

ELLINIKO

A trip through time
from prehistory to the present



ELLINIKO

SCIENTIFIC EDITOR:
ATHENA SPANAKI, historian

RESEARCH TEAM AND AUTHORS:
IOANNA ZACHAROPOULOU, historian - qualified tour guide
MARIA KALOGEROPOULOU, historian - archaeologist
NIKI BALATSOUKA, historian - qualified tour guide
SOPHIA XYNARIANOU, historian - museologist
ELENI FRAGAKI, archaeologist - cultural management consultant

PUBLICATION SUPERVISION
Eirini Louvrou

CONCEPT - COORDINATION
Vangelis Chronis

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Map of the area in the late nineteenth century, by Ernst Curtius and Johann August Kaupert. Visible are the Agios Kosmas promontory (Kosmas) and the area Hasani (Chasani).



INTRODUCTION

For some six decades or so, the site of the aerodrome at Elliniko housed not just the buildings, the ancillary facilities and the runways; it housed a host of emotions – the excitement of the journey, the anticipation of reunion, the sadness of separation, fear of the future unknown, hope. In endeavouring to reconstruct the history of the place, and especially in the twentieth and the first decades of the twenty-first century, the former aerodrome's very close relationship with events that took place in Greece, as well as in the world at large, inevitably becomes apparent. The site of the former aerodrome and its use and state over all those years do indeed constitute a mirror in which is reflected the whole course of Greece, with its ups and downs, its failures and successes, from 1938, when operation of the aerodrome began, until the present day.

This book tells the story of the wider area of the former aerodrome at Elliniko, from the first traces of human habitation in the area of Agios Kosmas until the last one hundred years, detecting man's presence during prehistoric, Classical, Byzantine and modern times until the contemporary period. It is not an exhaustive history, but rather presents the thread of human activity in this space, which is the meeting point of three ancient demes and three present-day municipalities: the Deme of Halimous, the Deme of Euonymos and the Deme of Aixone, on the one hand, and the Municipality of Alimos, the Municipality of Elliniko-Argyroupolis and the Municipality of Glyfada, on the other. Principal factor that emerges, particularly after 2001, when the aerodrome ceased to operate, is the frequent changes of use of this site, sometimes of a more permanent nature and sometimes of emergency character. In view of one more major change, that of the creation of the Metropolitan Pole of Elliniko-Agios Kosmas by Lamda Development SA, which will at the same time preserve and enhance many of the monuments discussed in the following pages, this volume aspires to be at once an epilogue and a prologue to an entire area and era.

Part of the aerodrome at Elliniko, as viewed from the sea, 2020.

FROM ANCIENT TO RECENT TIMES

Aerial photograph of the aerodrome at Elliniko, September 1959.





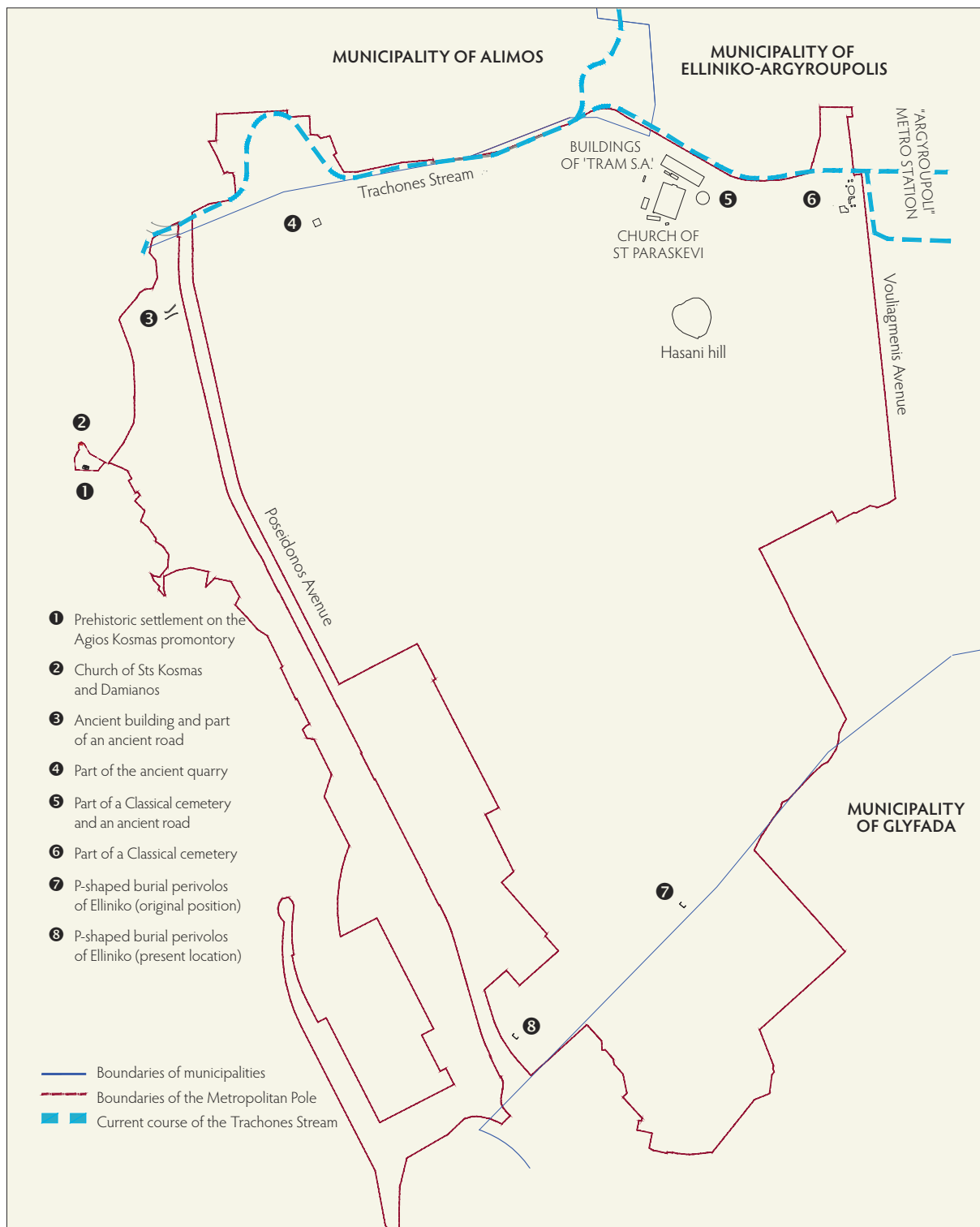


Diagram of the area of the Metropolitan Pole of Elliniko-Agios Kosmas, marked on which are the sites of archaeological interest inside the area.

The landscape of the wider area

Attica is a place with an illustrious history that is lost in the mists of time. The Attic landscape, diverse and dynamic, shaped its people and their culture. An aerial view of the Attic countryside reveals a rich tapestry of colours and shapes, prominent in which are four mountainous massifs. Dominating the centre is the Sacred Rock of the Acropolis, the very heart of the city-state of Athens, the *asty*. To the north rises Parnes, to the northeast Penteli, to the west Aigaleo and to the east Hymettos. The terrain is dotted also by several hills, such as Lykabettos, the hills of the Muses and of the Nymphs, Ardettos, and others. Between them are rivers, some of them now subterranean and passing underneath modern buildings, others on the surface of the land and swifter flowing. This long and narrow plain was from prehistoric times the setting for momentous events.

On the south side of Attica, there where Mount Hymettos is almost lapped by the sea of the Saronic Gulf, all the features typical of the Attic landscape, from antiquity to today, are concentrated in a small area of land that has remained virtually unchanged for centuries. The ground is rocky with only a thin cover of soil, there are rivers and streams, and, primarily, there is low vegetation.¹ On reading the description of Attica as it was in Plato's day, the similarity to the reality now is striking. Perhaps the most notable change is the lack of streams, which although once numerous have decreased considerably, while several of them are hidden under the modern city.

The configuration of the landscape is complemented harmoniously by the vegetation. Coniferous trees, Mediterranean shrubs, aromatic plants and herbs make up the flora encountered on Hymettos. Indeed, even in ancient times, healers and sages came here from all over the then-known world in quest of therapeutic plants and herbs that grew only on its slopes.² The varied vegetation was the reason why excellent honey was produced here in antiquity. Even so, whereas the vegetation on the northern part of the Hymettos was always dense, the southern part was arid and rather bare, which is why even today it is called

¹ Plato, *Critias*, 111b-c.

² As recorded by Evliya Celebi, Jakob L. Salomon Bartholdy and Iakovos Rangavis-Rizos. See Θωμόπουλος, Αριστείδης, *Το Θεμέλιο* [Aristidis Thomopoulos, *The Foundation*], Alimos 2019, pp. 510-514.

Mavrovouni (Black Mountain) or Xerovouni (Dry Mountain). There grow trees and bushes of the Mediterranean maquis, such as the pine, the holmoak, the lentisk and the oleaster, as well as fragrant rosemary, cedar and mimosa.

On descending the south slope of Hymettos, having left behind the city of Athens, the land is almost flat, punctuated by a few hillocks. At the centre is Pani hill, with an enchanting view and a rich history, whose name still echoes worship of the god Pan. Other hills in the area are Agia Anna, Troumpari, of the Geroulanos residence, Hasani and Kontopigado. Stones are ubiquitous in the landscape, offering abundant raw material that was used throughout the centuries for fashioning artifacts. In the *magnum opus* of the nineteenth century, *Karten von Attika*, which includes the historical maps prepared by Kaupert and Curtius,³ valuable information can be found about the region and its aspect at that time, which can be compared to the picture of it at present.

Within the arid landscape small streams have been flowing for centuries, providing clean and potable water and ideal living conditions for plants and animals. The Trachones stream has been flowing since antiquity, when it was called 'Euonymeia'. Its headwaters are on the slopes of Hymettos and it ends at the north edge of the archaeological site of Agios Kosmas. One other stream, which arises from a spring on Mount Hymettos and has been flowing since antiquity, separates Elliniko from Glyfada. The presence of natural flowing waters is supplemented by many wells, which in combination with the clement climate, contributed to the development of settlements in the area.⁴

³ Curtius, Ernst, Kaupert, Johann August, *Karten von Attika*, Reimer, Berlin 1881-1904.

⁴ Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κωνσταντίνη, «Ευώνυμον και Αλιμούς» (Α' Μέρος), στο Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κωνσταντίνη, Κλαδιά, Μαργαρίτα, *Άλιμος: Όψεις της Ιστορίας της Πόλης και του Δήμου* [Constantina Kaza-Papageorgiou, 'Euonymon and Halimos' (Part I), in Constantina Kaza-Papageorgiou – Margarita Kladia, *Alimos: Aspects of the History of the City and the Deme*], Alexandros Publications-Municipality of Alimos, Athens 2006, pp. 21-23.

The first traces of habitation (3200/3000-2000 BC)

Thousands of years ago, the Attica basin, thanks to its special characteristics, had attracted people seeking a suitable place to found settlements and organize their life. Linguistic analysis of toponyms in Athens, such as Hymettos, Ardettos, Lykabettos, and so on, indicates that Attica was settled by prehellenic tribes.⁵ Archaeological excavations conducted over the years have revealed incontrovertible evidence of human presence already by the end of the Neolithic period.

Then came the dawn of a new age, known to history as the 'Bronze Age', during which three different cultures developed concurrently in Greece: the Helladic on the Mainland, the Cycladic in the islands of the Cyclades, and the Minoan on Crete. Over time, knowledge of metallurgy and metalworking brought changes in all sectors. It seems that those who played a leading role in the sector of metallurgy were the Cycladic islanders. Metal ores and their products travelled beyond the narrow local boundaries of the islands and reached many places in Greece. New sea routes were navigated and together with the goods and ideas exchanged along them widened also man's horizons.⁶ Trade flourished and maritime voyages were of vital importance. It was then that people began to found settlements at coastal sites, which is why settlements that were created at that period are being uncovered today on Attic shores.

In the wider environs of the present municipalities of Alimos and Elliniko-Argyroupolis, three main sites confirm man's presence from at least 3000 BC –that is, from the Early Helladic period. These continued in existence during the Mycenaean period too, for which there is even more evidence. The sites are the hill at Kontopigado and the hill at Pani in the Municipality of Alimos, and Agios Kosmas, the history of which reaches to the present day.⁷

⁵ Μαστραπάς, Αντώνης, *Η Πόλις και το Αστὺ των Αθηνών* [Antonis Mastrapas, *The Polis and the Asty of Athens*], Patakis, Athens 2003, p. 11.

⁶ Θεοχάρης, Δημήτρης, «Σύνθεση των δεδομένων της Πρώιμης Χαλκοκρατίας», in *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους, Προϊστορία και Πρωτοϊστορία* [Theocharis, Dimitris, 'Synthesis of the data of the Early Bronze Age', in *History of the Greek Nation, Prehistory and Protohistory*], Vol. I, Ekdotike Athenon, Athens 2000, pp. 123-124.

⁷ Specifically for the areas of archaeological interest, which now lie within the boundaries of the Municipality of Alimos, see Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κωνσταντίνα (επιμ.), *Άλιμος, Στά Ίχνη των Αρχαίων Κατοίκων* [Constantina Kaza-Papageorgiou (ed.), *Alimos, Tracing the Ancient Inhabitants*], Municipality of Alimos, Athens 2004, pp. 3-4, 9-10 and Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κωνσταντίνα, *Αρχαιολογικοί Περίπατοι στον Άλιμο* [Constantina Kaza-Papageorgiou, *Archaeological Walks in Alimos*], Municipality of Alimos-Karon, Athens 2018, pp. 8-13, 18-20, 23-27 and Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Ευώνυμον και Αλιμούς», *op. cit.*, pp. 25-53.



On the hill at Kontopigado, maximum height just 84 m asl, where there were once abundant ‘short’ (Gr. *kontos*) –in the sense of shallow– wells (Gr. *pigadia*), traces of human activity dating back to the Early Helladic period have been identified, attesting the early habitation of the area.⁸ Close by, on a side road off Vouliagmenis Avenue, remains of Early Helladic habitation lie underneath three modern buildings. The archaeologist’s spade uncovered houses and workshops, many of which had been built at the point where there were once two fast-flowing streams, which were filled in.

⁸ For the excavations and the archaeological finds at the site of Kontopigado, see Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κωνσταντίνα, «Κοντοπήγαδο Αλίου Αττικής. Οικισμός των ΠΕ και ΥΕ χρόνων και ΥΕ εργαστηριακή εγκατάσταση» [Constantina Kaza-Papageorgiou, ‘Kontopigado at Alimos in Attica. EH and LH settlement and LH workshop installation’], *Archaiologike Ephemeris*, 150, 2011, pp. 197-274.



View of the aerodrome at Elliniko and the Agios Kosmas promontory, from the sea, 2020.

From the top of Pani hill, one of the highest hills in Attica, there is a spectacular panoramic view of the surrounding area and as far as the sea.⁹ This is a strategic location from which Kontopigado and Agios Kosmas can be surveilled, as well as the Attica Basin and the Saronic Gulf. The hill is of rock of different kinds, which is why quarries were operating on its slopes over the centuries. A strong enceinte encircled the hill to the southwest and fortified the settlement, protecting it from would-be attackers. The people who lived in the settlement cultivated the soil, reared domesticated animals and made clay vessels.

⁹ For the excavations and the archaeological finds at the site of Pani, see Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Ευώνυμον και Αλμιάς», *op. cit.*, pp. 25-29.

The Agios Kosmas promontory

In an attempt to reveal the history of the Agios Kosmas promontory, the archaeologist Georgios Mylonas, who had excavated at important sites all over Greece, carried out the first investigations over several seasons from 1929 until 1931, and made some supplementary observations in 1939. The outbreak of the Second World War delayed the full publication of his findings. Some years later, in 1951, he studied the area anew and in 1959 published the results of his later archaeological research.¹⁰ Mylonas's excavations did indeed bring to light important finds, enriching our knowledge of the prehistoric period. They proved that the promontory was inhabited for the first time during the Early Helladic period, in the third millennium BC, as an organized settlement and cemeteries of that period were found.¹¹ In the settlement, narrow streets ran between the houses, which usually comprised two rooms, of which one was for household tasks and the other as a bedchamber, as well as a small court. Pits dug in the earth and vases of various shapes were used for storing foodstuffs. A short road surfaced with stones, gravel and sand led from the settlement to the seashore, where the seacraft loaded with cargoes moored. In fact, when this little road was uncovered it was the earliest known manmade road in mainland Greece. A short distance below, in the two bays formed by the promontory, the inhabitants had organized the settlement's cemeteries. Unearthed there were family graves furnished with grave goods –that is, objects that accompanied the dead on their postmortem journey–, usually vases, figurines or other artifacts associated in some way with the life of the deceased.

The archaeological finds shed light on the life of people of that period and led to a significant conclusion. Archaeologists observed that at Agios Kosmas burial habits common in the Cyclades were encountered, which indicate the close relation between the settlement and the islands.¹² Unexpected finds led them to the conclusion that they had discovered a colony of Cycladic islanders in Attica. The distinctive Cycladic figurines, the sacred frying-

¹⁰ Mylonas, George, E., *Aghios Kosmas: an Early Bronze Age Settlement and Cemetery in Attica*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1959.

¹¹ Μυλωνάς, Γεώργιος, Ε., «Ανασκαφή Αγίου Κοσμά 1951» [George E. Mylonas, 'Excavation at Agios Kosmos 1951'], *Archaiologike Ephemeris* 1952, The Archaeological Society at Athens, Athens 1955, pp. 117-134 and Mylonas, George E., "Excavations at Haghios Kosmas", *American Journal of Archaeology*, XXXVIII, The Archaeological Institute of America, The Rumford Press 1934, pp. 258-279.

¹² Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Ευώνυμον και Αλιμούς», *op. cit.*, pp. 41-45.



The Agios Kosmas promontory. Visible in the upper part of the photograph is the Post-Byzantine church of the Saints Kosmas and Damianos, and at the centre are the traces of the prehistoric settlement, 2020.

pan vessels and the obsidian blades were artifacts which attested that the first inhabitants of this Early Helladic settlement were none other than islanders from the Cyclades, who went there initially for reasons of trade and then settled permanently. In their new home they kept their Cycladic customs. The sea that laps the coasts of Agios Kosmas offered the possibility of maritime voyages and cultural exchanges with the islanders. The trade of obsidian, a volcanic stone from Melos used for knapping weapons and tools, fishing and processing the murex mollusc to obtain purple dye were among the everyday activities of the people living in the area and made a decisive contribution to its prosperity. Indeed, the presence of murex was an important index of wealth, given that the extraction from the mollusc of the purple dye that was so precious in antiquity was a laborious procedure.



The prehistoric settlement at Agios Kosmas. The first excavations in the area were conducted in the late 1920s and were continued in the following years, 2020.

In the ensuing centuries, the settlement was deserted, probably after a destruction by fire, and was not reinhabited until Mycenaean times (*ca* 1600 BC), when a new settlement was built upon the ruins of the earlier one. Very often the same stones were used in the foundations of buildings of different periods, thus acquiring a kind of immortality. Around 1200 BC, the inhabitants erected a mighty fortification wall to protect them from external threats, but the promontory was soon deserted once again. In the end, the place was abandoned and people sought a safer site inland to organize their settlement, joining forces with other inhabitants.

Passing from prehistoric to historical times, the promontory is mentioned by renowned historians, with first Herodotus, as *Κωλλιᾶς ἄκρα* (Cape Kollias)¹³ and enjoyed a new heyday. As the great traveller of antiquity, Pausanias, informs us, the name derives from the temple of Aphrodite Kollias, which stood on its highpoint. The temple housed the statue of Aphrodite Kollias, as well as representations of the Genetyllides deities (goddesses of childbirth).¹⁴ There women anxious to conceive prayed to the goddess and those who were pregnant addressed to her their thanks. In addition to Aphrodite, the goddess Demeter was worshipped on the headland, where there was a temple dedicated to her.¹⁵

Cape Kollias was linked with many and different tales. It was said that here the wrecked ships of the Persians were washed ashore after the naval battle of Salamis, so verifying the prophecy of the Athenian seer Lysistratos, that 'Then shall the Colian women with firewood of oars roast barley'.¹⁶ It has in fact been observed that even today when the west wind blows, whatever flotsam and jetsom is in the open sea gathers in the sheltered bay. However, the *Kollias Akra* is linked also with another episode relating to Salamis, which was for centuries the bone of contention between the Athenians and the Megarians. Solon hatched a plot to hoodwink the Megarians on the day when their womenfolk congregated on the promontory to honour the goddess Demeter. Then, young Athenian men, still beardless, dressed up in women's clothes and pretended to dance. The Megarians, who had disembarked close to the sanctuary, were attracted by the spectacle and made to rush upon the dancers, thinking that they were women, but the disguised Athenian males drew forth their concealed knives and killed them. They then captured the Megarians' ships and subsequently the whole of Salamis.¹⁷

¹³ Herodotus, *History*, 8.96.2.

¹⁴ '...the Coliad promontory...' 'There is here an image of the Coliad Aphrodite, with the goddesses Genetyllides (Goddesses of Birth), as they are called.' Pausanias, *Travels in Greece*, Attica 1.1.5.

¹⁵ Plutarch, *Solon*, 8.4.

¹⁶ 'Twenty stades away is the Coliad promontory; on to it, when the Persian fleet was destroyed, the wrecks were carried down by the waves.' Herodotus, *op. cit.* The event was recorded also by Strabo, *Geography*, 9 1.21, and Pausanias, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ Plutarch, *op. cit.*, 8.

Apart from fascinating stories, the land of Kollias also hid within it very good quality clay that was used to make superb quality pottery, which was famed and in high demand.¹⁸

It is said that during the Second World War the Germans had installed an anti-aircraft battery on the cape, so destroying a large part of the ancient settlement. One other interesting piece of information concerns the continuous removal of sand from the site of the cemeteries, despite the police ban, 'until the last grain of sand is removed from the picturesque beach'.¹⁹ Even so, a small part of the prehistoric settlement can still be seen, a visual reminder of the history of this place.

Recently, in the wider area of Agios Kosmas, an ancient road was uncovered in the course of constructing facilities for the Olympic Games, close to the Agios Kosmas National Youth Sports Centre. This road connected the ancient coastal road to the sea. Other antiquities uncovered in the area of Agios Kosmas include the grave stele of Astinos from the deme of Halimous, which was found during works to widen the modern coastal highway, as well as the famous 'Decree of the Deme of Halimousians'.²⁰ The fourth-century BC decree is a very important find because it helped researchers to demarcate the boundaries of the ancient deme of Halimous. Over the years, the greater part of the archaeological remains has been lost.

¹⁸ Ορλάνδος, Αναστάσιος, Κ., *Τα Υλικά Δομής των Αρχαίων Ελλήνων και οι Τρόποι Εφαρμογής αυτών, Κατά τους Συγγραφείς, τας Επιγραφάς και τα Μνημεία* [Anastasios K. Orlandos, *The Building Materials of the Ancient Greeks and the Ways of Applying them, According to the Authors, the Inscriptions and the Monuments*], The Archaeological Society at Athens, Athens 1994, p. 86.

¹⁹ Μυλωνάς, Γ., *op. cit.*, p. 118.

²⁰ Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, *op. cit.*, 2018, pp. 15-16.

Classical times: the administrative organization of Attica

Myth has it that Kekrops, the first king of Athens, organized the land of Attica by dividing it into twelve cities.²¹ The Athenians believed that all these cities, which were dispersed throughout Attica, were united by Theseus. Thucydides recounts this historical event, which is known as the synoecism: *For in the time of Cecrops and the first kings down to Theseus the inhabitants of Attica had their several boroughs and therein their common halls and their governors, [...] But after Theseus came to the kingdom, one who besides his wisdom was also a man of very great power, he not only set good order in the country in other respects but also dissolved the councils and magistracies of the rest of the towns; and assigning them all one hall and one council-house, brought them all to cohabit in the city that now is; and [...] their city [...] grew great and was by Theseus so delivered to posterity.*²² For this reason, Theseus was considered the founder (*oikistes*) of the city of Athens.

Centuries later, in 508-7 BC, leading figure in the city of Athens was Kleisthenes, who envisioned a more democratic and united *polis*. He decided to divide the Athenians not on the basis of their economic status or origin, as was the case until then, but into ten new tribes, each named after an Attic hero.²³ In fact, a monument with the ten heroes and leaders of the tribes was set up in the ancient Agora, where the news of each tribe was publicized. He then divided Attica into three large geographical districts: the *Asty*, the nucleus of the city, the *Mesogaia*, the fertile inland area, and the *Paralia*, the coastal zone to the east of Hymettos. One of Kleisthenes' innovations was to combat social discriminations that had previously existed and to unite the Athenians. To this end, he decided that each tribe would include citizens from all three districts, so as to promote the interests of people of different social classes. Now every Athenian would have a heroic ancestor whom he would henceforth consider the genarch of his tribe. For this reason Kleisthenes divided Attica into thirty local

²¹ As Strabo states: *Cecrops first settled the multitude in twelve cities, the names of which were Cecropia, Tetrapolis, Epacria, Deceleia, Eleusis, Aphidna (also called Aphidnae, in the plural), Thoricus, Brauron, Cytherus, Sphettus, Cephisia*, op. cit., 9 1.20.

²² Thucydides, *History*, 2.15.1-2.15.2.

²³ The names of the ten new tribes were the following: 1. Erechtheis, 2. Aigeis, 3. Pandionis, 4. Leontis, 5. Akamantis, 6. Oineis, 7. Kekropis, 8. Hippothoontis, 9. Aiantis, and 10. Antiochis.

units called *trittyes*, and each tribe comprised three *trittyes*, one from each district.²⁴ Each *trittys* included a specific number of demes, which varied. In the end, Attica was divided into ten tribes and about one hundred and forty separate demes. Henceforth, every Athenian who introduced himself gave his own name (nomen) and the name of his father (patronym), but also the name of his deme. This contributed to the development of cohesive ties and the



The ancient theatre of the deme of Euonymos.

blunting of differences between citizens, putting the deme at the epicentre of a citizen's life.

The demes into which Attica had been divided were located either in the *Asty* or in the countryside. The smaller ones had up to thirty houses, while the larger had as many as three hundred and were administratively autonomous with their own laws and treasury.²⁵

²⁴ Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution*, 21.2-21.4.

²⁵ Σταϊνχάουερ, Γεώργιος, «Αττικοί δήμοι», στο Βλαχόπουλος, Ανδρέας (επιμ.), *Αρχαία Αθήνα και Αττική, Ιστορική Τοπογραφία του Αστεως και της Χώρας* [Georgios Steinhauer, 'Attic demes', in Andreas Vlachopoulos (ed.), *Ancient*

Each deme elected representatives to the Boule, their number proportionate to the deme's size.²⁶ The largest deme of Attica was that of the Acharnians, represented by twenty-two deputies (*bouleutai*), which indeed is mentioned by Aristophanes in his comedy of the same name.

Along the west coast, from the Piraeus as far as Sounion, many coastal demes developed, which were investigated archaeologically some years ago. Strabo, the famous geographer of antiquity, had travelled along the coast and recorded the names of the areas exactly as he encountered them: *After the Peiraeus comes the deme Phalereis, on the seaboard next to it; then Halimusii, Aexoneis, Alaeis, Aexonici*, thus enabling us to locate the ancient demes within the modern urban environment.²⁷ What he recorded is confirmed by the many finds brought to light in the wider region. These areas were linked with the *Asty* by two main road arteries, which coincide *grosso modo* with today's Vouliagmenis Avenue and Poseidonos Avenue.²⁸ They are three ancient demes with a glorious history: Halimous, Euonymos and Aixone, some parts of which are encountered in the area of the former aerodrome.

EUONYMOS

Fruit of the union of Ouranos (Lat. Uranus) with Ge was a mythical hero, Euonymos. So important was he for the Athenians that they decided to give his name to an entire deme. Its centre lay in the present area of Trachones, which owes its name to the rugged (Gr. *trachys*) terrain. Parts of this ancient deme possibly correspond to today's municipalities of Alimos, Elliniko-Argyroupolis, Ilioupolis and Agios Dimitrios. Just a small part of it existed on the site of the former aerodrome, as well as underneath busy Vouliagmenis Avenue. Euonymos was one of the largest Attic demes and elected 10 *bouleutai*. Going back in the mind's eye, we can imagine its ancient inhabitants walking along the small streets, reverently visiting the

Athens and Attica. History, Topography of the Asty and the Chora, Melissa, Athens 2010, pp. 92-111.

²⁶ Camp, John, M., *Οι Αρχαιότητες της Αθήνας και της Αττικής* [*The Antiquities of Athens and Attica*], Kardamitsa, Athens 2009, p. 343.

²⁷ Strabo, *op. cit.*, IX 1.21.

²⁸ Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κωνσταντίνα, *Η Αρχαία Αστική Οδός και το Μετρό κάτω από τη Λεωφόρο Βουλιαγμένης* [*Constantina Kaza-Papageorgiou, The Ancient Astike Hodos and the Metro under Vouliagmenis Avenue*], Kapon, Athens 2015, p. 62.

sanctuaries or enjoying the performances in the little theatre of their city, which was often flooded by downpours. In the upland areas, reaching to the foothills of Hymettos, the farmers cultivated their crops and the herdsmen left their livestock to graze freely. Thus the centuries rolled by, until at some moment the name Euonymos ceased to be used.²⁹

HALIMOUS

A humble plant, the *halimos* (glasswort or samphire), which grows beside the sea, possibly gave its name to a whole coastal area, the ancient deme of Halimous, which belonged to the Leontis tribe. The greater part of the ancient deme corresponds to today's Municipality of Alimos. A stone inscribed with a decree of the ancient citizens and a stele from the grave of an inhabitant named Astinos, set their seal on the historicity of the place. To the north its border was the Pikrodaphni, the third largest stream in Attica, with lush vegetation. The deme reached down to the sea and included the Agios Kosmas promontory. In this area there is also a hill, known today as Agia Anna. It was there that an important festival of antiquity was celebrated, in honour of the goddess Demeter, the Thesmophoria, with exclusively women participants. Worship of the goddess of fertility would seem to be appropriate, as an invocation for her help in this rather infertile land. Even so, there were here too several vineyards, olive groves, fields of cereals, vegetable gardens and orchards of fruit trees. It goes without saying that fishing supplemented the economic activities of the area's inhabitants.³⁰

Although Halimous had its own sanctuaries, cemeteries and other monuments, it was a small deme, as it was represented by only three *bouleutai*.³¹ However, one of its citizens was destined for a prominent place in the annals of history.

²⁹ Op. cit., pp. 121-123.

³⁰ Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Ευώνυμον και Αλιμούς», op. cit., pp. 73 & 109.

³¹ Καζά, Κωνσταντίνα, «Αλιμούς Αττικής: Ο αρχαίος δήμος, το δημοτικό θέατρο και τα εν Αλιμούντι θesmοφόρια» [Constantina Kaza, 'Halimous in Attica: the ancient deme, the theatre and the Thesmophoria in Halimous'], *Athens Annals of Archaeology*, 42, 2018, pp. 172-188.

This was the Halimousian Thucydides son of Oloros, who lived in the years of the Athenian Democracy and devoted his energies to recording the history of the Peloponnesian War. His impartial approach to the events and his quest for the deeper causes, in combination with an effort to crosscheck his information, were unprecedented for the period. Little wonder that many have dubbed him the first true historian.³²

AIXONE

Further south, where Glyfada is today, there was once one of the richest of the ancient Attic demes. Numerous inscriptions and demotic decrees found in the area confirmed the hypothesis that this was the site of Aixone, which many believe was named after a fish, the *aixonike trigle*, which is none other than the red mullet, then so abundant in the sea hereabouts.³³ However, apart from rich fishing grounds, the area also had fertile soils filled with crops. Aixone, which belonged to the Kekropis tribe, was a densely-populated city, packed with houses, streets and sanctuaries.³⁴ Its citizens, the Aixoneis/Aixonians, were said to be wry and blasphemous, which is why the proverbial phrase 'He's a true Aixonian' was coined, used of a person who was truculent.³⁵

³² Κακριδής, Ιωάννης, «Θουκυδίδης» [Ioannis Kakridis, "Thucydides"], in *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Έθνους, Κλασσικός Ελληνισμός* [History of the Greek Nation, Classical Hellenism], vol. Γ2, Ekdotike Athenon, Athens 2000, pp. 440-447.

³³ Γιαννοπούλου-Κονσολάκη, Ελένη, *Γλυφάδα. Ιστορικό Παρελθόν και Μνημεία* [Eleni Giannopoulou-Konsolaki, Glyfada. Historical Past and Monuments], Athens 1990, p. 10.

³⁴ Camp, J. M., op. cit., p. 394.

³⁵ Σουρμελής, Διονύσιος, *Αττικά: ή Περί Δήμων Αττικής εν οίς και περί τινων Μερών του Άστεως* [Dionysios Sourmelis, Attica: or On Demes of Attica among them some Parts of the Asty], Printed by Alexandros K. Garpolas, Athens 1854, p. 45.

Cemeteries and tomb monuments in the ancient demes

Each ancient deme of Attica was an independent, organized social entity and usually had its own sanctuaries and public spaces, houses and streets, workshops and cemeteries. The last are among the commonest finds in archaeology, mainly because of their natural covering by fill. Specifically, through the anthropological material, grave goods and funerary inscriptions, undisturbed graves are a significant source of information not only about the dead and their life, but also about the period and the society in which they lived.

Already from the tenth century BC, separation of the cemeteries from the settlements is observed, for sanitary reasons and economy of space. So, depending on the region, the graves are found either around a civic centre or in the landholdings of the citizens, while more commonly they are encountered *extra muros*, outside the gates of the fortification walls and along the sides of central roads, so as to be visible to those approaching the city, as in the case of the Kerameikos, the civic cemetery of Athens. Moreover, the location of cemeteries quite close to settlements facilitated the frequent and rigorous care of the dead, a habit ingrained but also instituted in Classical antiquity. Depending on the period, the deceased was either inhumed or cremated and then the bones and ashes were buried. Through a diversity of mortuary monuments found throughout the territory, the different burial practices reveal information on the economic standing of the deceased and perhaps also of the desire for his/her posthumous reputation.³⁶

In the wider area of the former aerodrome, cemeteries of various periods have been identified. The cemetery on the site of the Tram Depot and that of the 'Argyroupoli' Metro station, as well as other sporadic burial grounds in the area, attest the existence of corresponding small settlements dispersed in this zone of the Attic countryside to the west of Hymettos. Moreover, the finding of later burials in the same space shows that people chose to live in the same areas over the centuries. Most of the graves that have been excavated were

³⁶ For more information on burial customs in antiquity see Σταμπολίδης, Νικόλαος, Οικονόμου, Σταυρούλα (επιμ.), *Επέκεινα, Ο Θάνατος και η Μεταθανάτια Ζωή στην Αρχαία Ελλάδα* [Nikolaos Stampolidis – Stavroula Oikonomou (eds), *Beyond, Death and the Afterlife in Ancient Greece*], Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens 2014.

found along the sides of the ancient road artery that coincides at several points with today's Vouliagmenis Avenue.³⁷

Noteworthy is the case of the cemeteries of Halimous and Euonymos: the funerary monuments and the individual graves of these particular demes are in direct proximity to the houses and public buildings, in contrast to the adjacent Attic demes, such as Thorikos and Halai Aixonides (present Voula) as well as the *Asty* of Athens, where the cemeteries are further away from the inhabited area. Furthermore, the excavation finds from Halimous and Euonymos pointed to a lack of correspondence between the extensive mortuary remains and the relatively limited number of settlements, which situation is probably due to the short distance between these two demes and the *Asty*. It is probable that several Halimousians and Euonymians had their permanent residence in Athens, the hub of political life, and were visiting their deme even just for a day, in order to supervise works in their fields and to carry out other duties (perform sacrifices, attend religious festivals, and so on).³⁸ The dense road network of Attica in any case imprints this constant movement of people and goods to and from the *Asty*.³⁹ Nonetheless, citizens kept strong ties with their native deme and continued to erect their tomb monuments in it, as is documented by the excavation evidence from the Attic countryside.⁴⁰

³⁷ This is the ancient *Astike Hodos*, which linked the Athenian *Asty* with the west coast of Attica, reaching as far as Sounion and the mines of the Laureotike. See Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κωνσταντίνα, Κακαβογιάννη, Όλγα, Ανδρίκου, Ελένη, Ντόβα, Ανθή, «Η Αστική οδός (οδός Αθηνών - Σουνίου)» [Constantina Kaza-Papageorgiou – Olga Kakavogianni – Eleni Andrikou – Anthi Dona, 'The Astike Hodos (Athens – Sounion road)'] in Κορρές, Μανώλης (επιμ.), *Αττικής Οδοί, Αρχαίοι Δρόμοι της Αττικής* [Manolis Korres (ed.), *Attic Roads, Ancient Highways of Attica*], Melissa, Athens 2009, pp. 198-211.

³⁸ The slaves who cultivated the fields, the overseers and the older members of the families lived permanently on the estates. Σταϊνχάουερ, Γ., «Αττικοί Δήμοι», *op. cit.*, pp. 94 & 98, Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Ευώνυμον και Αλιμούς», *op. cit.*, pp. 73-75.

³⁹ Σταϊνχάουερ, Γεώργιος, «Άστυ και χώρα στην Αττική από την Κλασική στην Ύστερη Ρωμαϊκή Εποχή» [Georgios Steinhauer, 'Asty and chora in Attica from the Classical to the Late Roman period'], in Δρακούλης, Δημήτρης, Τσότσος, Γεώργιος (επιμ.), *Ιστορική Γεωγραφία της Ελλάδος και της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου* [Dimitris Drakoulis, Georgios Tsotsos (eds), *Historical Geography of Greece and the East Mediterranean*], Antonios Stamoulis Publishing House, Thessaloniki 2012, pp. 49-53. For the Attic road network in antiquity, see Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., Κακαβογιάννη, Όλγα, Ανδρίκου, Ελ., Ντόβα, Α., *op. cit.*, pp. 198-211.

⁴⁰ Σταϊνχάουερ, Γεώργιος, «Παρατηρήσεις στην οικιστική μορφή των αττικών δήμων» [Georgios Steinhauer, 'Remarks on the settlement pattern of the Attic demes'], in Coulson, William D.E. (ed.), *The Archaeology of Athens and Attica under the Democracy, Proceedings of an International Conference Celebrating 2500 Years since the Birth of Democracy in Greece, held at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, December 4-6, 1992*, Oxbow Monograph 37, Oxbow Books, Oxford 1994, pp. 183-184.

THE ANCIENT CEMETERY ON THE SITE OF THE TRAM DEPOT

In an excavation conducted over the years 2002-2004, in the area between the former 129 Support Wing of the Hellenic Air Force Aircraft Depot and the former West Airport, where the Tram Depot now exists, part of a cemetery was uncovered inside a hangar for the repair and maintenance of Olympic Airways aircraft, as well as two tomb enclosures in the countryside to the east of it.⁴¹ This is one of the two cemeteries identified within the ancient deme of Euonymos; the second one, which will be discussed in due course, is located along the kerb of Vouliagmenis Avenue, in the area of the 'Argyroupoli' Metro station and the former 129 Support Wing. These cemeteries are considered to have belonged to the southern settlement nucleus of Euonymos.

One hundred and thirty (130) graves were brought to light in this particular cemetery. They housed jar burials (enchytrismoι), inhumations and cremations, as well as a host of grave goods that accompanied the dead Euonymians in the Afterlife. The burials were furnished mainly with clay vases and other objects, which date from the Geometric period (8th century BC) until Hellenistic times (4th century BC), attesting the intensive use of this mortuary space over at least five centuries, whilst also giving an insight into the beliefs of each period. Limited use of the cemetery is observed several hundred years later, during the fourth to the sixth century AD.

Noteworthy among the finds is a fourth-century BC bronze hydria containing bones wrapped in a piece of cloth and protected inside a stone kalpe, an example of particular care and respect towards the deceased. Found too were inscribed grave stelai recording the names of the dead, as well as some court dockets, such as the one with the inscription *ΑΓΗΤΟΣ ΕΥΩΝΥΜΕΥΣ* (Agetos Euonymian), confirming the identification of the area with the ancient deme of Euonymos. Court dockets were metal strips incised with the names of citizens, which

⁴¹ The information about the cemetery in the Tram Depot is taken from Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κωνσταντίνα, «Ελληνικό: τέρμα οδού Αεροπορίας, χώρος αμαξοστασίου του ΤΡΑΜ (2003)» [Constantina Kaza-Papageorgiou, 'Elliniko: end of Aeroporias Street, site of the TRAM depot (2003)'], *Archaiologikon Deltion* 56-59, Part B1 Χρονικά, 2001-2004, Attica, 2010, pp. 473-474 & 476-478, Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ. op. cit., 2015, pp. 139-145, Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Η Αργυρούπολη στους αρχαίους χρόνους» [Constantina Kaza-Papageorgiou, 'Argyroupolis in ancient times'], in Γιαννακόπουλος, Γιώργος Α. (επιμ.) *Αργυρούπολη. Οψεις της Ιστορίας της Πόλης* [Giorgos Giannakopoulos (ed.), *Argyroupolis. Aspects of the History of the City*], Municipality of Argyroupolis-Ellinikes Ekdoseis S.A., 2006, pp. 44 & 47-49 and Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Ευώνυμον και Αλιμούς», op. cit., pp. 125-129.



The cemetery on the site of the Tram Depot. Archaeological remains dated mainly to the period from the eighth to the fourth century BC were found here, 2020.

were placed in stone ballot boxes from which jurors were selected by lot in the fourth century BC. It is ascertained from the finds in the graves that many men were buried with these dockets, indicating that they held judicial office in life. Also excavated at this site were part of a house and an adjacent street of Archaic and Classical times.

Only a few metres away, in the open space of the Tram Depot, a disturbed but unlooted Π-shaped tomb enclosure was excavated, one of the most important archaeological finds of recent decades in Attica. Tomb enclosures were decorated built structures of quadrilateral plan, open on one side, which surrounded family graves. Because they were expensive constructions, they are usually attributed to eminent citizens. An ancient road passed in front of the specific monument, following the course of a stream and connecting the ancient Astike Hodos (present Vouliagmenis Avenue) with the site of the former aerodrome. It was in any case customary in antiquity for prosperous families to build their funerary monuments in conspicuous positions, inside their estates and close to a road.

This imposing funerary monument was erected sometime in the second half of the fourth century BC, upon a well-built oblong pedestal inside the estate of Elpinos, a citizen of the deme of Euonymos, as a statement of his wealth and power. Elpinos decorated it with a grave stele with relief representation of *dexiosis* (the valediction of the deceased by the living), a second stele with the figure of a naked youth and his dog, a palmette stele and two marble lekythoi. The fragments of the decoration were found fallen in front of the monument's façade and had been carried away a short distance by the waters of the torrent. The inscriptions on marble grave stelai, ΕΛΠΙΝΗΣ ΜΝΗΣΙΘΕΟΥ ΕΥΩΝΥΜΕΥΣ. ΜΝΗΣΙΦΙΛΟΣ ΜΝΗΣΙΘΕΟΥ ΕΥΩΝΥΜΕΥΣ, record the names of members of the same family (Elpines son of Mnesitheos from Euonymos. Mnesiphilos son of Mnesitheos from Euonymos), while inside the enclosure were a sarcophagus of Hymettan marble, a stone theke (cist) containing bones, and a clay cinerary kalpe. Parts of other grave monuments were found too, but these are small and fragmentary. Not far to the east there was a second destroyed tomb enclosure, which had been breached already in antiquity, as well as in later times. After all, building material from these tombs has been identified at other places in the area, as it was used in Early Christian times to construct the small basilica that lies in front of the church of the Life-Bearing Source (Zoodochos Pege) in Alimos.

The cemetery inside the roofed space of the Tram Depot has been backfilled, while the tomb enclosure and other remains around it are visible in the open space of the Tram Depot. The sculptural works from the tomb enclosure, finds considered on a par with their counterparts from the Athenian Kerameikos, were taken to the Piraeus Archaeological Museum, where they are displayed in the outdoor exhibition of sculptures. Although information about the deme of Euonymos as a whole is meagre, the luxurious funerary monuments revealed to date bespeak the affluence of its citizens. This is advocated also by the relatively costly construction of the civic theatre of Euonymos, in which there is extensive use of marble for the inscribed slabs and the seats in the front row, of the *proedria*. By contrast, although a great deal is known about the deme of Halimous, the poros limestone seats of the *proedria* preserved in its theatre attest the absence of such luxury and, most probably, that the Halimousians were not as well off as the Euonymians.⁴²

THE ANCIENT CEMETERY ON THE SITE OF THE 'ARGYROUPOLI' METRO STATION

In excavations conducted on the site of the 129 Support Wing of the Hellenic Air Force Aircraft Depot, in the 1960s and in the years 1987, 1990, 1994, as well as during works at the site now occupied by the 'Argyroupoli' Metro station, in 2006-2008, an extensive cemetery was uncovered very close to Vouliagmenis Avenue.⁴³ Moreover, actually inside the station, in its north part, a well and a robust retaining wall of Classical and Hellenistic times were revealed, finds most probably indicating the existence of a second centre of the south settlement of Euonymos, about 300 metres to the east of the Tram Depot site.

⁴² Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., *op. cit.*, p. 135. For the theatre of Halimous, see *op. cit.*, pp. 81-85. For the theatre of Euonymos, see *op. cit.* pp. 115-117 and Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., *op. cit.*, 2015, pp. 121-127. For the theatres of the ancient Attic demes see Paga, Jessica, 'Deme theaters in Attica and the trittys system', *Hesperia*, 79 (3), July- Sept 2010, pp. 351-384 and specifically for the area under discussion see pp. 363-365.

⁴³ Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κωνσταντίνα, «Σταθμός Μητροπολιτικού Σιδηροδρόμου Αθηνών "Αργυρούπολη" εντός του χώρου της 129 Πτέρυγας Υποστήριξης στο Ελληνικό» [Constantina Kaza-Papageorgiou, "Argyroupoli" Metro Station inside the site of the 129 Support Wing at Elliniko'], *Archaialogikon Deltion*, 62 (2007), Μέρος Β1 Χρονικά, 2014, pp. 253-254, Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κωνσταντίνα, «Μητροπολιτικός Σιδηρόδρομος Αθηνών», [Constantina Kaza-Papageorgiou, 'Athens Metropolitan Railway'], *Archaialogikon Deltion*, 63 (2008), Χρονικά Β1, pp. 203-205 and Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., *op. cit.*, 2015, pp. 146-161.



The cemetery on the site of the 'Argyroupoli' Metro station, close to Vouliagmenis Avenue. The finds inside the archaeological site date mainly from the eighth to the fourth century BC.

Specifically, in the cemetery brought to light at the 'Argyroupoli' Metro station there are stone sarcophagi, pit graves, pyres and other types of burial, mainly dating from the seventh to the fourth century BC. There is also a Π-shaped tomb enclosure with a façade 6.90 metres long which faces, as was the norm, the ancient *Astike Hodos*. Last, preserved among the burials are two pedestals of cuboid stone blocks, which most likely belonged to funerary monuments, while to the south of the 'Argyroupoli' Metro station, in Lefkosias Square (at the junction of Konstantinoupoleos and Thoukydidou streets), two contiguous Π-shaped tomb enclosures, as well as remains of their decoration, have been revealed.

Unfortunately, the burials on the Metro station site had been looted in antiquity, depriving us of valuable information about the dead. However, among the grave goods to

survive are bronze mirrors, athletes' strigils, four court dockets, figurines and numerous vases, all objects that bring us closer to the people of Euonymos of the period. It seems that the habits of life on earth followed the deceased in the Afterlife.

Although the cemetery has not been excavated in its entirety, it is almost certain that it was the central one of the settlement of Euonymos. The tomb enclosure and a small part of the cemetery are visible today, incorporated in the landscaped space around the Metro station. However, the greater part of this cemetery has been backfilled.

THE TOMB ENCLOSURE AT ELLINIKO

An impressive tomb enclosure, which appears to have belonged to a wealthy family of Classical times, stood for centuries in the southern part of the former aerodrome, beside the ancient road leading to Leukonoion, a small deme that has yet to be identified. It is difficult to imagine the area without its distinctive funerary monument. This 'Greek' (Gr. *helleniko*) monument, as it was called in the years of Ottoman rule, gave its name to the entire area – Elliniko –, as an enduring reminder of its illustrious past.⁴⁴ The Π-shaped tomb enclosure is in fact one of the best-preserved mortuary monuments in Attica. It is also the largest of its kind, measuring 20 m in length and 5 m in height. The monument is constructed of conglomerate stone, a particularly friable material, which was obtained from the nearby quarry. In its entire history it was never covered entirely by soil and was always visible, constituting a landmark. However, its conspicuous presence was also the reason why its significant antiquities were looted and stolen, as consequence of which very few archaeological finds survived. Nonetheless, the few dispersed sherds of Classical vases helped to date the monument to the middle years of the fourth century BC.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., *op. cit.*, 2015, pp. 164-166 and Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Ευώνυμον και Αλιμούς», *op. cit.*, pp. 103-105.

⁴⁵ Πετράκος, Βασίλειος, Χρ. «Αρχαιότητες Αθηνών-Αττικής: Αττική. 1. Κηφισιά, 2. Ταφικός περίβολος Ελληνικού (α. Ανασκαφή, β. Τοιχοδομία, γ. Θεμελίωσις, δ. Κατεργασία των λίθων, ε. Υλικόν, στ. Μεταφορά και ανακατασκευή, ζ. Σύνδεσμοι, η. Ευρήματα), 3. Τροιζήν» [Vasileios Ch. Petrakos, 'Antiquities of Athens-Attica: Attica. 1. Kiphsia, 2. Tomb enclosure at Elliniko (a. Excavation, b. Masonry, c. Foundations, d. Dressing of the stone blocks, e. Material, f. Transport and reconstruction, g. Clamps, h. Finds), 3. Troezen'], *Archaiologikon Deltion*, 17 (1961/2), Part Β Χρονικά, Athens 1963, pp. 30-35.



The tomb monument at Elliniko, which is dated to Classical times. Originally it was in a different location but it was transferred elsewhere during works to expand the aerodrome, in the 1960s.

Many centuries passed until 1961, when works began on extending the runway close to the monument. This meant that the tomb enclosure could no longer remain *in situ*, as it would be an obstacle to aircraft taking off and landing. In 1965, the Antiquities and Restoration Service decided that the best solution would be to dismantle the monument, in order to move it to a new site made available by the Ministry of Transport and Public Works. An unprecedented undertaking for the time, which demanded excavating, labelling, moving and reconstructing the monument, was completed successfully. In fact, for the dismantling and relocating of the monument an automobile hoist was used. Four months later, the tomb enclosure stood on its new site, in the forecourt of the American Girls' College, there where the Civil Aviation Authority was to be housed in due course.



The monument before its removal to its original site.



The tomb monument at Elliniko, viewed from above, 2020.

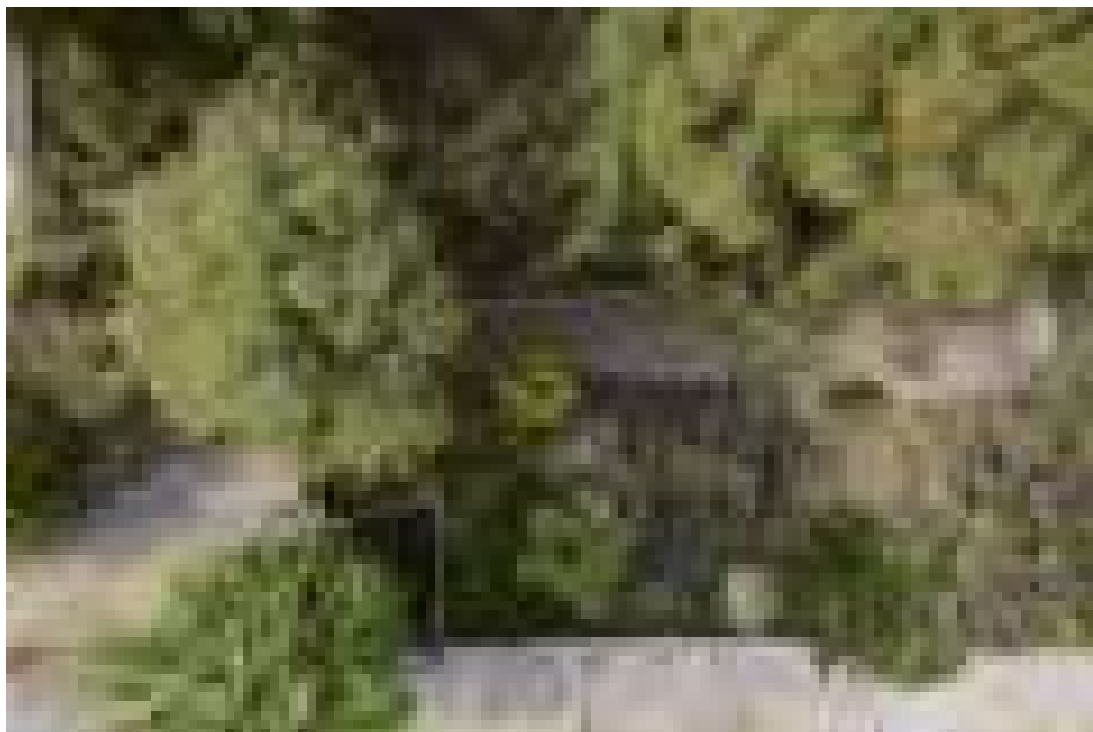
An ancient quarry

Stone, a particularly hard rock which abounds all over the earth and inside it, was one of the materials used by man to make his first weapons and tools in the struggle for survival already from the Palaeolithic Era. This inanimate material could express the human artistic sentiment and give soul to the imaginings of man's mind, which were transformed into works of art. So closely was it linked with man's life that it gave its name to an entire period of human history: the Stone Age. Since man's very existence depended on this raw material, from earliest times the first human interventions were made that gradually shaped the Attic landscape. The quarries are distinguished on the basis of their location, into open, on the surface of the earth, and underground, with tunnels, as well as on the basis of the structural material that could be extracted, such as limestone, poros limestone, shelly limestone, fieldstone, and so on. Of all the quarries the most famous were those that gave man marble. Indeed, in the Cyclades from as early as the third millennium BC there were marble quarries which supplied the islanders with the essential raw material for their artifacts.⁴⁶ In Attica, to this day, the hills and mountains conceal deposits of mineral wealth, providing valuable raw materials. Perhaps the best-known quarries are those that have existed for centuries on Mount Penteli, which was the source of the marble for many splendid monuments, pre-eminent among them those upon the Sacred Rock of the Acropolis.

Quarries that were operating in antiquity have been identified in several places on Mount Hymettos. On the site of the former aerodrome, not far to the south of the Trachones stream, part of a quarry that was in use in Classical times was brought to light during the construction of venues for the 2004 Olympic Games.⁴⁷ Its boundaries are still unclear and its size at the time it was operating is not known. In all probability it served the needs of the local population, supplying the raw material for buildings in the area. In the fill that covered it already in antiquity, scattered fragments of vases were found, indicating that somewhere close by products were traded, very likely in the bay of Agios Kosmas. After the Classical

⁴⁶ Κοκκορού-Αλευρά, Γεωργία, Πουπάκη, Ειρήνη, Ευσταθόπουλος, Αλέξης, *Αρχαία Ελληνικά Λατομεία* [Georgia Kokkorou-Alevra, Eirini Poupaki, Alexis Efstathopoulos, *Ancient Greek Quarries*], Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, Athens 2010, p. 17.

⁴⁷ For further information about the quarry, see Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., *op. cit.*, 2015, pp. 164-166 and Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Ευώνυμον και Αλιμούς», *op. cit.*, pp. 103-105.



Part of the ancient quarry of Classical times, inside the area of the aerodrome, 2020.

period, the quarry ceased to be used and was covered by fill. It is interesting that at some moment in history, perhaps shortly after the battle of Chaironeia (338 BC), a quarryman evidently tried to hide his small fortune there, believing that it would be safe. This is deduced from a hoard of Attic bronze coins of Eleusinian series, with the local hero Triptolemos on the obverse and a piglet on the reverse, as well as other coins from Salamis, which was recovered from a cleft in the rock. The monetary sum is small and does not seem to be more than a few day's wages, since it is known today that four coins of the said series corresponded to just one obol.⁴⁸ The years rolled by and the quarry gradually fell into oblivion.

⁴⁸ Αγαλλοπούλου, Πηνελόπη, «Θησαυρός Αττικών χαλκών νομισμάτων από τον Αλιμούντα (θέση Ελληνικό), 2004» [Penelope Agallou, 'Hoard of Attic bronze coins from Halimous (Elliniko site)], in *Διεθνής Ημερίδα Νομισματικής «Μαντώ Οικονομίδου» 20-21 Απριλίου 2016* [International One-day Numismatics Colloquium 'Mando Oikonomidou' 20-21 April 2016], Publication of the Friends of the Numismatic Museum, Athens 2018, pp. 79-86.

The Trachones stream

Along the edges of the former aerodrome, amidst locally dense riparian vegetation, flows the Trachones stream, one of the two streams that have been flowing through this area since antiquity.⁴⁹ It rises on Hymettos and ends to the north of the Agios Kosmas promontory, and is now encased for most of its length. Along its banks antiquities have been found, some of them dated to prehistoric times, as well as retaining walls on the sides of its bed, which bear witness to the efforts of the area's inhabitants to channel its flow.

In the Classical period, the deme of the Halimousians spread to the southwest, while to the northeast of the stream, around Geroulanos hill and as far as Vouliagmenis Avenue, one of the main settlement nuclei of the deme of Euonymos had developed.⁵⁰ Consequently, shortly before it entered the Saronic Gulf the stream was the natural border between the two demes of Halimous and Euonymos.

Building remains and riparian installations that exploited the running water of the stream have been uncovered along its length.⁵¹ Moreover, found close to its bed were parts of walls constructed of large ashlar blocks, which possibly belonged to a tomb enclosure of affluent families or to isolated burials, while found inside the bed were a built well of Classical times, which would have supplied potable water to the people and their fields, as well as to visitors to the area in the summer months. The well was in use until a few years ago, as some parts of the area have kept their rural character, with arable fields and grazing for livestock.

⁴⁹ Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Ευώνυμον και Αλιμούς», *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91 & 115, Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Η Αργυρούπολη στους αρχαίους χρόνους», *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁵⁰ The area of the former aerodrome was characterized in antiquity by a 'loose organization of habitation with two or three settlement nuclei, usually along the length of or around the crossroad of the central roads and as much as 600 or 700 m apart'. The houses, 'built at the edge of the field or at the far end of the garden alternated with family tomb enclosures and small sanctuaries'. See Σταϊνχάουερ, Γ., «Αττικοί Δήμοι», *op. cit.*, 2010, p. 101.

⁵¹ Καζά, Κωνσταντίνα, «Ρέμα Τραχώνων (Ιδιοκτησία Continent Hellas S.A.)» [Constantina Kaza-Papageorgiou, 'Trachones Stream (Property of Continent Hellas S.A.)'], *Archaiologikon Deltion*, 46 (1991), Part B Χρονικά, 1996, pp. 63-64.



Section of the Trachones stream. It flows from its headwaters on Mount Hymettos and enters the sea to the north of the Agios Kosmas promontory, 2020.

In recent times, during construction works for the aerodrome, the course of the stream was diverted yet again. In 1990, a new diversion was made, resulting in the destruction of ancient formations in its bed. Many of the archaeological finds from the area outside the site of the former aerodrome are preserved backfilled.

Hellenistic and Roman times (323 BC – AD 330)

The geopolitical and socio-economic developments that followed the Classical period brought drastic changes, even in the Athenian Democracy. Although Athens was no longer a key-player in the political processes of the period, it kept its fame as a great cultural centre in the Hellenistic and Roman world. It was this fame that attracted many rulers of Hellenistic kingdoms to the city, in order to study in its renowned philosophical schools, and they, in their turn, became its benefactors through patronage, endowing Athens with many of the new public edifices that changed its aspect. Concurrently, in the rest of Attica, which was traditionally the arena of agricultural activities, there was a steady decline in the economy and the population, as result of which only the large estates continued in existence.

The Romans prevailed in Greece in 146 BC. Athens continued to rest on the laurels of its past and to rely on the favour of several Roman generals and emperors, thus keeping some political and financial privileges. In the countryside, however, the further dissolution of small farmsteads continued, as large estates held sway and production was concentrated in the hands of a few pro-Roman landowners. Consequence of these trends was the decrease in the population of the rural periphery of the Athenian *asty*, while the imports of grain accelerated its desertion and abandonment. The demes of the west coast, which Strabo had enumerated, were by now no more than a handful of houses. In 86 BC, when the Roman army under Sulla captured Attica and proceeded to butcher the population, to destroy the city, as well as the countryside, most of the farms were put to the torch.

In later Roman times (1st – 2nd century AD), Athens was enhanced as the intellectual and artistic centre of the Empire, as well as the centre of Neoplatonic philosophy, enjoying a final heyday thanks to the patronage of the Roman emperors, as well as of wealthy individuals. Foreigners came to the city, residing there for shorter or longer periods. This image of the flourishing city with the important monuments and splendid edifices is preserved by Pausanias in his book titled 'Attica', the first in his *Description of Greece*.⁵²

⁵² Pausanias, op. cit., I.1-I.44.

The landscape was to change progressively from the third century AD, when the attacks by barbarian tribes increased in the Balkans, coming threateningly close to Greece. In AD 267, Athens suffered the catastrophic assault of the Heruls, Germanic tribes which set off from the Euxine Pontos and crossed Ionia and the Aegean, to reach the 'violet-crowned' city. Despite the destructions, the city managed to live on, shrunken around the Acropolis and within the confines of the so-called Late Roman wall.⁵³

Byzantine times (4th-15th century)

The Byzantine period in Greece begins conventionally with the founding of Constantinople in AD 330, which was henceforth and for almost a thousand years the hub of historical developments in the East Roman Empire. Within the vast Byzantine State, Athens, the once mighty political and economic power in the eastern Mediterranean, lost its leading role. The baton passed to cities built on the new highways of trade and directly linked with the Queen of Cities, such as Thessalonike. Nonetheless, even as a small provincial town of the Byzantine Empire, Athens was bustling with life. Although badly damaged by the Heruls, its monuments continued to attract travellers from all corners of the realm, while its philosophical schools continued to promote it as intellectual centre of the Empire.

The watershed event in the long history and tradition of Athens came a little later, with the prevailing of Christianity and the construction of the first churches. In AD 380, Emperor Theodosios I issued the edict establishing Christianity as the sole accepted religion of the Empire, outlawing the old religions. In AD 435, Theodosios II imposed the purification of the pagan temples and their conversion into Christian churches. He stripped Athens of its artworks, transporting the best ones to Constantinople, among them most probably the bronze statue of Athena Promachos from the Acropolis. Over a century later, in AD 529, Justinian abolished the philosophical schools and all activity associated with the ancient religion and tradition ceased.

⁵³ Σταϊνχάουερ, Γεώργιος, «Άστν και χώρα στην Αττική από την Κλασική στην Ύστερη Ρωμαϊκή Εποχή», *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.

As consequence, Athens devolved into a humble town, a backwater in the great Byzantine Empire. At the same period, hordes of Visigoths, Slavs and Avars invaded it, destroying, pillaging and changing its face forever. The economy was now dependent on farming, with the crops and produce consumed locally, while there was a falloff in trade.

Athens experienced a demographic, economic and cultural recovery after 961,⁵⁴ as evidenced by the numerous Byzantine churches that began to be built. Even so, by the late twelfth century it was once again in decline, due to raids by Saracen pirates, protracted drought and arbitrary measures of local dignitaries.

To the west of Hymettos and throughout the coastal zone, habitation continued at sites attested from antiquity. The people living in these areas were still linked closely with developments in Athens, so when commercial and mercantile activities in the city dwindled, they turned mainly towards agriculture and stock-raising. However, the rural population soon faced problems of survival, as apart from the failure of the grain crops and the pressure of a small local aristocracy of landowners, the coasts suffered from the marauding activity of pirates, which ebbed and flowed. The reference of Hosios Nikon the Repenter to the desertion of Salamis due to piracy suggests that the coasts of Attica too were extremely dangerous at that time.⁵⁵ In these circumstances, the wretched inhabitants of the coasts and the countryside sought refuge in Athens. Thus, the shores of Attica remained for the most part uninhabited, with the exception of the harbour of Piraeus.

Remains from the Byzantine period are scarce in this part of Attica. Whereas on the site of the former aerodrome and in the area of Agios Kosmas no Byzantine monuments have been found, just a few cases in the wider region bear witness to the Byzantine presence: namely two Early Christian basilicas (5th – 6th century) and two farmsteads. Specifically, on top of Agia Anna hill, and most probably on top of the remains of the ancient Thesmophorion, a small basilica –perhaps cemeterial– was excavated in the late 1920s. However, both the

⁵⁴ In 961, Nikephoros Phokas captured Crete and rid the Aegean of the Arab menace. The military victories of Basil the Bulgar-Slayer, on the northern and eastern frontiers of the Empire, a few decades later, also contributed to the recovery of the Byzantine State.

⁵⁵ In Nikon's day Salamis was deserted, due to the constant presence of pirates who were lurking offshore of the coasts of Piraeus. See Λαμπσίδης, Οδυσσέας, *Ὁ ἐκ Πόντου Ὁσίου Νίκων ὁ Μετανοεῖτε (Κείμενα - Σχόλια)* [Odysseas Lampsidis, *Hosios Nikon the Repenter from Pontos (Texts – Commentary)*], Committee of Pontic Studies, Athens 2007, p. 52 (25-26). Described in the same source is a case of pirates capturing a ship close to Piraeus, pp. 52 (38) - 54 (1).

basilica and the underlying Thesmophorion were totally destroyed during the Second World War. Only architectural members of the altar table survive, which are kept in the Byzantine and Christian Museum in Athens.⁵⁶ The remnants of a second basilica were identified in 1959 and are presently visible in the surroundings of the modern church of the Life-Bearing Source (Zoodochos Pege) in Koumoundourou Street near Vouliagmenis Avenue and in the east of the Geroulanos estate. This basilica was small and single-aisled. As was usual, ancient building material (*spolia*) from a pre-existing monument of the Classical period was used in its construction. This church too must have been cemeterial, as deduced from the ten graves that were excavated inside the narthex.⁵⁷

Close to Agia Anna hill, about 1.5 kilometres to the southwest of the Trachones area, part of a large building of rectangular in plan with large rooms was excavated, which is dated to the Middle Byzantine period (9th-12th century). Twelve silos were found here, as well as storage trenches, four storage jars (pithoi) for liquid and solid agricultural produce, as well as coins of the period. Perhaps this was a large farmstead with extensive agricultural activity, probably part of a large landholding. A few kilometres away, at Ano Kalamaki, the remains of another farmhouse comprising two rooms with court, and of part of a large installation of some landowner of the tenth-eleventh century document large-scale arable farming or animal husbandry. The south slope of Hymettos was, after all, a good area for grazing, thanks to its low vegetation cover. Last, the church dedicated to the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple (Eisodeia tes Theotokou), of free cross plan with dome, is considered to be Byzantine. It stands in Trachones, the area identified with the ancient deme of Euonymos. It probably dates from the twelfth century and survives today with later additions and interventions to the original building.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ The so-called Halimous basilica was excavated in 1929 by the German archaeologist Walther Wrede and our knowledge about it is restricted to a brief description by Georgios Soteriou. See Σωτηρίου, Γεώργιος, «Παλαιοχριστιανικά βασιλικά μονόκλιτοι – 25. Βασιλική Αλμιούντος παρά τὰς Αθήνας» [Georgios Soteriou, 'Early Christian single-aisle basilicas – 25. Basilica of Halimous near Athens'], *Archaeologike Ephemeris*, Athens 1929, p. 195.

⁵⁷ Λαζαρίδης, Πάυλος, «Μεσαιωνικά Αθηνών-Αττικής: Αθήναι (Ρωμαϊκή αγορά, Κτίμα Τράχωνες)» [Pavlos Lazarides, 'Medieval Athens-AtticaL Athens (Roman agora, Trachones Estate)'], *Archaeologikon Deltion*, 19 (1964), Part B1 Χρονικά, Athens 1966, pp. 96-97.

⁵⁸ Further information on remains from the Byzantine period in the wider area in Πάλλης, Γεώργιος, «Τοπογραφικά του αθηναϊκού πεδίου κατά τη μέση Βυζαντινή Περίοδο» [Georgios Pallis, 'Topographical data of the Athenian field during the Byzantine Period'], *Byzantina Symmeikta*, 23, 2013, pp. 150-153 and Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Ευώνυμον και Αλμιούς», *op. cit.*, pp. 141-147.

Although material culture remains are limited, the overall picture of the region is of a sparsely-populated space and a rural population of peasants and serfs who were involved with crop cultivation and other activities that covered the dietary and manufacturing needs of themselves and the townfolk. The essential link between Athens and these rural settlements was ensured by the road network of the Attic countryside, which to a large degree remained the same as in antiquity and continued to serve the needs of movement of people and goods throughout the Middle Ages.⁵⁹

PERIOD OF FRANKISH RULE (1204-1456)

In the spring of 1204, on the pretext of liberating the Holy Land from the Arabs, the Frankish Crusaders besieged and captured Constantinople. One year later, the fortification wall of Athens proved incapable of stemming the tide of Frankish forces; the attackers took the town without resistance and settled in it. Athens became a duchy under the command of Otto de la Roche. Next came its violent sack by Catalan mercenaries, under whom the west coasts of Attica, along with facilitating trade, were exploited as lairs and safe havens for pirates. Power passed from the hands of the Catalans to the Florentine nobleman Nerio Acciaiuoli, triggering the reinvigoration of mercantile activity in Piraeus, as well as in the neighbouring coastal zone.

During the long period of Frankish rule, which lasted some two hundred and fifty years, Athens suffered destructions and lootings by successive conquerors: French dukes of the houses of De la Roche and Brienne (1204-1311), Catalan mercenaries of the Spanish dukes (1311-1387), Florentine dukes of the Acciaiuoli house (1387-1456), as well as Venetians (1394-1403). Thus, Athens was turned into a Medieval burg, inward-looking and restricted to the territory around its Castro, the Acropolis. There was no sign of life elsewhere in the urban space, while the west coast of Attica continued to be at the mercy of raiding pirates. This turbulent period has left few tangible remains in Attica. The only archaeological finds

⁵⁹ The articulation of the road network of the period, as it had been preserved until recent times, is recorded accurately on nineteenth-century maps of Attic. See Leake, William Martin, *Die Deme von Attika: mit Karten und Plänen*, Westermann, Braunschweig 1840.

from the years of Latin domination from the site of the former aerodrome are a hoard of about 1,000 coins, discovered in the area of Hasani in 1860.⁶⁰

Ottoman times (15th-19th century)

On 4 June 1456, just three years after the Fall of Constantinople to the army of Mohamed II the Conqueror, the sultan placed Athens under Ottoman control. Two years later, the Acropolis became the seat of the Turkish garrison commander, while the vassal Christian subjects lived in the area around its foot. In August 1458, the sultan himself visited Athens and granted the Athenians special fiscal and administrative privileges. From that time the city began to grow, its population increased and mosques were established to serve the religious needs of the new inhabitants. In contrast to the situation in the city, the Attic countryside and its inhabitants were prey to plundering and atrocities, perpetrated not only by the Ottomans but also the Venetians, who intermittently launched attacks on Athens. Some testimonies about the period are preserved in the accounts of foreign travellers, who came to Athens from the seventeenth century onward.⁶¹

The landscape during the Ottoman period was apparently little different from that in earlier times. It continued to host agricultural and stock-raising activities, and small settlements. During these years, several villages of free peasants and serfs (*çifliks*) developed around Athens, as well as in more remote and barren areas, vulnerable to external dangers. One of these *çifliks*, which included part of Alimos and the neighbouring areas, is known to have been in the possession of Breham Emizi, after whom it took its name Brahami (present Agios Dimitrios).

⁶⁰ «Ευρέθησαν εις Χασάνι (αρχαίον δήμον Αλιμούντα) της Αττικής» [‘Found at Hasani (ancient deme of Halimous) in Attica’]. ~ *Newspaper τ. Φ.*, 19 March 1860, iss. 356, p. 1251. (As reported by the Ephor of the Public Library and the Coin Expert in the Ministry of Education) ~ [Of the 1,000 coins found in all, 500 were saved, and of these 37 were donated by P. Zographos to the Numismatic Collection]. See Μαλούχου-Νταϊλιάνα, Γεωργία, *Β’ Εφημερίς των Φιλομαθών* [Georgia Malouchou-Dailana, *II Ephemeris ton Philomathon*], Archive of the Monuments of Athens and of Attica, Athens 1993, p. 86.

⁶¹ Indicatively, Attica was visited by the Turk Evliya Celebi, the Frenchman Jean Giraud, the Britains James Stuart and Nicholas Revett, and others. See Πάλλης, Γεώργιος, *Τοπογραφία του Αθηναϊκού Πεδίου κατά τη Μεταβυζαντινή Περίοδο. Οικισμοί, Οδικό Δίκτυο και Μνημεία* [Georgios Pallis, *Topography of the Athenian Plain during the Post-Byzantine Period. Settlements, Road Network and Monuments*], Centre of Byzantine Studies, Thessaloniki 2009, pp. 18-20.

From at least the end of the eighteenth century, there were two such settlements-*çifliks* in the wider area of the former aerodrome. They comprised a few houses built for the landless peasants and a tower that was the residence of the official granted tenure of the *çiflik*. One village, Trachones, lay to the northwest of the former aerodrome, where the Geroulanos estate is today.⁶²

The area was divided into two large *çifliks*: Kato (Lower) Trachones, in the tenure of the mufti of Athens Hamza, and Ano (Upper) Trachones, in the tenure of Husein or Hasan Aga, known also as Mustafa Bey. The peasant population was mainly of *Arvanites* (people of Albanian descent), as was the case in almost the whole of the Attic countryside, and was involved with ploughing, sowing and reaping the fields, herding sheep and goats, and tree-felling on nearby Hymettos.

Hasani hill

The second village was to the south and called Hasani. Hasani hill stands to the southwest of the 129 Support Wing and a few hundred metres to the south of the cemetery on the site of the Tram Depot.⁶³ The area's history can be traced back to prehistoric times, as sherds of Early Helladic vases have been found, although no specific site has been located, due to continuous habitation, intensive land use and interventions in the natural terrain in antiquity. In the ensuing period, as deduced from the proximity to the cemeteries on the Tram Depot and 'Argyroupoli' Metro station sites, the hill seems to have belonged to the deme of Euonymos. Probably the houses of that period were built on the margins of the hill, from where people could monitor the entire region, as far as Salamis and Aegina. The graves of the dead would have been not far away, in lower-lying areas.

Hasani owes its name to the Ottoman landowner Hasan Bey, who had tenure of a *çiflik* that extended as far as today's Voula. Over time, this area became known as *Hasani Çiflik* and was within the space between Hasani hill and a second hill that no longer exists.

⁶² For Trachones, see Πάλλης, Γ., *op. cit.*, pp. 398-403.

⁶³ Relevant information drawn from Πάλλης, Γ., *op. cit.*, pp. 404-407, Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Ευώνυμον και Αλιμους», *op. cit.*, pp. 129-131 and Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Η Αργυρούπολη στους αρχαίους χρόνους», *op. cit.*, p. 44.

Essentially, it is the area where the aerodrome was subsequently created and in all likelihood reach as far as the Agios Kosmas promontory. Dominating the estate of the Ottoman bey was a two-storey tower, to protect it from piratical raids.⁶⁴

The local economy was most probably based on cultivating cereals and stock-raising, as at nearby Trachones. On the lower north slope of Hasani hill is the single-aisle vaulted-roof church of St Paraskevi. It is dated to late Ottoman times but has been considerably altered due to later interventions. In the precinct of the church is an ancient marble sarcophagus, as well as a replica of an ancient grave stele with crowning.

The estate of about 700 hectares, stretching from the outskirts of today's Argypolis as far as Agios Kosmas, was purchased in 1830 by the Athenian Periklis Zographos (1807-1868). Recorded in the relevant contracts are both his name and that of Hasan Bey (bey Hasani, as he was called by the locals). Over time, the property passed to the Karagiannopoulos family and was finally abandoned in 1924, when the Ministry of Agriculture decided to requisition it for the needs of rehabilitating the refugees of the Greek Catastrophe in Asia Minor.

In 1933 the estate devolved to the Greek State. Today, interventions in the landscape, carried out in the course of the twentieth century, have changed its aspect irrevocably. All that remains of the little village of Hasani is the low hill within the limits of the Hellenic Air Force Base.

⁶⁴ The remains of this tower were visible until the time the aerodrome was constructed in the area, see Μπίρης, Κώστας, *Αι Τοπωνυμίες της Πόλεως και των Περιχώρων των Αθηνών* [Costas Biris, *The Toponyms of the City and the Outskirts of Athens*], Ministry of Culture – Archaeological Receipts Fund, Athens 1971, p. 117.



The church of Saint Paraskevi, which is dated to the latter years of the Ottoman period.

Right: The ancient marble sarcophagus which is preserved in the precinct of the church, 2020.





The Post-Byzantine church of the Saints Kosmas and Damianos, 2020.

The church of the Saints Kosmas and Damianos

An important monument is the Post-Byzantine chapel of Saints Anargyroi Kosmas and Damianos on the homonymous promontory.⁶⁵ It is of the single-aisle vaulted-roof type commonly encountered in rural areas of Attica during the Ottoman period. The traveller E. Dodwell, who visited the area in the early years of the nineteenth century, notes that the church is built on top of ancient ruins, among which he discerned a Doric column capital.⁶⁶ It is possible that the church was built on the site of the ancient temple of Demeter and Kore or the temple of Aphrodite Kollias.⁶⁷ In the course of restoration works carried out by the Archaeological Service, wall-paintings of the seventeenth and the nineteenth century were revealed, as well as a layer of earlier decoration.

By the early twentieth century the little church was in a neglected state. Then, three siblings from Piraeus, who were known as the 'Three Zetas', from the epithet 'Zoe', decided to restore it, covering the costs of this project. They had in mind the Saints Anargyroi or 'Penniless Saints', who cured the sick without payment (that is, without 'silver', Gr. *argyros*) and would be henceforth the patron saints of this little church. This is, more or less, how not only the church but also the whole peninsula got its name, which in time was established simply as 'Agios (= Saint) Kosmas'. This church caught the attention of King George I, when, on an autumn excursion, he visited the area. Captivated by the beauty of the place, he ordered that a road be laid and so, from 1904, access became much easier. As time passed, a building with a general store was built on the promontory, as the area was isolated, as well as lodgings in which people could stay.

⁶⁵ Καζά-Παπαγεωργίου, Κ., «Ευώνυμον και Αλιμούς», *op. cit.*, pp. 147.

⁶⁶ Dodwell, Edward, *A Classical and Topographical Tour through Greece, During the Years 1801, 1805, and 1806*, Rodwell and Martin, London 1819, p. 428.

⁶⁷ There are references by ancient authors to the existence of the temple of Aphrodite Kollias and of the goddess Demeter on the Agios Kosmas headland in historical times. See Pausanias, *op. cit.*, 1.31.1, Strabo, *op. cit.*, Mylonas, George, E., *op. cit.*, 1959, pp. 8-9.





The church of the Saints Kosmas and Damianos, 2020.

The church was restored in 1964 and is a listed historical monument because of the *spolia* built into its fabric, which was common practice. Every year on 14 September, Agios Kosmas celebrates the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and people flock there to pray. On leaving, all hold a sprig of basil, as tradition has it that this plant had sprouted at the point where the Holy Cross was found.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Μίλεσης, Στέφανος, «Οι Πειραιώτες ιδρυτές του Αγίου Κοσμά» [Stephanos Milesis, 'Piraeans the founders of Agios Kosmas'], 23-10-2013, <http://pireorama.blogspot.com/2013/10/blog-post_23.html> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020).

Recent times (19th-20th century)

From the late eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire began to lose its iron grip on power. A few years later, the Greek Revolution broke out in 1821 and with the London Protocol in 1830 the Greek State was acknowledged as sovereign and independent. On 31 March 1833, the last vestiges of the Turkish garrison left the Acropolis. In 1834, Athens, a small war-torn town of 4,000 inhabitants, was declared 'royal seat and capital of the Greek State', which signalled its development at a rapid pace. The Athenians, who had sought refuge on the nearby islands, began to return home.

After the founding of the Greek State, the area on the western lower slopes of Hymettos continued to support a farming economy. Due to the War of Independence, the very few remaining estates were in ruinous state, the land lay fallow, with little water and soils fit only for growing cereal crops and providing pasture for sheep and goats. The new circumstances drove the Ottoman *çiflik*-holders to sell off their fields to Greeks and foreigners at rock-bottom prices over the next few months.⁶⁹ According to the available documents, the estates of Ano and Kato Trachones were purchased by Loukas Pyrros from Salona (= Amphissa) for 19,000 and 7,200 kuruç respectively, while in a very short time they passed to the ownership of Andreas Louriotis (1789-1854), a well-known politician and close collaborator of Alexandros Mavrokordatos. They ended up eventually in the hands of the Geroulanos family, with which the area was identified for almost the entire twentieth century. Many other tracts of land were bought by sailing-ship-owners from the islands, expatriate Greek merchants and foreign princes and landowners.⁷⁰

However, until the end of the nineteenth century the area remained poor, very sparsely populated and somewhat isolated, not least because of the now lamentable condition of the road network and the scourge of brigands. In the early twentieth century there was demographic growth in the area, with Athenians choosing the coastal zone as a summer

⁶⁹ With the London Protocol Ottoman landholders were granted the right to sell their properties within one year.

⁷⁰ Makrygiannis relates in his *Memoirs* that the land was sold off for ten kuruç a hectare, certainly a low price, whereas by 1834 the value of the estates had quadrupled. For more on the passing of the estates into Greek hands, see Δρίκος, Θωμάς, *Οι Πωλήσεις των Οθωμανικών Ιδιοκτησιών της Αττικής, 1830-1831* [Thomas Drikos, *The Sales of Ottoman Properties in Attica, 1830-1831*], Municipality of Glyfada-Trochalia, 1994.

resort. At that time, the Venizelos government went ahead with the expropriation of landholdings, which passed to the Special Settlement Fund of the Ministry of Agriculture, with the intention of giving them to the Brahami Cooperative of Landless Farmers. Wheat, barley and oats were grown in these fields, while there were also olive, pistachio and fig trees, as well as vines.

From antiquity until the early twentieth century, the area stretching from the western foothills of Hymettos as far as the coast of the bay of Sounion followed a course in parallel to the history and fortunes of Athens. This land was inhabited, cultivated, deserted and reinvitalized. The dispersed prehistoric settlements developed into the organized demes of Classical times and the estates of the Middle Ages into the *çifliks* of the Ottoman period, right up to the beginning of urbanization in the twentieth century.

However, the few textual sources and the scattered archaeological finds make the reconstituting of the daily life of the inhabitants and the picture of the lost landscape a difficult endeavour. In several areas it seems that whatever remains had survived were either reused as building material or even moved from their original position, falling into oblivion with the passage of time.

THE AERODROME AT ELLINIKO



August 11

HASLANT BRIDGES - ATHENS



Drawing of the area of Hasani, by the Englishman Harold William Hailstone (1897-1982), official war artist of Great Britain and flight lieutenant in the RAF, 1944.



Greece in the Interwar Years (until the 1930s)

The opening decades of the twentieth century were ones of political foment, with milestone the interwar period, which in Greece commenced with the Asia Minor Catastrophe. The Greek defeat in Asia Minor and the floodtide of refugees that inundated the country put an end to the irredentist vision of the *Megali Idea* (Great Idea) and marked the beginning of the quest for a new national orientation, bringing political, economic and cultural rifts and turning the Greek State's attention to problems on the domestic front. The First World War, which had preceded, and the global financial crisis of 1929 were watershed events that defined internationally the transition from the *laissez-faire* liberalism of the nineteenth century to the state interventionism of the twentieth.

Within an environment of realignments worldwide, principal characteristics of which were nationalist claims, Greece, from the founding of the Greek State until the Asia Minor Catastrophe, entered a period of territorial determination and successive territorial expansions. Although the country's participation in the First World War sparked dissension regarding Greece's foreign policy and its accession to international camps, in the end it strengthened the country's position and widened its territory. Nevertheless, the same period was checkered by continuous changes of regime.

The events of the decade 1910-1920 brought political polarization into Venizelism and Antivenizelism. Catalytic moment that set events in motion was the *coup d'état* of the Military League at Goudi (1909) and the rise of Eleftherios Venizelos with the 'Liberal Party' to political power, while important turning-points of the period are, among others, the National Schism (or Great Division) (1915-1917) and the establishing of the Republic (1924). The Interwar period was scarred by executions of politicians allegedly responsible for the tragic Greek defeat in Asia Minor, with immediate consequence the enfranchisement of the military.

These were to determine developments to a large degree and their fateful role in political affairs was to lead eventually to the dissolution of the democratic institutions, accelerating

Runway in the aerodrome at Elliniko in 1949.

the return of the earlier regime. Kingship was restored with a desire to reinforce monarchist views and the ensuing transition to the dictatorship under Ioannis Metaxas (1936).⁷¹

Despite the political upheavals, the Greek State strove for its reconstruction in the first decades of the twentieth century, with priority the economic reforms that set it on the track towards attaining autarky. The effort for economic reconstruction, which was brought about with the intervention of the League of Nations, bore fruits, which can be synopsized in the founding of the Bank of Greece (1927) and the Agricultural Bank (1929). The governments turned to reforms in the agricultural sector, while there was growth in industry too. Generally speaking, the country's economy was on a steady course, with significant negative fluctuations in the periods of wars and the international recession of 1929 (in the agricultural and industrial sector, exports, inflow of capital, and so on). With regard to infrastructure, there was a lull in the modernizing current of the nineteenth century, excepting some projects, such as the Marathon dam and land reclamation works.⁷²

Elliniko and the refugees (1920s to 1941)

REFUGEE SETTLEMENT ON THE FRINGES OF THE CITY

The Asia Minor Catastrophe was a turning point in modern Greek history, and not only, as it established the compulsory mass movements of populations –through the Treaty of Lausanne–, thus affecting the future drafting of similar policies for dealing with corresponding issues the world over. For the Greek State, confronting its consequences was a challenge of unprecedented proportions, given that the country was in a period of political instability and economic decline, due to the wars that had gone before.

⁷¹ For political developments in the interwar period, see Μαυρογορδάτος, Γιώργος, «Μεταξύ δύο πολέμων: πολιτική ιστορία 1922-1940» [Giorgos Mavrogordatos, 'Between two cities: political history 1922-1940'], in Παναγιωτόπουλος, Βασίλης (επιμ.), *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνισμού (1770-2000), Ο Μεσοπόλεμος 1922-1940. Από την Αβασίλευτη Δημοκρατία στη Δικτατορία της 4ης Αυγούστου* [Vasilis Panagiotopoulos (ed.), *History of Modern Hellenism (1770-2000), The Interwar period 1922-1940. From Republic to the 4 August Dictatorship*], Vol. 7, Ellinika Grammata, Athens 2003, pp. 9-32.

⁷² For the economic fluctuations and infrastructure works, see Σκάγιανης, Παντολέων και Καπαρός, Γεώργιος, «Τα έργα υποδομών στην Ελλάδα και η παρουσία των μεγάλων έργων μεταφορικών υποδομών: Μεταβαλλόμενα υποδείγματα και προτεραιότητες» [Pantoleon Skagiannis and Georgios Kaparos, 'Infrastructure works in Greece and the presence of the major transport projects: Changing models and priorities'], *Aeichoros*, 18, 2013, pp. 20-21.



Aerial photograph of the area of Hasani, 1928.

At least 1.2 million⁷³ refugees were settled in Greece and the area of Elliniko was one of the places where this took place. The task of rehabilitation proved titanic and first consideration was to cover their basic needs, central to which was providing a roof over their head. Initially, the Refugee Care Fund undertook their temporary housing in the cities, a task that later came under the remit of the Refugee Settlement Commission (ΕΑΠ), an autonomous organization that acted under the aegis of the League of Nations (1923-1930).

⁷³ In the 1928 population census, 1,221,849 are recorded, but their actual number was probably much greater. See inter alia Hirschon, Renée, *Κληρονόμοι της Μικρασιατικής Καταστροφής. Η Κοινωνική Ζωή των Μικρασιατών Προσφύγων στον Πειραιά* [*Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe. The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus*], National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, Athens 2006, pp. 94-95.



Makeshift houses built by refugees at Hasani, during the first years of their settlement in the area.

The Refugee Settlement Commission's decision to give priority to rural rehabilitation was a constraint to urban rehabilitation, while the concentration of a large percentage of the refugee population in the cities led to the creation of neighbourhoods on their fringes. The refugees resorted to illegal building and self-housing in order to cover their needs, 'with the tolerance of the State, which gradually legalized "rural land" outside the urban plan, which that had come into the hands of those who were unable to meet the high prices of land rent'.⁷⁴ By 1930, no less than 46 refugee neighbourhoods⁷⁵ had sprung up on the outskirts of Athens and Piraeus, among them the settlement at Elliniko.

These were the circumstances in which dozens of families originating from Asia Minor Pontos settled in the area of Hasani, on greenbelt land that reached as far as the locality 'EDEM' at Palaio Faliro. It is mentioned that in order to house these people a wooden structure with adjacent rooms was put up and that to ensure their employment they were

⁷⁴ See Κοντογιώργη, Έλσα, «Η Αποκατάσταση 1922-1930» [Elsa Kontogiorgi, 'The Rehabilitation 1922-1930'], in Παναγιωτόπουλος, Β. (επιμ.), *op. cit.*, p. 114.

⁷⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 113.



A refugee couple in front of their house at Hasani, in the first years of their settlement.

given parcels of arable land, the size depending on the number of family members. Sona Toulkariidou, a refugee from the heartland of Pontos, says characteristically in her oral testimony to the Centre of Asia Minor Studies: 'Later we came here, to Hasani. They gave us a plot of twenty-two stremmas (0.22 ha). We farmed it, vineyards. Then the war came. During the German Occupation Hasani became a military aerodrome. The Germans forced us out.'⁷⁶

The settlement of the refugees was widened beyond Hasani hill to the area that was named 'Sourmena', which refers to their place of origin and was divided in the communities of Komninoi (1929) and Elliniko (1930), which were recognized legally and acquired administrative status.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Κιτρομηλίδης, Πασχάλης (επιμ.), *Η Εξοδος: Μαρτυρίες από τις Επαρχίες του Μεσόγειου Πόντου* [Paschalis Kitromilides (ed.), *The Exodus. Testimonies from the Districts of Inland Pontos*], Vol. III, Centre for Asia Minor Studies, Athens 2013, p. 611.

⁷⁷ Sourmena belonged to the Community of Kalamaki, from which it was detached and the Communities of Komninoi (Hasani) and Elliniko were established, in accordance respectively with ΦΕΚ 221/6-7-1929, Τεύχος Πρώτον, «Περί αναγνώρισεως κοινοτήτων» [Official Gazette 221/6-7-1929, Fascicle First, 'On recognition of communities'], Ordinance 4-7-1929, p. 1979, and ΦΕΚ 80/14-3-1930, Τεύχος Πρώτον, «Περί αναγνώρισεως κοινότητος Ελληνικού εν τω νομώ Αττικής και Βοιωτίας» [Official Gazette 80/14-3-1930, Fascicle First, 'On recognition of community of

The lack of infrastructure and networks in the settlement, as was the case with refugee settlements in many urban areas, made life difficult, as relevant testimonies show: ‘The squalor, the mud, the stench where there was no water, no plumbing system, made the inhabitants bow their heads (...)’.⁷⁸ ‘When we came it was a mountain, nothing else, and we were living in tents. They sunk a well to supply us with water. Later, we began to build houses by ourselves, with mudbricks that we made with earth and straw in moulds and then left to dry in the sun [...]’.⁷⁹

The refugees were housed in shacks that they built themselves from whatever was at hand, on tracts of land granted to them by the state instead of compensation for the properties they had forcibly abandoned in Asia Minor. The size of the house-plots varied and gradually was probably decreased so as to increase the number of lot-holders. As time passed and the precarious conditions of the shanty housing became apparent, they built houses of durable materials, mainly stone, which was certainly readily available due to the rocky ground of the area. Furthermore, efforts were made to find water in the area and to sink wells that would supply them with water for domestic needs and for their crops, a situation commonly encountered in refugee settlements due to the lack of water-supply networks.

In the meantime, refugees from other regions of Asia Minor had come to settle in the wider area of Elliniko, among them Greeks from Thrace. In contrast to the problematical living conditions in the aforesaid settlements, the area of Kato (Lower) Elliniko, to the southeast of Hasani hill, became home to affluent refugees who originated from Smyrna, Istanbul and so on, as land was granted on condition that the recipient carried out works in the plot (such as clearing it of rocks). The well-kept gardens of the houses in lower Elliniko and the trees that were planted in the plots gave the area the name ‘Kipoupolis’ (=Garden City).

Elliniko in the prefecture of Attica and Boeotia’], Ordinance 8-3-1930, p. 582.

⁷⁸ Reference by Manos Markoglou to his book «Η Μικρά Ασία στο Ελληνικό» [‘Asia Minor at Elliniko’], which is included in Πασβαντίδης, Χάρης, *Ελληνικό, Ψυχή της Πόλης μας είναι οι Μνήμες της* [Charis Pasvantidis, *Elliniko, Soul of our Town is its Memories*], Municipality of Elliniko-Argyroupolis – Patakis Publications, Athens 2018, p. 103.

⁷⁹ Victoria Evfraimidou refers in her interview to the conditions of settling at Sourmena. See Κουφάκης, Νίκος, «Συνέντευξη στον Νίκο Κουφάκη» [Nikos Koufakis, ‘Interview to Nikos Koufakis’], Supplement: Ιστορία του Έθνους [History and Nation] (17), Newspaper *Ethnos*, August 2010.

The Second World War and the installation of the occupation forces at Elliniko brought the obligatory evacuation of the inhabitants, who sought refuge in other areas. They were to return after the war was over. Even so, already from the time of the dictatorship of Ioannis Metaxas, refugees living in Hasani had started to move towards the area of Sourmena, due to the building of the aerodrome. The continuous expropriations of land for its construction defined the movements of the refugees and the settlement pattern of the area.

ELEMENTS OF CONTINUITY: FROM ASIA MINOR TO ELLINIKO

For the refugees memory was a bridge of communication with the past, as they set about rebuilding their life in the new homeland on the basis of their cultural identity and reshaping a place familiar to them, which would enhance the element of continuity with their place of provenance. They gave to the areas in which they lived names of toponyms of Asia Minor, they built churches and schools, they brought traditions and customs, they acted as a group with interests in common, setting up associations and clubs. The area of Elliniko is a topography of refugee society, which is etched in the space and the historical course of this place.

Greek Orthodox Christianity was the foundation stone of the refugees' culture, as religion had been the basis of the social organization of the Ottoman Empire, while their faith had been strengthened even more after their expulsion from their ancestral homeland. On their arrival and settlement in a new place, the founding of the church was a top priority.

The church of Saint Paraskevi, which already existed to the northwest of Hasani, was restored by the refugees with the input of the entire community. Inside the church they placed icons that had been rescued from their homeland, since the religious treasures (*keimelia*) were their most precious asset. Alongside its function as the locus for observing their religious duties, the church was used also as a school, while a new school building was being constructed, which began operating in the 1930s. At about the same period, the stone-built school of Sourmena was constructed in the settlement's square. Likewise, the residents of Kato Elliniko founded the church of the Holy Trinity (Hagia Triada) and the residents of

Sourmena the church of the Transfiguration of the Saviour (Metamorphoses tou Soterou).⁸⁰ Among the schools that were built was the American Girls' College, which had been founded in Smyrna and was rehoused at Elliniko (1932-1965), in new premises inaugurated in the area.⁸¹

Tradition and memory were intertwined, they were expressed through faith and religious customs and were bequeathed to the ensuing generations with the revival of the centuries-old funerary habit of the Pontic Greeks in Sourmena, which is respected to this day. Annually, on the first Sunday after Easter, the feast of Saint Thomas, Mass is celebrated in the church of the Transfiguration, which is followed by a processional litany to the Cemetery of Sourmena, in commemoration of the 'dead Pontians all over the world'. The custom concludes with a fair, just as it was organized by the refugees who settled in the area a century ago. 'At the feast of Saint Thomas the Pontians, after visiting the cemeteries, danced incessantly until nightfall, kicking up clouds of dust in the then unformed square.'⁸²

The diversity of the population and the cultural stimuli characteristic of the refugees' places of origin gave them a cosmopolitan air, which was reflected in their way of life in Greece. A case in point is the creation of the 'Ellinkon' cinema in the rural settlement of Komninoi, on the initiative of the president of the community Giannis Charalampidis, who had installed his bakery inside the 'Ellinikon'. According to references to the movie theatre, it closed down in 1941, when it was blown up in order to make room for a runway. Three years earlier, a new era had already begun, signalled by the start of building the aerodrome, which set its seal on the area.

⁸⁰ For the schools and the churches, see Πασβαντίδης, Χ., *op. cit.*, pp. 104-106, 130, 143-144 & 161.

⁸¹ For the history of the American College in detail, see The American College of Greece, «Ιδρυση και Εξέλιξη» ['Founding and Development'], n.d., <<https://www.pierce.gr/pierce-development/>> (Retrieved: 19-11-2020).

⁸² Reference by Sophia Tokmakidou-Anastasopoulou, which is included in Πασβαντίδης, Χ. *op. cit.*, p. 200. For the custom of the fair at Sourmena, see also *op. cit.*, p. 198. For the funerary custom, see Ένωση Ποντίων Σουρμένων, «Ταφικό Έθιμο, την Κυριακή του Θωμά στα Σούρμενα» [Union of Pontians of Sourmena, 'Funerary Custom, on the Sunday of Thomas, in Sourmena'], n.d., <<http://www.sourmena.gr/tafikoethimo/>> (Retrieved: 18-11-2020).

The birth of an aerodrome (late 1930s)

Events in the interwar period prepared the way for the dictatorial regime imposed on 4 August 1936 by King George II and Ioannis Metaxas, who was prime minister from April that year and was subsequently declared 'national governor'. The 4 August Regime, as it was named, was not as totalitarian as other fascist regimes of the period, but rather '*ad personam*', as it was built around the personality of Metaxas, but harnessed to the king and his powerful role.

The aerodrome at Elliniko was born in the time of the Metaxas regime, in the framework of an effort to develop the domestic war industry, equipment and infrastructure projects. During the dictatorship, Metaxas concentrated on the military defences of the country, in preparation for the possibility of hostilities. He carried out fortification works and ensured the supply of armaments, placing emphasis on the war industry, while at the same time showing interest in the sectors of social welfare and health. Metaxas's foreign policy was not expansionist in design but rather one of moderation, of maintaining peaceful relations with neighbouring countries, in the hope of avoiding Greece's embroilment in a new war. However, the organization of the defence of the state was dictated by the fear of Bulgarian claims initially, and of Italian expansionism subsequently.

Over the years 1936 to 1939, the average annual military budget was 4.4 billion drachmas, with the sum spent on the Hellenic Air Force estimated at 1.25 billion drachmas. Between 1936 and 1940, 360 million drachmas were spent on putting in place various facilities for the Air Force.⁸³ It is possible that the creation of the aerodrome at Elliniko was included in these expenditures.

Adopting a centralizing tactic, Metaxas himself oversaw the ministries of the Army and the Navy, and the Ministry of Aviation, the foundations of which had been laid by Eleftherios Venizelos in 1929.

⁸³ Πλουμίδης, Σπυρίδων Γ., «Το καθεστώς Ιωάννη Μεταξά (1936-1940)» [Spyridon Ploumidis, 'The regime of Ioannis Metaxas (1936-1940)'], n.d., <<https://eclass.uoa.gr/modules/document/file.php/ARCH252/Metaxas.pdf>> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020), p. 37 and Ανώνυμος, «Τι έκαμεν η κυβέρνησις της 4ης Αυγούστου υπό τον Ι. Μεταξάν διά την αεροπορίαν μας» ['What the government of 4 August under I. Metaxas did for our Air Force'], Newspaper *Eleftheron Vima*, 17-07-1940, p. 1.



The officer in the Greek Army, K. Vassos (third from the left) in the aerodrome at Faliro, 1920.
Visible is the hangar for the aeroplanes.

The difficulties of financing the Hellenic Air Force, which had appeared in the previous period, were overcome in the Metaxas years, when its budget rocketed. New aerodromes were built (Elliniko, Heraklion, Mikra, Corfu), the Air Force was supplied with modern aircraft, while the number of meteorological stations and wirelasses was increased so that it was possible to make night flights.

The idea that Elliniko was an area suitable for utilization by the Hellenic Air Force seems to have been mooted in the mid-1930s. Bearing in mind that the development of seaside aerodromes was less complicated in comparison to inland ones, the installation of a water aerodrome was attempted at Elliniko, a venture that came to nothing due to technical obstacles. In the end, the approved sum for completing the project was invested in carrying out other works at Faliro. Moreover, at the same period it is mentioned that there were radio direction finders (radiogoniometers) at Hasani.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Παπανδρώνου, Γεώργιος, «Η γέννηση και η ανάπτυξη της πολιτικής αεροπορίας στην Ελλάδα του Μεσοπολέμου» [Georgios Papandronou, 'The birth and development of civil aviation in Greece in the Interwar years'], Doctoral



The Mayor of Athens Costas Kotzias (standing, with hat) in the aerodrome at Faliro, before his departure to Italy, 8 November 1934.

Given that the aerodrome at Tatoi did not meet the safety specifications, due to limited visibility in winter causing frequent accidents or cancellation of flights, the need to create a new aerodrome in Athens became imperative. Discussions as to the suitability of the site of a new aerodrome that would serve Athens and Piraeus and support two functions, civil and military, which was probably the initial idea, had begun before the Metaxas regime. Proposed sites were the areas of Vourlopotamo (Palaio Faliro), Pyritidopoieio, Kokkinia, Agios Kosmas at Hasani (Elliniko), Elefsis and Faliro.⁸⁵

Preference was given to areas near the sea, with Faliro prevailing. Faliro was considered to be in a favourable location for serving Athens and Piraeus, it was accessible via transport networks and, in addition, it hosted the State Aircraft Factory. One other factor in Faliro's favour was the possible financial contribution of the neighbouring

dissertation, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2005, pp. 71 & 98.

⁸⁵ The area 'Pyritidopoieio' (= Gunpowder Factory) perhaps refers to Aigaleo where there was an industrial unit producing ammunition. See, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

municipalities to the construction of the aerodrome. In the end, the final decision to create an aerodrome at Hasani was taken in August 1936, following an announcement of the Deputy Ministry of Aviation, Michail Passaris. For its construction the Ministry of Finance disbursed 18 million drachmas, for the compulsory purchase of 215 hectares. The inhabitants of the refugee community of Komnenoi, which had been founded at Hasani after the arrival of the Asia Minor refugees, were forced to move out of the area, with monetary compensation. The opening ceremony of the aerodrome was celebrated on 2 June 1938.⁸⁶

The typology of the new aerodrome cannot be determined exactly, because the research data are incomplete and contradictory. Although on the basis of the *Official Gazette* for setting up the aerodrome in 1937 there is a clear reference ‘to the compulsory expropriation of approximately 215 hectares for the founding of a Civil Aerodrome of Athens’, it is described as a military aerodrome in other sources, which could be considered reasonable in the light of Metaxas’s policy.⁸⁷ It is probable that it was intended to combine both functions, in accordance with the initial planning, or that it was turned into a military airport later, due to circumstances. Be that as it may, no secure conclusions can be drawn.

The aerodrome was laid out on a flat area delimited by the municipalities of Alimos and Glyfada, the foothills of Hymettos and the coast of Agios Kosmas. It had a runway just a few hundred metres long, together with which two small buildings were constructed.⁸⁸ The rudimentary runway and the aerodrome facilities were used as training grounds for pilots of aircraft of the school of the aviation company ‘Technical and Aeronautical Holdings’ (TAE), which seems to have operated also passenger flights, providing emergency domestic transport services (airtaxi).

⁸⁶ Op. cit., pp. 76-77.

⁸⁷ ΦΕΚ 360/15-9-1937, Τεύχος Πρώτον, «Περί αναγκαστικής απαλλοτριώσεως 2.150 στρεμ. περίπου δια την ίδρυσιν Πολιτικού Αεροδρομίου Αθηνών» [Official Gazette 360/15-9-1937, Fascicle First, ‘On compulsory expropriation of approximately 215 ha. for the founding of a Civil Aerodrome of Athens’], Ordinance 07-09-1937, p. 2342.

⁸⁸ Βασάκης, Αντώνης, *Η Ιστορία των Δημόσιων Αερομεταφορών στην Ελλάδα* [Antonis Vasakis, *The History of Civil Air Transport in Greece*], without publisher and place of publication, 2020, p. 125, <<https://www.openbook.gr/i-istoria-ton-dimosion-aerometaforon-stin-ellada/>> (Retrieved: 18-11-2020).



Building of the Technical and Aeronautical Holdings (TAE) company in 1947. TAE was one of the first aviation companies in Greece, active for about 20 years, from 1935 until 1954.

The first training period began in 1940, with the participation of about 12 trainees, divided into male and female sections. Particularly interesting is the information that among the female trainees was Ioannis Metaxas's daughter, Loukia.⁸⁹

In October 1940 flights stopped. War broke out before the aerodrome at Elliniko was finished. However, the Second World War did not cut short its course towards completion but instead added one more chapter to its history.

⁸⁹ Op. cit., p. 111 and Παπανδρόνυ, Γ., op. cit., pp. 334-336.

The beginnings of aviation (until the mid-20th century)

Man's desire to fly is apparent already from antiquity, with the myth of Daidalos and Ikaros, and continued down the ages, from the first studies by Leonardo da Vinci for a flying machine to the invention of the motor-powered airplane by the Wright brothers and the design of the first aeroplane in its modern form by Louis Blériot in the early twentieth century. The First World War impelled man to claim supremacy in the skies, resulting in remarkable technological advances in the sectors of aviation and aeronautical engineering.⁹⁰

At about the same period, shortly before the outbreak of the Great War, Greece got to know this new technological achievement through aerobatic displays in the city of Athens, while the first wings were to fly successfully across the Attic sky in 1911.⁹¹ At the beginning of the development of air transport in Greece, regular civil flights were carried out by the postal service, such as airfreight to European countries, in postal aircraft which although not intended for passenger use nonetheless permitted the transport of a few passengers, depending on the availability of places. Concurrently, the hydroplane was used as preferred means of air communication, serving transport needs until the formation of suitable infrastructure for the movement of aeroplanes. The First World War was to cut short the development of the sector of air transport and aircraft were to be used exclusively for military purposes.

The Greek civil aviation corps took shape in the 1920s, with the input of Eleftherios Venizelos being decisive for instituting the administrative and legislative framework. Realizing the importance of both military and civil aviation, Venizelos proceeded with setting up of the responsible ministry and himself became minister, conceding the supervision to Alexandros Zannos, reserve officer aviator. In fact, much earlier he had taken measures to establish the State Aircraft Factory (KEA), which began operating in 1925, while he had ratified also Greece's participation in the International Convention for regulating air traffic,

⁹⁰ Further information on the development of aviation in the First World War in Βασάκης, Αντώνης, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71.

⁹¹ The first successful flight in Athens is recorded on 25 March 1911 with aviator the Russian Sergey Utotckeen, who flew with a Farman type aeroplane from a square in Neo Faliro. For the first flights in Greece, see Βασάκης, Αντ., *op. cit.*, pp. 37-45.

which had been signed in Paris in 1919. Greece was one of the first countries in the world to acquire an autonomous aviation authority.⁹²

After the founding of the Ministry of Aviation, procedures for organizing the Civil Aviation Authority were set in motion. In the relevant provisions the aerodrome was defined. According to its characteristics, it was distinguished as a state airport, which had the necessary installations for the air traffic as well as administrative personnel, or an auxiliary airfield, which was considered to be an area of land or sea suitable for emergency use. Specifically, defined as an aerodrome was 'every land or water surface used for the landing, take off and parking of aircraft'. Moreover, already from the first flights in Greece the aviators of the period selected for landing and takeoff of the aeroplane any flat space, on land or water. Next, passenger traffic was served either by the military aerodromes, which were the first land aerodromes in Greece, or by the water airports, which did not require special works for laying out the space, as the cost of compulsory purchase and the creation of other facilities was prohibitive for the founding of new land aerodromes.⁹³

In Greece and in Attica in particular, there were numerous natural and manmade harbours that were used as water airports. The aviators who made some of the first flights in Greece frequently chose the area of Palaio Faliro. Specifically, in the early twentieth century, in the area to the north of the Faliro Delta there was a zoo with artificial lakes and a lovely garden in the grounds. Later, in 1914, the aviation school of Elefsis was moved there and in 1925 the area was expropriated in order to found the State Aircraft Factory.⁹⁴

As time passed, the use of aeroplanes prevailed over that of hydroplanes and, as has been said already, in the late 1930s the Greek State went ahead with expropriations in order to found the first civil airports (Heraklion, Elliniko, and so on).

⁹² For further information on establishing regular commercial flights in Greece, see *op. cit.*, pp. 87-97.

⁹³ Παπανδρόνυ, Γ., *op. cit.*, pp. 39 & 69.

⁹⁴ The State Aircraft Factory (KEA) was founded on the initiative of Eleftherios Venizelos, in collaboration with the British company Blackburn.

Essential for setting up land aerodromes was the expropriation of large areas which had to meet certain requirements for their new use. Specifically, a land aerodrome had to have a large area of stable, level and well-drained ground without natural obstacles around it, good weather conditions, easy accessibility by public transport services and essential utilities of water supply, lighting and telephone. These preconditions applied to the state aerodrome, while the auxiliary airfields demanded simpler installations and could be cultivated or used as pasturage after granting of the relevant permit.⁹⁵

The oldest land aerodrome in continuous use in Greece is that at Tatoi. Officially, procedures to create an aerodrome at Tatoi commenced in 1925 with the decision to expropriate 92.50 hectares.⁹⁶ In 1931, the Hellenic Air Force School was established there, while in parallel it functioned as the basic civil aerodrome of Attica until the creation of the one at Elliniko. During the Second World War, the aerodrome was bombed by the Italian and the German Air Force (Luftwaffe), and from 1941 it was under German occupation. After the end of the war, in 1946, the unit of the Technical Training Centres of the Hellenic Air Force (TEKA) was founded there, which continues to operate to this day as the '123 Technical Training Group (123 ΣΤΕ)'.

The first exclusively civil aerodrome was created at Heraklion in Crete, in the area of Rousses, where the present 'Nikos Kazantzakis' Airport is located today. Even though the expropriation of the specific area was decided on in 1935, the aerodrome began operating in mid-1938.⁹⁷ Initially, the personnel and the passengers were housed in three tents. In 1941, Crete was occupied by the Germans and the aerodrome at Heraklion was used by the German Luftwaffe. In 1946, it returned to normal use, while works began on expanding and modernizing the facilities. In 1947 premises to house the administrative offices of the airline companies and a small passenger terminal were built.

⁹⁵ Παπανδρώνου, Γ., *op. cit.*, p. 69.

⁹⁶ There is reference to the use of the space as an aerodrome by aviation schools for the basic training of handlers, from as early as 1918. Further information on the history of the aerodrome at Tatoi in Βογιατζής, Δημήτρης, «Συνοπτική ιστορία του Αεροδρομίου του Τατοΐου», *5η Συνεδρίαση του 10ου Συμποσίου της Ιστορικής και Λαογραφικής Εταιρείας Αχαρνών* [Dimitris Vogiatzis, 'Brief history of the Aerodrome at Tatoi', *5th Session of the 10th Conference of the Historical and Folklore Society of Acharnes*], 01-11-2011, <<https://eleftherovima.wordpress.com/2011/11/01/>> (Retrieved: 19-11-2020).

⁹⁷ Βασάκης, Αντ. *op. cit.*, p. 97.

The first civil aviation companies in Greece (early 20th century to 1956)

The first commercial flights in Europe commenced in 1910, in France, operated by the Compagnie Générale Transaérienne with the route Nice-Cannes. However, these were not scheduled flights, as the aeroplanes of the period carried no more than two passengers or were used to transport mail, as noted above. Correspondingly, in Greece in 1918 the Air Postal Service was set up to link the cities of Athens, Thessaloniki, Alexandroupolis and Constantinople/Istanbul. With the end of the First World War, the first regular flights were made, with the possibility of carrying more passengers, by British, French and German companies, the most important route being that connecting London and Paris.⁹⁸

The activity of foreign aviation companies in Greece began in 1925, with the conclusion of the agreement of the Greek State, via the Air Communications Bureau, with the Italian company Anonima Aero Espresso Italiana and the French Messageries Transariennes, for the transport of mail, cargo and passengers. The initial route of Aero Espresso was Brindisi – Athens – Istanbul, which was then extended to Lesbos, Patras, Syros and Rhodes. The first water aerodrome –and later aerodrome– of Aero Espresso was at the Faliro Delta, while there was also an alternative at Porto Rafti. Aero Espresso was the first airline company to be given a licence by the Greek Government to issue a postage stamp.⁹⁹ It ceased operating in 1936 and merged with other Italian companies to create Ala Littoria, which kept the Aero Espresso routes and signed a new contract with the Greek Government in 1936. In 1938 the Athens – Rome route became three times a week and aircraft of Ala Littoria were served by the aerodrome at Tatoi instead of that at Faliro.

⁹⁸ For further information on the first commercial flights in Europe, see *op. cit.*, pp. 69-71.

⁹⁹ Provision for the issue of a postage stamp was made in article 12 of the 1925 contract. Aviation charges were collected from these postage stamps. The first Greek company to issue a postage stamp was EEEΣ in 1933. Further information in Παπανδρόνυ, Γ., *op. cit.*, pp. 109-117. For Aero Espresso Ala Littoria, see *op. cit.*, pp. 248-254 & 255-258.

In parallel, the company's routes had been extended as far as Palestine, using Rhodes airport as stopover. Ala Littoria flights to Greece were stopped in 1940, with the outbreak of the Greek-Italian war.¹⁰⁰

Under the terms of the 1925 contract, the French Messageries Transariennes was to undertake the Marseille – Athens – Syria route, with extensions to other regions of Asia. The Greek Government made over land on Corfu and at Elefsis for the creation of airports, but this line was never inaugurated by the said company. In 1927 it transferred its rights to the Air Union Lignes d' Orient, later Air Orient, without asking permission from the Greek Government but merely informing it in December 1928. The new company observed fully the terms of the 1925 contract and undertook the organization of the Marseille – Naples – Corfu – Piraeus – Beirut line, as well as the building of the necessary infrastructures on Corfu and at Elefsis. In 1931, a new contract was signed between Air Orient and the Greek State, in which the former was officially acknowledged as successor of Messageries Transariennes. It was decided, inter alia, to move its facilities from Elefsis to Megalo Pefko and to carry most of the passengers and cargoes from the Faliro aerodrome. The company's routes were quickly extended towards Indochina, reaching as far as Saigon. One other French company operating routes in Greece in the same period was the Compagnie Internationale de Navigation Aérienne (CIDNA), which from 1931 linked Paris with Thessaloniki. In 1933, Air Orient, CIDNA and some other French companies merged to form Air France, which henceforth operated on their routes.¹⁰¹

Apart from the Italian and French companies, which were the first to appear on the aviation map of Greece, by the early 1930s many others, from different countries, were operating.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ The morning of 28 October, the company's offices at 2 Stadiou Street, were wrecked by protesters. See Αλμπάνης, Γιάννης, «28η Οκτωβρίου 1940: "Είχα πάρα πολλά χρόνια να δω τέτοιο ενθουσιασμό στην Αθήνα"» [Giannis Albanis, '28 October 1940: "I hadn't seen such enthusiasm in Athens for years"'], 28-10-2019, CNN Greece, <<https://www.cnn.gr/focus/story/195376/28i-oktovrioy-1940-eixa-para-polla-xronia-na-do-tetoio-enthoyiasmotin-athina>> (Retrieved: 18-11-2020).

¹⁰¹ Further information on the French companies in Παπανδρόνυ, Γ., op. cit., pp. 259-268.

¹⁰² For routes of the foreign aviation companies in Greece see *Αεροπορικός Οδηγός [Aviation Guide]*, Ministry of Aviation – Directorate of Civil Aviation – Pyrsos, Athens 1931, Section I, pp. 71-82 and Παπανδρόνυ, Γ., op. cit., pp. 268-293.

In 1930 the Yugoslavian company Aeroput linked Thessaloniki with Vienna, with stopovers in Skopje, Belgrade, Zagreb and Gratz. In 1931 the Dutch airline KLM included Athens on the route between Amsterdam and Batavia (Indonesia), and in 1938 it signed a contract with the Greek government, in which, inter alia, it agreed not to operate flights between Greece and Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Italy and Egypt, when these were served by Greek companies. The British firm Imperial Airways signed a contract with the Greek government in 1931 for the air routes London – Greece – India and London – Greece – South Africa, and was conceded the right to use for landing airfields in Athens, Thessaloniki, Corfu, Crete, Patras and other regions.

Despite the troubled relationship between the British company and the Greek government, the contract was renewed in 1939, placing restrictions on Imperial Airways, which could now only pass through Greece for the routes from Great Britain, Yugoslavia, Italy, Malta and Bulgaria, with compulsory touch-down in Athens. Together with Imperial Airways, in 1931 the Polish airline LOT also signed a contract for the route Thessaloniki – Sofia – Bucharest – Lviv. The contract was renewed in 1936 and the LOT route was extended towards Palestine, with stopover on Rhodes.

In 1932 the German airline Lufthansa began activity in Greece¹⁰³ with the Berlin – Thessaloniki route but with its sights set on access to an aerodrome of Athens and then the development of lines to the East.

Following negotiations between the German company and the Greek government, a new contract was signed in 1937, in which the Berlin – Thessaloniki and Germany – Far East routes were defined, but also the possibility of forming a consortium with the Hellenic Air Transport Company (ΕΕΕΣ, see below) in the event of the latter's routes being extended to Yugoslavia and Egypt.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ For Lufthansa see op. cit., pp. 293-302.

¹⁰⁴ In the framework of the collaboration between the two companies, an agency of Lufthansa was placed in the aerodrome at Tatoi, while German engineers undertook the training of Greek pilots in handling blind flights and landings. It is noteworthy that the first night flights between Athens and Thessaloniki were made by Lufthansa. See op. cit., pp. 298-299.

Lufthansa flights to Greece stopped in September 1939, with the outbreak of the Second World War; but they were resumed the following month with final destination Thessaloniki. During the war, Lufthansa was the only company operating civil flights, of which the most basic was the route Berlin – Prague – Vienna – Budapest – Belgrade – Sofia – Thessaloniki – Athens. Other foreign companies that were active in Greece in the late 1930s, but less prominent, were the Austrian ÖLAG and the Romanian LARES.

The first attempt to set up a Greek aviation company was made in the 1920s by businessman Nikolaos Kampanis, who founded the general partnership company Ikaros.¹⁰⁵ The contract with the Greek government was signed in 1925 and made provision for the exclusive transport of mail, the exclusive exploitation of the domestic lines Athens – Thessaloniki and Athens – Crete, as well as the concession of areas of land by the state in exchange for the payment of 25,000,000 drachmas. In looking for collaborators, in order to gather the capital to buy the aircraft and to start operating the company, Kampanis made contact, among others, with British and Italian companies, such as Blackburn and Aero Espresso. The negotiations lasted years, until in 1930 the Deputy Minister of Aviation, Alexandros Zannas, decided that the company should be national in character and not subject to foreign influence. In the end Ikaros never actually operated flights. Nevertheless, it was the basis for the formation of the Hellenic Air Transport Company (ΕΕΕΣ).

The Hellenic Air Transport Company, the first state-controlled aviation company, including Ikaros, was founded in December 1930, with the aerodrome at Tatoi as base.¹⁰⁶ In the founding agreement provision was made for exclusive exploitation of the routes between Athens, Thessaloniki, Ioannina and Crete, as well as the transport of Greek mail. As far as use of the aerodromes was concerned, it was decided that ΕΕΕΣ should have joint use of the existing aerodromes (Tatoi, Larisa and Thessaloniki), with the payment of the stipulated charges, rather than the concession of them, as was stated in the 1925 contract with Ikaros.

¹⁰⁵ For the Ikaros company, see *op. cit.*, pp. 123-133.

¹⁰⁶ Shareholder in ΕΕΕΣ were the National Bank of Greece, with the majority of shares, the Post Office Savings Bank, Thessaly Railways, the 'Prometheus' company and the 'Ikaros' company. Ioannis Drosopoulos was appointed Chairman of the Board and Nikolas Kampanis as director general. In 1936 the majority shareholding passed to the Army Share Fund. For the ΕΕΕΣ company, see Βασάκης, Αντ., *op. cit.*, pp. 97-110 and Παπανδρόνυ, Γ., *op. cit.*, pp. 134-242.

The first aircraft were purchased in 1931, from the German company Junkers,¹⁰⁷ and test flights were made by German pilots, who stayed in Greece for some time in order to train the Greek handlers. On 10 July the Athens – Thessaloniki route was launched, with the aircraft ‘Athenai’ and Eleftherios Venizelos as passenger on this maiden flight. To facilitate the access of passengers to the aerodromes, the company ran buses that picked up passengers from central points in each city. Over the next few years, the fleet of ΕΕΕΣ grew, while its routes were extended to more Greek cities. With the outbreak of the Second World War its operation stopped and its personnel joined the Hellenic Air Force, in accordance with the terms of the original contract of 1930. The liberation of Greece in 1944 found the ΕΕΕΣ in total administrative and financial collapse. It failed to recover and in 1947 ceased to exist.

In 1935 the general partnership company Technical and Aeronautical Exploitations (TAE) was founded by Stephanos Zotos, a retired Air Force captain (flight lieutenant).¹⁰⁸ As at this time ΕΕΕΣ had the exclusive privilege of operating regular routes in Greece, TAE functioned until the war as a school for training handlers.

Initially it made flights from the aerodrome at Tatoi, whereas from 1938 it also used the aerodrome at Elliniko (then Hasani). Its fleet was incorporated in the Hellenic Air Force for the needs of the war and was destroyed in Albania. However, in 1946 it was refounded with the aim of operating regular routes, in the absence of ΕΕΕΣ, and announced its flights to Thessaloniki, Chania and Heraklion.¹⁰⁹ TAE’s flights were made from the aerodrome at Elliniko, where a hangar was installed for the maintenance and repair of the aircraft, and a tent as passenger terminal.¹¹⁰

The following year, the Rhodes route was added and three new aircraft were purchased, which were named ‘Macedonia’, ‘Epirus’ and ‘Thrace’ in a ceremony at Elliniko.¹¹¹ In the first year of its operation, TAE had made 23 unscheduled flights to Rome, Paris, Cairo and Istanbul.

¹⁰⁷ In 1931 four Junkers aircraft were purchased, which were named ‘Athens’, ‘Thessaloniki’, ‘Ioannina’ and ‘Patras’. See Βασάκης, Αντ. *op. cit.*, pp. 104-106.

¹⁰⁸ For TAE, see Βασάκης, Αντ., *op. cit.*, pp. 110-111, 127-132 and Παπανδρόνους, Γ., *op. cit.*, pp. 334-338.

¹⁰⁹ Ανώνυμος, «Ελληνικά Αεροπορικά Γραμμά ΤΑΕ. Έναρξις δρομολογίων» [‘Greek Airlines TAE. Start of routes’], Newspaper *Eleftheria*, 01-09-1946, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Βασάκης, Αντ., *op. cit.*, p. 128 and Νταλούμης, Ηλίας, «65 χρόνια από το πρώτο αεροπορικό δρομολόγιο. Τα πρώτα βήματα της πολιτικής αεροπορίας στην Ελλάδα» [Ilias Daloumis, ‘65 years since the first air route. The first steps of civil aviation in Greece’], *Πτήση και Διάστημα*, 138, 1996.

¹¹¹ Ανώνυμος, «Ελληνικά Αεροπορικά Γραμμά ΤΑΕ. 3 Σεπτεμβρίου 1946 - 3 Σεπτεμβρίου 1947» [‘Greek Airlines TAE. 3 September 1946 - 3 September 1947’], Newspaper *Eleftheria*, 03-09-1947, p. 3.

The foreign routes were included in TAE's schedule in 1948, with the Athens – Alexandria flight. The company continued its upward course until 1951, although not without blots on its copybook, namely the hijacking in 1948¹¹² and the crash in 1949 with 22 dead.¹¹³

In May 1947 the state aviation company Hellenic Airlines (ΕΛΛΑΣ) was founded,¹¹⁴ with capital from the Share Funds of the Air Force, Army, Navy and Civil Servants.

In 1948 the partnership was finalized with the British company Scottish Aviation, which was to own 40% of the shares and to undertake the technical support, the organization of the new company, the training of the Greek handlers, as well as the sale of the aircraft. ΕΛΛΑΣ began operating in February 1948, with the Athens – London route, with stopover at Prestwick in Scotland, which was the base of Scottish Aviation. It was inaugurated in March, at the aerodrome at Elliniko, in the presence of King Paul and Queen Frederica. In addition to London, ΕΛΛΑΣ's schedule included the routes to Thessaloniki, Heraklion and Rhodes. Alongside the founding of ΕΛΛΑΣ, two other small companies appeared, Air Transport of Greece (AME) and Daidalos. AME was founded in 1947 with private capital and in 1949 began its routes to Kastoria, Corfu and Kalamata. Daidalos was founded in the same year and operated cargo flights. In 1950 the Civil Aviation Authority took away its licence, as it had only one aircraft and did not meet the requirements for the creation of a fleet.

The coexistence of so many companies led to the ministries of Economy, Finance and Aviation setting up a committee to investigate their financial status and ways of improving it. The committee decided that there was room for only one aviation company and proposed either the merger of all or the apportioning of the routes.¹¹⁵

¹¹² This was the first hijacking of an aircraft belonging to a Greek company. On the flight from Athens to Thessaloniki, of Sunday 12 September 1948, six young members of ΕΠΙΟΝ (United Panhellenic Youth Organization) Thessaloniki hijacked the aircraft and forced it to land in Skopje. See Ανώνυμος, «Αεροπλάνον ωδηγήθη βιαίως εις την Σερβίαν» [‘Aeroplane led violently to Serbia’] and «Πώς εξηνάγκασαν οι πειραταί το πλήρωμα του αεροπλάνου να τους μεταφέρει εις Σερβίαν» [‘How the hijackers forced the crew of the aeroplane to take them to Serbia’], Newspaper *Eleftheria*, pp. 1 & 5 and Βασάκης, Αντ., *op. cit.*, pp. 146-151.

¹¹³ This disaster is the first recorded on a scheduled flight in Greece. On Monday 6 June 1949 the flight from Kavala to Athens hit a local storm, forcing the aircraft to change course. The bad weather conditions led to the crash of the aircraft at Malakasa, with the loss of 22 persons, passengers and crew. See *op. cit.*, pp. 153-155.

¹¹⁴ For the ΕΛΛΑΣ company, see *op. cit.*, pp. 140-146.

¹¹⁵ Ανώνυμος, «Αεροπορικά συγκοινωνία της Ελλάδος» [‘Air communications in Greece’], Newspaper *Eleftheria*, 11-10-1949, p. 4.



Pavilion of the TAE company, June 1948.

In 1950 the Ministry of Aviation went ahead with allocating the routes, but the companies were dissatisfied. In 1951 it announced the merger of the companies TAE, ΕΛΛΑΣ and AME and the founding of a Greek National Aeronautical Company.¹¹⁶ The new company was named TAE Greek National Airlines and Stephanos Zotos was appointed managing director.

¹¹⁶ ΦΕΚ Α183, 23-06-1951, τεύχος πρώτον, «Α.Ν. 1856. Περί συστάσεως Ελληνικής Εθνικής Αεροπορικής Ανωνύμου Εταιρείας» [Official Gazette Α183, 23-06-1951, Fascicle First, 'Ε.Λ. 1856. On instituting Greek National Aviation S.A.'].



The Vassilis Logothetidis theatre company returns from Egypt on a TAE aeroplane. First from left Katie Lampropoulou, fourth from left Vangelis Protopappas, Ilia Libykou, seventh from left Thanassis Tzeneralis, Vassilis Logothetidis, Margarita Lamprinou and Smaro Stephanidou, *ca* 1950.

In the following years the company went downhill, burdened by financial problems and with its administration frequently at loggerheads with the government.¹¹⁷ In 1954 the Greek government decided on compulsory liquidation of the company and appointed a committee for its auction and sale. Under the terms of the relevant bill, only Greek citizens or Greek companies could bid in the auction and should there be no highest bidder the company would be bought by the State. The tender was published on 2 July 1955.

¹¹⁷ For the company TAE Greek National Airlines see Βασάκης, Αστ., *op. cit.*, pp. 161-169 and Νταλούμης, Ηλ., *op. cit.*

Frontrunners in the next phase were the shipping magnates Aristotle Onassis, Stavros Niarchos and Basil Goulandris,¹¹⁸ with Onassis as the final highest bidder.

The agreement was signed on 31 July 1956 and entailed, inter alia, buying all the stock and the premises of TAE Greek National Airlines, keeping its personnel, buying modern aircraft, developing routes to central and western Europe, the Middle East, South Africa and America, and building a central complex at his own expenses in the aerodrome at Elliniko.¹¹⁹ This contract constituted the foundation stone of Olympic Airways, which was owned by Onassis until 1974.

¹¹⁸ Ανώνυμος, «Καταρτίζεται σύμβασις διά την παραχώρησιν της εκμεταλλεύσεως αεροπορικών γραμμών» [‘Agreement is drawn up for conceding the exploitation of air routes’], Newspaper *Eleftheria*, 29-03-1956, p. 6.

¹¹⁹ ΦΕΚ Α222, 06-10—1956, τεύχος πρώτον, «Ν.Δ. 3560. Περί τροποποιήσεως και συμπληρώσεως του Α.Ν. 1856/1951 και του Ν.Δ. 3006/1954, ως και περί κυρώσεως της από 30 Ιουλίου 1956 συμβάσεως “περί Αεροπορικών Συγκοινωνιών”» [Official Gazette Α222, 06-10—1956, Fascicle First, ‘L.D. 3560. On amendment and supplement of E.L. 1856/1951 and L.D. 3006/1954, as well as its ratification by 30 July 1956 agreement “on Air Transport”’].

The aerodrome at Elliniko as strategic location in the Second World War (1941-1944)

WARTIME WORKS

On 1 September 1939 the Second World War broke out, when German forces invaded Poland. This had a domino effect. The Soviet Union annexed provinces to the east of Poland and the Baltic republics, Britain and France entered the war against Germany, and Italy moved against Greece. So widecast was the web of war that only Latin America was not caught up in it. Ioannis Metaxas's negative reply to the ultimatum delivered by the Italian ambassador Grazzi, demanding the free entry of Italian troops into Greece, was followed by the Italian attack and later the German invasion. Military operations ended when General Georgios Tsolakoglou, who would later form the first occupation government, signed the document of capitulation on 23 April 1941. Responsibility for several regions of Greece was entrusted initially to the Italian forces, since the country and the Balkans in general were outside the sphere of Hitler's strategic planning. Even so, the Germans kept control of some areas that were of military and economic importance for them. The aerodrome at Elliniko was one of these places.

The occupation forces exploited the country's resources and reserves for their upkeep and supply, while all kinds of products that were considered useful (raw materials, foodstuffs, fuel, and so on) were confiscated. They were interested also in Greek industries and enterprise, which they bought.¹²⁰ In addition, they went ahead with a large number of projects (constructing forts, warehouses, military installations), in order to serve their military purposes, concentrating on the construction of aerodromes that would play the role of operations centres.

The unfinished aerodrome at Elliniko, works in which were still pending from the preceding period, was completed, its facilities and runways were extended and it was turned into the main aerodrome of Athens and base of the German Luftwaffe. The American College,

¹²⁰ Λάζου, Βασιλική, «Εδαφικός κατακερματισμός: Η κατοχή της Ελλάδας από τις δυνάμεις του Άξονα» [Vasiliki Lazou, 'Territorial fragmentation: The occupation in Greece by the Axis forces'], in Παναγιωτόπουλος, Βασίλης (επιμ.), *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνισμού (1770-2000). Η Εμπόλεμη Ελλάδα, 1940-1949. Αλβανικός Έπος-Κατοχή και Αντίσταση-Εμφύλιος* [Vasilis Panagiotopoulos (ed.), *History of Modern Hellenism (1770-2000). Wartime Greece, 1940-1949. Albanian Epic-Occupation and Resistance-Civil War*], Vol. 8, Ellinika Grammata, Athens 2003, pp. 35-36.

which stood in the area of the airport, was requisitioned and used as a military hospital.¹²¹

The works carried out by the occupation authorities in the period of the Second World War gave some leverage to the economy, which was in collapse –due to exhaustion of resources–, bedevilled by rampant inflation and serious food shortages. Frequently, a Greek workforce was mobilized, sometimes paid either in wages or in kind, and sometimes providing forced labour, which was levied on the population of the area where each project was executed. In each case, conditions of employment differed depending on the project.¹²²

Legislative changes were made, so as to expropriate the necessary areas of land for the projects. Thus, tracts of land were expropriated at Elliniko, with the resultant demolition of many houses in the area,¹²³ the cost of which undertaking exceeded one billion drachmas and was covered by the state budget. The building materials from the demolished houses were recycled, which was common practice, as there were difficulties in obtaining new ones.

It is interesting that construction materials were often stolen, with the aim of selling them on the black market. Sale of products through the black-market system was not controlled by the authorities and people from all walks of life were involved in this system of illicit transactions, which functioned as a survival mechanism. In March 1942, Christophoros Christidis recorded information regarding incidents of theft in the aerodrome at Elliniko, the unwillingness of the labourers to work, as well as the lack of control: ‘The lack of monitoring by the Germans of the labourers working in the aerodrome defies description. The labourers hardly work at all, they clock in and then they skive off or they are busy with gathering materials of the Germans, which they then sell to middlemen, who then sell them on, at great profit, to the aerodrome contractors.’¹²⁴

The extensive works carried out in the aerodrome seems to have been of decisive importance for the occupation authorities, as it was adjacent also to the State Aircraft Factory

¹²¹ The buildings of the American College had been used as a hospital also by the Greek Army, before the Occupation. See *The American College of Greece*, op. cit.

¹²² Λάζου, Β., op. cit., p. 39.

¹²³ ΦΕΚ 1/10-01-1944, Τεύχος Πρώτον, «Περί αναγκαστικής απαλλοτριώσεως προς επέκτασιν του Αεροδρομίου Χασανίου» [Official Gazette 1/10-01-1944, Fascicle First, ‘On compulsory expropriation, for expansion of the Aerodrome at Hasani’], Act 195, p. 2.

¹²⁴ Χρηστίδης, Χριστόφορος, *Χρόνια Κατοχής 1941-1944: Μαρτυρίες Ημερολογίου* [Christophoros Christidis, *Occupation Years 1941-1944. Diary Testimonies*], Athens 1971, p. 225.





Aerial photograph of the installations in the aerodrome at Elliniko, shortly after the liberation of Athens from the German Occupation, 1945.

(KEA) at Faliro. The KEA, the running of which had been undertaken in the 1920s by the British-owned Blackburn Motor and Aircraft Company and in the 1930s passed to the ownership of the Greek State, had acquired modern machinery which was to be useful for repairs of Luftwaffe aircraft, and had highly-skilled technicians. In addition, during the Greek-Italian war a branch of the KEA had been created at Elliniko (workshop and crew for final assembly of aeroplanes and preparation of test flights).

As researchers have pointed out,¹²⁵ the intensive pace of repair works on aircraft and the number of them in Greece reflected the Luftwaffe's activity and developments on the warfront. Germany's Luftwaffe bases in Greece played a significant role during military operations in the Middle East, as they functioned as transportation channels for armaments and troops. Pivotal event in the German campaign in North Africa and the confrontations with Great Britain and the Allied forces to capture its regions, was the battle of El Alamein. So, in 1942, repair works on aircraft in Greece reached its peak. After the capture of North Africa by the Allies, the Germans once again stepped up their activities in Greece in 1943, as they received false intelligence of an imminent Allied landing in the country.¹²⁶ Several of the aircraft were repaired in the KEA, from where, after carrying out the necessary works, they were transferred, with their wings dismantled, to the aerodrome at Elliniko, to be reassembled and to make test flights.

¹²⁵ For more information on the Luftwaffe's activity in Greece and the repairs of aircraft, see Μανουσάκης, Βασίλειος, *Οικονομία και Πολιτική στην Ελλάδα του Β' Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου* [Vasileios Manousakis, *Economy and Politics in Greece in the Second World War*], Doctoral dissertation, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki], Thessaloniki 2014, pp. 619-626.

¹²⁶ This operation of the British Intelligence Services was code-named Operation Mincemeat. See Howard, Michael, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, Vol. 5, Cambridge University Press, New York 1990, pp. 89-93.

ALARM AT SOURMENA

The strategic importance of the aerodrome at Elliniko, as well as of the Faliro facilities, had been realized by the Allies, which is why they frequently bombed these targets. As the military situation in the Mediterranean changed, with the Allied landing in Italy and the impending signing of a truce of the country on the horizon, the bombardments and dogfights intensified.

In fact, it is mentioned that for the protection of the aeroplanes and the facilities the Germans had created a virtual environment of aerodrome infrastructures in order to mislead the Allies. They placed the aircraft in hangars that they had camouflaged so that they could not be discerned, and they moved the aeroplanes in the dead of night to the aerodrome in order to make flights. Consequently, the Allies made bombing raids over a wide ambit, in their endeavour to strike enemy targets.¹²⁷

Testimonies of people living near the aerodrome confirm on the one hand its importance for the occupation forces and on the other the barrage of bombing raids at that period: 'During the Occupation the Air Force base at Elliniko was of great importance for the Germans. They needed it both for the Balkan front and, even moreso, for the Africa front. So, on the one hand the Germans took draconian measures to keep it operating, and on the other the British tried to put it out of action. This struggle between the two was a terrible situation for the people living around the aerodrome. From the bombardments we were living in a burning hell.'¹²⁸

According to eyewitnesses, in the entire area from the lower slopes of Hymettos as far as the aerodrome there were gun emplacements (pillboxes) and battle trenches. In mid-1943, the German forces stepped up the organization of defences and the command was given to evacuate Argyroupolis, which until then had escaped the bombings unscathed.

¹²⁷ See Πασβαντίδης, Χ., *op. cit.*, p. 116.

¹²⁸ Excerpt from a testimony of Eleni Stephanidou-Karanikola, which is included in Μουρουγκλού, Άννα, «Ο συνοικισμός της Αργυρούπολης στη δεκαετία του 1940» [Anna Mourougrou, 'The settlement of Argyroupolis in the 1940s'], in Γιαννακόπουλος, Γιώργος Α. (επιμ.), *op. cit.*, p. 118.

In the words of one resident, 'We all left our houses as they were, in the autumn of 1943. Our parents had made an agreement between themselves and every couple of days one family head went down to inspect our households.'¹²⁹

Testimonies about how the children dealt with the air raids and the military operations of the time are poignant. In their eyes they seemed like exciting spectacles, while they used to visit the aerodrome to play. Towards the end of 1943, the fiercest bombardments took place. The pilots could be seen in the low-flying aircraft. One child, passing through the area on his bicycle, captures the moments of the bombardments: 'At Sourmena a new alarm sounded and then I estimated that next would be the turn of the aerodrome at Elliniko (...) From a distance I saw the underground fuel tanks on fire, at the edge of where the Greek base is today, next to Vouliagmenis Avenue, and I was frightened about possible explosions that would be caused by the fuel. I got onto my bike and headed for Nea Smyrni, where we had moved with my family after the evacuation of the area, a few months earlier.'¹³⁰

A few months later, the outcome of the war had been decided. In August 1944, with the Soviet forces marching through the Balkans, the German troops began to withdraw from Greece. The repair units, the aerodrome and the installations at Ellinko were evacuated. Before they retreated, the Germans seized part of the equipment of the KEA and they had perhaps planned to destroy its installations. It is rumoured that this was avoided thanks to the resistance group 'Apollo', which blew up a large quantity of explosives that were stored on the Geroulanos estate, near the aerodrome, where the Germans had set up their General Headquarters.

In October 1944, liberated Athens welcomed the government of National Unity, headed by Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou. Together with it, units of the British Army arrived too, because Greece belonged in Great Britain's sphere of influence. Despite the jubilant climate, the war had driven deep rifts in Greek society.

¹²⁹ Excerpt from the oral testimony of Efthymia Papoutsis, op. cit., p. 122.

¹³⁰ Excerpt from the testimony of Georgios Efstathiadis, op. cit., pp. 122-124.



Aeroplane of the Hellenic Royal Air Force in the aerodrome at Elliniko, March 1945.

The emergence of the National Liberation Front (EAM) as main political force in the country and the attempt by the political old-guard to remuster created two opposed poles. The clash between them was inevitable. The aerodrome at Elliniko was to witness the 33-day Battle of Athens, between the military wing of EAM and British and government forces.

The escalation of the conflict that began in December 1944 was to bring Sir Winston Churchill to Athens, at Christmas of that year. Churchill's references in his memoirs to his arrival at the aerodrome at Elliniko give information about its use by the British troops, which backed the military operations from the air. 'Around noon we landed in the aerodrome at Kalamaki, which was guarded by 2,000 British airmen, well-armed and on the alert. There we were welcomed by Field Marshall Alexander, Mr Leeper and Mr Macmillan. We boarded the aeroplane and spent almost three hours in heated discussion about the general situation both from the military and the political side. I believe that in the end we came to a full agreement about the immediate measures that must be taken.'¹³¹

Even though the clashes intensified after Churchill's visit, they were to end finally in early 1945, after EAM's retreat, and were to end typically with the signing of the Varkiza Agreement in February. But the agreement failed to bridge the rift and to avert open conflict and a civil war. The aerodrome at Elliniko was to develop in the shadow of the Civil War, and from the mid-1940s onward it became a landmark of the country with increased geopolitical importance. This was the start of a long career, every milestone in which reflects the stages in the transition to the postwar period and the regeneration of Greece.

¹³¹ The names cited refer to Harold Alexander, British Field Marshall in the Second World War, Reginald Leeper, British Ambassador to Greece, and Harold Macmillan, British politician. See Τσώρτσιλ, Ουίνστον, *Β' Παγκόσμιος Πόλεμος* [Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*], Kathimerines Publications, Newspaper *I Kathimerini* – Govosti Publications, Vol. 6, Athens 2010, p. 117.



The British General Henry Maitland Wilson (second from left) arrives in Athens a few days after the city's liberation from the German Occupation. He is welcomed by British and Greek officers, 25 October 1944.





Prime Minister Georgios Papandreou (third from right) and Minister of Aviation Petros Phikioris (second from right), accompanied by the British Brigadier G. W. Tuttle (seventh from right), inspect aircraft and pilots of the 336 Hellenic Royal Fighter Bomber Squadron, who have just returned to Greece after the liberation, 22 November 1944.



The leader of the National Unionist Party, Panagiotis Kanellopoulos, left, accompanies the departing head of the American Mission to Greece, Dwight Griswold, 2 August 1948. In the background, the building of the United States Air Force (USAF), with the sign 'Air Transport Command Athens'.



Welcome of Panagiotis Kanellopoulos (fourth from left) on his return from the USA. Right, the building of the American airline company TWA, 14 June 1948.

Modernization in the postwar world (mid-1940s to the late 1960s)

'THE VOICE OF AMERICA'

On the morrow of the Second World War the world was no longer the same. The end of the war signalled the beginning of a new period of fear and suspicion, which was mainly expressed through the political, economic and military rivalry between the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), as well as between the states allied to these two super-powers. This period is known by the term 'Cold War'. Unexpected derivative of the cold-war situation is the phenomenon of modernization that appeared in many countries, Greece among them, as the aggression promoted and accelerated the mechanisms of reconstruction.

The Greek Civil War, which was waged in those years (1946-1949), was one of the first manifestations of the Cold War, with Greece being the only country in Europe embroiled in internecine conflict. While the Civil War was in full spate, the initial efforts for Greece's reconstruction were made, with interventions from Great Britain and, primarily, the USA. The USA's interventions, which were not confined to Greece, aimed at creating a Western European economic system that would strengthen the West and contain the Soviet challenge. Furthermore, through foreign aid the 'Westernization' of states and their organization around a common core of institutions would be achieved.¹³²

American aid reached Greece after Great Britain's decision, in 1947, to disengage itself from Greek affairs. Great Britain, which had participated in wartime operations against the Left in Greece, immediately after the German retreat, appeared unwilling to continue its support of the country, as it realized that the Greek cause was as complex as it was expensive. On the other hand, the USA perceived that Greece, and Turkey too, functioned as natural frontiers for curbing Soviet designs in the eastern Mediterranean.

¹³² Χατζηβασιλείου, Ευάνθης, «Ο Ψυχρός Πόλεμος ως κρίση εκσυγχρονισμού: υπέρβαση κρίσεων και ελληνική εμπειρία, 1932-1959» [Evanthis Chatzivasileiou, 'The Cold War as crisis of modernization: transcendence of crises and Greek experience, 1932-1959'], in Μπότσιου, Κωνσταντίνα και Σακκάς, Γιάννης, *Η Ελλάδα, η Δύση και η Μεσόγειος 1945-62. Νέες Ερευνητικές Προσεγγίσεις* [Constantina Botsiou and Giannis Sakkas, *Greece, the West and the Mediterranean 1945-62, New Research Approaches*], University of Macedonia, 2015, <<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/49285129.pdf>> (Retrieved: 18-11-2020), pp. 17-34.

In the framework of the Truman Doctrine (1947) initially, and of the Marshall Plan subsequently (1948-1951), the USA made a decisive contribution to the economic and political reconstruction of Greece in the 1950s, as well as to the prevailing of the anti-communist forces in the Greek Civil War. The Americans were active through economic and military missions, as well as through the placement of advisers in the machinery of state, while a significant percentage of American capital was channelled into infrastructure projects, several of which were related to defence.¹³³

In the late 1940s, the United States Air Force (USAF) founded an airbase in the aerodrome at Elliniko and installed military aircraft for transportation purposes. Concurrently, a package of projects in the aerodrome was undertaken by the US Army Corps of Engineers, among a host of works carried out in the country (clearing of the Corinth Canal, railway and road network, harbours, etc.), activities that took place correspondingly in states of the Middle East. The works carried out in the aerodrome included the construction of hangars and a control tower, as well as improving basic infrastructure (lighting, drainage system). The cost of the projects implemented by the United States Air Force in the aerodrome at Elliniko was 2.5 million dollars.¹³⁴

Despite the Americans' involvement, their interest in Greece was limited, as the country was far away from central Europe and Germany, on which they focused their attention. However, after the outbreak of the Korean War the climate changed, equilibria were unsettled and the security of the existing alliances was doubted. Consequently, the newly-founded military defensive alliance of states in the West, under the name of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), invited Greece to join its ranks. Greece became a member of NATO in 1952, thanks to which it continued to enjoy American aid and was guided towards political stability, which was of vital importance after the end of the Civil War, and economic viability within a safe regime.

¹³³ Μπότσιου, Κωνσταντίνα, «Οι ΗΠΑ και η ελληνική συμμετοχή στην ευρωπαϊκή ολοκλήρωση, 1958-1961» [Constantina Botsiou, 'The USA and the Greek participation in European integration'], in Μπότσιου, Κ. και Σακκάς, Γ., (επιμ.), *op. cit.*, pp. 109-115.

¹³⁴ For the sums spent on the works of the American Corps of Engineers, see Grathwol, Robert and Moorhus, Donita, *Bricks, Sand and Marble: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction in the Mediterranean and Middle East, 1947-1991*, Center of Military History and Corps of Engineers, United States Army, Washington, D.C. 2009, <https://history.army.mil/html/books/bricks_sand_and_marble/CMH_45-2-1.pdf> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020), p. 140.



Facilities of the American Base at Elliniko in 1977.
The American Base remained in the area for forty years, from 1953 until 1993.



Greece's entry into NATO prepared the ground for the agreement to set up American military bases on Greek soil, signed in the autumn of 1953. The presence of the American bases has always been a contentious issue, object of debate and political opposition, mainly with regard to the degree of interventionism in Greek affairs, the lack of clarity concerning the commitments of the two states, but also the matter of immunity from prosecution enjoyed by American personnel serving in Greece. Nevertheless, the agreement was considered to be beneficial for Greece and to guarantee the country's security. Among the bases established in Greece at that time (Heraklion, Souda, Nea Makri, and elsewhere) was the American Air Force Base at Elliniko, together with the Voice of America radio station, which was a means of transmitting Western ideas.¹³⁵

The USAF was now installed in the aerodrome on a permanent basis. With the development of the sector of the civil aerodrome in the mid-1950s, it occupied a designated space in the area, which it utilized for transporting military supplies and diplomatic representatives. The military base at Elliniko played a critical role in the USA's operations in periods of unrest in the Middle East and Africa, as well as Cyprus, while the electronic air monitoring centre, which supported surveillance of the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, was located on the Base. Until 1960, considerable sums of money were invested in aeronautical works, telecommunications, facilities (military hospital, et al.), under the supervision of the Southern District Athens Area Office.¹³⁶

The Americans' long-term presence at Elliniko affected life in the surrounding areas, which adopted traits of the American lifestyle. The American BX (Base Exchange) was housed in buildings neighbouring the aerodrome and supplied the personnel on the Base with American products then unknown on the Greek market, which were particularly attractive to Greek consumers. New stores, modelled on American ones, opened in the area, to serve the American clientele. Furthermore, a host of people tuned in daily to the frequency of the American radio station transmitting from the Base.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ For the American bases see, inter alia, Σβολόπουλος, Κωνσταντίνος, *Η Ελληνική Εξωτερική Πολιτική, 1945-1981* [Constantinos Svolopoulos, *Greek Foreign Policy, 1945-1981*], Vol. 2, Estia Bookshop, Athens 2003, pp. 35-39.

¹³⁶ Grathwol, R. and Moorhus, D., *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141.

¹³⁷ Μηχανή του Χρόνου, «Η αμερικανική βάση του Ελληνικού» [Time Machine, 'The American base at Elliniko'], n.d., <<https://www.mixanitouxronou.gr/i-amerikaniki-vasi-toy-ellinikoy-i-amerikaniki-agora/>> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020).



Employees of the radio station on the American Base at Elliniko, 1973.





The water tower of the former American Base at Elliniko.
Its construction coincides with the installing of the Base in the 1950s, 2020.

Even so, there was no lack of anti-American sentiments. The internationalization of the Cyprus Question by the Greek government under General Papagos, shortly before the mid-1950s, with the aim of achieving the Union (Enosis) of Cyprus with Greece, upset relations between the two countries and fuelled the anti-American current. Reactions came to a head after the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, when the possibility of relocating the Base was even discussed. In the end, it was to remain at Elliniko and to continue operating until after the end of the Cold War, closing in 1993. Its facilities were then handed over for use to the Greek Army and to various agencies and services.

THE AERODROME AT ELLINIKO, BRIDGE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

Alongside the development of the military sector of the aerodrome, from the late 1940s, the civil aviation facilities were expanded thanks to American aid. In February 1949 the contract was signed for implementing a programme to develop air transport, so as 'to put Greece in an outstanding position in the field of aviation, which will make Elliniko one of the best international airports'.¹³⁸ The Marshall Plan breathed life into the civil aerodrome at Elliniko, which began operating systematically and was to become the hub of the Greek air transport network. Among the works carried out in the aerodrome at that time were the extension of the existing runway, the creation of a second runway and the construction of the first air traffic control towers and the first facilities of the West Air Terminal, to which other building complexes would be added later.

On reading the articles in the Press of the time, it becomes clear that the existence of an advanced aerodrome was a determinant factor for placing a country on 'the aviation map of the future', in a period that was 'the threshold of the century of air travel'.¹³⁹ The extensions and the constructions were to follow the developments in aeronautics, making the aerodrome capable of serving passenger and cargo needs, as well as all kinds of aircraft in all possible conditions. It is noted that already before works commenced the aerodrome was among the top few in air traffic in the East Mediterranean. Dozens of foreign airlines were using it for regular and unscheduled flights (the American airline TWA, the Dutch company KLM, the French company Air France, and so on). The daily traffic of aircraft averaged 70-75 civil aviation planes and 25-30 military ones. Indeed, in comparison to previous years passenger traffic rose rapidly, exceeding 300,000 passengers in 1948.

Under the terms of the agreement, various works and improvements were to be carried out, such as equipping with communication/tracking systems and putting up

¹³⁸ Ανώνυμος, «Υπεγράφη σύμβασις διά τας αεροπορικές συγκοινωνίας της χώρας» ['Agreement signed for air transport in the country'], Newspaper *Empros*, 26-02-1949, p. 4.

¹³⁹ Αβραμόπουλος, Δ., «Το Αεροδρόμιον του Ελληνικού, Γέφυρα Ανατολής και Δύσεως» [D. Avramopoulos, 'The Aerodrome at Ellinikos, Bridge between East and West'], Newspaper *Empros*, 03-03-1949, p. 3.



Aerodrome at Elliniko, 1960.
Visible are the Goodbye Terrace of the West Airport and two aeroplanes on the runway.

multipurpose buildings (for administration, customs, fire service, aircraft hangars, shops, restaurants, aircraft viewing area for the public, etc.).

Apart from the capital that the American mission would make available for these projects, provision was made also for the contribution of technical personnel in an advisory capacity. With regard to the modernization of the aerodrome, the director general of civil aviation noted that 'he hopes in a very short time that the aerodrome at Elliniko will be capable of serving international air traffic and that its facilities will offer travellers all modern comforts'.¹⁴⁰

The expansion of the aerodrome was not greeted with enthusiasm by all the Greek population and evoked strong protests from the people living in its environs. Initially, their opposition was due to the tar-production plant that was located in the area of Sourmena. The production of tar, which was an imperative material for the extension of the runways, was unpleasant to say the least, creating a stifling atmosphere. According to information, on a daily basis the labourers at the worksite extracted the raw material from the quarry on Hymettos and then brought it to be processed. Residents made continuous appeals to the responsible agencies, requesting the closure of the plant. The mayor of Argyroupolis, Kyriakos Efstathiadis, stated in his telegram addressed to the Minister of Public Works, in 1951: 'The aforesaid company resumed works without taking any protective measure and the inhabitants are living from morning to night in thick clouds of smoke and soot which make the atmosphere choking. There is an immediate threat to the life of the residents of Argyroupolis and Elliniko-Sourmena.'¹⁴¹ Despite the people's protests, the plant did not close down until 1958.

An additional reason for the adverse reaction of the inhabitants was the forced expropriation of properties for the development of the aerodrome. The protests took the form of a movement against the expansion, resulting in the organization of a protest march in Glyfada in the late 1950s. Just a few months after the demonstration, the Ministry of Transport informed the local authorities of the areas that had participated in the march of

¹⁴⁰ For information on passenger traffic and the aerodrome facilities, see *op. cit.*

¹⁴¹ The reference and the information are included in Πασβαντίδης, X., *op. cit.*, p. 186.

Aerodrome at Elliniko, 1962.
In the foreground, the Goodbye Terrace
of the West Airport and at the centre
of the photograph the refuelling of an aircraft.







American President Dwight Eisenhower (right, wearing hat and suit) is welcomed by King Paul (at the centre of the photograph) and Crown Prince Constantine (second from left), in the aerodrome at Elliniko. His visit accelerated works on modernizing and expanding the aerodrome, 14 December 1959.

the decision to expropriate properties on land as far as the north edge of the Glyfada forest.¹⁴²

The enlargement of the airport also dictated the replacement of the aeroplanes with aircraft of new type that demanded longer runways and more free space. The issue of the expropriations and the tracts of land needed for the new functions preoccupied the Press, public opinion and experts, while the predictions that had been made for the areas required were overestimated.¹⁴³

The need to finish works on extending the aerodrome was heightened by the impending visit to Athens by the President of the United States of America, Dwight Eisenhower, the first US president to come to Greece, on 14 December 1959. In anticipation of the American president's arrival, the country embarked on hectic preparations. The journey to Greece had been planned as part of the president's world tour (Italy, Pakistan, Turkey, India, and elsewhere), aimed at bringing the message of peaceful coexistence of states and representing a 'new American policy'¹⁴⁴ oriented towards cooperation and recession in relations with the Soviet Union. On his arrival at the aerodrome at Elliniko, where an impressive ceremony had been prepared, King Paul, Crown Prince Constantine, Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis, accompanied by members of his government, as well as a large crowd, gave the president a warm welcome, to the sounds of cannon fire and marches.

In a period when the development of the secondary sector of the economy was synonymous with progress, the government of Constantinos Karamanlis, who was premier for almost a decade, concentrated on industrialization.

¹⁴² Op. cit., pp. 114-115.

¹⁴³ It is stated in the periodical *Τεχνικά Χρονικά*, of the Technical Chamber of Greece, in 1957, that the length of the runways that was deemed necessary was at least 9 kilometres. See *Τεχνικά Χρονικά*, General Edition, 1-15 October 1957, iss. 139-140, pp. 24-25.

¹⁴⁴ Ανώνυμος, «Κυριαρχεί ήδη διεθνώς η οικονομική πολιτική» [‘Already the economic policy dominates internationally’], newspaper *Eleftheria*, 15-12-1959, p. 3.



Aerodrome at Elliniko, West Airport, 1957. Visible is the first logo of the newly-founded Olympic Airways.

In 1959 implementation of the First Five-Year Economic Development Plan¹⁴⁵ was announced and in the early 1960s Greece was affiliated with the European Economic Community (EEC). This affiliation was to boost the country's industrial sector and the capital adequacy for carrying out infrastructure projects. In the same period, unencumbered economic aid from the USA came to an end, but the supply of military material continued until the 1970s.

¹⁴⁵ Χατζηβασιλείου, Ευ., *op. cit.*, p. 17.



The main building of the West Airport in 1963.

In January 1960, in his announcement concerning public investments, Karamanlis stressed the scale of the effort being made to reconstruct the national economy, providing data that predicted a boom with the continuation of financing in the sectors of industry, tourism and transport, and the realization of infrastructure projects.¹⁴⁶ The works in the aerodrome at Elliniko were part of the intensive rebuilding of the country, which was

¹⁴⁶ *Τεχνικά Χρονικά*, General Edition, January-February 1960, iss. 185-186, pp. 42-43.



The pavilion in the aerodrome at Elliniko, October 1959.

entering its second phase of postwar development, in the early 1960s, with the aerodrome now included in the major infrastructure projects of the period (road building, land reclamation, energy production plants, etc.).¹⁴⁷

On 7 April 1960, the contract to draft the study for the development of the Greek capital's aerodrome was signed in the Ministry of Transport and Public Works by the minister Solon Gikas and the American company Ammann & Whitney. The aerodrome development plan included not only the additional lengthening of the runways and the building of premises, but also the creation of the new East Air Terminal. According to the minister's statement, the American government released a sum of 8.3 million dollars to finance the project, the total budget for which was estimated at 10.5 million dollars, excluding the sums of compensations for land expropriations.¹⁴⁸

It is noteworthy that airport traffic was steadily rising. The up-and-coming sector of tourism had given impetus to air transport, resulting in the number of foreign visitors to Greece doubling between 1958 and 1973.¹⁴⁹ Specifically for the aerodrome at Elliniko, the volume of passenger traffic from abroad tripled in the years 1956-1961. The number of tourists who came to Greece via the aerodrome in 1961 represented 45% of the total tourist flow of the country.¹⁵⁰

The new project dawned on 30 May 1962, when Prime Minister C. Karamalis laid the foundation stone. The ceremony was attended by the ministers of Public Works, Transport, and Shipping, junior ministers, secretaries general, personnel of agencies and services, public figures and a crowd of people. The Minister of Public Works said in his speech: 'We are in the Airport at Elliniko, the first Airport of the Country (...).

¹⁴⁷ Σκάγιαννης, Π., Καπαρός, Γ., *op. cit.*, pp. 24-34.

¹⁴⁸ *Τεχνικά Χρονικά*, General Edition, May 1962, 213, p. 45.

¹⁴⁹ The number of foreign visitors had risen from 257,000 in 1958 to over 3,000,000 in 1973. See Ιορδάνογλου, Χρυσάφης, «Η οικονομία 1949-1974: Ανάπτυξη και νομισματική σταθερότητα» [Chrysaphis Iordanoglou, 'The economy 1949-1974: Growth and monetary stability'], in Παναγιωτόπουλος, Βασίλης (επιμ.), *Ιστορία του Νέου Ελληνισμού (1770-2000), Νικητές και ηττημένοι, 1949-1974, Νέοι Ελληνικοί προσανατολισμοί: ανασυγκρότηση και ανάπτυξη* [Vasilis Panagiotopoulos (ed.), *History of Modern Hellenism (1770-2000), Winners and Losers, 1949-1974*], vol. 9, Ellinika Grammata, Athens 2003, p. 83.

¹⁵⁰ International passenger traffic increased from 293,000 in 1956 to 876,000 in 1961. See *Τεχνικά Χρονικά*, *op. cit.*



Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis (third from right) and the Minister of Public Works Solon Gikas (fifth from right) in front of the model of the new buildings of the aerodrome at Elliniko, during the foundation ceremony, 30 May 1962.

Shapely Hymettos to the east and the superb Faliro coast to the west create an exceptional environment (...). The Air Terminal building is the most important unit of the Airport's works (...). We expect that this building, when it is finished, will be indeed on of the loveliest Air Terminal in Europe.¹⁵¹ The East Air Terminal was completed in 1969, during the Colonels' Dictatorship, along with all the works in the aerodrome.

¹⁵¹ Op. cit., pp. 45-46.



Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis laying the foundation stone of the Terminal building of the new airport and the complex of support buildings, 30 May 1962.



Loading products of the 'FIX' Brewery, for export, in the aerodrome at Elliniko, 1963.

The Piraeus Theatre company
in the aerodrome at Elliniko, 1962.



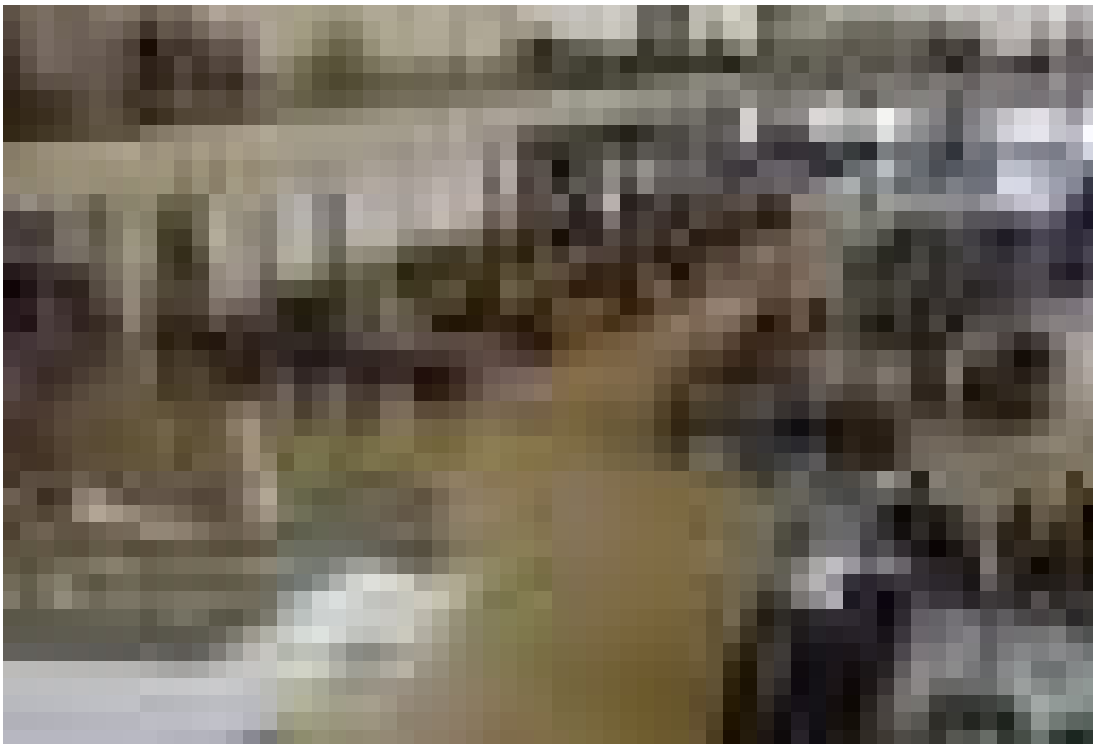


The Transit Terminal in the aerodrome at Elliniko.
Visible are vehicles of the airline companies Alitalia (above) and Air France (below), *ca* 1969.





The Goodbye Terrace in the West Airport (above)
and the waiting area in the Terminal building of the East Airport (below), *ca* 1969.







Aerial photograph of part of the West Airport of the aerodrome at Elliniko. Visible in the upper half of the photograph is Poseidonos Avenue, *ca* 1969.

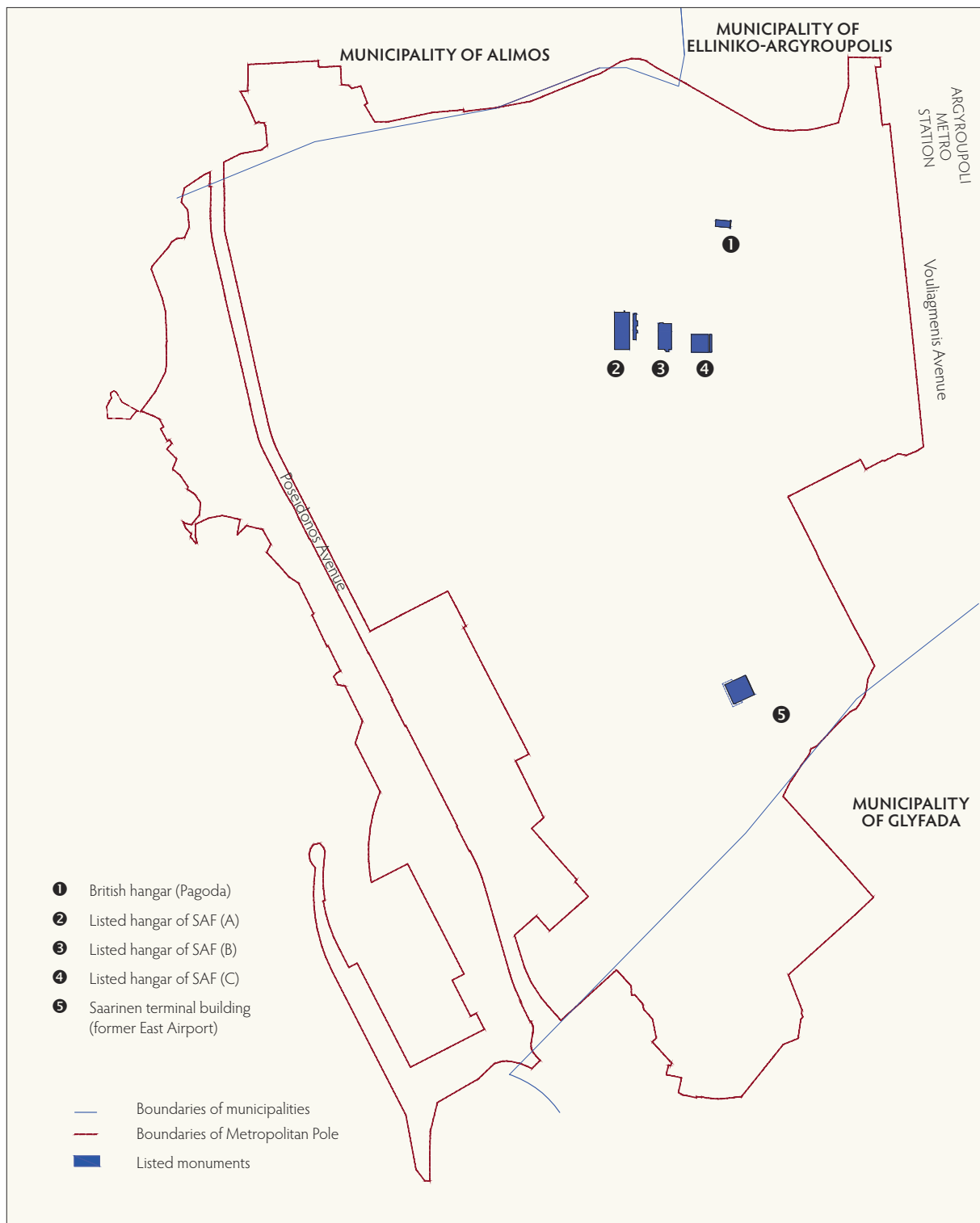


Diagram of the area of the Metropolitan Pole of Elliniko-Agios Kosmas, marked on which are the listed buildings.

The development of the aerodrome at Elliniko

Recent Monuments (1937-2001)

The former aerodrome at Elliniko, both in the years of its operation and in the subsequent decades, was an emblematic space, a landmark for the coastal zone of Attica. Its facilities signalled entry into a space full of sentiments, the start of a new journey or the welcome of a familiar face. Imprinted over its area were the political, economic, social, but also technological and aesthetic changes that made up the history of Modern Greece. Arrivals in the aerodrome at Elliniko are linked with seminal events in recent history, such as the arrival of Constantinos Karamanlis in 1974 after the fall of the Junta, and the arrivals of the Olympic victors in 1996.

The development of the buildings and the facilities of the former aerodrome over the years of its operation bear witness to the transition to modern architecture, with characteristic examples of this trend. Some of these buildings have now been listed as monuments, such as that of the East Air Terminal. The development of the space from 1937 until the dawn of the new millennium, with the successive expansions and the addition of new facilities, is typical of aerodromes in the twentieth century. Aerodromes should be constructed from the outset with possibilities of adaptation to and expansion on their site, so as to respond to the ever-increasing passenger traffic. The existence of documents from most, if not all, phases of development of the aerodrome at Elliniko and its different uses make it particularly interesting historically, since it allows us to follow its evolution in time.

Overall, the space of the aerodrome occupies an area of approximately 500-550 hectares and its building stock includes hundreds of facilities, principal and auxiliary.¹⁵² The phases of development of the aerodrome were determined on the one hand by passenger and commercial traffic, and on the other by the international and domestic political scene.

¹⁵² The exact size of the aerodrome is difficult to calculate due to incomplete mapping of the area during the period of its operation, as well as due to the use of facilities by different agencies simultaneously.

To summarize what has been noted already, the aerodrome that was founded by the legislative decree of 1937 basically as civil, was occupied by the Germans during the Second World War and was used as military, it was bombed by the Allied forces and came into the hands of the British Royal Air Force, while from 1947 sections of the United States Air Force - USAF were installed there, in the framework of implementing the Marshall Plan, in parallel with resumption of its operation as a civil aerodrome. Furthermore, in 1939, the State Aircraft Factory was moved there, which until then was operating in the Faliro Delta. During the 1990s, the Air Traffic Control Centre for the Region of Athens and Macedonia of the Civil Aviation Authority was installed, while after the departure of the USAF in 1991, its facilities were used by the Hellenic Air Force. The complex ownership regime apparent from the aforesaid makes it difficult to distinguish the phases of development of the aerodrome and the allocation of uses of the facilities with accuracy. Consequently, by combining the presence of the above agencies with the expropriations and additions each time, we are able to distinguish theoretically the following phases:

- a) 1937 – 1940: from the founding of the civil aerodrome to the outbreak of the Second World War,
- b) 1940 – 1945: military use of the aerodrome by the German Luftwaffe and the British Royal Air Force,
- c) 1945 – 1960: installation of the American Base and development of the first infrastructure works of the West Airport,
- d) 1960 – 2001: from the planning and operating of the East Airport until the closure of the aerodrome.

1937 -1940. THE EARLY YEARS FROM THE FOUNDING OF THE CIVIL AERODROME UNTIL THE OUTBREAK OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR.

In 1937 the decision was taken to expropriate 215 hectares of land in the area of Hasani in Attica, for the founding of the civil aerodrome of Athens. As has been said, the foundation stone for the onset of works was laid in the same year by Ioannis Metaxas. The first company to make flights from the aerodrome at Elliniko was TAE. Until the

outbreak of the Second World War and the suspension of the civil use of the aerodrome, commercial flights in Greece were carried out by ΕΕΕΣ, which was based at Tatoï, and by foreign aviation companies. In its first year of operation, 1938-1939, the aerodrome served 8,500 passengers.¹⁵³ During the first phase of development of the site, the first infrastructure facilities were constructed, of which only the start of the construction of the first runway, length 1,800 metres, is confirmed.

1940 - 1945. PERIOD OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR. MILITARY USE OF THE AERODROME
BY THE GERMAN LUFTWAFFE AND THE BRITISH ROYAL AIR FORCE.

With the outbreak of the Second World War commercial air traffic from the aerodrome at Elliniko ceased, as did the works that had commenced in 1938. The site was used by the Luftwaffe, which continued works, constructing a second runway of the same length as the first, oriented from the sea towards Ilioupolis.¹⁵⁴ Although it is not clear what other works were completed in the period of the German Occupation, we know that in 1942 a legislative decree was issued for the compulsory expropriation of areas of land in the communities of Agios Dimitrios, Elliniko and Komninoi, for the expansion of the aerodrome. This legislative decree was followed by three decisions for further expropriations. It is difficult to locate the facilities that were completed in that period, because at some points the Germans created virtual installations, in order to dupe the Allies. In the period 1943-1944, the aerodrome was bombed by the Allied Air Force and after the end of the German Occupation it came into the hands of the British Royal Airforce.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Ανώνυμος, «Συμβολή στη χάραξη πορείας για μια σωστή απόφαση για το νέο αεροδρόμιο της Αθήνας» [‘Contribution to mapping a course for a correct decision about the new airport of Athens’], *Τεχνικά Χρονικά*, 4-5, April-May 1976, p. 17.

¹⁵⁴ Πασβαντίδης Χ., *op. cit.*, p. 116 and Ανώνυμος, «Η δημόσια συζήτηση για το νέο αεροδρόμιο Αθηνών» [‘The public debate about the new airport of Athens’], *Ενημερωτικό Δελτίο ΤΕΕ*, 866, 08-11-1975, pp. 26-30.

¹⁵⁵ It is mentioned that the British Royal Air Force went ahead with constructing facilities of a military aerodrome in the east part and of a civil one in the west (see Study of Environmental Effects, Cultural Monuments).



View of the aerodrome at Elliniko with the three listed hangars, 2020.



THE PAGODA

Dated to this period is the hangar known by the nickname ‘Pagoda’, which is situated in the northeast part of the airfield, close to Hasani hill. This hangar was built before the German Occupation of Greece, by the British, who used it as a warehouse.¹⁵⁶ During the war it protected aircraft from air raids and later had various uses, among them as a storage space for equipment of Olympic Airways. It is a particularly interesting building in terms of form and construction, unique in Greece, for which reason it was listed as a monument in 2016.¹⁵⁷ Rectangular in plan, it comprises a single space of total area 1,210 square metres and has a wooden bearing structure with arched beams and a pitched roof curving upwards at its base. In the lower part of the building there are windows all around. On the façade there is a triangular pediment, allowing the scrolling of the external sliding doors.

1945 - 1960. POSTWAR PERIOD. INSTALLATION OF THE AMERICAN BASE.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST INFRASTRUCTURES ALSO OF THE WEST AIRPORT.

As said already, from 1945 the Greek government conceded areas of the aerodrome to the United States Air Force (USAF) for its installation in the northeast part. The installation of the American Base initiated a period of fervent activity, in terms of construction, at Elliniko, in the framework of the Marshall Plan.

By 1950 several important projects had been completed, with the input of the US Army Corps of Engineers. Construction activity on the American Base continued in the decades to come, with works associated with improving its infrastructure or with the development of the civil aerodrome.

¹⁵⁶ For the ‘Pagoda’ hangar see, op. cit., pp. 14-16.

¹⁵⁷ ΦΕΚ 307/30-12-2016, τεύχος Α.Π.Π., απόφαση ΥΠΠΟΑ/ΓΔΑΜΤΕ/ΔΠΑΝΣΜ/ 347577/31383/4566 «Χαρακτηρισμός ως μνημείου, σύμφωνα με τις διατάξεις του ν. 3028/2002, του Αγγλικού υποστέγου (Παγόδα) του πρώην αεροδρομίου Ελληνικού, φερομένης ιδιοκτησίας Ελληνικού Δημοσίου και ΤΑΙΠΕΔ Α.Ε.» [Official Gazette 307/30-12-2016, fascicle Α.Π.Π., decision ΥΠΠΟΑ/ΓΔΑΜΤΕ/ΔΠΑΝΣΜ/347577/31383/4566 ‘Designation as monument, in accordance with the ordinances of law 3028/2002, of the British hangar (Pagoda) in the former aerodrome at Elliniko, said to be property of the Greek State and ΤΑΙΠΕΔ S.A.’].

In this period the final extent of the aerodrome was shaped, with the issue of ordinances for the expropriation of land for its expansion. Specifically, in 1948 it was decided to expropriate about 47.5 hectares in parts of the communities of Elliniko and Komninoi; in 1950 an area of 21 hectares was designated for expropriation in order to extend the runway; in 1952 55 hectares were expropriated; in 1956 an area of 1,670 square metres was expropriate for a road access to facilities in the south part of the aerodrome; in 1959 an area of 1.3 hectares towards the Athens-Vouliagmeni highway.

By the end of the 1940s, the West Air Terminal had been completed, the building that served exclusively passenger traffic until the creation of the East Air Terminal in 1969. The building was close to Poseidonos Avenue and in its initial phase was single-storey with tiled roof. In the ensuing years it underwent successive modifications and extensions, in order to meet the demands of the increasing traffic. During the 1950s and 1960s the building was modernized and additions made, among them other waiting areas, office spaces, a 'Goodbye' terrace and a control tower. Until 1969 the West Airport served passengers on all flights, domestic and foreign. When the East Airport opened, the West one served exclusively Olympic Airways, which was responsible for the upkeep of its premises and facilities.



The British Hangar, known as the 'Pagoda', which was constructed by the British in the years 1940-1941 and was used initially as a warehouse, 2020.



Pp. 140-141
View of the interior of the 'Pagoda' building, with the characteristic ceiling, 2020.







Views of the outside of the 'Pagoda' building, which is now a listed monument, 2020.



Interior of the 'Pagoda' building, 2020.

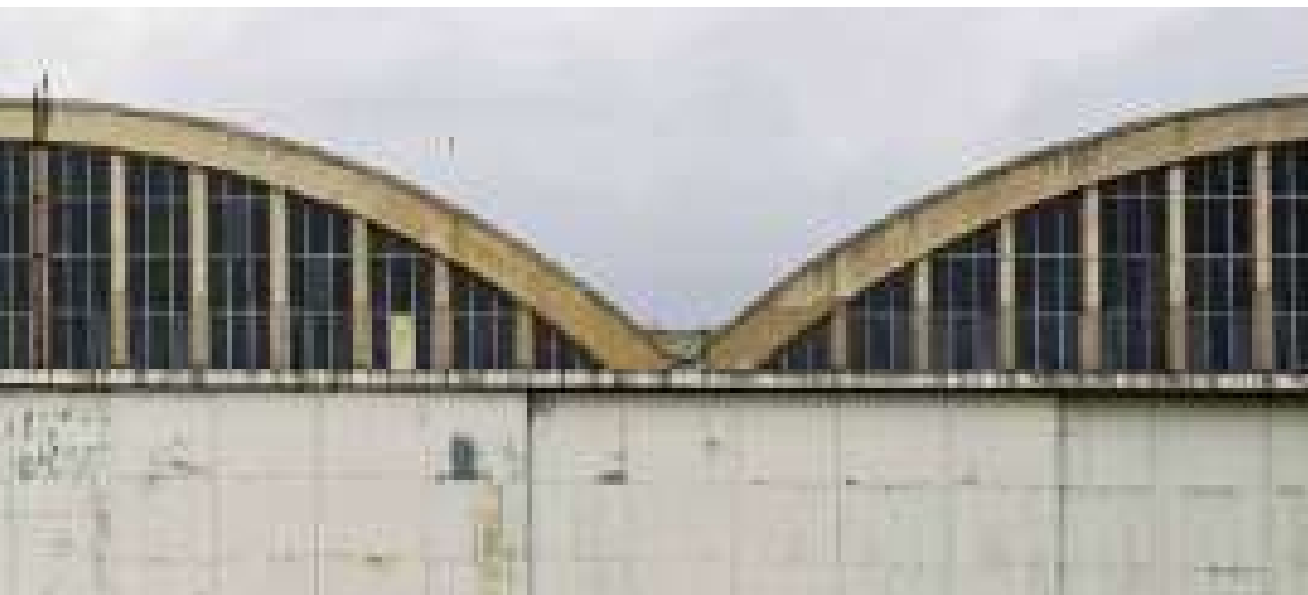


THE THREE AIRCRAFT HANGARS

During the postwar period, hangars A and B, constructed in 1939, were transferred to the aerodrome at Elliniko from the State Aircraft Factory at Faliro, with the intention of housing part of the factory.¹⁵⁸ They stand in the northeast part of the aerodrome and belonged to the Hellenic Air Force. They have a frame of reinforced concrete and are of rectangular plan with arched roof. Around the perimeter of the main space are repair shops and other auxiliary areas. In 1950, one more hangar, C, entirely of metal, was constructed in the same area. The area of hangar A is approximately 4,100 square metres, with maximum height 17 metres, of hangar B 3,300 square metres with maximum height 14 metres, and of hangar C 3,600 square metres with height 15 metres. These three hangars were listed as monuments in 2009, 'as constructions of particular technical importance with special industrial and technical features'.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Study of Environmental Effects, Cultural Monuments, pp. 13-14.

¹⁵⁹ ΦΕΚ 400/13-08-2009, τεύχος Α.Π.Π., απόφαση ΥΠΠΟ/ΔΣΝΑΚ/41429/1057 «Χαρακτηρισμός ως μνημείων 3 υποστέγων της Πολεμικής Αεροπορίας στον πρώην Αεροδρόμιο Ελληνικού (Χασάνι) φερόμενης ιδιοκτησίας Ελληνικού Δημοσίου» [Official Gazette 400/13-08-2009, fascicle Α.Π.Π., decision ΥΠΠΟ/ΔΣΝΑΚ/41429/1057 'Designation as monuments 3 Air Force hangars in the former Aerodrome at Elliniko (Hasani) said to be property of the Greek State'].



The roof of Hangar A which was constructed together with Hangar B before 1940 in order to house part of the State Aircraft Factory, 2020.

In 1950 work began on constructing the second runway (diagonally perpendicular to the sea), of length 2,250 metres, while concurrently the first and main runway was extended also to a length of 2,250 metres, so as to cover the needs of the constantly developing civil aerodrome. In 1958 the main runway was extended further, to a length of 3,000 metres. The last extension was made in order to serve the new type jet aircraft, which were bigger.¹⁶⁰

From the 1950s, the volume of passengers and cargoes circulating in the aerodrome at Elliniko were increasing so rapidly that the West Air Terminal building was unable to cope. Indicatively, traffic on domestic flights in 1956 reached 167,000 passengers and on flights abroad 293,000, while five years later these numbers doubled and tripled respectively, with 337,000 passengers on domestic flights and 876,000 on flights abroad.¹⁶¹ Thoughts about expanding the aerodrome began quite early, with the first studies being prepared in the early 1950s.

¹⁶⁰ Φουντούλης, Δημήτρης, «Το Αεροδρόμιον Ελληνικού είναι αθεραπεύτως ανεπαρκές. Ανάγκη αμέσου μεταφοράς του παρά τα Σπάτα» [Dimitris Fountoulis, 'The Aerodrome at Elliniko is incurably inadequate. Need of immediate transfer of it to near Spata'], *Τεχνικά Χρονικά*, 60, 25-06-1954, pp. 14-18.

¹⁶¹ Ανώνυμος, «Το νέον κτίριον του Αερολιμένος Ελληνικού» ['The new building of the Airport at Elliniko'], *Τεχνικά Χρονικά*, iss. 213, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

The listed building Hangar A.

Pp. 148-149
The interior of Hangar A.









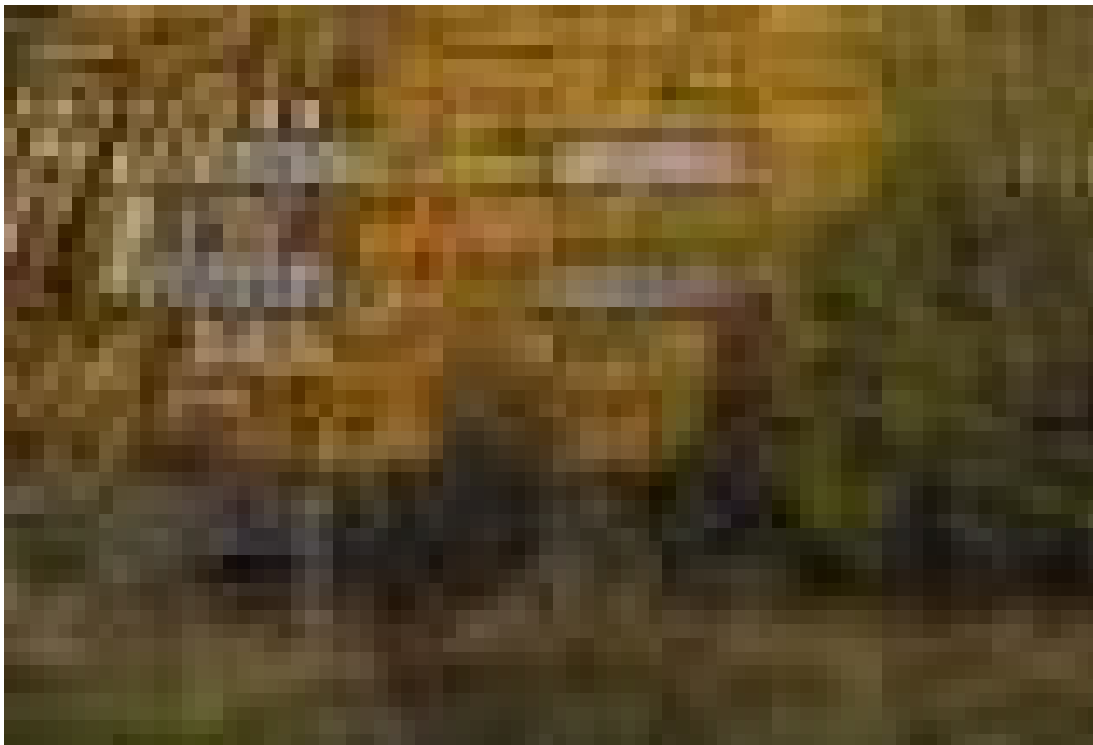


Hangar B, which was constructed before the Second World War and was part of the State Aircraft Factory, in Faliro. After the war, Hangar B and Hangar A were relocated to the aerodrome at Elliniko.









Hangar C, constructed in 1950. This is the most recent of the three hangars which are listed monuments.



1960-2001. PLANNING AND OPENING OF THE EAST AIRPORT,
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AERODROME UNTIL ITS CLOSURE.

As has been said, in the late 1950s the first moves were made to remodel the aerodrome. The construction company Amman & Whitney, which undertook the drafting of the preliminary plan, considered that the modernization of the aerodrome and the creation of facilities, particularly a new air terminal, were essential and urgent. At the same time, advice was sought from the Director of the Paris Airport, Pierre Cot, and of its engineer Henri Vicariot, who came to Athens in 1960 to make an in-situ study of the aerodrome.¹⁶² The final study for the project was commissioned from Amman & Whitney, which entrusted the design of the new terminal building to the Finnish architect Eero Saarinen, who in fact had studied also the international airport of Washington, then under construction.¹⁶³ The project was planned to meet the aerodrome's needs until 1975, with the possibility of further development in the future. Works began immediately, with financing from the American Government.

THE EAST AIRPORT TERMINAL

In 1960 E. Saarinen completed the preliminary study for the new air terminal building. As the architect himself states in his letter to Solon Gikas, then Minister of Transport and Public Works, his aim was to design a building that would be literally and symbolically the 'gateway to Athens and to Greece'.¹⁶⁴ Using to advantage the aerodrome's location, with a view towards the Saronic Gulf, but also the climatic conditions with low rainfall and abundant sunlight, he designed a modern building with its façade overlooking the airport and laid out the grounds, through which passengers and vehicles passed to reach the building, with lawns, greenery

¹⁶² Ανώνυμος, op. cit., and Ανώνυμος, «Ο εκσυγχρονισμός του Αεροδρομίου Ελληνικού» [The modernization of the airport at Elliniko'], *Τεχνικά Χρονικά*, 185-186, January-February 1960, pp. 45-46.

¹⁶³ *Τεχνικά Χρονικά*, General Edition, May 1960, iss. 189, pp. 38-39.

¹⁶⁴ Further information about the preliminary study and E. Saarinen's letter in Ανώνυμος, «Πρότασις διαμορφώσεως Αερολιμένος Ελληνικού» [Proposals for the layout of the Airport at Elliniko'], *Αρχιτεκτονική*, 24, November-December 1960, pp. 21-25.



The East Airport Terminal building, designed by Eero Saarinen, which is a listed monument. The photograph shows it shortly before completion and without the later additions, *ca* 1969.

and water features. After some modifications to the original plan, the foundation stone was laid on 30 May 1962, but Saarinen never saw his work finished, as he had died in 1961.

Construction of the East Airport was scheduled for completion in 1964. However, the political unrest in Greece during the 1960s delayed works and the new air terminal did not begin to operate until 1969. The building adopted fully the modernist trends of twentieth-century architecture, yet with respect for the tradition of Greek architecture, as was Saarinen's basic aim.¹⁶⁵

At the time construction of the East Airport began, the Civil Aviation Authority was carrying out works to upgrade the rest of the aerodrome. Specifically, in 1961 work started on extending the main runway to a length of 3,200 metres and on constructing a taxiway of

¹⁶⁵ Santala, Sussana, 'Laboratory for a New Architecture: The Airport Terminal, Eero Saarinen and the Historiography of Modern Architecture', Doctoral dissertation, Helsinki 2015, p. 190.



Views of the East Airport today. Top, part of the façade. Bottom, the waiting area.





Top, the reception desk. Bottom, the escalators, 2020.





Part of the mural created by ceramicist Eleni Vernadaki in the VIP passenger lounge, inside the East Airport Terminal building. The work was completed in 1969, to coincide with the inauguration of the new Terminal, 2020.

corresponding length, for the movement of aircraft on the ground, parallel to the runway towards the sea. In addition, construction of aircraft parking space commenced, while the erection of a building complex to house ancillary services was planned for the area of the West Airport. Furthermore, sewers and drains were installed, ground drainage measures were implemented, changes were made in the road network, and the telecommunications and light signalling systems were modernized.¹⁶⁶ In 1970 the last extension of the runway was made, which reached a length of 3,500 metres.

¹⁶⁶ Due to the expansion of the aerodrome, part of Geroulanou Street, which connected Vouliagmienis Avenue with Vasileios Georgiou II Street, in the area of Agios Kosmas, was abolished. See Ανώνυμος, «Τα νέα έργα του Αεροδρομίου Ελληνικού» [‘The new works in the Aerodrome at Elliniko’], *Τεχνικά Χρονικά*, 203-204, July-August 1961, p. 50.



The Control Tower of the Civil Aviation Authority, which was built in the early 1990s, as seen from the East Airport Terminal building, 2020.

Close to the East Airport terminal stand the premises of the Civil Aviation Authority (ΥΠΑ), which has been housed there since the 1990s. Dominating the space is the control tower from which the Civil Aviation Authority monitors Greek air space. Built in 1991-1992, it is the only one now in use on the site of the former aerodrome at Elliniko. There are two other control towers in the space, adjacent to the East Airport. One was built in the 1950s and was moved from the West Airport, and the other, the most recent, was built in 1996-1998, but was never put into service. The last flight out of the aerodrome at Elliniko was of Olympic Airways, on 28 March 2001, with destination Thessaloniki.



The Terminal building and grounds of the East Airport. A free space will be left around the building, over a radius of 100 metres, so as to enhance the listed monument, 2020.









View from the roof of the East Airport Terminal building.
Visible is the Control Tower of the Civil Aviation Authority, 2020.





View of the East Airport Terminal building with additions made after 1969, in order to cope with the increased passenger traffic, 2020.

The history and development of Olympic Airways (1956-2010)

Olympic Airways constitutes a large and integral part of the history of the aerodrome at Elliniko, as well as of the modern economic and social history of Greece generally. It is the first major Greek aviation company, a trailblazer in terms of technology and entrepreneurship, which linked the Greek cities with all five continents. Its founding in the late 1950s was dictated by the basic need to serve air transport, but its development over the ensuing decades opened new horizons in passenger traffic, offering possibilities inconceivable in the past. The expansion of the aerodrome at Elliniko, the modernization of the facilities and the erection of new buildings were the outcome of the exponential rise in traffic, which generated new needs of passenger services, particularly from the 1960s onward. The course of Olympic Airways did not always run smooth, with its transfer from the ownership of Aristotle Onassis to the hands of the Greek State a pivotal point.

OLYMPIC AIRWAYS UNDER THE OWNERSHIP OF ARISTOTLE ONASSIS

On 30 July 1956 Aristotle Onassis bought from the Greek State the run-down company TAE, simultaneously acquiring the exclusive privilege of exploiting the air transport of Greece, for traffic of passengers, cargoes and mail. His company took over from TAE all the flight material, facilities, equipment and 14 aircraft, as well as the workforce of 865 people, which it kept.¹⁶⁷ The name of the new company, 'Olympic Airways', was in line with the motif of other companies owned by Onassis, such as the shipping company 'Olympic Maritime', while the sixth circle in the logo was added so as not to contravene the registered five-circle emblem of the Olympic Committee. At that time only one other private citizen owned an airline company, the American Howard Hughes, owner of TWA.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Στεργίου, Δημήτρης, «Ολυμπιακή Αεροπορία. 40 χρόνια στους ουρανούς του κόσμου» [Dimitris Stergiou, 'Olympic Airways. 40 years in the world's skies'], *Πτήση και Διάστημα*, 145, April 1997.

¹⁶⁸ Ιωαννίδης, Πάυλος, *Κι αν δεν είσαι, θα γίνεις...* [Pavlos Ioannidis, *And if you aren't, you will become ...*], Livanis Publications, Athens 2008, pp. 113-114, and Ίδρυμα Ωνάση, «Αριστοτέλης Ωνάσης. Η ζωή και το έργο του ανθρώπου που αποτέλεσε την επιτομή του κοσμοπολίτη επιχειρηματία του 20ού αιώνα» [Onassis Foundation, 'Aristotle Onassis. The life and work of the man who was the epitome of the cosmopolitan entrepreneur in the 20th century'], n.d., <<https://www.onassis.org/el/people/aristotle-onassis>> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020).



Signing of the contract between the Greek State and Aristotle Onassis in the Ministry of Coordination. Signatories are Onassis, seated on the left, and the Minister of Finance Christos Thivaos, seated on the right. The contract was cosigned by the ministers of Coordination, Finance, Trade and Industry, and Public Works, 31 July 1956.

Olympic Airways made its first flight with a DC-3 aircraft in the morning of 6 April 1957, from the aerodrome at Elliniko to Thessaloniki. Pilot of the aeroplane was Pavlos Ioannidis, who went on to become chief handler, chief trainer, director of flight operations and director general of the company.¹⁶⁹ In no time, great strides were made in the company's organization and operation, with the hiring and training of personnel, the placement of orders for state-of-the-art aircraft, the construction of new facilities and the announcement of new routes. From May 1957 flights were operated to Rome, Paris and London, and one year later routes to Zurich, Frankfurt and Tel Aviv were launched. Indeed, foreseeing the inclusion of transatlantic destinations in its schedule, Olympic Airways opened its first ticket office in New York, a market it was to conquer in the next decade.

¹⁶⁹ Ίδρυμα Ωνάση, «Πάυλος Ιωαννίδης» [Onassis Foundation, 'Pavlos Ioannidis'], n.d., <<https://www.onassis.org/el/people/paul-i-ioannidis>> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020).





Douglas DC-3 SX-BAN aircraft of the newly-founded Olympic Airways Company,
at the start of flights by the new air carrier, April 1957.

The beginning of the 1960s signalled the modernization of Olympic Airways and its entry in to the age of jet aircraft. In the previous year, Onassis had placed an order for four British jets of Comet 4B type and had arranged for the training of Olympic Airways pilots by British European Airways in London. Furthermore, at this time the first IBM computer was installed, to support the company's data-processing needs. The new aircraft were employed mainly on routes abroad and in 1961 the first night flight was made from Athens to London.¹⁷⁰

In 1965 the first big step into transatlantic routes was made, with the purchase of three American Boeing 707-384C aircraft. The pilots, mechanics and engineers of Olympic Airways went to the TWA training centre in Kansas City to be taught new skills. In the meantime, two more offices of Olympic Airways were opened in the USA, in Chicago and Los Angeles. The first transatlantic flight from Athens to New York was made on 1 June 1966. This was also the first flight in the world in which an aircraft crossed the Atlantic Ocean only with electronic means of pilotage (Doppler and Loran), without navigator.¹⁷¹ Thanks to the preference of Greeks living abroad for Olympic flights, as well as to the expansion of the company's network to many Greek and European cities, passenger traffic soared and by 1967 exceeded one million travellers for the first time.¹⁷²

In the following years the fleet and the staff of Olympic Airways continued to increase and its network to widen. In 1968 the route from Athens to Johannesburg and Nairobi was inaugurated, and in 1969 routes to Montreal, Chicago, Vienna and Brussels. As far as the domestic network is concerned, this already included several destinations on the mainland and the islands, such as Corfu, Samos, Preveza, Volos, Rhodes and Pyrgos. In 1968 Olympic's fleet took delivery of new Boeing 727-284 jets, for the handling of which the company established an 18-month training programme in Oxford.

¹⁷⁰ Ιωαννίδης, Π., *op. cit.*, p. 116, Στεργίου, Δ., *op. cit.*, and Βασάκης, Αντ., *op. cit.*, p. 204.

¹⁷¹ Ιωαννίδης, Π., *op. cit.*, pp. 132, 140-142.

¹⁷² Στεργίου, Δ., *op. cit.*



Aristotle Onassis disembarking from an aircraft of Olympic Airways, a few months after it began operating. Visible is the company's first logo, 2 June 1957



As has been said already, in order for the aerodrome at Elliniko to meet the new demands, it was expanded and its form and layout were changed, with Olympic Airways having exclusive use of the facilities of the West Airport and the other companies being served by the new East Airport.

The 1960s ended sadly, with two hijackings and one crash with many victims, in 1969. On 2 January a flight on the Heraklion-Athens route was hijacked by the passenger Georgios Flamouridis, forcing the aircraft to land in Cairo. The second hijack happened on 16 August, on the route Athens-Agrinio-Ioannina, when the medical doctor Tsironis forced the aircraft to land at Avlona in Albania. On 8 December the aircraft on the evening flight from Chania to Athens crashed into a hill in the area of Keratea, killing the 85 passengers and

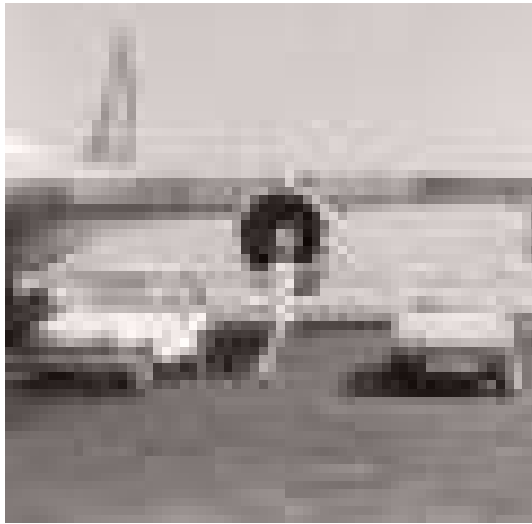


The premises of the West Airport, which from 1969 onwards was run exclusively by Olympic Airways, 1962.

the five-member crew.¹⁷³ In 1971 the first daughter company of Olympic Airways was founded, 'Olympic Aviation'. This was a development of the Division for Light Aircraft and Helicopters, which had been set up in 1968 on the initiative of Aristotle Onassis's son, Alexander, with the aim of serving small aerodromes in Greece with small flexible aircraft.¹⁷⁴ Alexander Onassis was an aviator himself and personally supervised the new company. Concurrently, Olympic Airways expanded its network to Milan and Dusseldorf, while direct flights from Thessaloniki to cities abroad were inaugurated.

¹⁷³ Ιωαννίδης, Π., *op. cit.*, pp. 169-173.

¹⁷⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 191-195.



Advertising shots in the aerodrome at Elliniko, showing an Olympic Airways aircraft, support vehicles and a woman in the uniform of an air hostess, 1970.





Passengers getting off an Olympic Airways bus, *ca* 1969.

The most important step was taken in 1972, with the route Athens – Bangkok – Singapore – Sydney, making Olympic a ‘company of the five continents’. Flights commenced on 3 March 1972 and were operated twice a week.¹⁷⁵

For all the positive developments of those years and the intensive activity of the company, the following years were to bring a series of unfortunate events, end result of which was the transfer of the company to the Greek State. In October 1972, there was another crash, when an aircraft travelling from Corfu fell into the sea in the area of Voula, in bad weather, killing 37 of the 53 persons on board.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Στεργίου, Δ., *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁶ Ιωαννίδης, Π., *op. cit.*, p. 207.



The following year, Alexander Onassis lost his life during a test flight with the amphibious aeroplane Piaggio P-136-L2 in the aerodrome at Elliniko.

Alexander, as a licensed examiner of the Civil Aviation Authority, boarded the plane together with the American D. F. McCusker, new pilot of the Piaggio, in order to assess him in the course of the flight. Immediately after takeoff, the aircraft tilted sharply to the right, failing to respond to the pilot's handling, and within a few seconds it hit the ground. Alexander Onassis, after being clinically dead for two days, died on 24 January 1973.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ More information on the death of Alexander Onassis in Ιωαννίδης, Π., *op. cit.*, pp. 207-220.



Cargo helicopter of Olympic Airways, *ca* 1971.

Alexander's death is said to have been the beginning of the end for Onassis's Olympic Airways, as henceforth he seems to have lost all interest in his company. Certainly Onassis never recovered from the loss of Alexander, but at the same period political and economic circumstances were far from favourable for the development of air transport. The early 1970s saw the outbreak of the first oil crisis, with reduction in crude oil production by the Arab countries that formed the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the simultaneous upsurge of its price. The rise in the price of petroleum created a huge financial problem for Olympic Airways, which had to cut down its expenses right away. The problem was exacerbated in 1974, when the Turkish invasion of Cyprus brought a falloff in passenger traffic.



Alexander Onassis (centre) between pilots and personnel of Olympic Airways, *ca* 1971.



Alexander Onassis conversing with a pilot, *ca* 1971.

Indicatively, in 1973 Olympic carried 2,977,011 passengers and in 1974 this number dropped by about 500,000.¹⁷⁸

In this difficult period there was one positive development; in 1973 the first direct flight on the Athens – New York route was made by the new Boeing 747 Jumbo jets.¹⁷⁹ These aircraft were the last to be received by Aristotle Onassis. 1974 was a year of strife within the company, with strikes of handlers rejoindered by Onassis with a lock out. In December of that year he went so far as to terminate his contract with the Greek State, returning Olympic Airways to the government. Onassis died in March 1975 and about one month later, on 21 April, the contract of delivery of Olympic Airways to the Greek State was signed.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 225, and Στεργίου, Δ., *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁹ Βασάκης, Αντ., *op. cit.*, p. 236.

¹⁸⁰ ΦΕΚ Α154/26-07-1975, Ν. 96 «Περί εξαγοράς των μετοχών της Ολυμπιακής Αεροπορίας Α.Ε. παρά του Ελληνικού Δημοσίου και παραλαβής αυτής» [Official Gazette Α154/26-07-1975, Ν. 96 'On buying out of the shares of Olympic Airways S.A. by the Greek State and receipt of it']. For more information on the handover of Olympic Airways to the Greek State, see Ιωαννίδης, Π., *op. cit.*, pp. 231-261.

OLYMPIC AIRWAYS AS A STATE COMPANY

Although the second period in the life of Olympic Airways may have lacked the cosmopolitan character it enjoyed under Onassis's ownership, nonetheless for many years it continued to expand its network and to guarantee safety in air transport services. From the first year, Thessaloniki and Heraklion were linked with Vienna, and Corfu with Frankfurt and Dusseldorf, while the following year Dhahran, Dubai, Kuwait, Benghazi and Melbourne were added to the company's network. In 1976 the subsidiary company Olympic Catering was founded, for in-flight catering. In the late 1970s the company's prospects were promising; the fleet was modernized with the purchase of the first Airbuses, the data-management system was upgraded with the purchase of new computers, the system of booking seats through British Airways was introduced and the facilities in the West Air Terminal were expanded, so as to serve the ever-growing volume of passengers and freight.¹⁸¹

In 1979 the second international oil crisis broke out, resulting in the continually increasing price of fuel. In an effort to cut down its expenses, Olympic Airways suspended most of its non-cost-effective routes, such as those to Australia and Canada, it replaced some old aircraft with new ones with lower fuel consumption, and it limited its personnel. In addition, it diversified its activities by founding the subsidiary Olympic Air Tours, which undertook to organize trips, book hotels and issue tickets. From 1981 the company gradually expanded its network and restarted suspended routes, while in 1982 there was the first fall in fuel prices for almost a decade. In the coming years routes were inaugurated to, among other places, Amman, Damascus, Alexandria, Copenhagen, Tirana and Marseille, there was a great increase in passenger traffic and numerous staff were engaged.

Despite the efforts for recovery, however, the company's operation continued to present problems. In 1986 handlers went on strike, causing chaos in Olympic Airways's schedule. Flights were delayed and passengers were inconvenienced, resulting in a significant slump in traffic. These events increased the company's financial deficit, which had been ongoing for years due to management problems. The company limped on with the existing problems until 1993, with some positive developments in its course, such as the addition of Tokyo and

¹⁸¹ Στεργίου, Δ., *op. cit.*, and Βασάκης, Αντ., *op. cit.*, p. 264.

Boston to the network of destinations and Olympic Aviation becoming independent in 1992.¹⁸²

In the meanwhile changes were made in the operating regime of airline companies in Europe generally. From 1988, consequent upon a decision of the European Commission, the deregulation of air transport services commenced, which was completed in three stages by 1993. This programme made provision for, inter alia, the abolition of monopoly exploitation of routes by national carriers and the founding of new companies, with the aim of creating a single competitive air transport market.¹⁸³ In Greece the monopoly of Olympic Airways was abolished by presidential decree in 1991. This was followed by the founding of several private companies, such as Aegean Airlines, Cretan Airlines and Cronus Airlines.¹⁸⁴ In 1992 one more subsidiary of Olympic was established, Macedonian Airlines, which undertook charter flights of the first.

Within this climate a series of actions was taken for the rehabilitation and restructuring of Olympic Airways. In 2003 part of the company was absorbed by Macedonian Airlines, to create Olympic Airlines. The company's problems continued, however, leading governments to seek its privatization. After a public tender, the Marfin Investment Group (MIG) bought the shares of Olympic Airlines and renamed the company 'Olympic Air'. In 2010 it changed hands for the last time, when it was bought out by Aegean Airlines, under whose aegis it operates as a daughter company to this day.

¹⁸² Στεργίου, Δ., *op. cit.*

¹⁸³ Αναστασιάδης, Τάσος, «Ανοικτοί ευρωπαϊκοί ουρανοί. Απελευθέρωση των αερομεταφορών» [Tasos Anastasiadis, 'Open European skies. Liberalization of air transport'], *Πτήση και Διάστημα*, 113, May 1994.

¹⁸⁴ More about the deregulation of air transport and private airline companies in Greece in Βασάκης, Αντ., *op. cit.*, pp. 289-307.

TRANSFER OF THE AERODROME
AND ITS USES IN THE 21ST CENTURY





Aerial photograph of the aerodrome at Elliniko during the final phase of its operation.

Relocating the aerodrome

Greece in the 1990s

Greece in the 1990s had to face multiple challenges, large and small, dominant among which were the actions and policies for its entry into the European monetary union and the preparations for organizing and hosting the 2004 Olympic Games. Successive elections, all-party governments and coalition governments were played out on the political stage in the years 1989-1990. Then came the election of Constantinos Mitsotakis as prime minister with the New Democracy party, to be followed by the re-election of Andreas Papandreou with the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (ΠΑΣΟΚ). Papandreou remained in power until 1996, when he was succeeded by Constantinos Simitis, who was prime minister until 2004.¹⁸⁵

At a global level too, the period 1989-1991 is distinguished by world-shattering events. The breakup of the Soviet Union generated upheavals in the global geopolitical map and brought the planet face to face with a new status quo, which was far removed from the West-East polarization of the Cold War world. Consequence of these changes was the opening of borders and the free movement of people previously deprived of the right to travel. The thousands of inhabitants of neighbouring Albania, mainly of Greek origin, and repatriated Greeks from the former Soviet Republics who came to Greece in the early 1990s brought changes in the social map of the country and an important boost to sectors of the economy such as agriculture and the construction industry, which they supplied with cheap manual labour.¹⁸⁶

Greece's European orientation, which dates from the 1960s, was consolidated finally in the 1990s. In 1992 the Maastricht Agreement was signed, setting as target the

¹⁸⁵ For further information about the political developments in Greece in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, see Clogg, Richard, *Συνοπτική Ιστορία της Ελλάδας 1770-2013* [*Short History of Greece 1770-2013*], Katoptrio, Athens 2015, pp. 268-274, 287-289 and 296-299 and Beaton, Roderick, *Greece: Biography of a Modern Nation*, Penguin, Milton Keynes 2020, pp. 354-357 and 365-368.

¹⁸⁶ Λιάκος, Αντώνης, *Ο Ελληνικός 20ός Αιώνας* [Antonis Liakos, *The Greek 20th Century*], Polis, Athens 2020, pp. 553-554 and Κωστής, Κώστας, *Ο Πλούτος της Ελλάδας. Η Ελληνική Οικονομία από τους Βαλκανικούς Πολέμους μέχρι Σήμερα* [Costas Costis, *The Wealth of Greece. The Greek Economy from the Balkan Wars to Today*], Pataki, Athens 2019, pp. 443-444.

monetary unification of the member-states of the European Union, and in 2001 the single currency, the euro, was adopted.¹⁸⁷ A significant development on a global scale was the liberalization of the financial system and the domination of the free market, which began in the 1980s from the USA and was followed by the advanced EU countries. In parallel, this decade witnessed the global technological and internet revolution, with its domino effect in the sectors of computer technology and communication. This had a knock-on effect on the manner of governance, the economy and the sectors of labour, leisure and transport.¹⁸⁸

Timeline of the relocation of the aerodrome

In the mid-1990s the contract was finally signed for the relocation of the International Airport of Athens from Elliniko to the area of Spata. This was not, however, a novel proposal; on the contrary, the decision and the rationale of the relocation had been set in motion in the 1970s, while from the first years of operation of the aerodrome at Elliniko objections and protests to its presence there had been voiced by associations and by residents of the neighbouring municipalities. In the 1950s and with progress in aeroplane technology, the need for bigger runways for the landing and takeoff of jets was a major concern. Jet technology had been developed some decades earlier, but Germany's war industry in the Second World War precipitated the production of jets in order to use them in military operations. At the same time, Great Britain too pushed ahead with building aeroplanes of this type and the first commercial jet flight was made in 1952, from London to Johannesburg in South Africa.

Published in the June 1954 issue of *Technika Chronika*, periodical of the Technical Chamber of Greece, is an article (in Greek) with the title "The aerodrome at Elliniko is incurably inadequate.

¹⁸⁷ Κωστής, Κώστας, *Τα Κακομαθημένα Παιδιά της Ιστορίας. Η Διαμόρφωση του Νεοελληνικού Κράτους 18ος-21ος αιώνας* [Costas Costis, *The Spoilt Children of History. The Formation of the Modern Greek State 18th-21st century*], Pataki, Athens 2015, pp. 829-833.

¹⁸⁸ For the technological transformation of Greece, see, Λιάκος, Αντ., *op. cit.*, pp. 527-536.

Need of its immediate transfer to Spata', by the civil engineer D. N. Fountoulis. He spells out the reasons why the aerodrome at Elliniko was not suitable, in his view, for the construction of a large runway and therefore its relocation to a more suitable site is preferable to the prospect of its expansion, so as to serve the large aeroplanes of new type. Basis of his argument is that the existing aerodrome's proximity to the mountainous massif of Hymettos and to the sea, creates unpredictable changes in wind direction, but also that there is lack of sufficient space for lengthening the runway, as dense settlement had already developed around the aerodrome. Because, as the author says, the length of the runways is the feature that defines whether an aerodrome has the capacity to receive aeroplanes of various sizes, this cannot be provided at Elliniko. As to the place of relocation of the aerodrome, the author proposes the area of Spata, which '... lying far from any settlement and mountains, does not have any of the aforementioned irremediable flaws of Elliniko and has all its accesses from the air free, as many veteran aviators assured us ...'¹⁸⁹ At that period the Greek government commission the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)¹⁹⁰ to investigate whether Spata was indeed an ideal site for creating an international airport or whether the expansion of the aerodrome at Elliniko was enough.¹⁹¹

In 1957, in the period when the major airline companies worldwide were modernizing their fleet by purchasing jets, a major public debate began on the suitability of the aerodrome at Elliniko. Many articles were written and there were long debates in the Greek Parliament about the expansion or the abolition of the aerodrome at Elliniko. The 'Leros Report', as it was dubbed then by ICAO executive John Malgrave Lerew, showed Elliniko to be the best location for the development of an international aerodrome.¹⁹² Other areas that were mooted and examined at that time as alternative locations were Megara, Oropos, the area of Loutsa-Rafina and Tanagra.

¹⁸⁹ Φουντούλης, Δ. Ν., op. cit., pp. 10-18.

¹⁹⁰ The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) was founded in 1944. See 'About ICAO', n.d., <<https://www.icao.int/about-icao/Pages/default.aspx>> (Retrieved: 19-11-2020).

¹⁹¹ Ανώνυμος, «Το αεροδρόμιον αιτία κολοσσιαίας σπατάλης διά το δημόσιον» ['The aerodrome cause of colossal wastefulness for the State'], Newspaper *Eleftheria*, 04-12-1957, pp. 1 and 5.

¹⁹² Ανώνυμος, «Συμβολή στη χάραξη πορείας για μια σωστή απόφαση σχετικά με το νέο αεροδρόμιο της Αθήνας» ['Contribution to charting a course for a correct decision concerning the new airport of Athens'], *Τεχνικά Χρονικά*, 4-5, April-May 1976, p. 18.

As noted also in the previous chapter, in the end in the late 1950s the Greek government decided to expand the aerodrome at Elliniko by adding runways and new main and auxiliary buildings, which were constructed in the 1960s. This was, however, a period of rapid growth in air transport. Aviation companies were enlarging or proliferating, aeroplanes were becoming faster and more and more people were travelling by aeroplane and visiting destinations beyond the close confines of their city or country, whether for professional reasons or for leisure. As British historian Mark Mazower remarks ‘... in 1971 only one third of British adults had ever been abroad on holidays; in 1984 only one third had not.’¹⁹³

In the early 1970s, the Junta regime commissioned Burns and Roe Inc. and Airways Engineering Corp. to prepare a ‘Feasibility Study for the Development of the International Airport of Athens’. The outcome of the study, which was completed in August 1971, was that the needs that would arise in the coming decade made the creation of a new airport imperative. The locations evaluated in the study were the following: Spata, Chalkis, Salamis, Aegina, Megara, Tanagra, Corinth, Kopais, Thebes, Fleves. By applying criteria such as the location and the adequacy of the ground, the climatic conditions and the effect of noise, the study enhanced Spata as the most suitable area and specifically the site of Zagani.¹⁹⁴ At this point it is worth mentioning also the later proposal of the Doxiadis Office for the creation of the International Airport on Makronisos, with the study that was submitted to the Ministry of Coordination in 1973.¹⁹⁵

In 1975 the Technical Chamber of Greece set up a special committee to study the issue of the Athens aerodrome. Its members were scientists from various disciplines;

¹⁹³ Mazower, Mark, *Σκοτεινή Ηπειρος. Ο Ευρωπαϊκός Εικοστός Αιώνας* [*Dark Continent. Europe's Twentieth Century*], Alexandria, Athens 2004, p. 293.

¹⁹⁴ The above information is drawn from the «Εισηγητική Έκθεση στο Σχέδιο Νόμου “Κύρωση Σύμβασης Ανάπτυξης του νέου Διεθνούς Αεροδρομίου της Αθήνας στα Σπάτα, ίδρυσης της εταιρίας ‘Διεθνής Αερολιμένας Αθηνών Α.Ε.’, έγκριση περιβαλλοντικών όρων και άλλες διατάξεις”» [‘Explanatory Report to the Draft Law “Ratification of Agreement of Development of the new International Aerodrome of Athens at Spata, founding of the company “International Airport of Athens S.A.”, approval of environmental terms and other ordinances”’], 31-07-1995, <https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/2f026f42-950c-4efc-b950-340c4fb76a24/NOM_SYM_EE_2338_HB25.doc> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020).

¹⁹⁵ Χεκίμογλου, Αχιλλέας, «Το όραμα του Δοξιάδη για αεροδρόμιο στη Μακρόνησο» [Achilleas Hekimoglou, ‘Doxiadis’s vision for an aerodrome on Makronisos’], Newspaper *To Vima*, 24-08-2015, <<https://www.tovima.gr/2015/08/24/society/to-orama-toy-doksiadi-gia-aerodromio-sti-makroniso/>> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020).





The area of the former aerodrome, on the side towards Athens, 2020.

architects, transport engineers, economists, archaeologists, urban planners, mechanical engineers, aeronautical engineers, and so on. In its report are useful and interesting conclusions relating to the criteria of selecting the new site for the aerodrome. There are also data on passenger traffic in Greece over the years 1970-1974. The highest figure is for 1973, with the number of passengers in excess of 9,000,000 annually, about 57% of which –that is, about 6,000,000– were served by the aerodrome at Elliniko.¹⁹⁶ The data for passenger traffic in 2019 show that the aerodrome at Spata served over 25,000,000 visitors, so that a comparison can be made with the corresponding numbers of about half a century earlier.¹⁹⁷

The Greek government had commissioned three project offices to prepare prediction studies for passenger traffic in the decades to come, so that there was the necessary documentation for keeping or not keeping Elliniko as the basic airport serving Greece. These offices were the Doxiadis Office, the Airways Engineering company and the consortium Aeroport de Paris/Frankfurt Flughafen/Aronis-Drettas-Karlaftis.¹⁹⁸ Indicatively, the predictions for passenger traffic in the year 1990 differ considerably in the reports of the three offices. The consortium predicted 14-18 million passengers, Airways Engineering predicted 25.34 million and the Doxiadis Office 28.74 million. The Technical Chamber of Greece committee judged that these predictions were over-optimistic and excessive, and that it was practically impossible to extract in a reliable manner a safe conclusion. However, it expressed the view that the aerodrome at Elliniko would be in a position to meet adequately the transport traffic until 1990, but that after then it would prove to be inadequate.¹⁹⁹

Specifically, the committee's report states: 'The aerodrome at Elliniko, even with the improvement works being made there, will not be able to meet the increasing needs of serving air transport, even if these will be in reality less than the conservative ones

¹⁹⁶ Ανώνυμος, «Συμβολή στη χάραξη πορείας για μια σωστή απόφαση σχετικά με το νέο αεροδρόμιο της Αθήνας», *op. cit.*, p. 98.

¹⁹⁷ International Airport of Athens, «Επιβατική Κίνηση 2019» ['Passenger Traffic 2019'], n.d., <<https://www.aia.gr/user-files/675393df-ab1a-4b77-826c-f3096a3d7f12/pax-traffic-gr-2019.pdf>> (Retrieved: 19-11-2020).

¹⁹⁸ Ανώνυμος, «Συμβολή στη χάραξη πορείας για μια σωστή απόφαση σχετικά με το νέο αεροδρόμιο της Αθήνας», *op. cit.*, pp. 48-55.

¹⁹⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 95-118.

projected – today. This ascertainment is made on narrow operational criteria, because the social and spatial reasons for moving the aerodrome (the civil and the military) from its present position, within the city of Athens, is now accepted by everyone.’²⁰⁰

The government of Constantinos Karamanlis then commissioned the consortium Aeroport de Paris/Frankfurt Flughafen/ΑΔΚ to evaluate 18 alternative locations for the transfer of the aerodrome, which once again proposed the Spata-Zagani site as the most suitable.²⁰¹ In this framework, in 1978 the law 811/1978 (ΦΕΚ 130 Α’/1978), which made provision for the founding of a legal entity in private law under the title ‘Athens Airport (Α.Α.) Société Anonyme’ was published in the *Official Gazette*. The remit of ‘Athens Airport (Α.Α.) Société Anonyme’ was the ‘study, construction, organization, operation, administration, exploitation and development of the new airport of Athens’. This law specified that ‘the Airport at Elliniko will continue to operate until the start of operation of the new airport, being abolished henceforth’ and that its land and its buildings shall be utilized either through divestment or through exploitation for the financing of the construction of the new aerodrome.²⁰²

Preparatory works, mainly of earth removal, began in the first half of the 1980s at Spata, and had been preceded by expropriation of the necessary land. Construction works for the new aerodrome were halted in the following years, due to change in political orientations and lack of funding, but studies of economic feasibility, social costs-benefits and environmental effects were set in motion.

The contract for the development of the new International Airport of Athens was signed finally in 1995, between the Greek State on the one hand and the companies Hochtief Aktiengesellschaft vorm. Helfmann, ABB Calor Emag SchaltanlagenAG, H. Krantz-TkTGmbH and Flughafen Athen – Spata Projektgesellschaft mbH on the other. Set out in the contract were the timetables for starting construction works, disbursements

²⁰⁰ Op. cit., p. 113.

²⁰¹ «Εισηγητική Έκθεση Εισηγητική Έκθεση στο Σχέδιο Νόμου “Κύρωση Σύμβασης Ανάπτυξης του νέου Διεθνούς Αεροδρομίου της Αθήνας στα Σπάτα, ίδρυσης της εταιρίας ‘Διεθνής Αερολιμένας Αθηνών Α.Ε.’, έγκριση περιβαλλοντικών όρων και άλλες διατάξεις”», op. cit.

²⁰² ΦΕΚ 130/23-08-1978, «Νόμος υπ. αριθ. 811 Περί συστάσεως Εταιρείας υπό την επωνυμία “ΑΕΡΟΛΙΜΗΝ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ Ανώνυμη Εταιρεία” και ρυθμίσεως συναφών θεμάτων» [Official Gazette 130/23-08-1978, ‘Law no, 811 On setting up a company under the name “AIRPORT OF ATHENS S.A.” and regulations of related issues’].

as well as the specific and complex details concerning, inter alia, the transfer of services and functions of the aerodrome from Elliniko to Spata.²⁰³ Concerning the termination of the operation of the aerodrome at Elliniko, after sixty years, the contract states:

“The Greek State undertakes the obligation that the Airport at Elliniko will close for the use of fixed-wing aircraft as soon as it is transferred to the “Aerodrome” [at Spata], ..., all the aeronautical activity, passengers, luggage, cargoes and mail which the Aerodrome at Elliniko circulates during this time, together with those related services and auxiliary works, for which there was arrangement with the Aerodrome Company, to be moved during the said time.”²⁰⁴

The ceremony of laying the foundation stone for the ‘Eleftherios Venizelos’ Athens International Airport took place on 5 September 1996. In tandem with the construction of the aerodrome, extensive road works were also carried out, with the building of new motorways and the improvement of existing ones to connect Athens with the rest of Greece. Construction works on the aerodrome were completed four years later, in September 2000, and a period of testing followed. The new aerodrome was named in honour of Eleftherios Venizelos, who had founded the Ministry of Aviation in 1929. The new airport began operating on 27 March 2001 and on the following day the first aeroplane, of Olympic Airways flight 424 from Montreal in Canada, landed. By August of the same year, the ‘Eleftherios Venizelos’ aerodrome had served a total of 7,000,000 passengers and 85,000 flights, and the average daily number of aircraft landings and takeoffs was 600.²⁰⁵ These are the first data for traffic in the new aerodrome until a few days before the horrendous hits on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York, on 11 September 2001, which were to have a chain of consequences all over the world and brought significant changes in the air transport sector.

²⁰³ ΦΕΚ 202/14-09-1995, «Νόμος υπ. αριθ. 2338 Κύρωση σύμβασης ανάπτυξης του νέου Διεθνούς Αεροδρομίου της Αθήνας στα Σπάτα, Ίδρυση της Εταιρείας “Διεθνής Αερολιμένας Αθηνών Α.Ε.”, έγκριση περιβαλλοντικών όρων και άλλες διατάξεις» [Official Gazette 202/14-09-1995, ‘Law no. 2338 Ratification of agreement of development of the new International Aerodrome of Athens at Spata, Founding of the Company “International Airport of Athens S.A.”, approval of environmental terms and other ordinances’].

²⁰⁴ Op. cit., Article 9.3.

²⁰⁵ International Airport of Athens, «Θετικός ο απολογισμός του 1ου εξαμήνου λειτουργίας του Διεθνούς Αερολιμένα Αθηνών “Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος”» [‘Positive compte rendu of the 1st six months of operation of the International Airport of Athens “Eleftherios Venizelos”’], 27-09-2001, <<https://aia.gr/el/company-and-business/press-and-Media/press-office/press-releases/after-the-first-six-months-of-operation-a-successful-1st-half-year-for-elftherios-venizelos>> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020).

Organizing the 2004 Olympic Games

The Olympic Games in Athens

Greece had entered the new millennium and the orbit of the Olympic Games. After the city of Athens' unsuccessful bid to organize the 1996 Olympic Games, which marked the centenary since the first modern games in Athens in 1896, on 5 September 1997 the city was selected by the International Olympic Committee to host the games in 2004. Athens' competitors in the bid were Cape Town, Stockholm, Buenos Aires and Rome. According to post hoc assessments, the candidature file for 2004 was characterized by clarity, precision and adherence to the specifications set out by the International Olympic Committee for the projects that had to be realized. To the contrary, the corresponding file for the 1996 games, which were organized by the city of Atlanta in the USA, projected Greece's illustrious past and the symbolism of the games, rather than an integrated and structured proposal.²⁰⁶

The Olympic Games of 2004 had several particularities in relation to previous games, particularities which, in the end, had a direct effect on the cost of the undertaking. They were the first Olympic Games after the attacks on the Twin Towers, on 11 September 2001, attacks that led Western governments to take ever stricter security measures. Furthermore, a few months prior to the Olympic Games in Athens, in March 2004, there were terrorist attacks in Madrid, with many victims and casualties.

Moreover, this was one of the few times that a country with such a small population had undertaken to organize such a big event. The games held in Greece in 1896 could hardly be taken as a measure of comparison, as only 241 athletes participated, whereas in 2004 the number of competitors exceed 10,500. Only naturally, this fact raised questions, both on the domestic front and among foreign observers, regarding the success of the venture.

²⁰⁶ Λιάκος, Αντ., *op. cit.*, pp. 589-593.





The Olympic Softball Centre at Elliniko, 2020.

Last, Greece was the first full member state of the European Union to organize the Olympic Games, which meant that all the contracts for constructions and so on, and the other legal formulations, had to be harmonized fully with EU legislation.²⁰⁷

In order to monitor the progress of the organization of the Olympic Games, in 1998 the Organizing Committee of the Athens Olympic Games (OEOA) was instituted by law, with the discrete title 'Athens 2004', which was placed under the supervision of a special Interministerial Committee of the Ministerial Council. In 2000, the management of 'Athens 2004' was assumed by Gianna Angelopoulou-Daskalaki, who had served also as head of the committee for the preparation of the candidature bid. Aim of her appointment was to speed up preparation works, after reprovals of the International Olympic Committee because of delays. The three axes on which the preparation moved were: creating and upgrading the venues to host the events and the athletes, infrastructure works in the city of Athens, and planning the issues relating to security.²⁰⁸

To host the 28 competitions and the 301 medal-award ceremonies existing athletics facilities were upgraded and several new facilities were created, mainly for sports that were not played in Greece, at least at professional level. Basic poles of athletics facilities were the Olympic Athletic Centre of Athens (OAKA) at Marousi and the Olympic Centre of Elliniko, on the site of the former aerodrome. Additional venues were the Olympic Centre in the coastal zone of Faliro, the Olympic Centre at Schoinia, the Olympic Centre of Markopoulo, the Olympic Centre of West Attica with facilities in Peristeri, Nikaia and Ano Liosia, and the Olympic Complex at Goudi. Used too were the Olympic Gym of Galatsi, the 'Georgios Karaiskakis' stadium in Piraeus, the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens and the Olympic Centre of Vouliagmeni. During the Games, events were held also outside Attica, in Archaia Olympia, Thessaloniki, Patras, Volos and Heraklion. Complementary projects were the Olympic Village at the foot of Mount Parnes, the International Press Centre at Marousi, and others.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ Ίδρυμα Οικονομικών & Βιομηχανικών Ερευνών, «Το αποτύπωμα της διοργάνωσης των Ολυμπιακών Αγώνων του 2004 στην ελληνική οικονομία» [Economic & Industrial Research Foundation, 'The imprint of the organization of the 2004 Olympic Games on the Greek economy'], January 2015, <http://iobe.gr/docs/research/RES_05_F_15012015_REP.pdf> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020), pp. 29-30 and 38-39.

²⁰⁸ Λιάκος, Αντ. *op. cit.*, pp. 592-593.

²⁰⁹ Information on the facilities for the Olympic Games was drawn from the Foundation of Economic & Industrial Research, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-34.

Alongside the construction and upgrading of the sports facilities, in the runup period to the 2004 Olympic Games several large-scale infrastructure projects were completed, mainly in the Athens basin. The construction and delivery of the first stations of the Athens Metro in 2000, with the concurrent renovation of the electric railway, the opening of the new 'Eleftherios Venizelos' aerodrome at Spata in Attica, the unification of the archaeological sites of Athens and the construction of the Rhion-Antirrhion cable-stayed bridge were some of them.²¹⁰ They were not all part of the Olympic preparations; for some of these projects decisions had been taken much earlier than Athens' successful bid to host the Games, the new aerodrome being a case in point. However, the Olympic preparations accelerated their completion, bequeathing to the city, its residents and visitors, improved means of transport with the consequent partial relief from the pressure of serious urban problems of the past, such as traffic jams and atmospheric pollution.

In parallel with the aforesaid works, as global concern about the safety of the Olympic Games was intensifying, the Greek government spent huge sums to secure their smooth conduct.

Among the special traits of Greece, which complicated the already difficult equation of the security question, were both the country's geographical location, in proximity to the Middle East, and its geomorphology, with the long and difficult to control coastlines. Furthermore, until 2002, when it was dismantled, the 17 November terrorist organization was active in Greece, responsible for assassinations of Greek but also foreign political figures, officials, magnates and others. The USA and NATO contributed to the country's effort to guarantee the safe conduct of the Games and a meticulously planned security system was set up with the participation of the security forces, the army, special foreign envoys and private companies, which monitored the sports facilities as well as entry and exit points of the country and the major urban centres. *Ex post*, it has been estimated that the cost of the security of the 2004 Games was many times greater than the corresponding cost of the preceding Games in Atlanta (1996) and Sydney (2000).²¹¹

²¹⁰ Λιάκος, Αντ., *op. cit.*, pp. 593-594.

²¹¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 597-601.

The 2004 Olympic Games proceeded smoothly and without problems, despite the worries about security and the previous international pressure regarding delays in completing the preparations. They were held from the 13 to the 29 August and were followed by the Paralympic Games from 17 to 28 September 2004. They commenced with an impressive opening ceremony that narrated the history of Greece from prehistoric times to the twentieth century, through the presentation of emblematic and familiar images, art works and symbols of Hellenism. About 10,600 athletes from 201 countries participated in the Olympic Games, and about 3,800 athletes and 3,200 members of the national committees in the Paralympics. Furthermore, some 20,000 correspondents of international news media came to Athens, as well as about 2,000,000 visitors, while 3.9 billion viewers in 220 countries watched events on their TV screens.²¹²

Evaluating the Olympic Games is a complex issue. Among the positive aspects cited by most historians and researchers is the transformation of Attica due to the large-scale infrastructure projects undertaken in the framework of organizing the Games. At the opposite pole, however, is the view that the development of the in any case favoured centre of the country was uneven and to the detriment of the provinces. Also considered a positive outcome of the venture is the unprecedented publicity given to Greece abroad, the opportunity to present itself as a land whose history goes back thousands of years but also where a transition and adaptation to the modern age. This cannot be measured quantitatively, but it seems to have paid off in the following years, with the increase in the number of tourists. Last, assessed as particularly positive was the country's ability to bring to pass a difficult undertaking, inversely proportionate to the magnitude of its economy and population, as well as the remarkable mobilization of volunteers –of the order of 45,000 in various capacities– both for the preparation and, mainly, for the conduct of the Games.

In the light of the economic and political developments in Greece in the years after the Games, strong criticism has been voiced about the high cost of the Olympiad, which has been estimated at various times and by various means at between 6.5 and 9 billion euros.

²¹² Foundation of Economic & Industrial Research, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38 and Λιάκος, *Avt.*, *op. cit.*, p. 588.

On this point too approaches differ as to what should be included in the outlay. Whatever the case, in the end, the fact is that the expenditure far exceeded the initial budget. Last, another bone of contention is the Olympic properties and the lack of a prompt, integrated and systematic plan for their further utilization after the Games, particularly as maintenance costs of several of these venues were high.

Olympic venues in the former aerodrome

For several years Athens had been turned into a huge worksite, in order to complete on time the venues for the Games, in parallel with infrastructure projects to facilitate their organization. The original planning to construct or expand sports facilities was far removed from the final result. Initially, the plan was to build several venues in the area of the old Race Track by the bay of Faliro, which would constitute a complex of closed facilities of multiple uses.²¹³ However, in 2001, after a series of studies, the final spatial arrangement of the sports facilities was decided on, in two large complexes, that of the Olympic Athletic Centre of Athens (OAKA) and that of the former aerodrome at Elliniko. Specifically, the site of the former aerodrome was not included as a locus of competition venues in the candidature file for the Games, but arose as preparations unfolded, mainly for reasons of reducing the geographical dispersion of the Olympic venues as a whole. In the end, the area of the former aerodrome was selected as the most suitable for the construction of six sports facilities.

In September 2002, the Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games in Athens handed over the Warehouse that stood in the former West Aerodrome at Elliniko to the newly-instituted company 'Athens Olympic Broadcasting S.A.' (AOB), which was responsible for radio and television coverage and broadcasting of the Games worldwide, a procedure essential for every organizing city under the terms of the contract to undertake them. The Warehouse would be used for the safekeeping, gathering and assembling of the transmission equipment. Access of spectators to the Elliniko complex would be served by lines 2 and 3 of the Athens Metro, by urban bus routes and by implementing special Olympic Priority lanes (as the need arose during the progress of the Games), but also by the new transport system of the tram.

²¹³ For further information on the facilities and the events held there, see *Official Report of the XXVIII Olympiad vol. 2: The Games*, ATHENS 2004 Organising Committee for the Olympic Games S.A. - Liberis Publications Group Libecom SA, November 2005, <<https://digital.la84.org/digital/collection/p17103coll8/id/42951>> (Retrieved: 18-11-2020).



In the foreground, left the Indoor Court at Elliniko, which hosted basketball and handball matches. Right, the Fencing Hall. In the centre, the Olympic Baseball Centre, left the Olympic Hockey Centre and in the background the Olympic Canoe/Kayak Slalom Centre, 2004.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), setting out all issues of collaboration, was signed between the Organizing Committee and the Municipality of Elliniko on 9 July 2001.²¹⁴ In the framework of organizing test events before the 2004 Olympic Games, an established procedure of all Organizing Committees, the Athens Committee held such events in the Olympic facilities at Elliniko from February to June 2004.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ *Official Report of the XXVIII Olympiad vol. 1: Homecoming of the Games - Organisation and Operations*, ATHENS 2004 Organising Committee for the Olympic Games S.A., Liberis Publications Group Libecom SA, November 2005, <<https://digital.la84.org/digital/collection/p17103coll8/id/42734/rec/89>> (Retrieved: 18-11-2020), pp. 256, 278 & 299.

²¹⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 513-514.

The Olympic Complex at Elliniko in the 2004 Olympic Games

The Olympic Complex at Elliniko, to the south of Athens, was the second largest complex of Olympic venues after that of OAKA, which is to the north of the city. During the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, in the period 13 to 29 August, seven sports were hosted in the six venues that comprise the complex. Events for the 2004 Paralympic Games (17-28 September 2004) were held in some of them. For both the Olympic and the Paralympic Games, Elliniko was one of the two main nodes of venues (the other being OAKA), hosting six of the total of nineteen competitions.

The legal instituting of the space of the facilities arose from the amendments to the initial Law 2730/1999 (Article 2) through Law 2833/2000 (Article 3) initially, and Law 2912/2001 (Article 41) finally. The facilities were located in an area of 159 hectares in the north part of the site of the former aerodrome. They included the Centres for Baseball, Softball and Hockey on the east side of the complex, the Indoor Arena with the Fencing Hall to the west near Poseidonos Avenue, the Olympic Canoe and Kayak Slalom Centre to the northeast, the Olympic Sailing Centre at Agios Kosmas, as well as various open-air infrastructures, such as a piazza, lawns and greenery, and spaces for access and parking of vehicles.

OLYMPIC CANOE AND KAYAK SLALOM CENTRE AT ELLINIKO

The original design of this venue was intended for the shore at Schoinia, on a flat site that demanded considerable interventions in the environment, the creation of an artificial hill to simulate mountain and river conditions, all of which entailed greater cost for the additional facilities. In 2001, in the end, works began on constructing the Olympic Canoe and Kayak Slalom Centre, with a capacity of 8,000 spectators, in the area of the former aerodrome and specifically at the northeast edge. The competitions of this sport were held between 17 and 20 August. The Centre was constructed on natural hills in the military base, which for this reason had been previously declassified, with an artificial river flowing through them and giving visitors the opportunity to walk on them, as well as to sit in the tiered seats and watch



The Olympic Canoe and Kayak Slalom Centre at Elliniko, during the period of the Olympic Games.

the events.²¹⁶ The overall area used for its construction was 288,000 square metres, as the figure-eight shape given to the manmade canal greatly economized space.

The Centre occupied 27,000 square metres and consisted of one competition course, one secondary training course, one warmup lake of natural form and ancillary installations, which were included in a new building with view onto the apron and the renovated Olympic Airways terminal (former loading/unloading bays). Formed at the centre was an artificial islet. For the first time, seawater was pumped into the lake and the river, making the construction unique in the annals of the Games, to the extent that the International Federation changed its regulation and permitted the use of seawater in the sport.

²¹⁶ Φιντικιάκης, Νίκος, «Από το όραμα του αρχιτέκτονα στην εκμετάλλευση» [Nikos Fintikakis, 'From the architect's vision to the utilization'], *Αρχιτέκτονες*, 59, September/October 2006, p. 63.

Spectators in the Olympic Centre for the Canoe and Kayak Slalom, the Whitewater Park as the first Olympic kayak course in Greece was called, were able to observe the athletes' skill throughout the duration of the competition.²¹⁷

INDOOR ARENA AT ELLINIKO

Although the proposal in the candidature filed was to construct indoor arenas mainly in the area of the Faliro Bay, for a series of reasons and mainly lack of time, it was decided to accommodate the Indoor Arena in a former Olympic Airways hangar, after its appropriate adaptation, in the former aerodrome. The Indoor Arena at Elliniko hosted the basketball and handball events. Specifically, in basketball the preliminary matches of the groups and the run-off matches for places 9 to 12 were held over 11 days (14-24 August), with the rest of the matches being played in OAKA, while in handball the matches of the final phase were played over the days 26-29 August, with the preliminary matches being played earlier in the newly-constructed Olympic Handball Court and Tae Kwon Do at Faliro.

In the Paralympic Games, the wheelchair rugby matches were played in the Indoor Arena. The Arena's capacity was 15,000 spectators for basketball and 14,100 for handball. In the years after the Olympic Games the Indoor Arena was home ground of Greek basketball teams (KAE) with first Panionion, which was hosted there for about four years. After that it was used by AEK and Panhellenion, while six finals of the Men's Basketball Cup of Greece were held there, from 2007 to 2013.

²¹⁷ Μασούρα, Ρίτσα, «Κανόε-καγιάκ στα “Λευκά Νερά” του Ελληνικού» [Ritsa Masoura, 'Canoe-Kayak in the “White Waters” of Elliniko'], Newspaper *Kathimerini*, 21-10-2001, <<https://www.kathimerini.gr/103406/article/epikairothta/ellada/kanoe-kagiak-sta-leyka-nera-toy-ellhnikoy>> (Retrieved: 19-11-2020).

FENCING HALL AT ELLINIKO

In a second, smaller former Olympic Airways hangar, suitably adapted to meet Olympic specifications, the Olympic sport of fencing was housed in the period 14-22 August. It comprised two halls, one of capacity 3,800 spectators, which was used for the preliminary matches, and one of capacity 5,000 spectators, where the final matches were held. In the Paralympic Games it hosted the sitting volleyball matches, while the smaller hall hosted the wheelchair fencing matches.

Between the two former Olympic Airways hangars, of the Indoor Arena and the Fencing Hall, a complex of neighbouring buildings was formed, to house support functions. The post-Olympic use of both the Fencing Hall and the adjacent Indoor Arena for cultural events, commercial outlets, catering spaces and exhibitions/trade shows was defined in Article 23 of Law 3342/2005. Until 2019 the venues did indeed host cultural and music events, theme parks for children, as well as numerous exhibitions and trade shows, such as of mechanized vehicles, photography, food and beverages, furniture – decoration – household equipment, and boat shows.

OLYMPIC SOFTBALL CENTRE AT ELLINIKO

The women's softball matches were held in the newly-built Olympic Softball Centre, which occupied an area of 91,000 square metres. It comprised a main field with capacity 4,800 spectators, two auxiliary pre-performance fields and all the other necessary facilities for the athletes, the directorate of the event, housing personnel of the mass media, the Olympic Family and the service staff. The matches took place from 14 to 23 August 2004.



The Olympic Baseball Centre at Elliniko, during the period of the Olympic Games in Athens, 2004.

OLYMPIC BASEBALL CENTRE AT ELLINIKO

The Olympic Baseball Centre was custom built and comprised two main fields. The larger could accommodate 9,000 spectators and hosted preliminary matches, the semi-finals and the finals, and the smaller, of capacity 4,000 spectators, where only preliminary matches were held. The matches took place over 11 days (15-25 August), excepting the 19 and 23 August, which had been designated rest days. In the Paralympic Games, the archery competition took place in this Centre. Occupying a plot of 147,000 square metres, the venue included facilities for the athletes, coaches, press representatives, personnel, catering, sanitary installations, and so on. After the Olympic Games it was used, like the neighbouring softball and hockey centres, to provide ancillary spaces for sports and athletics, to host cultural events, as well as catering outlets for the public. From 2007 to 2013 it was also headquarters of the Ethnikos Piraeus football team, to which it was leased for three plus three years.



The Olympic Hockey Centre at Elliniko, 2004.

OLYMPIC HOCKEY CENTRE AT ELLINIKO

Hockey matches were also hosted at Elliniko, in a light construction, instead of in the Karaiskakis Stadium in Piraeus, as was originally planned; the latter was used in the end for the preliminary football matches. The hockey venue is a new building in the Olympic Complex at Elliniko, covering an area of 150,000 square metres and consisting of two fields, a large one of capacity 7,300 spectators, and a smaller one of capacity 2,100 spectators. In addition, it included a warmup pitch for athletes, as well as essential services for athletes, coaches, mass media representatives, members of the Olympic Family and personnel. The hockey matches were played there between 14 and 27 August, while in the Paralympic Games the Olympic Hockey Centre at Elliniko hosted 5 x 5 and 7 x 7 football matches.



The Olympic Sailing Centre at Agios Kosmas, 2004.

OLYMPIC SAILING CENTRE AT AGIOS KOSMAS

A short distance from the Olympic venues in the former aerodrome, the Olympic Sailing Centre at Agios Kosmas (OKIAK) hosted the sailing events. For the needs of the races a 450,000 square metre marina was created, after special environmental studies, while some buildings were erected to accommodate the athletes, the Olympic Family, and so on. Contingency plans had been put in place for to deal with mishaps, such as pollution with petroleum products and chemical substances. The forecasting of the weather conditions for this particular sport is considered particularly important for the development of the races, and not only, since the track is none other than the sea. For this reason, a fully-equipped meteorological bureau operated in the Olympic Sailing Centre when the races were in progress.

The facilities, which were under the umbrella of the then Ministry of the Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Works (Υ.ΠΕ.ΧΩ.Δ.Ε), had been checked through test events organized in August 2002 and 2003 (International Sailing Competitions Athens 2002 Regatta and Athens 2003 Regatta, respectively). The sailing events were held from 14 to 28 August. There was a space to accommodate 1,600 spectators, which was utilized also for the medal presentation ceremonies. The corresponding races of the Paralympic Games were held from 18 to 23 September.

Apart from the Centre's use during the period of the Olympic Games, according to Article 23 of Law 3342/2005, it could be used afterwards as a venue for exercise and training, cultural events, leisure and entertainment on preconditions, but also for the docking and servicing of boats. In fact it was developed as a private marina, the use, administration, management and exploitation of which was undertaken by Elliniko S.A.



The site of the Olympic Canoe and Kayak Slalom Centre at Elliniko, 2020.

Uses of the Olympic Complex at Elliniko after the Olympic Games

The Olympic Complex at Elliniko, on the site of the former aerodrome of Athens, occupied an area of 783,000 square metres. It was accessed by road from Vouliagmenis, Poseidonos and Alimou avenues. Provision for utilizing the venues after the Olympic Games was made in Article 23 of Law 3342/2005 and included, in addition to their use for sports and athletics, hosting commercial stores, catering services, cultural events and exhibitions-trade shows, as well as the possibility of conversion into a theme park and a water park (Olympic Canoe and Kayak Slalom Centre at Elliniko), in the framework of creating a wider metropolitan park in the area. However, these provisions were applied piecemeal or not at all. Except for the case of the Fencing Hall, which was utilized sufficiently commercially through exhibitions and events until 2019, the Indoor Arena and the Baseball Centre,



The Olympic Hockey Centre, 2020.

which were put to the limited use as sports venues and only until 2013, the rest of the venues were defunct.

After the first decade passed and shortly before the Olympic venues were turned into open hospitality structures for refugees and migrants in 2015, their overall picture, particularly on the east and north sides of the complex, already showed severe signs of dereliction.²¹⁸

²¹⁸ Ανώνυμος, 'Olympics: Athens venues lie empty as tenth anniversary nears', *BBC*, 07-08-2014, <<https://www.bbc.com/sport/olympics/28693970>> (Retrieved: 19-11-2020), and Παπαδόπουλος, Γιάννης, Canaj, Enri, Μπεμπέλου, Γωγώ, «Ολυμπιακή ερήμωση δέκα χρόνια μετά», <<https://www.kathimerini.gr/779872/gallery/epikairothta/ereynes/olympiakh-erhmwsh-deka-xronia-meta>> (Retrieved: 19-11-2020).



The departure lounge in the East Airport Terminal building, 2020.

The former aerodrome in the years 2005-2020

Political and economic circumstances of the period

The years that followed the 2004 Olympic Games held for Greece a difficult and unexpected adventure, mainly of economic hue, the effects of which have yet to be assessed and recorded in their entirety. Winner of the elections in March 2004 was the New Democracy party, under the leadership of Costas Karamanlis. Greece was in the Eurozone but its economy, after the intensive effort of the preceding years, entered an orbit of slowdown. In the elections of September 2007, New Democracy secured a second, consecutive, term of government.²¹⁹

Developments worldwide were rapid. A sequence of events in the sectors of the international stock exchanges, real estate market and banking in 2007, with climax the collapse of the financial house of Lehman Brothers in 2008, led to the global economic crisis, to which in the first months at least the Greek economy did not seem to be particularly exposed. In elections held in 2009, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (ΠΑΣΟΚ) came to power, headed by Giorgos Papandreou. The economic problems of Greece surfaced. By April 2010, Greece was unable to borrow from the international money markets.

To deal with the Greek crisis, the mechanism of the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund, the so-called Troika, was set in motion. The first rescue programme, the 'Memorandum', the *Mnimonio* as it became known, was signed in May 2010 and two other programmes followed, in 2012 and 2015. They secured large funding for the country, but at the same time placed Greece under a regime of strict fiscal control, obliging it to make important reforms in order to reduce the deficits.

In 2011 a provisional government was formed with Lucas Papademos, former Governor of the Bank of Greece, appointed Prime Minister. In the 2012 elections, the

²¹⁹ Further information on the political scene of the period, in Clogg, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 333-336 and Beaton, R., *op. cit.*, pp. 375-376.



Partial view
of the West Airport, 2020.



New Democracy party was returned, this time led by Antonis Samaras. Second party was the Coalition of the Radical Left (ΣΥΡΙΖΑ), which was elected to government in January 2015, with its leader Alexis Tsipras as Prime Minister. In snap elections in the autumn of the same year ΣΥΡΙΖΑ was returned to power, governing until July 2019, when it was succeeded by New Democracy with leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

In parallel with the political developments, the social consequences of the economic crisis were dire; it is estimated that the income of a large number of Greeks fell by one-third, unemployment rocketed –especially among young people–, bank savings diminished, many businesses closed down and investments decreased. For the first time the country saw a notable rise in the number of homeless people, organizations and agencies set up soup kitchens and distributed food to vulnerable social groups, such as the unemployed and pensioners, while many young Greeks migrated abroad in search of better luck.

Other uses of the aerodrome after 2001

When, in March 2001, the Olympic Airways Boeing 737 with destination Thessaloniki made the last flight out of the International Aerodrome at Elliniko, the aerodrome was simultaneously renamed ‘former’. Since then, apart from the well-known use of the site of the former aerodrome for constructing the Olympic Complex at Elliniko, in the framework of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, and the turning of its space into open hospitality structures for refugees and migrants at the peak of the refugee crisis in the period 2015-2017, it was used also to house services and offices, as well as to host exhibitions, trade shows and cultural events. Even so, the majority of its over 400 buildings, small and larger, remained defunct. Over the years the need arose for systematizing the management of the facilities and infrastructures of the former aerodrome and the area of Agios Kosmas. For this purpose, the company Elliniko S.A. was founded in 2011.

One of the most important infrastructures in the north part of the former aerodrome at Elliniko is the Tram Depot, which was built on the site of the former depot for vehicles

of Olympic Airways²²⁰ and began operating together with the return of the tram as means of transport in Attica, in 2004. Essentially, the tram owes its existence to the Olympic Games in Athens, when the lack of means of fixed-track transport to Faliro and Elliniko, where there were important Olympic poles, was realized. The premises of the Elliniko Tram Depot also house most of the administrative and operational services of Urban Rail Transport S.A. (ΣΤΑΣΥ Α.Ε.) and specifically the company's offices, the Operation Control Centre, the body shop for the rolling stock, as well as the parking lot for the trams.²²¹ Also in the sector of transport infrastructures, from 2004 until the summer of 2018 there was alongside the Tram Depot also a Road Transport (ΟΣΥ, former ΕΘΕΛ-ΟΑΣΑ) Depot for the urban buses, serving mainly areas of southern Athens. In fact, according to ΟΣΥ, the depot at Elliniko was the second largest in Athens, after that at Renti, with an area of 62,780 square metres.²²²

As site of a former aerodrome, Elliniko could not but house functional –and not only– services of the Civil Aviation Authority, as well as of the Hellenic Air Force. Perhaps the most important functional section of the first is the still active air traffic control tower of Olympic Airways and Civil Aviation Authority (FIR Flight Information Region of Athens) in the northeast part of the aerodrome. It covers 3,150 square metres, of which 350 square metres concern the technical installations of air traffic control. One of the total of four control towers that operated inside the site, it was built in the period 1991-1994 and still serves the whole of the Greek airspace.

As far as the Hellenic Air Force is concerned, the best-known service that continues to be housed on the site of the former aerodrome, and specifically in the area of the East Airport, is the National Meteorological Service (ΕΜΥ).²²³ Another service subject to the Hellenic Air Force Chief of Staff is the Air Defence Notification Centre

²²⁰ Βασενχόβεν, Λουδοβίκος, «Οι Ολυμπιακές εγκαταστάσεις και η “επόμενη μέρα” του Ελληνικού» [Ludwig Wassenhoven, 'The Olympic facilities and the “next day” at Elliniko'], *Αρχιτέκτονες*, 28, July/August 2001, p. 79.

²²¹ ΣΤΑΣΥ ΑΕ, «ΤΡΑΜ – Ιστορικά Στοιχεία» [ΣΤΑΣΥ SA, 'TRAM – Historical data'], 2020, <<http://www.stasy.gr/index.php?id=343>> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020).

²²² Ανώνυμος, «Ως τον Ιούνιο η μετεγκατάσταση του αμαξοστασίου Ελληνικού» ['By June the relocation of the tram depot at Elliniko'], *Athens Transport*, 16-03-2018, <<https://www.athenstransport.com/2018/03/amaksostasio-elliniko/>> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020).

²²³ The National Meteorological Service belongs to the Armed Forces (Ministry of National Defence) and specifically to the General Staff of the Air Force (ΓΕΑ).

(KENA), which provides air traffic control services²²⁴ and is located on the premises of the Civil Aviation Authority. Last, until the summer of 2018 the Air Force Personnel Service Complex (ΣΕΠΑ) –that is, those units that provided commercial services to the rest of the units of the Air Force, as well as to its military and civilian personnel– stood on the site of the former American Base at Elliniko, in the east part of the former aerodrome.

Noteworthy is the use of the site of the former aerodrome for artistic activities. Even when the aerodrome was operating it had been used as a setting for international cinematic productions,²²⁵ as well as for a host of Greek films. The end of the aerodrome's operation in 2001 did not end its use for artistic expression. This continued, perhaps aided and abetted by the allure of the landscape of gradual desertion and dereliction of a space that had been a reference point in the preceding decades. Greek and especially international cinematography productions made there were in some cases acknowledged for their artistic excellence at international film festivals and art exhibitions, such as the films *Ellinikon* directed by Constantinos Prepis with a special mention at the 25th International Film Festival 'Premiere Nights', *Third Kind* directed by Giorgos Zois and presented in the Special Screenings at the 71st Cannes Film Festival, *Tripoli Cancelled* by the internationally-acclaimed director and author from Bangladesh Naeem Mohaiemen, screened on the occasion of the contemporary art exhibition Documenta14, and *The Airport* by distinguished film director and visual artist John Akomfrah, which was screened in the Lisson Gallery in London.

In the music sector, the former aerodrome was used for the local and international productions of videoclips, while noteworthy too was the organization, in collaboration with the Stegi of the Onassis Foundation, of the second edition of the major Athens festival for contemporary electronic sound, 'ADD Festival 2019', in ruined spaces of the dilapidated building complex of the old aerodrome.

²²⁴ The Air Defence Notification Centre (KENA) provides information on traffic control relating to foreign military aircraft inside the Athens FIR, as well as of civil aircraft intending to land in aerodromes of the Hellenic Air Force.

²²⁵ E.g. the outside space of the aerodrome was used for representing scenes in the 1986 film *The Delta Force*, directed by Menahem Golan.



On the roof of the Olympic Catering building, 2020.

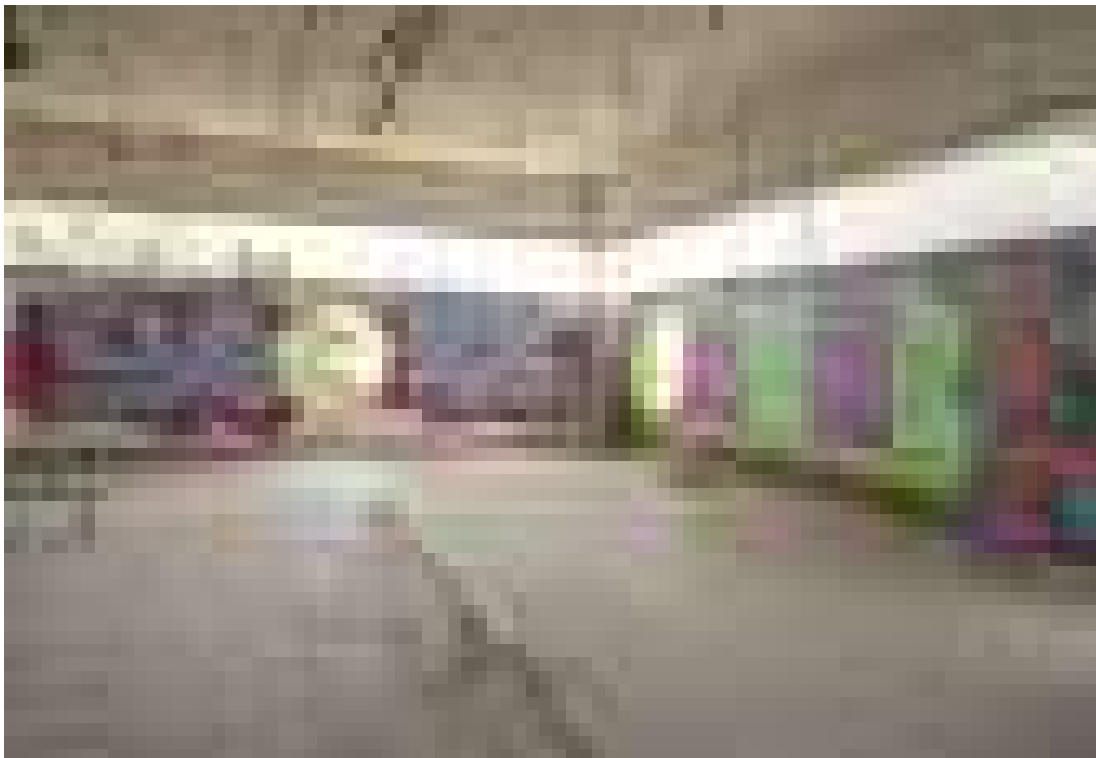
Last, the Terminal Building of the former aerodrome at Elliniko, the one designed by Saarinen, operated as the Elliniko Exhibition Centre, hosting all manner of exhibitions and trade shows.²²⁶ Exhibitions and trade shows were also hosted in the Fencing Hall, as well as cultural events.

²²⁶ The space lent itself to hosting 20-25 exhibitions a year in open and roofed spaces.

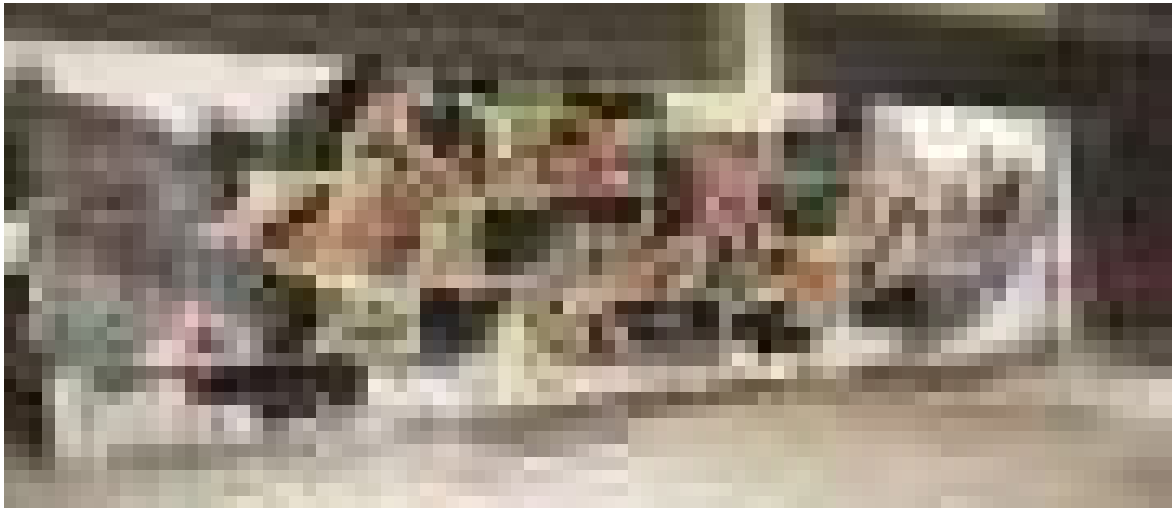




Buildings on the site of the former aerodrome, 2020.







Views of the interior of the Olympic Catering building, 2020.





West Airport. Visible in the background is the Olympic Airways hangar, 2020.

Influx of migrants in Greece

The site of the former aerodrome at Elliniko was destined to be used for an emergency situation of totally different character, which arose from the climax of the large influx of refugees and migrants in Greece in the years 2015 and 2016. Almost a century after the first settling of Pontic refugees in the area, which is described in Chapter 2, refugees and migrants were hosted in the space of the former aerodrome for over a year.

As outcome of events over the last two decades, with generalization of the War on Terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the events of the Arab Spring in North Africa and the Middle East, Greece started to receive a motley multitude of refugees and migrants from these countries and regions. The remarkable increase in the flow of migrants and refugees was observed from 2011 and found the countries of southern Europe –Greece, Italy and Spain- turned into gateways to the continent. These flows continued at a swift pace in the following years and in the case of Greece there was a marked turn towards arrivals via the sea routes already from 2012.²²⁷

In the period 2015-2016 the phenomenon reached its peak. According to official state data, there were 1,200,000 arrivals by sea to islands and just 8,000 via land routes recorded in Greece, with the overwhelming majority of refugees coming from three countries: Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. The problem was acknowledged also by the European Union,²²⁸ resulting in the replanning of its migration policy and the boosting of funding for the refugee issue. From September 2015, various EU member-states introduced border checks and in early March 2016 the western Balkan countries went ahead with total shut down of the borders.

As consequence of the closure of the ‘Balkan Corridor’, mixed refugee and migrant populations were trapped in Greece, while a few days later, on 18 March 2016, the joint

²²⁷ Κασιμάτη, Ευαγγελία, Παναγιωτοπούλου, Ρόη, «Μεταναστευτικό και προσφυγικό ζήτημα στην Ελλάδα την περίοδο 2015-2017: ζητήματα ενσωμάτωσης και κοινωνικής αποδοχής» [Evangelia Kasimati, Roi Panagiotopoulou, ‘Migration and refugee question in Greece in the period 2015-2017: issues of incorporation and social acceptance’], Jean Monnet European Centre of Excellence – National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, 2018, p. 12.

²²⁸ European Commission, «Καλύτερη διαχείριση όλων των πτυχών της μετανάστευσης: μια ευρωπαϊκή ατζέντα για τη μετανάστευση» [‘Better management of all the aspects of migration: a European agenda for migration’], Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή – Δελτίο Τύπου [European Commission – Press Release], 13-05-2015, <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/el/IP_15_4956> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020).



Refugees on the site of the West Airport, 2016.

declaration was signed between the EU and Turkey, for immediate dealing with the refugee question, bringing immediate results. Characteristically, according to officially recorded data, there were 876,232 arrivals in Greece in 2015 and 175,275 from the beginning of 2016 until October that year, of which only 20,164 in the interval April – October 2016.²²⁹

²²⁹ Γενική Γραμματεία Ενημέρωσης και Επικοινωνίας, «Προσφυγική Κρίση Fact Sheet» [General Secretariat of Information and Communication, 'Refugee Crisis Fact Sheet'], January 2017, <<https://mindigital.gr/old/index.php/pliroforiaka-stoixeia/945-fact-sheet-2017>> (Retrieved: 19-11-2020), p. 2.

Refugees in the former aerodrome

The turning of spaces inside the former aerodrome, Olympic venues among them, into open hospitality structures for refugees and migrants was linked with the closure of the so-called Balkan Corridor, the migration route through the western Balkans, which was begun in September 2015, by EU member-states in the Schengen Zone, and was completed in early March 2016, when the countries of the western Balkans also closed their borders.

The first movement of refugees and migrants to the Olympic venues at Elliniko, and specifically the Hockey Field, of capacity 500-600 persons, took place in late September 2015, as a temporary solution, because the Tae Kwon Do Centre at Faliro, in which they were previously housed, had to be made available for hosting the World Wrestling Tournament. Already from the end of 2015, the Ministry of Migration Policy gave priority to setting up a centre for refugees and migrants in abandoned facilities of the Hellenic Air Force inside the former aerodrome at Elliniko. This was finally agreed on 15 December and the Hockey Field was turned into a stopgap open hospitality structure, guarded by the Greek Police. In the end, however, this facility was not used. Over the next two months, temporary hospitality structures were set up on the site of the former aerodrome, so that by February 2016 the Olympic facilities of the Hockey Field (Elliniko I), the former arrivals terminal in the old West Airport at Elliniko (Elliniko II) and the Olympic Baseball Field (Elliniko III) were in use for this purpose.²³⁰ Last, the internal grounds of the Basketball Arena, approximately 5,000 square metres in area, were used as a warehouse for storing humanitarian aid.

However, neither the timeframe of the presence of refugees and migrants, which had been characterized as temporary, nor the foreseen capacity of the hospitality structures were kept to. For the next 16 months, according to inspections by Amnesty International, the humanitarian organizations present in the camps were reporting the inadequacy of the spaces arranged for the hospitality of such a large number of people, while the housing infrastructures (mainly tents) were not sufficient to cover the basic needs, mainly for those people staying in open-air venues, such as the Baseball Field, leaving them exposed to the

²³⁰ Διεθνής Αμνηστία, «Οι απαράδεκτες και μη ασφαλείς συνθήκες στους καταυλισμούς προσφύγων στο Ελληνικό» [Amnesty International, 'The unacceptable and unsafe conditions in the refugee camps at Elliniko'], 24-07-2017, <<https://www.amnesty.gr/en/node/20737>> (Retrieved: 18-11-2020).



Snapshot from accommodating refugees on the Hockey pitch, 2017.



Accommodating refugees in the West Airport buildings, 2015.



Refugees accommodated on the Baseball pitch, 2016.





From the accommodation of refugees inside the West Airport Terminal building.
Above: 2017, Below: 2020.



weather, without adequate protection measures against flooding and without any provision for shading the tents.²³¹ As to the overcrowding, from April 2016 the management of Elliniko S.A. had pointed out that 6,000 or so refugees and migrants recorded in the temporary hospitality structures in that period were far in excess of the site's capabilities.²³² There was no possibility whatsoever of privacy for those living there, the majority of whom were families, while there lurked multiple dangers for the safety of them and of visitors to events in other venues of the Olympic Complex.

Specifically for safety, Amnesty International had drawn attention to this issue as a whole in Greece, after a relevant in-situ inspections, stating that 'the existing hospitality centres are particularly unsafe for women and girls, as there is inadequate lighting and separation of sanitary facilities, as well as no mechanisms of protection from and for filing complaints about harassment'.²³³

Also judged precarious were the health issues of the refugees and migrants as a whole. In a relevant report, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ΚΕΕΛΠΝΟ), after visits made to several hospitality centres in July 2016, proposed the 'total closure of the hospitality centres', stressing that long-term stay, even for a healthy population, increases the percentage of epidemics and contagious diseases, as well as of mental health problems, exposing it to constant risks. Specifically for the hospitality centre at Elliniko, on 25 and 26 August of the same year, ΚΕΕΛΠΝΟ ascertained accumulation of water due to damage to the plumbing system, which was promptly dealt with, thanks to the intervention of the Region of Attica.²³⁴ The report of the National Committee for Human

²³¹ Εθνική Επιτροπή για τα Δικαιώματα του Ανθρώπου, «Έκθεση ΕΕΔΑ. Οι συνθήκες διαβίωσης στα Κέντρα Υποδοχής και Φιλοξενίας μεταναστών και προσφύγων» [National Committee for Human Rights, 'ΕΕΔΑ Report. The living conditions in the Centres for Reception and Accommodation of migrants and refugees'], December 2016, <https://www.asylumineurope.org/sites/default/files/resources/kentra_filoxenias_autopsia.pdf> (Retrieved: 19-11-2020), p. 9.

²³² Ανώνυμος, «Χάος στο Ελληνικό - Πάνω από 6.000 πρόσφυγες ζουν στο παλιό αεροδρόμιο» ['Chaos at Elliniko - Over 6,000 refugees are living in the old aerodrome'], *iefimerida.gr*, 11-04-2016, <<https://www.iefimerida.gr/news/261346/haos-sto-elliniko-pano-apo-6000-prosfyges-zoyn-sto-palio-aerodromio>> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020).

²³³ Διεθνής Αμνηστία-Ελληνικό Τμήμα, «"Έχουμε χάσει κάθε ελπίδα". Η παράλυση της Ευρώπης αφήνει χιλιάδες πρόσφυγες εγκλωβισμένους στην Ελλάδα», Νέα-Εκθέσεις [Amnesty International Greek Chapter, "'We have lost all hope." The paralysis of Europe leaves thousands of refugees trapped in Greece', New Reports], 22-09-2016, <https://www.amnesty.gr/sites/default/files/pdf/ehoyme_hasei_kathe_elpida_diethnis_amnistia.pdf> (Retrieved: 20-11-2020), p. 5.

²³⁴ Ανώνυμος, «Αυτοψία του ΚΕΕΛΠΝΟ στον χώρο φιλοξενίας προσφύγων και μεταναστών στο πρώην αεροδρόμιο του Ελληνικού» [ΚΕΕΛΠΝΟ's on-the-spot inspection in the space of accommodation of refugees and migrants in the

Rights about the Elliniko site recorded deficiencies in the sanitation spaces, insufficient drinking water and the lack of laundry facilities, while characterizing the hospitality structure as unofficial it judged it overall as unfit for decent living, proposing its disbanding and the transfer of those sheltered there to other more suitable spaces.²³⁵ All the aforesaid are confirmed both by testimonies of refugees and migrants who stayed in the facilities of the old aerodrome at Elliniko, and by coordinators of the structures that had been created there. The responsible authorities' reticence about the future of the refugees and migrants, and the dreadful conditions in which they were living exacerbated their insecurity and fear about what life had in store.

Moves to relieve the overcrowded spaces and buildings of the former aerodrome began in the spring of 2017, several months after the initial installation of refugees and migrants there. They were completed in early July of that year, with the full evacuation of all three hospitality structures and the transfer of most of the inmates to the newly-instituted corresponding centre in Thebes.²³⁶ Thus, one more chapter in the history of the former aerodrome closed.

former aerodrome at Elliniko'], *Αθηναϊκό-Μακεδονικό Πρακτορείο Ειδήσεων* [Athenian-Macedonian Press Agency], 26-08-2016, <<https://www.amna.gr/article/122608/-Autopsia-tou-KEELPNO-ston-choro-filoxenias-prosfugon-kai-metanaston-sto-proin-aerodromio-tou-Ellinikou>> (Retrieved: 23-11-2020).

²³⁵ Εθνική Επιτροπή για τα Δικαιώματα του Ανθρώπου, *op. cit.*, pp. 4, 12, 21 and 24. The relevant report of ΕΕΔΑ was written after visits by its representatives to selected accommodation facilities in Greece. The on-the-spot inspection at Elliniko was made on 02-06-2016.

²³⁶ Ανώνυμος, «Εκκενώθηκε το πρώην αεροδρόμιο στο Ελληνικό από πρόσφυγες» [‘The former aerodrome at Elliniko has been evacuated of refugees’], Newspaper *Ta Nea*, 02-06-2017, <<https://www.tanea.gr/2017/06/02/greece/ekkenwthike-to-prwin-aerodromio-sto-elliniko-apo-prosfyges/>> (Retrieved: 19-11-2020).

BY WAY OF AN EPILOGUE





Photorealistic panoramic image of Elliniko.

The Vision for the 21st century

Twenty years have passed since the day the last aeroplane, a Boeing 737 of Olympic Airlines, took off from the State Airport of Athens with destination the 'Macedonia' aerodrome of Thessaloniki. A few years before this final flight, in 1996, and when the decision had been taken to relocate the aerodrome, Dr Spiro Latsis had already envisioned the next day for Elliniko and had initiated the first discussions with the then Minister of Development Vasso Papandreou about the future utilization of the area of the aerodrome.

In 2001, during the period of the relocation of the aerodrome, the issue of what should be done with the area returned to the forefront, with the then Prime Minister Costas Simitis declaring that Elliniko would be transformed into the largest metropolitan park in Europe. However, several years were to pass until the issue was debated in the Greek Parliament, in June 2007, with the government of Costas Karamanlis in power. The matter was included also in the agenda of the succeeding government of Giorgos Papandreou, but the economic crisis hit Greece, which entered the protracted period of the *Mnimonia*.

In 2011 an international call for tenders was declared. Nine investors expressed interest but it was decided that only four of them met the preselection criteria for bidding in the second round. Of the four interested investors, only Lamda Development S.A. submitted a binding offer and was also declared the sole bidder for the largest regeneration project in Europe. The contract was signed in 2014, under the government of Antonis Samaras. It made provision for the transfer of the shares of Elliniko S.A. to Lamda Development S.A. and defined that the transfer procedure must be completed within two years –that is, by November 2016. In June 2016, under the government of Alexis Tsipras, the renegotiation of the contract was concluded, which led finally to the ratification of the modified contract by the Greek Parliament in September that year. In March 2018, the Integrated Development Plan (ΣΟΑ) was approved by Presidential Decree. Finally, in June 2020, almost four years after the signing of the contract, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis attended the commencement of preparatory works.

The visionary project for the regeneration of the Metropolitan Pole of Elliniko – Agios Kosmas, of overall area approximately 6,200,000 square metres, will be a global reference

point and a new destination for the city of Athens, setting the model for corresponding regenerations in the future. Just 10 kilometres away from the centre of the capital, Elliniko will develop into a new city with an open seafront of 3.5 kilometres, principal feature of which will be the Metropolitan Park of international ambit, occupying over 200 hectares. A city that will combine the unparalleled beauty of the Mediterranean landscape, the unique climatic conditions of the area, the historicity and the cultural wealth of the space, while at the same time it will be a smart model-city utilizing to the utmost the technological innovations of the fourth industrial revolution.

In the Metropolitan Pole Elliniko – Agios Kosmas, the features of archaeological-historical interest which have been determined by the responsible services of the Ministry of Culture, as well as the buildings that are listed as recent monuments, are included in toto in the protection of the Cultural Heritage. With respect for memory, the elements of the different historical phases of the area will be enhanced and visitors will have the opportunity to wander through the Metropolitan Pole, where ancient and recent monuments will be linked in a single cultural assemblage.

In the area of the Agios Kosmas promontory, measures will be taken for the restoration and enhancement of the antiquities and of the Post-Byzantine church of Saints Kosmas and Damianos, which will be visitable within an appropriately landscaped environment. The funerary monument of Elliniko, after which the wider area and the modern municipality were named, will be returned to its original position and will be further enhanced by creating a space around it. Access to it will be free.

The terminal building of the old East Airport, designed by Finnish architect Eero Saarinen, the three hangars of the Hellenic Air Force and the British hangar better known as the Pagoda, will be enhanced and acquire a new role as features of the Metropolitan Park. Specifically, the terminal building of the former East Airport of Athens will be restored to its original dynamic form, as it was designed and constructed in the early 1960s. Later additions and extensions made in order to serve the operation of the airport, but which resulted in the marring of its original aspect, will be removed. Because of the important formal features, the renovated building will be a reference point, national and international, in the study of the history of architecture. The space around the building to

a distance of 100 metres from it will remain free of constructions, in order to enhance the monument by allowing the unimpeded view of it.

The overall picture of the investment will include, among other things, residential developments, hotel units, commercial activities and malls, spaces for family activities and entertainment, museums, cultural centres, health and well-being centres, sports facilities and leisure spaces, as well as a model business park for training, research and entrepreneurship. On the seafront there will be a skyscraper of residences and luxury hotels. In addition, there will be full remodelling of the existing marina at Agios Kosmas, which will be accompanied by the development of a commercial zone with luxury shops, restaurants and entertainment venues. Last, a new beach will be created with free access, of length 1 kilometre, and an integrated tourist complex-casino.

The project will be a new model of green development, with the creation of a smart green city that will adopt sustainable development and will incorporate cutting-edge technologies and best practices. State-of-the-art practices and processes will be applied for waste management, adapted traffic solutions with reduction of the carbon footprint, intelligent system of transport and traffic management, as well as the development of routes friendly to pedestrians and cyclists, of total length 50 kilometres. Through the investment the image of Athens will be upgraded to one of the most important tourist destinations worldwide. A destination that will include a significant number of new tourist accommodation services, architectural landmarks, as well as uses of thematic tourism. It is estimated that it will attract one million new tourists per year, significantly widening the tourist period with the simultaneous reduction of seasonality and increase of visitors' average stay and expenditure in Athens. The benefits at a social and economic level are considerable. The investment, at completion of its development, will absorb in all 8 billion euros, it will create 85,000 new jobs, it will contribute 2.4% to the GNP of Greece and will bring over 14 billion euros income to the Greek State. Elliniko will be all the above and more; it will be a city from the future.

Through the pages of this book we have given a review of man's course and imprint in this part of Attica, from prehistoric, Classical, Byzantine and Modern times, the tempestuous twentieth century to the past decade. The twenty-first century promises for the area a new chapter, which is beginning now.





Photorealistic image of the Metropolitan Park at Elliniko.

Pp. 246-247
'Elliniko', drawing by Alekos Fassianos.





SNAPSHOTS



Constantinos Karamanlis with police escort, exiting the aerodrome on the night of his arrival from Paris, after the fall of the dictatorship.



Visible at his side are, right, Nikos and Giannos Kranidiotis, and left, his collaborator in Paris, Costas Chrysostallis, 24 July 1974.



Snapshot of the welcome of British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (centre) by Prime Minister Constantinos Karamalis (left), 1958.



Welcome of the Vice-President of the USA Lyndon Johnson (left) by Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis, 1962.



Arrival of the First Lady of the USA Jackie Kennedy (left). At the aerodrome she was welcomed by Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis and his wife Amalia, June 1961.



Turkish Premier Adnan Menderes (left) and Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis, during the former's arrival at the aerodrome at Elliniko, October 1959.

King Paul (second from left), Crown Prince Constantine (centre) and Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis (second from right) welcome the Archbishop of Cyprus Makarios at the aerodrome at Elliniko, 1962.







Arrival of French President Charles de Gaulle at Elliniko, 16 May 1963.



Arrival of the president of the United Democratic Left party (ΕΔΑ) and parliamentary deputy of the United Left, Ilias Iliou (centre) at the aerodrome at Elliniko. Left, Bambis Drakopoulos, 18 December 1974.



Melina Mercouri (left) welcomes actress Aspasia Papathanasiou in the aerodrome, after the fall of the dictatorship, August 1974.



Welcome of Andreas Papandreou, on his return to Greece after the fall of the dictatorship,
16 August 1974.



Welcome of the President of Yugoslavia Field Marshall Josip Broz Tito (second from right) in the aerodrome at Elliniko by President of the Hellenic Republic Constantinos Tsatsos (third from right) and Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis (first from left), 10 May 1976.

Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis welcomes the President of the French Republic Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, on his visit for the ceremony of signing the Agreement of the Association of Greece with the European Economic Community, 28 May 1979.





Carrying the Olympic Flame to the aerodrome for the 1968 Olympic Games, which were held in Mexico City, December 1967.



Evzones in the aerodrome at Elliniko, February 1961.



The return of composer Mikis Theodorakis to Greece, after the fall of the dictatorship, September 1974.



Return of the poet Odysseus Elytis from the Swedish capital Stockholm, where he had gone to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature, December 1979.



Performance by American actor and comedian Bob Hope (on stage, first from left) on the American Base at Elliniko, December 1963.



American singer Joan Baez (first from right) in the aerodrome at Elliniko, July 1974.



Arrival of French actor Jean Paul Belmondo (centre) in Athens, February 1971.



Egyptian actor Omar Sharif (centre) in the aerodrome at Elliniko, February 1971.



American actor Anthony Quinn (second from left, wearing a hat) in the aerodrome, March 1974.



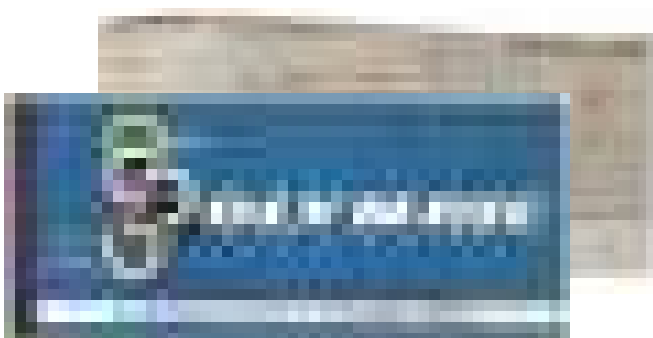
French-German actress Romy Schneider in the aerodrome, July 1974.



Map of Greece showing Olympic Airways flights.



Air tickets for a TAE flight., 1.2.1948.



Air tickets for an Olympic Airways flight. 21.1.1974.



Cover of an Olympic Airways menu, for passengers in first class, late 1960s. Depicted is a species of wildflower that grows in the Greek mountains.

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TIMELINE

3200/3000-2000 BC: First habitation in the wider area of Agios Kosmas.

8th-7th century BC: The earliest finds from the cemeteries on the site of the Tram Depot and the 'Argyroupoli' Metro station are dated to about this period.

508-507 BC: Administrative reform of Kleisthenes.

5th century BC: Herodotus refers to the area of Agios Kosmas as *Κωλιάδα άκρα* (Cape Kolias). Finds from the cemetery on the Tram Depot site and the ancient quarry are dated to this period.

4th century BC: Decree of the Deme of Halimousians. Court dockets from the cemetery on the site of the Tram Depot. Creation of a funerary monument of a family in Euonymos. Erection of a tomb enclosure at Elliniko.

86 BC: Destruction of Attica by Sulla's armies.

1st-2nd century AD: The travellers Strabo and Pausanias tour the wider region.

AD 267: Attack by the Heruli and destructions in Athens.

13th-15th century: Hoard of 1,000 coins at Hasani.

17th-19th century: Wall-paintings in the church of the Saints Kosmas and Damianos.

18th-19th century: Ottoman *çifliks* and settlements at Trachones and Hasani.

1830: Within just a few months, the Ottomans sell their properties to Greeks.

1920s: Settlement of refugees from Pontus in Hasani. Founding of the first Greek aviation company 'Ikaros'.

1925: Setting up of the State Aircraft Factory in Faliro. Contract between the Greek State and the aviation companies Aero Espresso Italiana S.A. and Messageries Transaeriennes for the transport of mail, passengers and cargoes.

1929: Founding of Ministry of Aviation and start of the formation of the Civil Aviation Service.

1930: Founding of the Hellenic Air Transport Company (ΕΕΕΣ).

1931: Inauguration of the route Athens-Thessaloniki.

1935: Founding of the Technical and Aeronautical Holdings Company (TAE).

1938: Commencement of operation of the aerodrome at Elliniko, with a runway 1,800 metres long.

1939: Transfer to Elliniko of sections of the State Aircraft Factory.

1940-1941: Interruption of commercial flights. Construction of the Pagoda hangar by the British is dated to about this period.

1941: Aerodrome turned into a Luftwaffe operations base.

1943: Air raids on the facilities at Elliniko by Allied aircraft.

1944, October: Liberation of Athens.

During the 1940s: Transfer of State Aircraft Factory Hangars A and B from Faliro to Elliniko.

1947: Founding of Hellenic Airlines (ΕΛΛΑΣ). Start of installation of the United States Air Force (USAF) Base at Elliniko.

1949: Signing of a contract, in the framework of the Marshall Plan, for the development of air communications. Under its terms, works were carried out on constructing a new runway, extending the old one, creating air traffic control towers and developing the facilities in the West Airport.

1950: Construction of State Aircraft Factory Hangar C in the space of the aerodrome and of a second runway 2,250 metres long.

1951: Merger of aviation companies into a new company with the name 'National Airlines TAE'.

1953: Permanent installation of American Base at Elliniko.

1954: Liquidation of TAE.

1956: Signing of a contract between the Greek State and Aristotle Onassis assigning to the latter the operation of the national airlines.

1957: Founding of Olympic Airways.

1958: Extension of the main runway to length 3,000 metres.

1959: Visit of American President Dwight Eisenhower to Athens and speeding up of works on expanding the aerodrome.

1960: Contract for study of development of the aerodrome by creating the East Air Terminal. Completion of preliminary study for the new airport building by architect Eero Saarinen.

1961: New extension of the main runway to length of 3,200 metres and construction of taxiway.

1962: Foundation stone of the East Air Terminal laid by Prime Minister Constantinos Karamanlis.

1966: First transatlantic flight of Olympic Airways from Athens to New York.

1969: Completion of construction of the East Airport.

1970: Last extension of a runway to length 3,500 metres.

1971: Founding of Olympic Aviation. Completion of the study for the development of the International Airport of Athens, which proposed Spata as the most suitable place for relocating the aerodrome.

1973: Death of Alexander Onassis.

1974: Aristotle Onassis returns Olympic Airways to the State.

1975: Death of Aristotle Onassis. Setting up of committee by the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE) to consider the issue of the Athens aerodrome.

1978: Founding of a new legal entity under the name 'Athens Airport (A.A.) S.A.', for the planning and development of the new aerodrome of Athens.

1988-1993: Deregulation of the sector of air transport in Europe.

1991-1992: Construction of the control tower of the Civil Aviation Authority.

1993: Closing down of the facilities of the American Base at Elliniko.

1995: Signing of the contract for the relocation of the Athens International Airport from Elliniko to Spata.

1996: Ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the new airport at Spata.

1997: Assigning of the organization of the 2004 Olympic Games to the city of Athens.

2001: Inauguration of the new airport. Last flight from the aerodrome at Elliniko.

2003: Olympic Airways flights taken over by Macedonian Airlines and the Olympic Airlines company founded.

2004: Organization of Olympic and Paralympic Games in Athens.

2010: Olympic Airlines bought out by Aegean Airlines.

2011: Founding of the company Elliniko S.A. Declaration of international call for tenders for utilization of the area of the former aerodrome.

2014: Signing of a contract between the Greek State and Lamda Development S.A.

2015-2017: Temporary housing of refugees and migrants in the premises of the former aerodrome.

2020: Start of precursory works on laying out the area of the Metropolitan Pole of Elliniko-Agios Kosmas.

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from prehistory to the present

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