RESTRICTURING THE CITY
INTERNATIONAL URBAN DESIGN COMPETITIONS FOR THESSALONIKI
METASXHMATIZONTAS TIN POLH
RESTRUCTURING THE CITY
Ta istorikia gegovota qyuro apo tin pragmatopoihsh tou "Mvneiakou Xevna tis Aristotelous", upodhlihnan afwor ti probhlma olon tin iistorikion plolwv me polalalpe epinea anaptyxh, otopo to pallo apokolaipetai kai anaferi to qe kai to epalhlla epidei surkeunetai h allalhlogrounqeta kathws dieidkinoq to kathedra gia logarismou to, qyuro sti sme- meriwn ploli. Iosws h megalyterew dveni tis qe Xenias tis Aristotelous me tin smeirwv anakololhrh meqoraq ton, na briskoqeta sto qegonon qti kataqagei te poliomorfi kai te amvrhmiq miais plolis "enaih", ftagmwnh apw sti ekxhriq kai anakololhrh koomatia tis, me tin sa- genti miais poliamevnekis polialhlogrounqetas pou ofreleov kai diaithproun.

Prorhse tis proptaseis einai na ana- dianwugisei, stis smeirwves synhnhes, mia smbrhka erminxia tis qe, h opoia ta kathoriesi tin architektonikes epem- bazedes kai ta sunveldei sti anagwog- nhs eu. Katallhloni qti mia nei ermi- nxia gia tin smeirwv dynamiq tis qe mporei na bavisthe sto poliomorfi, polalalpe kai entono sthrmatop- grapia to. H problimatiqka auti ohgei se emebazedes pou diunov emfasa sta epalhlla epidei tis plolis sti, ws te einai anagnwima, na sunupharov kai na sunveldei sto demyvirhia tis sunghrho- vou asitikov plleugos.

Prêteitei mia eurenthiki anakafhia kata mhkos tis qe, ta apotelxmatata tis opoia te diapofubovn sti teliq eikona tis qyuro. Sti loqikh tis anavu- ses tis "epalhlwn plolwn" xerhima- poieita ws schaidiastiko erwseleio to tetra- gnwviko knavbhos pou diakrforofen to diaphora smemia tis qe (plaleia- paxi-penipatos), kathos einai euvelktos, eouxrhn, kai baikhei sti pragmato- tikpita tis architektonikq kavayqou.


To tpmia metaexi Mhtepolew kai Egnatiis pezdqromieetai, evw sto mna keri- triki zvnh diqledh katevdwis ta deunwta te dleleis autokivntov. To tpmia auta te anakafhri epixeis kai ta apotelx- mata tis Hkkaqhs th kathoriesi tis charakteri kai te latreutismou tis upaqegos qyuro: te einai eite episkopikos arxhio- logikos qyuro, me dvanatptes ekdhle- seis, eite upaqegos qyuro stamvqseis autokivntov. O arxhio- logikoq plaleia tis Arxhaias Agorás, metaexi tis omdno Egnatiis kai Filippou, proteitei ena arxhio- logikq paró. Katw h einai anagwmo te apotelxmatata tis anakafhias, efarmoqديدة ena eveloq osumma-mynmelo. Orgbhsh tis "archi- ologikoq paróq" panye se tetragwnikos knavba, parqechi te dvanatptes dleleir- giaq evnoq neq asitikov isto. Me ait auti te logikh, ginetai prospadeia te xanaker- dhvbei to istorikq "opeqnumou" gia tin mhi- olapoihsh tis arxhaiq sallhsh tis qe, "erepiq". O épixos epanegdisei wos smemia qti to parolov daskasth- vetai me to paró, leitourgqei ta nq, oti te anavmgia -ou svasataktika "anegmwna" nq- allh ekein qti dein phfeta te dletheia kai te sunhxeia.

To paró apotelei mia eunpteta me ton qyuro tis Arxhaias Agorás kai evnopoliei stin epinea tis arxaiqtepota me par- semea kata apo tis omdo Filippou. O arxhio- logikos qyuro tis Arxhaias Agorás einai ena rhqma mpe apo to opio evnopolieetai ena álllo strwmia tis plolis. Prétéitei te aithsh tis bivamos qte enagwvethi me mia katakevsh, apo metala- lliko skoleito kai eulo, sto techxwma tis qyuro, pou leitourqei aphi sto aqhmatos "f" gia ektheseis.

O tetragwnikos knavbhos epeteqetei "apodoomenou" mpea sto veoro, me Elidnq probrheta sti morph plleugos me duo platforma. Te epalhlla epidei einai evnoq kai edo orqata: to asitiko katakasauxvmeno smma tis plolis kai te fisiko wgoqgrafiko smma tis thlasisos. Eite, to veoro dixekidei te orria sto to metws tis plolis, me to idio trpoq pou ta iistorika strowes dieidkinoq sti parousia toun sto sunghrho is tis.
The historical facts surrounding the creation of the monumental axis of Aristotelous indicate with clarity the problem of all historic cities with numerous layers of growth, where the old is revealed and revokes the new, where the successive levels are in conflict or ignore each other, as each claims for itself space in the present-day city. Perhaps the greatest strength of the Aristotelous axis in its present, incomplete form lies in the fact that it is a record of the many forms and versions of a “unique” city consisting of separate, unfinished parts, with the charm of a complex culture that should be preserved.

The proposal is based on an attempt to reformulate, in today’s conditions, a symbolic interpretation of the axis, which will determine future architectural interventions there and contribute to its revival. The conclusion is that any new interpretation of today’s dynamic of the axis should be based on multifority, multiplicity and distinct stratification. Such speculation leads to interventions that emphasize the successive layers of the city so that they are legible, coexist, and contribute to the creation of the contemporary urban fabric.

An extensive investigative excavation is proposed along the whole length of the axis, the results of which will determine the final aspect of the space. In the context of the exposure of “successive cities,” a square grid is used as a designing tool to form the different parts of the axis (square-park-promenade), because it is flexible and easy to use, and is based on the reality of the archaeological grid.

In Aristotelous Square a large underground space for cultural activities—an “under-square”—will be created. In this way the city will acquire the large covered, public space that it lacks at present. There are no antiquities under the square, apart from on the north side where it is possible that the coastal city walls were once located. The traces of the ancient city walls will be uncovered, with a staircase descending towards the underground hall to ensure that they are visible at both levels. The underground space will be lit by a perimeter zone covered with a thick, practical iron grid. Extra light will be provided through holes in the ceiling. All these elements will also help define the upper level of Aristotelous Square.

The section of the axis between Mitropoleos and Egnatia St. is pedestrianized but a two-way central zone permits the passage of vehicles. This part will also be excavated and the results of the excavation will determine the character and function of the underground space: it could become an archaeological area that hosts exhibitions and other small-scale activities, or an underground parking space.

At the Forum Square between Egnatia St. and Filippou St. an archaeological park is proposed. Because the results of the excavation are not yet known, a flexible system-model is used to determine use. The layout of the “archaeological park” on a square grid offers the possibility of creating new, realistic urban tissue. The effort to retake possession of the “ruin” is in the logic of the design of the archaeological park, the same ruin that is historically “responsible” for the non-realisation of the original concept of the axis. This is an attempt to make the space come alive as a point where past and present intersect, reactivating memory, not as a recollection or a reference—a memory-less memory—but as memory that does not fear continuity, creativity and the future.

The park forms a whole with the archaeological area of the Forum and they are linked with the antiquities by passages under Filippou St.

The antiquities area of the Forum is a split in which another layer of the city makes its appearance. We propose to strengthen the impression of a split by building on the surrounding walls. The proposed structure consists of a metallic frame and wood, and is actually an L-shaped construction to host exhibitions.

Finally, the axis is extended into the sea: the square grid is prolonged and “deconstructed” into the water in the form of a wooden pier in grid form with two platforms. The successive levels are once again visible: the urban constructed “body” of the city and the natural geographical “body” of the sea. Thus the water claims its limits on the city frontage just as the historic layers vindicate their presence in the contemporary urban fabric.
Ο ΑΞΟΝΑΣ ΤΗΣ ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΟΥΣ / THE ARISTOTELOS AXIS