

JOURNEY TO GREECE: URBAN DEVELOPMENT, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND THE TOURIST GAZE IN THE 1930S

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Abstract: The transition from the Grand Tour tradition to the phenomenon of mass tourism can be detected in Greece at the dawn of the 1930s. This paper considers travelling and the shaping of Greek tourism as tools for investigating the emergence of modern mobility and modern networks, both structural components of the modern city and urbanism. The modern socio-economic condition of the Greek state gave rise to a vast development of urban infrastructure in Athens and its harbour Piraeus as well as of welfare facilities. An emerging Athenian modernism is evident in a series of town-planning programs as the garden-city suburbs and refugee settlements addressed, respectively, the pressure for housing and the rehabilitation of thousands of refugees, settled in the city after the Asia Minor Catastrophe. At the same time, the expansion of the Greek capital had to be planned in advance, organized and designed, in order to meet the modern needs of urban development, together with its ancient heritage and tradition. In this context, the present paper will explore the role of modern architecture in the development of the newly formed touristic aspect of the Greek urban, archaeological, as well as natural, environment. Foreign archaeological schools in Athens, international conferences, travel agencies, art magazines, travel publications and cultural cruises are intertwined networks that urged modern intellectuals to make the journey to Greece. At the same time, the impressive building boom motivated foreign engineers, architects, urban planners and construction companies to visit Greece. Additionally, the political situation in Europe, with the rise of totalitarian regimes, offered to several intellectuals of the time a way-out through working in Greece. Pointing examples by both professional and recreational travellers, the paper will trace the way foreign architects, planners and engineers looked at the urban transformation of Athens. This other gaze is an opportunity to unveil the dynamic situation of the yet to become touristic gaze. The itineraries of foreign architects and other modernists in the 1930s are explored here as instances of the multiple and interconnected mobility networks of the period. This research attempts to showcase the traveller's view of the interwar urban development of Athens, as prefiguring the tourism frenzy of Mediterranean vacations that would emerge after WWII.

Keywords: Modern Athens; Tourism; Antiquity; Urban development; Interwar Greece;

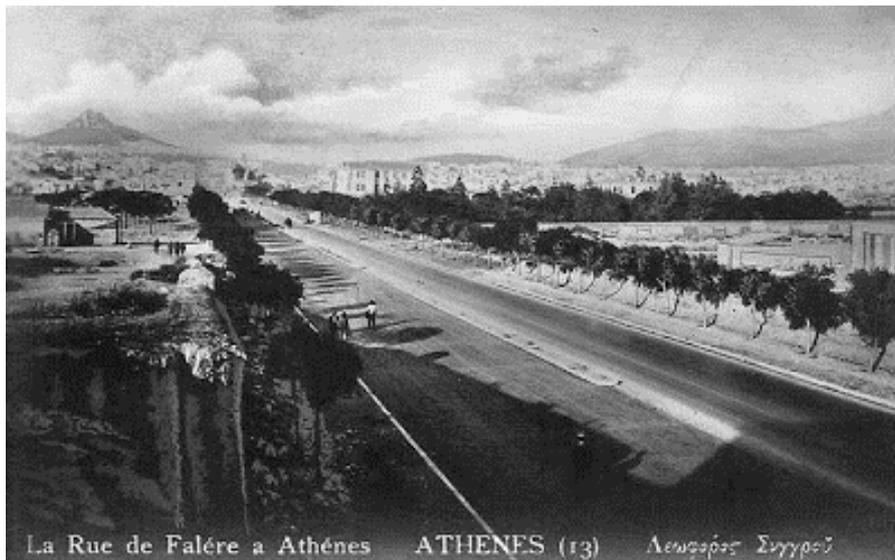
Modern Athens and urban rush in the 1930s

This paper argues that in the interwar years the prospects of modernizing Athens as the Greek metropolis on the one hand, and promoting it as a tourist destination on the other, rendered antiquity and modernism as two sides of the same coin, which took the shape of tourism development.¹ The gaze of modern western intelligentsia to Greece, previously focused mainly to the ancient world, is now interestingly also redirected to the modern city of Athens and its recent urban development, as well as to the Aegean islands, as a new modern way of seeing, which eventually led to the tourist gaze of the thirties. We argue that during that contradictory decade a tourist gaze emerged in the form of printed articles, books, travel accounts, and photographic material as a way to update antiquity and establish modernity. The city of Athens welcomed the '30s by celebrating the centenary of the foundation of the Greek state. From the late twenties, the capital has started claiming a position on the tourist map of Europe, while entering at the same time a new era as a modern metropolis. It was a process of great reforms and transitions to a – yet vaguely defined – modernity, with the technological achievements of the time shaping the new framework of ideas. As depicted by Yiorgos Theotokas (1906-1966), the par excellence

¹ The present paper is part of the research program *Voyage to Greece: Mobility and modern architecture in the interwar period*, E. Athanassiou, V. Dima, K. Karali, scientific supervisor: P. Tournikiotis, Prof. NTUA. The research is co-financed by the Greek State and the European Union. See also: E. Athanassiou, V. Dima, K. Karali, *Modern architectural encounters and Greek antiquity in the thirties*, VIII AISU Congress, "City, travel, tourism: Perception, production and processing", Napoli, Sept. 7-9, 2017.

representative of the Generation of the Thirties,² the technological fancy of the times, jazz music and the airplane balanced the muddled chaos and pandemonium of the Athenian developmental rush, all inclined to the transformation of the Greek capital into a modern metropolis.³ In this context, Athens was described as an enormous construction site⁴ in a process of imminent change,⁵ synchronized to the popular anticipation of the ambiguously approaching modernism.⁶ The city seemed overwhelmed by the high speeds of the accelerating automobiles, trams and buses, while the new straight Syggrou Avenue⁷ is recognized by Greek poet George Seferis (1900-1971) as the futuristic symbol of the technocratic ideology, rationality and modernity (Fig.1).⁸

Fig. 1 – Postcard showing Syggrou Avenue during the 1930s.



For many European modernists of the interwar period, the urban rush of contemporary Athens blurred their original contact with antiquity, causing mixed feelings despite the fact that ancient patterns kept feeding the connection between the ancient and the modern world. However, the vicinity between modern Athens and ancient ruins appeared in various accounts as occasionally unexpected and awkward. René Puaux, correspondent of the Parisian *Le Temps*, on his last trip to Greece in 1930, portrays the city's problems as terrifying, unresolvable in the near time.⁹ German architect Erich Mendelsohn, visited Athens in May 1931, and in his article "Neu-Athen" [New Athens] for the *Berliner Tageblatt* expressed his disappointment by the irregular modern

² The *Generation of the '30s* was group of Greek intellectuals that introduced modernism in Greek art and literature.

³ D. Tziouvas, *Mapping out Greek Literary Modernism*, in D. Tziouvas (ed.) *Greek Modernism and Beyond: Essays in Honor of Peter Bien*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997, pp.26-27.

⁴ Y. Theotokas, *Ελεύθερο Πνεύμα*, Athens: Estia, 2002, pp. 24-25.

⁵ M. Kaika, *City of Flows: Modernity, Nature, and the City*, London: Routledge, 2005, σ.107-140. The construction of the Marathon barrack started on 20th October 1928 and was completed in May 1931, which modernised the water supply system of Athens. The great new station of the electric train [ΗΣΑΠ] at Piraeus was constructed in the same period (1926-1929), and in January 1928 started the construction of the subway station at Omonoia square, that was inaugurated on 21 July 1930 by the Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos.

⁶ Y. Theotokas, *Αργώ* [Argo], vol. A (1936), Athens: Estia, 2006, p.183.

⁷ The idea of Syggrou Avenue originally conceived in 1898, was finally materialised in the period 1928-1932.

⁸ G. Seferis, "Syggrou Avenue 1930", *Ποιήματα* [Poems], Athens: Ikaros, 2007, pp.85-86. Five years later, the poet's hopes have been defeated, and on 25th November, 1935, the day of restoration of the monarchy, he writes the poem *Syggrou Avenue B*.

⁹ R. Puaux, *Grèce Terre aimée des Dieux*, Paris : G. de Malherbe, 1932. René Puaux (1878-1937) made seven long term travels in Greece between 1913 and 1930. During his last trip in 1930 he attended the celebrations for the centenary of the modern Greek state and the Second Delphic Festival, organised by the Greek poet Angelos Sikelianos and his wife Eva Palmer.

transformation of the Greek metropolis –former “mother of Europe”– without any rules, technical knowledge or any apparent attempt of urban planning.¹⁰ Similarly, Italian journalist Pietro Maria Bardi’s report for *Quadrante* (September 1933), appeared also ambiguous about the Athenian development, describing it as the “most inspired building anarchy”.¹¹ In spite of the ambivalent attitude, various publications praised the transformations and the aesthetic uproar of modern Athens, like *L’Architecture d’ Aujourd’hui*’s homages (1933,1934) to the Greek school architecture, or the tribute to Greek modern architecture by Christian Zervos and Siegfried Giedion at the *Cahiers d’ Art* of 1934.¹² Heinrich Lauterbach, in his 1932 account from his travel to Greece in the official journal of Deutscher Werkbund *Die Form*, highlights the work of modern Greek architects and the impressive development of contemporary architecture in Athens.¹³ He parallels Omonoia square with Potsdamer Platz in Berlin and emphasizes the street of Aeolus that leads to the Acropolis, implying an immaterial and symbolic connection between ancient and modern Athens (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 – Acropolis seen from Aeolus Street (Photograph by H. Lauterbach, 1932).



¹⁰ E. Mendelsohn, *New-Athen*, “Berliner Tageblatt” (261 – 5/6/1931). Mendelsohn visited Athens after an invitation of the director of the German Archaeological Institute [DAI] Georg Karo (1872-1963). He also gave a lecture at the National Technical University of Athens as part of the initiative of the Technical Chamber of Greece to promote modern architecture. See: M. Stavagna, *Which modernism is bad? Erich Mendelsohn and the Acropolis in danger (1931)*, in A. Vitopoulou, A. Karadimou-Gerolympou, P. Tournikiotis (eds.), “Τα τετράδια του μοντέρονου 05” [“Modern Notebooks 05”], Athens: Docomomo Greece / Futura, 2015, pp. 49-59.

¹¹ P. M. Bardi, *Ταξίδι στην Ελλάδα [Travel to Greece]*, A. Giakoumakatos (ed.-trans.), Athens, MIET, 2016, pp. 100-101. “The demographic situation of Greece is unique [...] this overpopulation has settled on its own, building in large areas small cottages and shacks based on the most inspired building anarchy.”

¹² S. Giedion, *Pallas Athénée ou Le visage de la Grèce*, “Cahiers d’Art”, no.1-4, 1934, pp. 77-80. [N.D.LR] *Notes sur l’architecture grecque moderne*, op.cit., p. 115; P. Karantinos, *Les nouveaux bâtiments scolaires de l’Etat Hellenique*, op.cit., pp. 115-118. José Imbert, *Ecoles en Grèce*, in “L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui”, no. 4, mai 1934, pp. 62-63; J[ulius] P[osener], *Ecole privée de la rue Coletti à Athènes*, *Architecte N. Mitzakis* [sic], op.cit., pp. 66-67; J[ulius] P[osener], *Annexe de l’Ecole Normale « Marasléion »*, op.cit., pp. 68-69.

¹³ H. Lauterbach, *Notizen von einer Reise in Griechenland*, “Die Form”, H.11 (15 Nov.),1932, pp. 336-348.

In the same way, when German architect Bruno Taut visits Athens in April 1933, as a stop during his travel to Japan fleeing from the Nazis, he records in detail in his travel diary his experience of the Greek capital.¹⁴ Arriving on Sunday, April 2nd, he took the electric train to Athens from the new Piraeus train station, which reminded him of Berlin U-Bahn. Looking at the city from the moving train, it appeared to him unexpectedly vibrant. In his eyes, Greek houses were simple and poor, squared and not *kitsch*, built on dry soil, with small gardens, whereas the centre of Athens is described as not beautiful, but charmingly unassuming. Climbing up the Acropolis hill, he is rewarded with an overall view of the city from above, which he finds pleasant, a nice image in its grey mass uniformity. Interestingly, Taut distinguishes colours in the buildings' mass, as light blue, red and yellow,¹⁵ exalting the mountainous forms, the green levels and the masses of houses, scattered into the urban landscape. He also distinguishes certain modern buildings, which he finds not at all “snobbish” and totally integrated into the cityscape. Passing the Propylaea and approaching the Parthenon, the ancient complex of buildings strikes him with its purity and precision, which he parallels to modern machine engineering (Fig.3).¹⁶ According to Taut's notebook, it was not until his departure that the essence of the city's layout with its acropolis revealed itself, as his steamship sailed away. In the imaginary axis that linked Piraeus port, Athens Acropolis with the Parthenon's pediment and Pendelikon's mountain peak, he envisaged a line that connected antiquity to the rest of the world.¹⁷

Fig. 3 – The Parthenon and the Erechtheion (right) in Bruno Taut's photographic album (1933).



¹⁴ B. Taut, *Bruchstücke zum Tagebuch "Bis Japan"*, Bruno Taut Sammlung 68 [Akademie der Künste Archiv, Berlin], 1933. Also published in M. Speidel (ed.), *Ex Oriente Lux. Die Wirklichkeit einer Idee*, Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 2007, pp. 185-220.

¹⁵ B. Taut, *Die neue Baukunst in Europa und Amerika*, Stuttgart: Julius Hoffman Verlag, 1929, p.50. Taut's love for the use of color is legendary and is considered a substantial characteristic of his architectural work.

¹⁶ Cf. Le Corbusier, "Des yeux qui ne voient pas... III. Les autos", in *Vers une Architecture*, Paris: Crès, 1923, p.107, where Le Corbusier compares the Parthenon to a 1921 Delage Grand-Sport car. First German translation: Le Corbusier, *Kommende Baukunst*, H. Hildebrandt (trans.), Berlin: Dt. Verl.-Anst., 1926.

¹⁷ B. Taut, *Die Stadtkrone*, Jena: Eugen Diedrichs, 1919, p. 28. English translation: M. Mindrup, U. Altenmüller-Lewis (eds.-trans.), *The City Crown by Bruno Taut*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. In this book, Taut outlines a new urban concept for city planning, prefiguring the trends of modern urbanism of the interwar years and uses a photograph of the Acropolis a paradigm of Old City Coronation in 1919 in *Die Stadtkrone*.

“How much does this city cost?”

In a spirit of general optimism, in the 1930s two important international conferences with prominent participants endowed Athens with two modern scientific agreements and placed her at the centre of international archaeological and technical interest. In 1931, the *First International Congress of Architects and Technicians on the Conservation of Cultural and Historical Monuments* was held from 21 to 30 October, under the aegis of the International Museums Office (IMO) of the League of Nations.¹⁸ Foreign archaeological schools at Athens contributed to the Congress, at what the Italian Gustavo Giovannoni and the Greek Nikolaos Balanos played a key role. As a result, the *1931 Charter of Athens* was adopted as the first international agreement on the protection of monuments.¹⁹ The congress program included, besides the visits to archaeological sites –mainly Balanos’ anastylosis of the Acropolis–, an Aegean cruise with stops to Mycenae, Delos, and the Greek islands, a prefiguration of a tourist future potential of the sights. Two years later, the most outstanding modern architects decided to organize the 4th CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne) on board the SS/Patris II sailing from Marseille to Piraeus, concluding their work at the National Technical University of Athens.²⁰ This conference was the basis of the famous *Charter of Athens*, published by Le Corbusier in the midst of WWII and widely known as the Manifesto of Modern Urbanism.²¹ This meeting, apart from its scientific, urban and architectural interest, had also a nuance of vacation as it took place during the summer and included tourist activities in Athens, as well as excursions to Peloponnese and a cruise to Cyclades.²² Following the 4th CIAM’s journey to Greece, one can realize that the way archaeological sites and modern buildings interweaved into the urban fabric, were directly interrelated in the eyes of modern architects that were working on the guidelines of new urbanism at the time. This scientific modern gaze, though, forecasted not only a school of urbanistic fieldwork, but also the emerging tourist gaze of the thirties (Fig. 4). In the aftermath of CIAM IV, members of the Greek CIAM group together with other architects –most of them civil servants at significant posts of the Greek state– offered in 1934 to work voluntarily on the general plan of Athens.

Ioannis Despotopoulos (1903-1992) and Alexandros Dragoumis (1891-1977) were part of that initiative. Feeling their lack of experience in urban planning, they considered inviting a foreigner expert as consultant for the new plan of Athens, and Fred Forbát (1897-1972) recommended Martin Wagner (1885–1957), the former chief city planner of Berlin.²³ However, by the time the new Office of Planning for the City of Athens was organized, Wagner had moved to Istanbul to work as the city’s consultant planner. As a result, the mayor of Athens Konstantinos Kotzias (1892-1951) made the trip to Turkey in order to invite him to give a lecture,²⁴ which eventually took place

¹⁸ The congress was organized by the International Committee of Intellectual Cooperation (CICI) of the League of Nations, with the assistance of the International Museums Office (IMO), with the main focus on the evaluation and on-site observation of the completion of the restoration work on the Acropolis by Nikolaos Balanos (1860-1942). Balanos’ work was severely criticized after the war because of the use of reinforced concrete, iron plates and glue that caused extensive damages to the monument in the long run.

¹⁹ F. Choay (ed.), *La Conférence d’Athènes sur la conservation artistique et historique des monuments (1931)*, Paris: Linteau, 2012.

²⁰ P. M. Bardi, 2016, op. cit., p.102. “The conduct of IV CIAM revived the hopes for a solution to the complex problems of the Greek capital through modern design, upgrading Athens to the symbolic center of modern urban planning. The Charter of Athens of 1933, due to the international appeal of the conference, linked the hopes for the city’s urban consolidation with modernism.” According to Bardi, “rationalist architects are studying the regulatory plan, a hair raising issue, as it is full of obstacles and even more difficult because of the economic hardship. All the ideas of our conference, [...] can be implemented in Athens.”

²¹ Le Corbusier, *La Charte d’Athènes*, Paris: Plon, 1943.

²² E. van Es, G. Harbusch, B. Maurer, M. Pérez, K. Somer, D. Weiss (eds.), *Mediterranean Recreation*, in *Atlas of the Functional City. CIAM 4 and Comparative Urban Analysis*, Bussum: THOTH/gta, 2014, pp. 91-102. Also: Ch. Perriand, *Charlotte Perriand, a life of creation. An autobiography*, New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003, pp. 54-66.

²³ Correspondence between J. Despo and F. Forbát, January 1935, Forbát Archive, ArkDes Stockholm.

²⁴ M. Wagner, *Η πολεοδομική αναδιοργάνωση της πόλεως των Αθηνών* [*New urban layout of the city of Athens*], “Technika Chronika”, no.98 (15th Jan.), 1936, pp. 87-99. Wagner’s ideas for the Athenian lecture originated from his former article

in December 1935. In his lecture, the German architect associated urban development with economy and the general way of living, underlining the interrelation between the individual and the collective, using the Acropolis as an example of the ultimate collective creation. According to Wagner, the Parthenon, situated on top of the city, reminds to the Athenians the subordination of personal interest to the general, public benefit. When Dragoumis accompanied Wagner climbing up to the “city crown of Athens”, the latter had the opportunity to see the old and the new city. His remark could take one by surprise. Instead of comparing the ancient city to modern Athens, imagining its reform and improvement, Wagner –looking at Athens as an expert, but as a tourist as well– asked a simple question: “How much does this city cost?”²⁵ His remark underlines the inevitable economic factor of urban planning, while, in a more pragmatic approach, his tourist gaze was precisely what could give an answer about the economic value of Athens.

Fig. 4 – Photograph of Athens from the Acropolis during CIAM IV (1933).



The idea of organizing a master plan of Athens begins in 1832 when Stamatios Kleanthis (1802-1862) and his colleague at the Bauakademie in Berlin Eduard Schaubert (1804-1860) undertook the design for the new capital of free Greece “bearing in mind the greatness and the beauty of the Ancient City”. Until 1914 and the outbreak of war, there were many attempts of town planning in

Städtebau als Wirtschaftsbaue und Lebensbau, “Die neue Stadt”, H.8, Nov. 1932, pp. 162-178. In the same issue appeared an article by the German CIAM member Fred Forbát (1897-1972) on the subject of *City Air Defense*.

²⁵ M. Wagner, *Η πολεοδομική αναδιοργάνωση της πόλεως Αθηνών* [*New urban layout of the city of Athens*], op. cit., p.97.

order to deal with the unconstrained and continuous expansion of the city in combination with the emergence of new archaeological sites. According to architect Patroklos Karantinos' article in 1934 in *Cahiers d' Art*,²⁶ Athenian urban chaos was due to academic tradition and the "dirty" pseudo-classical Bavarian architecture of the 19th century²⁷ and not to the pathogenic failure to realize a functional regulatory plan. In the first half of the 1930s, the optimistic belief that modern planning could be a solution to the city's impediments, disguised the obvious impasses of Greek urban development. In this context, the problems were considered as transitional stages of an obsolete period that had to be eliminated. The task of spreading urban modernization in a number of fields was responsible for a preliminary development of a welfare state, which was imprinted in a number of public sectors, such as Education (School Building Programs), Health (Hospitals), Refugee Housing, Infrastructure networks and Industry. In 1935, the General Department of Technical Services of the Municipality submitted a new town planning proposal for Athens, signed by Mayor Konstantinos Kotzias (1892-1951) and the Director of Technical Services Elias Kribas (1894-1981), which remained also unrealized.

The Tourist Gaze

In the thirties, tourism gradually emerged as a vehicle to consolidate the mutual financial links with the foreign countries, but also as a tool of promoting the country's symbolic capital, which was its archaeological reserve and its privileged geomorphology. Tourism provided the toolset in order to balance the fiscal and ideological deficit caused by the international scepticism against the technological prevail of radical modernism of the interwar period. The 1938 the article *Grèce* in *L'Architecture d' Aujourd'hui* perceives the relationship between Athens' reconstruction, tourism and modern architecture as a priori, suggesting urban planning as an inevitable priority. As Paul Sirvin remarked, "Greece's special geographical position, the charm and variety of its climate, have led to its tourism and commercial development".²⁸ Furthermore, he underlines Athens' rapid development and the favourable outcome of the use of modern movement's principles in urban architectural design. In a 1934 interview in *20^{ème} Siècle* magazine of Michalis Tombros, Heracles Ioannides (1897-1950), director of Neptos Shipping Company, explicitly highlights the socio-political aspect of the connection between modern design (architecture and urban planning) and the tourism phenomenon as a key factor in Greek tertiary sector development.²⁹ Greek modern sculptor Tombros, transcribing the tourism ideal of Ioannides, utters explicitly that tourism's role within the Greek state in the 1930s was not limited solely to the economic aspect of the phenomenon, but contributes as the main shaping apparatus of the national urban and spatial planning policies.³⁰

"The state, as well as science, archaeology and society itself, should beware the benefits of tourism, focusing on these matters with faith and fanaticism. Definitely, productive benefits are a potential treasure, increasing national income, industrial growth, and the business cycle of commerce, but at the same time the aesthetic arrangement through modernist assimilation of to the contemporary habitus of universal education could be a parallel endeavour, ...superior yet".³¹

In the same way, the country's urban renewal could be considered as an outcome of tourism development, since –as architect Yiannis Lyghizos explains– both the roads network and the sea

²⁶ P. Karantinos, *Notes sur l'architecture grecque moderne*, in "Cahiers d' Art", no.1-4, 1934, pp. 115-121.

²⁷ Bardi shares the same opinion, expressing a deceptive opinion about "Bavarian architecture", op.cit., p.102.

²⁸ P. Sirvin, *Grèce*, in "L'Architecture d' Aujourd'hui", no.10, 1938, p.56.

²⁹ M. Tombros, *Τουρισμός – Αισθήματα – Έργα [Tourism – Emotions – Works]*, "20^{ème} Siècle", no.3, 1934, p.10.

³⁰ A. Vlachos, *Τουρισμός και Δημόσιες πολιτικές στη Σύγχρονη Ελλάδα 1914-1950. Η ανάδυση ενός νεοεποχικού φαινομένου [Tourism and Public Policies in Contemporary Greece 1914-1950. The emergence of a modern phenomenon]*, Kerkyra: Economía, 2016.

³¹ M. Tombros, *Καθοδηγήσεις – Τέχνες – Κράτος [Guidelines – Arts – State]*, "20^{ème} Siècle", no.3, 1934, pp.9-10.

connections were expanded due to touristic mobility, launching Athens as a hub between Central Europe and the Orient:

“That’s why in Athens and the countryside they quickly built [...] hotels for travellers, churches, hospitals, factories, private homes, and the Greek architects enjoy a remarkable activity.”³²

Corroborating the above, the *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*’s tribute to Greece demonstrated two aerial photographs of Athens, where the thriving building activity of the capital appeared as mainstream “tourism attraction” (Fig.5). Moreover, an extensive selection of modern buildings that illustrated the article suggested that urban constructions and tourism played a key role for Greek development, on an equal basis with the already prominent welfare state sectors (Schools, Hospitals, Housing).

Fig. 5 – Aerial photograph of Athens, in *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* (1938).



At that time, the *gaze* of international modernists towards the Greek antiquities and natural landscape was restricted to a symbolic interconnection with the ecumenism of modernism, as it is documented in various chronicles and travel accounts. Puaux also witnessed the emerging tourist profile of the capital, as he recorded it at Syntagma Square:

“Large cars are loading or unloading spring tourists of all nationalities, among them certain English, [...] showing off the colonial hat [...]. For them Athens is Orient.”

Philhellenist Puaux perceives the British attitude towards Athens as humiliating and considers that kind of Athens orientalisation to be a counterfeit, in contrast to many other Europeans who believed the opposite. In 1927, the famous American adventurer Richard Halliburton³³ (1900-1939) re-enacts Ulysses’ journey back to Ithaca, while two years later, in 1929, his compatriot and popular travel author Harry A. Franck³⁴ (1881-1962) publishes his impressions from 1925 Greece. In 1932, the first *Guide Bleu* for Greece appeared, written by the archaeologist Yves Bequignon (1899-1990),

³² G. Lyghizos, *Le Mouvement architectural en Grèce*, “L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui”, no.10, 1938, p.57.

³³ R. Halliburton, *The Glorious Adventure*, New York: Garden City Publishing, 1927.

³⁴ H. A. Franck, *I Discover Greece*, London: Methuen., 1929.

nineteen years after the last travel guide for Greece, the *Guide Joanne* by Gustave Fougères.³⁵ The same year, the album *En Grèce* by the archaeologist and photographer Antoine Bon (1901-1972) was released, containing photos from his tours in Greece with his colleague and traveling partner Fernand Chapouthier (1899-1953), followed in 1934 by the sequel *Retour en Grèce*. In their footsteps, the Swiss archaeologist and photographer Paul Collart (1902-1981) created a remarkable photo-account from his tours in Greece that began in 1926 and stopped in 1938. Moreover, in 1936 the American cinematographer and painter Jerome Hill (1905-1972) publishes his work under the title *Trip to Greece*, while in 1937, George Hoyningen-Huene (1900-1968), one of the most important photographers of his time, during his visit to Greece, totally overwhelmed by the ancient monuments, highlights, by the human absence in his frames, their universal value.³⁶ His companion, the German Herbert List (1903-1975), in his “fotografia metafisica” also immortalized ancient and modern Greece, with extreme shades and strong contrasts, ideally representing the contradictory decade of the 1930s and the tooling of the ancient Greek idea.³⁷ The various aspects of the latter were eloquently developed in Edith Hamilton’s (1867-1963) 1930 book *The Greek Way*, that radically changed the way foreigners appreciated ancient Greek legacy.³⁸ By that time, the British Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966) had already declared the country to be a “fully labeled” tourist destination.³⁹ That was confirmed by the March 5 1934 tribute to Greece of the *Atlantis* travel magazine, published by the Swiss publisher, photographer and traveler Martin Hürlimann (1897-1984).

The idea of linking tourism with antiquity, modern art, and architecture, as an instrument of economic and cultural development, had been employed since the 1920s. In 1924, when Greek photographer Nelly’s (1899-1998) returns from her studies in Dresden, she becomes “the vehicle of introducing the western gaze in Greece”.⁴⁰ In 1927, with the first Delphic Festival by Eva Palmer and Angelos Sikelianos, it became clear that both Athens and the archaeological treasures of the country, combined with the revival of ancient drama, could turn into a powerful magnet for attracting tourists. In 1930, Nelly’s shoots from the second Delphic Festival, published by *National Geographic*, travelled all around the globe, invigorating international interest about Greek landscape and rural Greeks. In 1929, the first Greek Tourism Organisation [GTO] was founded by Venizelos’ administration, an effort strongly connected with Ioannides, who is its official representative in Paris. Furthermore, from 1932 to 1934, in his cruises to Greece, he released the tourist magazine *Le Voyage en Grèce*, which also systematically promoted the privileged relationship between modern architecture, archaeology, and tourism. Likewise, based in Paris, Christian Zervos with his *Cahiers d’ Art*, leads the magazine’s effort to interconnect modern art, architecture, and archaeology, introducing unexpected photographic juxtapositions in representing Greek cultural heritage, suggesting a clear convergence with the tourism development policies to come.

³⁵ Gustave Adolphe François Fougères (1863-1927), archaeologist, member of the Institute and Professor at the Sorbonne was the director of the French School at Athens (1913-1919). During the period 1909-1910, he re-introduced the lesson of History of Ancient Art at the *École Spéciale d’Architecture*, from which many famous Greek modern architects graduated in the ’20s and the ’30s. Besides the *Guide Joanne*, G. Fougères published also *Athènes* (first ed. Paris: H. Laurens 1912).

³⁶ H. Chisholm, G. Hoyningen-Huene, A. Koiransky (eds.), *Hellas: A Tribute to Classical Greece*, New York: J. J. Augustin, 1943.

³⁷ H. List, *Licht über Hellas – Eine Symphonie in Bildern von Herbert List* (Aufnahmen aus Griechenland zw. 1937-1939). Einleitung von W. H. Schuchhardt, Munich: Georg D. W. Callwey, 1953.

³⁸ D. Fielding Reid, *Edith Hamilton, An Intimate Portrait*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1967, pp. 77-78. Hamilton, with her partner Doris Fielding Reid (1895-1973) and the latter’s nephew Dorian Fielding Reid (1917-1973), first visited Greece in 1929.

³⁹ E. Waugh, *Labels: A Mediterranean Journal*, London: Gerald Duckworth., 1930.

⁴⁰ N. Panayotopoulos, *On Greek Photography: Eurocentrism, Cultural Colonialism and the Construction of Mythic Classical Greece*, “Third Text”, vol.23, no.2, 2009, pp.181-194.

In 1936, due to the Metaxas regime and the wider conservative turn in national and global level, changes of administration and priorities occurred in the National Technical Chamber of Greece [TEE]. However, in its official journal *Technical Chronicles*, but also in the construction domain, the vision for an urban technical reformation was still vivid and rushing. In the context of an increasing anti-urban consciousness, a 1938 article by the German architect Hermann Hampe (1904-1970) adopts an opposite stance to Athens modernization, accusing it for an impertinent replacement of the old classical order with the chaotic image of a grotesque city antagonizing western metropolises.⁴¹ His explicit admiration for the Greek islands reveals a new anti-modern Western attitude towards Greek tradition. Here, the vernacular building tradition was not appreciated for its architectural building ethos, useful for the functional city of tomorrow. Instead, the Greek rural landscape was utilized as a means of representation that provides a paradigm of a “healthy growth of building art, always reinforced by the image of ideal perfection”. Similarly, an article by Alexandros Dragoumis and a translated excerpt from Lewis Mumford’s *The Culture of Cities*, renounce the unhealthy urban noisy city spectacle and propagandize the rehabilitation of the city’s landscape in accordance to nature and in combination with the archaeological ruins and folk dwelling tradition. All of the above, converted into reservoirs of ideological reference in accordance to the contradictions of the new national narrative, shaped the country’s tourist brand, exportable to the international audiences. Architects Dimitris and Alexandra Moretis, working for the under-secretary of Tourism in the Technical Service of Expositions and Fairs, designing the pavilions for the official Greek participations to international events, constitute an exemplary case of tooling antiquity, folklore and modernity in an unorthodox assemblage, representing Greece abroad. Their work, tuned to the general condition, connected popular culture, archaic scenery and urban civilization in a modern context. In the early thirties, the ancient ruins boosted the transformation of Athens to a modern metropolis of the future, by virtue of their symbolic and timeless surplus,⁴² furthering the perpetual dialogue between *les anciens et les modernes* into the 20th century. On the eve of WWII, Athens begins to capitalize on the antiquities and Greek natural landscape, using the emerging tourist trends as a vehicle for economic and urban development, thus forging a strong and clear national image, both for domestic and international use. However, a contemporary sensitive reader will detect the then growing tension between nature and the urban environment, which in the post-war era of mass tourism evolved in a persistent and unresolved dystopia.

⁴¹ H. Hampe, *Δύο Ελληνικά νησιωτικά χωριόπολεις [Two Greek Island Towns]*, “Τεχνικά Χρονικά”, no.165, 1938, p.971-976.

⁴² P. Tournikiotis, *The place of the Parthenon in the history and theory of modern architecture*, in P. Tournikiotis (ed.), *The Parthenon and its Impact in Modern Times*, Athens: Melissa, 1994, pp.200-229 / New York: Harry Abrams, 1996, pp.200-229.