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STAGING THE ANCIENT: INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVALS IN GREECE

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Abstract

The power of arts, either visual or performing, in creating positive impact has been widely praised in cultural diplomacy literature. The present paper examines the biographies of two great theatre festivals in Greece and their managerial models, arguing that leadership directly affects the public and foreign relations of a cultural institution. The author will analyse the case of the European Cultural Centre of Delphi and its theatre festival, as well as the Athens-Epidaurus theatre festival, the most renowned theatre festival within Greece. To gather data, the author used material from 10 semi-structured interviews with policy makers from the Ministry of Culture and Sports and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs originally conducted with the aim to map Greek foreign cultural policy. Thematic analysis was used to process the transcriptions. Also, desk research largely informed this study. The theatre festival in Delphi is now in decline, as the European Cultural Centre has reoriented its strategy organising conferences instead of theatre productions. By contrast, the Athens-Epidaurus festival is becoming more outward-looking and is blooming. In both cases, politics have played a major part in shaping new agendas. What are the international dynamics of these two festivals?

Key words

cultural diplomacy; theatre festivals; theatre diplomacy;

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Introduction

Cultural diplomacy literature largely focuses on US-USSR postwar relations, investigating the strategies of the Americans to win the Cold War via the diplomatic course (Bu 1999; Arndt 2005; Robbins 2007; Cull 2008; Prevots 2012). Exhibitions, theatre productions and films were only a handful of the tools used to penetrate the Iron Curtain in attempt to win ‘the hearts and minds’ of the neutralised public as Gould-Davies (2003, 195) shares. Looking into literature on theatre and its role in International Relations as part of this conference, I came to realise how under-researched this area is despite the much-praised benefits the arts are said to yield. Interestingly, a large part of the literature about the role of theatre in cultural diplomacy comes from American journals. Although the United States have no official institution working exclusively on cultural diplomacy, their interest in the effects of the performing and visual arts in strengthening ties and fostering understanding is certainly high. Three publishing platforms have shown consistent interest in theatre and its role in diplomacy: a. *Theatre Topics*, b. *American Theatre*, and c. *Journal of American Drama and Theatre*. In 2011, *Theatre Topics* launched a special issue calling for papers focusing on the relation between international relations and theatre. A section of the literature review I offer in this introduction, covers this special issue.

Cultural diplomacy can be meaningful if there is a genuine approach in re-negotiating issues of identity and beliefs. Channick (2005) raises this point arguing that there is a difference in the way governments and artists conduct cultural diplomacy. “Artists engage in cross-cultural exchange not to proselytize about their own values, but rather to understand different cultural traditions, to find new sources of imaginative inspiration, to discover other methods and ways of working and to exchange ideas with people whose worldviews differ from their own. They want to be influenced rather than to influence” (Channick 2005, 4). With these words the author outlines the difference between cultural diplomacy, a governmental strategy, and cultural relations which “grow naturally and organically, without government intervention” (Arndt 2005, 18). Nevertheless, the artists that are commissioned by the government to launch workshops and stage performances may need to negotiate their agenda to meet the government’s goals. As Banks (2011, 109) shares in her introduction “the symbiotic relationship between art and politics is especially vivid in the work of cultural diplomacy.” Carter (2015) mentions that the academia is often over-criticizing governmental agendas on cultural policy and cultural diplomacy denouncing their interest-driven focus that

mutilates artistic freedom. However, Nisbett's study (2013) concluded that cultural practitioners do not necessarily view instrumentalism as completely damaging to their work. Interviews revealed that gallery directors, curators and artists accepted that their work could be used as tool for cultural diplomacy as long as policy makers did not demand that artistic creation to be totally aligned with the state cultural policy.

American cultural diplomacy during the Cold War offers a view in how culture can be instrumentalised. Lewis (1999) in his commentary addresses the problem that the United States no longer show a strong interest in funding cultural diplomacy programmes which put at their core the arts. Hollywood and mass media are now shaping America's cultural landscape and define its image. The disbandment of the USIA² in 1999, and even prior to that, the termination of the State Cultural Presentations Program in 1997, signalled the end of the American cultural diplomacy as we knew it in the Cold War. Canning (2011) offers an example of the much admired Cold War American diplomacy presenting the case of the US production of Hamlet in Denmark in 1949, which was sponsored by the US Department of State. The innovation of this project lied into its producers who did not work in Broadway but were representing a nonprofit regional theater movement thus were seen as unconventional and avant-garde. The selection of this theatre company meant that the American government did not resort to safe choices, but was ready to experiment putting aside those tactics that would evidently lead in the achievement of foreign cultural policy goals. US cultural diplomacy was largely successful because the funded programmes and projects were designed to work in the subconscious. As Cull (2007, 12) insightfully notes "cultural diplomacy's credibility springs from this distance and its effectiveness declines the nearer it comes to the official foreign policy apparatus."

Apart from the theoretical pieces, a large part of the literature is dedicated to analyzing the setup and influence of specific workshops and performances in different contexts. McFarren (2011) and Tuan (2011) both examine specific cases; McFarren studies a workshop in Rwanda launched by a cultural envoy as part of a short residence there, while Tuan examines the staging of a performance coproduced by China and Taiwan in an attempt to attract Chinese tourists to Taiwan and strengthen ties. Similarly, Siyuan (2013) analyses China's diplomatic efforts when in 1958 the Chinese state chose to revise a play to send it on a tour in Europe greatly challenging artistic freedom. Lanjun

2 United States Information Agency.

(2016) also refers to the Chinese case commenting that the adaptation and export of many plays and operas during the 1950s and early 1960s aimed to normalise affairs with countries beyond the Iron Curtain. In the western context, Kasten's article (2014) explores Spain's cultural efforts to push the idea of 'hispanidad' in Latin America during General Franco's period. The author discusses the strategic selection of a theatre company that toured South America performing plays that conveyed this idea. On the other hand, Standing (2011) argues for a different type of diplomacy, one that is not travelling abroad but is happening within the borders of a country. She shares her experience as a facilitator hosting theatre classes in New York that draw students from multicultural backgrounds.

In this article, I will concentrate on the biographies of two great theatre festivals in Greece and their managerial models arguing that leadership directly affects the public and foreign relations of a cultural institution. The theatre festivals that I am going to look into this brief analysis are the Athens-Epidaurus theatre festival, the most renowned theatre festival within Greece, and the International Meetings on Ancient Drama, a series of meetings organised by the European Cultural Centre of Delphi. Despite having the form of a festival with multiple performances and workshops, the International Meetings were never marketed as such by the coordinating team, an interesting aspect on its own. Both events largely present productions of ancient drama in iconic open-air venues, but they use once more the 'safe' route to success: Greece's classical past. To gather data, the author used material from 10 semi-structured interviews with policy makers from the Ministry of Culture and Sports and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, originally conducted with the aim to map Greek foreign cultural policy. Thematic analysis was used to process the transcriptions. Also, desk research largely informed this study with the main body of information coming from press publications and governmental websites.

Praxis I: the European Cultural Centre of Delphi

The Greeks are accustomed to watching theatre performances during the summer season when it is possible to attend a performance in an open-air venue. Theatre is a popular attraction in the country thanks to the emblematic Melina Merkouri, actress and Minister of Culture in the 1980s and early 1990s. She established the District Council Theatres to promote theatre practice and education in the region outbalancing the opportunities citizens had

in the cities for entertainment (Kaggelari 2004). Knowledge of the classical plays comes from the subject of Ancient Greek in secondary education nevertheless theatre education in Greece is largely experiential and sensorial and tied to the theatrical space. The open-air theatre which follows the same architectural form with its ancient prototype is the space in which the Greeks act an ancient tradition which for centuries had ceased.

For the first time since ancient times, a drama performance was brought to life in its original 'milieu' in 1927 in Delphi, an idea of the acclaimed Greek poet Angelos Sikelianos. The concept was to bring alive ancient Greek classical plays in their original venues drawing to Delphi international figures from the Arts, Letters and Sciences to promote peace building and humanitarianism just like in ancient times when the Amphictiony³ met there. The place was pivotal in the way Sikelianos envisioned the so-called Delphic festival where sports games, musical concerts and arts exhibitions would complete the theatre performances. The Delphic festival was only held twice, in 1927 and in 1930, due to its high expenses. Its organisers did not accept the festival to be widely advertised, refused state subsidies and declined the offer of sponsorships from the private sector making it a rather personal affair (Tiverios 2006). The disdain towards practices that aimed at the commercial use of the festival led to the festival not being marketed to the rising touristic flows which could have ensured its longevity. Despite the absence of promotional activities, the festival attracted a lot of media attention and notable personalities of the time attended the events according to the will of its initiator, however the festivities never became a popular event among the common people. Cultural diplomacy in this sense and at this phase largely excluded civil society and idealism was almost synonymous to elitism.

The Delphic festivals drew the attention of policy makers who wished to officially support the events, however, World War II stalled all plans. After the war, Sikelianos, who had refused any state involvement, died and in 1966 the establishment of the European Cultural Centre of Delphi followed upon recommendation of the Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis. His proposal to the European Council to establish an 'International Intellectual Cooperation Centre' at Delphi, was aiming to put Greece at the cultural forefront. According to the Centre's founding law, its aim is "to serve international cultural interests and develop common cultural principles that will

3 The Amphictiony was the delegation of the Greek leagues which were associated to sanctuaries. Although the purpose of the Amphictiony was mainly religious, political interests were often expressed.

unite the peoples of Europe through the publication of studies on European culture, the organisation of cultural meetings and other artistic activities...” (Περίδρυσσεως Ευρωπαϊκού Πολιτιστικού Κέντρου Δελφών 1977, 1819). Unfortunately, another major political event held back plans; a year later, in 1967, the military junta took over the power in Greece. After these events, the European Cultural Centre of Delphi was barely operating. It was in the 1980s that the ECCD really took off. The International Meetings on Ancient Drama were first held in 1985 when the Centre organized a symposium, theatre performances, workshops, exhibitions, screenings, under the general theme ‘Ancient Greek Drama in Modern Reality’. Twenty performances took place in a number of venues including the ancient theatre of Delphi, the Herod Atticus Theatre under the Acropolis in Athens and the Lykavitos Theatre also in Athens. The productions were not only hosted in ancient venues, but made use of contemporary spaces with the most impressive one being the ‘Tenta’ Theatre, a prefab theatre in central Athens.

The Meetings were truly international and over the years many plays were presented from various artists around the globe. From the first Meetings a great number of foreign artists participated in the call. From the Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki who presented the Trojan Women, to the Myth of Oedipus by the American theatre director Ellen Stewart starring Min Tanaka, the Persians by the German director Hans-Günther Heyme, to Antigone by Eskimo Inuit of Alaska and Oedipus Rex directed by the Macedonian Rahim Burhan. The next Meetings were equally successful drawing the attention of numerous renowned artists and intellectuals from China to Ethiopia, the United Kingdom, France, Japan and the United States. Next to the performances, workshops and lectures took place focusing on the aesthetics, the form, the style and pedagogy of the classical drama. Anthropologists, historians, performers, directors would gather to discuss and exchange ideas fostering understanding and intercultural dialogue through the study of the ancient texts. The performances and all the events were in English allowing the participants to fully submerge into this multicultural and highly educational experience. Over time and as Greece was prospering and political optimism was the prevalent discourse, the European Cultural Centre of Delphi enriched its annual programme organising International Meetings on Fine Arts, Music, Photography and initiated a series of symposia and conferences exploring different subjects. The decision of the ECCD in naming the events ‘International Meetings’ instead of ‘International Festival’ was quite smart as the series of events lacked punctuality. From 1985 on, the events would be organised for 5 consecutive years, however, from 1989 onwards the Interna-

tional Meetings would be organised randomly. In 2009, the XIV International Meeting on Ancient Drama were the last to run since the economic crisis greatly challenged the operation of the ECCD (European Cultural Centre of Delphi 2016).

The Centre decided instead to focus in hosting symposia, conferences and exhibitions, however, it maintained the 'Meeting of Young Artists' a series of activities inaugurated in 2007. The 'International Meetings on Ancient Drama' were "by far the most costly activity that the ECCD ran" as one interviewee admitted. The re-orientation of its activities changed profoundly the character of the ECCD which focused in gaining income from leasing its conference spaces and guest rooms. A very important aspect which partly explains this shift is that the Directors of the ECCD are usually academics and not artists hence conferences and symposia were preferable. The Board composition of the Centre is also very interesting. Out of the twelve members, including the President and the Director, four are academics, one member is the representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, another one acts as a representative of the Ministry of Culture and Sports and two members are representatives sent by the Council of Europe. Interestingly, another two members are international figures who hold positions in cultural institutions worldwide⁴ and another two members are regular members with no external affiliations (Περίδρυσως Ευρωπαϊκού Πολιτιστικού Κέντρου Δελφών, 1977). Despite the rich synthesis of the Executive Board, an interview with a former Director of the ECCD revealed that he did not believe that the Centre was exercising cultural diplomacy. To his mind, the Centre was not involved in activities abroad therefore to argue that the ECCD was involved in the foreign cultural policy of the state was not valid. This traditional definition of diplomacy limited the Director's perspective who believed that a necessary prerequisite to exercise cultural diplomacy is to maintain activities abroad.

Praxis II: the Athens-Epidaurus festival

The theatre of Epidaurus, well preserved and with perfect acoustics, is the flagship of all surviving ancient theatres in Greece today making the Athens-Epidaurus festival the most prominent theatre event in Greece. It was in the summer of 1938 that the first play was put on in the modern history of the theatre of Epidaurus, however, the imminent war put a halt to the initiative. The next performance would come in 1954 in an effort by the Greek National

4 In the present Board the institutions are the UNESCO and the Croatian Ministry of Culture.

Tourism Organisation to boost regional heritage tourism through the revival of ancient theatre venues. A year later, in 1955, the Athens festival was established with the encouragement of the Prime Minister Ioannis Papagos who was seeking to secure his re-election in the upcoming elections. Since its establishment, the festival included a range of spectacles from theatre performances to dance shows, music concerts and arts exhibitions (Loverdou 2004). It was largely conceived as Greece's attempt to put the country back into the map by presenting its artistic excellence. Despite its inspired vision, the core of the festival revolved around performances of ancient drama directed by Greek directors who chose Greek theatre companies. The 'made in Greece' signature was so much celebrated that the Festival was initially called 'The Hellenic Festival' for quite some time before taking its current name 'Athens-Epidaurus Festival'. The present title is indicative of the locations of the venues that are primarily in use. The year 1982 marks a special one, a shift in mentality as one would observe: it is the first time when a non-Greek director with a foreign cast is allowed to present a performance of Greek drama in the Hellenic festival⁵. The move caused quite a stir in the circles of the conservative Greek critics. Ioannidou (2011, 385-386) shares a passage from an acclaimed critic who argues that the Greeks "are capable of articulating (their) own heritage better than anyone", so "performing in Epidaurus, in the critic's view, presupposes a biological relationship with the place and the language". This alone said is a great obstacle to opening a dialogue with other cultures and foster understanding. Until 2005, the festival made use of four venues to host its performances, all of them open-air theatres with three of them being ancient venues and only one being a modern venue.

Today the Athens-Epidaurus festival is becoming more outward-looking and is blooming using many more locations in Athens to launch exhibitions, host concerts and performances. However, the festival was recently marked by great controversies which shook the country's cultural life. In early 2016, a new artistic director was appointed by the Minister of Culture after consultation with the Prime Minister to run the Athens-Epidaurus Festival for the next 4 years. Yan Fabre, the renowned Belgian artist, was put in charge in an effort to bring international attention to the Festival. That was the first time a non-Greek was put as head of such an important institution. This political decision probably followed the general surge in Europe the past years where non-ethnics are appointed in prominent positions – especially in the museum sector – in order to bring a global outlook. In 2015, it was announced

5 The director was Peter Hall who presented 'The Oresteia' by Aeschylus with an all-male cast.

that 7 new foreign directors would be positioned in some of Italy's major institutions and some months later the British Museum announced that a German would take on after Sir Neil MacGregor stepped down. At this phase the realist approach dominates the exercise of cultural diplomacy with directors being pushed to put their maximum effort and skill in the public relations of the institutions they run.

In the Greek case, the endeavour to challenge the *status quo* did not last long. After almost 3 months from his appointment and numerous unfavourable publications in the press, Jan Fabre resigned. What went wrong? Fabre replaced Giorgos Loukos, who held the position of artistic director from 2005 until his dismissal in December 2015 amid accusations for mismanagement which – it is said – resulted in overcharging the festival's budget. Loukos refused to resign from his post, turned down the allegations as fake and argued that was no lawsuit pending against him. He claimed that, in fact, he purged the festival from previous debts and the case was an attempt to tarnish his image. He was released from his duties after ministerial order and a month later Fabre took on (Anesti 2015). On March 28th 2016, Jan Fabre and his team announced the programme of the Athens-Epidaurus Festival in a packed press conference room. Greek directors and their casts were not included in the first year of the programmes Fabre insisted that he took on the project very late and his planning was based on his good connections back in Belgium, so there was not time to include Greek artists. Therefore, the first year of his presidency was entirely dedicated to Belgium. He went on to rename the festival to 'International Festival of Athens-Epidaurus' to reflect its global outlook, nevertheless, as the Greek press commented after the end of the press conference, the festival was now a celebration of Fabre himself. He announced that he would curate exhibitions, host talks about his work and would also stage his own performances in collaboration with well-known Belgian artists (Haliotis 2016). For the Greeks that was hubris. Another statement which caused hysteria was that he considered the festival an installation so it was more appropriate that he should be the curator than its managing director. Until Fabre, the role of the artistic and the managing director coincided and the same person responsible for the creative part was also the one signing contracts and regulating financial affairs.

The press kit (Athens and Epidaurus Festival 2016) interestingly mentions that the curatorship would be divided among his team in five themes: literature and ideas, young theatre and dance artists, visual art, performance art, film. For the first time, the scope of the festival was explicitly acknowledged

and other areas of artistic creation were recognised as equals next to theatre. All the areas would be managed by foreigners apart from visual art. Although inspiring and ambitious in its conception, the programme lacked Greek character so much that it would not be tolerated. The media, the opposing political parties and a large group of Greek artists who were not included in the programme – hence left without job amidst the crisis – managed to create such pressure to the team and the Minister himself that Fabre was forced to resign because of the outcry. In a public letter he stated: “I accepted the invitation by the Greek minister of culture on the condition that I could do my artistic choices under a regime of freedom. This is not possible any more in Greece. I do not want to work in a hostile artistic environment to which I came with open mind and open heart.” (Stefanou 2016).

Although the new strategy selected by the Minister of Culture to choose an international figure for the management of the festival was in the right direction, the implementation of the strategy was not well thought out. There was no plan to engage with the stakeholders in the selection of the new artistic director. Jan Fabre has been a personal choice of the Minister of Culture who dismissed the former well-established director in a scandal that was raging for months. The Ministry did not launch an international call for applications to select the director out of a pool of candidates like in the case of the Italian Ministry of Culture which issued an international call for candidates. In the case of the British Museum, earlier mentioned, the decision for the appointment came by the Board of Trustees whose members are elected by a range of political actors ensuring its polyvocality (The British Museum trustees 2017). In the Greek case, the atmosphere was negative as the selection process was not seen as transparent. Shutting out from the process stakeholders like the trade unions did not prove wise and soon an open letter of complaint made its way to the press. Above all, Fabre’s own vision created sensation when he presented the festival programme and in one day he sidelined Greek productions probably ignoring the fact that the Festival provided opportunities for work and exposure to young Greek professionals in the industry.

Beyond the harsh reality of the sector and the debt crisis which has shrunk the job market, the narrative that was chosen by the new artistic director was not one that appealed to the social concerns of the Greeks. The need to modernise Greece from public administration to the cultural scene and to open up as a society has been superimposed to the Greeks the past years. While it is true that the Greeks as artists and audience are largely self-absorbed and the need to broaden their perspective is real, the choice of an artist with no managerial

experience or concern to learn the subject proved wrong. The new programme was certainly not focused on establishing international connections. In terms of International Relations, it seems that Fabre invested in Greece's bilateral relations with Belgium without even realising it. However, he was brought to this position to work multilaterally. No wonder that the Greek stakeholders felt insulted from this change of focus which was only by name truly universal.

The case of Fabre resembles the case of Benjamin Millepied who was appointed dance director at the National Opera in Paris in 2015. Half-American half-French, famous in the U.S. for his work as choreographer in the Oscar-winning film 'Black Swan' – and Natalie Portman's husband – he was thought to bring international attention to the French Opera's productions but, more importantly, attract sponsors. After a year in the post Millepied unexpectedly resigned citing personal reasons. Many pointed towards the unfriendly atmosphere in his work environment and the harsh criticism of the press. Paris Opera director Stephane Lissner paid tribute to Millepied saying: "He brought a lot to the ballet. Being the ballet director and a much sought-after choreographer was causing him trouble..." (Reuters 2016).

The confusion between the role of the artist and the role of the manager is certainly an anguish especially when the artist remains active, however, the most controversial aspect in any director's work is the relation between Culture and Politics. As noted formerly, the establishment of the Athens-Epidaurus festival in 1955 was encouraged by the Prime Minister and his shadow Minister at the time to secure the result of the upcoming elections. However, the elections were lost and a new Prime Minister took on who immediately proposed to the Council of Europe the establishment of the European Cultural Centre of Delphi which we analysed earlier. The antagonism between these subsequent Prime Ministers has bequeathed the Greek people with two remarkable institutions. Culture is one of the many tools inspirational leaders use to safeguard their interests in terms of foreign and domestic affairs.

Praxis III: Critical reflections from the interviews

The link between tourism and theatre festivals is absent in Greece's cultural and tourism policy. During an interview with a high profile policy maker in the Directorate for Contemporary Culture of the Ministry of Culture, I asked whether it would be possible to put on ancient Greek drama performances in English or with surtitles for tourists. The policy-maker responded: "In cul-

ture wherever language comes in, we have to be extremely careful". The idea was certainly not new to him. He pointed out that putting surtitles to engage with foreign groups is certainly difficult although technology has proved that the possibilities are endless. A major problem he recognised immediately is the objections of archaeologists in letting hoards of tourists flood in the ancient theatres, a practice that would definitely put much strain on the ancient structures. Undoubtedly, the tourists would invest a great deal of money if they wished to attend a performance in the place where theatre was born and in the space the plays were originally written to be enjoyed. Living the myth and experiencing the authentic have been pivotal ideas in Greece's marketing strategy in tourism, nonetheless, the Ministry of Culture is resisting the marketisation of Culture overall.

Another question that was posed to the same policymaker was whether Greece could and should change its promotional narrative. Classical Greece has dominated the social imaginary of the Greek people since the Greek Revolution in 1821 after the Romantic movement in Europe first idealised classical antiquity and the Greco-Roman civilisation. As a policymaker in the Directorate for Contemporary Culture I expected that the interviewee would advocate to push forward a new narrative in which the contemporary culture would now be the priority. Instead he endorsed the classical narrative; in his words: "If we want to have (an effective) foreign cultural policy or cultural diplomacy we should primarily sell what is granted. And then we can proceed with the contemporary culture. We need to set a long-term agenda." Swiftly the interview became even more interesting with the participant admitting that "there is a detachment from classical antiquity. Should we watch this happen or are we going to incorporate this into our strategy? And what about the contemporary culture, what are you going to sell from contemporary culture? Because generally the contemporary culture is a renegotiation of the Greek identity", he acknowledged.

It seems that Greek policymakers are not ready to accept a paradigm shift and they point out to society arguing that the people are not ready for a shift. An interviewee from the Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs recognised that civil society now takes a central role in cultural diplomacy. This is now an international trend since the advent of Web 2.0 has made the diplomacy game more convoluted with citizens taking on the role of the agent. In the Greek case, many citizens have been mobilised to protect the country's ancient theatres not only by donating money for their preservation but also by giving tours and sharing ideas about best practices for the integra-

tion of ancient theatres in the daily life of the communities. 'Diazoma' has grown mainly thanks to the Internet. The initiative was introduced by the former Minister of Culture Stavros Benos who formalised the idea in 2008 with the establishment of the association 'Diazoma.' The originality of this venture lies in the thoughtful inclusion of all the stakeholders that could influence the project: archaeologists and conservators, artists and intellectuals and, last, local municipalities and communities. Tourism and sustainability are the main goals of the movement (Diazoma 2016). The introduction of a statutory framework for donations and sponsorships in 2007 by the Ministry of Culture has allowed the association's coordinators to set up a number of sponsorship contracts not only with private and public partners but also with individual citizens (Πολιτιστική Χορηγία 2007). The model of 'Diazoma' is exemplary for Greek standards and demonstrates how important stakeholder engagement and management is especially in the cultural sector.

Conclusion

Cultural diplomacy through theatre festivals is not yet a priority for the Greek state and the different theatre institutions are called to devise their own agendas. Cultural managers and artistic directors are now called to focus more on Public and International Relations and that is why we are witnessing a new trend forming in Europe with managers being often chosen from an international pool of candidates. Greece lacks an explicit foreign cultural policy plan and the different state organizations that are responsible for the country's international cultural profile such as the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs do not always concede. Culture and Politics enjoy a volatile relationship in which culture can be either benefited or damned. Theatre festivals in Greece largely present productions of ancient Greek drama in open-air venues during summertime reviving an ancient tradition, however, the link with tourism seems to be missing. The language of the performances is a problem to attract foreign audiences as the performances are presented in Greek. The use of surtitles in some performances is not yet an issue of debate for the responsible authorities since they largely focus in solving day-to-day problems within their organizations. Beside the commercial aspect, the production of performances in English could assist in pushing forward a new narrative for Greece in foreign and domestic audiences alike. The festivals use the safe route to success by putting on classical plays. A new model for foreign cultural policy could mobilize the civil society and the private sector in a synergy with the state. The effective collaboration between the state, the

citizens and private theatre businesses has the potential to elevate theatre diplomacy in a core dimension of cultural diplomacy.

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Appendix – List of Interview Subjects

Subject	Title/Department
1	Cultural Division, Embassy of Greece in London
2	Former President of the European Cultural Centre of Delphi
3	General Directorate of Contemporary Culture, Ministry of Culture and Sports
4	E1 Directorate for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
5	Department for International Relations, Hellenic Foundation for Culture
6	Marketing and Communications Department, Hellenic Foundation for Culture
7	Department for Programming, Hellenic Foundation for Culture
8	Former President of the Hellenic Foundation for Culture worldwide
9	Nation branding consultant, Member of the Image & Identity Department of the Organizing Committee for the Athens 2004 Olympic Games
10	Directorate for Market Research and Advertising, Greek National Tourism Organisation