

THE ANDROS LANDSCAPES AND THEIR EVOLUTION: FROM EMBIRIKOS' GAZE TO THE ERA OF SUMMER HOLIDAYS

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Abstract

The present paper is an investigation of landscapes and their evolution in the island of Andros. The investigation embarks on a journey through photographic documentation of characteristic vistas and snapshots of social situations in the island during the early to mid-20th century, as captured by Andreas Embirikos, alongside postcards that were in circulation at the time. Its destination is the current image of the same vistas and landscapes in the island, with the aim of articulating observations and remarks on the changes that have been effected on these sites in the course of approximately a century. At the same time, this research aims, on the one hand, to trace the deeper processes associated with these changes, and on the other, to formulate suggestions for possible objectives and strategies for an optimal management of the island's environment and landscapes, as well as its development.

Key words: *Landscape, Environment, Sustainability, Urban Planning, Urban Design, Andros*

1. Introduction

The impetus for this research on the recent evolution of Andros' landscapes was a joint publication by the Kairis library and Agra edition (Petsopoulos 2009), entitled "Andreas Embiricos' Andros". The publication was an album consisting of approximately 240 black and white photos, depicting characteristic aspects of natural and built landscapes of the island, and spanning a period of time between 1920 and the mid-20th century (particularly the 1950s and 60s). Embirikos' gaze is therefore directed towards the island's landscapes with particular sensitivity, attempting to discern, behind their static images, the emotions that they elicit in people in various everyday life situations, as well as the deeper "truths" that these may reflect. While processing this material, a further volume was published by the Kairis library, entitled "Regards from Andros ... Postcards 1900-1960" (Stathatos 2007). It is a rich collection of postcards, representing everyday life in Andros through snapshots taken in the context of characteristic natural and built landscapes.

Using a selection of material from the above sources and comparing it with a comparable body of systematically effected recent documentation the present research investigates the evolution of characteristic natural and human-built landscapes in Andros, with a special emphasis on the island's Chora. The aim of this research is, initially, to articulate certain observations and remarks on the changes that have been effected on the sites under investigation in the course of approximately a century. At the same time, it aspires to interpret the causes, mechanisms and implications of these changes. Finally, it attempts to formulate certain suggestions on the prospects for further development of the local environment and the island's areas of interest and outlining a series of essential actions for consideration by the relevant local authorities.

2. Remarks on concepts and terminology

A linguistic and conceptual investigation on the notion of «landscape» (Dimitrakos 1964, Kriaras 1995, Wikipedia 2013, N. 3827/2010 «Implementation of the European Landscape Convention») reveals that during the last 80 years there has been a marked broadening of the concept of landscape. The narrower and more traditional understanding of landscape referred to a delimited place or geographical entity with homogeneous natural characteristics that can be apprehended in a single view and which present artistic or aesthetic interest exclusively oriented towards one's sense of vision. However, landscape has gradually come to encompass a multifaceted set of perspectives, and is now understood more as a set of traits (forms, sounds, smells, tastes, material textures, cognitive and emotive experiences, social and political elements etc.). These traits are combined by the perceiver in a subjective consideration of «landscape» on the basis of one's senses, memory and perception (see NTUA/UPL, 2000, Moraitis, 2005).

3. The landscapes of Andros

3.1. Chora. Residential development

The island's main town or «Chora» lies on the southeast part of the island and stretches in linear fashion along a peninsula, between the gulfs of Neimborio and Paraporti inlets (Fig. 1). During the 16th - 17th century the settlement was confined to the outermost tip of the peninsula, to the east of its current «Entrance», entrenched within a wall that consisted of the outer walls of houses (Fig. 2). A 1910 postcard (Stathatos 2007 (Fig. 3) depicts a view of the Chora from the area of Ypsilos. On it, one easily discerns that, at the time, the Chora was densely built, but occupied only the main body of the peninsula up until the Church of the Virgin Mary (The Dormition or Kimisis), which dominates the space, on a higher stretch of ground. A little further up one can see the Primary School, and to the right the Nursing Home (erected on 1894, following a donation by Constantine Embirikos). The nursing home is located in an essentially unbuilt and undersigned area, outside the dense network of buildings. In the greater area of the Nursing Home, the first town houses, i.e. the residences of Andros' wealthier population, are starting to appear (Daniolou 2011).



Fig. 1.
Andros, Chora.
Overlook. On the left, the Neimborio inlet and on the right, Paraporti.

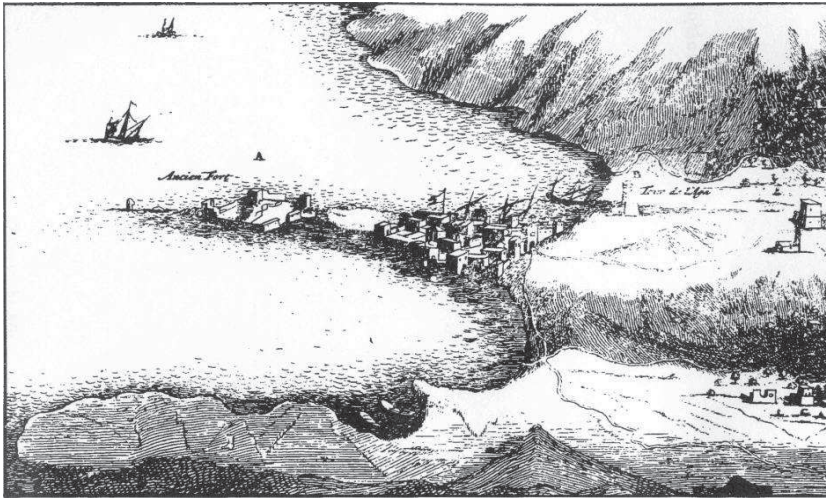


Fig. 2.
General view of the Southern Castle (Kato Kastro) around 1700. Lithograph by the French traveller Tournefort (reproduced from: Nisos Andros 2007/1, tradition, culture, environment, development, society. Typothito editions, Athens).

The current image (Fig. 4) suggests that in the interceding century, significant building development took place (Demathas, 2008). This development almost quadrupled the size of the Chora's residential area, while increasing the density of the peninsula's built area. It also included a significant presence of small-scale tourist / holiday accommodation, which expanded the residential area towards the western edges of the settlement.

It is worth noting that the residential development in Chora was not realized in a scattered fashion, but was located alongside a linear development, across the peninsular axis, thus accounting for today's largely consistent urban fabric. A smaller-scale residential development is also evident towards the Neimborio area, on a narrower zone across the road to Lamyra / Apoikia / Vourkoti. A pivotal factor for this development, and for the lack of expansion towards the two fertile plains on each side of the settlement (Livadia and Neimborio) was possibly the fact that there are large stretches of land on these sites where (even today) the land owners never expressed an interest to build or develop for residential purposes.



Fig. 3 and 4.
Andros, Chora. Left: 1910 postcard (Stathatos 2007). Bottom: August 2013.



This evolution resulted in the preservation of the Chora's structure and significance as a cohesive and recognizable urban entity within a greater mainland. Moreover it enabled the conservation of the surrounding countryside, which includes fertile plains that still today retain, to a certain extent, their significance for local agriculture, and a characteristic surrounding mountain mass. Consequently, the landscape that is formed through the intense contrast between the densely built Chora area and the almost entirely unbuilt surrounding countryside, has managed to retain its basic structure, function and form, despite being subjected to significant residential development.

3.2. Chora. Central Pedestrian Street (G. Embirikou)

The backbone of the Chora is the pedestrian market street (Georgiou Embirikou (Fig. 5 to 10) which begins on the L. Th. Voyatzidis residence (1917 and ends on Kairi square and the Archaeological Museum, then continuing after a slight turn towards the Riva square. The market street is the first pedestrian street to have been constructed in Greece. It was realized in 1901 by the Mayor G. Embirikos (Kampanis, Mpasantis 2012) and has since constituted a significant urban landscape, where the poet Andreas Embirikos has often turned his gaze. His photographs from the period between 1953 and 1956 attest to the importance of this street as a commercial center for the island's Chora. The building facades are continuous, consistent in scale and share a common architectural style, which includes characteristic neoclassical elements (Valma 2013), as well as traits of art nouveau, neo-baroque, eclecticist and even neo-byzantine and neo-roman styles. The existence of such traits in the form, and most importantly the structure of the street's buildings is directly linked to the naval development of the island, which enabled new architectural models to be transported from wherever Andros' ships could sail to. This fact is also responsible for the significant accumulation of wealth in the island, which was a necessary prerequisite for the realization of the above models, often through the hands of famous Greek architects (Vassilopoulos 2013). The general image of the market transpires an unmistakably bourgeois character, often underlined by the presence of its users, particularly in the 1956 shot.

In the course of time, between the 1950s and the first decade of 2000, the market street remains remarkably consistent in its basic traits: its broadly commercial character, its bourgeois style, the human scale of its buildings, as well as its ability to constitute a main pole of attraction for people. Naturally and expectedly, however, it has also been subjected to several changes. The richness of former buildings has been significantly altered, with older neo-classical or neo-classically styled buildings giving place to several newer, contemporary forms made primarily of concrete. While the façade lines as well as the greater architectural scale of the street are generally preserved, the above alterations do not cease to introduce new elements in this urban landscape. These elements are either entirely foreign to the existent whole (e.g. concrete tiles and cantilevers along the sides of the buildings) or of dubious locality (e.g. arches on the facades), thus significantly altering the street's image and character. A typical example can be seen in the case of the National Bank building (Fig. 6 and 10) as well as that of the Telecommunications Buildings (OTE), a little further up and to the west, on the northern face of Goulandri square.

In this context we should also note the long-term modification of use that the market street has gone through during the aforementioned decades. From purely commercial uses associated with the regular supply of basic goods for the population of Chora throughout the year, the building complex has acquired new uses, shifting to a certain degree towards newer kinds of commercial activity, aimed chiefly at the visitor or summer tourist, and are therefore distinctly seasonal in character. Such uses concern primarily the domain of accommodation, and extend to open-air tables and chairs which have recently spread to parts of the pedestrian street itself. A further use concerns tourist, seasonal and traditional product commerce. Compared to other

activities, this street arguably still retains a good balance between permanent commercial uses and more seasonal ones. The latter impart a characteristic, buzzing atmosphere to the atmosphere, which is discernible on a 24-hour basis during the summer months, but is significantly reduced or near absent during other times in the year (for uses of land, see Aravantinos, 1999).



Fig. 5 to 9. Andros, Chora. Market Street. Upper left: photograph by A. Embirikos, 1953 (Petsopoulos 2009). Upper right: October 2004. Lower left: August 2013, morning. Lower right: August 2013, evening.



Fig. 9 and 10. Andros, Chora. Market Street. Left: photograph by A. Embirikos, 1956 (Petsopoulos 2009). Right: August 2013.



Fig. 11 and 12. Andros, Chora. G. Embirikou street. View of the westernmost upper part. Left. 1904 postcard (Stathatos 2007). Right: August 2013. The Voyatzidis residence (1917) is visible in the background.

Another postcard from 1904 (Stathatos 2007) presents a general view of the westernmost part of G. Embirikou street. This photograph has been taken from the opposite direction by comparison to the previous ones, i.e. from what is today's Town Hall (Embirikos residence), and facing what is currently the Kairis Library. This site features some of the wealthiest households, and some of the most interesting town house (Daniolou 2011) which, with their size, structure and rich neoclassical forms, grant a distinctly bourgeois outlook to the street (Fig. 11, 12). The vanishing point extends towards the countryside, with the neighbouring mountain masses in the background, giving the observer a perspective that infinitely extends this urban neighbourhood towards the west.

In the years leading on to the present era, this part of G. Embirikou street its primary urban character, but was also the subject of significant transformations. The main body of modifications involved the replacement of old town houses by newer buildings of different form and scale (Fig. 12). New models of urban living began to appear (the shift from «mansions» to the modern typology of «town houses»). The building mass began to move away from the building line, for the benefit of including front gardens, a new element for this area. In this way, the characteristic continuity of building facades was broken. In other cases, new buildings appeared, preserving a connection with the primary built front, but presenting an entirely different structure, construction and form (e.g. Post Office, OTE). Residential use began to wane in favour of new, common use functions (Post Office, Andros People's Club, Kydonieos Foundation and Contemporary Art Museum, Police Station, Kairis Library etc.). The introduction of automobiles is a further transformation parameter for the main elements of G. Embirikos street. However, that only concerns the topmost part of the road, to the west of the Embirikos Gymnasium of Andros, since the remaining street was fortunately allowed to retain its purely pedestrian character across the decades.

Finally in 1917 the new town hall (Th.N. Voulgaris house, 1917, that was bought by the municipality of Andros) and Kairios library (G. Dabasis house, 1917, that came to the possession of the Kabanis family and was later donated by M. Kabanis to the library in 1988) (Kabanis, Basantis

2012) and the house of Leonidas Bogiatzidis, an enormous duplex apartment, are erected in the area where today we find the Police Station (Markos Drakou house, 1912, that was bestowed by the church). The front side of the Bogiatzidis house is vertical in relation to G. Embirikos street and the building is also the western end of the pedestrian street obstructing completely the view of the inland countryside. This intervention signals a new era fro a city planning perspective and is considered successful as it manages to “enclose” public space and thus and therefore render it intelligible. This intervention , in addition, makes concrete the axis of Chora, which is the most significant element, in terms of for and function, and which this way assumes a specific shape with beginning, middle and end, stretching out for 500 meters from this point all the way to Kamara and Kairi square and which incorporates many different impressions and variations. This way the pedestrian walking along G. Embirikou pedestrian street oversees the surroundings and the street itself becomes a point of reference. The pedestrian as a clear visual sense of scale of the area and in this way the urban setting becomes familiar and pleasant (for issues regarding space perception, Sitte 1909).

3.3 *Neimporio*

The beach of Neimporio stretches along the northern side of the Chora of Andros and easily to reach on foot (fi. 13). That point is also the staring point of a modern road and an old pathway (Filippidis, 2010) that leads to Stenies, the village of the famed skippers of Andros, and to Apoiia, the village where the fountain of Sariza is located. On the most eastern end of that cove is the port o Chora, which recently expanded and is populated mostly by fishing boats, small boats, sailboats and yachts.

In a postcard from 1940 (fig. 14) and from 1950 (fig. 16) the cove and the beach of Neimporio is depicted as an idyllic place characterized by absolute peace and quiet. The most dominant presence is that of the sea and the sand that fades in the distance high towards the west, at the first trees near some small buildings. A characteristic point of reference, that survives still today, is the temple of Saint Nicholas, at the northern end of the cove, at the point where the Andros Yacht Club was bulit in later years. From that side of the cove, a small road gives access to the beach houses and fades in the sand. The landscape largely maintains its natural characteristics. The presence of man has been mild, discrete and clearly adapted to the environment.



Fig. 13
Chora of Andros
Neimporio,
General View



Fig. 14 & 15. Chora of Andros. Neimborio, view towards the north. Left: Postcard from 1940 (Stathatos, 2007). Right: August 2013.

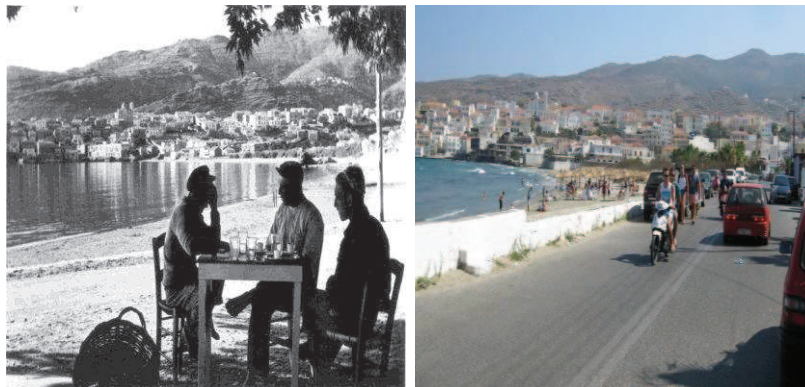


Fig. 16 & 17. Chora of Andros. Neimborio, view towards the south (Chora). Left: Postcard from 1950 (Stathatos, 2007). Right: August 2013.

Today human interventions on the Neimborio seaside are significant (fig. 15, 17). The construction of an elevated (in relation to sea level) road, significantly limits the width of the sandy beach without though cutting away completely the wanderer from the element of the sea. The peace of the place has been significantly disrupted; The road during the tourist season is burdened with a lot traffic and in additions all the leisure activities taking place alongside the road are the source of significant nuisance. Neimborio used to be the stamping ground of the local fishermen, destination for rest along the seaside and a place for swimming near Chora. Now it has become the main passageway towards the northeastern and northern parts of the island and, during the summer in particular, a tourist destination offering for the most part music, food and drink to younger people. Finally the commercial exploitation of significant parts of the beach with the placement of umbrellas and seats (the relevant regulation of the municipality of Andros, 1.6.2013 – 31.12.2013 at <http://diavgeia.andros.gr/?p=774>), changes significantly the conditions for the bathers.

3.4 Gavrio

Gavrio (Ydrousa) is a seaside settlement on the northwestern part of Andros that numbers approximately 950 residents. It is located on the eastern side of the Harakas cove (fig.18), a location that is very well-protected from wind, and which has been the main port of the island for decades now. For this reason, the area along the seaside in Gavrio is densely populated and has developed as a residential area (fig. 19, 20), while the surrounding area has developed in a more disparate fashion. The area around the road that leads to Batsi/Chora is again more densely populated. The phenomenon of residential diffusion are equally visible in the western side of the

cove, opposite the port, but also in all the surrounding area. That area is not included in the city plan and the presence of these buildings against the law, but as is often the case the state's leniency regarding building regulations allowed them to still be there (fig. 21).



Fig.18. Gavrio. General view. The core of the settlement develops in the region around the port. In all the surrounding area, most clearly along the road that leads to Chora, on the west side and opposite the port there are clear phenomena of building diffusion..



Fig. 19 & 20. Gavrio. Left: photo by A. Embirikos 1953 (Pesopoulos, 2009). Right: October 2004.



Fig. 21. Gavrio. View of the wider area where we observe building diffusion. October 2004.

With these observations in mind, it is worth articulating certain general relevant observations, since the phenomenon of building diffusion is seen time and again throughout the island and the whole country in fact. Already since the early 20th century, the foundation of all legislation in relation to city planning issues is the drafting of an approved “street plan”, which sets out specific building regulations and outlines the public, common and buildable spaces and the acceptable uses of land in every segment or zone” of the settlement. At the same time though it also cancels itself out (Rizos, 2004), by allowing building pretty much everywhere (see among others: ΠΔ 6/17.10.1978, ΠΔ 24/31.5.1985, ΠΔ 29.12.1989/22.1.1990) (Skouris, 1991) enforcing only a fraction of all the prescribed limitations, thus maintaining high building factors (eg in the case of

developmental activities) and low saturation (especially if all the minor transgressions are taken into account) (Anairousi, Oikonomou, 1997, Romanos, 2004).

The aforementioned process results in extensive development of a network of several scattered housing, productive and other activities as well as building facilities in areas on the periphery and outside of the residential space (fig. 22). This process results in the development of new forms of residential space, that could easily be described as sparse formations with mixed agricultural / residential functionality. These mixed formations are most often found in areas of special beauty, such as the area on the periphery of residential space, the seaside and other holiday areas as well as the roadside zones around the main roads (NTUA/ Strategic Environmental Esimates 2001).

The multiple problems that arise from this situation are more or less documented and familiar (see Aravantinos, 1999). Among them we would have to mention the rapid deterioration and downgrade of the natural environment and landscape, the destruction of agricultural land, the conflict between different functions, the high costs of creating and maintaining extensive road construction works and other technical infrastructures, as well as the dangers from the unchecked disposal of waste water and trash.

The isolated voices of dissent, which formulate, among other points, opinions in favour of a ban on off plan building, either as a radical immediate measure, or gradually through a series of steps (Anairousi, Oikonomou 1997, Rizos 2004, Romanos 2004), as well as the various relevant regulations that have been laid out in a rather fragmented fashion, have not thus far served their purpose as a «pilot» for further regulations. Therefore, for the time being there seems to be no clear policy in the direction of abolishing off plan building. Unfortunately, the expectations that have been built up for several decades now concerning the development of off plan land for significant financial benefit, as well as the inefficiency of a strong political will, which would be essential for the promotion of such an undoubtedly unpopular decision, currently render the entire project ineffable.



Fig. 22. Greater area of Gavriion. Off city plan residential diffusion. July 2010.

The phenomenon of residential diffusion is tightly interconnected with that of arbitration in urban design. The lack of consistent planning, and by extension of state intervention, both in terms of addressing functional and accommodation needs, as well as on the level of urban design control, leaves considerable space for private parties to do as they see fit on each occasion. Arbitrary building constitutes the most significant form of self-acting in space. It is expressed either through deviations from current urban design regulations (e.g. additional floor levels, fencing and

enclosure of open air spaces etc.) or through transgressions and illegal building on public land, on or off plan, as well as on streams and forest areas (Mavridou 1985, Filippidis 1990, Oikonomou 2004).

Today, although the phenomenon of arbitration in the urban design space appears reduced by comparison to other times, it has not been eliminated. The pursuit of a relevant state of law (e.g. the regulation and legislation regarding buildings and deviations, the inclusion of arbitrary sites in city plans, etc.) that has occasionally been promoted (see recent regulations: laws 3843/2010, 4014/2011 and 4178/2013) has by no means provided a solution or guarantee for a sustainable, high-quality environment, since it not only fails to address, but in fact promulgates this problem for future generations (Rizos 2004, Romanos 2004).

3.5. Stenies

Stenies, also known as Andros' Village of Ship Captains are a settlement of 210 inhabitants, built on an 80m altitude, on the hills of a green hill, with ample running waters and a sea view towards the Gialia inlet (Fig. 23).

From a comparative observation of available images of the area, the 1910 postcard (Fig. 24), A. Embirikos' photograph from 1954 (Fig. 25) and our recent photograph of Stenies and their greater surrounding area (Fig. 26), we can safely assume that the Stenies settlement per se has retained, during the course of about a century, its residential structure, its basing urban plan characteristics, as well as the relationship of the built environment to the countryside. A visit to the settlement affirms that a large part of its architectural wealth, including both buildings and public spaces, has been conserved with remarkable consistency. Therefore, the physiognomy of this landscape, of the dense settlement of Stenies under the naked, rocky, linear mountain mass of Kourameni, where the waters and thick vegetation set off, has been preserved almost intact, until today.

Nevertheless, while this landscape remains unaltered, the space between the settlement and the sea has suffered considerable changes. Due to its attractive natural beauty on the one hand, and its immediate contact with the sea on the other, this space has developed significantly towards residential activity in the last few decades (Demathas 2008). Such activity concerns primarily summer homes, many of which stand out with their size and «distinctive» architecture (Dardanos 2007) (Fig. 26).



Fig. 23.
Stenies.



Fig. 24 & 25. Stenies. Left: 1910 Postcard (Stathatos 2007). Right: Photograph by A. Embirikos, 1954 (Petsopoulos 2009).



Fig. 26. Stenies. Panoramic view of the greater area, which constitutes a pole of attraction for large summer residences (August 2013).

3.6. Stenies / Gialia

Gialia (from the word Aigialos, meaning “waterside”) are the inlet of Stenies with two sandy beaches, Embros (front) and Piso (back) Gialia. The two beaches are separated by the rock of Hionataki (snow white). In the front part of Gialia one finds the estuary of the river Melios, which flows under the ground during the summer months and has a visible surface flow for the rest of the year. The back Gialia form a much more secluded and weather safe beach. The entire inlet of Stenies has undergone significant residential development during the last decades, primarily targeted towards summer holiday accommodation. This development has been effected in a scattered fashion, making use of the possibilities available in off plan building (Fig. 30). Thus, an abundance of small and larger holiday residences have been built in the last decade, chiefly around the cove of back Gialia, which until recently remained intact.

In this way, sensitive and invaluable natural zones of this landscape have been significantly altered and constricted, and have currently been damaged beyond repair. These alterations do not only concern the presence of uncharacteristically large building complexes inside very large plots of land, but the transformation of unbuilt space and its open air characteristics, with a significant change in the ground terrain, due to extensive excavation, large wall constructions and extensive planting which is entirely atypical for the area (Dardanos 2007) (Fig. 27, 29). Through intense human intervention, this landscape is therefore gradually led to a full-scale transformation of physiognomy.



Fig. 27.
Stenies inlet.
General overview of
the Gialia and Piso
Gialia beaches.



Fig. 28 and 29. Stenies inlet. Left: photograph by A. Embirikos (Petsopoulos 2009). Right: August 2013.

The above evolution is easily visible during a comparative observation of A. Embirikos' photograph probably dating from the 1950s (Fig. 28) and the current relevant photograph from 2013 (Fig. 49). Apart from the dramatic change in the general form and of the specific

characteristics of the landscape on the slope above the cove of Piso Gialia, another very evident transformation concerns the way in which nature reacts to every human intervention, by altering its characteristics, unfortunately for the worst. The construction of a reinforced concrete road behind the beach of Gialia has entirely upset the balance between sea and land, and within the course of about 50 years, has ultimately produced intense phenomena of corrosion and a shrinking of the sandy beach surface by about 2/3 its original size (over 12 metres), while in some areas, the beach-front has disappeared completely. Thus, the consequences of human intervention on such a sensitive landscape have upset not only its physiognomy and aesthetics, but its very form and structure. Today, and for a span of several decades, it does not appear either possible or probable that these transformations may be revoked.



Fig. 30. Stenies inlet. Panoramic view of the greater area of scattered holiday residence development. August 2013.

4. The Role of Planning

In terms of planning, directions for the lower levels of planning are set out in the Regional Framework for Urban Design and Sustainable Development of the Southern Aegean Prefecture (Ministerial Decree YA 25290, Government Gazette ΦΕΚ 1487B/10.10.2003). According to this framework, Andros is classified in the category of islands that “develop in terms of tourism, while also presenting other productive activities and usable resources. Emphasis should be placed on actions that aim to resolve conflicts between different activities, and to avoid dependency on one-sided tourist development” (Fig. 31). What is more, Andros is recorded as an island where certain greater directions for planning have been set out, concerning the need for drastic reduction of off plan building (repeal of deviations, re-adjustment of building terms, and imposition of limitations), delineation of land uses in countryside environments, and implementation of the principle of the “compact city”.

The more specific, localized planning for Andros, albeit replete with regulations on the protection of the natural environment, is characterized by fragmentation and incompleteness. Unfortunately, an integrated and legally binding spatial plan that would set out uses of land for the entire island, as well as terms for the protection of environmentally sensitive areas and of the island’s characteristic landscape sites, has yet to appear. Such a plan, were it to exist, could also highlight the role of landscapes as significant developmental resources, that require appropriate management, in the context of a systematic pursuit for sustainable development (see also NCC 2012).

In terms of urban design plans, two Residential Control Zones (ZOE) are currently set out, for the region of the former township of Gavrión (Presidential Decree 25.2.1997) and for the current area of the Municipality of Andros and the Gavriónisia islets (Presidential Decree

19.10.2011). In their accompanying regulations, one finds terms outlining the lowest degree of segmentation and related building terms and limitations that concern only specific areas that are currently outside the approved street plan and settlement limits.

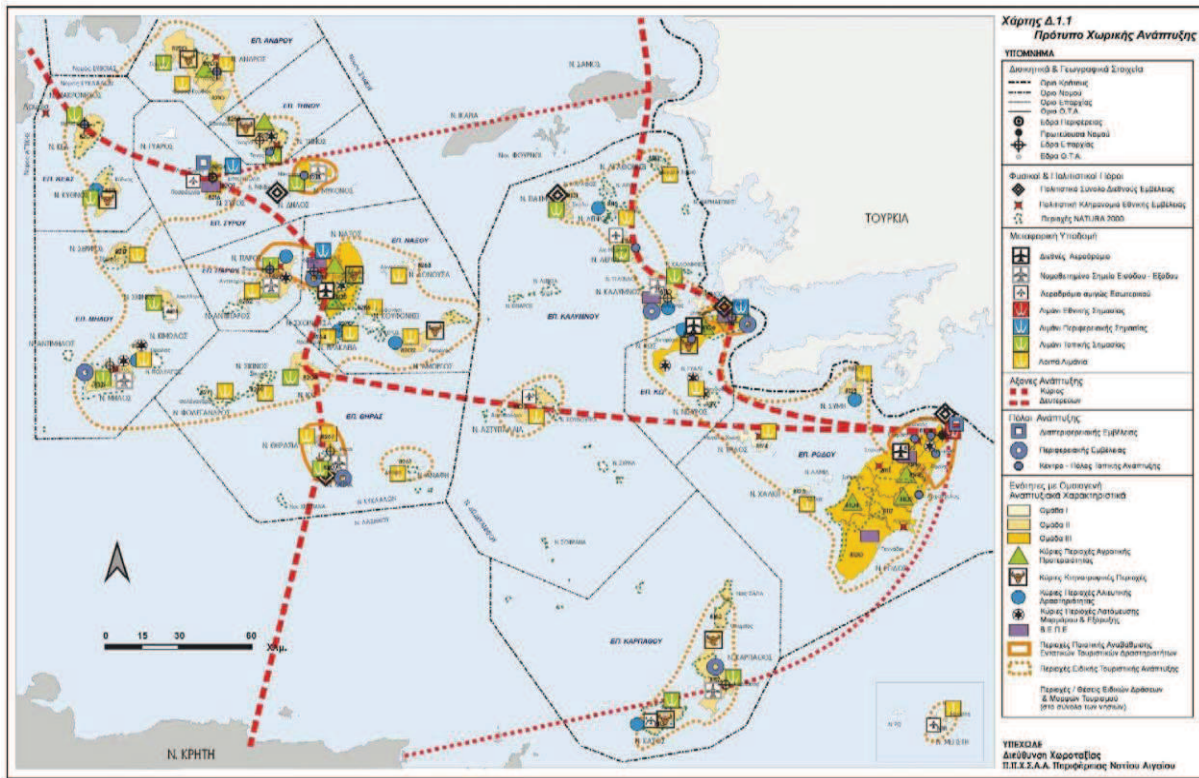


Fig. 31. Regional Framework for Urban Design and Sustainable Development. Southern Aegean Prefecture. Spatial development model.

In terms of the environment, an abundance of regulations are present. Again, these only concern very specific areas. Among them, we should note: Delineation of a Zone of Special Protection (ZEP) for Andros in the Natura 2000 network, Management Plan for the Zone of Special Protection (ZEP) for Andros in Natura 2000, classification of the inlet of Vitali and of the Central Mountain Mass as Places of Community Importance in the Natura 2000 network, classification of six areas as «Wildlife Resorts», definition of the area of «Dipotamata» as a Landscape of Unique Natural Beauty, approval of a list of small island wetlands and outline of regulations and limitations for the protection and enhancement of the small waterfront wetlands that are included in this list, and, finally, the recording of the «Central Andros» area as an important region for birdlife (NCC 2012, see also <http://www.biodiversity.gr>).

Last, a Draft Presidential Decree is currently being promoted, with the subject of defining land and water sites of the island as a Regional Park, and the setting out of a specific Management Agend (Andros Municipality, 2013). This is a proposal concerning the synthesis and coordination of the various extant spatial plans, with the aim of drafting an integrated policy and management framework for the protection of the environment and landscape – on the basis of law 3937/2009 – which will cover about 2/3 of the island (Fig. 32) (Design on behalf of the Municipality of Andros, from the Department of Planning and Regional Development of the University of Thessaly and the Aegean Energy Office that constitutes a support mechanism for the “Daphne” network / society of Aegean island municipalities). The objective of the above project is “the protection, conservation

and management of the natural environment and landscape, as natural heritage and a valuable national natural resource in land and sea portions of the Andros island region, which stand out for their great biological, ecological, aesthetic, scientific, geomorphic and educational value”.

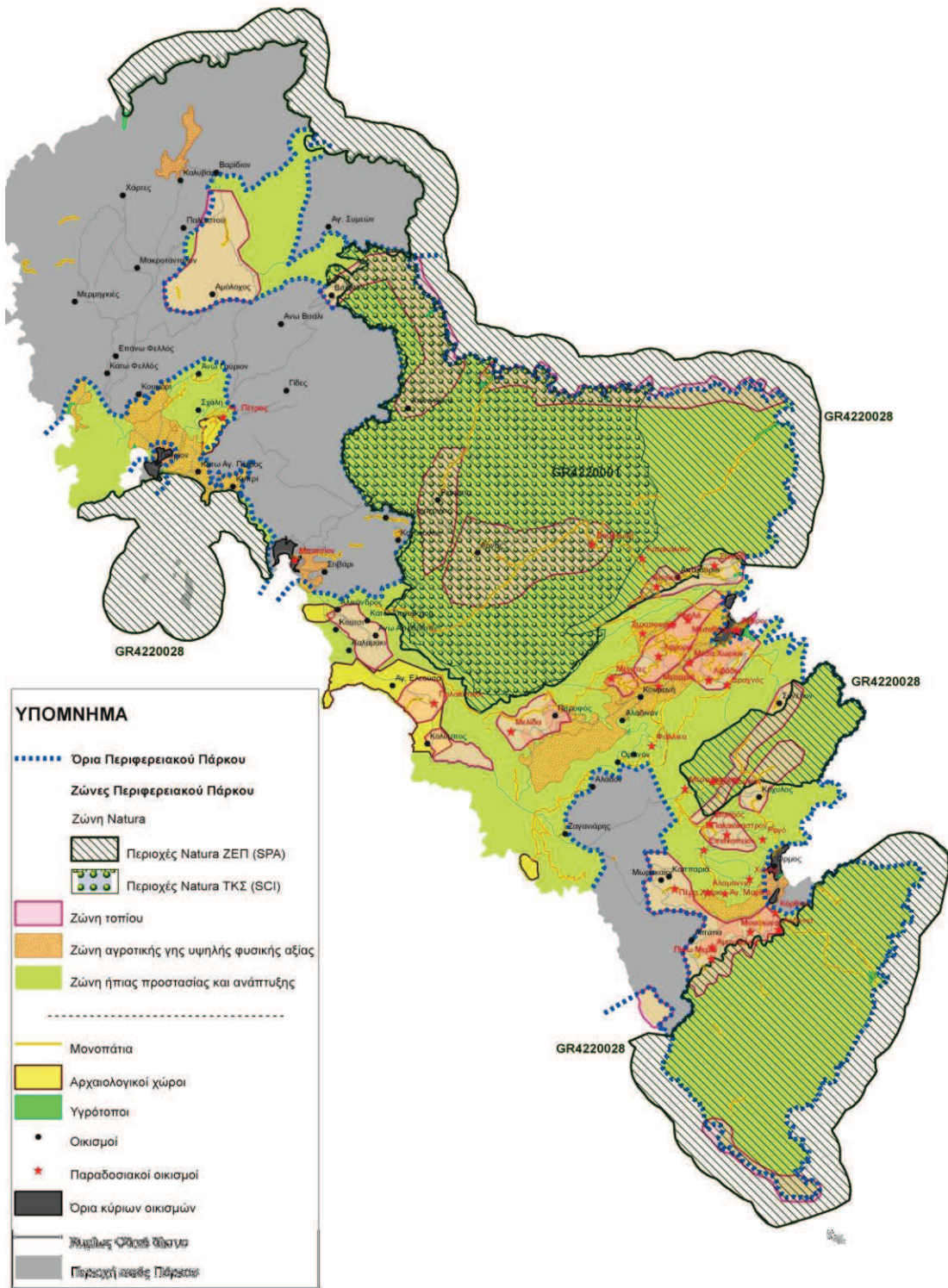


Fig. 32. Boundaries and zones of the Andros Regional Park (Municipality of Andros 2013).

5. Conclusive remarks

From the aforementioned investigation, it transpires that the landscapes in Andros could be distinguished into three broad categories: urban / residential landscapes, mainland countryside landscapes and coastal landscapes.

The **urban / residential landscapes**, have their formative roots in the development of naval activity in the island, which enabled the transport and import of new architectural prototypes – as well as, more generally, lifestyles that were new to the island. Naval activity was also responsible for ensuring the necessary economic means for the realization of relevant building plans and constructions. What is more, wealthier naval / shipping families were and are still able to support their local community, through the financing of public charities, private infrastructural projects, as well as activities broadly adhering to the domains of social and cultural economy, thus reinforcing the urban character of their local contexts. Despite any pressures for residential development in the island, urban / residential landscapes in Andros (on the basis of the analysis offered as regards the Chora and Stenies), largely conserved their cohesive character and their historic architectural physiognomy, as well as, to a great degree, their relation to the unbuilt surrounding countryside. Particularly as regards the Chora, one could add to the above remarks the conservation of its relationship with a particular social strand of the island's life, since it still constitutes the main center of social, commercial, artistic, cultural and political life.

The **mainland countryside landscapes** are characterized by the variety and richness of their natural locations, which include an abundance of trees and running waters. Thanks to the latter, and to the fertile grounds on these areas, many of these landscapes provided the basis for agricultural development. Where the ground slopes did not favor such a development, dry wall structures were introduced, creating graded ground compartments, known in Andros as the «anamasies» or «mases», with the aim of holding the soil and providing stable portions of ground that could be put to agricultural use. Through the years, this element became tightly interconnected with the natural landscape and formed an essential part of its physiognomy. A second characteristic of these landscapes' physiognomy is imparted by the scattered settlements which owe their creation both to the high value of fertile land, and to the feudal structure of ownership.

The process of spatial development, largely through manual labor, up until the mid-20th century, is intimately connected with the relatively non-intrusive nature of alterations introduced and, by extension, with the harmonic integration of constructions within the natural landscape. The activation of mechanical means across the space's development history doubtlessly led to more drastic, gradually larger-scale interventions, which often resulted in a less successful integration into the existent ground forms and broader sense of landscape. Residential diffusion, although relatively limited in comparison to other islands, has nonetheless left its traces, particularly in areas that are subject to increased pressure during the high holiday season. Large-scale arbitration has been avoided in this context, notwithstanding of course the kinds of typical offenses that are evident on a national level. Summer residences form the main field of development for out-of-plan construction, chiefly expressed across two planes: either commercial, ready-for-sale residences, small in size but including proportionately more offenses to the building code, or private residences, with more typical, small- or larger-scale offenses, but notably with much larger absolute sizes of built mass, and clearly more intensive offenses that extend to the unbuilt or open-air space, a sine qua non aspect of the greater landscape itself.

Coastal landscapes in Andros constitute zones of extraordinary natural beauty, and are therefore an important and particularly attractive resource for tourism in the island. This very fact, however, in conjunction with an incomplete planning both in terms of the space itself and as

regards its management, has led to significant alternations in coastal areas. These are brought about by the development of uses, activities, facilities and infrastructure for summer tourism, particularly in peak areas (e.g. Gavriou and Mpatsi), i.e. in areas which possess the relevant natural characteristics and are easily accessible. Human interventions are therefore significant and largely disorganized, attesting to no evidence of advance planning and management of eventual impact on the natural environment and landscape.

All three categories above, and particularly the mainland countryside and coastal landscapes, bear evidence of intense human interventions during the last few decades. These are chiefly attributable to two negative effects of spatial development: on the one hand, the diffusion of residential buildings off the building plan limits, and on the other, planning arbitration per se.

Concerning the **diffusion of residential buildings off-plan and outside settlement limits**, it is a common observation, initially amongst relevant researcher for some time now (see, among others, Anairousi, Oikonomou 1997, Ioannou Serraios 2007, Rizos 2004), but more recently even in official planning documents (e.g. Regional Framework for Urban Design and Sustainable Development, Southern Aegean Prefecture) that policies regarding the gradual suspension of Off Plan Building have to be implemented. This can only happen through a series of decisive and coordinated legal intervention of a local, prefectural and national level, and on the basis of an emergency plan that could, for instance, be formulated as follows:

1. Instigation of a public and scientific dialog (e.g. 3-4 study day conferences in Universities, in the Greek Technical Chamber, the Ministry, etc.) within a per-determined frame of a few months.
2. Simultaneous suspension of issuance of new building permits in Off Plan areas across the country, for the duration of the public dialog.
3. Following that: a) suspension of all offenses b) increase of the segmentation limit (e.g. to 10/20, on a case-by-case basis), c) increase of the degrees of saturation and building (e.g. to 6 / 10 / 20 acres on a case-by-case basis), d) decrease of permissible building surface (e.g. to half of today's terms, starting with 150 sq.m. for 6 acres), e) inclusion of semi-open and open-air spaces, as well as of all enclosures (e.g. basements) in the calculation of building surfaces, f) increase of building license cost and g) compulsory contribution for land, to the benefit of state funds, in an attempt to counter the environmental footprint of Off Plan building. The above measures would already render off plan building a non-cost-effective option (e.g. for manufacturers of holiday homes as well as permanent residences), therefore quickly achieving a significant advance towards the right direction
4. Planning for further action in the direction of more restrictions.

Regarding **arbitrary building** (and, more generally arbitration in Greece, in every domain) the main problem lies in the fact that the state's initial tolerance and subsequent legalizing tendency, has corrupted citizen ethics. Any management of arbitrary building should, in our estimation, take into account three important parameters, in the context of a «rule of law» as well as a sustainable development: a) To act on the basis of current, post-1983 and legislation, which, as is well-known, included provisions for the implementation of erection and conservation penalties for arbitrary constructions (□ those who pollute should pay). Such measures could probably be adjusted downwards, without however being drastically reduced, so that perpetrators of arbitrary building could be led even to the demolition of their buildings; This would be the chief objective of such action in terms of both planning and environmental management. b) To ensure the non-continuation of arbitration in the future. Experience drawn from various attempts thus far to legalize, exclude from demolition or otherwise regulate arbitrary buildings suggests that the above measures have evidently not yielded the desired outcome but, on the contrary, have had a negative impact on the long run. This is due to their contributing to the formation of a long-standing belief

that arbitration is socially and politically acceptable, and therefore encouraging people to continue with their offenses. c) To form conditions for the improvement of urban space. It is well known that all European cities gradually tend to increase their public and open-access spaces within the residential tissue. Greek cities are heavily deprived in this respect, and this deprivation is intensified even further due to the sharp arbitrary increase of the building factor, which, in some cases, exceeds 50%. We therefore hold that, in order to restore environmental balance (and particularly the balance between built surface and public / communal spaces) within the urban space, the relevant penalties that should be imposed and collected according to post-1983 legislation, should be chiefly «invested» towards the safeguarding of new public and communal spaces, on a priority basis.

Relevant officials often posit that the main problem for the drafting and implementation of such a policy is the state's inability to locate arbitrary constructions (!). Thus, however paradoxical this may sound, the documentation of arbitrary buildings is primarily based on complaints filed by private parties. Understandably, this process is subject to several types of micro-politics and is therefore simply not functional. Evidently, if only in defense of its own role, the state should develop and implement mechanisms that would solve this (fictitious) problem. In any case, and in the interests of facilitating this process, it might also be possible to create an "anonymous complaint hot-line" that would give citizens the option to inform the relevant authorities of any cases that should be monitored. This process would also work as a further suppressing factor as regards the perpetuation of arbitrary building.

The question of averting «future arbitrary constructs» is of central significance to this discussion. This should, in our opinion, be subject to a construction monitoring process during erection, and subsequently be periodically monitored again for the duration of a building's lifespan. This process should be assigned to independent «monitoring agencies», i.e. privately run offices with state accreditation, as is the teaching of relevant international, as well as Greek experience thus far (e.g. centers for the technical monitoring of vehicles [KTEO], elevator monitoring agencies, shipping classification societies, etc). After each monitoring survey, these accredited agencies would issue relevant certificates for a fixed term. Thus, it would be possible to build a reliable and ongoing system for monitoring construction, and to significantly limit, if not entirely eliminate, building arbitration.

An effective policy against arbitration would have visible benefits for everyone: a) the state would collect money (significantly more than that collected thus far with recent regulations) β) arbitrary constructs would be reduced as some would choose to demolish them c) the future of arbitration in our country would take a serious blow d) a sentiment of justice would prevail among citizens and e) a significant contribution in the direction of conserving the country's natural and urban environment, as well as its characteristic landscapes, would be ensured.

Today, the question of "development" in the island is posed in the most pressing way. It is more than evident that this discussion can only take place in a context that recognizes the need for protection and conservation of the island's environment and landscape, as well as its more specific relative resources; the latter is an element that is nowadays a crucial, directive parameter for any kind of planning.

In the last few decades, initially in central Europe and subsequently in Greece as well, there is a growing awareness of the need for a gradual return, from the complete human conquest and exploitation of nature, to the logic of respect for the environment and landscape, not least under the umbrella-term of «sustainability». (see also the introductory remarks in Palaiokrassas 2009). In the past, respect for the environment / landscape was rooted in deep knowledge of its inherent laws, through a relationship of codependency and complementation. Today, such a relationship is not

present to the same extent, and may possibly be absent in all the kinds of relationships between landscapes (natural / cultural) and people. However, respect for the environment / landscape could, and should, today be based on at least two mutually complementary parameters: a) the deep and multifaceted knowledge of the place's history, in order to enable an understanding of its state, entity and value on a short- and long-term perspective and b) the consideration of the place's objective carrying capacity, as regards its ability to contribute resources and to receive potential aggravation (Vagianni, Spilanis 2002)

In this general context, several perspectives are being formulated with regard to policy. Their main intersection is the notion of "development" in Andros (Glynos 2011, Demathas 2009, 2013, Palaiokrassas 2009, Pippas 2008). In this light, we estimate that a new model of development for Andros that would aim to consciously preserve and protect the island's environment and special landscape characteristics should by definition take into account the following parameters, among others:

Tourism and summer holidays hold particular significance for the island, as noted in the opening of this article. However, the ways in which this field is developed today, is gradually impacting on the island's landscape physiognomy in increasingly aggravated ways, thus threatening its very nature and sustainability. The promotion of such activity should therefore a) safeguard the conservation and protection of the island's significant natural resources and landscape physiognomy during its development across the island space and b) to suggest and develop other complementary areas of low-scale intervention that are more compatible with the spatial and landscape parameters of the island (in the Regional Framework for Urban Design and Sustainable Development of the Southern Aegean Prefecture, Andros is defined as a special tourist development zone for the Prefecture), which would possibly lead to a significant broadening of the tourist season. Such alternative forms of tourism could add to the currently known forms of tourism in Andros (including peripatetic, religious and cultural), the areas of ecotourism and agricultural tourism, as well as highlighting other possible forms, including diving, archaeological, conference, artistic or even school tourism.

Alongside tourism and summer holidays, further areas of interest could include sustainable primary development and production, with an emphasis on local / traditional and/or organic products (in the Regional Framework for Urban Design and Sustainable Development, Andros is defined as a primary site for agriculture and farming in the Prefecture), and the promotion of measures for the facilitation of naval activity, with an application of extant new technologies. An additional pole of interest could be the promotion of actions for the development of the energy industry in the island, with an emphasis on Sustainable Sources.

The reconstruction of the island's production structures is tightly linked to the issue of improving, supplementing and upgrading its technical and social infrastructures. Among them, one could include not only the transportation and communication networks, but also the infrastructure for waste collection and management, which is in itself an environmentally heavy activity, and holds particular significance for the preservation of the landscape. The collapse of the Stavropeda region Uncontrolled Waste Disposal Site in 2010 is known to have created several and hard-to-resolve environmental problems, and has had significant and near-irreversible impact on the coastal and sea landscape of this area (Filippidis G. 2012). Such incidents are all but self-evidently to be avoided at any cost in the future. Furthermore, an important step would be the upgrade of any kinds of services aimed at active citizens, including tourists, such as the mechanisms for licensing, monitoring and controlling environmentally damaging intervention and activity. Of those, residential development is by far the most urgent, due to the potential extent of its spread, as well as its practically non-reversible impact.

Another need that is rendered relevant to this observation is the need for re-organization of the residential areas. Primarily this would entail the implementation of immediate legal action, both on a local and to some extent on a national level, as well as supplementary measures to the ones taken so far. Emphasis should be chiefly placed on two issues that are of irreparable impact to the landscapes in Andros: a) the drastic limitation of off-plan building, with a future prospect of a total ban and b) the efficient control of any kind of arbitration in the building sector, with a long-term view to the complete elimination of this environmentally damaging, as well as socially offensive phenomenon. Particular attention to the dialog on residential structures should also be given in the case of traditional and/or interesting settlements, for which delimitation within specific boundaries should be a first priority, so as to safeguard their relationship with the surrounding countryside. The same would apply for decaying mountain settlements, which constitute characteristic and interesting elements of the Andros cultural landscape, but have nonetheless suffered in recent years a considerable loss of their permanent residents and therefore of their vitality and local folk-life, to which they had previously been inextricably linked.

It is essential to note here that, the decisive factor for retaining a critical balance between environment / landscape and human activity, is the harmonious relationship between people and their place. Today it is almost a fact that the older, more cohesive forms of social space have been replaced by a new, significantly different model, that consists, aside from the remaining locals, of Greek professionals and foreign immigrants, as well as from semi-permanent holiday residents and pensioners. A significant challenge, with environmental as well as social implications, would be the project of integrating this heterogeneous model of «new Andriot people» (Pippas 2008) as smoothly as possible to the local social tissue, and to enable them to feel the island as their own place, so as to consider it under a more long-term light and thus to contribute actively to the preservation of its sensitive and precious environmental structures.

Last, a significant means of coordinating the prevention and spatial impact management of all the aforementioned data and characteristics, would be the presence of spatial planning that would consider the island as a totality. In order to be of use and of business value for the island, such planning should enjoy as great a degree of social approval as possible. Thus far, Andros has not had the fortune of such a plan. Instead, it has been the subject of a series of partial and sectional spatial regulations for the more sensitive areas and critical subject matters, primarily motivated by environmental interests. Positive as these may be, they can by no means substitute the role of an integral plan that would highlight and address incompatibilities, conflicts and points of overlap in the space, and would set priorities and propose balanced regulations. The Special Urban Planning Project that was assigned in 1992 by the then Ministry for the Environment, Urban Planning and Public Works, with the aim of determining a Zone of Residential Control for the entire island (Dardanos 2010), and would integrally regulate the critical status of residential development, ultimately failed to materialize, due to apparently administrative, but in reality evidently more substantial reasons that pertained to the disagreement expressed by the local authorities and the local community against the proposed building limitations. At this time another, complementary spatial regulation is being promoted, that relates to the creation of an “Andros Regional Park”. One of its aims is the coordination of all current spatial regulations for the island. The effort is certainly towards the right direction, but this does not reduce the need for carrying out and approving a complete spatial plan (Plan for the Spatial and Residential Organization of Open Cities) on the basis of current data, which will cover the entire stretch of the island, will take on board current regulations of spatial interest, will make a combinatory account of all the range of parameters that bear a spatial impact, and will ultimately succeed in obtaining maximum social

approval and agreement. Perhaps such a project might be the biggest challenge for Andros in the coming years.

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