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**Management of the Architectural Heritage
of the Historic Centre of Korça.
Institutional Framework and Policies**

Introduction

The cultural heritage as a parameter of the collective memory of a region or a community is a structural part of evolution and development. This legacy shapes the identity of a nation, a country or a region and, therefore, an integral part of modern life. The term “legacy” may consist of elements from both natural and cultural environment, landscapes and historic sites, places and the built environment, biodiversity and old and continuing cultural practices, the knowledge and life experiences.¹

The management of cultural heritage consists of both the conservation and the transmission of the values to the community and the visitors. At this level, the predominant factor is the access to the cultural data, a physical, mental or emotional access, integrated into a framework that allows the evolution. This access also includes the obligation of respecting of cultural values and interests, the economic benefits of the community and local groups who preserve it or the owners of historic properties, as well as the landscapes and cultures from which it is derived.²

Once integrated in such a context, the architectural heritage of a place is directly linked to the archaeological sites, monuments and

¹ *Η χάρτα του πολιτισμικού τουρισμού* (The charta of cultural tourism). Available at: http://www.icomos.org/charters/tourism_greek.pdf (date of access: 28/4/2013).

² *Ibid.*

historical totals. As Christine Boyer underlines, the historic city is the “city of the collective memory”, with overlapping alternant layers of historical time, wherein the various architectural layers which coexist, adjoin, without necessarily affecting each other.³

The preservation and the protection of these areas which are located in the centre of the modern cities is a necessity that needs spatial and material sacrifices and complicated operations, which concern the association of these places with the contemporary city and the everyday lives of citizens, indicating ways of reading and viewing the symbolical load of the Historic Places. Nowadays, in a new era of globalization, the conservation, the preservation and the protection of these areas and, moreover, the research of the different or the specificity of each region are particularly important.⁴

Hans Sedlmayr, one of the most intellectual art historians of the 20th century, wrote in 1975 that if the contemporary architecture had a quality architectural style, nowadays the problem of architectural heritage would not be addressed in a pan-European and also in global scale.⁵

From the mid-19th century, the maintenance of individual monuments is considered as a necessity in a context that is limited by the awakening of national consciousness.⁶ Although, the anony-

³ Z. Petridou, «Αρχαιολογικοί χώροι, Μνημεία και Ιστορικά Σύνολα στο κέντρο της Θεσσαλονίκης. Σημεία και Σύνολα του Αστικού Τοπίου» (Archaeological sites, monuments and historical buildings in the center of Thessaloniki. The Points and the Ensembles of the Urban Landscape), in I. Polyzos–D. Polychronopoulos (ed.), *Όψεις του Αστικού Τοπίου στο Δημόσιο Χώρο (Aspects of the urban landscape in the Public Area)*, Athens: Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies, Architecture-Spatial Planning, Urban and Regional Planning. Available at: [archaiological_landscapes_Petridou_Zoi_FULL_TEXT.pdf](#) (date of access: 28/4/2013).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ G. Lavvas, *Προστασία μνημείων και συνόλων. Βασικές έννοιες, ιδεολογία και μεθοδολογία (Protection of monuments and ensembles. Basic concepts, ideology and methodology)*, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki 1984, pp. 37-41.

⁶ For example, in France, the interest in restoration and preservation of monuments of the past, the first stage of “restauro” (see: C. Cechi, *Teoria e Storia del Restauro*, M. Bulzoni, Roma), begins simultaneously with the fall of Napoleon

mous architectural heritage has already damaged in a large scale, the newly established European states followed the pattern of selective conservation of monuments and memorial places, aiming to keep alive the historical memory.⁷ The preservation of the architectural heritage assists in the shaping of national consciousness. The monuments act as historical evidences and the methodical protection and their highlighting is institutionalized and is given to the responsible public services.⁸

Until the 1970s, the emersion and prevalence of Functionalism in the Urban and the Modern Movement in Architecture, devalues implicitly the historic city centres by focuses on models of garden cities and suburbs, urban expansion in the region, ideas that reduce building density and monofunctional zones of urban space. According to the *Charta of Athens* (1933),⁹ which was also the manifesto of Functionalism and Modern Movement, the existing forms of cities are inconsistent with the challenges of the new era and require a radical and major intervention with complete demolition

and the restoration of the constitution of the monarchy. It was chosen to preserve those individual monuments that symbolize better the values of the monarchy (e.g. medieval Gothic churches, old palaces, defensive towers). A. Gospodini–I. Beriatis–E. Raskou, «Διαχείριση αρχιτεκτονικής κληρονομιάς: Η διαχρονική εξέλιξη των πολιτικών στην Ευρώπη και οι νέες προκλήσεις για την Ελλάδα» (Management of architectural heritage: The timeless evolution of policies in Europe and the new challenges for Greece), *Αειχώρος. Κείμενα Πολεοδομίας, Χωροταξίας και Ανάπτυξης* (Aeichoros. Texts for Urban Planning and Development, 1/6 (2007), 146-175. Available at: <http://www.aeihoros.gr/el/ejournal/oldissues#> (date of access: 28/4/2013).

⁷ P. Larkham, *Conservation and the City*, Routledge, London 1996. B. Graham, “The past in Europe’s present: diversity, identity and the construction of place”, in B. Graham (ed.), *Modern Europe. Place, Culture, Identity*, Arnold 19-49, London 1998. B. Graham (ed.), *Modern Europe. Place, Culture, Identity*. Arnold, London 1998. B. Graham–G. J. Ashworth–J. E. Tunbridge, *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture and Economy*, Arnold. London 2000.

⁸ Initially in Italy, France and Germany and, later, in the rest European countries. In Greece, 1834 is a milestone, when the restoration work on the Acropolis started. Gospodini–Beriatis–Raskou, *ibid*.

⁹ G. Simeoforidis (ed.), *Le Corbusier. Η Χάρτα των Αθηνών* (Le Corbusier. The Charta of Athens), Υpsilon, Athens 1987.

and reconstruction. Consequently, large areas of historic city centres and numerous buildings of architectural heritage are demolished gradually from functionalist as “obstacle” to development. In both *Charta of Athens* and *Hague Convention*¹⁰ there is a provision for the protection of individual significant monuments of the past.

In the 1980s, the emersion and the prevalence of Postmodern Movement, which focuses on the historic city centres, the regeneration and the revival constitutes the incision in the conservation of the architectural heritage. In this context, the historical typology of urban space reflects the point of the town planning debate.¹¹

Starting from the axiom that “the whole town itself is a typology that is waiting to be revealed”,¹² the interest is carried by the individual historical monument in building complex and entire sections of the urban tissue with special morphology and cultural meaning, and in samples with particular architecture of the location in the proximal past. This wideness of architectural heritage is clearly expressed in the *Declaration of Amsterdam* (1975) and, ultimately, there is noticed a shift of interest to the anonymous architectural heritage, which, as a whole of buildings and sites (road, square, area, settlement), has significant architectural value rather than themselves.

In the 80s, the multitude regeneration of interventions and revivals in all European cities is rendered the management of architectural heritage as a dominant urban policy. In the *Treaty of Granada* (1985), the protection and the enhancement of the architectural heritage associated with financial, social and cultural development of cities and regions.¹³

¹⁰ N. Konsola, *Η διεθνής Προστασία της Παγκόσμιας Αρχιτεκτονικής Κληρονομιάς* (The International Protection of World’s Architectural Heritage), Papanisis, Athens 1995.

¹¹ R. Krier, *Urban Space*, Academy Editions, London 1978. A. Rossi, *The Architecture of the city*, MIT Press, Cambridge Mass. 1982 [Greek edition: *Η Αρχιτεκτονική της Πόλης*, University Studio Press, Θεσσαλονίκη 1991]. A. Vidler, “The third Typology”, in A. Vidler (ed.), *Rational Architecture*, Archives d’Architecture Moderne, Brussels 1978, pp. 28-32.

¹² Vidler, *ibid.*

¹³ Gospodini–Beriatos–Raskou, *ibid.*

Nowadays, in an era of increasing globalization, the protection, the conservation, the interpretation and the promotion of the architectural heritage and cultural diversity of each region or country is a major challenge for the whole world. However, the management of this heritage, within the framework of internationally recognized and properly applied standards, usually belongs to the responsibility of the community where it is located or of the group which preserves.¹⁴

Within this context, the present study aims to record and discuss about the institutional framework and policies for managing the architectural heritage of the Historic Centre of Korça at urban level, with parallel references to the financial factors that influence the growth of development mechanisms and the basic design options. As the “modern city” has aroused a widely scientific debate,¹⁵ the theoretical approach emphasizes on the systematic identification and the determination of the evolution’s characteristics that compose the various urban planning options.¹⁶ Thus, we focus on the Law 455/23-6-2005,¹⁷ the most comprehensive legislation in Albania’s state level. Simultaneously, we record the movements of the political authorities and of the society, which jointly shape the architectural landscape of the city.

¹⁴ *The charta of cultural tourism, ibid.*

¹⁵ See T. Deckker (ed.), *The Modern city revisited*, Spon Press, London 2000. J. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jonathan Cape, London 1961. P. Hall, “The City of Towers”, in P. Hall (ed.), *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*, Blackwell, Oxford 1988, pp. 203-240.

¹⁶ E. X. Asprogerakas–K. A. Serraos, «Οργανωμένη πολεοδομική ανάπτυξη. Η εμπειρία του Αμβούργου: Από τη δεκαετία του 1950 στο πέρασμα στον 21ο αιώνα» (The organized urban development. The experience of Hamburg: From the 1950s to the passage in the 21st century), *Aeichoros. Texts for Urban Planning and Development*, 16 (2011), 30-59. Available at: <http://www.aeichoros.gr/el/ejournal/oldissues#> (date of access: 28/4/2013).

¹⁷ Ministria e Kulturës, Rinisë dhe Sporteve, Vendim nr. 455/23-6-2005 Për Shpalljen “Qendër Historike” dhe “Ansambël Urbanistik, Arkitekturik, Tradicional” të disa Zonave të Qytetit të Korçës, si dhe për Miratimin e Rregullores së Administrimit të tyre.

*The Historic Centre of Korça*¹⁸

The city of Korça is built on an extensive and fertile plain at the foot of Morava. It is the largest city in eastern Albania and is considered a cultural and industrial center of great importance. There are no reliable data for the establishing of Korça, but as “City” (*La Città di Korcha*) mentioned in the 14th century by the annals of Musaka’s family, as a property of the Despot Giovanni Musaka.¹⁹

In the 16th and 17th century, the development of Korça was not very spectacular. But in the late 18th century, after the destruction of the neighbouring commercial metropolis of Moschopolis, Korça assumes the role of productive and commercial center as it benefits from its geographical position at the crossroads of important trade routes and rich agricultural hinterland around.

The evolutions of the 18th and 19th century in Europe reflected at different ways in the Ottoman Balkans. In mid-19th century the city of Korça was ready for a further developmental leap. In the first decade of the 19th century, Felix Beaujour and William Leake

¹⁸ The information of this module become from the articles: Kl. Kalamata, “A brief history of architecture in Korça town 1496-2006”. The papers were presented at the conferences with subject *Conversation and Management of historic buildings*, Lund, Sweden, September 24-October 12, 2007 & Santiago, Valparaiso, Chile 1-5 March, 2008, Part I & II, kindly bestowed by the author, as an interview with him in Korça on March 25, 2013. Also, on this issue see: Em. Riza–P. Thomo, *Albanie. Architecture Traditionnelle des Balkans*, Melissa, Athens 1990. Em. Riza–P. Thomo, “Albanie”, in *Architecture Traditionnelle des Pays Balkaniques*, Melissa, Athens 2005, pp. 17-82. N. Cholevas, *Αρχιτεκτονική του Μεσοπολέμου στα Βαλκάνια* (Interwar architecture in the Balkans), Philipotis, Athens 1994.

¹⁹ ...*E più possedi e signoriggio la città de Corizza, per insino alla villa nomine Savoiana...* G. Musachia, “Istoria e Genealogia della casa Musachia”, in Ch. Hopf, *Chroniques Greco-Romanes*, Weidmann, Berlin 1873, p. 280 (Albanian translation: G. Muzaka, *Memorie*, TOENA, Tiranë 1996). Giovanni Musaka was the nephew of Despot Andrea Musachia II, an Albanian nobleman, who died in 1451. He was titled as “Despot of Epirus” and his flag with the double-headed eagle, was given to him by the Byzantine emperor.

record 450 houses in Korça and a total of 3,000 inhabitants.²⁰ At this time, as the structure of society was crystallized, the city gathers a significant number of workers from surrounding villages. Now, there is a need for a new modern design and in very short time were created new areas, with large and straight streets and new types of houses, according to the European model.²¹

Korça is one of the few but, at the same time, one of the best examples in the Balkans, where the urbanization of the city in an urban pattern was started too early, since 1858, whereas in the late 1860s and early 1870s was finalized in the urban structure. This urban pattern was applied in practice for almost a century, imposing modern standards of hygiene and traffic and, most importantly, with a specific program to further development of the city by adding new sections. The specific urban design was likeable in the local community; since the housing needs of a growing urban middle class was fulfilled, and therefore required a standard of living that corresponded to their financial status. Each one of the rectangles of this urban tissue had an area of 2,000-5,000 m², in which were built two rows of houses, into equal plots and same orientation. This new type of house, with symmetrical design, reflects not only urbanization, but also a process of social integration. It is a typical example of the changes to a new lifestyle.

The neoclassical architecture, that dominated in Europe for more than a century, and had spread many cities in the Balkans, also influenced the new extension in Korça. The new bourgeoisie deman-

²⁰ W.M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, London 1836, V, I, p. 337. F. Beaujour, *Voyage militaire dans l'empire ottoman*, Imprimerie de A. Firmin Didot, Paris 1829.

²¹ M. Kiel dedicates the new project to Ahmed Eyyub Pasha, who rebuilt the city after the fire at the end of previous century. M. Kiel, *Ottoman Architecture in Albania 1385-1912*, Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul 1990, p. 163. This rebuilding may be a reference to the market, after the fire, in 1879. The market was out of the two residential neighbourhoods, Varosh and Kasaba. But there are indications that the grid had started before the year 1879, even on the market, while in the city the new urban project started at least at 1858. See, also P. Thomo, *Korça –Urbanistika dhe Arkitektura*, Tiranë 1988, pp. 113 & 119.

ded the appropriate residential structures that would represent its greatness and power, provided that it could be achieved with the least possible cost. Neoclassical influences are also obvious through the use of new materials and technologies. The process of replacing old materials and technologies had begun before the mid-19th century and in the 1860s and 1870s the builders were familiar with the demands of the new typology.

This social integration did not last too long. During the last decades of the 19th century, the demand for diversification in lifestyle was intense. First sample was the transfer of the multifunction market to the residential district. Besides bakeries, grocery stores, laboratories (such as tailors, shoemakers etc.), hotels, restaurants, bars, government buildings, luxurious shops with high quality products began to erect at specific points and squares of neighbourhoods. A part of the large bourgeoisie lived in these places and had the need to adopt a specific type of building, with large ground floor shops and housing above them. During this period, many changes occurred to the market place (bazaar) of the city, which was out of residential areas. Three fires, which resulted in the almost final catastrophe, as the shops were built mainly from wood, enforced the faster reconstruction of urbanization of the bazaar.²²

The turn of the century, raised new concerns in urban planning. The local authorities were legally responsible for the further expansion of the city. In 1910, a new draft of regulation was submitted, that was called “Chart of the Town”. Then, in 1923, the Municipality of Korça commissioned three engineers to prepare a new plan. It was apparent that the complexity of the problems could not be solved as before by empirical ways. The urban structure of the city, outside of the main squares, was enriched with small and large areas of public open area. Monumental sculptures adorned those urban areas. Initially in the center and then in the park, in front of the

²² The fires were in 1822, 1858 and 1879. The reconstruction of the market according to the urban plan and with modern buildings had started before the third fire. Thomo, *ibid*, p. 119.

Public Library, two monuments, dedicated to national heroes of the Albanian Renaissance, were erected.²³

Naturally, the complexity of the projects required in this intensive residential development could not be realized only by the locals. For this reason, many foreign engineers and architects were invited to Korça. In addition, many merchants brought with them building designs from countries in which they were trading and, of course, they brought the corresponding cultural approach, education and culture. This led to the introduction of a wide variety of inspirations in architecture from East and West. In a short time, the old traditional style was replaced by neoclassicism and later, from the early 20th century, the Art Nouveau or eclecticism.

A cosmopolitan character to the city's architecture was given by the rapid adoption of every new method, technology or fashion. The cosmopolitan trend expressed also in lifestyle through the co-existence and mutual communities.²⁴ This condition exists until the end of the World War II, when the communist regime closed the borders, bringing heavy blow not only to trade, but also to the free movement of people and ideas.

In this period, as in all countries of real socialism of Eastern Europe, in Albania the architecture is mainly influenced by that of the Soviet Union. Blocks of uniform housing began to appear in every city and in Korça, destroying the old 'urban' homes. Being a well-organized city, Korça had no need for residential complexes for more than a decade. But many houses were destroyed after the earthquake of 1960 and the housing needs increased. Architects, who were trained in the Soviet Union, start to build the first collective housing estates along the major arterial roads of the city, composed of three to four storey buildings, with very little unhealthy apartments, without decoration. Even the lack of coating on the

²³ Both monuments, National Warrior (Unknown Soldier) and Themistokli Gjërmenji, created by Odise Paskali, the greatest artist of the 20th century in Albania.

²⁴ During the first half of the 20th century, there were in Korça Albanian, Greek, Bulgarian, Turkish, English, Italian and French schools. There were, also, many diplomatic services.

outer walls, was seen as “socialist domination of high buildings in opposite to the small houses of bourgeoisie”.

Similar blocks continue to get rebuilt until 1973, when the first measure for the protection of historical monuments in Korça was voted. At this time, fourteen buildings were proclaimed as “cultural monuments” and three small areas come under special conditions of protection for their architectural heritage. Then, in 1984, a second regulation, that protected buildings rising to twenty four, was voted. Two areas of the city are under a framework of strict protection, while two others under strict surveillance. Another legal instrument of 1988, this time belonging to the municipality, sets under protection the entire old part of town, which was defined as “Historic Center”. In 2003, the area was certified as “Historic Center” and by a government law,²⁵ accompanied by a regulation concerning the protection, administration, management and construction of new buildings inside this area.

The political instability of the country in the 1990s, and especially the financial collapse, caused by the “fall of pyramids” in 1997, led the country in a mess. A year later, after general elections, the government stabilized and tried to bring order, but it took many years to be able to control this situation in the whole country. During this period a significant percentage of the population had migrated abroad. The old industries were destroyed and the economy was based on agriculture, trade, and textile and building construction. The informal sector was involved in smuggling and “laundering” of money.

For towns as Korça, the consequences of those years were disastrous. The social structure of the city changed. Most of the migrants do not return to their homeland and the new inhabitants of the city are mainly farmers from the highlands who suddenly get into the role of bourgeois. They began to reconstruct the old town houses in a way that showed a growing tendency of disaster despite rescue. The values of the past were irrelevant to them. They were dominated by arrogance and desire to prove their superiority to the

²⁵ Kuvendi i Republikës së Shqipërisë, Ligji nr. 9048/07-04-2003 Për trashëgimë kulturore.

neighbours. The local authorities were not able to resist and the corruption prevailed.

By 2005, construction companies got powerful. By taking advantage of the political, financial and social circumstances, they developed their construction activity in the old center of the town. They increased their demands for the demolition of old houses, replacing them with multi-storey buildings. A weak and useless, in most cases, corrupt local government system lies behind them, unwilling or unable to perform his institutional role. In addition, the local authorities are involved in this system of nepotism, destroying, eventually, a unique, rich part of the urban, architectural heritage of the city of Korça.

The Law 455/23-6-2005²⁶ regarding the definition and management of areas of the city as “Historic Center” or as an “Ensemble of Traditional Urbanism, Architecture” is the latest legislation at central power level.

Law 455/23-6-2005²⁷

The Law No. 455, which was signed by Fatos Nano, Albanian Prime Minister, on June, 23rd, 2005, identified the specific areas for the city of Korça as “Historic Centre” and “Ensemble of traditional urbanism, architecture” and also introduced the legislation concerning their management.

The decision invokes the Article 100 of the Constitution and the Law No. 9048 of 2003²⁸ (Article 3, paragraphs 5, 29, 2, 31) “For cultural heritage”, after the proposal of the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, the Council of Ministers decided:

1. To proclaim as “historic center” of the city of Korça, the following areas:

- a) The museum complex and the complex bazaar,
- b) A part of the region 3
- c) A part of the region 12

²⁶ Ministria e Kulturës, Rinisë dhe Sporteve, Vendim nr. 455, *ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Kuvendi i Republikës së Shqipërisë, Ligji nr. 9048, *ibid.*

d) The Boulevard “Republic” and the complex of the museum with its two wings, according to the map attached to this decision.

2. To proclaim as “Ensemble of traditional urbanism, architecture” the areas of the city Korça 1, 2, 11 and parts of Regions 3 and 12, according to the map attached to the decision.

3. The approval of regulations for the management of the “Historic Center” and the “Ensemble of traditional urbanism, architecture”, which are attached to this decision.

4. Sets as responsible for the implementation of this decision, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, the Ministry of State and Tourism, the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralisation, the city of Korça and specialized agencies.

5. The decision number 516 of 24.10.2002²⁹ of the Council of Ministers for “The extension of historic center of the city of Korça” repealed.

The decision is applicable after its publication in the Official Gazette.

In this decision, a map with areas of Korça is attached, defined as “Historic Centre” and “Ensemble of traditional urbanism, architecture”.

Then, the regulation on the management of the historic center and the ensemble of traditional urbanism and architecture of Korça follows, which consists of sixteen (16) articles.

In Article 1, the aim and objectives of the Regulation are recorded. Specifically it is stated that the regulation is designed to determine the rules of the management, protection, conservation and restoration of the historic center and the urban, traditional, architectural ensemble of Korça.

The main objectives of the Regulation include:

1. The management of the historic center and the urban architectural traditional ensemble of Korça, according to the map, which is annexed to the Regulation as an integral part of it.

²⁹ Ministria e Kulturës, Rinisë dhe Sporteve, Vendimi nr. 516/24-10-2002 të Këshillit të Ministrave për Zgjerimin e ‘Qendrës Historike’ të Bashkisë së Korçës.

2. The protection, conservation and restoration of historical and cultural value of the historic center and the urban, traditional, architectural ensemble of Korça.

3. The forms of cooperation with local government of Korça for the management, protection and restoration of the cultural heritage of the historic center and the urban, traditional architectural ensemble of Korça.

The Article 2 refers to the structure of the historic center and the urban, traditional, architectural ensemble of Korça. It is noted that the historic center and the traditional urban architectural complex of the city, is considered as the most authentic places, confirming the history of the development of the city, as part of the cultural heritage and, therefore, are subjected to the Law No. 9048, dated 07.04.2003 "For cultural heritage". These consist of:

1. The historic center, which includes:

a) The monument of the "Unknown Soldier" in the neighbourhood 3, which is considered as the oldest ensemble in Korça.

b) The ensembles in both sides of the boulevard "Republic", which include areas 1, 2, 11, and almost the entire region 12. These areas represent the period of the planned development of the city from 1850 until the early twentieth century.

c) The ensemble of the old city market, which includes the area around the Ilias Mirahorit mosque, according to the map attached.

2. The traditional urban architectural ensemble, which includes the entire regions 1, 2, 3, 11, 12, and some partly areas of 7, 8, 9. This is bounded as hereinafter:

– North: the boulevard "Gjergj Kastrioti" and the highway that goes along the park "Rinia".

– East: with hills and the city on the hill Shën Thanasit.

– South: the boulevard "Fan S. Noli" from the center up to the city hospital.

– West, with the streets "Ajet Xhindolli" and "Haxhi Dvorani", which ends at the boulevard "Fan S. Noli" and at school "Themistokli Gërmenji", then to the hotel "Regency", ends to the boulevard "Democracy" and then in the square in front of the

Bankës Kombëtare, including also the garden “Shën Marisë” and the boulevard “Gjergj Kastrioti”, according to the attached map.

The Article 3 refers to the Historical Center as the most important part of the city of Korça. It is noted that it is protected as both architectural and environmental urban monument. Within the area, which is defined as Historic Center, only the reconstruction and the rehabilitation of the existing buildings are allowed, these being considered as essential for their conservation. The Institute of Cultural Monuments is the defined responsible for restoration, rehabilitation and any other intervention in facilities of cultural monuments in the historic center. Regarding the renovation and the usage of monuments in the historic center, it is emphasized that these are allowable only for administrative and socio-cultural needs, but with prejudice that will not affect the values that have been set. In any case, the permission for that purpose, is given in accordance with the Article 39, paragraph 2 of Law No. 9048, dated 7.4.2003³⁰ “For cultural heritage”.

The Article 4 defines the categories of cultural monuments. The monuments of the historic center, in accordance with Law No. 9048, dated 7.4.2003³¹ “For cultural heritage”, grouped by their value in two classes: Class I monuments and monuments of Class II. The grouping of monuments aims to differentiate regarding to their value and related to the methods of conservation interventions.

The Article 5 refers to the monuments of class I, which are defined as the most valuable historical architecture according to the nature, type and degree that their existence is necessary for maintaining the character of the city of Korça. These monuments can be found in the historic center or traditional urban architectural ensemble of the city, but can also be in and outside of specific areas. In this category of monuments, any change affecting to the composition of the ensemble, its architectural management of internal and external spaces, the functionality of the surface and the distinctive

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

architectural elements is not allowed. Also, the replacement of the original materials is prohibited.

The Article 6 sets the monuments of Class II as all the other buildings, except those covered by in Class I, which are situated within the boundaries of the historic center, as well as those areas that belong to the traditional urban architectural ensemble of the city. In these monuments internal changes or adjustments may be permitted, which enable a more convenient and rational use, using for this purpose the existing structure, provided, of course, they do not alter their appearance. Under exceptional cases, it may also permit some changes in the appearance of secondary factors of monuments after studies DRMK or ICM. In the monuments of Class II can be salvaged, where available, environmental characteristics, architectural decorations and value furniture. As Class II monuments are considered also roads and sidewalks, green, and all other elements of the urban landscape of the historical center.

The Article 7 refers to the restoration of cultural monuments in Classes I and II. It is noted that the study and the projects referring to restoration of the monuments of Classes I and II submitted by ICM, and the regional directorates of cultural monuments in which they belong, and in each case approved by the National Council for Rehabilitation.

In Article 8, there are recorded the reasons in which the specific areas must be included in the traditional urban architectural ensemble. In this way, as urban architectural traditional group are considered all regions around the historic center of the city after the rationalization of boundaries as mentioned in Article 2 and visualized in the attached map. These areas represent the urban and architectural development of the city of Korça during the 20th century that preserve many valuable elements of the history of architecture and urban development of the city and every Albanian city as a whole. In the characterization “traditional urban architectural ensemble”, it is emphasized that the main roads and city streets, volumes, proportions and the residential character of the buildings to the street should also be included. The yards, fencing and outbuildings shall be constructed as part of the value derived from the past and as

such they should be maintained in this set. Also to maintain the overall character of the area with the protection of gardens, green alleys and private homes is needed. Any changes or interventions in the urban landscape (roads, sidewalks, green, lighting, decoration, etc.) in traditional urban architectural ensemble should be made after studying and retain as much as possible the values inherited from the past. Studies and reconstruction projects, new constructions and any other interventions in the urban traditional architectural ensemble must be firstly adopted by the Supervisory Committee and the Ensemble of historic urban traditional architectural center of Korça.

The Article 9 refers to the green areas of the historical center and the traditional urban architectural ensemble. The parks and gardens are considered as part of the urban landscape and urban architectural ensemble of traditional Korça. In these areas any new construction is not allowed. The green spaces within the urban traditional architectural ensemble, either private or public, are considered as part of the value of the conurbation and are subject to state protection, as well as architectural constructions.

In Article 10 are recorded the interventions permitted in the urban traditional architectural ensemble. According to this, the reconstruction in the traditional urban architectural ensemble or the re-cast of urban and architectural studies, based on the existing urban and architectural trend, is allowed. It is also noted that this planning should aim to identify and preserve the values inherited from the past and take into consideration the criteria set out in this Law.

In Article 11 the new constructions in traditional urban architectural ensemble are mentioned. It is emphasized that the city plan must respect the limits of historical mapping and this Regulation for the further development of the city.

The Article 12 is concerned with the design criteria for reconstruction and adaptation of new construction in the urban traditional architectural ensemble. It is emphasized that the adjustments or new constructions in urban architectural traditional ensemble should follow the urban architecture design and the constructions must be in harmony with the urban character in a whole, while re-

specting the design criteria laid down in this Regulation. The ratio of building area defines that for constructions sized up to 80 m², the building factor can be up to 100%. For constructions with an area of 80-200 m² the building factor should be 80%. For constructions with an area over 200 m², the percentage should be 70%. It is clarified that the arrangements related to the urban apartments must be made in accordance with the character of other neighbouring districts. Then, the law lists a number of markings related to the placement of the buildings on the street, the composition of their volume to the surrounding buildings, the use and the management, the fencing, the stone masonry with the traditional patterns, the use the ground floors as shops, the form of separate elements of the buildings (windows, balconies, etc.), the form of the roof, the gutters and the terraces. It is noted that the structure of the building should include functional components, such as chimneys, or decorative elements, such as porches, panels etc. Their shape, however, is needed to follow the simple neoclassical principles, in order to support the overall picture of the structure of the ensemble and not bother with their appearance. It is clarified that in the facades of the new buildings, modern elements can be applied, but they are harmonized with the influences of the neoclassical style, most coherent with traditional urban architecture and that if used to structure modern construction materials, concrete etc., these should not be visible. For these reasons, it is recommended to use traditional materials such as stone, hewn without visible joint, hammered iron etc.

Regarding to the Infrastructure Projects, the Article 13 refers that the study and planning of technical infrastructure works in the historical center and traditional urban architectural ensemble initially is depended to the Supervisory Committee and to the Ensemble of historical urban traditional architectural center of Korça.

The Article 14 provides the Supervisory Committee and the Ensemble of historic urban traditional architectural center of Korça: Near the City Hall of Korça exist the Supervisory Committee and the Ensemble of historic urban traditional architectural center, which have an advisory role, specific operating principles and in which are involved representatives of local government, of the Re-

gional Directorate of Korça Cultural Monuments and of other specialized institutions. This Committee advises and recommends local authorities to take measures in order to improve and achieve national standards for the management, protection and restoration of cultural heritage of the city of Korça. The committee consists of five members. Chairman of the Committee is the mayor or a commissioner of the city of Korça. The Regulation of the Supervisory Committee and the names of entities are proposed by the representative of the Commission and approved by the Municipal Council of Korça.

The Article 15 indicates the forms of cooperation that are required in order to have the Supervisory Committee and the Ensemble of historical urban traditional architectural center of Korça. They are obliged, therefore, to cooperate with local and central government on the basis of mutual agreement.

Finally, the Article 16 contains the final provisions, in which the amendments to this proposal for a Regulation of the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, is adopted by the Cabinet. It is emphasized that the map contained in this Regulation of the historic center and the urban traditional architectural center of Korça is an integral part of this Regulation.

The Discussion

The discussion that emerged does not just concern the management plan for protection and conservation of the historical side of Korça. In practice, there are involving factors, related to economics, sociology and politics not only of this city but also the entire country. The issue could focus on intense changes in the country's economic level and potential impact they make to social structure. The historic center of Korça is no exception. The large proportion of the urban poor, who lives there, is threatened both by neglecting and degradation. This dilemma could be described as the difficulty of achieving protection of the area in natural, structure and social context.

As it is already mentioned, the legal protection of the historic center basically begins with the government's decision in 2003 on the conservation of the five regions belonging to the old urban core of the city. This law was considered as a successful outcome of long-standing researches and studies that would contribute to the maintenance and restoration of the historic architectural character of the city. Within a year, however, the construction companies basically are fighting back and pushing for its repeal. The local authorities (Mayors and Prefect) are on the side of the constructors, who are supported by a number of architects and engineers, who took advantage of this opportunity for easy profits. They achieve the enactment of government act in 2006,³² which is a setback to the policies and practices of heritage conservation. Relating to the Korça, the protected areas are reduced in four, as happened in the law of 1984, and the Municipality has undertaken the control.

³² Kuvendi i Republikës së Shqipërisë, Ligji nr. 9482/3-4-2006 Për Legalizimin, Urbanizimin dhe Integrimin e Ndërtimeve pa Leje. This law has been modified in individual points, as follows: Kuvendi i Republikës së Shqipërisë, Ligji nr. 9786/19-7-2007 Për disa Ndryshime dhe Shtesa në Ligjin nr. 9482/3-4-2006 "Për Legalizimin, Urbanizimin dhe Integrimin e Ndërtimeve pa Leje". Kuvendi i Republikës së Shqipërisë, Ligji nr. 9895/9-6-2008 Për disa Ndryshime dhe Shtesa në Ligjin nr. 9482/3-4-2006 "Për Legalizimin, Urbanizimin dhe Integrimin e Ndërtimeve pa Leje". Vendimi i Gjykatës Kushtetuese, Nr. 3/02-02-2009. Një Grup prej 31 Deputetësh të Kuvendit të Shqipërisë: 1. Shpallja si të papajtueshme me Kushtetutën e Republikës së Shqipërisë dhe Kartën Europiane të Autonomisë Vendore të neneve 3, pika 8, 4, 5, pika 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 14, pika 3, 16, 17, 20, pika 2, 23, 24, 26 dhe 28, pika 2, të Ligjit nr. 9895/09-06-2008 Për disa Ndryshime dhe Shtesa në Ligjin nr. 9482/03-04-2006 'Për Legalizimin, Urbanizimin dhe Integrimin e Ndërtimeve pa Leje'. 2. Pezullimi i Zbatimit të Ligjit nr. 9895/09-06-2008 Për disa Ndryshime dhe Shtesa në Ligjin nr. 9482/03-04-2006 'Për Legalizimin, Urbanizimin dhe Integrimin e Ndërtimeve pa Leje'. Kuvendi i Republikës së Shqipërisë, Ligji nr. 10099/19-03-2009 Për disa Ndryshime dhe Shtesa në Ligjin nr. 9482/3-4-2006 'Për Legalizimin, Urbanizimin dhe Integrimin e Ndërtimeve pa Leje'. Kuvendi i Republikës së Shqipërisë, Ligji nr. 10169/22-10-2009 Për disa Ndryshime dhe Shtesa në Ligjin nr. 9482/3-4-2006 "Për Legalizimin, Urbanizimin dhe Integrimin e Ndërtimeve pa Leje". Kuvendi i Republikës së Shqipërisë, Ligji nr. 10219/4-2-2010 Për disa Ndryshime dhe Shtesa në Ligjin nr. 9482/3-4-2006 "Për Legalizimin, Urbanizimin dhe Integrimin e Ndërtimeve pa Leje".

With a semblance of an infrastructure project relating to water supply and sanitation of the region,³³ a massive destruction of the cobbled streets of the city started. The Municipality, who had the oversight of the project, did nothing to enforce a minimum discipline in progress of works, causing chaos. The social indignation about the living conditions was significant. There was created, finally, the impression that the maintenance of the historic center was impossible, except in a form of “slum”. This impression is in fact exacerbated by the media: “...*the historic center can not be maintained... The city should breathe freely, through new and modern construction...*”.³⁴

Furthermore, there is no effective response from the Institute of Monuments of Culture and the Ministry of Culture. The government’s weakness finalizes the conflict between protectors of urban heritage and constructors. The Director of the Regional Centre for Historical Monuments relieved from his duties³⁵ and opens up the way for any kind of constructions in and around the historic center, which, in a short time, transformed from an organized urban architecture system to a mess of buildings and components.

The Dimensions of Conflict: Two Examples out of Albanian Border

I. Protection of the urban architecture of Korça, Albania. Motion for a resolution³⁶

On October 10, 2010, a proposal for the Protection of urban architecture in Korça, Albania (Doc. 12403) was submitted by Ed-

³³ The project started as a very serious effort by the Germans, but soon degenerated into an ordinary, just profitable subproject from the Italian construction company (from Sicily), which had won the contest.

³⁴ The owners of construction companies also possess both private television channels of the city. The third television channel owned by the state and is easily led by local authorities.

³⁵ Dr Kliti Kalamata, Architect, in whom we have already referred.

³⁶ Council of Europe (2010). *Protection of the urban architecture of Korça, Albania. Motion for a resolution Doc. 12403.*

ward O'HARA, United Kingdom, SOC, to the European Parliament.

In the draft resolution that was set out by O'Hara and others was mentioned that:

1. Korça is the largest city in south-east Albania. Its importance derives from the connection with Ilyas Panarity (later Ilyas Bey Myrahor), a local resident who became the first Janissary who pass through the breached walls of the Topkapi at the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and from its ascendancy as a regional commercial center after the sacking of the nearby Moschopolis (Voskopoja) by the troops of Ali Pasha in 1788.

2. The significant history of Korça between the 15th and 20th centuries is reflected in its distinctive mix of urban architecture, including Balkan, eastern, western, northern, neoclassical and modern styles.

3. This urban architecture is at risk from insensitive restoration and inappropriate development.

4. The Parliamentary Assembly calls upon the Government of Albania and the municipal authorities of Korça to protect the urban architecture of the city.

Following are the signatures of those who support this proposal.³⁷

³⁷ O'HARA Edward, United Kingdom, SOC
ANDERSON Donald, United Kingdom, SOC
AUSTIN John, United Kingdom, SOC
BOSWELL Tim, United Kingdom, EDG
CURTIS-THOMAS Claire, United Kingdom, SOC
ETHERINGTON Bill, United Kingdom, SOC
GREENWAY John, United Kingdom, EDG
HEALD Oliver, United Kingdom, EDG
KEAVENEY Cecilia, Ireland, ALDE
MARLAND-MILITELLO Muriel, France, EPP/CD
McCAFFERTY Christine, United Kingdom, SOC
MEALE Alan, United Kingdom, SOC
OLSSON Kent, Sweden, EPP/CD
PAPADIMITRIOU Elsa, Greece, EPP/CD
POURGOURIDES Christos, Cyprus, EPP/CD
PRESCOTT John, United Kingdom, SOC

II. Korça: City Centre Master Plan³⁸

The City Center Master Plan was the result of international competition held by the Municipality of Korça, in 2009. Five of the twelve finalist companies selected to present their proposals: 51N4E (Belgium), Bolles+Wilson (Germany), Daniel Libeskind Architects LLC (New York, USA), JA-Joubert Architecture (Rotterdam, Netherlands) and Domus Concept (Lisboa, Portugal). The first prize was awarded by the German company Bolles+Wilson.³⁹

Specifically, the contest winners indicate for the architectural design that: *The aim of the competition was to find a concept which integrates a traffic and pedestrian rational with the qualitative and development needs of the city – a commercial strategy providing administrative facilities and a framework for residential development. The competition briefly also emphasised that the scale of the new Korça should be respectful and appropriate to the historic scale.*⁴⁰

As the City Center Master Plan did not conform to the regulatory plan of 1994, later regulations for the protection of traditional neighbourhoods of the city and matters of private ownership, in May 2010 the District Council rejected the plan, for reasons which focused on mainly negative impact on the city identity, which

SARIKAS Fidias, Cyprus, SOC

VRETTOS Konstantinos, Greece, SOC

WALTER Robert, United Kingdom, EDG

WILLIAMS Betty, United Kingdom, SOC

EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party. SOC: Socialist Group. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. EDG: European Democratic Group. UEL: Group of the Unified European Left. NR: not registered in a group

³⁸ J. Sebastian, Masterplan Korça City Centre/Bolles+Wilson. Available at: <http://www.archdaily.com/84344/masterplan-Korça-city-centre-bolles-wilson/> (date of access: 28/4/2013).

³⁹ L. Triantis, "Spatial planning, institutional diffusion and the politics of space in Albanian cities after Socialism. Evidence from Tirana and Korça", in *Symposium on South East Europe*, London School of Economics and Political Science, 18 June 2010.

⁴⁰ Sebastian, *ibid.*

would cause the application. The future implementation of this plan remains uncertain.⁴¹

Remarks

The most complete version of the term “landscape” refers to any place that has undergone interpretation, recording and visual representation or configuration, in relation to members of a cultural community. In this sense, the landscape can refer to every kind of cultural construction, in every cultural meaning or cultural symbolism. The socially approachable, interpreted and configured locus is the essential background of every culture. It is the place which holds the actions of societies and who expresses the results of these actions. What is worth to mention is the fact that the broader reference to landscape, whether it is directed toward the past and its relations with us or it is directed towards the future; it can only be the foundation of politics.⁴²

Aris Konstantinidis, with quite radical but realistic approach considers that: *things are perishable and the replacement of the old by the new is an ineluctable necessity and law of life... Once architecture creates “life cans”, you should not see these as monuments, but as “animate bodies”, as temporary structures that their life is limited in duration, as well as human life on earth.*⁴³

After all these, someone should wonder: how we expect to become the center of Korça in the future. In order to answer this question, someone must answer two other questions: a) what is the future of cities in general and b) whether will be implemented on behalf of the leadership of the city a coordinated planning or uncontrollable market rules will predominate.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Triantis, *ibid.*

⁴² K. Moraitis, «Προλογίζοντας το τοπίο. Το πολιτισμικό τοπίο–Το τοπίο ως συνθήκη πολιτικής» (Introducing the landscape. The cultural landscape–The landscape as treaty policy), *Τα Νέα* (23 Οκτωβρίου 2011).

⁴³ Petridou, *ibid.*

⁴⁴ A. Aravantinos, «Δυναμικές και σχεδιασμός κέντρων στην πόλη των επόμενων δεκαετιών-προς συγκεντρωτικά ή αποκεντρωτικά σχήματα;» (Dynamics and design of city centers for decades to come-to centralized or decentralized

The history of city centers is almost identical with the history of civilization. Economic growth and prosperity are certainly objectives which were specialized in centres. But nowadays in the developed world, the civilization, the culture, the intellectual, the mental and the spiritual evolution of the human factor should be the main issue.⁴⁵ For this reason, the city planners and other specialists have a great responsibility, but primarily, even more the politicians and decision-makers, in order to promote the centers as the best possible organization of cultural spaces and social contact.

There are points of view that reflect the mild approach about the relationship between the old and the new, which usually prevail. Through these, the need to preserve the monuments in the urban fabric is recognized, but it is considered that entire revelation of the fragments of the past is impossible, and has no meaning for a modern city. Within this context, the composition of the present with the past and the inclusion of monuments to modern life in order to incorporate the story into city life are considered as necessity.⁴⁶

The concept of the city, as this is recorded in the collective subconscious, is an issue that concerns Christine Boyer from a different perspective. Boyer argues that the postmodern imagery of space and time, takes advantage of the history and the fragments of the past for a romantic and misleading perception of the city: *...In order to appreciate the viewers or to be able to read this urban landscape as text, they should see the city not only in formal and func-*

schemes?), *Aeichoros. Texts for Urban Planning and Development*, 1.1, 6-29. Available at: <http://www.aeichoros.gr/el/ejournal/oldissues#> (date of access: 28/4/2013). A. Aravantinos, «Η Ευρωπαϊκή και η ελληνική πόλη στον 21ο αιώνα» (The European and the Greek city in the 21st century), *Sygcro*, 1. Heraklion: OPEC Heraklion Crete (2001), 147-166.

⁴⁵ A. Defner, *Σχεδιασμός για τον Ελεύθερο Χρόνο (Τουρισμός–Πολιτισμός–Αθλητισμός), Πανεπιστημιακές παραδόσεις* [Planning for leisure time (Tourism–Culture–Sports). University lectures], Department of Planning and Regional Development, University of Thessaly, Volos 1999.

⁴⁶ D. Zivas, *Τα μνημεία και η πόλη* (The monuments and the city), Libro, Athens 1991.

*tional terms but also in a morphological way.*⁴⁷ Boyer looks for fragments of the past, the unifying thread to set up... *a continual urban topography, a spatial structure that covers rich and poor places, honourable and humble monuments, permanent and ephemeral forms, which must include places of public assembly and debate, but, also, private walks of memory and personal shelters.*⁴⁸

But despite of these disputes in the approaches of the researchers and the different starting points, the final goal of protecting and preserving the historical features of a place remains the same. According to the current vision of the city's problems, the parameter of the conservation and management of historic sites acquires a further dimension, the dimension of sustainability. These represent a valuable material, a repository that can and should be tapped, in order to serve and coexist with contemporary needs.

⁴⁷ Chr. Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory—Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London 1994.

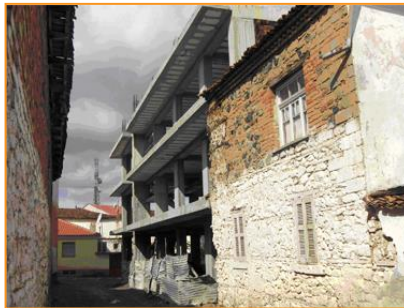
⁴⁸ X. Giannakis–P. Nikiforidis–K. Petridou–P. Tarani, *Θεσσαλονίκη Πάνω Κάτω* (Thessaloniki Up Down), Technical Chamber of Greece/Department of Central Macedonia, Permanent Committee of Architectural Issues, Thessaloniki 2004.



Picture 1: The “Historic Centre” and the “Ensemble of Traditional Urbanism, Architecture” according to the Law 455/23-6-2005⁴⁹



Picture 2: Contemporary town plan of Korça⁵⁰

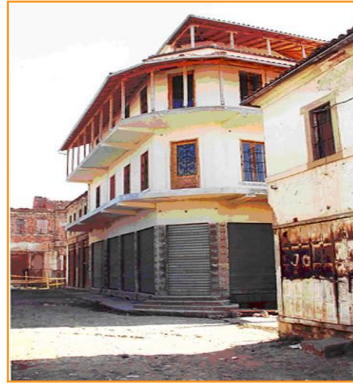


Picture 3: Building with 3 floors in the area of “Fan S. Noli”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ministria e Kulturës, Rinisë dhe Sporteve, Vendim nr. 455, *ibid.*

⁵⁰ Available at: <http://www.bashkiakorçe.gov.al/site/articles.php?cid=59> (date of access: 28/4/2013).

⁵¹ Archive of Dr Kliti Kalamata.



Pictures 4 & 5: Former Merdanëve shop in “museum area” of the Old Bazaar, L.7⁵²



Pictures 6 & 7: Design proposal for the Historic Centre of Korça by Bolles+Wilson (Masterplan Korça City Centre)⁵³

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Sebastian, *ibid.*



*Picture 8: Korça Bazaar: delayed reconstruction*⁵⁴



*Picture 9: Panoramic view of Korça today*⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Available at: <http://lajme.shqiperia.com/lajme/artikull/iden/1047147618/titulli/Korçe-shtyhet-rikonstruksioni-i-Pazarit#> (date of access: 28/4/2013).

⁵⁵ Available at: <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/17822089> (date of access: 28/4/2013).