significant features at local and regional level (Papathanassiou-Zuhrt and Sakellaris, 2005c). In order for a destination to safely enter the global tourism market, a distinctive reference image is required and this image has to be communicated to

visitors and often even to locals. Natural and cultural heritage values, if properly communicated, not only strengthen local identity but also raise interest in conservation and preservation of heritage resources. The primary goal must always be retention of the place's heritage values: well-conserved and presented sites have the potential to stimulate local economies. The value placed on conservation and management of heritage resources in an area should be at least equal to the cost of preserving it (Newell, 2004:21-22). Smaller heritage resources may not be able to attract large numbers of visitors but are capable of providing socio-economic advantages for local communities and transferring the knowledge of the past to future generations (Grimwade and Carter, 2000:33).

In most cases, tourism products such as educational trails, heritage trails, guided walks, folk museums etc aim to present places to visitors. Independently of media selection (panels or leaflets, multimedia, interactives, guided walks, presentations etc) success depends on the quality of (re)presenting *genius loci*. To date, rural areas wishing to use their natural and cultural wealth to attract visitors, lack know-how to present their assets in an inspiring and memorable way. Irrespectively of local actors' engagement and public funding, their heritage potential remains underused. On the other hand offering tourism products that develop the appreciation of local heritage, and celebrate the spirit of the place instead of offering "placeless resorts and manicured destinations" (Bodger, 2004:4) may benefit guests by high-added value and hosts by infusing multipliers into local economies. Data demonstrate quality experience seekers tend to return for more and repeat business up to a 60% to 70%. (Bodger, 2004:5) Given the fact that experiential learning is the most effective form of learning, the demand for quality experiences can indeed be facilitated in a recreational learning environment. Because going and doing cannot be replaced by books and films, recreational learning environments supported by Heritage Interpretation may provide visitors eager to experience novelty with unique insight into a destination and its culture.

#### 4. Heritage Interpretation in Continental Europe: *Habemus papam ante portas*

*Heritage Interpretation is the sharing of culture. (NSW, 2005:9)*

##### 4.1. A historical overview

"*Interpretation*", Latin for the Greek word "*Hermeneia*" has a long tradition in Western Philosophy. Associated with Aristotle, Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer, is the science of understanding, also the art of analysis, explanation, a cognitive technique to perception. Connected to Hermes, the messenger of gods, "*hermeneia*" meant the authoritative process. He is the one appointed to translate the divine messages, the language and will of the gods to humans. Philosophy has replaced these vertical, authoritative power structures by dialectical ones: Not anymore in palaces and temples takes communication place, but publicly at the Agora. We are introduced to the message, as non-imperative, indicative and optative meaningful information. Philosophical messages aim to persuasively communicate contents and contexts to recipients, activating the process of understanding. Information becomes thus a message, should it be relevant and useful to the recipient. Philosophical messages do not expect recipients to obey, rather than use their own logic to judge. Their primary aim is a dialectical one: to produce new in-formation, new insight. Other than directive divine messages, philosophical messages use the dialog and the discourse as a tool to diffuse themselves among recipients. First Aristotle formulates that Hermeneutics is a systems logic that derives from the ability of humans to think in abstract and taxonomic categories, naming it *categorical knowledge*. Cognitive scientists refer to this inherent quality of human thought as the *general cognitive ability g* (Knowlton, 1999:123-124, Prasada, 2000:66-72, Plomin and Spinath, 2002:169-176, Grossmann, 2002:936-948, Harnad, 2003). His text "*Peri Hermeneias (de Interpretando)*", a part of *Organon*, is a logical Grammar, examining the structure the judgment. Being governed by cognition Aristotelian Hermeneutics reject any expression that cannot be verified as true (Αριστοτέλης, Εκδ.Κάκτος, 2000).

Each interpretation presupposes a process of message transmission (Capurro, 2000), which in turn presupposes a hermeneutical situation, where senders and recipients have some common basis of understanding. Hermeneutics operates with the difference between pre-understanding and interpretation, based on the principle that the object of the interpretation process has been successfully decoded. The recipient understands a message if he may correlate it to a known system. Heritage attractions in their tangible and intangible forms, significant as they may be- are deeply coded systems of far pasts and recent presents representing in the eyes of the visitors, the novel and unknown. In most

cases visitors are disappointed when, the only thing they get back for their admission money is that they may stare at some meaningless structures. It may be the Parthenon or the Great Wall- both masterpieces may degrade in the visitor's perception to ruins, if they do not offer evident connections to appreciate their universal values.

Interpretation as has been recorded as a profession as far back as 460. B.C. In the Roman world traveling to sites in Hellas was a must and Pausanias refers to professional guides, the «εξηγητές επιχωρίων», who escorted travelers to attractions (Παπαχατζής, 1974). The guiding profession has left a legacy of pride in place and the importance of passing on heritage to the local community and the tourist (Devar, 2000:175), but also a tradition connected with boring presentations in sterile museum settings and incomprehensible heritage sites without visitor facilities. From the middle of the 19th century onwards Interpretation emerges as a concept of information and education in the U.S. national parks, where the "learning by doing" practice is the pursuit of nature conservationists. John Muir, who inspired the founding of the Yosemite National Park and the Sierra Club, employed 1871 the term "interpretation" to describe direct experiencing of nature. In the beginning of the last century conservationist Enos Mills contributed to the establishment of the Rocky Mountain National Park and in his "Trail School" he trained both sexes to rangers. The National Park Service (NPS) founded in 1916, establishes the "Park Naturalist Service", whose success depended primarily upon the interest and ability of individual rangers. From 1940 onwards information and education work in nature preservation areas of the U.S. has been officially entitled "park interpretation" (Mackintosh, 1986, Ch.1). In 1957 Freeman Tilden's book "Interpreting Our Heritage" established a philosophical basis and a working framework for Heritage Interpretation (Ludwig, 2003:1, Izquierdo-Tugas, 2005:15). Heritage Interpretation, as a method for effectively presenting heritage to visitors, is acknowledged and widespread mainly in English speaking countries.

#### **4.2 Heritage Interpretation: The Communication Process for non-captive Audiences**

In 1999 Ham, defines Heritage Interpretation as an "agency's communication with non captive audiences in leisure settings" and 2005 the notion is enriched by the component "strategic communication" (Ham, 1999:162, Ham and Weiler, 2005:3). The U.S. based "*National Association for Interpretation*" defines the approach as a communication process that "forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource" (NAI, 2006). Interpretation constitutes a communication path, a bridge, which connects audiences with tangible and intangible phenomena. Successful interpretive presentation of attractions and phenomena facilitates individual perception, leading audiences into new and fascinating worlds. It brings new understanding, new insights, new enthusiasms, and new interests (Starr-Hurt, 1994:10).

To day more than ever before Heritage Interpretation is a multidisciplinary process of message communication aiming to effectively reveal to visitors' in recreational environments the values inherent in places, items and phenomena. In contrast to academic disciplines, visitor centric Heritage Interpretation communicates the most significant aspects about places, people, items, events and stories in cognitive and affective modes. Interpretation involves consequently much more than mere transmission of knowledge and facts: it is a system for decoding messages of diverse complexity and a high degree of ambiguity. It employs codes accessible to visitors, enabling them to connect with heritage presented to them in virtual and in situ environments by experiencing and understanding through their senses and cognitive abilities. By providing visitors with relevance Heritage Interpretation makes them a part of the experience (Moscardo, 1996:376-397, Frauman, 2004:381-389).

Based on cultural and /or natural evidence, either material or immaterial, found in a given location, Heritage Interpretation seeks to promote these features in their original context (Izquierdo-Tugas, 2005:15). It is connected to any attractions whatsoever and may be applied in parks, visitor centres, scientific exhibitions, historic sites, city streets, museums, zoos or galleries, at specials events or promotions, in publications, in written and oral presentations, etc (Colquhoun, 2005:viii). The contextualization of heritage resources allows visitor education in recreational environments, reinforcement of their environmental and social conscience, appreciation of codes of conduct and local cultures. Visitors learn to value and care for the cultural and natural heritage resources interpreted to them. In order to adapt natural and cultural phenomena at given heritage tourism contexts to the needs of specific target groups, interpretation interlinks various disciplines from natural, cognitive and human sciences. Key issues in the interpretive process are the planner's ability to master human cognitive mechanisms of acquiring and retaining information and to adapt through hermeneutical information

processing scientific context and terminology to a recreational learning environment in favour of the visitor in given heritage tourism contexts: sites, collections, trails, websites, etc (Papathanassiou-Zuhr and Sakellariadis, 2005a)

### 4.3 Interpretive Planning as attitude formatter

Interpretation is, besides protection and conservation, an essential component of heritage management: Whatever it may be, “heritage is conserved because someone thinks it important” (Carter, 1997:4, Howard, 2003) Interpretation is a way of helping the self and the other to appreciate that importance. Seven basic principles are named by the Ename Charter (ICOMOS, 2004)

1.	Heritage consumption is considered to be a universal right and therefore access to their significance, understanding for a broad public as possible should be facilitated by effective interpretation, involving a wide range of associated communities, as visitors and stakeholder groups.
2.	Cultural heritage sites interpretation must respect the evidence and information sources gathered through accepted scientific and scholarly methods as well as from living cultural traditions.
3.	Cultural heritage sites interpretation should relate to their wider social, cultural, historical, and natural contexts and settings.
4.	The Interpretation of cultural heritage must respect their authenticity, in the spirit of the Nara Document (1994) and to manage information presentation within the framework of the given historic environment.
5.	Since conservation and protection are the essentials for a sustainable heritage management, interpretive plans should respect natural and cultural environments. Social, economic and environmental sustainability in the long term should be clearly expressed in interpretive plans.
6.	Communities and associated stakeholders should be a constant consideration for interpretive planners and their inclusion and active involvement is required to keep the sense and the dignity of a place.
7.	The Interpretation of a cultural heritage site is an ongoing, evolving process of explanation and understanding that includes continuing research, training, and evaluation

**Fig. 1: The Ename Charter for Heritage Interpretation**

Interpretive planning is a process that identifies and produces significant visitor experience and involves themes, presentation media, audiences and evaluation procedures (Harpers Ferry, 1998: 6-48, NPS: 2000:3-9, Ham, 2005:4). It exploits visitor experience opportunities provided by given resources in given (heritage) tourism contexts, and caters for experience diversity. Understanding visitor needs can help determine a range of desirable visitor experiences and resource conditions. Since visitors come to attractions for very different and sometimes conflicting reasons, providing opportunities for a range of visitor experiences is an important part of sustaining the attraction’s quality. By providing a diversity of settings, planners may accomplish a double task. Firstly visitors may select products and services close to their visitation motives and secondly a diversity of experiences helps to avoid the conflicts that often occur among visitors who expect various outcomes from their visits (Belnap, 1997:42-51, NPS 1998:41-42)

Planning for visitor experiences is an integral component of general tourism and management plans (Earthlines, 1999:33-36, NPS, 2000:6-9). Interpretive Planning is a set of procedures and mechanisms that strive to connect people’s in situ experiences with significant phenomena and events considering at the same time economic benefits for local economies, sustainable uses of local resources and quality visitor services. The interpretive planning process should therefore include a hierarchical set of indispensable components such as **a-** the reasons and the objective of cultural operators and heritage managers to offer interpretive services, **b-** knowledge of audience and resource including a significance assessment process, **c-** media selection, **d-** implementation steps and evaluation procedures. Interpretive planning has to be visitor centric in a holistic way and provide visitors with comfortable in situ experiences. It is very unlikely that visitors return, if they are not well serviced with valid directional information and properly functioning facilities. They do not wish to feel that they might get lost, miss sections of the site or parts of programs offered, nor to play hide and seek with consumer related services. Interpretive planning should therefore consider site facilities and orientation and tourism related services such as transport and accessibility issues, catering, shopping and accommodation information, distance and time on tracks, important features identified on an

orientation map, seasonal problems such as very high or very low temperatures, (Owen et al., 2004:76, Colquhoun, 2005:93).

Physical and social impacts on resources constitute the major concern for recreation managers. Management actions that serve to improve the experiences of recreational users may have negative impacts on the environment, but on the other hand environmental management initiatives can diminish the quality of visitor experiences (Bayfield 1985 in McLennan, 2000:6). Efforts to enhance visitor experiences may have implications on safety, while efforts to ensure safety may impact visitor experience. Effective interpretive presentation is very likely to replace or modify problematic behaviours carried out by diverse audiences. Interpretive planning incorporates information-based management tools, which apply persuasive communication aids to visitor management: it develops and delivers messages that are likely to be understood and accepted by visitors, who consequently modify their behaviors in line with the message. Interpretive planning is goal driven and considers each time the objectives of cultural operators, managing agencies and local stakeholders have set. Usually there are two main objectives interpretive services strive to accomplish: learning and behavioural objectives in recreational settings.

Interpretive services enhance leisure experiences by incorporating educational elements in recreational settings, meeting an audience's demand, which prefers educational interactive entertainment to passive observation (Schauble et al. 1997:3, Prentice et al., 1998:6, Anderson 1999:50-58, Packer and Ballantyne, 2001:139, AHC, 2001:21, Reed et al, 1999:14). Learning objectives are met if enthusiasm is created among visitors for the goals of the managing agencies. In leisure settings, however, learning experiences are not imposed by conventional instruction methods. Learning in recreational environments is tailored to non-captive audiences, a fact that differentiates instructional design from formal academic settings (Packer, 2001:150-158, Ham and Krumpke, 1996:11-23, Kelly, 2001:1-6). In contrast to formal education, where learning motivation is often dependent on fear of punishment or on forfeiture of reward, learning content must rather be willingly embraced by visitors. In leisure settings audiences select freely to attend or ignore communication content; in addition, visitors' perspective regarding the experience and the learning outcomes may be paramount to recreational objectives. Interpretive products and services should therefore offer enjoyment and relevance to audiences based on clearly organized message nuclei, if they are to attract visitors.

Behavioural objectives are a constant consideration for site managers. In general they wish to reduce environmental and cultural damage by explaining the impacts of various behaviours and suggesting appropriate alternatives. They may wish to substitute experience for places that are very fragile and/or difficult to visit (e.g. caves, sacred temples), or topics that are impossible to experience directly (e.g. chemical procedures, prehistoric, cosmic conditions). In particular they wish for instance to prevent visitors from picking up "souvenirs" at archaeological sites, such as pieces of marble - a constant problem at heritage places in Greece. Interpretive offerings tailored to this objective would get the visitors to appreciate the value of artefacts left intact in their place. They should create the feeling that by not touching anything visitors are contributing to the site's maintenance, which would then benefit all interested parties. Research evidences that interpretive programs successfully target an audience's behavioural, normative, and control beliefs and are effective influencing the behaviours for which those beliefs are salient (Ham and Krumpke, 1996:11-23).

#### **4.4 Interpretive Planning as a Tourism Planning Instrument**

Tourism planners should consider that development and management of effective interpretation has to be a collaborative process, involving state, and local governments, curators and other guardian institutions, communities and private owners. Interpretation is a powerful tourism planning instrument, fully capable of defining policies concerning sustainable tourism uses of heritage potential: it contributes to the overall sense of place, and to the quality of a visitor's experience, and thus to greater success in the business of tourism by helping visitors to gain insights about places visited. It creates high added-value tourism products by adding depth to tourists' experiences, rendering a visit to something more than just a sightseeing trip (Tourism Queensland, 2000:1). Without interpretive products and services, such as trained staff to present the unique story of a heritage attraction to visitors, or outstanding self-guided interpretive opportunities, it's not about a historic heritage site, but just old site, where people pass by: It is interpretation that reveals to visitors, in powerful and memorable ways, the differences between "old" and historic (Veverka, 2000). This makes

interpretation equally important to tourism product components such as accommodation, catering, shopping, transport, facilities and general visitors. If visitors feel that the time spent was worth the money spent, they are more likely to recommend places and activities to friends and relatives. Quality interpretation caters for satisfied customers, and satisfied customers benefit places with positive word-of-mouth, high revenue, visit elongation, repeat visitation, environmental conscience and respect for local communities.

## 5. Institutionalizing Heritage Interpretation in Continental Europe

Transinterpret I, a transnational cooperation within C.I. Leader II, concerning quality management in Heritage Interpretation, has implemented interpretive products and services in rural areas in three countries: Scotland – Rural Stirling, Germany- Hochschwarzwald / Baden-Württemberg and Austria-Kleinregion Feldbach, / Steiermark. Funded by C.I. LEADER II and the State of Baden-Württemberg in 1999, Transinterpret I managed to demonstrate that applied scientific research yields tangible benefits at local level on the basis of a multilateral agreement, which transfers know-how on heritage interpretation at local and regional level. The project therefore provided a basis for transferring the approach to other regions and fields of science (Lehnes und Zanyi, 2001:2). With a budget of 221.000 € Transinterpret I has managed to cover the following objectives:

1.	178 diverse tourism products and services in the Black Forest have been tested for their interpretive character, whereas only a few of services offered may be classified as interpretive offers, e.g. conveying specific meaning to visitors.
2.	Constitution of a data base with 119 recommendations and standards for interpretive products and services in Access 2000 format in the German and English language.
3.	Constitution of planning and evaluation checklists
4.	Evaluation procedures on the basis of field research
5.	Coaching of eleven new projects in the partners areas that have been designed and developed to follow Transinterpret I recommendations and standards.

**Fig. 2: Basic outcomes of Transinterpret I**

Transnational exchange of know-how has taken place in form of the 3 transnational and 5 regional workshops. The results have entered the Transinterpret I Database as new recommendations enriching the to date partners knowledge on the subject.

### 5.1 Transinterpret II: Identity

The second phase “TRANSINTERPRET II: Transnational Quality Management in Heritage Interpretation, 2003-2008” represents the quality upgrading of its predecessor. It is a transnational cooperation agreement aiming to manage heritage presentation in partner areas according to standards and recommendations for interpretive products and services for tourism uses. Transinterpret II is also a multilateral cooperation funded during its second phase 2005-2008 by C.I. Leader+, support at national level and local action groups respectively. Transinterpret II aims to implement Measure 2.2. / Priority Axe 2 of the C.I. Leader+. Eligible partners are Local Actions Groups (LAGs) and other relates interested parties. Up to date 14 partners from four different countries, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Greece participate the to day co-operation.

Tourism management within the framework of Transinterpret II includes the (re) presentations of natural and cultural heritage, the presentation of emerging destinations and marketing of regional products. All projects are implemented as a result of the transnational cooperation and know-how transfer and participation. Partners share Know-How through the participation at transnational and regional workshops and the use of Transinterpret II Database. Projects implemented according to standards and recommendations of the Database are being evaluated to acquire the Transinterpret II logo, a quality assurance for heritage consumption at local level.

Transnational Lead Partner is the LAG Suedschwarzwald (State of Baden Wuerttemberg), who accommodates the Transnational Virtual Centre des Ressources (VCdR), run by the Department of Physical Geography, Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg. VCdR is responsible for development and



maintenance of the Transinterpret Database, the multilingual Website for the Cooperation partners, further development of evaluation checklists and all procedures concerning Transinterpret II logo.

## **5.2. Implementation period**

The development phase of Transinterpret II began on 15 August 2003 in the LEADER+ area Südschwarzwald and will be completed on 15 August 2006. The following operational phase will last until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008 in order to foster transfer of know-how, to ensure exemplary implementation of local interpretive projects, to collect evaluation data and to foster marketing of the Transinterpret quality label (Lehnes, 2004:p.4).

## **5.3. Special Features of Transinterpret II**

Main task of Transinterpret II is the development of a transnational quality label, which is based on the implementation of best practices for heritage presentation. Partners are not able to finance and implement on their own equivalent standards. Essential to the co operation is the collection, classification and management of specific Know-How at for interpretive products and services at global level. This Know-How is then made available to partners practically through their rights to use the Database and their participation at international and regional workshops. The specific Know-How aims to distill best practices for the presentation of cultural heritage to the public adapting management practices to the needs of each project in each partner area. Best practices offered by Transinterpret II are not static conditions but dynamically re-adapt to new requirements, such as new scientific research result, market tendencies and local conditions.

### **5.3.1 Multilateral Cooperation Agreements**

The Cooperation Agreement Transinterpret II serves as a “*Multilateral Cooperation Agreement*” among intra-European Local Action Groups (LAGs). This aspect is distinctly depicted in final products and projects in partners’ areas, since they are conceived and implemented according to the mutual efforts and know-how shared equally by all partners. The summative know-how capital obtained during the implementation phases from the most diverse projects at local level is fed back to the Database, so as to serve again to evolving projects in the partners’ areas. The responsible manager for the overall Know-How is the Virtual Centre des Ressource (VCdR), run by the University of Freiburg. In this way tourism attractions such as a museum collection, a heritage network, natural and cultural trails planned according to best practices included in the Database become competitive tourism products, since the experience of each partner with own product development is diffused to all partners through the common Database.

### **5.3.2 Transnational Quality Management**

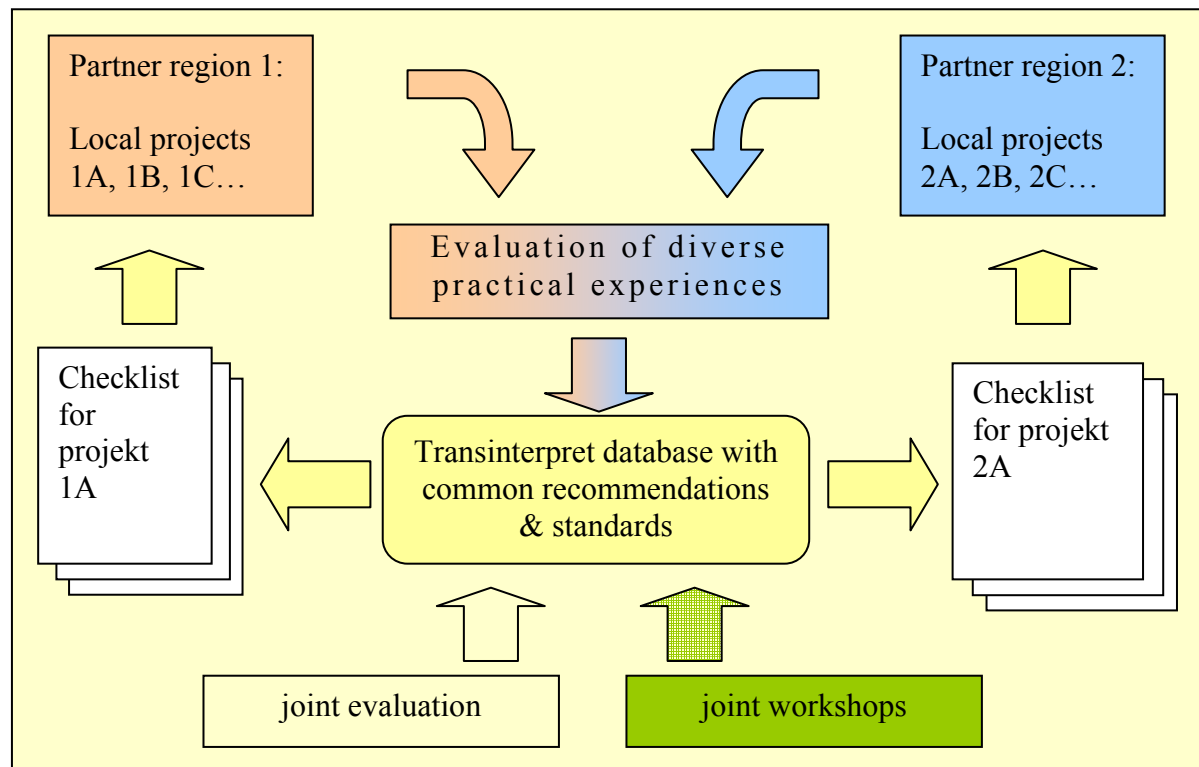
Transinterpret II pursues a trans-organisational, highly decentralized approach for quality management. Concrete projects concerned with heritage interpretation are supported within the LEADER areas independent of their respective lead organisations. This approach takes into account that those responsible for interpretative projects usually represent a wide range of different bodies. Transinterpret II offers also individuals wishing implement heritage tourism projects by the approach of Heritage Interpretation, access to specific Know-How, provided they operate within a region that belongs to the Transinterpret II network.

### **5.3.2. Know-How Transfer**

Expert knowledge, literature and research results on aspects of interpretation and practical experiences gained by local projects are translated into practical recommendations, which, collated in a database are then made available to local project managers in the partner regions in form of planning checklists. Regional and international workshops test the recommendations and standards using concrete projects as a test bed. The workshops use a concrete project as a case study and whose results will influence the development of recommendations and standards

Individual projects receive practical recommendations in the form of checklists, which are based on relevant literature, expert knowledge and practical experience. Using the completed checklist the experiences gained in implemented projects are fed back to the Transinterpret II Database. At the same time, those participating in the project test the practical applicability of the checklists.

The Transinterpret II Project Office at Freiburg University channels Know-How to collaborating partners and is being benefited by the diverse practical experiences gained through implemented interpretive projects. Another important aspect is that Transinterpret II interpretive project involved local project groups of different size and composition, which would have not been able otherwise to access knowledge in Heritage Interpretation.



**Fig. 3: Transinterpret II Project development and Know-How Transfer (Source: Lehnes, 2004:8)**

### 5.3.3. Evaluation

The development of commonly accepted evaluation procedures forms an important part of Transinterpret II. Evaluation results are fed back into the Transinterpret Database optimizing the recommendations and standards. Transinterpret II uses a mix of evaluation methods, including random testing using the Transinterpret evaluation checklists, expert interviews and visitor observations and questionnaires.

### 5.3.4 Logos for Implemented Projects

Interpretive products and services in the partners areas are granted the Transinterpret quality label, provided evaluation has demonstrated that Transinterpret criteria have been met.

## 5.4 Technical Features of Transinterpret II

### 5.4.1 Database

The Database serves as a tool to design and evaluate (best) practices for interpretive products and services. It has four subcomponents: Standards and recommendations, facilities, services and products, bibliographical and human resources. In contrast to print media the Database reflects the most current state of the art, since it is being permanently fed back with new projects and experience. The combination of database and checklists permits a selection of only those recommendations that are relevant to the particular project - depending for instance on the media selected or chosen target groups. This helps to avoid unnecessary and potentially confusing information.

Recommendations are primarily designed to assist in the planning and implementation of new natural and cultural heritage attractions, to support organizations involved in heritage interpretation and

help develop quality tourism at local and regional level. Main priorities are the enhancement of interpretive facilities, media and applications and crystallizing principles for planning and implementation of innovative facilities, media and applications. Available in English, German, and Italian, - soon also in Greek and French, recommendations developed according to Transinterpret II concept, are not obligatory in the sense of the law, because priorities are formulated by the project aims. Planning checklists are designed to aid with this flexible approach by stating the reasons behind the recommendations provided and roughly rating their importance for overall success.

#### **5.4.2 The partner-shared Website as co-operation network**

Implemented projects with a quality logo are being promoted by a shared multilingual Website. In this way Transinterpret II, promotes regional tourism, since in its web pages are presented the most diverse and intriguing cultural and natural topics of European rural areas.

### **5.5 Structural Features**

#### **5.5.1 Virtual Centres des Ressources**

Transinterpret II operates internationally through a Virtual Centres des Ressources (VCdR), which is responsible for the transnational management. The VCdR is represented by the Lead Partner, the State of Baden Wuerttemberg and the IPG, Department of Physical Geography at the University of Freiburg. The VCdR offers a highly decentralized transnational management process since it is connected to every project through Regional Competence Centers (RCCs) in each partner area. The VCdR is responsible for the transnational project management, the establishment and maintenance of the Virtual Centre (database, development of new recommendations, website, conceptualisation of international workshops, coordination of data processing and evaluation). VCdR develops new recommendations and standards in constant interaction with the RCCs, analyzes project data collected for evaluation and evaluation methods, and organizes the international workshops in different partner regions.

#### **5.5.2 Regional Competence Center**

Experience in LEADER II has shown that although Know-How needs had to be centrally managed, local bodies are important for supporting local project teams. For this reason, Transinterpret II operates on the basis of Regional Competence Centres (RCCs), which have knowledge of places, mentalities and people at local and national level. The RCCs as an intermediary body in between the VCdR and local LAGs guarantees the return investment of the partners. RCCs responsible for planning, implementation and evaluation of Transinterpret II projects in partner areas. They also function as advisors and coach project development. RCCs are responsible for feeding back implemented projects to the common Database by guiding local project managers to accomplish this task. The RCCs bear the responsibility for translating of the Website into the national language.

An essential task for the RCCs is to guarantee project implementation at local level and by transferring Know-How in Heritage Interpretation among national partners to supplement the work of the VCdR. Concerning education and Know-How transfer, RCCs have been certified by the VCdR in order to facilitate the principles and practices of Heritage Interpretation to partners involved. Training of the LAGs personnel is assigned to experts members of the RCCs. The certification is strictly personal and is granted only after the respective individuals have been trained by the VCdR. Training members of the RCCs, a main task of the VCdR, is an ongoing process.

<b>Project Management</b>
Coordination, Controlling, Reports
Participation in at least one international workshop /year
<b>Databases</b>
Translation into the local language
Ensuring feedback to the Centre des Ressources
Translation of Project descriptions to English
<b>Training of Local Project Teams</b>
Explaining the Transinterpret approach and database to local project teams
Coaching of interpretive projects run by local project initiatives and teams
Organizing inter-regional workshops for Greek members

Organizing one international workshop in cooperation with the CdR and the inviting LAG
<b>PR and Marketing</b>
Marketing opportunities for regional and local stakeholders
Organising Transinterpret info, events, press releases, e.t.c.
Present and represent Transinterpret-Greece at conferences, publish articles
<b>Data collection for documentation and evaluation</b>
Assessing to what extend the Transinterpret II criteria have been met by each implemented project
Visitor surveys and observations (selected interpretive products only)
Expert interviews with Greek stakeholders: LAG managers, mayors, local project-teams
<b>Consulting &amp; Interpretive Strategy per LAG</b>
Research on particularities and special features of the natural and cultural heritage
Research on tourism facilities, infrastructure, tourism flows, target group profile
Proposals of interpretive products: (which product with which intention using which media
Advise how to find somebody on planning, design, writing texts, timing, budgeting, etc
<b>Selected Demo Projects in the partner areas</b>

**Fig. 4: Tasks for the Regional Competence Centres**

## 5.6 Benefits and Beneficiaries

The Transinterpret II beneficiaries may be identified as producers and consumers of cultural heritage tourism products. Producers include immediate and ultimate beneficiaries (Lehnes, 2004:6). Immediate beneficiaries include local and regional project teams and various bodies and executing organizations including individuals, which implement interpretive products and services, such as thematic routes, interpretive trails, exhibitions in rural museums or visitor centres, nature parks, open air museums or the professional training of local guides. They benefit in multiple ways during participating Transinterpret II. The program enables them to use the planning and evaluation checklists to ensure their work meets current international recommendations and standards. They share their experiences with others and train with specific projects in progress at regional and international workshops. They may actively participate, if they wish, to the further development of recommendations and receive international attention through Transinterpret II standards.

Ultimate beneficiaries include communities and regions, local and regional governments, local action groups, local and regional governments, local action groups, associations and authorities and institutions managing and safeguarding heritage, regional marketing organisations and SMEs in the tourism sector and related secondary branches. For these parties the qualitative improvements facilitated by Transinterpret II lead to the implementation of their economic and social objectives.

Consumers include potential visitors in real and virtual environments. Transinterpret II heritage presentation approach is tailored to individuals interested in experiencing in depth the region they have chosen to travel to, and discover its natural and cultural heritage in an entertaining, informative way. They benefit through greater satisfaction with interpretive provisions, since they are able to appreciate the particularities of the place.

## 6. Transinterpret II. The Case of Greece

### 6.1 The profile of the partners

Greece has entered the Cooperation with 9 Local Action Groups (LAGs) and a budget of approximately 780.000 Euros. The preliminary phase was approved on 15.02.06 by the Managing Authority at the Ministry of Agriculture in Athens. All 9 partners are rural areas which are not yet acknowledged tourism destinations. With highly diversified natural and cultural wealth, all partners possess intensely diversified distinctive features, a fact which creates a major planning task for the Greek Regional Competence Center (RCC). The partners were in general enthusiastic about new ways and tools and Transinterpret II philosophy was very welcome, but they were inexperienced in tourism planning and were not aware of possible impacts of conventional tourism regarding the use of heritage resources. The RCC became their main consultant, transferring Know-How about tourism planning basics, in order for the LAGs to develop later their own heritage strategy. Concerning heritage planning and policies each partner had his own developmental targets and a very uneven money budget; it was inevitable that the RCC was used as vehicle for local / regional heritage tourism development.

Since all partner areas are emerging destinations, one of the major tasks of the RCC is to plan and implement projects that produce place identity, visitor satisfaction and later on place attachment. Another major issue, compared to international partners, is the absence of organized local project groups, initiatives, foundations or individuals to realize local level projects. The responsibilities had to be taken over by the LAG themselves, since they can provide for human resources, under the prerequisite, that the RCC will be responsible for tourism education. On the other hand all partners are responsible for networking local authorities.

LAG	Location	Population	Overnight Stays per Leader Area	Total Budget	Project Coordinator	E-mail Address
Ipiros S.A.	Ioannina	99,000	41,337	110,000	G. Papailias	<a href="mailto:epirus@epirussa.gr">epirus@epirussa.gr</a>
Aitoliki S.A.	Nafpaktos	24,164		60,000	N. Dimitropoulos	<a href="mailto:leader@aitoliki.gr">leader@aitoliki.gr</a>
Trichonida S.A.	Agrinio	78,079	23,000	70,000	I. Birbilis	<a href="mailto:leader@trichonida.gr">leader@trichonida.gr</a>
Rodopi S.A.	Komotini	29,321		50,000	E. Kefalidis	<a href="mailto:anro@anro.gr">anro@anro.gr</a>
Drama S.A.	Drama			50,000	E. Xatzopoulos	<a href="mailto:aned@otenet.gr">aned@otenet.gr</a>
Xanthi S.A.	Xanthi	25,588	5069	60,000	S. Papoutsoglou	<a href="mailto:anxanet@otenet.gr">anxanet@otenet.gr</a>
Olympia S.A.	Krestena	47535	40,890	63,000	N.Theophilopoulos	<a href="mailto:anol@otenet.gr">anol@otenet.gr</a>
Kozani S.A.	Kozani	86,072	124,987	110,000	A. Sidiropoulos	<a href="mailto:anko@anko.gr">anko@anko.gr</a>
Kastoria S.A.	Kastoria	51,000	140,000	110,000	V. Tsaparas	<a href="mailto:ankas@otenet.gr">ankas@otenet.gr</a>

**Fig. 5: Partners of Transinterpret II in Greece**

All partners are managed by the IRIS Research Laboratory which belongs to the Department of Business Administration, University of the Aegean. The IRIS Lab is specialized in asynchronous training, the use of ICT as well as in cultural heritage management and interpretation. Supported by the VCdR, the IRIS Lab has introduced the program Transinterpret II to interested partners throughout the country in 2004 and in 2005 the national partnership has concluded with nine partners from rural areas. The Iris Lab has a consulting role for tourism development issues among the LAGs, and along with LAG experts plans and supervises all Transinterpret II projects. It is certified by the VCdR to transfer Knoww-How in Heritage Interpretation, it bears therefore the main responsibility for professional training of LAG personnel.

Greek Regional Competence Center	Location	Director	Project Coordinator	E-mail Address
The IRIS Research Laboratory	Department of Business Administration, 8 Michalon Street, Chios, Greece	Prof. Dr. Od. Sakellaridis	D. Papatnasiou-Zuhrt	<a href="mailto:irislab@aegean.gr">irislab@aegean.gr</a> <a href="mailto:osak@aegean.gr">osak@aegean.gr</a> <a href="mailto:dzuhrt@aegean.gr">dzuhrt@aegean.gr</a>

**Fig. 6: The Greek Regional Competence Center**

## 6.2 The project development process

Project development is a collaborative process in between the LAGs, the VCdR and the IRIS Lab. It includes Know-How transfer by the VCdR to the Lags and specialized training of LAG personnel by the IRIS Lab. LAG managers bear the responsibility to create a team which participates the training and is then able to meet the requirements of project development. Learning material is available in English, German and Greek, whereas the main language for training is Greek. Training includes synchronous and asynchronous education modes as well as field work and round tables. Know-How transfer at local level regarding technical matters such as the use of the CMS Data Bases, access to the shared Website, is offered by the VCdR. The IRIS Lab bears the responsibility of training LAG personnel in basic professional skills in Heritage Interpretation, Heritage Management and Tourism Planning.

Project development is pursued on the basis of proposals by the LAGs to the IRIS Lab, which reflects aims and targets at local or regional level. Firstly are held meetings and discussions followed by personal contacts and interviews at local level, facilitated by LAG personnel. Tourism planning, as conducted by the IRIS Lab so far, includes field work, aiming to collect data in situ and in virtual environments, followed by thorough study and research activities. Project resources are identified in pure heritage classes, so as to be signified and proved appropriate for tourism uses. The project is given a provisional name, whereas the final title greatly depends on the specific heritage typology. Typologies are methodological frameworks which contribute to sustainable cultural heritage consumption mix and place mix. Typologies are also the basis for the development of a sustainable Heritage strategy (Papathanassiou-Zuhrt and Sakellariadis, 2005c). After the project receives a final name, it goes into the implementation phase, followed by evaluation and monitoring.

### **6.3. Holistic Interpretive Planning: A task for the Greek RCC**

Trying to ameliorate visitor experiences within the framework of Heritage Interpretation, the Greek RCC aims to plan interpretive products and services in the partner areas following an integral Heritage Management plan. The plan is supported by special features such as cognitive processing of information with tourism value, communication policies for non-captive audiences and leisure time management in recreational learning environments.

#### ***6.3.1 Cognitive Processing of Information with Tourism Value***

Trying to contribute to innovation in Heritage Interpretation the Greek RCC aims to manage information with tourism value by linking causal mechanisms of human cognitive architecture and instructional design in order to facilitate higher cognitive results in non-formative settings. Cognitive processing of information with tourism value facilitates perception of phenomena and rule with less effort in shorter time periods. The purpose of any tourism signposting and signage is to inform visitors and travellers of the key aspects of a regions tourism industry. They include **a-** natural, tangible cultural feature signs erected to indicate the location of natural, cultural or historic features, **b-** commercial tourism facility signs erected to indicate the location of a commercial tourism facility (accommodation, catering, shopping, transport, entertainment and infrastructure possibilities). Information flows are concerned with and exterior environments, irrespectively of the media's nature, and aim to reduce the visitor's needs to prepare for their visit, and to provide them with information comfort during their stay time. Identified are two major categories: directional which corresponds to tourist signposting and interpretive, which by nature aims to attract the attention of non-captive audiences.

Directional Signage includes roadside signs for motorists, drivers and simple navigation before, during and after a trail, warning signs of both informative and preventative nature, navigation to facilities and recreational opportunities within a heritage area (park, archeological site, museum, etc). It manages any information that is related to attractions: accessibility, (parking and transport possibilities, bus schedules, etc) amenities, detailed description of the site, maps, route markers and street names, diagrams and photographs, other available tourism packages, activities in proximity or connections to other attractions and ancillary services, such as local tourism bureaus, maps, regional products, etc. Directional Signage also includes any forms of identification and information signs, "Welcome" signs, signage for accredited and non-accredited visitor information services, regional tourist drives, themed tourist routes, regulatory signage (parking, no-parking, prohibited, free etc.), roadside advertising, guide and service signs, signage in rural and urban areas etc (McLennan, 2000:11-25, Tourism NSW, 2003:29-33, RTA, 2001, Tourism Tasmania:2002).

Interpretive Signage strives to attract visitor attention by producing connections to meanings and phenomena. Interpretive Signage describes the sensitivity and significance of each heritage resource and has to be both educational, accurate and tell the stories of past and present landscapes. Interpretation content needs to assist visitors to develop an awareness and understanding of local cultural heritage, to recognize ecosystem and cultural values, to encourage actions taken in relation to protection of natural heritage and cultural heritage. Interpretive Signage coordinates communication with the public by presenting the mission and the values of tangible and intangible resources. It includes a variety of programs and services such as audiovisual programs, historic furnishings, museum

exhibit labels, publications, wayside exhibits, graphics design, interpretive, site signage, contextual design, websites.

Research demonstrates that cognitive mapping of unfamiliar environments influences travel decision and length of stay (Walmsely and Jenkins, 1994, Ankomah, 1996, Ryan, 2000, Reisinger and Turner, 2002). Facilitating access to unfamiliar environments in leisure settings, e.g. opportunities for connections to visitors as well as memorable experiences, is a task that requires adequate management of information with tourism value. Brain literacy is an indispensable factor to facilitate information and meta-cognitive awareness in leisure settings (King-Johnson, 1992, Chen, 2003:28-39, Berninger and Corinna 1998:352, Schraw, 1998, Rushton and Larkin, 2001:25, O'Donnell et al., 2002:75-78). Humans acquire, store, recall, code and decode information about the relative locations and attributes of phenomena in their everyday spatial environment. They orientate using perception and memory to create cognitive maps. Contents of informational material should therefore adjust to the principles of human cognitive architecture: eye scan path movements, a limited working memory (WM) and an infinite long term memory (LTM) (Cowan, 1998:77-78, Kolk et al, 2003:26-29, Fusi, 2001, Oberauer et al., 2003: 167-193, Wang, Liu and Wang, 2003:189-198). Information management presupposes a limited WM capacity to deal with visual, auditory and verbal material as well as an almost unlimited long-term memory, able to retain schemas (mental representations) that vary in their degree of automation. Interpretive design pursues the reduction of working memory load, the reinforcement of the association chain by provocative use of schema construction and automation and the use of concept mapping (Sweller et al. 1998:255-258, Paas et. al., 2004: 1-8, Nowak and Canas, 2006). Information structure will provide visitors with specific knowledge acquisition, especially designed on a basis of hierarchical sequential segments in order to free WM from irrelevant cognitive load, enabling new cognitive content to relate to prior knowledge (Papathanassiou-Zuhrt and Sakellariadis, 2005b). Facilitating information in this way heritage places are promoted within the consumers' conscience. Heritage resources become indispensable components of the regional tourism product, followed by the consumers' willingness to pay for quality products.

Cognitive processing of information with tourism value enables effortless acquisition of novel items and concepts at heritage places by providing access to the unknown through cognitively structured messages. Cognitive structures support the development of verbal and non-verbal narrative tools in order to facilitate content acquisition. Translating an expert's technical account into an easy to access, cognitively structured communication message that the audience can relate to, means, to put contents into a format that attracts, interests and inspires visitors. Cognitive maps bridge the discrepancy between novelty and familiarity allowing the historic environment – the *novel entity* within the travel experience- to be realized by visitors. Provocative, attractive and coherent collocations make visit-worthy and significant heritage resources accessible to a wider. Acknowledging the fact that story skeletons with plots provoke conceptual associations, interpretive planners use the power of connections to create sense by linking two or more, formerly separate entities into a meaningful way with one another. By reducing drastically accumulation of facts, technical accounts and endless chronologies and by presenting facts and reasons in *one format*, novel content becomes the new narrative form, enhancing visitor participation in given settings, as well as the ability to explore and move back and forth in this setting. A visit to a heritage place becomes then a pleasure generating procedure.

### **6.3.2 Communication Policies for non-captive audiences**

Communication policies should be based on the main visit outcome, which is the visitor experience, e.g. everything what visitors do, think, and feel during their visit at heritage places. Communication policies should also regard the audience's expectation from a visit to a site, collection or a park, therefore knowledge of the resource and knowledge of the audience are equally important issues. In order to make experiences accessible to a wide audience with different characteristics, cultural operators have to define how to facilitate visitor experiences at their heritage sites and which features have to be promoted. For the communication to be interpretive, it must provoke the audience's attention, relate with the visitors' every day life, reveal the meanings and relationships of the heritage resources by bridging the gap between the tangible form of the resources and its intangible meanings, addressing the whole, rather than presenting isolated pieces of information. To meet these demands the Greek RCC has developed a model to assess the significance of the resources to be offered to tourism, while at the same time to protect them from detrimental use (HFC, 1998:8-12, Belnap, 1997:19-24).

Significance means the physical natural, historic, aesthetic, scientific and social values that a tangible and intangible resource has for past, present and future generations, in and outside a spatial entity. Natural heritage values which include the importance of ecosystems, bio- and geodiversity, and cultural heritage values which include the importance of aesthetic, historic, social, and scientific or other commonly recognized special values are measured for their significance within a system, a society, in space and time. The process of measuring heritage significance, *Significant Assessment Process (SAP)*, is essentially vital to creating visitor flows (Russell and Winkworth, 2001:20-37, NTS, 2003:2-4). SAP, as an interdisciplinary process, testifies exactly why places and heritage entities are important. It is central to developing conservation and management plans, a local heritage strategy, interpretive products and services; it contributes to the development of educational materials, justifies the allocation of resources. If heritage assessment is not undertaken, damage could be irreversible: destruction of evidence of significance, inappropriate management practices, overuse of resources, and loss of a place altogether. There are four levels of significance for heritage resources: they can be of local, regional, national and global importance. The significance assessment process is based on four primary criteria such as the historic, aesthetic, scientific, research or technical as well as socially or spiritually acknowledged values of the resources (NSW, 2001:4-32, Unesco, 2005:79-95).

Assessing the significance of heritage resources for tourism means to select features of certain tourism value, which not only are distinct, but also visit-worthy, physically and mentally accessible to visitors. They may belong to any heritage class, being natural, manmade or spiritual. All distinctive and visit-worthy features are being categorized in specific heritage classes, so that they can be later on processed as information with specific tourism value and specific features, which may be easily documented by respective experts. The classification of heritage resources in pure heritage classes helps planners to deal with the distinctive characteristics of each class separately and enables them to distil the essence of heritage resources for visitors in a shorter time period. The Greek RCC suggests a subset of tourism modifiers to allow a thorough assessment of any resource to be offered to tourism as well as to adapt grades of significance for tourism uses (NSW, 2001:11). The above mentioned criteria should merge together in order to clearly communicate a major statement of significance, which would then build the main travel motive.

THE SIGNIFICANCE ASSESSMENT PROCESS			
Heritage Classes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Natural Heritage Resources<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Wilde Life (pure natural environment)</li><li>Man-Nature Interaction (parks, cultural landscapes, theme parks, battlefields)</li></ul></li><li>Man-made Environment / Tangible Cultural Heritage<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Built Environment</li><li>Movable Cultural Heritage (objects and collections)</li><li>Material Culture</li></ul></li><li>Intangible Cultural Heritage<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Spiritual Heritage, Values and Beliefs</li><li>Religion</li><li>Customs and Traditions</li><li>Lifestyles</li></ul></li></ul>			
Significance & Assessment			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Main principles<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>historical</i></li><li><i>aesthetical</i></li><li><i>scientific, research, technical</i></li><li><i>social, spiritual</i></li><li><i>global, national, regional, local, personal</i></li></ul></li></ul>			
Tourism Modifiers			
1.Provenance	1.1 Authenticity	1.2 Originality	1.3 Designation
2.Integrity	2.1 Completeness	2.2 Exemplarity	2.3 Bio- and Cultural Diversity
3.Distinctiveness	3.1 Representativeness	3.2 Novelty	3.3 Familiarity
4. Accessibility	4.1 Availability	4.2 Carrying Capacity	
		Resource Condition – Infrastructure – Visitor Services	
5. Interpretive Potential			

**Fig. 7: Signifying Heritage Resources for Tourism (SAP)**



The relation between Heritage Interpretation to heritage significance is close. While the first includes the possible ways of presenting the importance of an item, beyond its utilitarian value, the latter refers to its historical, scientific, cultural, social, archaeological, architectural, natural or aesthetic value, its setting (the area beyond its boundaries), use, associations, meanings, records, related items and objects. Items may have a range of values and meanings for different individuals or groups- or no values at all- if not known or interpreted.

Successful Heritage Interpretation engages the audience by provoking their interest and reflection about the item and its values in a way that sustains the ambience and significance of the item. The significance of some heritage items is for different reasons each time easy to understand. But to most visitors values of heritage items are not obvious and require interpretation. Non-captive audiences are multicultural audiences, exploring in situ or in virtual environments 'novel' heritage potential connected with their pre-understanding and prejudices. They are often not able to decipher unfamiliar cultural contents. Fusion of meanings, time-distance-decay, deciphered contexts, high cognitive loads through codification and encryption, weary search for adequate information etc., render even highly motivated visitors to bored spectators, resulting consequently into an acute reduction in tourism consumption. This happens because most visitors are not given the chance to relate to the contents of phenomena being observed on the basis of their previously acquired experiences. Their endurance in the first phase of the visit is high, mostly due to intrinsic motivation. An acceleration of interest loss takes place though in the middle visit-phase, due to working memory fatigue to process huge amounts of novel elements. Finally working memory loads and other location-related inconveniences accumulate visitor-fatigue in the last visit-phase. The war between *Perception and Understanding*, which is both of emotional and cognitive nature, transforms the visit at heritage environments to an unsuccessful event: for visitors never to return and for heritage sites to loose attractiveness. An effective communication policy with non-captive audiences in leisure settings should include guidelines providing an intellectual and conceptual framework for communicating the significance of an item, revealing the meanings an item signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses.

### **6.3.3 Leisure Time Management in a Recreational Learning Environment**

Time lack is a feature of post-modern society; leisure time is thus treated as more precious than ever. Informational asymmetries between visitors and producers result in unsustainable uses of a destination's assets. The '*Quest*' for visitors seems to be acquiring information with tourism value in given time settings. Asymmetric information between consumers and producers of tourism goods generally result in stay-time and expenditure reduction, in congestion of major fame attractions, as well as in creation of monopolies, especially if a business' proximity to attractions is evident (Caserta and Russo, 2002: 245-260). Visitor friendly, quick to access information impinges on the way visitors spend their time, where they go, what services they use and ultimately on the travel expenditure at destination level.

To effectively manage leisure time in leisure setting RCC used hermeneutical logic as a tool to analyze the historic and natural environment for tourism, and create a destination's image by offering visitors a balanced mix of distinctiveness, authenticity, novelty and familiarity. Hermeneutics is just not a method for understanding, but an attempt to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place (Gadamer 1975: 263). Among these conditions are, crucially, prejudices and fore-meanings in the mind of the individual interpreter. Understanding is therefore interpretation, which uses one's own preconceptions, so that the object can really be made to speak to us through its meaning (Gadamer 1975: 358). Understanding is a productive process, since interpretations keep changing during the process of what is being understood. One of the main problems visitors face during their stay at heritage environments is how to distinguish '*true prejudices*', by which they understand, from the '*false*' ones, by which they misunderstand. The condition, in which understanding takes place, is *temporal distance*, which presupposes cultural distance and mentality differences. Present and past are firmly connected and the past is not something that has to be painfully regained in each present, if the interpreter has the tool to decode it (Gadamer, 1975: 264ff.). Gadamer suggests to develop a '*historical self-awareness*' which makes conscious one's own prejudices and allows one to isolate and evaluate an object on its own, unfortunately a solution suitable only for experts. A place or phenomenon becomes authentic, distinctive and familiar into the visitors' eyes, if it has its own stories, character, style, history, people, and culture that reflect the very quintessence of the place. Presentation modes that rely on concept mapping respecting principles of human cognitive architecture are fully capable of managing and interpreting heritage assets in a manner that enhances visitor experiences, conveying at

the same time distinctiveness (*novel elements*), authenticity (*original elements*) and familiarity (*common elements*) while keeping cognitive loads balanced. Visitors wish to understand and experience local spirit, to relate to their own cultural background. It is likely for them to be aligned to the values of the local residents as they originate from valid, distinctive, authentic locality and historicity.

Interpretive Planning by the Greek RCC aims to involve visitors in the explorative learning and entertainment process. The dual character of edutainment consists of entertainment and exploratory learning, a combination that generates the pleasure of being (self)-instructed. The prerequisite for edutainment to be effective is that structure and management of information results in meaningful messages for the recipients. In virtual or in situ environments, visitors receive understandable messages, to be remembered and somehow used after the visit. Given the fact that any heritage object is an autonomous narrative element belonging to a larger narrative structure, visualized and verbally re-constructed cultural narrative elements also possess the power of the real thing. They are able to tell stories, to validate other elements and structures as long as they are (re)presented in the prevailing historical and socioeconomic context that created them. Conceptual models (Salvucci and Andersson, 1999, Novak and Canas, 2006) are used to reveal temporal and causal relationships between the tangible heritage resources and the broader socio-historic context. In this way are created high added value products in virtual or in situ environments during leisure time.

## 7. Conclusions

Providing regions with identities, which are no longer exchangeable commodities in the global tourism market and visitors with high quality experiences, is no more a utopia. Transinterpret II, a still ongoing project, under the umbrella of C.I. Leader+, has proven to establish an innovative heritage management paradigm in Continental Europe by using the very much acknowledged Heritage Interpretation as a tourism development and tourism planning tool, emphasizing cognitive processing of information with tourism value. Transinterpret II has collected relevant Know-How in Heritage Interpretation in a constantly evolving data base, which contains recommendations, standards and evaluation criteria for successful interpretive products and services, shared by 14 European partners. The highly decentralized project management and the direct transfer of specific knowledge in Heritage Interpretation, as well as a variety of high-added value tourism products render Transinterpret II to a pioneer in heritage presentation in Continental Europe.

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