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PROLEGOMENON

The essays in this book are adapted from papers presented at the “ICOMOS CIVIHI Mediterranean Sub-Committee Webinar” held in February 2021¹. The Webinar’s topic highlights the current thought on “Rehabilitation and Enhancement of Small Municipalities in the Mediterranean Area” which issued the need to safeguard small historic centres and villages by including inherent values into future strategies of sustainable urban development. The intention was to gather leading experts from around the Mediterranean world to discuss on small towns and villages that must be preserved and re-created as attractive places where people can live, work and enjoy into the wider context.

The selected contributions are mainly focused on the development of a new international standard-setting instrument to be used as a tool for innovative urban conservation. They contain forward-looking ideas, strategies, and tools to facilitate protection and management of living historic towns and villages that must have also a contextual importance especially under specific urban and social risks. To this end, a comparison of different situations and contexts bordering the Mediterranean Area seems to be an important starting point for rethinking protection, conservation, and redevelopment of living historic towns by considering them geographically as ‘special areas’ but also districts for sustainability and innovation.

This volume is clearly setting the scene on policies and strategies to recognize sustainable use of heritage assets and creating urban landscapes more attractive and sensitive on the impacts of contemporaneity. Further, to face complexity regarding urban change and pandemic emergency, the new trends are in evidence from both structural and visual point of view with different levels of intensity that should be integrated into the planning process. In particular is stressed that over the last few years local communities have increased significantly debates on a more sustainable future suggesting matters of a contemporary development withing small historic towns and villages.

The contributions are focused on potential impacts of urban development and regeneration projects, including threats of emerging tourism and traffic pressures as well as lack of planning and management capacity under regional conflicts. Therefore, analysis and main discussion is emerged on the EU Countries (Italy, Spain, Greece, France, Cyprus, etc.) included local/global processes with new dynamics for redeveloping and new challenges to urban conservation. In addition, study cases of non-EU Countries (Turkey, Lebanon, etc) as well as from the North Africa Mediterranean Area (Tunisia, Morocco, Lybia, etc) have been presented as well. After all, it has been argued that new approaches and a critical on standards and guidelines should be set for the future based on new theoretical and practical trends.

¹ Coordinator prof. arch. Teresa Colletta, President Mediterranean cities and villages CIVIHI sub-committee.

At the current, Mediterranean countries seem that have responded positively by welcoming the current debate in favour of an undergoing process towards an updated agenda on their urban tangible and intangible assets. But still a lot should be done on new recommendations considering the evolved concepts on historic urban area conservation and regeneration that should also consider an innovation approach on managing historic environment.

It is therefore important to underline that this volume also contains a valuable 'Statement' developed along the ICOMOS CIVVIH Sub-Committee Webinar by the 'Expert Group' showing the importance of Burgs, Villages and Small Towns facing the Mediterranean Area with their unique cultural heritage. Recommended policies put forward in this document preservation, carefully planning and implementation of urban heritage to meet people's needs and strategic objectives for a sustainable development.

Dimitra Babalis
The Series Editor

FOREWORD

The Mediterranean CIVIH Sub-committee that has been founded in Patras, Greece in 2006 to promote the collaboration between the members of the CIVIH that represent the countries of the Mediterranean, according to the aims of the International Committee of Historical Cities, Towns and Villages (ICOMOS ISC CIVIH).

A more specific aim of the Sub-Committee is the development of solidarity in the area of the Mediterranean for the sustainable protection, management and development of historical cities and towns, through common meetings of collaboration, where their particular characteristics in the common historical space of the Mediterranean will be analysed and relative studies, researches, and educational programs for all stages of education will be promoted.

Mediterranean countries are linked by geographic, cultural and historic ties, which can form a favorable framework for cooperation between peoples, in order to face the problems of interstate relations devised by former generations. But new problems should be considered having risen in the Mediterranean because of globalization conditions, migration, climate change uncontrollable tourism and the degradation of the natural and cultural environment. Over the last years, these problems have been intensified aggravated because of instability and conflicts in Arab countries. Mediterranean civilizations will continue in creating a common future of peace, democracy, prosperity and safeguarding of cultural heritage and natural environment. social and cultural understanding.

The values of small municipalities are often unrecognized and under-appreciated making them vulnerable to multiple vectors of change. In these times of rapid change and multiple challenges, advancing small towns and rural heritage, and their recognition and conservation is critical to humanity and to this planet.

Small municipalities constitute a rich and complex ensemble of tangible, intangible and living heritage which are co-produced by human-nature symbiosis. Underscored by geographical diversity and ecological bounty they are enriched by human interactions – through cultural practice, forms of shelter and modes of livelihood

The resilience of small towns and villages stems from a fundamental respect for man's natural and cultural world and their harmonious coexistence. In the face of rapid urbanization which continually threatens to reshape rural-urban boundaries, coupled with global challenges as global growth and shifting of the human population, climate change, desertification, our rural heritage and traditions are today – more than ever – vulnerable to degradation, loss and other irreversible disruptions.

Intangible traditions and practices of small municipalities should be conserved as well their decline and losses hindered. Intangible elements reflect integrity, authenticity, re-enactment, sense of identity and anchor collective memory. Challenging is the management of safeguarding of tangible rural heritage.

Markets for products, food, and traditional offerings of small towns and villages have to be improved, heritage-based activities strengthened and opportunities for cultural heritage tourism created.

There are opportunities and challenges for economic uplift of small municipalities heritage assets through urban-rural connections, local re-investment in infrastructure and agro-industry.

In regard to the environment of small towns and villages soil quality, water availability and quality and resilience in the face of desertification, drought, flood and other weather events must be thought of, ensured or countered. To support local and migrating species habitat conservation and improvement is necessary.

Civil Society, and especially local communities related to heritage properties, have become a fundamental actor in the identification, protection and management of heritage. This implication of local communities has an impact, for example, in the identification of values attributing to heritage: besides historic and artistic values, the social and communitarian significance of buildings, sites and places. Civil society has also a primary role in the process of heritage management, especially when considering heritage as an instrument for sustainable development.

Without active participation of communities and local populations it is not possible to define how to adapt spaces in small towns and villages to new requirements and to consider social changes without compromising or threatening heritage values.

The topic of rehabilitation of small communities has been discussed in the CIVIH Mediterranean Sub-committee webinar in February 2021. These for Mediterranean countries important historic towns and villages with their diverse cultural heritage offer rich urban and social qualities. They constitute an opportunity against urban sprawl for environmental and sustainable development and help to preserve agricultural lands and natural resources. In the current pandemic often people from greater cities move to small historic towns and villages because these often abandoned and downgraded settlements provide better living conditions. Necessary are new practices to enhance their cultural heritage, their landscape and identity to foster and boost the recovery, the revitalization and enhancement of small historic municipalities in Mediterranean countries.

Claus-Peter Echter
President ICOMOS CIVIH

INTRODUCTION

The Small Towns and Rural Settlements as a Resource of the Mediterranean Area

Teresa Colletta



It is well known that in this moment of urban crisis, due to global pandemic Covid 19 in all parts of the world, an impact has been generated on life in metropolitan and urban areas. At the moment we are in an enormous space of changes of *modus vivendi*. At the same time we have registered a movement of a large part of people giving away from the great urban centers, in all parts of the world. This is a movement of “inhabitants” from the urban areas to the small towns, minor centers, rural settlements, not very far from the metropolitan areas. They find a new alternative to live, especially in the near small towns, with more green spaces and more large residences, sanitary justifications, best quality of life, connected with a better environment and beautiful rural landscape etc... All these movements are based to find a better quality of life. This means reconnecting people with their local areas and de-centralising city life and services.

After these words I think it is necessary a brief introduction to the topic of this volume *Rehabilitation and Enhancement of small municipalities. A great resource of the Mediterranean cultural heritage in the pandemic era. A comparison survey* and the reasons of the editorial initiative.

The current pandemic crisis has further highlighted the negative impacts of urbanization increasing phenomena in the last years. The unexpected and forced diffusion of the new technologies has allowed: more people to work close to home or remotely with home-working, remote school and university learning, on-line education, telemedicine, on-line shopping etc. The smart worker, with the broadening of the “Banda Larga”, leaves the metropolitan areas and we have reported a new alternative to live, especially in the near small towns, villages, *Borghi* in the Italian language. Moreover, this change of life has reduced the necessity of the physical movements and has modified the daily-life model into the big urban built up areas. In these years the European people move from greater cities to small historic towns and villages, because these provide better living conditions. Consequently inhabitants pay attention to the revaluation of the role of minor cities, towns and rural settlements, often abandoned and downgraded, with proposals of their rehabilitation in a new urban strategy and new incentives. Historic boroughs are an extraordinary “common wealth” because of the concentration of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, that they offer with a great potential for development. These considerations represent a real opportunity for the old-aged topic of the ancient urban environments and historical smaller municipalities revitalization, for they are very rich in cultural heritage. We have registered, in my historical urban researches, their depopulation and highlighted the progressive aging of the resident population, the loss of public services, the impoverishment of economic activities. The growing isolation creates consequent abandonment of the inhabited areas and the old houses. Furthermore, the residents of the small historic municipalities in Mediterranean countries, small towns, mi-

nor centers, especially in Italy, also play a fundamental role for the protection of both natural environment and heritage, intangible traditions and peculiarities of each territory. New practices are necessary to enhance their cultural heritage, their landscape and identity to foster and boost the recovery, revitalization and enhancement, with the aim of identifying innovative methods more related to compatible uses of the whole territories and shared by the inhabitants: the main subjects as proposers, operators and final beneficiaries. In the meetings of the ICOMOS Italy Scientific National Committee of CIVVIH, we have debated about the rehabilitation of small historic centers, present in all Italian regions, with regard to the Law n.158/2017, named “*Legge salva Borghi*”. Afterwards, I have considered interesting, in agreement with my CIVVIH colleague Paolo Motta, after the debate in the Italian CIVVIH webinars, to open a discussion on this issue, among the Mediterranean countries, to understand the situation in the different European countries having similar problems about the revaluation of small centers. I have launched this idea during the last International CIVVIH Annual Conference in Tunis, November 2019, and than in the virtual CIVVIH Annual meeting of November 2020. Then, as the President of the CIVVIH Mediterranean Sub-Committee, I have decided to open an internal debate to compare the different situations of the small towns / villages in the countries bordering the Mediterranean sea.

I was sure of the relevance of a scientific comparison survey of the minor centers situation in the Mediterranean area, in order to deepen the different systems and the different planning proposals. The aim is to put attention to the revaluation of the role of minor cities, towns and rural settlements as a new urban strategy at the moment of the pandemic crisis. Many territories all around the globe and in Europe, especially in the Mediterranean countries, have a great number of minor towns and villages facing similar problems of demographic loss and abandon of the traditional activities and skills from the inhabitants. Consequently we have decided for our discussion on-line the title: “*The rehabilitation and enhancement of small municipalities (coastal, mountain, rural), as a great resource of the Mediterranean cultural heritage in the pandemic era. A comparison survey*”.

Such an initiative took into account the large number of smaller towns, minor settlements and villages in the South member countries. Their potential as poles of local development and tourism attraction, can contribute to a sustainable development of these southern regions based on an integrated network of defined smaller towns with an overall action to rise their enhancement.

It is well known that the basis of the activities of the Mediterranean CIVVIH Sub-Committee, since its foundation, by Sofia Avegrinou Kolonias on Corfù (Greece) in 2008, has been that “*The Mediterranean countries are linked not only for a geographic bond, but especially for a preexistent cultural and historic tie, which can form a propitious framework for rapprochement and cooperation between people. The aim is to face the problems of interstate relations devised by former generations. These ties form equally propitious presuppositions, encouraging the tackling of new problems having risen in the Mediterranean because of globalization conditions, migrations, climate change, uncontrollable tourism and degradation of the natural and cultural environment*”.

I have proposed to all members of the Mediterranean CIVVIH Sub-Committee a preliminary program of this initiative on the mentioned topic and, on the basis of the responses by a group of the Mediterranean Sub-Committee colleagues, I have organized the Webinar in February 22th 2021. The final Program of the Webinar, strictly related to the received answers, was concentrated on the proposal to put in comparison the different situations regarding the small towns / villages in the countries bordering the Mediterranean sea in EU countries (Spain, France, Greece, Cyprus, etc), the recovery and enhancement policies of small towns in Syrie, Tunisia and Turkey, and the enhancement of small towns in inland areas. (see in note n.1 the final PROGRAM of the CIVVIH Sub-Committee Mediterranean Cities, Towns and Villages Webinar, 12th of February 2021). We had two moments of debate



Fig. 1. View of Borgo Molisano in Molise Region

¹ *Final Program of CIVVIH-Sub-Committee Mediterranean Cities, Towns and Villages. WEBINAR, Friday, February 12, 2021. “The rehabilitation and enhancement of small municipalities (coastal, mountain, rural), as a great resource of the Mediterranean cultural heritage in the pandemic era. A comparison survey”:*

- Welcome Address, CLAUSS-PETER ECHTER, President ICOMOS CIVVIH;
- Brief introduction to the topic. The reasons of the initiative, TERESA COLLETTA, President of Mediterranean CIVVIH sub-committee;
- FIRST PART, Session n.1: 1. *The situation of the smaller centers and villages in the EU countries (Italy, Greece, Spain, France, etc.):*
 - TERESA COLLETTA, PAOLO MOTTA, *The situation of the small centers – “Borghi” – in Italy. Laws and Decrees;*
 - SOFIA AVERIGNOU KOLONIAS, *The towns and small settlements in Greece. A development problem associated with its cultural landscape;*
 - ELENI MAISTROU, *The situation of small villages in Greece;*
 - ALVARO GOMEZ FERRER, *The situation of the Spanish small centres and villages: from abandonment to recovery;*
 - ANTOINE BRUGUEROLLE, «*Bourgs, villages et petites villes*». *Les cas de bourgs historiques en Languedoc dont un en bord de mer;*
 - DIMITRA BABALIS, *Living environmental and cultural values within the historic centres of the Pistoia mountain. Preservation and assessment of the Campo Tizzoro former Industrial Village;*
 - PAOLO MOTTA, *Revival of historic small towns-pilot proposal in central Italy.*
- Discussion about the Session n. 1
- SECOND PART, Session n.2: 2. *The situation of the smaller centers and villages in the in Mediterranean area (Syrie, Tunisia, Turkey):*
 - SAMIR ABDULAC, *Restauration et reconstruction de Malona un village traditionnel de montagne en Syrie;*
 - FAIKA BEJAOU, *Tunisia and the enhancement of small towns in inland areas in the core of Mediterranean area;*
 - EGE ULUKA TUMER, *Some studies in the small villages in Cyprus.*
- Discussion about the Sessions n. 2
- Conclusions and Proposals.



Fig. 2. View of Pontone Village in Costiera Amalfitana, Campania region (Southern Italy)

after the first session and than the second session. We have concluded the webinar with the proposition of a first "Resolution" draft to spread to all the CIVVIH members.

Subsequently I have organized a synthesis of the authors's presentations at the Webinar, in a "Report", named *"Book of Abstracts"*. This document is now inserted in the CIVVIH website, Mediterranean Sub-Committee. In the same time, we have written, by contacts via email with the Webinar "rapporteurs", on the basis of our discussion, a *"Statement"*², in English and French language (revised first by Kathleen Crowther and then by Samir Abdulac), now inserted in the CIVVIH web site and reported in the following pages.

Subsequently I have had a specific interest to the topic "historic small municipalities rehabilitation" and the opportunity to spread this scientific comparison about the Mediterranean small municipalities, at present to be shown only in the CIVVIH web site, in the *"Book of Abstracts"*. For this reason I have decided to accept the proposal of my colleague Dimitra Babalis to publish in the series "Cities, Design & Sustainability", of which she is the series editor, a scientific volume to amplify with more details every singular case studied by the rapporteurs in the February webinar. The aim, as written in the *"Statement"*, is *"Concerning particularly all countries facing the Mediterranean, the rehabilitation of this unique urban heritage must be supported, carefully planned and implemented, so as to be included among the main actions necessary to achieve the strategic objectives of sustainable development in the fields of culture, environment and climate change, as advocated by ICOMOS"*².

It is therefore necessary to rise a wider awareness and participation to engage national and local authorities to this direction for a new urban settlement model. CIVVIH-Med could then contribute in developing a campaign of information and awareness in the diverse Mediterranean countries among authorities and all actors about the rehabilitation and enhancement of small municipalities. Among the ones belonging to the EU, it is essential to promote a common request for the assignment of proper resources to these issues; they are fully in accordance with the more recent European strategies of the Next Generation EU and several other programs to safeguard environment, cultural heritage, within sustainable development and social cohesion.

² Cfr. The *"Statement"* of the webinar "CIVVIH Mediterranean Sub-Committee / Sous-comité méditerranéen du CIVVIH", 12 February 2021, about *"Burgs, villages and small towns"* are written down in the pages 14 and 15 in English and French Languages.



CIVVIH MEDITERRANEAN SUB-COMMITTEE
SOUS-COMITÉ MÉDITERRANÉEN DU CIVVIH

Webinar 12 February 2021
«Burgs, villages and Small towns»

“The rehabilitation and enhancement of small communities (on coast, mountain and plain), as a great resource of the Mediterranean cultural heritage in a pandemic era. A comparative Survey“

“La revitalisation et la mise en valeur des petites communes (littoral, montagne et campagne) comme une ressource du patrimoine méditerranéen en période de pandémie. Etude comparative”

STATEMENT

The contributions presented during the online seminar on February 12, 2021 show the importance of towns for Mediterranean countries as well as the richness and diversity of this heritage located in the urban “in-between”.

Whether by the sea, in plains or on reliefs, they are most often located in large picturesque sites that they enhance.

These small or medium-sized settlements, on an intermediate scale, between towns and villages, in transition with the countryside, are often the markers of cultural landscapes of a historic urban character located in rich natural sites.

Historic burgs are an extraordinary common good because of the concentration of tangible and intangible cultural heritage that they offer with a great potential for development.

By their morphology and their urban, architectural and landscape composition, they bear witness to the history of our civilizations and the interaction of man on his environment and constitute an original “corpus” of heritage, able to offer an exceptional quality of life in comparison with cities and metropolises, particularly in this period of pandemic.

We note that their buildings are most often left without maintenance, abandoned and empty for the benefit of the sprawl development of cities and metropolises.

There is no better apprehension of heritage than the feeling of loss that one feels with the disappearance and degradation of a property, which moreover suffers from depopulation.

In Greece, Italy, Spain or France and on the other side of the Mediterranean the Burgs, Villages and small Towns demonstrate their diversity and their large numbers, but also their fragility, underlining the importance of the issue.

These burgs constitute a waste and an opportunity that must be used to fight against urban sprawl for environmental and sustainable development objectives also in order to preserve our agricultural lands and natural resources.

Whatever the reason, we notice that they suffer from abandonment and downgrading phenomenon, leading to the ruin of some built blocks, which can lead to the disappearance of this tangible heritage in the medium term.

In the current context of a pandemic, which leads us to question our consumerist practices and current lifestyles, there is a rising displacement of people in many European countries towards these small historic towns, which offer rich urban and social qualities.

The burgs, minor towns and rural villages are based on a settlement scale, which allows the blossoming of cultural and social links different and complementary to those of the city.

This ongoing reflection constitutes an opportunity to re-invest abandoned urban settlements to find better living conditions with less nuisance.

Their recovery and revitalization, based on the enhancement of their urban cultural heritage, their landscape and their identity, which is not reproducible, must make it possible to develop new practices and implement new modes of integrated economic development, local services and compatible mobility systems, by mobilizing institutional structures and public incentives, with the support of new technologies.

The richness of this cultural and urban context allows, with the sharing of local and universal values, innovative tourism practices integrating the economy and local cultural assets of “soft tourism”.

It is therefore necessary to open a process of revising current models of urban development and reassessing the role of small historic villages (borghi), focusing on the well-being of populations and promoting joint action, based on diverse Mediterranean countries, which all face, despite different contexts, very similar problems. This different approach must be considered not only as an economic objective, but as a real global tool for enhancing the still existing values in these urban settlements, once correctly restored, reorganized and equipped with the necessary tangible and intangible infrastructures.

Concerning particularly all countries facing the Mediterranean, the rehabilitation of this unique urban heritage must be supported, carefully planned and implemented, so as to be included among the main actions necessary to achieve the strategic objectives of sustainable development in the fields of culture, environment and climate change, as advocated by ICOMOS.

April 22, 2021

The Situation of Small Villages in Greece

Eleni G. Maistrou

Greece disposes a considerable number of historic villages that constitute its cultural wealth. Some of these villages, mainly those that are tourist destinations have been developed without proper planning rules, resulting in the loss of their historical physiognomy. Some other mainly mountainous villages with difficult access that have lost their original productive base, (agriculture, stock raising, etc) are declining, and lose their permanent residents, resulting in the abandonment and desolation of their historic buildings. The following text presents some examples that illustrate the problems and proceeds to address them.

1. The problem of abandonment of historic villages

The bigger depopulation of the villages occurred in the 2nd half of the 20th century in the post-war period at a time when there was significant migration to the developed countries of Europe. A state program of 1997 'Kapodistrias' and another of 2010 'Kallikratis' aiming at the unification of small communities in larger districts and Municipalities, resulted in administrative and social services (educational, financial and medical) being concentrated in larger towns. This administrative change, the lack of infrastructure and

Fig. 1. Site plan of Kalamoti, Chios, by Arnold Smith, 1934

Fig. 2. Kalamoti. The defensive wall of the village. Sketch by post graduate students 2012-2013





Fig. 6. Vatheia. Photo by my post graduate students of NTUA 2015-16

Fig. 7. Vatheia. Map of the village. Buildings with red-brown color are abandoned. By my post graduate students of NTUA 2015-16

The main products were mastic, olive oil, cereals, cotton, anise, figs, and almonds, and much later, from 1922 onwards, tobacco. Kalamoti is today a human society with 500 approximately permanent residents, and several residents who have a second home there, with the elderly as majority. There is no economically active population, economic activities of the area are declining, and the land is cultivated by a few permanent residents and immigrants who supplement their income by cultivating fruit and vegetables. Some factors deterring the settlement of families are the lacunary health services and the absence of areas for cultural activities and recreation. The problem of desertion and abandonment overshadows the future of this historic village, as many owners of the historic buildings have abandoned their property.

An example of abandoned village: Vatheia

Vatheia is one of the most well-known and conserved mountainous villages of Mani in the Peloponnese, in southern Greece, built at the top of a now abandoned hill. It occupies about 17 acres, it is 240m long from East to West, 110m from North to South and it has a perimeter of about 650m. Buildings at Vatheia are towers, house-towers (fig. 6) and adjacent houses, depicting the social differences at Mani. The settlement also includes 4 churches and 5 olive presses². The village is first mentioned in the sources dating from 1566 and it continues to be mentioned in the records of Mani settlements until 1829. Its current form is the result we see from the 18th century onwards. It disposes buildings dated from 1840 to 1920, when the village reached its prime with approximately 400 residents, who were occupied with ag-

riculture, stockbreeding, hunting, as well as with piracy! The latter activity was profitable until the end of the 19th century (1870), when the activity of pirates decreased, and the cultivation of olives began.

The territorial configuration of the village hinders the development of local productive occupations; this situation, combined with the socio-economic changes of the 20th century and the two wars that ensued, led to the displacement of the active population of the Mani villages towards big cities or abroad and the gradual desolation of these regions. The large number of heirs of the abandoned buildings and the difficulty of finding them in combination with the difficulty of the area's productive reconstruction, makes the revival of the village problematic and Vatheia is now for the most part in ruin (fig. 6).

In 1975, Vatheia's population was down to 4-7 elders. The village did not have electricity, water, not even an access road. On that year – the year of Architectural Heritage – the Greek National Tourism Organization launched a program for the revival of traditional villages, with architect Aris Konstantinidis at its head. It aimed at the conservation and restoration of historic buildings, in order for them to house touristic activities or other relevant activities, such as museums, restaurants, municipal offices, weaving mills, etc. The program is the first connection of tourism development with the architectural heritage. It included 6 villages, among which Vatheia at Mani, and it anticipated the building's restoration, the concession of their exploitation for 11 years initially and then the restitution of the buildings with their new use to their owners.

Despite the program's success in other settlements, at Vatheia the program unfortu-

² <https://travelphoto.gr/vatheia-lakonian-mani-vathia/>

nately failed, because only 11 buildings were able to be restored, and when they were returned to their owners, they functioned as guesthouses for a certain period, and they were then abandoned.

Today, the historic settlement is abandoned (fig. 7) with most of its constructions in ruin and the old paths are blocked by vegetation or decrepit buildings. According to the 2011 Census, only 6 people live permanently at Vatheia. And today very few inhabitants can be seen in the village, mainly during hunting season and in summer. In a study elaborated in 2016 by NTUA postgraduate students, 208 buildings were recorded in Vatheia: 54 in ruins, 44 buildings in poor condition, 35 in moderate and only 75 buildings in relatively good condition, most of which are within the intervention zone created in 1975 by the Hellenic Tourism Organization.

Despite the abandonment of Vatheia, the village is visited by Greeks and foreigners who are interested to get acquainted with the region and who wander around the site, however difficult that may be, due to its ruinous condition.

The development plans which have been drafted from time to time for the villages of Mani have proposed the reinforcement of the traditional agricultural economy and the promotion of mild forms of tourism, combined with the protection and promotion of its unique natural and man-made landscape. However, the required policy to implement these projects has not yet been developed, nor are there any incentives for the rehabilitation of the village and the restoration of its buildings.

Legislation and Incentives

For the revival of Greek villages, measures and incentives that will strengthen the primary and secondary economic sectors are needed.

Mountainous villages primarily require a new financial basis to drive the problem of abandonment of historic buildings. The current conjuncture of the pandemic kept many city residents in their villages, which until now were a place of vacation. The profile of this population varies. They are retired, students but also many other professionals working by video conference. In the coming years, things may change to the direction of the revitalization of small settlements, if telework is maintained to some extent and if there are incentives for the return of young people to the villages and their involvement in agricultural activities by producing and distributing local products.

Lately, social bodies have been pushing the state to introduce financing, favorable loans, and subsidies to the owners of listed buildings. Specifically, in November 2020, the Ministry of the Environment announced a new financing program for historic buildings, called "Diatiro Kat Oikon" (Keeping the Home). The program was created after the successive collapses of old and noteworthy buildings in Athens as well as in cities and villages throughout Greece. These collapses endanger public safety and deplete our cultural wealth. To this day, the program has not been implemented.

At the same time, a Law bill is being drafted by scientific teams, setting procedures for the revitalization and reuse of abandoned listed buildings, or buildings located in protected areas, and specifying the procedures that the Municipality – or any other public body – has to follow in order to take over the use of the building in case the owners are unable to implement these procedures. This Draft Law also anticipates the action to be followed in the case of buildings of unknown ownership and abandoned public real estate. The above body undertakes the necessary work for the restoration of the abandoned properties and the restitution of their appropriate use. The Draft Law also mentions possible sources of funding from private, Community or National resources. Upon the expiration of the period of exploitation and use by the Municipality, the property is attributed to its owner, in its present state. An important aspect of the proposal is that the owners do not lose their property rights and when their identity is known, they have the option of participating in the restoration and maintenance program of their property. However, the adoption of this proposal by the State has not yet been ensured, although the problem of the historic buildings' abandonment and collapse is acute. The current legislative provisions obliging the owner to maintain his property do not apply, as there are no practical consequences if the owner does not comply. In case the owner is unable to undertake this obligation when it comes to dangerously dilapidated buildings, the law anticipates the intervention of the Municipality for the fixing of the building and these works encumber the owner. However, this regulation has not worked either, and even if the Municipality fixes and restores the building, it is bound to end in the same situation if it is not inhabited and properly maintained. We hope that in the following years if the above proposals are adopted by the state, they will lead to a better future for our villages.

2. The problem of alteration of form and function of historic villages

Along with the problem of the abandonment in mainly mountainous villages, active villages are facing the problem of alteration of their architectural and functional physiognomy. The existing legislation, coming from two Ministries, is not always able to protect the architectural physiognomy of the historic villages from modern interventions that alter the buildings and the public space, because for the most part they have not been based on the necessary special studies for each village. The main issues are encountered are:

A) The incorrect demarcations of villages which, despite the lack of residential pressure, allow for large expansions which render their historical nucleus indistinguishable and push the inhabitants to live in the newer residential areas and to exploit the properties that they have within the historic village from a touristic viewpoint.

One of the typical examples conveyed by the aforementioned problem is represented by the village of Volissos³ in the northern part of the island of Chios. That region has a very broad area of permitted expansion, but which also disposes empty plots and empty buildings inside its limits (fig. 8).

A second relevant example is the historic village of Pyrgos Santorini⁴ the boundary of which allows new construction in a zone around the historic village and as a result makes it illegible. And since most of the new constructions are intended for hotels, the village will follow the example of other villages of Santorini, with the increase of the tourist pedestrian traffic in its narrow streets, where the tourist trade begins to develop (figs. 9, 10).

B) Incorrect restorations of historic buildings, made by engineers who are not specialized and are addressed to owners who do not realize what are the characteristics of their historic buildings that they must maintain. *Typical examples can be found even in mountainous villages, as Amfikleia and Leontari (fig. 11).*

C) The erroneous building rules and the high building coefficients lead to the production of buildings whose volume does not blend harmoniously with the historic ensemble. At the same time, owners are urged to demolish old buildings to better use their plots. The solution to transfer the building coefficient to salvage historic buildings is a solution which has been largely discussed during recent years but has not yet been implemented (fig. 12).



Fig. 8. Volissos, Chios. Wide area of permitted building expansion. Plan of the urban organization of the municipal unit of Amani in Chios, 2016

Fig. 9. Pyrgos, Santorini. Photo of the author

Fig. 10. Map of Pyrgos, by post graduate students of NTUA. Typology of buildings and new constructions around the historic village. Erroneous building rules. By my post graduate students of NTUA 2018-19



³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdJQSyeHUPQ>

⁴ <https://www.travelstyle.gr/to-mesaiwniko-xwrio-ths-santorinis/>

Fig. 11. Amfikleia, in central Greece. Incorrect restoration of historic buildings. Photo of the author

Fig. 12. Volissos, Chios. Erroneous building rules. Photo of the author

Fig. 13. Overtourism in Santorini. <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/01/16/ebird-proposals-to-slow-down-overtourism-on-popular-greek-island-of-santorini/>

One of the many examples is again, the historic village of Pyrgos at Santorini, that is governed by different degrees of protection by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Environment, Physical Planning and Public Works. The building conditions that have been imposed for the whole village - historical and modern - do not consider the different typologies of historic buildings (popular or urban buildings, mansions, etc.) which have completely different characteristics of height, number of floors and volume, but they establish common building coefficients and heights for the entire settlement (see fig. 10).

D) The lack of legislation defining permitted uses that will not exceed the capacity of each place to receive visitors, has as result the excessive development of tourism (accommodation, trade, recreation) that alters the buildings and the physiognomy of the settlement.

A typical example to highlight this problem is Santorini. A recent report on "overtourism" by the EU's transport committee warned that the island is failing to manage the increasing tourist numbers, spelling disaster for the local community and the environment, and putting the future of the destination at risk. The village of Oia has become a tourist attraction and entertainment center as all the habitants moved to a neighboring village and their houses in Oia have been transformed in tourist reception areas. From April to October, the famous for its sunset village of Oia, is packed with thousands of visitors all whipping out their smartphones to take the exact same picture. "In peak season, it's busier than Penn Station at rush hour," says the island's former mayor advisor, Lukas Bellonias. Every evening huge swathes of tourists' swarm around the vista points to get their most instagram shot. To do so, they often step on the roofs of residences. But there are more villages and sites in Santorini heading in the same direction of tourist overgrowth (fig. 13) [<https://www.greece-is.com/santorini-pressure-threat-overtourism/>].

The former mayor of Santorini commissioned a study to assess the carrying capacity of the island which is expected to be revealing for the risk of the island from tourism and respectively to highlight the special importance for the future economic development of the island based among others to products such as the famous wine of Santorini, the small tomatoes, the legume fava. However, the future of this land does not seem promising.

Urban Planning – Legislation - Management

Dealing with the problems arising from incorrect demarcation of villages and inappropriate building conditions requires appropriate legislation that must be based on urban planning studies, individualized for each settlement. And it then requires compliance with the legislation on behalf of the implicated researchers and of the owners, and the monitoring of its implementation by the responsible state and local administration bodies. Proper restoration requires the training of engineering researchers and engineers serving in the monitoring services, as well as the sensitization of society. As for the issue of hypertourism that alters the buildings, the social characteristics and the overall physiognomy of the villages, a developmental policy is required, to motivate all productive sectors in the suburban regions. It also requires studies to calculate the carrying capacity and visitor management, to assess each area's environmental, social, economic, and cultural characteristics.

3. Concluding

The recent problem of the pandemic and the now obvious problem of climate change require a revision of developmental policies in Greece and in Europe on many levels. The revival of abandoned villages through strengthening primary production and processing, the establishment of incentives to move younger generation from large cities to smaller villages by providing all the necessary infrastructure for modern living and working, will work advantageously for both problems. The harnessing of hypertourism and the proper management of tourist movement will help reduce the effects of climate change as well as hinder the expansion of the pandemic. Moreover, building activity within reason and the preservation of historic buildings instead of their replacement are obviously contributing to the reduction of energy consumption and, in turn, to the reduction of the effects of climate change. In conclusion, it should be noted that the reduction of climate change phenomena and the response to the current pandemic and any corresponding issues which may arise in the future, require agreement on a global level and cannot be addressed effectively on an individual-state level.

The text is based on personal scientific activity as well as on postgraduate students' projects which I supervised.



The Situation of the Spanish Small Centers and Villages: from Abandonment to Recovery

Alvaro Gomez-Ferrer Bayo

With the term of “la España vaciada” the “emptied Spain”, we know that large part of Spain that occupies its north-central part, with a very small population density, with many abandoned towns and ultimately with great difficulty in recovering the old territorial balance. Internal migrations after the civil war and, later in the sixties and in the seventies of the last century, the Spanish process of development and industrialization have been the main cause of this abandonment. This process of abandoning the little villages has never stopped because in general the new generations have decided not to follow the way of life of their parents. The causes of depopulation are basically cultural and developmental, where the decrease in the birth rate and the progressive aging of the resident population strongly affect. There is also a great gap between the urban and the rural society. The urban inhabitants don't realize that the rural environment is the space where food and water is produced, and only for this reason should be valued, preserved and enhanced.

Spain took the street of a high industrialization without protecting sufficiently the agricultural sector. And we can add the problem derived from the obsolescence of many of those first industries and for the globalization process that contribute to the desertion. During the last years of this century the economic rules of the European Commission about the limitation and control of the production of several agricultural products has added to the flight of that kind of rural habi-

tat which has continued or even increased. Thousands of Spanish little towns suffer serious problems of lack of inhabitants and a good part of them are classified as “rural areas at risk of irreversible depopulation”. The situation is so severe that it has been considered as a State problem. In fact, a lot of private associations, grouped municipalities, television programs, journal articles, universities conferences, etc., have taken attention to this serious problem.

The process of autonomic decentralization in Spain, which took with it the reinforcement of the regions identity, strengthening in each one of them, their educational, health, and administrative systems, has contributed also to the migratory flow not only towards the capital cities of those regions, but also towards other provincial capitals of each region.

The main problem for those areas of the empty Spain is not only the lack of population, but the lack of financing that could help to promote new initiatives and projects capable to solve the absence of services. Only sometimes touristic interest has maintained a few original structures. Ancient artisan trades have been lost, and the maintenance and restoration processes of that old habitat are very difficult.

The lack of employment due to an insufficient economic activity in those little villages, together with the job offers in the cities, has generated a continuous and sometimes massive emigration and has

Fig. 1. Map of the emptied Spain

Fig. 2. Calatañazor (Soria)



almost cancelled the villages' human resources.

It is important for the maintenance of the old population to combine its normal life with an adaptation of the productive fabric to that aging workforce, eliminating arduous jobs, for the benefit of intellectual and creative activity, improving the beauty of the town, painting the houses, gardening, opening footpaths, etc. It is so important the conservation, repair, restoration of the local heritage that these jobs could be paid by the municipality or by the provincial system of economical help with the direction and control of architects concerned by the rural and vernacular heritage.

On the other hand, against that situation in some little regions certain villages have strengthen its ties in order to arrive to a minimum which could resolve its necessities centralizing the basic stores and services. Even more in a part of the deepest empty region a political party has born and in the last general elections obtained a representative in the National Parliament. In some areas of those empty lands new stranges installations have been located, as the base camp to maintain and repair big commercial aircrafts near Teruel, the provincial capital of one of the most inhabited zones of Spain.

1. Some data from 2017

Rural Spain lost 61,684 inhabitants during the last year, in the set of municipalities with less than 10,000, while the set of Spanish provincial capitals gained between 2016 and 2017 a total of 27,960 neighbors.

In rural Spain when a municipality falls below the thousand neighbors the problem begins. When it falls below 500, the risk of extinction becomes clear. When it drops below 100, the risk of total loss is extremely dangerous. Of the 8,124 municipalities in Spain, 4,979 have less than a thousand registered inhabitants. And, of these, 3,972 subsist on less than 500 residents.

2. Some ways to recovery that "emptied Spain"

This communication, as is indicated in the title, tries to show some possible ways to recover that "emptied Spain" specially the small villages. Sometimes those ways are a mixture of attempts because there is not a specific rule to solve the situation extremely serious in certain situations.



Fig. 3. San Vicente de Munilla (Rioja) squatters village



Fig. 4. Landscape first type villages



Fig. 5. Benidorm 1950



Fig. 6. Benidorm today

Spain is a country with different climatological zones. Very dry in the south and in the east, where in autumn the storms are very dangerous because the concentrate rain. Most of those empty regions suffer very cold winters and hot summers, making more difficult the adaptation to new residents. Also it has high diverse topographic landscape with high mountains, extensive plateaus and plains. And we can find an extremely particular construction background according to the climatology, the history and customs of each region. It is very important to maintain the territory like an evocative and useful place. It is also necessary to maintain the agricultural production in a continuous process of modernization which could permit to compromise between the past and the present. Today society is increasingly urban and the rural territory is considered frequently as

something valid almost only in terms of its use for leisure. It seems to me, that there is also a fundamental value, based on respect for the land and the people that lives in it, and also in the knowledge of its ability to host the appropriate uses.

3. Types of villages

We will first analyze which types of small villages are in Spain trough a very synthetic way. We could group five types of villages.

Villages with an agricultural economy

The first would be those to which we have referred in the first paragraph, villages more or less picturesque, with an agricultural economy, generally isolated in a large territory, and with a strong population loss. A variant of this type would be those located in mountainous areas that remain somewhat isolated, difficult to recover because they are strongly linked to a declining cattle rising or forestry economy and a temporary tourist economy.

Villages satellites

The second would be those with old particular characteristics, located near large towns, but that end up becoming a satellite of the big city, living on the economy of it. In some cases they get new jobs located in these little towns that are mainly places of residence.

For that kind of villages the problem is the loose of its old personality but can't be considered a part of the "empty Spain".

Villages in Spanish peripheral areas

The third would be those located in most of the peripheral areas of Spain, particularly those situated in the south and east part of the country, very affected by the tourist pressure that has made many of them a place of residence for foreigners. In some cases so transformed that nothing remains of their previous appearance. It would be the case of Benidorm or Marbella.

Villages in a balanced territory

A fourth type is composed by the villages situated in agricultural areas with properties of medium or small dimension covering a territory more or less balanced. Many of those areas have suffered in old times a dramatic emigration, but today the average of population is stabilized and are not considered as part of the empty Spain.

Village's medium size

A fifth type would be those that cover spaces between cities of a medium size and that in general maintain their personality and help to ensure that the territorial balance could not be greatly altered. The policy of promoting new communications as highways and speed trains connecting large population centers has made the stability of many towns of this fourth type difficult because they are outside the new traffic systems.

4. Some initiatives for the recovery

Let us now look at some initiatives for the recovery of those towns with less than 500 inhabitants, a number that marks the risk of extinction. There are at present time different initiatives coming from diverse associations. We present some examples of them.

Temporary occupation

The first one is the temporary occupation, generally on vacation, with the consequent process of restoring the buildings, by the people or families who had abandoned them. That supposes a temporary flow that does not serve for the recovery of the town

in its total function. But it is important to stop the process of degradation of this heritage.

Recently due to the consequences of the pandemic restrictions many people has decided to leave in small villages not so far of the main cities where their job continuous. That signifies a new valuation of this kind of life, but that occurs in areas enough habited, not in the empty Spain.

There are projects that are trying to fix in little villages in some parts of that empty Spain, new families, even coming from outside our country, that want to begin a new life, profiting the low prices of the scenery and beauty of the setting of that places, and the structure and services of the village that still remains. They are as the ancient pioneers that occupied wastelands in old times.

Conversion of buildings into rural accommodation

The second is the conversion of some of the buildings into rural accommodation. This practice implies that the village is attractive and that the tourist offer is wide and constant to achieve the recovery of the village. To realize this target, each town has to find its identity and manage its own tourism model. Normally this process is made keeping the ancient structure and in many cases conserving the identity of the build-

Fig. 7. Lerma (Burgos) medium size village





Fig. 10. Granadilla (Caceres) aerial view

ing like an added aesthetic value. Rural accommodation facilitates that those families could continue leaving in their own house that many times comes from various generations. In Spain the experience of holidays in this kind of rural houses for Spanish people has been very appreciated because the beaches and the holidays resorts have been usurped for an abusive tourism.

New economies for ancient villages

The third is to settle the population through diversified economies, with telework that has become widespread in this year of the pandemic crisis, with quality basic services, taking advantage of the home distribution of goods that has been extended recently with highly developed logistics areas. Some universities, they have started to have its summer curses in those areas in order to boost and to carry on at those population cultural activities.

Another action in order to promote the knowledge and valuation of isolated re-

gions is the fact of put in the television screen many programs about those areas, included their way of life or the new activities carried on for new inhabitants that have decided to live there.

Transfer of abandoned lands

The fourth initiative is to transfer abandoned lands, without loss of property, but facilitating their exploitation to whoever wants to work them, so that they will be revitalized. Agreements of all kinds can be made in this matter. This fourth initiative is the most difficult to be implemented, because it needs a revitalization of the structural system of the agricultural sector. It implies new agricultural technics, an efficient system of storage and transport, etc.

There are some successful experiences in towns in the Pyrenees where tradition and technology have been united, houses have been rebuilt, and they have opted for organic farming and renewable energy.

5, Administration commitment

All these proposals imply a commitment by the administrations to guarantee basic services, with a reasonable communication system, and with a solid and permanent regional policy. Innovation in rural schools should be encouraged, and a close and flexible health system ensured. Today some services as post office, bank office, detail commerce, pharmacies, etc., have disappeared in many of those little villages. A new local structure should be built that could concentrate services in one of that villages, of course in the one best placed in terms of access, in order to maintain a minimum of them, specially that who concerns first medical attention.

6. Heritage as recovery factor

We, professionals of the spatial planning and architectural conservation, must introduce in the discussions about the empty villages the heritage factor. We are living a crucial period in which the transfer of the population towards cities seems to be impossible to stop. In Spain the migratory flow to the peripheral areas or main cities keeps going on despite some administration efforts to stop it.

As I have said in a recent communication for an Interreg European project "Territorial planning must be the instrument for rational management of the resources of that territory in which it operates. It is also responsible for its functionality, its landscape and environmental protection, the protection of its heritage values, the control of accesses and the reception capacity that this territory may have, and ultimately for the beauty of its urban components or natural ones". I would add also the proposals for new agricultural activities looking the financial resources that can be implemented.

The loss of so many villages is an economic problem because the state must built new apartment buildings to give housing to all the transferred inhabitants. The right to housing is a constitutional right and actually for the young generation it is very difficult to have access to a worthy apartment. It seems to be impossible to stop this migration process towards the cities and also it seems very difficult to create jobs in those isolated villages.

In terms of heritage today the rural architecture, the vernacular architecture, has a new appreciation that can help to conserve

this architectonic heritage, mostly accompanied by a particular landscape. Each village has a church, a little town hall, the old house of the landlord that constitutes an attractive focal point of it. Heritage must be conserved not only by the owners, normally with strong financial problems, but also by the administration as part of the recovery of those villages, and as part of the balance between rural life and its difficult development.

In Spain we have had the recovery of some villages or as minimum maintained the population, thanks to the transfer of those inhabitants to new villages due to the construction of barrages so necessities in our country because of the permanent draught of many areas. But we have also the case of Granadilla a walled village near a barrage, where its neighbors were transferred to other settlement and the village was abandoned. Many years later this place was declared urban heritage and restored. The rural community of Granadilla lives in another place and this outstanding site only serves for students and visitors. We must be careful with those situations which can create ghost towns or lifeless museums.

We need territorial plans for all those empty regions that could give after a serious analysis of each situation an accurate proposal to reestablish the ancient balance between different scenarios, rural settlement, little villages, medium size towns, etc.

And in these plans we need also to reinforce and underline the wonderful landscape, the particular heritage of each town as their landmark.

Finally I think that we must focus on all kind of European funds that can help to the recovery of those empty lands, giving attention to the conservation and protection of the vernacular heritage contained in them.