

CITY FORM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY. URBAN DESIGNS IN THE 19TH CENTURY GREECE

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RESUMO

O cenário urbano da Grécia moderna foi originalmente introduzido pelo Presidente Capodistrias (1828-32). O principal objectivo centrava-se na formação de um território nacional, homogéneo, coerente e unido pelo poder central. Neste contexto, o planeamento, longe de ser accidental, tornou-se o aspecto fundamental da formação do Estado.

As ideias novas e os conceitos foram importados da Europa por engenheiros, geógrafos e outros. O plano da cidade assumia simultaneamente um significado excepcional e uma função. A ideia genérica que estava na base destes planos consistia em justapor, de forma harmoniosa, a cidade nova sobre a antiga.

As modificações constantes dos planos e a não implementação de muitos deles devem ser analisadas não apenas em consequência de inadequadas técnicas ou fraquezas políticas, mas antes como a manifestação da grande diferença de interesses entre o que o Estado pretendia impor e o que a sociedade desejava na realidade.

Palavras-chave: Grécia, reconstrução urbana, organização do espaço, planeamento.

RÉSUMÉ

La scène urbaine de la Grèce moderne a été originellement introduite par le Président Capodistrias (1828-32). Le but principal était centré dans la formation d'un territoire national, homogène, cohérent et uni par le pouvoir central. Dans ce contexte, l'aménagement, loin d'être accidentel, est devenu l'aspect fondamental de la formation de l'Etat.

Les nouvelles idées bien que les concepts on été importés de l'Europe par des ingénieurs, des géographes et d'autres. Le plan de la ville assumait simultanément un sens exceptionnel et une fonction. L'idée générique qui soutenait ces plans consistait à juxtaposer harmonieusement la nouvelle ville sur l'ancienne.

Les constantes modifications des plans et la non-implémentation de beaucoup d'eux doivent être analysées non seulement en conséquence de techniques inadaptées ou de faiblesses politiques, mais surtout comme la manifestation de la grande différence d'intérêts entre ce que l'Etat prétendait imposer et ce que la société souhaitait en fait.

Mots-clés: Grèce, reconstruction urbaine, organization de l'espace, aménagement.

ABSTRACT

The urban scenery of the modern Greek State was originally introduced by President Capodistrias (1828-32). The main objective was focused on the formation of a nation territory, made homogeneous, coherent and united by central authority. In this context, planning, far from being incidental, became a fundamental aspect of the formation of the State.

The new ideas and concepts were transplanted from Europe by engineers, geographers. A completely novel urban ideal was introduced. The town plan assumed *de facto* exceptional significance and

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function. The generic idea of these plans was to harmoniously juxtapose the new city to the ancient towns.

The constant modification of the plans and the non-implementation of many of them, are therefore to be viewed as not merely due to technical inadequacies or political weakness, but rather a manifestation of the vast gap between what the State wanted to impose and what society could or would do.

Key Words: Greece, reconstruction of city, organization of space, planning.

The development of the modern Greek state in 19th century, after a long war of independence, went along with an endeavour to set up a unified national domain, centre of greater Hellenism, unliberated or in Diaspora, in a marginal area compared to geographical extent of the pre-revolutionary thrive of national sentiment. The demand for national unification was closely linked to the demand for territorial unification, and this latter to the concept of modernisation; modernisation meant “desottomanisation” and simultaneously “occidentalisation”, war against backwardness and historical inertia, and at the same time a course towards “civilisation”, homogenisation and creation of national identity, as well as economic, social and technical development.

The constitution of a new state of a European type, novel in the Orient, had been the fundamental objective of the war of Independence. Europe was regarded as having achieved the harmonious coexistence of classical culture with material civilisation, and assimilation with Europe was thought as the way to restore civilisation back to its birthplace; a restoration possible only after the Ottoman heritage would be swept away.

The march towards Europe was not uneventful. Yet, it was never contested or challenged, neither was an alternative perspective ever sought, even by the most fervent critics of the imported civilisation. Criticism and protests were abundant, but they mainly concerned the violent way in which “europeanisation” was forced, the excessive presence of foreign persons and the free play accorded to private interests.

THE UNIFICATION OF THE TERRITORY

The small state in the southern end of the Balkan peninsula was “the poorest, less populated (17 inh./sq.km), and most illiterate part of the nation”. All the important cities which had large and prosperous Greek communities, and developed urban functions, such as Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Adrianople, Smyrna, and Constantinople, were out of the borders of the new state. Within the national territory the population was essentially agricultural, dispersed in a nebula of small settlements, not easily accessible because of the insufficient road network. City and countryside were hardly differentiated: they formed a rather homogeneous economic space, while the few manufacturing businesses had never succeeded to transcend

subsistence economy.

By the beginning of 19th c. the urban network consisted of small administrative, commercial, and manufacturing centres, inland and maritime towns, none of which exceeded 15,000 inhabitants. Of semi-rural character, with multi-ethnic population (Greeks, Turks, Jews, Albanians, etc.) living in distinct quarters. The urban fabric, where subsequent Frankish, Venetian and Ottoman occupation had left its marks, presented an irregular layout, with streets forming an inextricable network of rugged lanes and impasses, with low constructions made of stone or wood, dispersed within gardens and yards. The absence of a civic centre and functional premises was apparent.

On this landscape, the impacts of the long war for Independence were immense. Preceded by an investigation ordered by President Capodistrias early in 1828, the great survey that the Ottonian administration undertook into administration, population, finances, public assets, roads, etc. in 1834, revealed a national territory in substantial disorder: after ten years of military activity, raids, destruction and civil strife, settlements were ruined or abandoned, population was dispersed, economic activity was disrupted.

Equally important were the effects of immigration to Greece, which begun with the outbreak of the revolution, and continued after Independence was achieved. In a country extremely underpopulated, immigration was welcome and served as a counterweight to the narrowness of frontiers; on the other hand, the “new-comers” (veterans from unliberated as yet territories, refugees, and intellectuals from the Diaspora), expectations for money, land and social positions, contributed to the confusion of the early post-independence years.

In this context, the reconstruction of towns and the settlement of the immigrants were tasks to be accomplished in an order of priority; planning intervention had been instigated by the urgent pressures of reality. However, it did not stop there; far more steps than immediate needs dictated and the logic of a centralised state demanded, were taken.

Right from the start, the State took control of the organisation of space. European planning ideas, models and methods (French and German) were not merely used to regulate existing malfunctions or to settle conflicts for the use and appropriation of space; their introduction rather expressed a deliberate political will to proclaim the existence of a national state which had to be brought up to date by casting off its “oriental” image, and which

associated the desired constitution of modern Greek society with an innovative organisation of space, based much more on urbanity than was proper for a country where the agrarian element was prevalent.

This process was originally introduced by President Capodistrias (1828-32). It took, however, a rapid course of development under the Bavarian reign (1833-62). The efforts for the urbanisation of the country, through the restructuring of the existing towns and the creation of new ones, the enhancement of agriculture and the colonisation of the countryside, the development of industry and communications network, etc, were main aspects of the modernisation policy.

From 1828 onwards, successive legislative initiatives focused on the formation of a national territory, made

homogeneous, coherent and united by central authority. *"Having shaken off the Turkish rule, the Greek nation neither should nor could respect any further local authorities which had been established by a power already abolished. For that reason, none of them remained. But the people who held real influence in various provinces, and had taken an active part themselves in the war for independence, continued taking a part in the management of both military and civil affairs."* (CAPODISTRIAS, *Correspondence*). The decree of 1833 ("On the administrative division of the country") "neutralised" the historical space in order to achieve a rational hierarchy of competences, in Prefectures, Provinces, and Municipalities. This rationality answered the demand for national unification, and the homogenisation of all parts of territory,

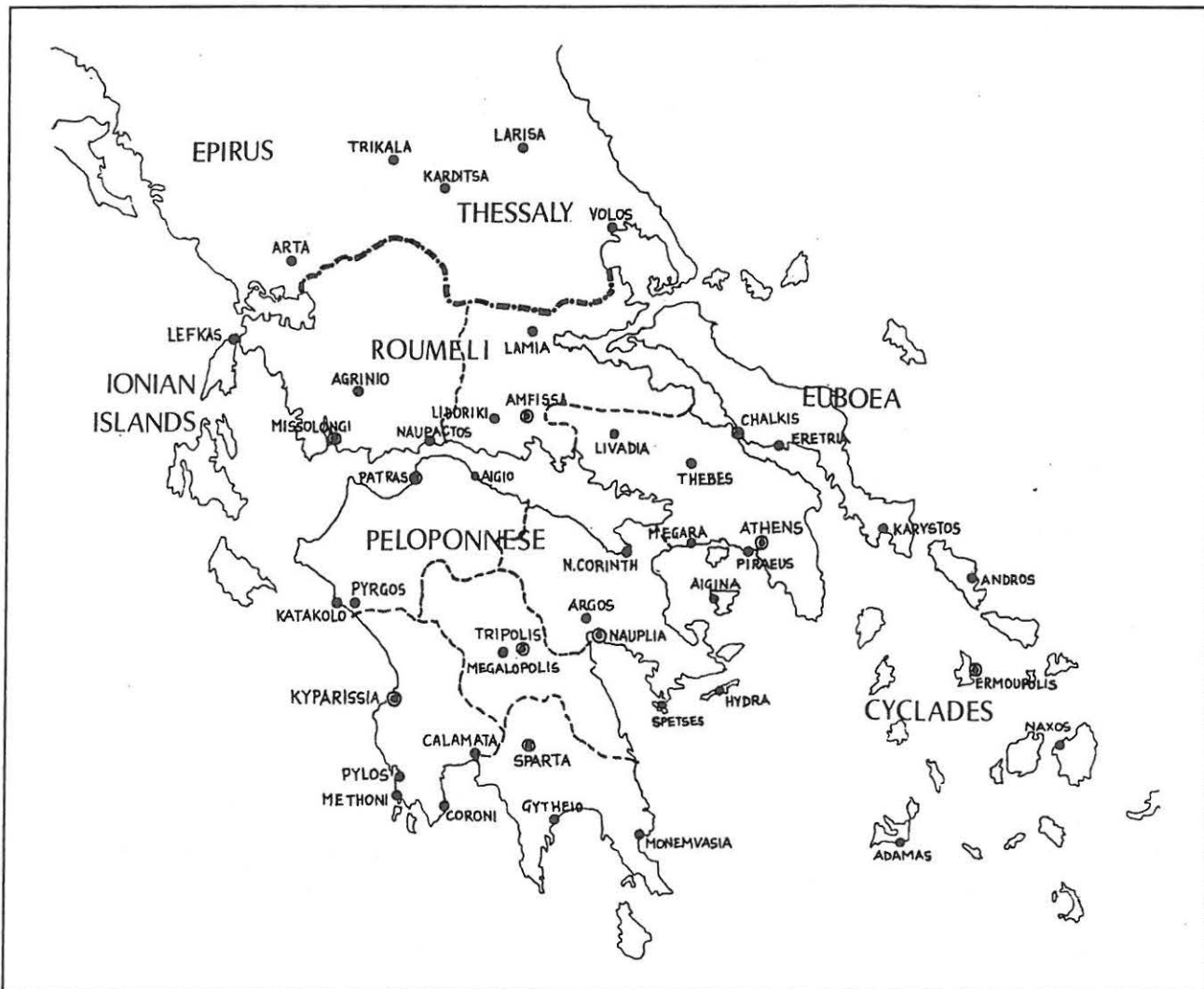


Fig. 1 – Greek territory with the towns which were planned from 1828 to 1862

through the abolition of their specific features, together with the calculated spread and weight of the new institutions; in sum, it allowed the state to intervene in every aspect of life and activity of its citizens (MAURER, 1835), including city planning and building.

CLEARING UP THE PAST

Thus planning, far from being incidental, became a fundamental aspect of the formation of the state. New settlements were planned, old ones restructured, new legislation covered the use and appropriation of urban space, and relevant public services were set up to carry out this complex activity. A policy was introduced to encourage people to settle in towns (free grant of state land to those who wanted to build a town or a suburb; law "on the endowment of Greek families", 1833), and to promote new institutions and functions across the whole spectrum of social life. In this sense, the modern city was viewed as an element without which new society could not materialise, an instrument of homogenisation of a population of different origins, a laboratory to create and inculcate patterns, norms and values of the new social order; as the mould, in other words, capable to convert the peasant into bourgeois, the inhabitant into the citizen of the new national state.

Thus, the existing city must be restructured and reshaped, cleared up of its particularities, and become an object of rational management, an active mover of social progress and the protagonist of national renaissance. Planning and architecture had an major part to play in this transformation: "*Architecture is all the time engaged in this aim, opening up streets, levelling, and rectifying as much as possible everywhere, in order to correct the city's former ugliness which can please only barbarians, and to contribute here indeed, to the nursing of the place.*" (*Official Journal*, N° 16, Febr. 22, 1830, p. 24).

The clearance of the past was not the consequence of modernisation, but its objective: "...so that the town may cease to appear in the eyes of the Europeans as a barbarian city" (S. BOULGARIS, *Letter to Capodistrias*, 1828). The concept of the "nationally alien" city helped precisely to illustrate the process towards the development of a national society, as a process of gradual "nationalisation" of cities. The greater the distance from the past, the stronger was Greece to be vis-à-vis its European assessors. Particularly, when the reform of the Ottoman Empire (after 1839) and the growing support from European countries towards it, undermined Greek supremacy and the significance of the modern Greek state in the Orient.

The attitude towards the traditional town is quite revealing. It was considered to be irrational and anachronistic in function, incoherent in structure and gross in appearance, to represent an element of inertia and physical fossilisation of parochial social and political structures, such as communal autonomy and common law (PANTAZOPOULOS, 1965); thus, it was considered to

be an obstacle to control and change, the product of an alien culture and testimony of a hideous (Ottoman) past. The early studies in folklore left no doubts on the nature of the town: "...the countryside leads a more archaic and hellenic life than city" (SKOPETEA, 1984, p. 178).

The traditional town was incomprehensible to the European experts, involved in the reconstruction plan: they surveyed the layout of the existing town, the parcelling of the land, recorded its population, etc; yet they never studied its production, or evaluated its character, if only to assess it in terms of their ideal of city and reject it as alien, barbarous or inadequate. Their account of the existing town was purely instrumental, as merely necessary technical knowledge, that according to the rules of their discipline preceded any corrective action. Whenever a positive image of the traditional town is given, it is perceived in terms of the picturesque (f.i. Klenze's ideas of the "Mediterranean" city) or exotism, familiar to philhellenes and travellers of the time.

The traditional town was also experienced in a negative sense by its inhabitants. In the island of Tenos, for example, already in 1824, the Elders provided for "*the orderly rectification of the irregular streets of the town, to imitate those of enlightened Europe*" (*Newspaper Athens*, N° 36, Jan. 17, 1825).

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PRESENT

The innovative and pedagogic role of the city was to a large extent entrusted to the physical form of the town, in which these objectives were materialised in a comprehensive and coherent manner. The new ideas and concepts were transplanted from Europe by foreign experts, engineers, geographers, philhellenes, who rendered their services to the government or were appointed to relevant positions, and businessmen who explored the possibility to invest in model establishments. Early in 1828, the engineers of the French Military Mission stationed in the Peloponnese, the scientists of the French Scientific Expedition to the Morea, and the first Greek military engineers, aided the country's first President, while a whole army of experts accompanied king Otto on his arrival to Greece in 1833.

In place of the old model of the traditional town, a completely novel urban ideal was introduced: the rational city of the late 18th and early 19th century, as a process that is planned and then administrated according to principles of hygiene, circulation, and amenities, with operative instruments and laws that would guide the just regulation of city construction.

The model was already known and tested in the rebuilding of the Italian states after catastrophic earthquakes, the Napoleonic planning in France, etc. It was also being used at around the same time in the new national Balkan states (Serbia, Bulgaria, Roumania) and within the Ottoman empire itself, which were on a similar

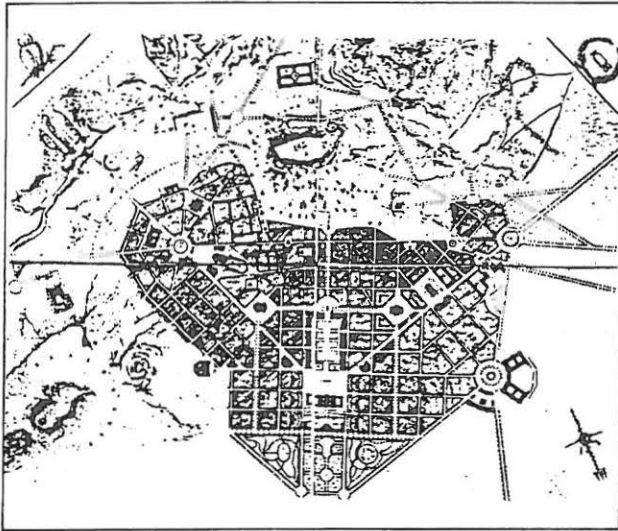


Fig. 2 – The plan for Athens, 1833 by St. Kleanthes and E. Schaubert



Fig. 3 – The plan for Eretria, 1834 by E. Schaubert

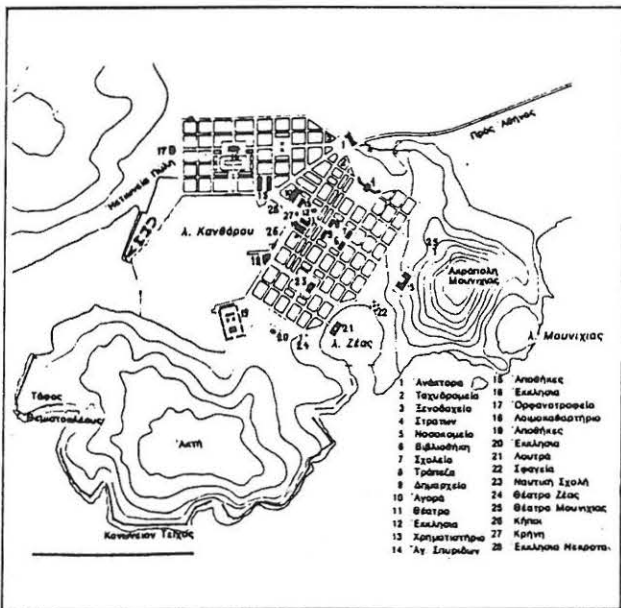


Fig. 4 – The plan for Piraeus of 1834 by St. Kleanthes and E. Schaubert

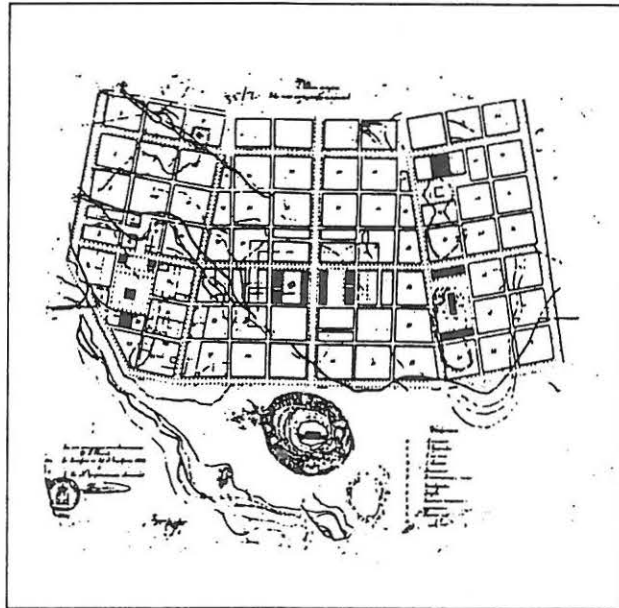


Fig. 5 – The plan for Sparta, 1834 copy of the original of F. Stauffert

course towards modernisation. What, however, distinguishes the Greek case, is the belief that the model imported, product of the European neoclassical tradition, was indebted to its Greek origins, a counterloan in other terms; in this sense, it was considered as a means to restore the nation's historical continuity, and a way to re-establish Greece in its role of "civilizing" the Orient. And also the fact that the assimilation of the model, merely in its architectural dimension (SKARPIA, 1974), resulted in the mild neoclassical landscape of southern Greek cities, that is quite different from those in northern Greek and other Balkan cities, which were characterised by the strong presence of eclecticism.

As already stated, main purpose of the centralised state established in Greece, was to remove from civil society and its members the initiative for any action and domain deemed to concern public interest and to reduce these to objects of state authority and control. Now, the construction of the city came to be founded on the distinction between planning and building, public and private, in a three-pace schema: a preliminary phase of ordering the land surface, formulated by the central government bodies, the subsequent phase of urbanisation (infrastructure and public buildings) carried out by the newly established municipal authorities, and the actual building construction undertaken by private individuals.

As there existed no treatises, manuals, writings, etc. on the city (OREOPOULOS, 1990), - apart from the correspondence between engineers and administration, some memoranda specifying the plans, instructions and decrees -, the town plan assumed de facto exceptional significance and function: it became the vehicle of new ideas, patterns, norms and values of the new social and cultural order, the instrument for planning, defining needs, and controlling of urban growth, and the means for change and order, ideological, institutional and aesthetic; as Lavedan stated upon, "*the straight line and the right angle became symbols of independence*" (LAVEDAN, 1952, p. 199).

Plan and decrees were therefore to give birth to the modern city; in particular, the decree "on the sanitary building of towns and villages" (1835), established the principles which meant to guide in a holistic way the structure, form and building of cities. The plans drew up a layout for all the areas, existing or future, of the town development, fixing density, relative positions and a regular grid into which the new constructions could be inserted. It also specified the precise siting and the typological indication of services and amenities, as pacesetting elements for private buildings, as well as monuments that "speak" to the inhabitants of the authority the new institutions.

The regularisation of the city and the rationalisation of operations seemed immediately attainable: the adoption of the rectangular grid permitted the imposition of regularities on behaviour, functions, and form. It had the advantage of producing fine public squares by the

subtraction of blocks, it facilitated the assignment of individual plots, and the control of land value, to be gauged in terms of front feet, accessibility, services, centrality, etc.

It also imposed this regularity on the new subject of town planning, the civilian inhabitant, the "private citizen": it obliged him to follow street and building alignment, to abide by the proper size of individual plots, to seek the permission to built only after the plan was drawn and approved by an expert, to conform to specific building regulations (heights, coloris, safety instructions, etc). A new relationship of public and private domains thus emerged as to the appropriation of urban space, as well as to the sharing of the burdens and benefits of urbanisation.

This model was originally introduced by President Capodistrias, in the reconstruction of the towns of the Peloponnese Nauplia, Patras, Argos, Aigion, Corinth, Tripolis, Modon, and Navarin, and in the creation of the new towns of Itea and Lidoriki. Yet, to facilitate its acceptance, the President used old instruments (local leaders, priests and existing administrative units) and ordered gradual alterations of the cities. Only the plan of Patras (by St. Boulgaris) was drawn in a complete form, presenting impressive similarities with that of Napoleonville Roche-sur-Yon (1804) (MORACHIELLO e TEYSSOT, 1979).

Capodistrias' experts adopted the rectangular grid for the new urban areas or extensions, while street alignments and opening up of civic squares were planned for the old parts of cities; the regular building block became the planning unit, replacing the traditional neighbourhood or quarter. Public squares and open places were created, as gathering places of local society, as well as for functional reasons and embellishment. A limited but significant repertory of public buildings (administrative = "*to affirm the presence of the government*", religious = "*for the praise of God*", and educational = "*for enlightenment*"; hospital = "*for the needy*"; commercial and manufacturing) was provided to meet practical necessities and to "*bring prosperity to the citizens*" (LOUKATOS, 1979).

However, the concept of the neoclassical city achieved its most complete and idealised form during the first decade of Otto's reign, as a result of a higher degree of disregard of the local conditions and the exercise of greater authority in imposing selected models. In a sense, the Ottonian period was a historically minded one, dedicated as it was in re-establishing the continuity of the nation, and in reconnecting modern Greece to the great classical tradition which had generated a city-state civilisation. The existence of relics of antiquity in most cities was felt to be an unparalleled means of evidence to support this aim. But now new social institutions had to be monumentalised, and especially the most comprehensive one: the city itself;

a monument to bring to mind the antiquity of the nation, the power of the present regime, the prospects of the new society-to-be, the truth of the modern ideology. With this went an overvalorisation of the geometric figure: "Considering the influence that architecture has on civil life at large; appreciating the historic memories which are, particularly to this respect, associated with Greece ..." declared the decree founding the school for training engineers in 1836.

This concern generated some of the most eloquent and original conceptions, imaginative adaptations of the model of neoclassical city to the specific conditions encountered on site, and late specimens of the European legacy of grand designs. Upholding the ideal of the ancient polis, as transmitted through the version of European neoclassicism, the "Architects of the Government" St. Kleanthes and E. Schaubert, envisaged the new nation's capital and the rest of new cities in prominent ancient sites.

Athens, an insignificant fortress during the Ottoman era, semi-destroyed by the end of independence war, numbering 4,000 inhabitants (1831), crammed with monuments of the Byzantine, Frankish and Ottoman periods, had now to rise up to its legend, as well as to the needs of a contemporary capital. The plan had to take into account three factors: the needs of the royal residence, the functional and rational demands of the new society, and the symbolic importance of the classical heritage essential to the cultural centre of the nation. St. Kleanthes and E. Schaubert created "... new plan equal to the ancient fame and glory of this city and worthy of the century in which we live" (*Memorandum*, in RUSSACK, 1942).

The plans of Piraeus, Sparta, Eretria, all new towns, and to a lesser degree those of the existing towns of Corinth, Megara, and Thebes, seem also to have been conceived and designed in the fashion of town—"residence of royal power in absentia" (MUMFORD, 1966, p. 441), a character emphasised by the existence of royal palaces in many of them.

The generic idea of these plans was to harmoniously juxtapose the new city to the ancient town, whose relics were actively interweaved with the composition, serving as points of reference, as well as elements of embellishment.

The new city was orientated in a crescent-like form towards the major archaeological element (the Acropolis in the cases of Athens and Eretria, the ancient theaters and fortifications in Piraeus, the relics of the ancient city in Sparta, etc); the royal palace constituted the opposite symbolic pole. A central avenue connected in a monumental fashion the royal palace to the ancient relics, establishing a sort of symbolic dialogue between the ancient world and the new kingdom.

The royal palace (in Athens, Piraeus, Sparta, Corinth), was the focus from which the asteroid pattern of avenues radiated, establishing civil cores and public spaces. The gridiron pattern was varied in size, and not monotone, as

the radial street pattern formed a system of partial orthogonal grids, and permitted the creation of different quarters.



Fig. 6 – Patras: the layout of the traditional city, survey map by army engineer Le Blanc in 1829

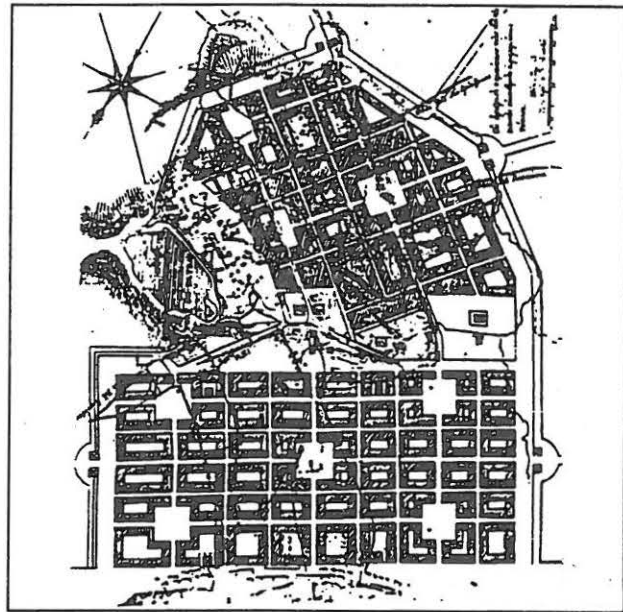


Fig. 7 – Patras: the new city plan by St. Boulgaris, 1828



Fig. 8 – Larissa: the layout of the traditional city in 1882

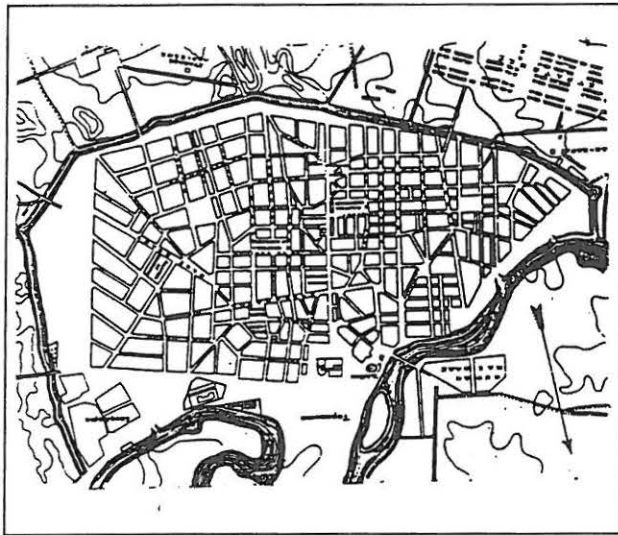


Fig. 9 – Larissa: the new city plan, 1883

The Athens plan provided for a complex programme for urban facilities, that included both the old palatial institutions, as well as the modern social ones: theatre, stock market, casino, library, cathedral, museum, botanic garden, parliaments, town hall, banks, post office, court rooms, hospitals, schools, market, etc; this typology was reproduced for the provincial towns, though in a more moderate scale.

On the surface, the plans feature the main aspects of baroque design: topography is usually subordinated to the form of the plan, the position of public buildings is linked

to axial approaches, horizontal spaciousness is emphasized by wide avenues and streets lined up with trees, giving vistas and monumental prospects, and public gardens are provided for promenades.

In practice, all these plans suffered the fatal handicap of the baroque conception of the city, as a finished form and a block achievement, where planning and building went hand in hand. The plan of Athens came up against the lack of public control of the land, and the scanty financial means available for the construction of public buildings. Even when the control of the land had been secured from the beginning (as in the cases of Piraeus, Sparta, and Eretria, new cities where land was granted free to encourage the establishment of colons), the failure to assure sufficient infrastructure and amenities hindered to a large extent the materialisation of the original ideal.

Under the circumstances the paper plans had little influence; the forces that could make the plans come to life had not come yet to the fore: the planning philosophy was committed to the division between public and private with regards to the planning and building of the city, the new state was impecunious, the new comers were hesitant, the expected supremacy of modern Greece in the Orient had been compromised by the emergence of new nations in Balkans, and the modernisation of the Ottoman empire itself...

MODEL AND REALITY

After 1850, a highly centralised planning and administrative apparatus, gradually developed, was to enforce the model in a much more realistic way, adapting it and scaling it down to Greek capabilities. City form became simplified, without making any specific adaptations to the landscape, easy to sprawl in any direction, fitting usually a quick parcelling of plots, and a quick conversion of farmsteads into urban land. It thus made it possible for the municipal engineer (who sometimes did not have the slightest training) to plan a town with standardised, comparable and replaceable parts. The plans for Volos and Larisea, drawn up immediately after the annexation of Thessaly in 1882, are representative of this period.

The plans and the results they produced diverge from the original model for a number of reasons: the lack of specialised technical personnel, exacerbated by the departure of the foreign engineers in 1843 (following the constitutional change in that year), the low standards in skill of the majority of Greek technicians, the inability of local authorities to assume their assigned role in the making of the city (owing to their lack of financial resources and pertinent technical staff), as well as their inability to exercise an efficient form of urban government.

But what mostly accounts for the impoverishment of the original idea were the changing circumstances of the

larger context: the anticipated economic progress that came only too slowly; the disillusionment as to the longed-for territorial expansion of Greece after the war in the Crimea (1853-56), and the role that Greece was to be assigned as the centre for the enlightenment of the Orient; the shift of European interest towards the Ottoman Empire in anticipation of the profits it might win from its partition. As it was put by a journalist: "*Ancient philhellenism was sunk in the Suez Canal, crashed under the wheels of the railways built by English capitals in Turkey, or burnt out in the factories that European capitalists erected in the Ottoman Empire*" (Newspaper *Elpis*, Jul. 18, 1867).

The constant modifications of the plans, and the non-implementation of many of them, are therefore to be viewed as not merely due to technical inadequacies or political weakness, but rather as manifestations of the vast gap between what the state wanted to impose and what society could or would do.

Nevertheless, the model of the modern city never sunk in general esteem, its assumption of modernity was never contested, and the planning principles were never attacked, at least not until the first decades of the 20th c. This should be thought, therefore, as evidence for the success of the aesthetic-pedagogical role of the city in the transition towards modern urban society, as well as the expression of the unanimity of both civil society and the state in their aspirations to become part of the civilised European world. The numerous demands of the inhabitants for the rebuilding of their towns, in accordance with modern planning principles, is most convincing testimony: in 1829, for example, the inhabitants of Mistra demanded "*the reconstruction of the former glorious city of Sparta, which lies buried under its ruins*".

The reactions of the inhabitants and public criticism had to do primarily - if not exclusively - with issues relating to the effects on private properties, the spaciousness of the proposed layout, the slow pace of the implementation of the plans, and in general with the distribution of the burdens of urbanisation to the inhabitants.

Critiques for Athens, frequent throughout 19th century, concerned the difficulties in keeping to the original model, to become that is a model for the national image, a centre for the enlightenment of both free Greeks and the rest of the Greeks all over the world; instead, Athens had become, the critics asserted, a place for the "*superficial alteration of manners, the uncritical rush for foreign things, mimicry and pernicious misunderstanding of European culture*". (Newspaper *Aion*, Jul. 16, 1860).

Yet, at the turn of the century, the account is quite impressive: more than 170 plans were approved for the foundation of new towns, and the redesigning or expansion of old ones, among which circa 35 for towns exceeding 5000 inhabitants (HASTAOGLOU-MARTINIDIS, V. *et al.*, 1990). The traditional city had been restructured, homogenised and unified, its construction was more or less rationalised by the new relationships between public and private domains, and its fabric was opened up and regularised through alignments, civic squares and public spaces; embellishment projects were implemented and public buildings were erected in spite of the scanty financial means available (usually financed by private individuals). Individual houses of a certain quality and neoclassical style were erected and lined up streets, giving shape to a singular urban scenery, still apparent wherever it has not been swept away by the massive urban reconstruction which followed World War II.

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