



WORK WITH MYTHS REPORT



Co-funded by
the European Union



Report on the best mythology-oriented entrepreneurial practices in Italy

Author: Marco Coico

Le Vie dei Tesori @ *Work With Myths* working group: Laura Anello, Marcello Barbaro, Rosario Genchi, Marco Coico

Table of content

Summary	2
Introduction	2
1. What is MOCE: Mythology-Oriented Cultural Entrepreneurship	3
1.1 Key components of MOCE:	3
1.2 Examples of MOCE in practice:	4
1.3 Benefits of MOCE:	4
2. Le Vie dei Tesori: a leading example of mythology-oriented cultural (non-profit) entrepreneurship in Italy	6
2.1 Introduction to Le Vie dei Tesori	6
2.2 The mythological and cultural approach	7
2.3 Innovative entrepreneurial practices	8
2.3.1 Partnership model	8
2.3.2 Mythological storytelling and education	8
2.3.3 Digital innovation	9
2.3.4 Community engagement and Festivals	9
2.4 Why Le Vie dei Tesori is one of the most virtuous projects in Italy	10
2.5 Conclusion on Le Vie dei Tesori's MOCE model	11
3. Some cases of Mythology-Oriented Cultural Entrepreneurship	12
3.1 Mythology as a livable experience: I Viaggi di Adriano	12
3.2 Teatro Greco di Siracusa (Greek Theater of Syracuse)	12
3.3 Villa Adriana (Hadrian's Villa)	14
3.4 Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (National Archaeological Museum of Naples)	15
3.5 Fashion: Versace and the Medusa logo	16
3.6 Festa Etrusca	16
3.7 Patrimonio di Storie	17
3.8 Hades Videogame	18
3.9 Circo Maximo Experience	18
3.10 Vini Donnafugata	19
3.11 Elenoiret	20
3.12 Conclusion on MOCE cases	21
4. Final recommendations	22
5. The EU funded project "WORK WITH MYTHS"	22

Summary

This report provides an in-depth exploration of successful mythology-oriented entrepreneurial practices in Italy, demonstrating how ancient myths are being revitalized to drive innovation and economic growth in the modern era. Italy's rich cultural history, interwoven with Greco-Roman myths and regional legends, has inspired a broad range of entrepreneurial ventures across industries such as tourism, food and beverage, fashion, arts and crafts, and digital media. The report examines several real-world examples where Italian entrepreneurs have skillfully incorporated mythology into their business strategies, creating culturally resonant products and services that connect with both local and global audiences.

As part of the **WorkWithMyths** project, supported by Erasmus+, this report aligns with the broader goal of promoting entrepreneurship, especially among younger generations, by tapping into mythology and cultural heritage. It highlights the role of myths in fostering economic innovation while simultaneously preserving Italy's storied past. By blending traditional narratives with contemporary business practices, these ventures are contributing to the sustainable development of local economies, promoting tourism, and enhancing Italy's global cultural presence.

Introduction

Mythology is an integral part of Italy's identity, influencing its history, art, architecture and literature for millennia. From the legends of Rome's founding by Romulus and Remus to the gods of the Greco-Roman pantheon, Italian culture is suffused with mythological narratives. These stories are not only historical relics but also valuable cultural assets that continue to inspire modern entrepreneurs across various sectors. By drawing on these myths, businesses are able to create products and services that are not only culturally significant but also commercially successful.

This report explores the ways in which Italian entrepreneurs are leveraging mythology to drive innovation, attract tourists, create unique products, and preserve cultural heritage. Through a series of case studies, we examine how mythology-oriented businesses in Italy are thriving by incorporating ancient narratives into tourism experiences, artisanal crafts, food and beverage products, fashion and digital media. These ventures not only preserve Italy's mythological legacy but also offer economic opportunities, particularly in the creative industries and cultural tourism.

The **WorkWithMyths** project, which aims to promote entrepreneurship through the lens of mythology, provides a framework for understanding how these ancient stories can be reinterpreted for the modern world. By linking mythology with entrepreneurial initiatives, the project empowers young people to engage with their cultural heritage while developing skills that can be applied to business creation.

1. What is MOCE: Mythology-Oriented Cultural Entrepreneurship

Mythology-Oriented Cultural Entrepreneurship (MOCE) is a unique approach to business and creative ventures that seeks to leverage the rich tapestry of myths, legends, and cultural narratives within a particular region or tradition. In this context, mythology becomes not only a source of inspiration but also a strategic asset for developing products, services and experiences that are deeply rooted in cultural heritage. MOCE combines the power of ancient stories with modern entrepreneurial practices, resulting in innovative ventures that celebrate cultural identity while engaging contemporary audiences.

At its core, MOCE is about taking the enduring elements of mythology – such as gods, heroes, monsters, and symbolic narratives – and using them as a foundation for new business models, particularly in the fields of arts, tourism, education, fashion, media, and technology. It aims to create products and services that are culturally authentic, creatively engaging, and economically viable. Entrepreneurs who adopt MOCE not only contribute to the preservation and revitalization of their cultural heritage but also tap into the universal appeal of mythological themes, which continue to resonate with people across different cultures and generations.

1.1 Key components of MOCE:

1. **Cultural heritage as a strategic resource:** MOCE begins with the recognition that mythology is a valuable and often underutilized cultural asset. Entrepreneurs draw from the deep well of stories, symbols, and characters that have shaped their local culture, incorporating these elements into their business ventures. By doing so, they create products and services that are not only commercially successful but also contribute to the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage.
2. **Creative storytelling and branding:** Storytelling lies at the heart of MOCE. Mythology provides a rich narrative framework that can be used to craft compelling stories, build brand identities, and engage customers on a deeper emotional level. Whether it's through product names, logos, visual design, or marketing campaigns, entrepreneurs use mythology to create a strong brand presence that resonates with both local and global audiences.
3. **Innovation through tradition:** MOCE encourages innovation by blending ancient traditions with modern trends. Entrepreneurs find ways to reinterpret or reimagine mythology for today's market, using it to inspire new products, experiences and services that are both familiar and fresh. This could mean designing fashion lines that incorporate mythological motifs, developing apps or video games based on ancient stories, or creating immersive tourist experiences that allow visitors to step into the world of myths.
4. **Cultural tourism and experiences:** One of the most prominent applications of MOCE is in the tourism industry. Mythology-oriented cultural entrepreneurs often design tours, events, or experiences that bring myths to life for visitors. For example, guided tours of ancient sites, reenactments of legendary events, or immersive performances that explore mythological themes can offer tourists a deeper connection to the cultural history of a place. These experiences often go beyond sightseeing to provide meaningful engagement with local traditions and stories.

5. **Community engagement and education:** MOCE also focuses on education and community involvement. By incorporating mythology into educational programs, workshops or events, entrepreneurs help foster a sense of pride and belonging among local communities. This can involve everything from children's storytelling events based on local myths to adult workshops on mythology-inspired entrepreneurship. Education not only helps to preserve cultural knowledge but also empowers communities to participate actively in the revitalization of their heritage.
6. **Economic empowerment and sustainability:** MOCE is about creating sustainable businesses that can have a positive impact on local economies. By harnessing cultural heritage, entrepreneurs can develop niche markets that attract tourists, collectors or enthusiasts of mythology from around the world. These ventures often promote local artisanship, craftsmanship, and traditional practices, providing economic opportunities while ensuring the continuity of cultural traditions.
7. **Global appeal through universal themes:** While MOCE is deeply rooted in local culture, it often has broad global appeal because mythology deals with universal themes: love, heroism, conflict, transformation, and the relationship between humans and the divine. Entrepreneurs who adopt this model can tap into this universal resonance, making their products and services attractive to a wide audience. Mythological themes cross borders, allowing for cultural exchange and dialogue while maintaining a strong sense of authenticity and place.

1.2 Examples of MOCE in practice:

- **Mythology-inspired fashion:** Designers may create clothing lines that incorporate symbols, patterns, and figures from ancient mythology. These items become more than just fashion statements: they are cultural artifacts that tell a story, allowing customers to wear a piece of history while engaging with their heritage.
- **Cultural tourism:** Entrepreneurs in the tourism industry may offer guided tours that explore historical sites associated with myths, such as temples, caves or landscapes mentioned in ancient stories. These tours often include reenactments, interactive storytelling, or myth-themed events that allow visitors to experience the culture firsthand.
- **Creative arts and entertainment:** Artists, filmmakers, and game developers can create works that are inspired by mythology, bringing ancient stories to modern platforms. For example, video games based on mythological quests or films that adapt ancient tales for contemporary audiences are prime examples of how MOCE can flourish in the creative industries.
- **Myth-themed products:** Entrepreneurs may develop product lines, such as handcrafted jewelry, home decor or artisanal food items, that are inspired by mythological symbols or characters. These products can be marketed as unique, culturally significant items that connect buyers with the mythological heritage of a specific region.

1.3 Benefits of MOCE:

1. **Cultural preservation:** By creating businesses that are based on mythology, entrepreneurs help preserve important cultural narratives and ensure they remain relevant in today's world.

2. **Economic development:** MOCE can stimulate local economies, particularly in regions that have rich cultural histories but limited economic opportunities. It creates jobs, attracts tourists, and promotes local craftsmanship and tradition.
3. **Community empowerment:** MOCE often involves local communities in the creation and promotion of mythology-based products and services, fostering a sense of pride and ownership over cultural heritage.
4. **Educational impact:** Through storytelling, workshops, and immersive experiences, MOCE fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of mythology, especially among younger generations.
5. **Sustainability:** Many MOCE ventures are committed to sustainable practices, whether through supporting local artisans, using eco-friendly materials, or promoting responsible tourism that respects cultural sites.

In summary, **Mythology-Oriented Cultural Entrepreneurship (MOCE)** is a powerful model for bridging the gap between cultural heritage and modern business. It harnesses the timeless power of mythology to create innovative ventures that honor the past while engaging the present, offering new ways for people to connect with their cultural identity and for entrepreneurs to thrive in a global marketplace.

2. Le Vie dei Tesori: a leading example of mythology-oriented cultural (non-profit) entrepreneurship in Italy

2.1 Introduction to Le Vie dei Tesori

Among the most virtuous and impactful projects in Italy that marry mythology with entrepreneurship is **Le Vie dei Tesori**, a unique cultural initiative based in Sicily. Established as a Foundation, Le Vie dei Tesori promotes the discovery and rediscovery of Sicily's cultural and mythological heritage by turning the island into an open-air museum. Through a variety of innovative activities, the Foundation successfully brings together tourism, education, mythology and local entrepreneurship, creating a model of cultural revitalization that has inspired many other regions in Italy.



The name "Le Vie dei Tesori" translates to "The Paths of Treasures", which fittingly captures the essence of the project. It is designed to unveil the hidden treasures of Sicily, including historical landmarks, lesser-known monuments, sacred sites and, significantly, places connected to local myths and legends. What makes Le Vie dei Tesori particularly noteworthy is its ability to integrate Sicily's rich mythological past into a wide range of cultural activities, from guided tours to festivals and educational programs, all while promoting sustainable tourism and supporting local communities.

2.2 The mythological and cultural approach

Le Vie dei Tesori is fundamentally centered around the promotion and preservation of Sicily's heritage, which is an intrinsic part of the island's identity. Sicily is a land steeped in ancient Greek, Roman and local myths, ranging from the legends of Demeter and Persephone in the hills of Enna to the fearsome Cyclops Polyphemus of Mount Etna. Recognizing this, Le Vie dei Tesori designs experiences that allow visitors to delve deeply into these stories, creating a connection between the mythological past and the present-day cultural landscape.



One of the unique strengths of Le Vie dei Tesori is its ability to weave mythological narratives into its tourist offerings. Whether it's a journey through the myth of Persephone in Enna, where visitors trace her path from the underworld to the earth's surface, or a storytelling event at the ancient temple ruins of western Sicily, where gods like Zeus and Hera were worshipped, Le Vie dei Tesori enriches each visitor's experience by layering historical and mythological context onto physical exploration. This approach not only appeals to tourists but also fosters a deeper appreciation for Sicily's heritage among locals, encouraging a sense of pride in their cultural and mythological roots.



The project capitalizes on this region's unique geographical and historical assets, such as Ferdinandea Island: Sicily's hidden little island, also called the Mediterranean Neverland. It's an extinct volcanic island located in the Sicilian Channel, about ten meters below sea level. Its existence has sparked many writers' curiosity, from Luigi Pirandello to Andrea Camilleri. By designing activities that highlight the mythological importance of these sites, Le Vie dei Tesori creates

experiences that are immersive, educational, and emotionally resonant. These stories are not presented as distant legends but as living narratives that have shaped the land and continue to influence contemporary Sicilian identity.

2.3 Innovative entrepreneurial practices

Le Vie dei Tesori stands out as a model of effective cultural non-profit entrepreneurship for several reasons, including its innovative use of partnerships, storytelling, digital technology and community engagement.

2.3.1 Partnership model

One of the foundation's most innovative practices is its use of **partnerships** to promote mythology-oriented cultural entrepreneurship. Le Vie dei Tesori works closely with local governments, businesses, educational institutions and cultural organizations to offer a diverse array of experiences. This network of partnerships not only enriches the content of the tours and events but also helps promote local entrepreneurship. Small businesses, such as artisanal shops, cafes, restaurants, and boutique hotels, benefit from the increased tourism brought by Le Vie dei Tesori's activities.



By integrating these businesses into its offerings, the foundation supports the local economy while enhancing the visitor experience. For example, after a mythology-themed tour, visitors might dine at a local restaurant serving dishes inspired by ancient recipes or shop for handcrafted goods that reflect the island's mythological motifs. This creates a symbiotic relationship between cultural tourism and local entrepreneurship, ensuring that the benefits of the project are shared throughout the community.



2.3.2 Mythological storytelling and education

Le Vie dei Tesori places a strong emphasis on **storytelling** as a central component of its success. Mythological storytelling is woven into guided tours, workshops and events, providing visitors with engaging narratives that enrich their understanding of the locations they are exploring. For instance, tours of ancient temples or sacred groves often include myth reenactments, where professional actors and local performers bring to life the stories of gods, heroes and legendary figures from Sicilian mythology.

In addition to storytelling, the foundation places a high priority on **education**, offering workshops and seminars that delve into Sicily's mythological heritage. These educational

programs are aimed not only at tourists but also at local residents, particularly young people. By educating the younger generation about their cultural and mythological heritage, Le Vie dei Tesori ensures that these ancient stories are preserved and passed on, while simultaneously fostering an entrepreneurial and good-will mindset among the participants.

2.3.3 Digital innovation

Le Vie dei Tesori has also embraced **digital technology** to enhance the accessibility and appeal of its offerings. The foundation has developed a digital platform that allows users to explore the Foundation's activities virtually. Through this platform, users can access digital guides, multimedia galleries and interactive maps that bring mythology to life.



This use of digital innovation has expanded the reach of Le Vie dei Tesori beyond the confines of Sicily, attracting international audiences who may not be able to learn about the island in person. Additionally, the platform includes a mobile app that tourists can use during their travels to access real-time information about sites and events, further enriching their on-site experiences.

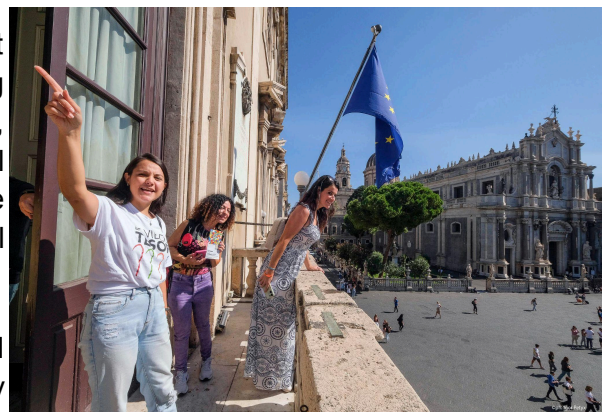
2.3.4 Community engagement and Festivals



A key aspect of Le Vie dei Tesori's success is its **community engagement**. The foundation actively involves local communities in its programming, encouraging residents to participate in the preservation and promotion of their mythological heritage. This is most evident in the organization's annual **Le Vie dei Tesori Festival**, which takes place over several weekends each year across multiple cities and towns in Sicily.

The festival showcases not only the island's mythological and cultural heritage but also its human talent. It features guided tours, mythological storytelling performances, concerts, exhibitions and workshops, all of which highlight Sicily's rich heritage. Local artisans, storytellers and performers are given the opportunity to showcase their work, creating a festival that celebrates both the past and the present.

The festival is a massive draw for both locals and tourists, significantly boosting the local economy during its run. Through the festival, Le Vie dei Tesori



effectively turns Sicily into a cultural hotspot, attracting thousands of visitors who come to experience the island's unique blend of mythology, history and modern creativity.

2.4 Why Le Vie dei Tesori is one of the most virtuous projects in Italy



Le Vie dei Tesori represents one of the most virtuous and effective cultural non-profit entrepreneurship projects in Italy for several reasons:

- 1. Cultural preservation and revitalization:** Le Vie dei Tesori has played a pivotal role in reviving interest in Sicily's mythological and cultural heritage. By shining a spotlight on lesser-known sites and stories, the Foundation has contributed to the preservation of these important narratives for future generations.
- 2. Economic impact:** The Foundation's activities have had a significant positive impact on the local economy. Through its partnerships with local businesses and its ability to attract tourists, Le Vie dei Tesori has provided a remarkable stream of revenue for Sicily's hospitality, retail and arts sectors.
- 3. Educational and social benefits:** By offering educational programs and community engagement opportunities, Le Vie dei Tesori has empowered local residents, particularly young people, to take an active role in the preservation and promotion of their cultural heritage. The Foundation fosters a sense of pride and ownership among locals, ensuring that the benefits of its work are felt throughout the community.
- 4. Sustainability and innovation:** Le Vie dei Tesori's innovative use of digital technology and its commitment to sustainable tourism practices make it a model for other regions in Italy and beyond. The Foundation has successfully balanced the promotion of tourism with the need to protect and preserve Sicily's historical and cultural sites.
- 5. Scalability and replicability:** The success of Le Vie dei Tesori demonstrates that its model of cultural non-profit entrepreneurship can be scaled and replicated in other regions. By leveraging mythology and cultural heritage as assets, other regions in





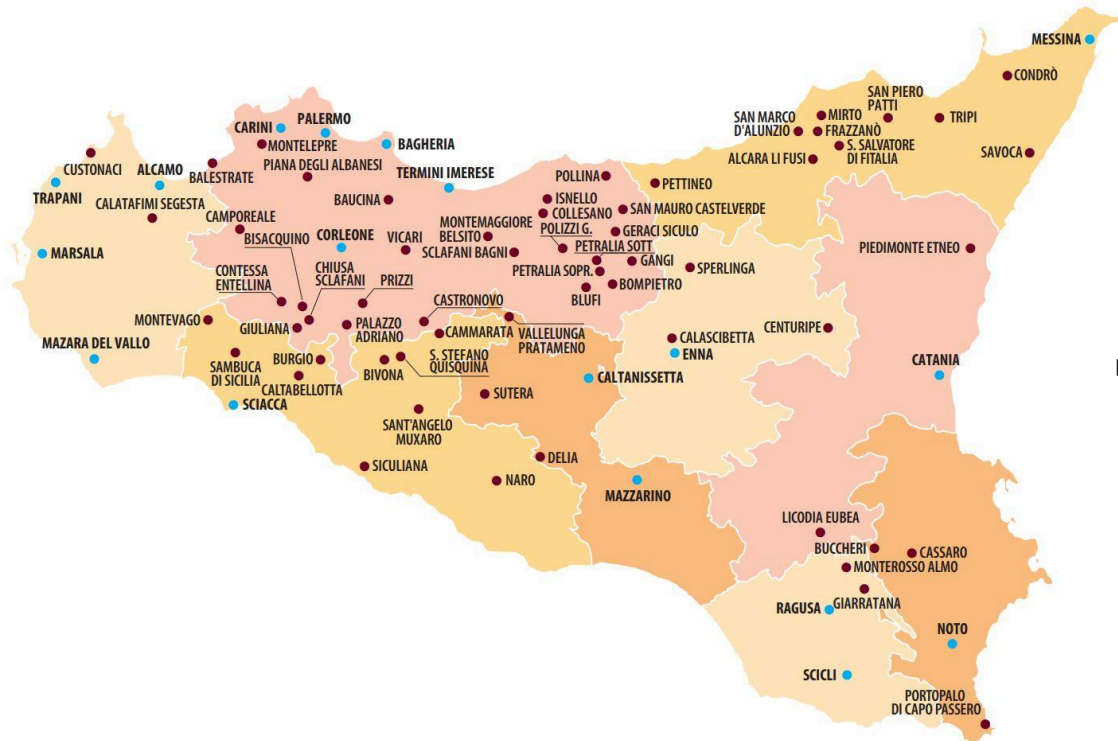
Italy and Europe can create similar initiatives that promote tourism, foster local entrepreneurship and preserve cultural traditions.

2.5 Conclusion on Le Vie dei Tesori's MOCE model

Le Vie dei Tesori is a shining example of how mythology and cultural heritage can be harnessed to create successful entrepreneurial ventures that benefit both local economies and cultural preservation efforts. Its comprehensive approach –

blending storytelling, education, digital innovation and community engagement – has made it one of the most virtuous and effective cultural projects in Italy.

The Foundation's ability to integrate mythology into tourism and non-profit entrepreneurial practices not only promotes Sicily's rich cultural history but also provides sustainable economic opportunities for the island's residents. Le Vie dei Tesori serves as a model for how cultural non-profit entrepreneurship can be used to preserve the past while fostering innovation and economic growth, making it a leading example for regions across Italy and beyond.



Fondazione Le Vie dei Tesori

Via Duca della Verdura, 32,
90143 Palermo

Tel. +39 091 7745575
festival@leviedeitesori.it

www.leviedeitesori.com

3. Some cases of Mythology-Oriented Cultural Entrepreneurship

3.1 Mythology as a livable experience: I Viaggi di Adriano

Cultural tourism is one of the most successful sectors where mythology has been seamlessly integrated into entrepreneurship. Italy's wealth of mythological landmarks, from ancient ruins to sacred sites, has long attracted tourists seeking to connect with the country's classical past. By offering immersive experiences that blend history, storytelling, and adventure, several tourism companies have successfully capitalized on the enduring appeal of mythology.

I Viaggi di Adriano, based in Rome, has a unique approach which combines traditional historical tours with immersive storytelling and live performances. Visitors can experience the city's mythological history by exploring landmarks such as the Roman Forum, Palatine Hill, and the Pantheon, where gods like Jupiter, Venus, and Mars were once worshipped.

I Viaggi di Adriano's tours are led by expert guides who have extensive knowledge of both ancient history and mythology. What sets the company apart, however, is its use of actors who reenact key moments from Roman mythology during the tours. For example, visitors might witness Romulus and Remus arguing over the founding of Rome or encounter Mercury delivering messages from the gods. These theatrical performances, combined with historical commentary, make the tours engaging for a wide audience, from history buffs to families looking for entertainment.

[Learn more about I Viaggi di Adriano's dramatized visits](#)

3.2 Teatro Greco di Siracusa (Greek Theater of Syracuse)

The **Teatro Greco di Siracusa** is one of the most iconic examples of mythology-driven cultural entrepreneurship in Italy. Located in the ancient city of Syracuse in Sicily, the theater is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most well-preserved ancient Greek theaters in the world. Built in the 5th century BC, the theater still hosts performances of classic Greek dramas, attracting visitors from around the globe.



The Greek theater of Syracuse

The **Istituto Nazionale del Dramma Antico (INDA)** organizes the annual season of classical Greek and Roman plays, which include the works of **Aeschylus**, **Sophocles**, and **Euripides**. These dramas often revolve around mythological themes, such as the tragedies of **Oedipus**, **Electra**, and **Medea**, all of which explore deep, timeless narratives of gods, heroes, and human frailty.

Cultural impact: The performances at the Greek Theater are more than just theatrical events; they are immersive experiences that transport audiences back to the world of

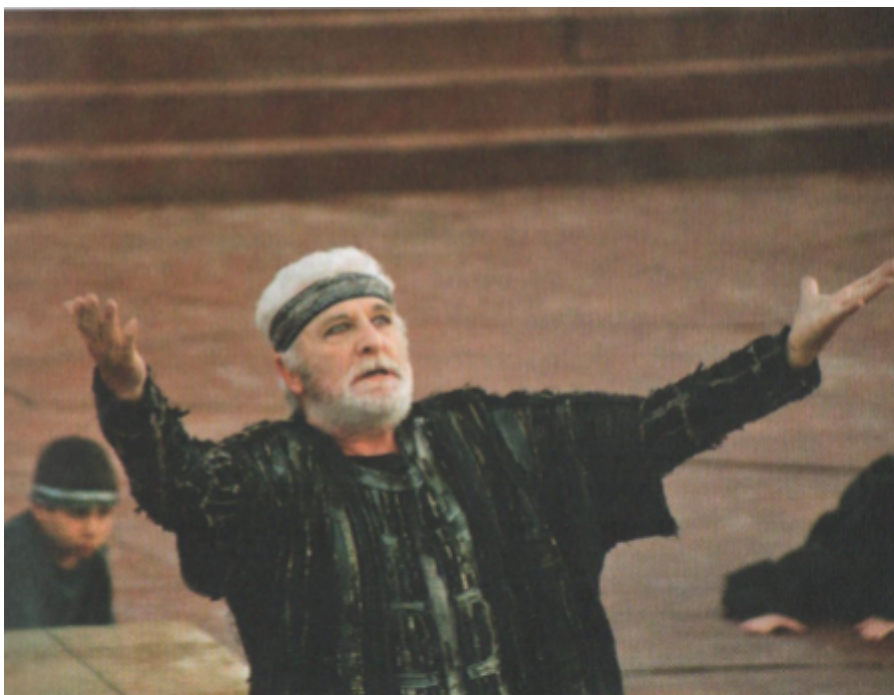
ancient mythology. The theater provides a powerful context in which the myths of the ancient Mediterranean come to life in the very setting where they were once performed. This connection between place and story enriches the cultural experience and deepens the visitor's understanding of the myths that have shaped Western literature and thought.

Economic impact: The annual festival significantly boosts the local economy, drawing international tourists who stay in hotels, dine in local restaurants, and purchase souvenirs. Local artisans and merchants benefit from the influx of visitors, while the cultural performances provide jobs for actors, technicians, guides and event organizers. The theater's integration of mythology into the region's cultural calendar is a model for how historical sites can remain economically viable and culturally relevant by tapping into their mythological roots.



Spectators at the theater of Syracuse

[Learn more about INDA's activities at the Greek theater](#)



Actor Ugo Pagliai in the role of Amphitryon in Euripides' *Hercules furens*, at the theater of Syracuse, 2007

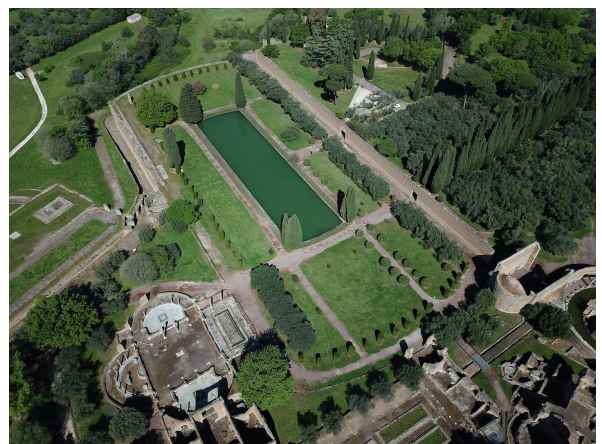


William J. Ferguson (1849-1886), *Theater of Taormina*, 1876

3.3 Villa Adriana (Hadrian's Villa)

Villa Adriana, or **Hadrian's Villa**, located near Tivoli outside of Rome, is a monumental complex that exemplifies the integration of mythology with architectural grandeur. Built by the Roman emperor Hadrian in the 2nd century AD, the villa served as a retreat for the emperor, who was deeply fascinated by Greek culture and mythology. The villa incorporates several reproductions of famous Greek sites and statues, including representations of mythological gods and heroes.

Mythological significance: Hadrian's Villa was designed to reflect Hadrian's passion for Greek culture, especially its mythology. The villa's architecture includes references to stories and figures from Greek mythology, such as **Athena**, **Apollo**, **Persephone** and **Jupiter**. One of the villa's most famous features is the **Canopus**, a long pool bordered by columns and statues, which represents the Egyptian city of Canopus and includes statues of gods like **Serapis** and **Neptune**. The blending of mythological symbols from different cultures reflects Hadrian's vision of an empire that celebrated the diverse traditions under Roman rule.



Cultural and educational impact: Villa Adriana is not only a tourist destination but also a site of significant historical and cultural scholarship. The villa attracts historians,

archaeologists and students who study its mythological and architectural significance. It offers educational programs and guided tours that explain the historical context of the myths represented in its design. The villa serves as a bridge between ancient mythological narratives and modern architectural appreciation.

Economic impact: Villa Adriana draws thousands of visitors annually, contributing to the local economy through tourism. Nearby businesses, such as restaurants, cafes, and shops, benefit from the influx of tourists, and the site employs local guides, historians and preservationists. Villa Adriana is a key example of how mythological heritage can be leveraged to sustain and enhance cultural tourism.

[Learn more about Villa Adriana](#)

3.4 Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (National Archaeological Museum of Naples)

The **MANN - Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli** is one of Italy's most important cultural institutions and is particularly known for its extensive collection of Greco-Roman antiquities, many of which feature mythological themes. The museum houses artifacts from Pompeii and Herculaneum, including frescoes, sculptures and mosaics that depict gods, heroes and mythological creatures. The museum's collection allows visitors to explore the artistic and cultural legacy of ancient mythology.



Mythological significance: The museum's collection includes a wide range of mythological artwork, such as the famous frescoes of **Hercules**, **Venus**, and **Jupiter** from Pompeii. Among its most notable pieces is the **Farnese Hercules**, a colossal marble statue of the hero Hercules, as well as mosaics depicting scenes from the **Iliad** and **Odyssey**. The museum brings ancient mythology to life through these visual representations, providing insight into how the ancient Romans and Greeks understood and depicted their gods and heroes.

Educational and cultural impact: The Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli offers extensive educational programs, including lectures, workshops and tours, aimed at both students and the general public. These programs explore the significance of mythological themes in ancient art and how these narratives have shaped Western culture. By presenting mythology through the lens of archaeology and art, the museum offers a rich, multidisciplinary approach to understanding the past.

Economic impact: As one of the most visited museums in Italy, the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli generates significant revenue for the local economy. It attracts international tourists, scholars and art enthusiasts, many of whom spend time in Naples' hotels, restaurants and shops. The museum also creates employment opportunities for curators, guides, conservators and educational staff. Its success demonstrates how the preservation and presentation of mythology through art can be a powerful driver of cultural tourism.

[Learn more about MANN](#)

3.5 Fashion: Versace and the Medusa logo

One of the most iconic examples of mythology-oriented fashion entrepreneurship in Italy is **Versace**. Founded by **Gianni Versace** in 1978, the brand is globally recognized for its use of the **Medusa** head as its logo. Medusa, a figure from Greek mythology, was famously cursed to have snakes for hair and the power to turn anyone who gazed upon her to stone.

Mythological significance: The Medusa symbol has deep roots in ancient Greek mythology and is often associated with power, mystery and beauty. Versace's decision to adopt Medusa as the brand's logo reflects these qualities, positioning the brand as one that exudes confidence, allure and timeless beauty. Gianni Versace reportedly chose Medusa because he believed she made people fall in love with her and they couldn't escape her spell: qualities he wanted his fashion to embody.

Cultural and economic impact: The Medusa logo has become synonymous with luxury and high fashion, helping Versace stand out in a crowded market. The brand has built its identity around the powerful symbolism of Medusa, turning the myth into a cornerstone of its branding. Versace has expanded globally and continues to be a major player in the fashion industry, with a loyal customer base drawn to its mix of boldness and classical influence. The mythological branding has helped Versace differentiate itself while maintaining a strong connection to Italy's classical heritage.



Versace's logo

[Learn more about Versace](#)

3.6 Festa Etrusca

The **Festa Etrusca** is an annual event held in Tuscany, celebrating the rich history and mythology of the Etruscan civilization, one of Italy's most significant pre-Roman



cultures. This festival is designed to immerse participants in the everyday life, art, religion

and mythology of the Etruscans through a series of live historical reenactments, guided tours of archaeological sites and hands-on workshops.

Visitors to the Festa Etrusca can experience various aspects of Etruscan culture, such as traditional rituals and ceremonies that honor the gods and goddesses of the Etruscan pantheon, including **Tinia** (the supreme god, equivalent to Zeus), **Uni** (similar to Hera), and **Menrva** (akin to Athena). The festival also features a detailed reconstruction of ancient Etruscan marketplaces, where artisans demonstrate traditional crafts like pottery, metalwork and jewelry-making, all of which often carry symbolic mythological meanings.

Cultural and economic impact: Festa Etrusca brings together historians, artisans, performers and locals to create a vibrant experience that educates and entertains visitors. The festival not only shines a spotlight on the relatively lesser-known Etruscan mythology but also promotes Tuscan heritage, engaging both international tourists and local residents. Economically, the event boosts tourism in the area by attracting visitors to historical towns and archaeological sites, supporting local businesses like hotels, restaurants and artisan shops. Additionally, the workshops and craft demonstrations help preserve ancient techniques while promoting modern artisan industries.

[Learn more about Festa Etrusca](#)

3.7 Patrimonio di Storie

Patrimonio di Storie is an innovative cultural project aimed at preserving and sharing Italy's intangible cultural heritage, with a focus on storytelling and mythology. The project brings together scholars, local communities and artists to rediscover and retell the myths, legends and folklore that are deeply ingrained in Italy's regional identities. By using both traditional and modern storytelling techniques, Patrimonio di Storie emphasizes the cultural significance of these stories, ensuring they are passed on to future generations.

One of the project's key features is its **interactive workshops** and **storytelling sessions**, where participants – especially young people – are encouraged to engage with myths from their regions, such as tales of **Lamia**, the half-woman, half-snake creature of southern Italian folklore, or the **Benandanti**, nocturnal warriors in the Friuli region who were believed to fight against evil spirits. Patrimonio di Storie also organizes **digital storytelling initiatives**, leveraging multimedia platforms to create podcasts, video stories and educational content that make these ancient myths accessible to a global audience.

Cultural and educational impact: The project is particularly successful in promoting regional myths that have been overshadowed by mainstream Greco-Roman mythology. By focusing on local legends and folk tales, Patrimonio di Storie preserves unique elements of Italian culture that might otherwise be lost. The educational aspect is central, as schools and communities participate in the workshops, allowing children and adults alike to take part in



the storytelling tradition. The use of digital media ensures that these stories reach a wider audience, revitalizing the role of mythology in contemporary Italian culture.

[Learn more about Patrimonio di Storie](#)

3.8 Hades Videogame

Hades is a masterless tabletop role-playing game (GdR) developed by **Terra dei Giochi**, which transports players into the dark and mysterious world of the Greek underworld. Inspired by Greek mythology, the game focuses on exploration, mystery and interaction with mythological figures such as **Hades**, the god of the underworld, **Charon**, the ferryman of the dead, and **Cerberus**, the three-headed guardian of the underworld. Players embody characters navigating this dangerous and enigmatic realm, uncovering clues and solving puzzles that reveal the secrets of their personal journeys through the underworld.



Unlike traditional role-playing games, **Hades** uses a masterless system, meaning there is no designated game master to direct the narrative. Instead, players collaboratively shape the storyline, relying on mythological lore to guide their decisions and encounters. The game draws heavily on Greek myths, integrating ancient deities and monsters into its mechanics, making it a richly atmospheric experience that combines narrative depth with immersive gameplay.

Cultural and interactive impact: **Hades** represents an innovative way to engage with mythology, as it allows players to immerse themselves directly in a mythological world. The game not only encourages creative storytelling but also teaches players about ancient Greek myths through interaction. By integrating mythology into a tabletop gaming experience, **Hades** appeals to a diverse audience, including both mythology enthusiasts and gamers, fostering a modern approach to learning about classical myths in a dynamic, interactive setting.

[Learn more about Hades](#)

3.9 Circo Maximo Experience

The **Circo Maximo Experience** in Rome is an extraordinary project that combines **augmented reality (AR)** and **virtual reality (VR)** to reconstruct the ancient grandeur of the **Circus Maximus**, Rome's largest chariot racing stadium and one of the most famous arenas in the ancient world. By using VR headsets and AR devices, visitors can visually experience the Circus Maximus as it appeared during its peak, including the massive crowds, the thunderous sounds of chariot races, and the ceremonial grandeur associated with these events.

The experience also delves into the mythological aspects of the Circus Maximus, where games and races were often held in honor of Roman gods like **Jupiter**, **Mars** and **Neptune**. Visitors are transported to ancient Rome, where they can



witness reenactments of the religious and mythological ceremonies that accompanied the chariot races, making the experience both a thrilling spectacle and a deeply immersive historical journey.

Cultural and technological impact: The **Circo Maximo Experience** is a pioneering example of how modern technology can be used to enhance historical and mythological education. By allowing visitors to virtually experience the grandeur of ancient Rome, the project connects people to Rome's legendary past in a highly engaging way. This initiative significantly boosts cultural tourism in Rome, as it attracts both history enthusiasts and tech-savvy tourists eager for immersive experiences. Additionally, the experience fosters an appreciation for Roman mythology by blending it seamlessly with the excitement of historical events.

[Learn more about Circo Maximo Experience](#)

3.10 Vini Donnafugata

Donnafugata is a renowned Sicilian winery that has masterfully integrated mythology and storytelling into its branding. Each of the winery's labels is a vibrant, artistic representation of Sicily's myths and legends, interpreted in a modern, whimsical **naïf** style. The winery draws on Sicily's rich cultural heritage, using its labels to tell stories that range from ancient myths to classic literature, often with a fantastical twist.

For instance, the **Mille e una Notte** wine is inspired by the famous **One Thousand and One Nights** stories, evoking the enchanting tales of Scheherazade. The **Ben Ryé** wine, on the other hand, is linked to the myth of the **desert wind** that blows over the island of Pantelleria, where the grapes for this wine are grown. Another notable example is the **Tancredi** wine, which references the historical figure Tancredi, a knight from the First Crusade, and also alludes to the character in **The Leopard**, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa's famous novel set in Sicily.



Cultural and economic impact: By combining local mythological and cultural themes with high-quality wine production, Donnafugata successfully markets its wines as not just beverages but as cultural products that embody the spirit of Sicily. The unique approach to branding and storytelling has helped Donnafugata stand out in the competitive global wine market. Visitors to the winery

can enjoy immersive tours that include both wine tastings and storytelling sessions, further connecting them to the cultural and mythological roots of the island. This synergy between mythology, culture, and commerce has elevated Donnafugata to an international level, while simultaneously promoting Sicilian heritage and contributing to the local economy through wine tourism.

[Learn more about Vini Donnafugata](#)

3.11 Elenoiret

Elenoiret is a highly skilled Italian graphic designer whose work is deeply influenced by the mythology, history and cultural richness of Sicily. Through her designs, she seeks to reconnect modern audiences with the ancient stories and symbols that have shaped Sicilian identity for millennia. One of her hallmark collections, "**Icone Sicilia**," is a perfect example of how she blends the old with the new: taking inspiration from classical Sicilian icons and reimagining them with a contemporary twist.

In this collection, Elenoiret draws on Sicily's mythological and historical past to create elegant and highly stylized visual interpretations. Her work often features the **Trinacria**, the ancient symbol of Sicily that incorporates Medusa's head, surrounded by three bent legs, symbolizing the island's triangular shape. This powerful icon, with its roots in both Greek and Roman mythology, is infused with Elenoiret's unique artistic vision. Her renderings of the Trinacria and other classical figures bring a sense of modernity while still honoring their historical significance, making them relatable to a contemporary audience while staying true to their ancient roots.



Elenoiret's work on a t-shirt

Additionally, Elenoiret's work is characterized by an emphasis on symmetry, clean lines and a thoughtful use of color. Her designs often feature a balanced composition that mirrors the harmony found in classical art, while her color palettes – ranging from earthy tones reminiscent of Sicilian landscapes to bold, vibrant hues that evoke the Mediterranean spirit – give her work a distinct aesthetic that appeals to both traditionalists and modern art lovers alike.

One of the most impressive aspects of her work is her ability to incorporate the legendary figures of Sicily into her designs. Figures like **Medusa**, the **Sirens** and **Demeter** are recurring themes in her portfolio, each reinterpreted in a way that highlights their enduring power and mystery. Medusa, for example, is a central motif not only because of her association with the Trinacria but also due to her broader symbolism as a figure of transformation, danger and beauty. Elenoiret captures these elements in her art, offering fresh interpretations that speak to modern themes of empowerment and identity, while also nodding to the deep mythological roots of her homeland.

Beyond the mythological, Elenoiret also finds inspiration in Sicily's architectural heritage, including its ancient temples, mosaics and Baroque churches. Her designs often reflect the intricate patterns found in these historical structures, reworking them into elegant prints and artwork. This connection to Sicily's past is not only an aesthetic choice but also a way of preserving and revitalizing the island's rich cultural heritage through art.

Elenoiret's work extends beyond static designs; she also collaborates with various cultural initiatives, local brands and art projects that seek to celebrate and promote Sicilian culture. Her designs are featured in products that range from prints and posters to wearable art and home decor, making them accessible to a broad audience. By weaving mythological and historical themes into these everyday objects, Elenoiret allows individuals to carry a piece of Sicily's rich history with them in a tangible, contemporary form.

In addition to her work on Sicilian mythology and icons, Elenoiret engages with digital storytelling, using platforms such as social media and her online store to further extend her reach. Through her visually captivating designs and storytelling abilities, she creates an online space where audiences can learn about Sicily's myths and history while appreciating them in a modern design context.

Elenoiret's ability to balance traditional Sicilian motifs with a sleek, modern design aesthetic has earned her recognition not just in Sicily but among a global audience interested in Italy's mythological and cultural heritage. Her work serves as a bridge between past and present, allowing ancient stories and symbols to be rediscovered and appreciated by new generations of art and design enthusiasts.

Elenoiret's work transcends traditional graphic design by creating a significant cultural, economic and entrepreneurial impact. **Culturally**, her designs play a vital role in preserving and promoting Sicily's rich mythological and historical heritage, making it accessible and relevant to modern audiences. By reinterpreting ancient symbols and legends through a contemporary lens, Elenoiret helps to keep these stories alive, encouraging a renewed appreciation for Sicily's past while fostering a sense of identity and pride among locals. **Economically**, her work contributes to the creative economy of Sicily, drawing attention to the island's cultural assets and helping to bolster cultural tourism. From an entrepreneurial perspective, Elenoiret serves as a model for how designers can successfully leverage regional heritage to create a brand that resonates both locally and globally. Her innovative approach to combining mythology with modern design appeals to a wide audience, expanding her market reach beyond Sicily and Italy to international consumers who are captivated by the story-rich designs. Through her online store and collaborations, Elenoiret has effectively turned cultural preservation into a thriving business, demonstrating that creative entrepreneurship rooted in cultural heritage can be both profitable and impactful.

3.12 Conclusion on MOCE cases

These examples demonstrate how mythology can be successfully incorporated into various sectors, from immersive experiences and interactive media to food and wine. By drawing on Italy's rich mythological heritage, these businesses not only create unique products and experiences but also foster a deeper connection between the past and present, ensuring that ancient stories continue to resonate in modern cultural and economic contexts.

4. Final recommendations

The case studies presented in this report highlight the diverse ways in which Italian entrepreneurs are incorporating mythology into their businesses, from tourism and food to fashion and digital media. These ventures are not only preserving Italy's cultural heritage but also creating new opportunities for economic growth, particularly in the creative industries and cultural tourism.

To further capitalize on Italy's mythological heritage, we recommend the following:

1. **Foster collaboration:** encourage partnerships between entrepreneurs, cultural institutions and educational organizations to develop products and experiences that promote both cultural heritage and innovation. Museums, historical sites and universities can provide valuable resources and expertise to support these ventures.
2. **Leverage digital technology:** explore opportunities to use digital platforms, such as augmented reality, virtual reality and video games, to make mythology more accessible to modern audiences. These technologies can engage younger generations and create immersive experiences that bring ancient stories to life.
3. **Focus on sustainability:** incorporate sustainability into mythology-oriented businesses, particularly in the fashion, food and tourism sectors. By drawing on themes of nature, renewal and balance found in ancient myths, businesses can appeal to environmentally conscious consumers while promoting ethical practices.
4. **Promote local artisanship:** support local artisans and craftspeople who incorporate mythological themes into their work, whether through ceramics, textiles, jewelry, or other mediums. These artisans help preserve traditional techniques while creating products that have cultural and commercial value.
5. **Expand cultural tourism:** develop new mythology-oriented tourism products that cater to niche markets, such as educational tours, luxury experiences and interactive workshops. By offering unique and culturally rich experiences, Italy can attract more tourists who are interested in exploring its mythological heritage.

This report reflects the objectives of the **WorkWithMyths** project, which seeks to promote entrepreneurship through the lens of mythology. By linking mythology with business innovation, Italian entrepreneurs are preserving cultural heritage while contributing to the country's economic development. The success of these ventures demonstrates that mythology remains a powerful tool for engaging consumers, enhancing brand identity and creating meaningful cultural experiences in the modern world.

5. The EU funded project “WORK WITH MYTHS”

The Erasmus+ project titled “Exploring Entrepreneurship Through Myths and Culture, with the acronym “WORK WITH MYTHS”, aims to intertwine the richness of mythology and cultural heritage with entrepreneurship among young individuals. The project's mission includes inspiring the youth to utilize the wisdom of mythology and implement it in their business practices. This approach not only serves as a means of protecting and promoting

the unique cultural heritage of the different regions, but also encourages the entrepreneurial spirit.

Objectives: The primary objectives of the project are to equip young people with entrepreneurial skills through the use of cultural narratives, revive and promote local myths and legends, foster active community participation and pride in local heritage, and encourage eco-friendly business practices rooted in cultural traditions. More specifically, the project's objectives include:

1. Promote Youth Entrepreneurship: Utilize mythology as a foundation to foster entrepreneurial thinking and initiatives among young people.
2. Elevate Youth Work Quality: Improve the quality of young participants through activities like best practices research, workshops, and mentoring programs.
3. Cultural Heritage Preservation: Revive and promote local myths and legends, ensuring their preservation and relevance in modern contexts.
4. Community Engagement: Enhance community involvement of young participants by connecting them to their cultural roots and enhancing their sense of belonging.
5. Sustainable Growth: Encourage eco-friendly and sustainable business practices rooted in cultural narratives.

Activities

The project also involves several key activities:

- Research and Documentation: Partners will research and document how myths influence modern businesses, resulting in comprehensive reports and educational booklets aimed at introducing regional mythology to youth.
- Workshops: Interactive entrepreneurship workshops will be held in each partner country, exploring the intersection of mythology and business.
- Mentoring Program: A mentoring program will guide young entrepreneurs in integrating cultural elements into their ventures.
- Dissemination: Findings will be shared through newsletters, social media, and community outreach.
- Evaluation: The project will be evaluated via a questionnaire survey and a final report to gather feedback from participants and stakeholders.

Partners

The project is a collaboration among three main partners:

- F. PARASTATIDIS – M. POUSPOURIKAS G.P. (Greece) specializes in European project management, development consulting and entrepreneurship mentoring.
- Miejska Strefa Kultury w Łodzi (Poland) is a cultural center focused on non- formal and informal education and community activities, like workshops, and educational programs.
- Le Vie dei Tesori (Italy) is a foundation dedicated to enhancing Sicily's cultural heritage through the organization of cultural festivals, workshops and community engagement activities.

The partnership between these organizations leverages their unique strengths and shared objectives. F. PARASTATIDIS – M. POUSPOURIKAS G.P. brings extensive experience in project management and youth entrepreneurship. MSK offers a robust framework for cultural

and educational activities, while Le Vie dei Tesori provides deep insights into cultural heritage and community engagement. Together, the partners aim to create a sustainable model for youth entrepreneurship rooted in cultural heritage, fostering a sense of pride and active citizenship among young people.

Target Groups

The WORK WITH MYTHS project targets a diverse array of groups to achieve its objectives:

1. Young Aspiring Entrepreneurs: Individuals aged 16-30 interested in starting or enhancing their own ventures with innovative, culturally-rooted business ideas.
2. Local Youth Communities: Youth in the regions represented by the partner organizations, including those outside formal education, who will engage with cultural heritage through modern applications.
3. Local Communities: Residents in the project regions who will experience a renewed sense of pride and connection to their heritage, fostering community cohesion.
4. Stakeholders in Cultural and Heritage Sectors: Museums, heritage sites, and cultural festivals that will gain insights into leveraging mythology for entrepreneurial and educational purposes.
5. General Public: The broader public, both local and international, who will benefit from the project's dissemination activities. Understanding the project's goals and outcomes can foster support, encourage broader participation, and enhance cultural appreciation.
6. Digital Audience: Online followers, blog readers, and social media enthusiasts who will help spread the word, participate in online activities, and provide feedback.
7. Project partners: Each of the three participating partners will be both contributors to and beneficiaries of the project outcomes, learning from the experiences and insights of the other regions.

By engaging these groups, the WORK WITH MYTHS project aims to promote youth entrepreneurship, preserve cultural heritage, and enhance community engagement.

Impact and Follow-up

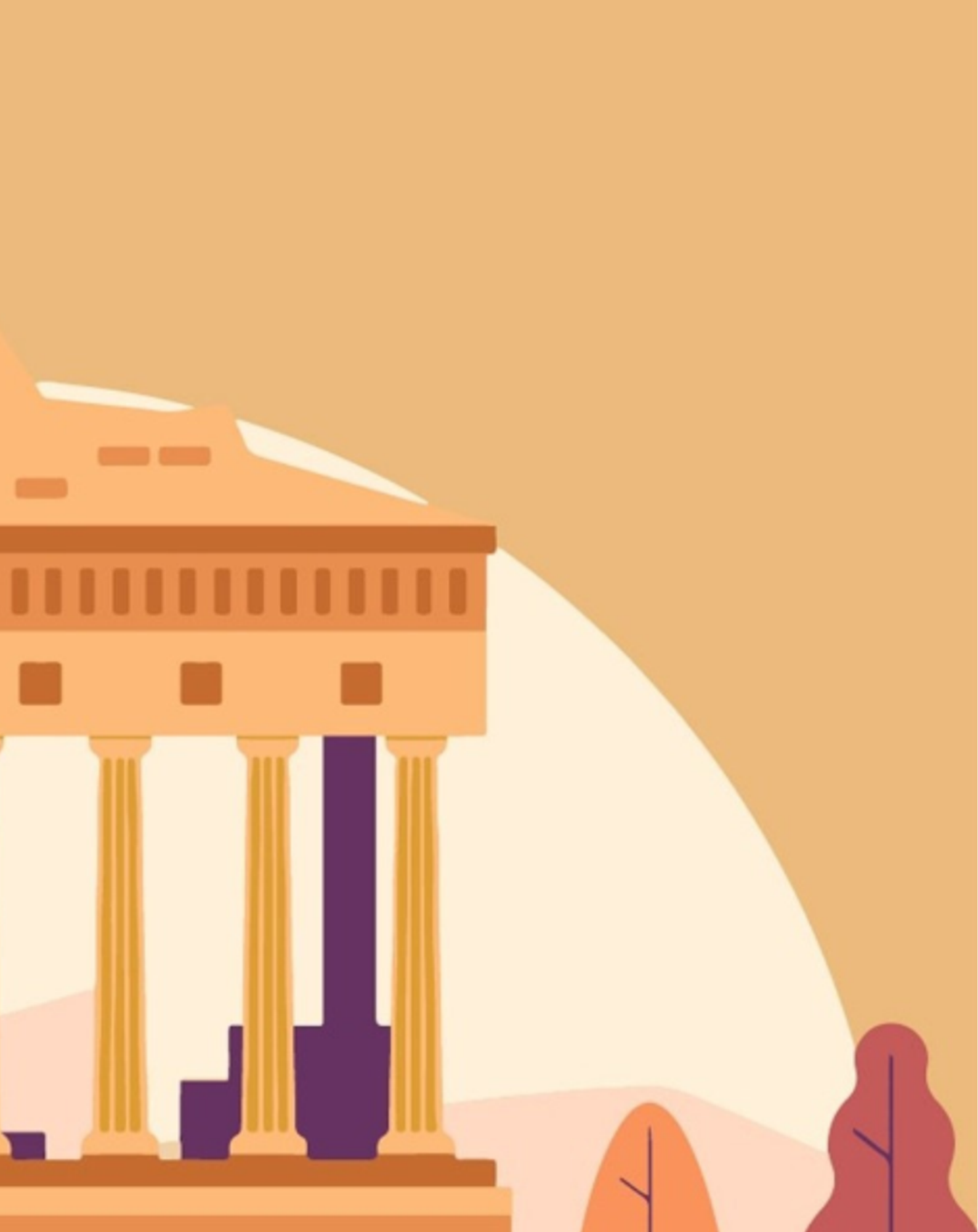
The project aims to leave a lasting legacy by fostering a new generation of entrepreneurs who value and promote their cultural heritage. It aims to significantly enhance cultural awareness and appreciation among young people by integrating regional myths into modern business practices. It will empower youth with entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, resulting in innovative ventures that celebrate cultural heritage. The project will produce valuable educational materials, facilitate successful workshops and mentoring programs, and increase community engagement in cultural preservation. By promoting sustainable practices and fostering cross-cultural collaboration, the project expects to boost local economies and create a sustainable model for youth entrepreneurship. Digital dissemination will ensure global reach, spreading the project's impact and results widely.

The "WORK WITH MYTHS" project leverages the strengths of its transnational partners to promote youth entrepreneurship, preserve cultural heritage, and foster community engagement. Through educational resources, workshops, and sustainable practices, the project will create a lasting legacy of cultural appreciation and economic growth. This booklet is part of the "Best Practices Research and Documentation Mythology" activity of the project and delves into the fascinating world of Greek mythology, offering insights into the timeless stories and legendary figures that have shaped Greek culture.

By exploring these myths, we aim to provide a source of inspiration for contemporary entrepreneurial ventures, demonstrating how ancient narratives can be seamlessly woven into modern business practices and drive innovation and success in today's world.



Work with myths banner



Co-funded by
the European Union

