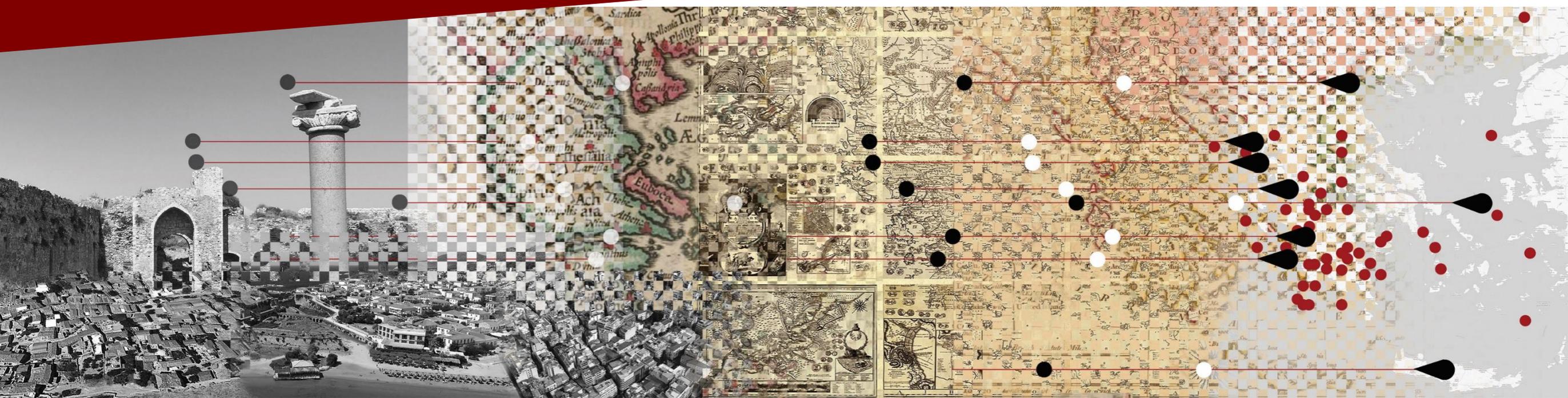




H.F.R.I.
Hellenic Foundation for
Research & Innovation

Description of funded project
1st Call “Science & Society”
“200 years from the Greek Revolution”



Title of the project:

Revolutionary Palimpsests

The visualization of the network of the distinct urban places in the space-time spectrum of the Greek revolution

Project Coordinator: Efrossyni Tsakiri

Host Institution: NTUA, School of Architecture

Collaborating Institutions: TUC, UTH, UNIWA

Project webpage:

<http://revolutionary-palimpsests.arch.ntua.gr>



Budget: 100.000 euro

Duration: 28 months

Project Synopsis

The project aims to study and promote the network of the distinct urban places of the '21 revolution in the modern Greek reality through their representation as 'visual palimpsest' with elements, conceptual and morphological, from the architectural design, the cartography and the visual arts. The research departs from the present and moves towards the past as a kind of 'archaeological excavation' in the collective memory of the places, which for this reason, identifies and reconstitutes in conceptual and artistic stratifications, multi-level structures, creating the palimpsests.

The palimpsests are parchments, in which the original text has been scratched and another one has been written in its place. Traces of the previous layers can now be detected by X-rays and the contents of the erased texts are restored. In the visual arts the palimpsest describes the simultaneous representation in many layers, while in linguistics and semiotics, the palimpsest is associated with intertextuality and polysemy, the existence of multiple levels of meaning. Architects and urban planners compare cities with palimpsests because they too are composed of layers of culture and history, which have left their mark and co-shape the present. In modern urban theory, the palimpsest simulates the complex city consisting of overlapping layers and interdependent processes.

The 'Revolutionary Palimpsests' are the urban sites of the Greek Revolution that the research team will analyse as urban 'excavations' and will visualize in superimposed layers.

Using urban analysis tools, researchers will map selected locations in the territory of modern Greece with a historical contribution to the revolution and the formation of Greek identity. The locations will function as narrative nodes of the revolutionary network. The elements, cultural, architectural, spatial, social, anthropological, economic, etc. of that mapping will create a database, which will structure and enrich the visual works that will be created by both renowned artists and new creators, students, and graduates of schools of architecture and visual arts, that participate in the research.

Expected results & Project Impact

The aim of the project is through architecture, urban theory, and visual arts to study and promote the network of revolutionary urban places, how it was originally formed in the 19th century, and how it evolved due to the revolutionary events in modern times.

The Greek revolution is not an isolated event. On the contrary, it is related to the french, and the wider revolutionary situation that prevailed in the 19th century in Europe. The network of the Greek urban places participated and influenced the European urban networks. Therefore, the study of the urban, spatial structure of Greece is at the same time a study of the structure of the modern European city. The Greek revolution from a spatial and temporal detached symbol of national pride will acquire through the study of urban culture a broader meaning, that of an integral node of the network of claims and circulation of revolutionary ideas and actions in Europe, in which participate philhellenes, intellectuals, and artists, closer to the political direction of bourgeois democracy or beyond.

The benefit of promoting the network of the urban places as 'revolutionary palimpsests' is further identified in two main points:

A: As products of scientific and artistic processes, the resulting artworks will be transmitters of information and sense. Art works through insight, its meanings are immediately understood without the mediation of thought, writes philosopher Susanne Langer. Contemporary art focuses on the message and has a variety of means to convey it deeper and better. The information about the Greek revolution already exists, the aim of the research is to make it more accessible to the public through contemporary art.

B: The methodology processes a large amount of data for the revolutionary places. The organization of data in superimposed levels and the relationships that will result from the simultaneous projection, will promote the understanding of modern urban places to be 'systems of organized complexity', that is, places of simultaneous action, interaction and interweaving of diverse data, spatial, temporal, perceptual.

The importance of this funding

When I returned from a journey of meeting 140 different 'Revolutionary Places' in Roumeli, Thessaly, Macedonia, Epirus, Peloponnese, Crete, a process in which I chose to put myself in order to understand what the Greek Revolution was, in order to coordinate the project and narrate the story, I formed a point of view very different from the one that was following me from the school textbooks, the history books, the internet and the discussions. The experience and the personal contact with the things brought me face to face with a revolution with 'flesh and bones'.

The distinct geomorphology of each place, the climate, the architecture, the people, the customs and traditions, the history, the monuments and many more concern me now personally. The beauty of the places leaves me speechless. The difficulty of access, the adversities that still exist in many areas today, the hidden secrets, the injustices, the anecdotal personal stories, the winners and losers, the balances that were upset, the sacrifices of people, the complaints of the neglected, landscapes in obscurity and cultural elements that have been lost forever, images bright and dark, they all invaded my life, formed a canvas of diverse feelings and meanings and transformed who I was.

I bowed my head because I felt sincere respect, emotion, gratitude and debt for those people who gave their lives for timeless values such as survival, right to land and housing, freedom, culture, and more...

My purpose is to bring to the fore all those elements that are ignored about the places of the revolution and to make everyone feel that in some way they are part of it, that it concerns him / her.

My vision is the thorough study of the spatial, urban structure of Greece in the light of the Greek Revolution. The juxtaposition of two images: Greece of the 19th and Greece of the 21st century. The acquaintance, understanding, and public projection of what Greece really was then, an 'invisible' image that the modern greek cannot easily imagine because it is very different from what he/she sees and speculates, and how that invisible image evolved into the visible and modern Greece.

E. Tsakiri



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