

Urban- Spatial Development and Built Heritage The Case of Greece

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1. Introduction: Uncontrolled Urban Development and the Risk for Built Heritage

The 21st century undoubtedly holds significant perils and challenges in store which stem from sweeping changes in the economic and social sphere which impact directly and/or indirectly on space, landscape and the environment (Beriatos, E.- Balesta, J. (2007). Climate change and related phenomena (the greenhouse effect, rising sea level etc.) combined with accelerated urbanization are ushering in dramatic changes in geographical mobility (environmental immigrants), agricultural activities and, more generally, land uses in cities, coastal zones and mountain areas. On the other hand, at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, our planet became 'urban' in its entirety. Urban areas are now in the majority, meaning that over 50% of the world's population (and more than 80% of Europe's population) lives in small and large cities, urban centres and metropolitan areas. At the same time, the countryside has itself begun to urbanize at a dizzying pace in recent years, to the extent that we can now speak clearly (in Europe as well as in other parts of the world) of a 'rural- urban continuum' which is continuously spreading and expanding to all directions. This urban sprawl, which, for some time, has been underway in more or less developed countries has serious negative consequences for the economy, social coherence and the environment. A recent strong reaction by people and local social initiatives have sought to moderate, if not to stop, the phenomenon (e.g. anti-sprawl movement in USA). In the same direction is also the policy of 'compact city' of all relevant European institutions and organisations.

In parallel to this trend and as a result of the acute global energy crisis and the consequent need for the development of all kinds of Renewable Energy Sources (RES), the countryside (after having been cluttered by advertising billboards) has begun to fill up with new constructions and installations (wind farms, solar panels, geothermic parks etc.) which have laid claim to large expanses of flat open farmland in plains or in sensitive mountainous, coastal and marine zones such as forests, wetlands, deltas etc.

On the other hand, while cities are becoming reshaped and transformed by the new post-industrial urban economies mainly based on culture, leisure and knowledge, new urban forms and landscapes are rapidly emerging. In this process of urban transformation the existence of cultural built heritage constitute a crucial element for the sustainable spatial development of towns and cities because it plays a very important role for the improvement of the quality of life.

This is why, in an era of increasing '*place identity*' crisis, the wise management of cultural heritage, with a local reference, combined with innovative design of space, with a rather global reference, appears to be a major concern aiming at improving urban environments and transforming them into unique places with a clear identity and authenticity. Besides it is an increasingly becoming major urban tourism resource (Gospodini A - Beriatos E.. 2004).

In the era of globalization and the information society the preservation of cultural heritage constitute a sine qua non condition for the integrated and balanced development of a given area or region. Especially in Greece the historic centers of cities the traditional settlements, the monuments, the archeological sites compose an immense resource for the country. In Greece, rapid urbanization and the large scale projects of the last decades (due to Olympic Games 2004) caused many problems concerning preservation of built heritage. Also illegal constructions are often too close to or even inside archaeological sites or other designated protected areas.

The building up (legally or illegally) of the countryside near or into protected sites exacerbates the downgrading of these places, which are also core tourism assets. This leap in urbanization has led to the erection of a cement wall along the entire length of the coast, thanks to the construction of a mass of hotel and tourist complexes as well as settlements of second-homes constructed often illegally as for instance in the region of Attica (see Figure 1). As a result, cultural built heritage sites, existing in these areas, is facing major difficulties due to unplanned urban development and uncontrolled urbanization.



1a. South of Athens: the “amorphous” space

1b East of Athens around the international airport area

Figure 1. Unplanned urban development and uncontrolled urbanization in Attica region (around Athens)

2. Heritage: Some Remarks on Its Definition and Concept

By the term ‘heritage’ we mean all kinds of natural and cultural goods, tangible or intangible which have a historic, symbolic or aesthetic meaning. The evaluation of these goods as elements of heritage must be in relation to the time, the place they are located and the existing system of social values. Taken into account the temporal dimension, heritage represents all goods -mobile or immobile, tangible or intangible- that are transmitted from generation to generation through tradition process. Heritage could also be defined as a way of thinking and acting in the fields of sciences, arts, techniques, ethics etc. being at the same time the ‘vehicle’ of continuity and a memory that must be transmitted in a diachronic basis. As for the Spatial dimension there is a double relationship: from the one part, elements of heritage are deeply marked from the place they are located and from the other part, this location acquires an identity from them.

Larousse dictionary defines heritage as the common goods of a collectivity (community or social group) while Oxford dictionary perceives it as works of art and cultural achievements that have been passed on from earlier generations. Council of Europe considers heritage as the common bond / denominator between different countries and cultural entities (Europe as a common heritage). Finally UNESCO World Heritage Convention (1972) defines “cultural heritage” as those works of man and nature which deserve preservation, protection and management. Consequently cultural heritage could include monuments as historic buildings, archaeological sites, geological formations of exceptional beauty (monuments of nature) as well as know-how, local traditions and customs.

The above definitions show that the principal characteristic of heritage, except legal ownership aspects, is a kind of informal intimacy, a special relationship established between the elements of heritage and the social groups who have the use, interest, care or special knowledge for these elements.

3. Institutional and Administrative Framework for Built Heritage in Greece

The main bodies responsible for heritage matters are two ministries: The ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC) competent also for spatial planning and the ministry of Culture (MC) (recently united with the ministry of education). Between them there is a long history of conflicts but also of cooperation. Local authorities do have any significant decision making competence .

The existing institutional framework is based on relatively recent legislation, the law 3028/2002 on the Protection of antiquities and cultural heritage which constitutes a new systematic approach for the safeguarding of cultural heritage by including new principles and by defining protection regime with both spatial and temporal terms (Karybali-Tsiptsiou G. 2004) Other legislative provisions are also in force although older ones. (table1). According to the current legislation the cultural good and more particularly the monuments are classified by chronological and geographical terms as shown in table 2.

Besides national legislation there is also an international legal system which is often ignored and “unexploited” or underused. It is therefore necessary to approach the protection and the rational management of heritage through the implementation of international conventions, charters and declarations as for instance those of Amsterdam, Granada, Venice, Florence (Council of Europe 2008) which have been incorporated in national law through their ratification by the Greek parliament (ICOMOS et als 2004). In addition it is important to complete legislative provisions through the establishment of new administrative mechanisms and structures at national level adapted to the Greek reality.

A/A	Object of protection	Competent body for designation	Consultative bodies	Valid provisions
1	Archaeological sites zones A&B	Ministry of Culture (YPPO)	Central Archaeological Council YPPO	L.5351/32-L/1892/90
2	Buildings of historical importance after 1830	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC)	Central Council of modern monuments -MEECC	L.1469/50-PD 161/Δ/84
3	Historical Sites	Ministry of Culture (YPPO)	Central Council of modern monuments-MEECC	L.1469/50-PD161/Δ/84
4	Building regulations in historical sites	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC)	Ministry of Culture (YPPO)	L.1469/50-PD 161/Δ/84
5	Sites of exceptional natural beauty	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC)	Committee of urban-architectural control - MEECC	L.1469/50-PD161/Δ/84-N.1650/86
6	Traditional/historical settlements or parts of them	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC)	Central Council of urban-spatial Planning - MEECC/Municipalities	L.2831/2000, special P.D.
7	Historic/listed buildings	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC)	Committee of urban-architectural control-MEECC	L.2831/2000 (art.3)
8	Protection of Antiquities and Cultural heritage	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC)	Ministry of Culture (YPPO)	L 3028/2002

TABLE 1: Basic Greek legislation on built heritage (chronological order)

Source: Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC) – (YPEKA in Greek)

CULTURAL BUILT HERITAGE				
Classification according to Greek legislation L 3028/2002-chronological order				
Tangible cultural goods				
Inside Greek territory			Outside Greek territory	
Immobile Goods (monuments, archaeological sites etc)		Mobile Goods	Immobile Goods	Mobile Goods
Ancient monuments	Prehistoric times		Prehistoric times	
	1453-beginning of modern times		1453-beginning of modern times	
Modern monuments	1830-foundation of the modern Greek State		1830-foundation of the modern Greek State	
	1912-beginning of the last centenary Period of the last 100 years 2012		1912-beginning of the last centenary Period of the last 100 years 2012	

TABLE 2 . General classification of monuments and sites – Cultural built heritage (Law 3028/2002)
Source: Law 3028/2002 for the protection of cultural heritage

4. Built Heritage in Greek Reality: Blessing or Curse?

In Greece the protection of heritage is approached in a dilemmatic way. While it is considered as a matter of first priority at the same time it constitutes a serious problem because of the inerrant contradictions of Greek society. As a result citizens are suffering from bureaucracy that has a long tradition in the country and local societies act in a contradictory way before issues concerning protection of natural and cultural heritage. Furthermore there is a lack of documentation, economic incentives, information, education and coordination of the competent bodies. The cause and consequence of this situation is the lack of confidence between civil society and the state/ government which is expressed in various ways. From the one part, there is a lack of credibility of the public administration and from the other part the permanent suspicion of the citizens who act every time according to their interests that are dictated by their socio-economic position.

Citizens, as property owners, are complaining for the complex and time-consuming legal and administrative procedures that are needed in order to solve property matters (e.g. expropriation) and also for the lack of substantial indemnity in money or in kind according to the Greek constitution.

Time is a crucial parameter for spatial planning because it neutralizes the effectiveness of every try and effort, causing the devaluation of the statistical or technical data which are necessary for the formulation of the final proposals in heritage protection projects. As spatial reality changes very rapidly many studies and the consequent legal regulations (concerning spatial arrangements for heritage protection), become unimplemented because of inaccuracy of their data. On the other hand, the obligatory publicity of the plans and the necessary restrictive regulations that are going

to be implemented in the near future, push people to build up according to the existing legislation (before the validation of the new plans).

These problems due to the long delays of planning procedures and the lack of organization within public services explain why the built heritage is often transformed from a 'blessing' to a 'curse' of the place or the region concerned.

The causes of the above mentioned problems and dysfunctions are *inter alia* the following:

- Lack of efficient economic or other incentives helping the owners of land, terrains or buildings that are designated as protected. The existing ones are considered inefficient and the citizens feel themselves as victims of injustice.
- Problems in the system of the official documentation of cultural heritage. There were many attempts in order to establish a national registry of monuments in an operational way although it is an obligation coming from the declaration of Amsterdam for the integrated preservation.
- Absence of criteria for the evaluation and classification of the monuments and other cultural goods and values to be protected according the Granada Convention
- Serious overlapping of competences between ministries of Planning and Culture and other peripheral ministries. It is observed a series of conflicts due to ministerial 'chauvinism' at political and administrative levels which leads to vain and useless antagonisms.
- Lack of the appropriate specifications, so the interventions towards protection and enhancement of built heritage could not be elaborated and implemented by specialists and experts through effective management.

As we see, the main problem is not the lack of financial resources but the lack of know-how and organizational matters which are the means for the good functioning of the whole political and administrative system. In Greece, as far as the financing for the protection of archeological heritage is concerned there is a central mechanism (archeological fund) belonging to the ministry of culture while for the architectural heritage there is another central fund (green fund) belonging to the ministry of Planning and the Environment. Both mechanisms proceed to a redistribution of the financial resources at national level but without a substantial coordination and cooperation between them.

5. Integration of Built Heritage Protection in Urban-Spatial Development Process

Provided the above considerations, spatial development perceived as a complex socio-political process, is fundamental for the achievement of the integrated sustainable development. Nowadays all international organizations (UN, CoE, etc) as well as European Union have incorporated the protection of natural and cultural environment in their official policy documents (and legislation) as a basic and organic element. It is needless to say that the wise management of this heritage is one of the three main objectives of the European Spatial Development Perspectives (ESDP). The other two objectives are a) Polycentric development and new relationship between towns and countryside and b) Equal access to infrastructures and knowledge (European Commission 1999). According to this document cultural heritage can be a factor of economic growth with an increased importance recently. For this reason there is a need for a creative approach since the protection by only restrictive measures is not efficient and effective on a sustainability basis at both urban and regional levels. As a result the protection of built heritage constitutes today one of the basic goals of urban and regional planning and spatial development. What is needed is the way to integrate this objective (protection of heritage) to the policies of spatial socio-economic development. From this point of view there two steps/levels of integration, the following:

At a first level there is the principle of unified (single) perception of cultural and natural heritage since it is not possible in practice a separation between natural and cultural elements. A specific

example of this principle is the combined and integrated protection of an architectural monument and its physical environment in urban or rural space (Granada Convention)

At a second level there is a need to treat the protection and management of heritage not only 'per se' but also in relation to the needs of society in the framework of the broader political and socio-economic development. This means that the wise management of the built heritage will mostly contribute to the local economies and the rules of protection and the eventual restrictions will not have negative impacts to the living and working conditions of the people of the areas concerned. Therefore the protection and enhancement of the archeological, architectural and related ecological heritage must be incorporated to the sectoral policies aiming at the economic and social development in combination with the objectives of urban and spatial planning because this protection is not considered any more as an obstacle but as a factor of economic growth and improvement of quality of life for the present and future generations (Pavlogeorgatos G. 2003).

6. The Specific Role of Urban – Spatial Planning towards the Protection of Built Heritage

Spatial planning is a crucial process for the protection of heritage at all levels and especially at local-regional ones. At these levels planning must apply the basic legislation Law 3028/2002 (designation of zones A and B) (figure1). It must also provide for methods and means which can realize the functional connection of designated archaeological and historical sites between them and with their broader area. Furthermore must take care for the rational and sustainable designation / restructuring of land uses in the vicinity of important (primary) monuments and cultural poles of a given area.

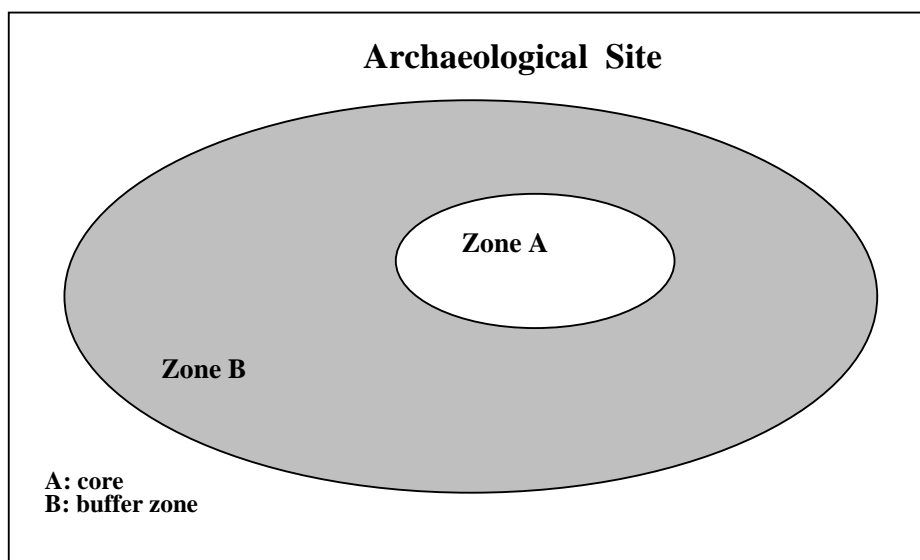


Fig 2. Schematic Diagram of Protections Zones A and B for archaeological sites

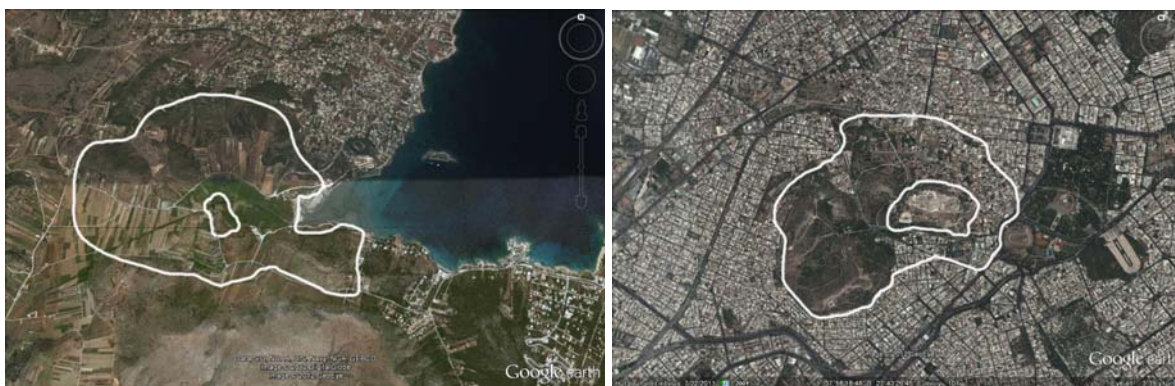
More specifically, at local scale it is necessary to make plans for ecological-cultural itineraries through local networks of pedestrian roads and paths where visitors and tourists could easily have access (by foot or bicycle) to all monuments of the area (Beriatos E., Papageorgiou M., Lainas I. & Nikolakopoulou Ch.2011). In addition it is considered important to make possible the connection (integration) of monuments with their hinterland, in priority with the existing protected areas (natural parks, geological formations, agricultural landscapes etc)

At an even lower scale spatial planning must provide for the appropriate land use plans around monuments and sites or other protected objects/ elements of built heritage whatever they are located (in or outside of the urban tissue). It must be stressed that Law 3028/2002 enforces the

competent authorities to designate zones A (core) and B (buffer/ peripheral) in order to impose limitations and restrictions on land uses and building constructions.

It must be noted that there was and there still is a great difficulty with the designation of the crucial buffer zone B due to strong reactions from powerful local actors and local society in general, who are opposed to any restriction of land development. While zone A is considered 'automatically expropriated' by law, zone B, which works as a buffer zone around the core of the protected site, is not a public property. For this reason all kinds of planning tools must be used (strict building regulations, transfer of development rights etc) in order to make zone B play its role and achieve the objective of protection.

A key question demanding an answer is to what extent the designation and the land use planning of the zone B has been implemented ten years after the law came into force. Although an answer to this question is not possible without a special research, it is certain that the majority of listed monuments and sites do not have a such zone. Therefore there is a need of closer cooperation between archaeologists and urban planners as well as between competent public authorities and local governments at both administrative and political levels.



3a: Temple of Diana -East Attica in rural-urban space 3b :Parthenon, Acropolis- Historic center of Athens
Fig. 3. Indicative delimitation of zones A and B in archaeological sites in rural and urban space

7. Concluding Remarks

According to the observations and opinions expressed in the previous chapters of the paper, we present here some general concluding remarks in relation to the policy towards protection and sustainable management of built heritage.

First of all, there is a great need to reduce the overlapping of competences between the various bodies, agencies and other administrative structures of the Greek state since it is the main reason for coordination problems. On the other hand it is useful the establishment of a National Council (not as legal entity) for the natural and cultural heritage, which will act as a consultative body of the government and as forum of social dialogue since its members would be representatives of social organizations and NGOs relevant to heritage issues.

Secondly an effort must be made for the integration of the principles, means and methods of protection into the spatial plans at all levels local, regional, national (i.e. master plans of cities, plans of spatial development of regions, national guidelines). This procedure needs both legislative and administrative steps. In other words contemporary planning must incorporate the management of cultural goods and be an effective tool for the integration of the sectoral policies concerning the protection and enhancement of built heritage.

Thirdly it is necessary to promote a networking of cultural poles at European and international levels in order to fill-in the existing gap of cooperation between national and international agencies and administrative structures. The reason to do so is the need to cover innovative thematic fields on heritage enhancement that are not treated sufficiently in Greece (e.g. industrial heritage etc).

The safeguard, preservation and wise management of built heritage in relation to urban and spatial development must be promoted through the creation of new culture and tradition because the problem of heritage is not only the protection of the existing cultural goods but also the continuous creative 'production' of new ones. This begs the question of how viable it is to maintain and safeguard the historicity of the Greek built heritage, and how important the concept of the place identity will be in the future. The new reality in Greece needs to be studied and approached carefully if suitable actions and interventions are to be taken and made by those responsible-by warrant of their position-for protection heritage plans and projects. What is needed is clear: the quest for a new spatial and social status quo and for the best way to achieve this given the conditions that now hold. Only thus, can a viable and better future be ensured for Greek built heritage

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