

## IMPACT OF DISCOVERING THE MONUMENTAL TOMB IN AMPHIPOLIS GREECE IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION

Rouska Krasteva  
SWU Neofit Rilski, Bulgaria  
katerina.genadiou@gmail.com

### **Abstract:**

The existence of anthropogenic resources - historical and architectural monuments, fortresses and towers, palaces, archeological excavations and memorable places, in an area and their proper utilization can lead to development of tourism. The scope of this paper is to examine the impact of discovering the monumental tomb in Amphipolis Greece, in tourism development of the region. The tomb of Kasta is located some 100 km east of the city of Thessaloniki, in north Greece. According to the archeologists, the tomb is dating from 325 to 300 B.C., close to the end of the reign of Alexander the Great. The large size of the tomb, the materials used and the excavations show that it was constructed for an important personality. In order to achieve the aim of the study, an empirical study was conducted by developing a questionnaire for analyzing the impact of discovering the monumental tomb in Amphipolis, Greece in the tourism development in the region. The questionnaire was distributed to hoteliers in the nearest summer resorts (distance around 15km) – Asprovalta, Vrasna, Stavros, Ano Stavros, and the nearest big cities (distance around 40-100km) – Kavala, Serres, Drama and Thessaloniki. The measuring instrument is consisted of several thematic-questions about the present situation, the plans for the future and the opinion about the importance of the discovery for the tourism development. The conclusions show the positive impact of the excavations and are formed in graphs and tables. Recommendations have also been made for increasing the numbers of visitors and income in the region.

*Keywords: Tourism economy, regional development, tourism development, Amphipolis, anthropogenic resources, Alexander the Great, north Greece*

# 1. INTRODUCTION

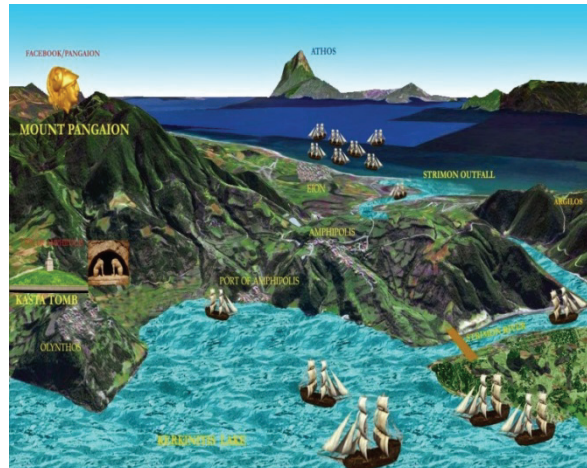
In today's changing world tourism markets, destinations must develop and use the natural and anthropogenic resources, which appear as competitive advantages in an area. Newly discovered monuments of historical and archeological interest should be promoted in order to attract tourist flows and to provide the development of regional economy. In 1950 America and Europe had represent 95% of the total tourism market, in 1990 this percent was 82%, in 2000 lowest-76% and in 2010 some 50.6%, i.e. for the time period of 60 years the share of Europe and America has almost halved (from 95% to 50.6%), since new destinations especially from the Middle East and South Asia and the Pacific have entered the international tourist market (Mileva S. 2011, pp 79-82).

Map 1: Municipality of Amphipolis, Greece



Source: Griffiths S.

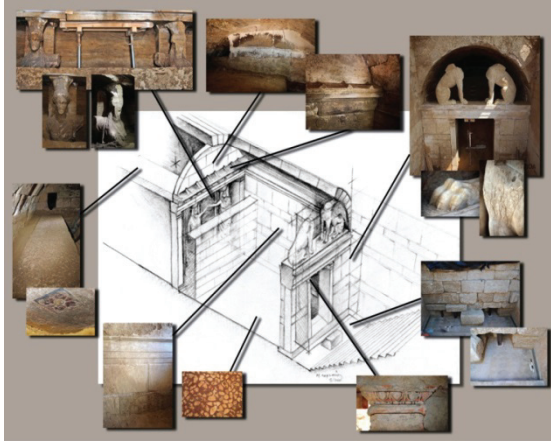
Map 2: Ancient city of Amphipolis, Greece



Source: Amphipolis History

Greece, as a part of the old continent is a country situated in the north part of the Balkan Peninsula, with a strong developed tourism industry and worldwide known history. Amphipolis, where the monumental tomb of Kasta was found is located some 100 km east of the city of Thessaloniki, in north Greece. The Ancient town of Amphipolis has been one of the most strategic locations of ancient Greek civilization. It was founded by the Athenians in 437 B.C., occupied by the Spartans during the period 431-421 B.C. and incorporated into the kingdom of Macedonia in 357 B.C. by Philip II of Macedon (Encyclopedia: The Greek history, pp. 125-131). From Amphipolis Alexander the Great started his invasion against the Persians (Encyclopedia Faros, 1979, p. 298). The tomb of Kasta or Amphipolis built close to the end of the reign of Alexander the Great, entered in 2014, is a monument of high historical and archeological value, as it is the largest ancient tomb ever found in the Greek territory, with a perimeter of 457 meters and 20 acres ground (Greek Ministry of Culture 2014, "The surrounding wall" and Pringle H., „Who's Buried in Largest Tomb in Northern Greece"?, 2014). Some of the most important excavations are the Sphinxes, two Caryatids and a mosaic showing the abduction of Persephone by Pluton (Amphipolis Press Conference: "Archaeologists reveal new secrets of ancient tomb at Kasta Hill", 2014). The large size of the tomb, the materials used and the excavations show that it was constructed for a prestigious personality. Who was buried there or for whom was it built? Roxane (wife of Alexander the Great) and Alexander the IV (son), Olympiada (mother), general of Alexander's army or Alexander the Great? This is a question, which has still to be answered. Until then, people from all over the world are looking with interest to the mystery around the Greek tomb. That gave to the author the opportunity to make a research about the upcoming impact of discovering the monumental tomb in Amphipolis, in the tourism development in the region.

**Figure 1:** Amphipolis Tomb



Source: Amphipolis tomb, 2014

**Figure 2:** Mosaic-The abduction of Persephone by Pluton



Source: Skarlidou Nefeli, 2014

## 2. RESEARCH MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted by the author from September to December 2014. The method used for collecting the empirical data was by questionnaire: "Impact of discovering the monumental tomb in Amphipolis, Greece in tourism development of the region". The questionnaire was distributed to hoteliers in the nearest summer resorts (distance from Amphipolis around 15km) – Asprovalta, Vrasna, Stavros, Ano Stavros, which are part of the Megali Volvi Municipality and the nearest big cities (distance around 40-100km) – Kavala, Serres, Drama and Thessaloniki. According to data taken from the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels and the Confederation of entrepreneurs of rooms and apartments in Greece (Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, 2014 and Confederation of entrepreneurs of rooms and apartments in Greece, 2014) the total number of hotels and apartments for rent in the examined region is approximately 700. The sample size of the research in this period of time is 207 hotels (one to five stars) and apartments for rent (one to four keys), an appropriate size for this research, taking into account the table for determining minimum returned sample size for a given population size (Bartlett, Kotrlik& Higgins: 2001).

The measuring instrument is consisted of several thematic-questions:

- About the present situation of their own business. The number of stars that the hotels have, the number of keys that an apartment for rent has, the number of beds, if there is also a restaurant, which are the additional services offered to the guests.
- The plans for the future of their own business, having in mind discovery of Tomb Kasta. The plans about: improving the quality of the offered tourism product, the price level and the additional services, which could be presented to the guests.
- Their opinions about the importance of discovery the Tomb of Kasta for the tourism development in the region.

The impact to the tourism, as an industry, to the local economy, the local society, the regional policy and the ecology, in the identification of the region as a known tourist destination and if the discover of the tomb of Amphipolis will have a positive impact in general for the tourism development in the region.

## 3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The modern city of Amfipoli belongs administratively to regional unit of Serres, decentralized Unit of Central Macedonia and Thrace. On the north it borders with Republic of Bulgaria, to the south stretches the Gulf of Strumonias, to the east it borders with regional unit of Drama and to the west with the regional unit of Thessaloniki. In regional unit of Serres, mountain ranges (20.7% of the total area) surround from the west and east one of the largest plains in Greece - 48% of the region. This

determines the employment of the population, the majority of which is employed in agriculture. Tobacco, maize, cotton and sugar beets, are the most common agricultural crops as well as almond and olive trees, which benefit by the Mediterranean climate.

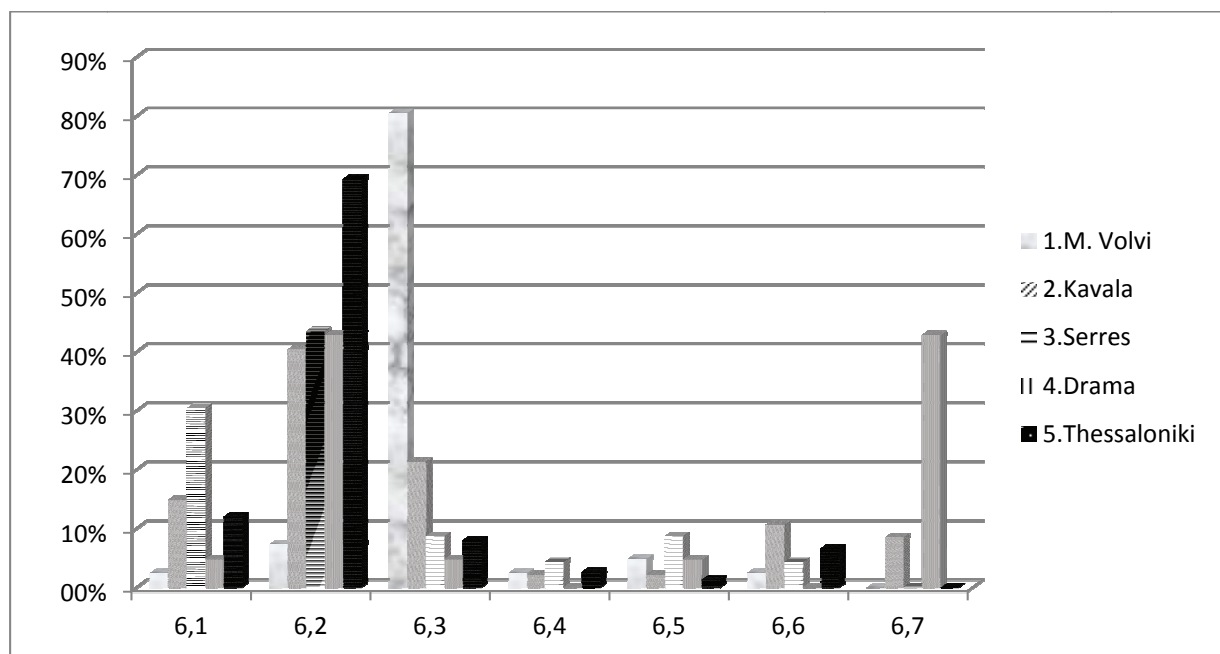
The region is rich in natural resources, mountain ranges - Kerkini-Beles, Lailias, Pangeo, Orvilos, home of a unique variety of animals and plants, many of which are protected species. Old -growth forests of beech, oak, sycamore, pine, are shelters for disappearing from Europe brown bears, wolves, deer and wild boar. This biodiversity and natural resources are prerequisites for the development of horseback riding, hiking, mountaineering and winter sports. Water resources in the region are mainly formed by the river Strymonas, which in this part is very deep and Lake Kerkini, where rare birds protected by the Ramsar Convention, overwinter.

In 1970 the region experienced an interest in the study and recreation of cultural traditions, manners and customs. This interest was expressed by creating many cultural clubs to acting amateur groups. Organized by these clubs holidays can be divided into several categories (Krasteva R., 2014, pp.111-114):

1. Holidays related to the lifestyle and customs, which is transmitted from generation to generation (Fire dancing "Anastenaria" etc)
2. Holidays related to religion - These holidays are accompanied by many cultural performances and folk celebrations(Easter, Christmas, etc)
3. Celebrations associated particularly with the agriculture production (Day of corn, Day of cherries etc)
4. Modern development of the arts, leads to the creation of many festivals in the region with local and international importance (Festival of Amphipolis, Eleftheria, National Dance meeting etc)

The above information shows that the region can offer to the visitors a wide range of activities connecting with nature, culture and history. Moreover, the discovery of the Tomb of Amphipolis, as the following figures show, could increase interest of potential tourists, as well as arrivals and stays in the region.

**Figure 1:** Plans for improvement of the offered tourism product's quality in the future



Source: Krasteva R., 2015.

To the question which are your plans for improvement of the offered tourism product's quality in the future, hoteliers from the resorts area of municipality Volvi, which incorporates Asprovalta, Vrasna, Stavros and Ano Stavros, invest in the additional inner equipment, like furnishing (80,5%). Unlike to this tendency, hoteliers from the big cities like Kavala, Serres, Drama and Thessaloniki, give a significant importance in the education and training of already existing stuff respectively 40,4%, 43,5%,

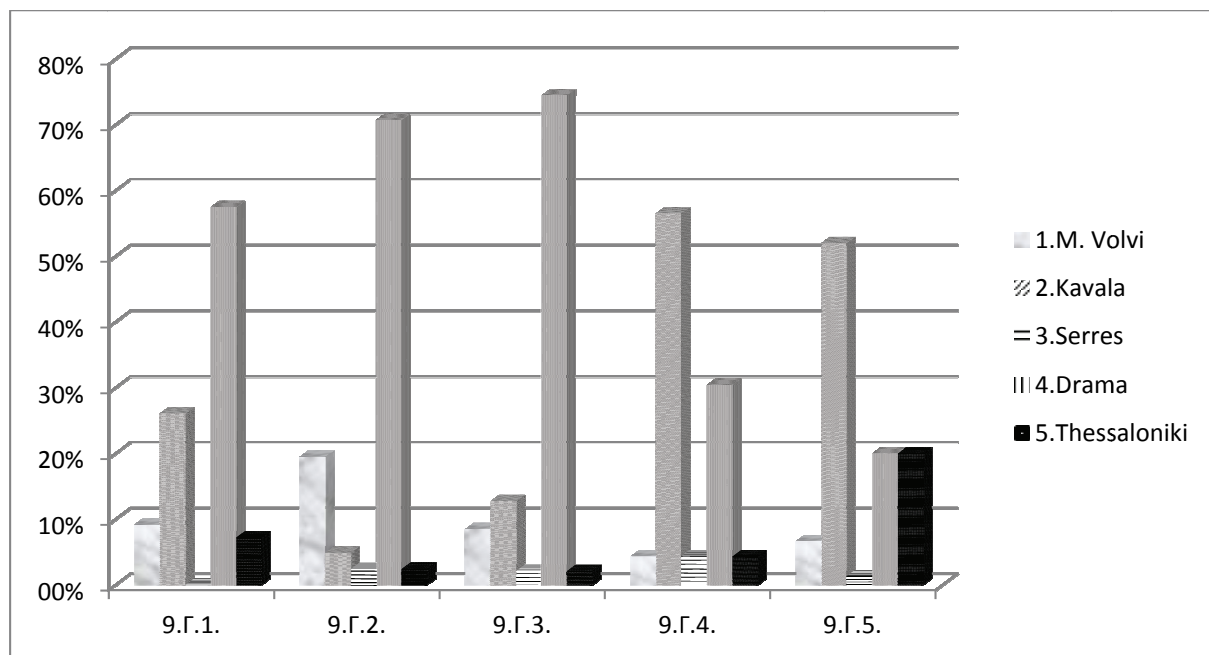
42,9% and 69,3%. Employment of specialized staff (degree in Tourism studies, foreign languages, Computers) seems to be in the plans of entrepreneurs of big cities, something that comes in contrast with these one in the resort area of Volvi, where only 2,4 % of the interviewees gave this answer. This low percentage could be explained by a common phenomenon in small societies in Greece, where children inherit their family tourism businesses, without having studies connected with the business object. They used to learn from practice, helping their parents from a young age in the tourism activities.

**Table 1:** Plans for improvement of the offered tourism product's quality in the future.

Answers	Municipalities				
	<u>Volvi</u>	<u>Kavala</u>	<u>Serres</u>	<u>Drama</u>	<u>Thessaloniki</u>
6.1. Employment of specialized staff (degree in Tourism studies, foreign languages, Computers)	2,4%	14,9%	30,4%	4,8%	12,0%
6.2. Education and training of already existing staff	7,3%	40,4%	43,5%	42,9%	69,3%
6.3 Investment in the additional inner equipment (furnishing etc)	80,5%	21,3%	8,7%	4,8%	8,0%
6.4 Investment in the additional outdoor equipment	2,4%	2,1%	4,3%	0,0%	2,7%
6.5 Investment in restaurant or bar	4,9%	2,1%	8,7%	4,8%	1,5%
6.6 Investment in new transport mean	2,4%	10,6%	4,3%	0,0%	6,7%
6.7 Another	0,0%	8,5%	0,0%	42,9%	0,0%

Source: Krasteva R., 2015.

**Figure 2:** Impact of discovering the monumental tomb of Amphipolis in the local community



Source: Krasteva R., 2015.

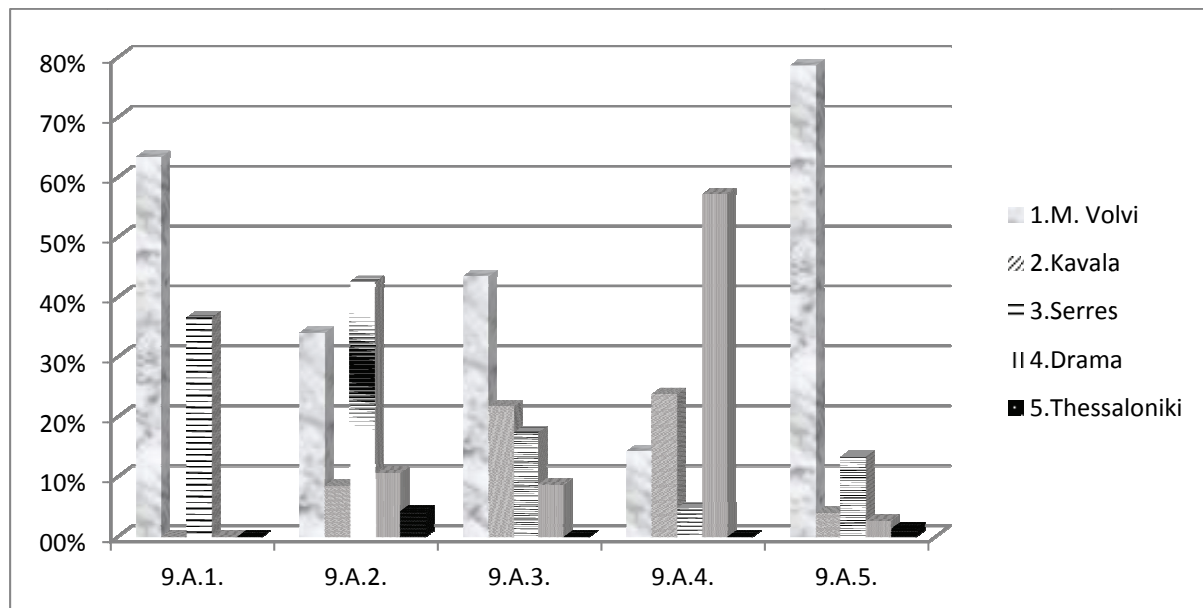
**Table 2:** Impact of discovering the monumental tomb of Amphipolis in the local community

Answers	Municipalities				
	<u>Volvi</u>	<u>Kavala</u>	<u>Serres</u>	<u>Drama</u>	<u>Thessaloniki</u>
9.Γ.1. The number of residents will increase	19,5%	8,5%	4,3%	4,8%	6,7%
9.Γ.2. The number of residents will remain constant	4,9%	12,8%	60,9%	81,0%	20,0%
9.Γ.3. Decline of residents number	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
9. Γ.4. Young people will stay and work in their hometown	75,6%	78,7%	34,8%	14,3%	53,3%
9.Γ.5. Nothing of the above	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	20,0%

Source: Krasteva R., 2015.

The analysis shows, that hoteliers from municipalities, like Volvi and Kavala, where the strongest economic branch is tourism, see like the most important impact of discovering the monumental tomb of Amphipolis in the local community, will be that young people will stay and work in their hometown, respectively 75,6% and 78,7%. This percentage is lower in the big cities, Serres 34,8%, Drama 14,3% and Thessaloniki 53,3%, where employment of population is distributed to many economic sectors. Hoteliers from these cities gave high percentage to the answer “The number of residents will remain constant”, respectively 60,9%, 81,0% and 20,0%. Divided seems to be the opinion of the hoteliers in Thessaloniki, about the impact of discovering the tomb, as some 40,0% gave answers that show a constant situation and some 60% thinks of positive impact in the local community.

**Figure 3:** Impact of discovering the monumental tomb of Amphipolis in tourism development



Source: Krasteva R., 2015.

**Table 3:** Impact of discovering the monumental tomb of Amphipolis in tourism development

Answers	Municipalities				
	<u>Volvi</u>	<u>Kavala</u>	<u>Serres</u>	<u>Drama</u>	<u>Thessaloniki</u>
9.A.1. The number of stays will increase	63,4%	34,0%	43,5%	14,3%	78,7%
9.A.2.The number of stays will remain the same	0,0%	8,5%	21,7%	23,8%	4,6%
9.A.3. The number of visits will increase	36,6%	42,6%	17,4%	4,8%	13,3%
9. A.4. The number of visits will remain the same	0,0%	10,6%	8,7%	57,1%	2,7%
9.A.5 Another	0,0%	4,3%	0,0%	0,0%	1,3%

Source: Krasteva R., 2015.

Opinions of hoteliers in the region coincide, about the impact of discovering the monumental tomb of Amphipolis in tourism development. Some 63, 4% of interviewees in Volvi says that “The number of stays will increase” and 36,6% that “The number of visits will increase”. Respectively 34,0% in Kavala, 43,5% in Serres and 78,7% in Thessaloniki gives the first answer and 42,6% in Kavala, 17,4 in Serres and 13,3% in Thessaloniki gives the second answer. Exception makes Drama, where over the half or interviewees believe that the situation will remain the same and that the excavations are not an important factor for the tourism development in their municipality.

As regards the price levels, over 80% of the entrepreneurs, will hold them in the same levels as last years. About the recognition of the region as a tourism destination some 98,6% believe that Tomb of Amphipoli will become a widely known destination in a world level, 5,8% answered in Europe and 0,5% in the Balkans, as they already have knowledge about this. The total number of hoteliers that have been answered the questionnaire, believe that the impact of discovering the monumental tomb of Amphipolis in the tourism development will be positive.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Last settlement along the Strumonias River is the ancient village of Amphipolis. Spanning Amphipolis Strumonias River flows into the picturesque Strymonikos bay in the Aegean Sea. Strumonikos bay, as a geographical and cultural object is characterized by long beaches, beautiful scenery, clear blue sea, Mediterranean climate, interesting traditions, crafts, historic monuments and hospitality of the population. The discovery of the monumental tomb of Kasta complements the attractiveness of the region as a tourist destination.

The surrounding area offers a rich biodiversity of flora and fauna. Perhaps one of the most environmentally clean bays in Greece - in diameter of 80 km there is no industry. It is close to the cities of Thessaloniki and Kavala 80km from Serres 70 km from the city of Drama 60 km, but has the unique combination of sea and mountain. Parallel paths and Egnatia Odos highway (E-79) provide fast and easy movement of tourists. Strumonikos Bay is a “transportation hub”, a natural crossroads between East and West, Europe and Asia.

Active development of the tourism sector in the region began in the 60s, but then missed to catch up very rapidly in the last 20 years. The resorts along the bay have become major tourism discovery, not only for the Greek tourists, but for the European and Balkan as well.

In order to evaluate deeply the impact of discovering the monumental tomb in Amphipolis, in tourism development of the region, the research will continue after summer of year 2015, including as well information about the total number of tourists visit the museum of Amphipolis, the percentages of visitors among the years and the purposes making them to choose this destination.

The recommendation given by the author is addressed in first place to the local tourism associations and it is to create a passport for this tourism destination “The monumental tomb of Kasta” in Amphipolis Greece.

**Table 4:** Passport for the tourism destination “Tomb of Kasta” in Amphipolis, Greece.

1.	Nature and name of the tourism object, site (destination). -city, village, tourism center, resorts -museum, gallery, shop etc. -anthropogenic/ nature landmark
2.	Historical review -occurrence (century, year, architects etc.) -events and personalities connected with this object (destination)
3.	Natural condition nowadays. -infrastructure
4.	Characteristics of the object (destination) -location and borders -natural resources -anthropogenic resources -native population and ethnographical groups
5.	Exploitation -national and international standards -period of exploitation -basic and additional activities -perspectives for development -visitors
6.	Analogues with other objects (destinations) in the same country or other countries.
7.	Other tourism sites in or out of the object (destination).
8.	Illustrative material of the object (destination).
9.	Functional role of the object (destination) in time.
10.	Realization of visiting the object (destination) -options for realization -methodology of tour guiding\
11.	References

Source: Trendafyllov K., 2002, p. 66 modified by Krasteva R., 2015.

The completed passport or with other words guide should be shown to the tourists by the hoteliers, in order to achieve a better information about the monuments and the history of the region, a better organization of the locals regarding the offered services and a widely recognition of the destination.

This recommendation could be also given to the Ministry of Tourism, which could propose it in the associations of all regional units in a national level or cross border cooperation for the most important tourism destinations.

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