

(REVIEW ARTICLE)



Italian monuments in Kos- present situation and tourist interest and the role of ICTs in their promotion

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Abstract

The present study has to do with the Italian architecture in the Dodecanese and specifically on the island of Kos. The departure of the Italians bequeathed to the island a rich architectural work, which is a valuable capital for its tourist industry. It is the result of thirty-one years of Italian rule and is an important and special part of the island's cultural heritage. After a quantitative survey carried out in November 2023 with questionnaires distributed on the island, it was shown that the Italian monuments have been utilized to a satisfactory extent, so that today they provide the visitor with a unique combination of history and architecture that attracts tourists and contributes to local and cultural development and presentation.

Keywords: Kos; Italian monuments; Tourism; Cultural heritage

1. Introduction

The island of Kos is one of the most historic islands of Greece. Kos is located in the Aegean Sea and is the third largest island of the Dodecanese in area, after Rhodes and Karpathos, with a population of 37,089 permanent residents, being the second most populated island after Rhodes. Making a historical review, we can see that the history of the island starts from antiquity. Indeed, Kos is known as the island of Hippocrates as it is the birthplace of the father of medicine, Hippocrates.

Today Kos is a major attraction for many tourists. It is often called the island of the bicycle, since the bicycle paths that dominate the island are countless. Of course, from ancient times until today the island has passed through many different conquerors. These conquerors have left their mark on the island and even more so on its architecture. The greatest influence, as far as the foreign conquerors of the island were concerned, is that of the Latins and the Italians. Their influence on the island begins in antiquity with the Romans, continues in the Middle Ages with the Italian knights and ends in modern times, when the island passes into the hands of the Italian state.(Koltsikoglou & all,2022). Kolonas,2002),(Logothetis, 2004). Manola, & 2023).

2. Italian architecture in the Dodecanese

Italian architecture in the Dodecanese consists of two periods of time, which are involved both in its war aims and its new colonial policy. This can be seen from the choices made in the field of architecture by the two general governors of the Dodecanese based in Rhodes, 1st period Mario Lago 1924 to 1936 with a more restrained policy which continues the revivalist architecture with its references to the architecture of the Knighthood, 2nd period Cesare Maria de Vecchi 1936 to 1941 with the attempt to purge architecture from his predecessor in an authoritarian manner, hoping to make Rhodes and its region an equal province of the new Empire of Rome. For Mussolini's government, the architecture of

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the buildings was the assurance that they would remain untouched through the centuries for generations to come. (Manola,2024) (Manola,2022b) ,(Manola, 2022α).The first one approved for Kos by the Italians in 1928 was the extension around the harbour of Mandraki, so the first public buildings were built along the beach. The buildings built in Kos are divided into categories: pre-seismic e.g. Town Hall, which is an example of eclecticism and post-seismic 1933 e.g. Municipal Market which has elements of racialism and fascist architecture. (Kolonas, 2002).

2.1. The roman odeon

The Roman Odeon was built in the 2nd century AD and is located in the center of the city. It is considered one of the most important public buildings of ancient Kos. In 1929, the Italian archaeologist Luciano Laurenzi excavated and discovered this impressive monument. During the period of Italian rule in Kos, the Italians wasted no time and immediately began the restoration of the Roman Odeon in 1929, with the first restoration work being carried out by the Italian Archaeological Mission, while more recent conservation and consolidation work was carried out during the period 1994-1999. The Roman Odeon was able to accommodate 750 spectators. In addition, it is worth mentioning that various musical competitions were held in the admirable amphitheater, while at the same time it was the seat of the public body of Kos, responsible for the awarding of honors to the distinguished citizens of the island.

Today, from the point of view of tourist interest, visitors have the opportunity to admire an authentic Roman Odeon, with its impressive architecture, while wandering through its interior corridors, which resemble tunnels. The visitor is confronted with the exhibition area, which includes an exhibition of photoFigures from the Institute of Archaeological Studies of the Aegean. The Roman Odeon can host a variety of events, mainly of cultural interest, organized by local and municipal institutions

2.2. The palazzo del governo

is located next to the Knights' Castle. It was built in 1927-1928 by Fausto Di Fiorestano. Its characteristic feature is a clock tower. Inside it has an airy courtyard and the exterior is surrounded by balconies. During the Italian occupation it housed the administration of the island and the Palace of Justice (Pallazo di Giustizia). It was an important symbol of fascist power with the inscription 'Legum servae sumus omnes' ('We are all slaves of the law'), proclaiming the rule of law, engraved on the back of the building overlooking the Hippocratic plane tree.

Today it dominates the site and its entire appearance shows a clear influence from Northern Italy. The stone decorations, the arched arches, the sharp angles on the roof, the towers and the slight Arabic influences are also a clear example of Italian Eclecticism. Today it houses the Town Hall of Kos Town , the Court of First Instance and the Kos Police.

2.3. Casa del fascio teatro-casa del fascio teatro-space of irradiation

The building complex of Liberty Square was built between January 1934 and April 1935 to a design by Bernabiti with volumes of different heights, such as the three-storey tower. In this complex there was a cinema, the offices of the fascist party and a club for the gathering and entertainment of workers after work. Today the building houses the Orpheus cinema, the Aegli café which is privately owned. The rest of the building is owned by the Municipality and houses the Municipal Library and the Special Historical Folklore Archive of the town of Kos.(<https://www.discoveringkos.com/destination-item/egli-building-orfeas-cinema/>)/)

2.4. Gelsomino-building

The Jasmine Hotel (1928-1929) was designed and decorated by Petracco. A rectangular three-storey building where the ground floor contains the reception and dining rooms, the first floor has 7 rooms and the second floor 10. On one side there is a terrace with pergola and access to the beach. On the two larger sides of the building there are three symmetrical windows on both floors. Today the hotel Yasemi or also known as Aktaion offers luxurious accommodation to its guests(<https://www.gelsominohotel.com/gr/hotel-kos>)

2.5. The aegis building

The "Egli" or "Aegli" complex is located in Eleftherias Square. It is an imposing building which impresses the visitor. It includes many functional areas mainly for the pleasure of the residents. It was built in 1934-35 by Bernabiti. It was intended to house the fascist party and at the same time had event halls and a cinema. The building is characterized by its three-storey tower and the arches on the ground floor, which are the hallmark of Italianate architecture. Today, apart from the 'Café Aegli' and the 'Orpheus' cinema, the Municipal Library and the Folklore Museum are housed.

2.6. The castle of the knights

built by the Knights from 1436 to 1514. It owes its present form to the Italian Archaeological Service, which demolished the Ottoman additions and restored the castle to its original style. The main gate bears a Hellenistic vivisection with garlands and facades. During the German occupation, the castle was used as a prison and fortress. In 1948 it was declared a historical monument.

2.7. Church agnus dei

It is today the only Catholic Church on the island of Kos. (Agnus Dei - the Lamb of God) In the same location as the church is the Catholic cemetery. The cemetery of Kos was blessed in November 1935 and contains the remains of Italian soldiers.

2.8. The municipal market (Mercato delle erbe)

It was designed in 1933 by Di Fausto and completed in 1934 by the architect Rodolfo Petracco. It is located in the central square of the island. The marketplace with its arcades, arches, arches and the atrium in the middle make it impressive. It is divided into 3 building zones, with small houses for the working class, two-storey houses for the bourgeoisie and mansions with gardens for the Italian settlers.

Today only the central atrium is still used as an open-air market. The Municipal Market has been designated as a listed monument(<https://www.bolognawelcome.com/en/places/shopping-places/mercato-delle-erbe-2>)

2.9. Ancient agora and port

The ancient Agora and the ancient port were located under the old fortifications. The excavations were carried out by the Italian School of Archaeology from 1935 to 1942, by Laurenzi and Morricone. Some attempts were made to restore the Agora and the port's arcade, but due to the Second World War they were not successful

2.10. Asklepieio

The first discovery was made around 1902 by R. Herzog (German archaeologist). In 1935, excavations were carried out by Italian archaeologists and the monuments were restored. These works gave the form of today. The archaeological site is of world interest because of Hippocrates, the father of medicine, and receives thousands of foreign visitors.

2.11. Town hall

The Town Hall is one of Di Fausto's works (1925-1930). It consists of a two-storey, rectangular complex that unfolds around an atrium with galleries. On the west side there is an apartment for the Mayor, on the east side there are shops, while on the northeast side there is a three-storey tower with a terrace. Today it houses the Town Hall, the Customs Office and the Land Registry(<https://www.discoveringkos.com/destination-item/city-hall/>)

2.12. General hospital

In 1912 the first clinic was built by a family of Italian Francolevantine doctors. Work continued in 1926 with the construction of the hospital building which was completed and opened in 1930. After the liberation in 1947 the hospital came under the jurisdiction of the Municipality and was renamed Municipal Hospital of Kos "Hippocrates".

2.13. Archaeological museum

The idea for the construction of the museum came from Mario Lago (Governor of the Dodecanese) after the successful excavations on the island. It was built in 1934-35 to the designs of the Italian Rodolfo Petracco. The imposing stone arched entrance stands out. It is located in Eleftherias Square. All the findings from the ancient marketplace and other individual sites such as the Roman House (Casa Romana) have been gathered there. It attracts thousands of visitors (culture.gr) as it is located in the centre of the island making it easy to access. During his visit, the tourist gains knowledge about the ancient history of Kos by wandering through the corridors and studying the descriptions of the exhibits. It houses wide-ranging exhibits of great importance that reflect the history of ancient Greece and the late Roman period. The finds came from sites from the Roman Odeon, the Roman Oikia, the Altar of Dionysus, from archaeological sites of both the Ancient Market and the Western Archaeological Zone. The museum houses works of sculpture, mosaics, reliefs, vases, Hellenistic sculptures of the period (statues of the "Athlete", Hippocrates, Athena, Demeter) and statues of the Roman period (The "Sitting Hermes", "Artemis", "Asclepius".)

3. Research methodology: quantitative

The survey was conducted with questionnaires distributed with google forms in Kos, to which 200 people responded. The responses as shown in the Figures are as follows:

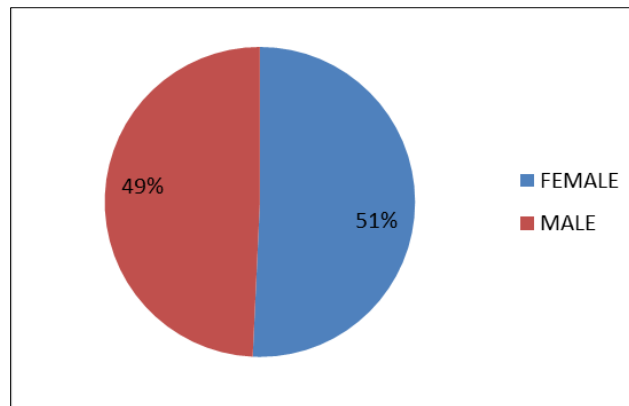


Figure 1 Gender

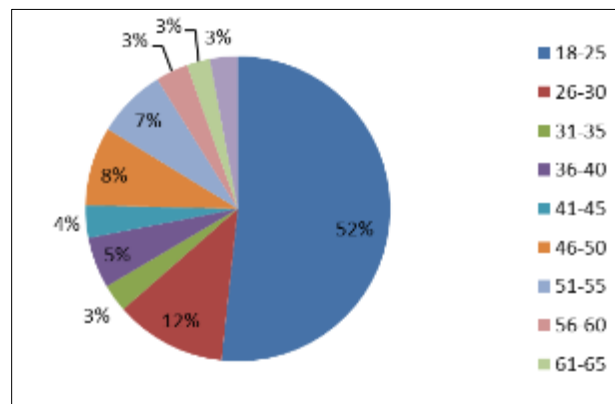


Figure 2 Age

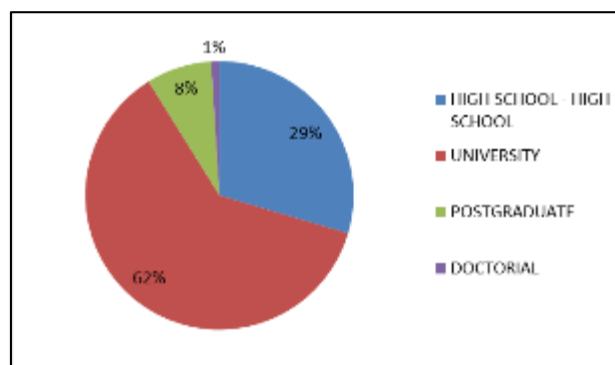


Figure 3 Education level

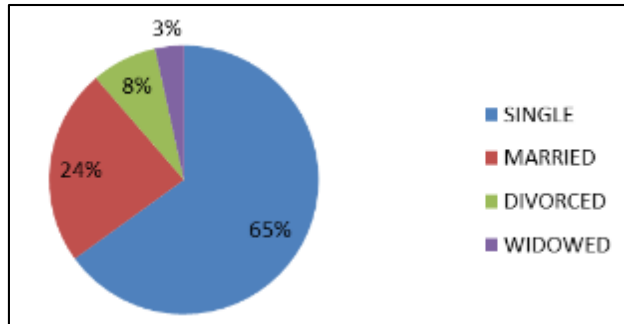


Figure 4 Marital status

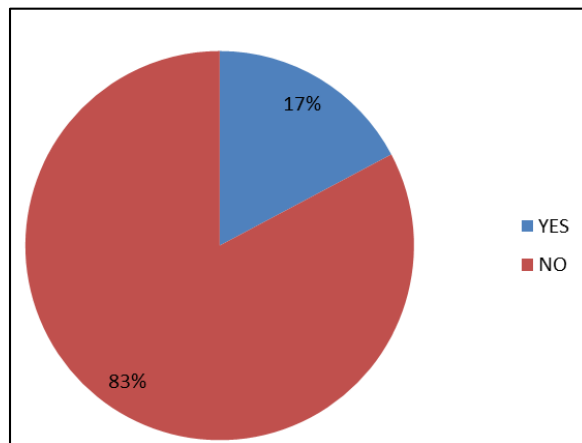


Figure 5 Have you visited the island?

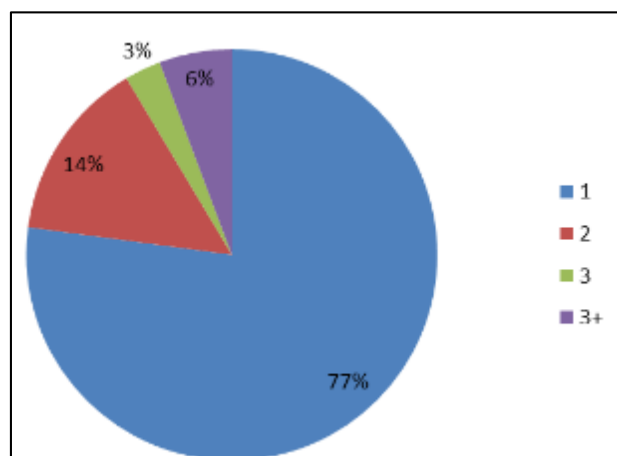


Figure 6 Number of visits to the island

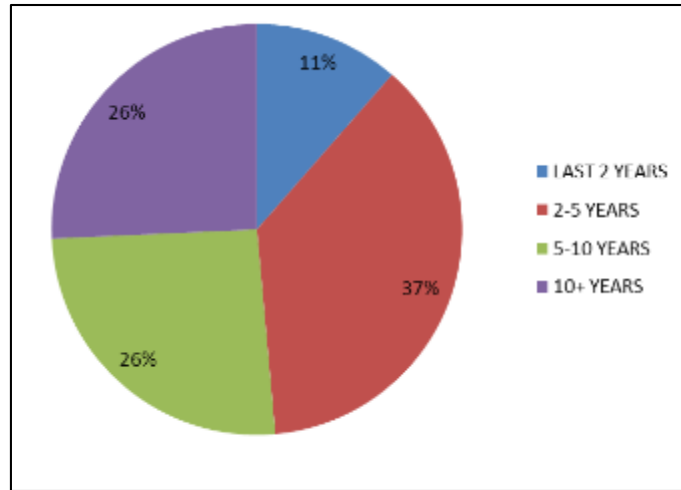


Figure 7 Last visit to the island

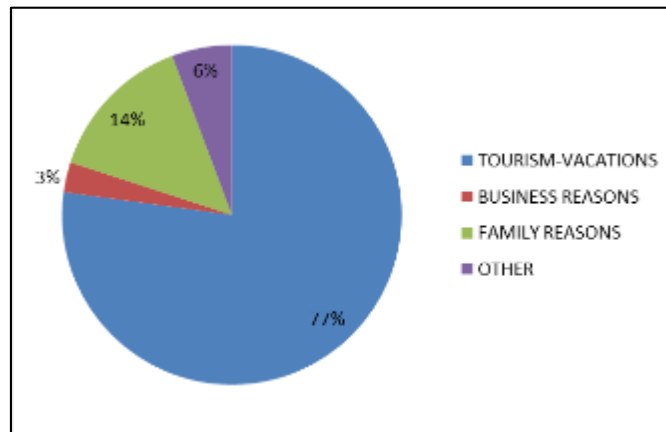


Figure 8 Reasons for visiting the island

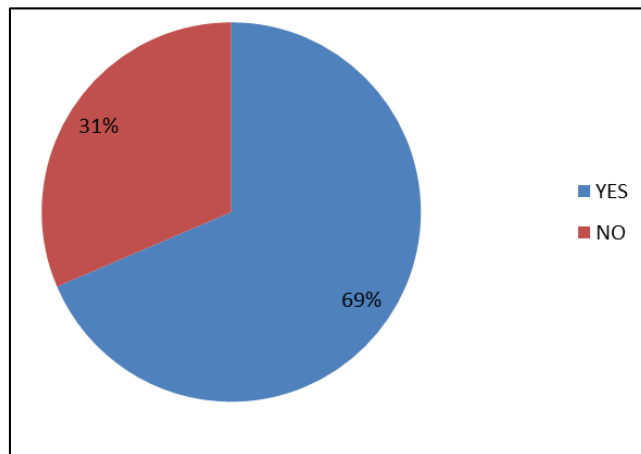


Figure 9 Have you visited the archaeological sites and monuments?

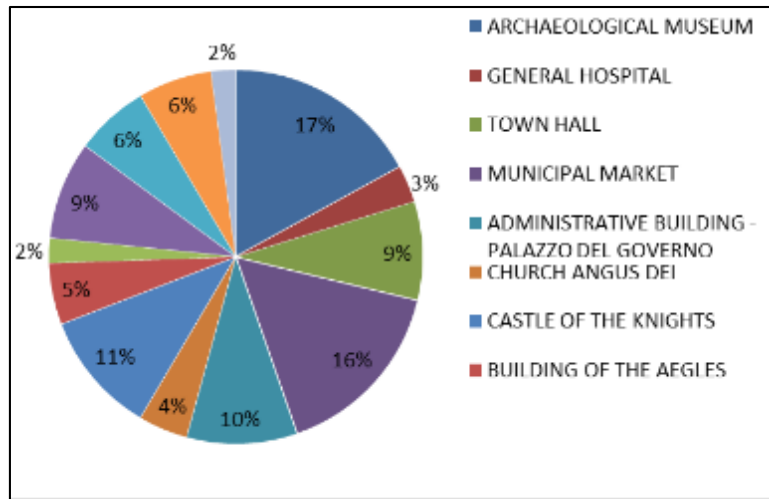


Figure 10 Monuments

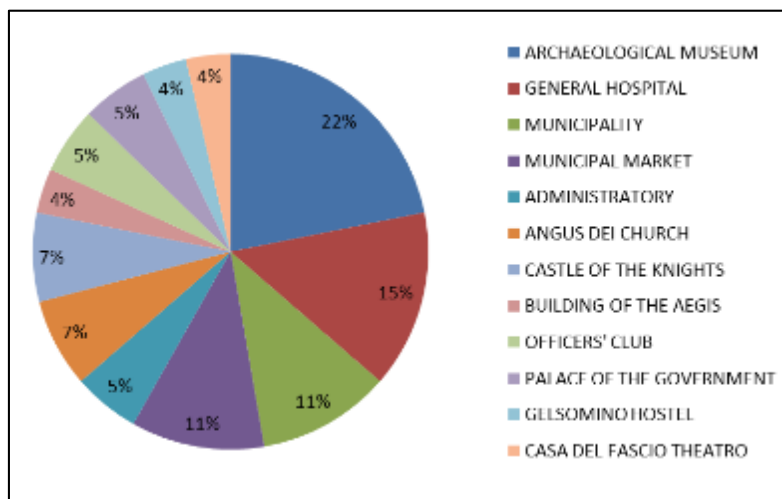


Figure 11 Monuments best preserved

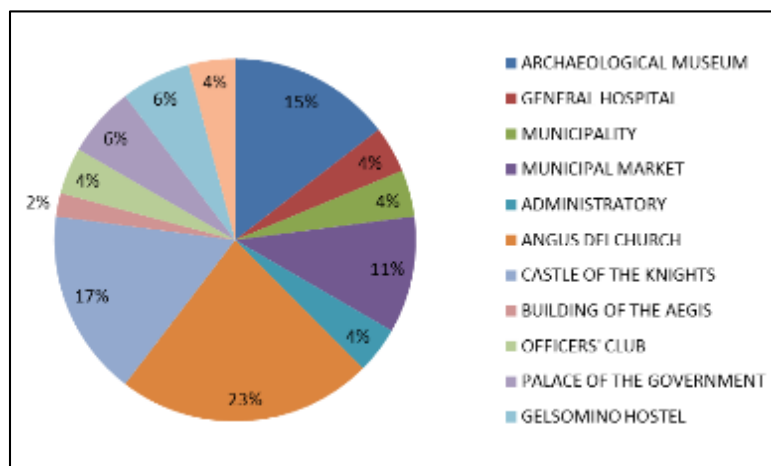


Figure 12 Which Monuments impressed you the most?

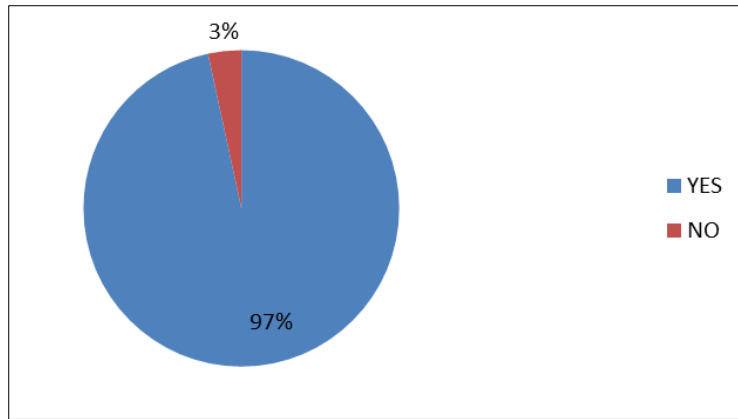


Figure 13 Do monuments contribute to the development of local society ?

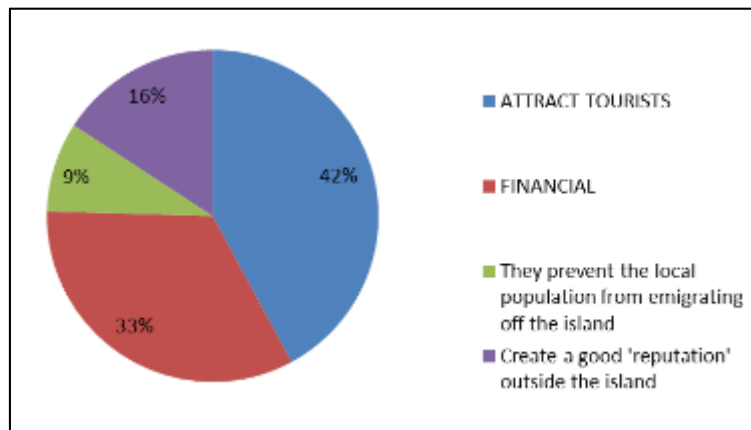


Figure 14 how do they contribute to the development of local society?

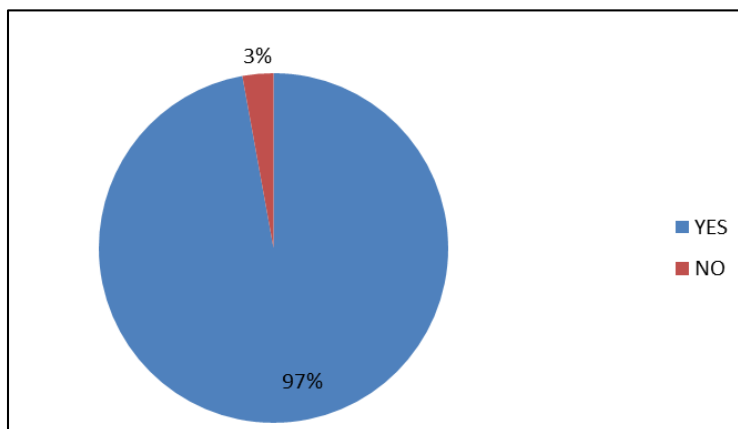


Figure 15 Would you recommend someone to visit the island?

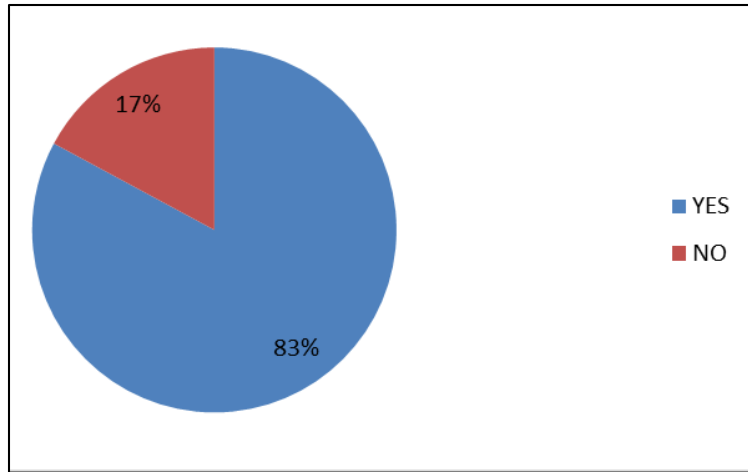


Figure 16 Would you suggest visiting the Italian archaeological sites?

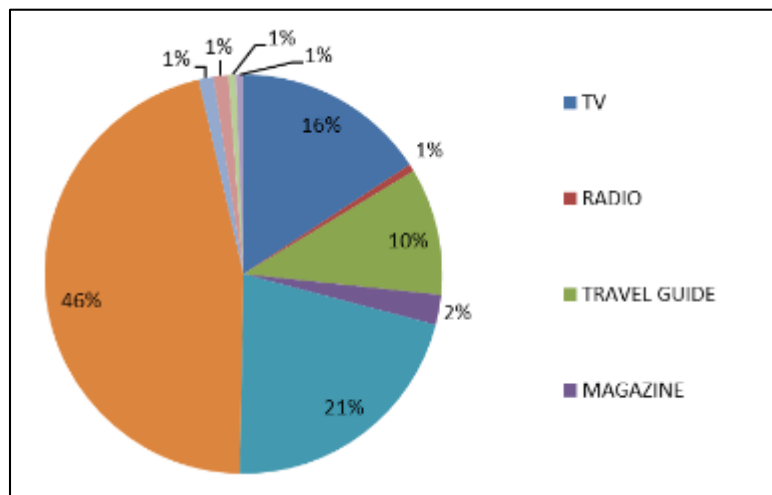


Figure 17 What was the source of the information?

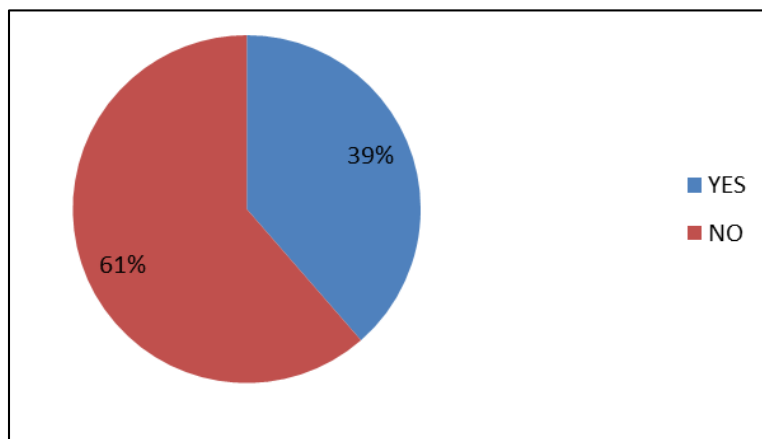


Figure 18 From your overall information, have you heard /learned/read anything about the Italian monuments?

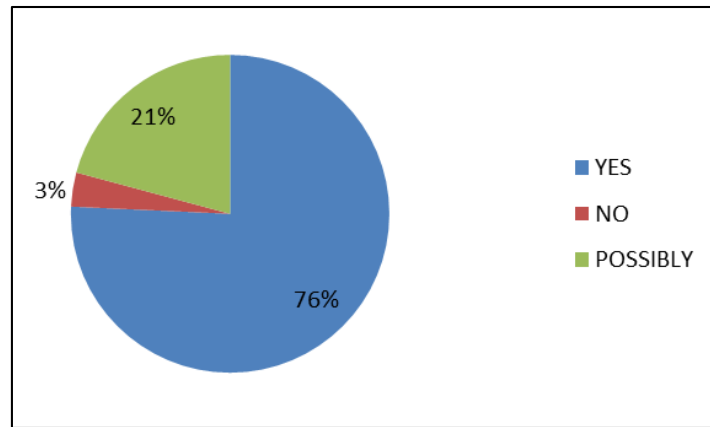


Figure 19 Would you like to visit the island of Kos in the future?

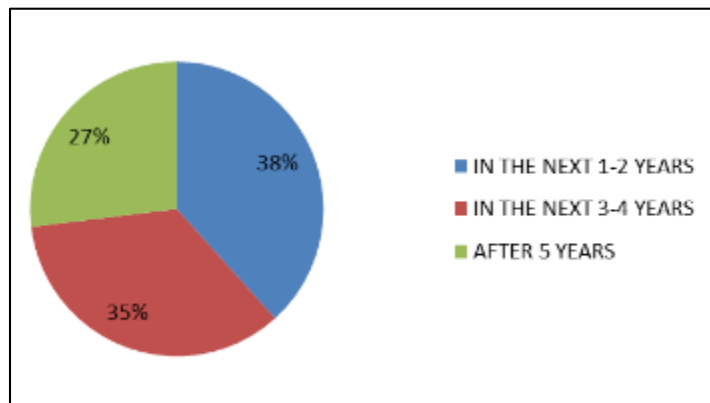


Figure 20 Would you like to visit the island of Kos in the future?

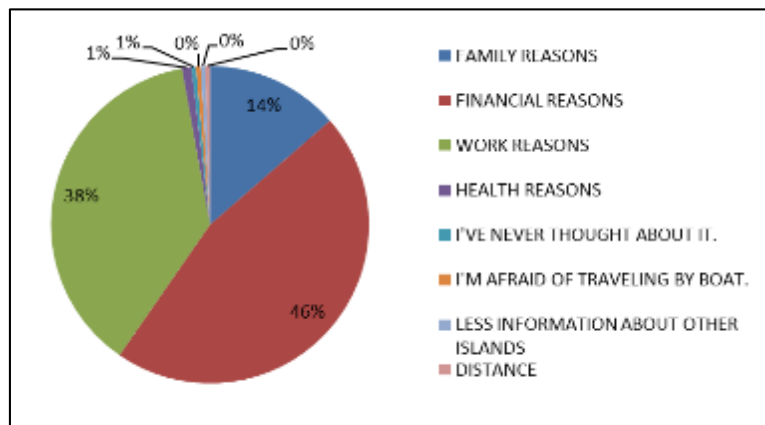


Figure 21 What is the main obstacle to visiting the island?

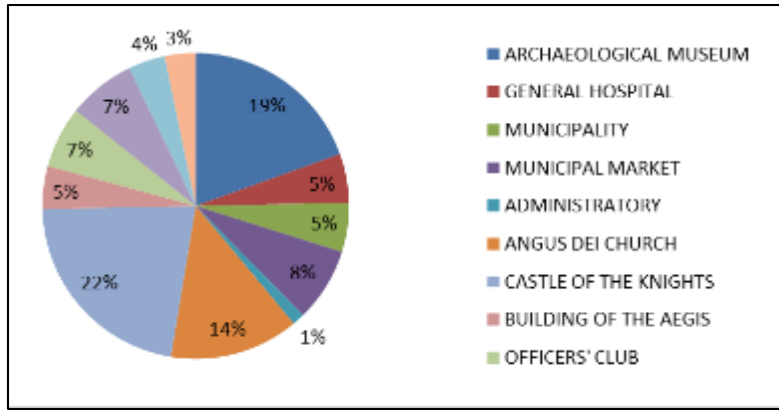


Figure 22 From your overall information, which Italian monuments do you remember?

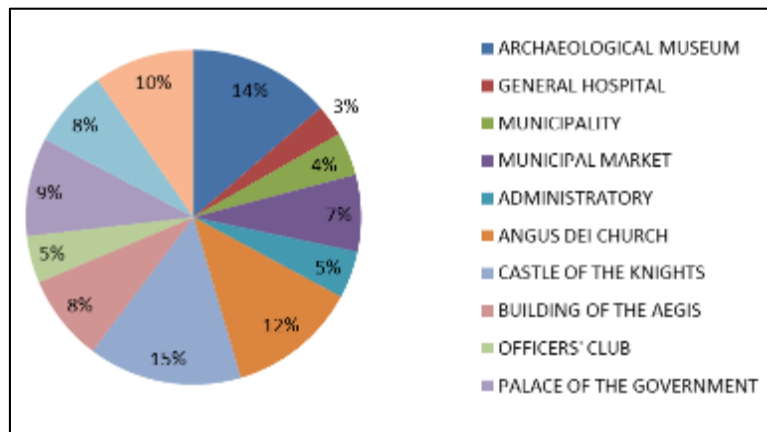


Figure 23 If you ever visit the island of Kos, which Venetian monuments would you like to visit?

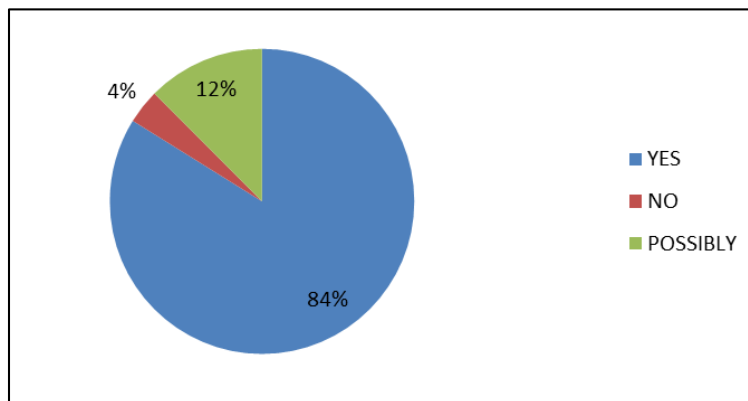


Figure 24 Do you think that the organization of the Monuments in Cultural Routes integrated in tourist packages would help the tourist promotion and sustainable development of the place?

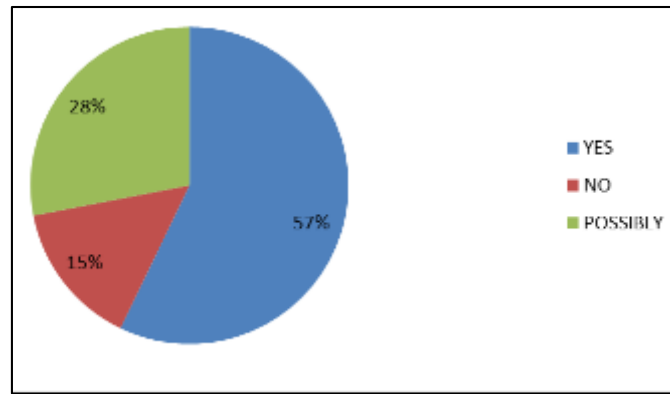


Figure 25 Would you be interested in literary works left over from the Italian period?

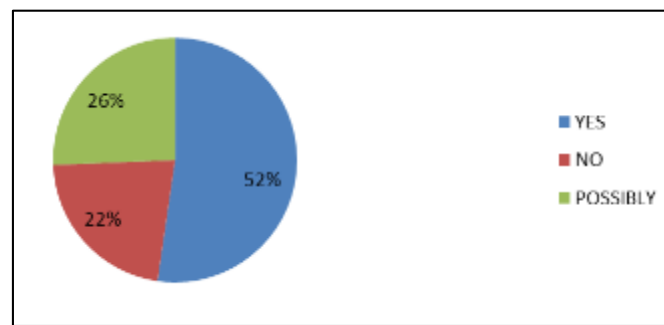


Figure 26 Would you like to find out about the content of literary documents left over from the Italian period?

4. Current situation and tourist interest-promotion strategies

The architectural heritage of the Italian occupation remains a vital part of the cultural identity of the Dodecanese and specifically of Kos. Despite the passage of time, the Italian monuments have been preserved and utilized, contributing to tourism and local development. According to the above presented research, the architecture of the Italian era is an important attraction for tourists and contributes to tourism development. Visitors are fascinated by the combination of Italian and Greek influences and their attendance helps generate income and employment opportunities for residents. (Markwick, 2018) Manola, 2022a), (Maniou, 2024b)

The Italian monuments could lead to cultural entrepreneurship and greater utilization, in the following ways:

- Incorporating educational programs into school curricula that highlight the history, architecture and cultural importance of the Dodecanese.
- Organization of seminars and lectures for local people employed in tourism, so that they are informed about the new technologies, while also recognizing the importance of the Italian cultural heritage. (Papaioannou & all, 2024)
- The organization of all sorts of cultural events, as well as festivals, so as to give opportunities to tourists to get to know the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the island and prolong their stay in it. (Manola, 2022c)
- Creation of a website or mobile application, dedicated to the subject, which will serve as a comprehensive guide to the cultural heritage of the Dodecanese, providing virtual tours and historical information.
- Provision of financial incentives and grants to property owners for the restoration and preservation of historical buildings linked to the Italian era in Kos (Mitoula, Maniou, 2024, (Mitoula, 2014, Economou & Mitoula, 2018)

Highlighting the cultural heritage of the Dodecanese is necessary to preserve the identity and attract cultural tourism and there are certainly possibilities to expand cultural entrepreneurship on the island of Kos (Maniou, 2023), (Maniou, 2024a) (Maniou, 2024c)

5. The role of ICTs and Digital Culture

The term "digital culture" refers to the modern era of communication technologies, which includes digital images, networked computers, and personalized technologies. It comes after print culture in the 19th century and electronic broadcast culture in the 20th century. An increasing amount of communication technology is used in the actions that are typically linked to the creation of digital culture. Increased user participation, an environment with ever-richer visuals, and connection aspects that surpass personal dimensions are all implied by these uses. The rise of digital, networked, and customized media in modern society, along with the shift from print and broadcast media-centered communication stages to more personalized and networked media, are the main causes of the shifts that digital culture represents.

New and creative ways to learn interactively about different languages, cultures, and customs are brought about by the digital age. Individuals can deeply connect with the nuances of diverse cultures through online language courses, cultural workshops, and virtual travel experiences. These tools can increase empathy, close cultural divides, and promote a feeling of oneness throughout the world. But in order to prevent oversimplifying or exoticizing cultural identities, it is essential that virtual encounters are carefully planned.

In conclusion, we emphasize the importance of all digital technologies in the field of culture, education, and training. These technologies are highly effective and productive in facilitating and improving assessment, intervention, and educational-cultural procedures through mobile devices that bring educational-cultural activities anywhere [20-22], various ICT applications that are the main supporters of culture and education [23-28], and AI, STEM, and ROBOTICS [29-33] that raise educational procedures and culture to new performance levels. In addition, the development and integration of ICTs with theories and models of metacognition, mindfulness, meditation, and the development of emotional intelligence [34-44], accelerates and improves educational-cultural practices and results.

6. Conclusions

The importance of Italian architecture on the island of Kos is a pole of tourist interest and contributes to economic development. By implementing responsible tourism practices and advocating conservation, the Dodecanese can continue to benefit from its rich Italian architectural heritage. Travelers are looking for more meaningful and authentic experiences, while the fusion of cultural richness and inventive approaches ensures that tourism becomes a powerful vehicle for both exploration and cultural management. The preservation of cultural heritage is a critical aspect of maintaining a society's identity over time.

Compliance with ethical standards

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The Authors proclaim no conflict of interest.

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Appendix



Source:
http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/gh3562.jsp?obj_id=5142&mm_id=683
)

Picture 1 Ancient market



Source
http://odysseus.culture.gr/h/3/gh3562.jsp?obj_id=5142&mm_id=683
)

Picture 2 Asclipeium



Source: <https://www.allovergreece.com/Attraction/32/14/2188/en>)

Figure 3 Administrator



Source https://www.ertnews.gr/perifereiakoi-stathmoi/notio_aigaio/kos)

Picture 4 Glory



Source: <https://www.kos4all.com/5912/>)

Figure 5 Archaeological museum



Source: <https://kos.gr/gr/the-re-enactment-of-the-hippocratic-oath>)

Picture 6 The first representation of the Hippocratic Oath in 1952



Source: <https://aegeanews.gr/>

Image 7 Municipal market



Source: <https://www.angelahotel-kos.com/el/explore-kos-el/383/to-kastro-ton-ippoton-/>

Image 8 The castle of the Knights



Source: <https://wikimapia.org>

Picture 9 Palace of Fascism



Source: <https://www.tripadvisor.com.gr/>

Picture 10 Palazzo de Governo



Figure 11 The Roman Conservatory