

## **Xenia Hotels Project, 1950-1967. Reapproaching the role of Post-War Modern Architecture in Greece.**

*Myrianthe Moussa*

(PhD Candidate, Myrianthe Moussa, School of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens,  
Department I: Design & Theory, 20 Skylitsi Str. 11473 Athens, Greece, myrianthe\_m@hotmail.com, myianthemoussa@teemail.gr)

### **1 ABSTRACT**

In the early 50s, Greece started its reconstruction after World War II and a following civil war. The Greek National Tourism Organization (G.N.T.O.) was founded in 1950, when tourism became a basic axis of the national economy, and started the Xenia Project; the one and only attempt of the Greek State to create accommodation infrastructure for the development of Tourism. Under the dictatorship of 1967, the 'Era of Reconstruction' ended and the official tourism policy changed, giving priority to mass-tourism.

The buildings of the project (more than 70 all over the country), prominent examples of Post-War Modern Greek Architecture, set the standards of accommodation for International Tourism, in a time that high standard facilities for tourists did not exist and there was no interest for private investment in tourism. The project includes different types of buildings (hotels, motels, hostels, pavilions etc.) in privileged places - beautiful and/or historical sites. Those constructions were made to offer hospitality to high class international tourists, who brought valuable foreign exchange to a poor developing country. On the other hand, those buildings with their infrastructures became very popular to the local society, hosting festivals, weddings, conferences etc. till nowadays.

Xenia Hotels Project represents the efforts of the only non-communist Balkan country to connect with Western Europe. This paper reveals unknown aspects of Post-War Modern Greek Architecture, based on unpublished documents of the GNTTO archives. Official policies on Tourism, the State Budget, international tourism models etc. defined the building types of the project. For almost two decades the Xenia Project evolved and adapted to a changing reality.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

#### **2.1 The 'Era of Reconstruction'**

After World War II, a civil war followed and postponed the reconstruction of Greece till the early 50s. The losses of those wars were incalculable: human lives, infrastructures, economy etc., while the State was broke. Under those conditions many people decided to migrate to urban places or abroad for economical or political reasons.

When political disputes settled, the State had to regenerate the economic strategy of the country. Main axes of the national economy were: Industry to increase exports, Tourism to import foreign exchange, Construction to rebuild the ruins of the wars and produce housing for the internal migrants.

That era coincided with the beginning of the Cold War (some historians consider the Greek civil war as the first act of the Cold War). Under those circumstances, Greece, the only non-communist Balkan country, was included in the Marshall Plan (1948-1951), the American program - officially named as the European Recovery Program (ERP) - which offered financial aid to non-communist European countries to rebuild their economies following the model of capitalism.

As previously described, a new era begun for Greece in the early 50s. It was the 'Era of Reconstruction'. That period of time was terminated by another political event: the Dictatorship of 1967.

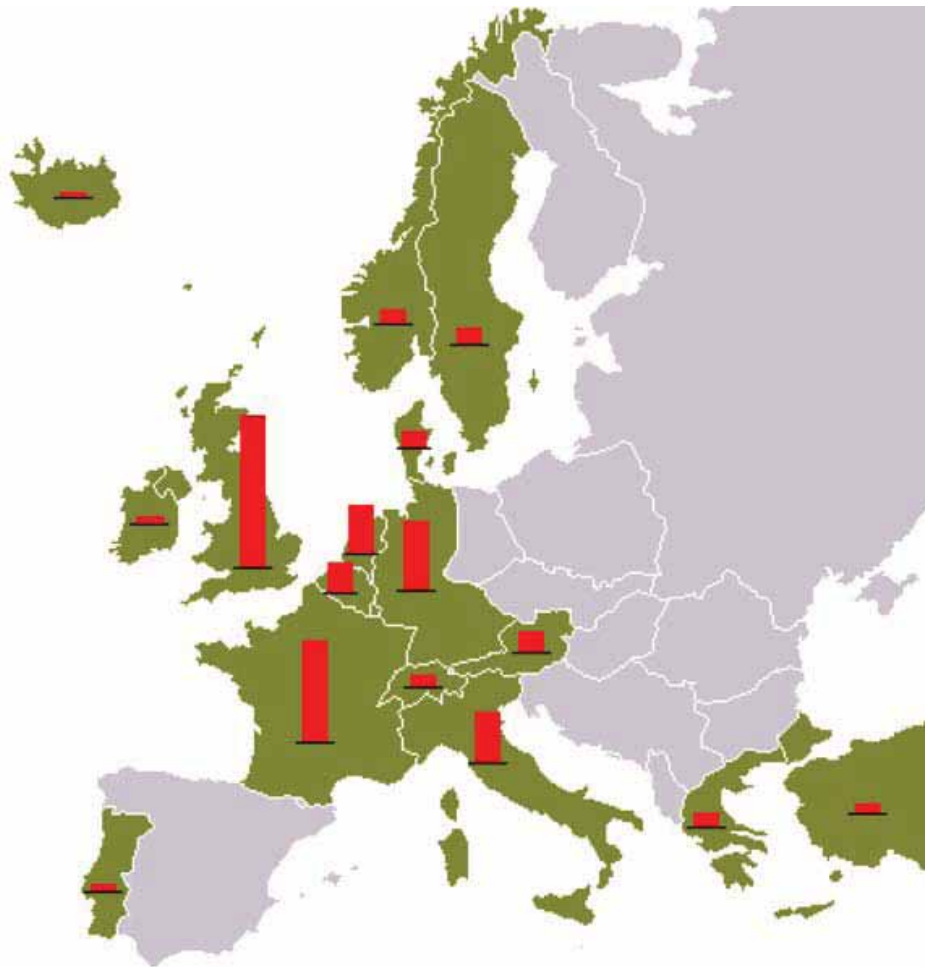


Fig. 1: The countries that received financial support from the Marshall Plan. The red columns show the proportion and amount of financial aid per Nation (Source: Wikipedia)

## 2.2 Greek National Tourism Organization

Tourism always was a priority for the Greek economy. Since 1914, tourism bureaus were founded in many different forms<sup>1</sup>. The General Secretariat of Tourism was established in 1945, despite the political turmoil. As tourism became a basic axis of the national economy, the Greek National Tourism Organization (GNTO) was founded in 1950. The GNTO would continue the tourism programs of the previous General Secretariat, keeping the same members in the Management Council. The new structure of the Organization provided flexibility compared to other public services. For the GNTO, tourism aimed to import foreign exchange and to promote the international 'icon' of Greece as a 'cultural product'.

The aims of the Organization was:

- to manage the hotels, spa-complexes etc. owned by the State
- to invest in building hotels, pavilions, highway stations etc. mainly in places that lacked private investments
- to organize festivals, tours, cruises, advertising and other commercial activities - a risk that private investors avoided to take.

<sup>1</sup> 1914: Tourism Bureau  
 1929: Greek National Tourism Organization (primary form)  
 1936: Sub-Ministry of Press and Tourism  
 1941: Directorate of Spa-towns and Tourism  
 1945: General Secretariat of Tourism  
 1950-today: Greek National Tourism Organization

This paper reveals unknown aspects of Post-War Modern Greek Architecture, based on unpublished documents of the GNTO. The archives of the GNTO Management Council contain dialogues, just like in plays. Therefore, after reading the proceedings of a few meetings, the researcher is acclimatized to that time and profiles the protagonists (might like or dislike them).

The members of the Council were about 10 persons that knew each other from the previous forms of the Organization. Some of them were in charge of other Organizations related to tourism, such as the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels or the Hellenic Organization of Hotel Loans. All members were well educated, open-minded cosmopolitans, specialized in tourism.

Most of the councilors were Lawyers, a few members of the Council were Engineers and there was always an important Architect of the time, such as: *Anastasios Orlandos*<sup>2</sup>, an internationally renowned academic, and *Periklis Sakellarios*<sup>3</sup>, who studied in Austria and in Bauhaus, too. Despite their conflicts, the members always respected each other. The Council often took decisions on architectural issues.

It is remarkable that, although the governments changed one after the other, the Council consisted of almost the same persons. President *Konstantinos Karamanlis senior* after forming a government for the first time in 1955, he chose to interfere with tourism affairs, sometimes by by-passing the Organization, thus causing disputes.

Therefore, it is obvious that for almost two decades there was not a unique, stable Policy on Tourism. It was constantly evolving, updating and adapting to a changing reality, by expressing novel thoughts and innovative ideas that could shock us even today.



Fig. 2: Sheds in Athens in the 50s (Source: Modern Social History Archive)

<sup>2</sup> *A. Orlandos* (1887-1979), the most important academic of Greek Architecture with international recognition.

<sup>3</sup> *P. Sakellarios* (1905-1985) studied in Austria and for a short period of time in Bauhaus under *Walter Gropius*. He was *Gropius'* partner in designing the American Embassy in Athens (1959-1961).

### 2.3 Post-War Modern Greek Architecture

In a country ruined by wars, Architects and Engineers had the mission to rebuild it, during the 'Era of Reconstruction'. Many constructions had to be made: housing for internal migrants, public facilities (hospitals, schools etc.), private commercial buildings (shops, tourism accommodations etc.), industry and infrastructures (roads, ports etc.).

Modern Architecture had been established in Greece since the interwar period, especially in public buildings and public works programs (schools, hospitals etc.). Post-War Greek Architects who studied either in the School of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens founded in 1917 (like *C. Doxiadis*<sup>4</sup>, *Ch. Sfaellos*<sup>5</sup> etc.) or in Technical Universities abroad of German influence (like *A. Konstantinides*<sup>6</sup>, *J. Despotopoulos*<sup>7</sup> etc.) embraced modernism, which became the dominant style in Architecture at that time.



Fig. 3: Patroklos Karantinios (1903-1976), School in Athens 1931

Having a poor budget, the Greek State had to hierarchize its expenses. Housing, leaving out a few exceptions<sup>8</sup>, was left to private investors, in a unique way of transaction between the land owner and a contractor with low budget. The infrastructures and public buildings were obviously a State affair. Industry and commercial activities were private investment affairs, supported by low-interest loans. On the one hand, industrial private investors took advantage of that support, but on the other hand, private investors hesitated to invest in tourism accommodation, because the depreciation period of capital assets was too long (over 20 years). Consequently, the State had to take more radical actions. It was then that GNTO started the Xenia Project; the one and only attempt of the Greek State to create accommodation infrastructure for the development of Tourism.

Architect *Charalampos Sfaellos*<sup>9</sup> was in charge of the project from 1951 to 1958. Since 1957 (to 1967), *Aris Konstantinides*<sup>10</sup> had been recruiting a new architectural team, combined of young passionate architects. The presence of *Konstantinides*, pioneer of Post-War Modern Greek Architecture, who inspired 'schools' of Greek architecture, defined the style of the project. Under the dictatorship of 1967, the 'Era of Reconstruction' ended, *Konstantinides* quit the organization and the official tourism policy changed, giving priority to mass-tourism.

<sup>4</sup> *C. Doxiadis*, founded *Doxiadis Associates*, the international corporation of consulting engineers offering services in 40 countries. The first important international project was the town planning of Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. He is also known for his theory of *Ekistics*. Other international programs of his office on urban and town planning were about: Ghana, Baghdad, Lebanon, Syria, Washington, Eastwood, Oklahoma, Brooklyn, Detroit, Miami etc.

<sup>5</sup> see note 9

<sup>6</sup> see note 10

<sup>7</sup> *J. Despotopoulos* (1903-1992) studied in Bauhaus and later in Hanover. He taught in NTUA and Universities abroad.

<sup>8</sup> by the Social Housing Organization

<sup>9</sup> *Ch. Sfaellos* (1914-2004) studied in NTUA under *Anastasios Orlandos* (see note 2) and *Dimitrios Pikionis* (see note 12). He continued his postgraduate studies in France after the end of World War II. He taught in the School of Architecture of Paris. He served the United Nations as a Consultant Architect in tourism.

<sup>10</sup> *A. Konstantinides* (1913-1993) studied architecture in Technical University of Munich. He is recognized as the greatest Greek architect of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His works and books guided the younger generations of Greek architects. During Dictatorship he was teaching architecture at the Zurich Polytechnic.

### 3 XENIA HOTELS PROJECT, 1950-1967

#### 3.1 Policies on Tourism

Next, we will refer to some of the main programs planned by the GNTO. Most of them were completed, while others were revised or even abandoned. The order is neither chronological nor hierarchical, because



many of the programs were complementary to one another and running in parallel.

Fig. 4: Kleon Krantonellis, The first Xenia hotel in Nafplio

##### 3.1.1 The new accommodation program (Xenia Project)

The first four hotels in *Nafplio*<sup>11</sup>, *Delphi*<sup>12</sup>, *Mykonos*<sup>13</sup> and *Kastoria*<sup>14</sup> were announced in the 'Reconstruction program' of 1950-51. This program seems to have been designed by the General Secretariat of Tourism, because the GNTO Council during its second meeting made important decisions regarding issues of those hotels, such as: the sites, the land expropriation and the architects of the projects. The Marshall Plan would fund those first projects. The *American Mission for Aid to Greece* confirmed the necessity and approved the budget for the hotels on the base of immediate foreign exchange inflow. The *Kastoria Xenia Hotel* was not approved for political reasons.



Fig. 5: Ch. Sfaellos, Xenia of Kastoria

<sup>11</sup> *Xenia of Nafplio*, by architect *Kleon Krantonellis* (1912-1978). He studied architecture under *Anastasios Orlandos* (see note 2) and *Dimitrios Pikionis* (see note 12). He was in the same class with *C. Doxiadis* and *Ch. Sfaellos*. After some private projects he served in important positions as an architect in Public Services. In 1951, he was placed in charge of the *Department of Architectural Design* of the GNTO for a few years.

<sup>12</sup> *Xenia of Delphi*, by *Dimitrios Pikionis*. *D. Pikionis* (1887-1968) studied Civil Engineering in NTUA, as the School of Architecture was not founded yet. At the same time, he was taking courses in painting under *K. Parthenis* - a very important Greek painter. He continued his studies on art and on architecture in France at *École des Beaux Arts*. A few years after returning to Greece, he became professor at the School of Architecture in NTUA. His is recognized as a member of the 'generation of the 30s, a movement in literature, art, folk art-science etc.

<sup>13</sup> *Xenia of Mykonos*, by architect *Prokopis Vassiliades* (1912-1977). He was an architect and town planner that held key positions in Greek Ministries for decades. He was a partner and consultant in many important projects, like the *Athens Hilton Hotel*, 1958-1963.

<sup>14</sup> *Xenia of Kastoria*, by architect *Ch. Sfaellos* (see note 9).



### 3.1.2 Tourist Pavilions program (see next section)

This program was started by the General Secretariat of Tourism. By the time GNTTO was founded, the Xylokaastro, Paleokastritsa and Knossos Pavilions were already completed. GNTTO continued the program by building new pavilions.

### 3.1.3 Guesthouses of Monasteries (see next section)

This is another program started by the General Secretariat. It was an ambitious program of the Secretariat and the Orthodox Church, which failed very soon and was finally abandoned.

### 3.1.4 Reconstruction of Spa-towns

Supervision, management and maintenance of Spa-towns was one of the main responsibilities of GNTTO. The Organization was reluctant to take on management, because bureaucracy for this internal tourism activity cost too much time. On the other hand, Spa-town taxes were the main income source of the Organization.

### 3.1.5 Development of Tourist Sites

Development of Tourist Sites was legislated in 1946. A declared 'tourist site' had a special legal status for hotels and tourist accommodations. The sites were carefully selected, based on anticipated tourist interest. Private investors would not take the risk for those interesting, beautiful, but not yet popular places, unlike other cosmopolitan resorts, such as Corfu or Rhodes (developed during the interwar period), where the risk was considerably lower.

### 3.1.6 The Islands Development Program

With this program, 'wild', beautiful places would be transformed into high class resorts. It started before 1951, too. By that time, *Mykonos* island, which combined natural beauty and antiquities (of the neighbouring island of *Delos*), had already been transformed. In the 50s, the island of *Skyros* and the island of *Samothraki* were the next projects in priority. Xenia hotel of *Skyros* island, was designed by *Doxiadis<sup>15</sup>-Skepers Architectural office*. The plan for *Samothraki* was to be transformed to '*Delos of the North Aegean*', because of its archaeological interest and its natural beauty.

### 3.1.7 Touristic Exploitation of Pelion

GNTTO aimed to extend the tourist season beyond the summer period, so as to ensure financial sustainability of hotels. The program started from the region of Pelion, which combines mountain for skiing and sea, as a pilot effort to develop winter tourism.

This particular program was undermined by the Government (which preferred to develop Volos town hotels), by cancelling projects and cutting the budgets of Pelion's hotels. However, the GNTTO Council insisted on this project and built the *Tsagarada Xenia Hotel* and the *Portaria Xenia Hotel*. In this region, a number of traditional mansions were turned into hostels.

### 3.1.8 Tours by Pullman coaches

In the mid 50s, pullman tours were a new model for tourists who wanted to travel in organized groups. By that time there were no organized tours by private investors. Tourists without a car had to travel by public transportation means together with local people. The public transportation net was not designed for tourism, so tourists struggled to reach their destinations. GNTTO organized several tourist tours for a few years, until entrepreneurs took over and the Organization's mission was completed.

The tours were carefully planned based on the duration of the trip, the main tourist destinations (*Epidaurus*, *Delphi*, *Olympia* etc.), other tourist destinations (*Dafni Monastery*, *Acropolis of Korinthos*, *Osios Loukas Monastery* etc.) and the facilities on their way (tourist accommodation, restaurants, pavilions etc.).

### 3.1.9 Cruises

GNTTO also organized sea cruises in a similar way. That kind of investment took time to return profits.

---

<sup>15</sup> see note 4

### 3.1.10 Road Stations Program

In the beginning, GNTO envisaged partnership with oil companies. However, investors withdrew, so the Organization had to redesign the program and transform it to a motel program.

### 3.1.11 Greece-Yugoslavia (and Istanbul) Cooperation Program

This ambitious program was designed to connect by road (for car travellers) Western Europe-Yugoslavia-Greece-Istanbul through a friendly country of the communist block that accepted non-communist tourists. The geography and the tourist infrastructure of Yugoslavia were ideal. The *Frontier Stations Program* was designed to serve this cooperation. The *Kastoria Xenia Hotel*, the 4<sup>th</sup> one built by GNTO, was another project which facilitated this cooperation. This policy was not endorsed by the *American Mission for Aid to Greece*, which was in Greece at that time supervising the Marshall Plan, so the program was condemned.

### 3.1.12 Greece-Italy Cooperation Program

It was a similar program that aimed to connect Greece with Western Europe by sea. At first, GNTO chose to use the *Patras Port*, but the Government, unexpectedly selected to develop the port of *Igoumenitsa*, although it lacked infrastructure at that time. The sea connection with Italy was made with ferry-boats, the new types of vessels that could carry vehicles. GNTO had to solve many problems: to build a suitable ship, to define the exact shipping route and the arrival time of the passengers to *Igoumenitsa Port*, to provide accommodation to travellers and to develop a road network with a wise selection of interesting tourist sites on the way of tourists who travelled by car.

### 3.1.13 Other programs

Occasionally there were other programs, such as the development of hotels in Athens and Thessaloniki, which was eventually abandoned. GNTO generally gave priority to the provinces, not the urban areas. With the help of donations, old traditional buildings were renovated as hostels (mainly in Hydra). Finally, the Athens Festival, the Epidaurus Festival and other events (like the Feast of Wine) were promoted through the press as GNTO programs.



Fig. 6: J. Triantafyllides, Xenia of Nafplio II (Source: Benaki Museum Photographic Archives)





Fig. 7: J. Triantafyllides, Xenia of Nafplio II (Source: Benaki Museum Photographic Archives)

### 3.2 The types of buildings

The buildings of the project (more than 70 all over the country), prominent examples of Post-War Modern Greek Architecture, set the standards of accommodation for *International Tourism* in Greece, in a time that high standard facilities for tourists did not exist and there was no interest for private investments in tourism. The project includes the following types of buildings in privileged places - beautiful and/or historical sites. Those constructions were made to offer hospitality to high class international tourists, who brought valuable foreign exchange to a poor developing country.

To categorize the types of buildings of the Xenia Project is a difficult process, because those buildings mirror the multiple policies for the development of tourism - including policies that changed or were redefined. This is the reason why there are so many types of buildings. Some of them evolved from another type. The buildings of the Spa-towns facilities are omitted from this categorization. Those buildings are separated from the Xenia Project as accommodation for migrant tourists.

#### 3.2.1 Tourist Facilities (without accommodation)

##### 3.2.1.1 Beach Facilities

Those facilities, such as changing-rooms for swimmers, small beach bars, etc., were placed in every organized beach (Vouliagmeni, Thessaloniki, Kavala, Loutraki, Kalamata, Platis Gialos-Cephalonia, Karteros-Iraklion, Patras, Nafpaktos, Arvanitia-Nafplion, Volos, Mykonos, Santorini, Aedipsos etc.).

##### 3.2.1.2 Tourist Pavilions without accommodation

Those pavilions were used as bars, souvenir shops, small exhibitions of folk art, tourist information kiosks etc.

### 3.2.1.3 Tourist Restaurants

Corfu's restaurant at Kanoni, Nafplion's Arvanitia restaurant and restaurant 'Dionysos' in Athens are nice examples.

### 3.2.1.4 Tourist Stations

#### 3.2.1.4.1 Frontier Stations and Customhouses

Those facilities were the first buildings that a tourist came across when entering the country. GNTO demanded premium customer service and innovative design, so that the tourist would have an excellent first impression. Some of them are located at Evzoni, Nike, Igoumenitsa etc.

#### 3.2.1.4.2 Highway Stations without accommodation

They were fuel stations, with cafeteria or restaurant-bar, small shops etc. (for example at Rio, Antirio etc.), where travellers stopped with their cars for some rest on the way to their destinations.

#### 3.2.1.4.3 Yachting facilities

They were fuel stations and facilities for yachts (for example at Corfu, Spetses, etc.).

### 3.2.1.5 Special Facilities

Those are unique facilities that cannot be categorized: actors' dressing rooms in Epidaurus, GNTO's stands in international exhibitions, local (all over the country) and international Tourism Offices of GNTO (Egypt, France, German, New York etc.), bus stops etc.



Fig. 8: Ph. Vokos, Xenia Highway Station with accommodation at Platamonas (Source: Benaki Museum Photographic Archives)

## 3.2.2 Tourist Accommodation

### 3.2.2.1 Xenia Hotels

The primary policy of GNTO was to build high class hotels for international tourists (above A class), as models for the individual hotel owners. Lower class hotels with limited budgets would be built by private investors for other categories of tourists. The budget was always a subject of discussion for the GNTO Council, which aimed to suppress the cost per bed. Sometimes, a limited budget cut major facilities (resulting in shared bathrooms, no-heating system etc.) that condemned the building to a short lifecycle and limited tourist seasons.

On the other hand, hotel public facilities, like restaurants or cafe-bars, in sites that had not had any tourist facilities till then, were usually oversized, so that tourists staying in pensions or rooms to let could use them (for example in *Xenia of Kastoria*). The oversized public facilities would also be useful in case of hotel expansions. Eventually, local societies embraced those buildings and made them part of their social life. Festivals, weddings, conferences etc. take place in Xenia hotels until nowadays.

#### **3.2.2.1.1 Bungalows**

Bungalows was an innovative type of accommodation of the late 50s. In Xenia Project, buildings of this type were parts of hotel complexes.

#### **3.2.2.2 Xenia Motels**

This type of accommodation, an imported international model, was introduced in Greece in 1959. At that time, tourists were travelling by car all over Europe and spent the night in small cozy hotels with spacious parking lots located outside residential areas near the highways. Travelling by car was the type of international tourism that GNTO promoted at that time.

Organizing rooms in wings, providing outdoor access to rooms and replacing bathtubs with showers, added to the low cost of land outside urban places, dropped the construction costs significantly. That was a key issue for GNTO.

##### **3.2.2.2.1 Highway Stations with accommodation**

Those stations, apart from having facilities like restaurants, bars, shops etc., also had a few rooms for travellers to rest for the night (e.g. Messolonghi, Acheloos, Mornos, Itea etc.). In some stations the bathrooms were shared. The architects designed the units with wide and cozy public functions so as to be easily extended to Motels if there would be a further tourist interest in the future.

#### **3.2.2.3 Xenia Hostels**

In this wide category we can integrate the following sub-types of accommodation that cannot be regarded as hotels. Many of them are tourist guesthouses existing before GNTO was founded (before 1951).

##### **3.2.2.3.1 Tourist Pavilions with accommodation**

Some of the Tourist Pavilions (see previous section) had modest rooms (e.g. Xylokaastro etc). In many cases they were dormitories (e.g. Phaistos) for tourists in groups, where men and women were separated.

##### **3.2.2.3.2 Inns in traditional mansions**

Traditional mansions were turned into hostels (Voudouris Mansion-Hydra, Leoussi House-Hydra etc.) after donation to GNTO. The works were usually sponsored by wealthy citizens or by the local municipality.

##### **3.2.2.3.3 Monasteries' Guesthouses**

The guesthouse of *Osios Loukas Monastery* was the first hostel of the innovative program that envisaged the cooperation between the General Secretariat (GNTO after 1951) and the Orthodox Church. The two guesthouses of *Meteora Monasteries* (Varlaam Monastery guesthouse for men and Metamorphosis Monastery guesthouse for women) are the next and simultaneously the last projects.

Although the experiment of the pilot hostel (under the General Secretariat) was not successful, GNTO continued the program, aiming on the one hand to promote religious

tourism and on the other hand to provide overnight accommodation to travellers from Athens to Thessaloniki, at a time when there were no highway stations for that two-day roadtrip. The Monasteries of Mount Athos were ideal for that use.

The strict Orthodox Church tradition and the untrained (tourism-wise) Monks kept upsetting the guests and especially tourists, that were Catholics not accustomed to Orthodox traditions in their majority. Eventually, the program failed. The *Xenia Motel of Ouranoupolis* was the last connection between the Orthodox Church and GNTA.



Fig. 9: G. Nikolettopoulos, Pavillion in Chalkida (Source: Benaki Museum Photographic Archives)

### 3.3 General characteristics of the Xenia Hotels architecture

From the preceding analysis we can conclude that the types of buildings and the locations of the infrastructures of the Xenia Project were defined by the policies on the development of tourism.

The buildings of the project are found in archaeological sites (Xenia Motel Olympia I & II), on the islands (Xenia of Andros, Xenias of Mykonos), along highway roads (Xenia Motel of Platamonas, Xenia Motel of Messolonghi), in urban places (Xenia of Heraklion, Xenia of Rethymno), in Spa-towns (Xenia of Ypati) and other destinations of touristic interest.

The architect would select the location that the Xenia Hotel should be built. The property land which was selected should be in a privileged site, providing beautiful view, proper orientation and accessibility. The topography of the land was very important, too.

Each project was based on:

- location research to choose the land property and climate observation of the region
- study of the local traditional architecture, as a synthesis of spaces and volumes, without any decoration elements
- a building program that covered the tourist needs and made the most of the potentials of each site.







Fig. 10: Typical Room (Source: Benaki Museum Photographic Archives)

The main general architectural characteristics of the Xenia Hotels are the following:

- Environmental integration (natural, urban and cultural environment), proper orientation (usually south or east), easy access, adaptation of the solution according to the climatic and morphological data of the region.
- We could summarize the common features in: a functional program of the floor plans, simplicity in forms, authenticity of the material and techniques, parking lots, small number of levels, use of pilotis, low budget construction.
- The common synthesis key components are: separation of public and private functions, relationship between inner and outer space, grid, open spaces design, facade design based on the function of the internal spaces, organizing mobility within the complexes.
- Typological organization and standards of the construction: identification of the functional grid with the construction grid, organizing rooms in wings, organizing a model room, standard construction details (wall details, windows, stairs etc.) for time and money savings in design and construction.

The materials selected were usually a combination of modern materials (the bearing structure was made by concrete) and materials used in local traditional architecture (e.g. local stones). The colors used are: deep red, ochra, white, black (called the *Polygnotia color grate*) and the sea blue.

Beyond these common characteristics, each building is individual. Every architect designed with regards to his own aspect, based on the special demands of each project, the local environment and the climatic conditions.

The architect of the project might design the furniture, the operating equipment and could even decide about the sculptures and paintings that would decorate the building.



Fig. 11: C. Mpitsios, Xenia Motel of Vytina (Source: Benaki Museum Photographic Archives)

#### 4 CONCLUSION - PRESENT SITUATION

The Xenia Project was a unique Greek State program by which different types of buildings and infrastructures were constructed all over the country, setting the standards for Greek tourist accommodation. It was a long-term program planned by expertised individuals, beyond personal ambitions, who focused on the development of their country. GNTO had to lead the private Greek investors towards international high standards. The Xenia Project became the model for private hotel projects, especially those of the 70s. Those buildings, apart from offering hospitality, they brought together the native population with tourists of different cultures. Their architecture is one of the most important examples of Post-War Modern Greek Architecture.

Mass tourism, new luxury life model and bad management led the Xenia Project to decline. Nowadays, some of the hotels are still operated by entrepreneurs. However, most of the hotels are abandoned, waiting to collapse by time or to be demolished with irregular procedures. A few years ago, the Association of Greek Architects started an 'aggressive' effort to retain the Xenia Project buildings, an effort that has already saved some of the most important ones.

## 5 REFERENCES

- BENAKI MUSEUM: Contemporary Architecture Archives, Athens.  
BENAKI MUSEUM: Photographic Archives, Athens.  
GNTO: Documents archives, Plans archive, Projects archive, Athens, 1951-1967.  
GREEK LEGISLATION ON TOURISM, 1914-today.
- ADAMI, Mary: Architect Cleon Krantonellis, Athens, 2009.  
BENAKI MUSEUM: Dimitris Pikionis 1887-1968, Athens, 2010.  
KONSTANTINIDIS, Aris: Projects and buildings, Athens, 1992.  
KONSTANTINIDIS, Aris: Experiences and events, Athens, 1992.  
KONSTANTINIDIS, Aris: For architecture, Athens, 2004.  
PHILIPIDES, Dimitris: Five Essays on Aris Konstantinidis, Athens, 1997.  
SFAELLOS, Charalampos: Architecture - Development, Athens, 2002.
- ARCHITECTONES MAGAZINE, Journal of Association of Greek Architects.  
ARCHITECTONIKI MAGAZINE, Greek architectural review, Athens, 1958-1972.  
NEWSLETTER OF TECHNICAL CHAMBER OF GREECE MAGAZINE, Journal of Technical Chamber of Greece, Athens.

## 6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was funded by the Basic Research Program 2010 of NTUA (PEVE 2010 – NTUA).