Western Silk Road:
The Greek Legacy

Stella Kostopoulou  
Associate Professor  
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki  
Department of Economics
The Western Silk Road in Greece

Kostopoulou Stella
Associate Professor
Scientific Supervisor

Dr. Toufengopoulou Anastasia

Kyriakou Dimitrios
Malisiova Sevasti
Sofianou Evina
Xanthopoulou–Tsitsoni Valia

Silk Road Programme 2016
Western Silk Road Tourism Initiative
A UNWTO-EU Initiative

Stella Kostopoulou
Associate Professor
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Department of Economics
Tel: +30 2310 996423, +30 6932236366
E-mail: kostos@econ.auth.gr

Dimitrios Kyriakou
PhD Candidate
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Department of Economics
Phone: +30 6978295499
Email: dkryiakou@econ.auth.gr

Evina Sofianou
Architect Engineer, PhD candidate
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Department of Civil Engineering
Tel: +30 2310997107, +30 6396 994 491
Email: sofianou@civil.auth.gr

Dr. Anastasia Toufengopoulou
Urban and Regional Planner
National Technical University of Athens
School of Architecture
Phone +30 6944304101
Email: a.toufegopoulou@gmail.com

Sevasti Malisiova
PhD Candidate
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Department of Economics
Phone: +30 6947462212
Email: smalis@econ.auth.gr

Valia Xanthopoulou-Tsitsoni
PhD Candidate
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Department of Economics
Phone: +30 6937178524
Email: xathypv@econ.auth.gr
The Western Silk Road

- Historic route, cultural importance
- Cross-border, inter-regional, international cooperation
- Global Brand name
- Rich variety of tourism destinations, products and experiences
- Independent travelers target market
Western contact with China dates back to Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), one of the first Silk Road travellers from the West.

Herodotus in his Histories (450 BC), wrote about the speed and efficiency of the Persian messengers: “There is nothing in the world that travels faster than these Persian couriers”.


Silk Road Tangible and Intangible Heritage: Regional Analysis
Region of Central Macedonia

Silk Road Branded Sites
1. Goumenissa: ‘Chrissalis’ silk factory
2. Thessaloniki – Pilea: Textile industry (‘Helios’ silk mill – ‘Benozilio’)
3. Edessa: Silk industry

Main Silk Road Nodes
4. Nigrita: Silk industry in the past
5. Chalkidiki: Silkworm tradition

Alternative Silk Road Nodes
6. Kilkis: Tobacco warehouse
7. Policastro: Silkworm production – mulberry trees
8. Griva: ‘Vermion’ spinnery
9. Naoussa: Textile industry
Thessaloniki: Silk Industrial Heritage Complexes

- Chief port of Northern Greece
- 11 Silk factories in 1870 with quality products
- Sericulture was flourishing throughout the environs of Thessaloniki and the silk produced rivalled silk from Bursa.
- Spinning-weaving mill "Yfanet": began operating during the Ottoman period, fell into decline in the 1950’s, stopped its function in 1965, in 1993 classified as a "historical monument".
- Silk mill “Benozilio”: built before 1886, operated as a silk mill and then, as spinning — weaving unit

http://thessaloniki.photos.vagk.gr/el/photos-gr/old_photos-gr/old_photos_people-gr/
http://thessaloniki.photos.vagk.gr/el/
## Silk Road Regional SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development and Tourism Profile</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(demographics, socio-economic structure, capacity building programmes, local empowerment etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Determining Factors of Tourism Development

- **Tourism Supply**
  - Silk Road’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage
  - Services - Infrastructure - Accessibility

- **Tourism Demand**
  - Tourism Image (focus on Marketing and Promoting the Silk Road)
  - Tourism stakeholders

## Tourism Policy, Planning and Management
(at national, regional, local level)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism Product</strong></td>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Threats</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silk Road cultural resources</strong></td>
<td>Many of the <strong>silk mills haven’t survive</strong> (ex. in Edessa)</td>
<td><strong>Unexploited potential</strong> for further developing tourism</td>
<td>Potential economic / political <strong>crises</strong> in other countries, impact upon potential tourist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low level of <strong>tourism product</strong> diversification due to lack of knowledge experience</td>
<td><strong>Revival of sericulture</strong> in Edessa and potential for new investments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mass tourism</strong> and seasonality in some regions</td>
<td><strong>Historical connections between monasteries and silk production</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Low level in tourism investments</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tourism funding opportunities</strong> from European, National and Regional Programmes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Uneven spatial tourism concentrations</strong> (Chalkidiki, Pella)</td>
<td><strong>Regional Operation Programme</strong> (2014-2020) promoting tourism development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Lack of integrated planning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Contribution of media</strong> in tourism development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Lack in tourism education</strong></td>
<td><strong>New international trends</strong> in tourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Lack in tourism promotion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Promotion of ICTs</strong> in tourism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Low tourism development rate in some areas</strong></td>
<td><strong>Investment interest</strong> from other countries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Potential for thematic tourism</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Findings
Knowledge — Promotion of Silk Road

How would you assess your knowledge about history on "The Silk Road"
- No Knowledge: 81%
- General Knowledge: 12%
- Specialized Knowledge: 7%

How would you assess your knowledge about tourism destinations on "The Silk Road"
- No Knowledge: 71%
- General Knowledge: 7%
- Specialized Knowledge: 22%

Has your organisation any relation to the World Tourism Organisation’s program for the Silk Road?
- Yes: 10%
- No: 90%

Has your organisation introduced Silk Road promotion into tourism actions/plans/policies within its area of responsibility?
- Yes: 83%
- No: 17%
### National Western Silk Road SWOT Analysis of Greece

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism Supply</strong></td>
<td><strong>Silk Road’s unique natural and cultural resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strategic geographical location on east-west crossroads</td>
<td>• Notable Abandoned resources directly and/or indirectly related to the Silk Road</td>
<td>• Untapped Silk Road heritage, ready to utilization</td>
<td>• External obstacles to the exploitation and tourism development of the WSR cultural resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unique characteristics of cultural supply in Greek tourism destinations (diversity, dispersion)</td>
<td>• Undiscovered links with the history of Silk RoadRoutes (many regions with history in silk and textile production)</td>
<td>• Unexploited potential for differentiation of tourism supply towards higher-value added and 365 days attractions, through WSR based experiences</td>
<td>• Potential reduction in domestic tourism (due to economic crisis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• New cultural resources: local gastronomy, cultural landscape, festivals, industrial heritage</td>
<td>• Low level in tourism investments related to Silk Road</td>
<td>• Greece to be established as one of the most important WSR destinations</td>
<td>• Potential economic/political crisis to countries of origin of WSR tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong links with the history of Silk Road (e.g. Soufli, Goumenissa, Messinia, Kos etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Timeless experience in the maritime trade on the Maritime Silk Road</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Silk Road Tangible and Intangible Heritage in Greece

- Tourism attractions **highly relevant** in all regions
- Rich **tangible** cultural resources
  - need for restoration / redevelopment plans and sustainable tourism strategy
- Rich **intangible** resources
  - risk to disappear unless properly exploited
  - in search of the *invisible* Silk Road Heritage
- Stakeholders involved in tourism
  - not aware of the importance of Silk Road
- Need for
  - Silk Road National Tourism Policy / Regional Strategy Plans
  - Local Authorities and Private sector commitment
Silk Road Regional Tourism Development Plans

Silk Road tourism product development

1. Define the Silk Road Concept / Policy Targets / Market Segments

2. Identify Cultural / Natural Silk Road sites / attractions / experiences

3. Define the local / regional / inter-regional Silk Road Cultural Routes

4. Develop Local Silk Road Culture Storytelling

5. Design Regional Branding of the Silk Road Legacy

6. Adopt-adapt to UNWTO strategy / labels

7. Create Tourism Intelligence / new Communication Tools: website / platform / interactive Google maps / on-the-road Mobile Apps / Social Media

8. Support cooperation / networking: joint tourism development programs at the local – regional – national – international level
Establishment of a European Silk Road Research Center under the auspices of UNWTO and with the support of the Greek Ministry of Tourism
Thank you for your attention!

kostos@econ.auth.gr