

Pre-War Greek “Open” Prisons: A Dynamic Spatial Condition

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Abstract

The article explores the unique nature of pre-war Greek agricultural prisons, arguing that these settlements offered a progressive spatial condition to the enclosed communities. In contrast to Foucault's model of central control and isolation, these prisons incorporated agricultural work and open-air spaces, aiming for rehabilitation through: a) connection with the natural environment and b) assigning responsibilities to the inmates. As Yi-Fu Tuan suggests, we cross-examine conceptual, built, and experienced spaces to explore "...how abstract ideas develop out of those given directly to the body...". Following a qualitative research method, we examine three aspects of prison space: space defined by the legal system, the built space, the lived space. We present findings on the built structures and life within them, concluding with how culture of enclosed societies contributes to a state's legal and political civilization. We highlight these places as valuable heritage deserving further interdisciplinary investigation by architecture, criminology and anthropology.

Keywords: architecture; place-making; identity; culture; civilization.

1. Introduction

This article refers to the particular type of prison space of the pre war (II) Greek Agricultural Prisons and aims to highlight them as significant and everlasting cultural landscapes. These large settlements were established in Greece during the period 1925-1930 and some of them continue to operate until today.

Greek Agricultural Prisons of the pre-war Era are linked to one of the most powerful 'systems' established by Western social and political organization: the Western Modern Prison System, according to which prison buildings constitute the spatial framework of the new social condition that set conditions of 'civilization' in the treatment of social problems: all criminals and offenders could be reformed to ethical and useful citizens through modern prison. Modern Prison Systems are differentiated from ancient and medieval imprisonment, mainly, in four points: a) they are intended for the execution of sentences against liberty, b) they are characterised by the care for the living of the prisoners, c) they provide common protection of the life of the convict and d) they undertake, in addition, the function of 'reformation' for the reintegration of the prisoners into society. Based on these features, the French philosopher Michel Foucault transfers the notion of the beginnings of the 19th century that modern prisons of the Western world are recognised as the civilized way of dealing with social problems (Foucault, 1995[1977]: 304).

In this context, in the late 18th century, the field of prison architecture emerged, in order to realize the functions and goals of the new prison system that went beyond mere detention and needed buildings adequate for all the activities of the convicts: apart from the detention rooms, there should be the school, the workshops, the church, the courtyards, all included in strict surroundings for the control and the safety against escapes. Starting from the English pioneer architects, a typological variety of buildings arised, following different prison systems and expressing the particular sociopolitical concept of a region or state on imprisonment. Typical examples of this are the two main -and rival- prison systems that arised in the north-eastern states of America and spread universally: the separate prison system, also known as the “Pensylvannian” and the mixed prison system also known as the “Aubernian”, both named after the places where were erected. The representative buildings have obvious differences on the structure and on the presence, clearly expressing each community's concept on imprisonment. Among all these buildings, the iconic structure of S. & J. Bentham, the famous Panopticon, was the physical basis of Foucault's critical theory of central control over human behaviour (Foucault, 1976). Moreover, it is related to contemporary conceptions of the prison question, which incorporate the human factor into their problematic, such as the work of the American sociologist Norman Johnston (2000). Eventually, these theories of the 20th century led to the specific interdisciplinary research field of “carceral geography” to explore the complex carceral spaces, the internal and external relations of their spatial distribution, the concepts of human mobility and embodiment, the identity of these places and the experiences of the inmates. All these recent approaches include the human factor and indicate that the geometrical and perceptual investigation of prison space falls within the broader field of space and place studies, linking the “prison building” to a society's civilization.

Specifically for Greek Prisons, the first approach of this kind was presented in the doctoral dissertation entitled “Greek Public Prison Buildings, 1836-1940” (Kavyri, E. 2022). The concept of the dissertation is that the Greek prison system is considered to be a social and legal condition that has a physical structure, as a spatial condition and refers to the confined life, as a lived condition. So, it can be evaluated by co-examining a) the legal framework, b) the architectural theory and practice and c) the personal experiences of involvement with prison, using the

criteria that were highlighted by the analysis of the western theories and practices: organization, order, security, reformation and surveillance.

Based on this background, our research delves into the –unknown- specific space of Greek agricultural prisons, erected between 1925-1930, investigating the space perceived by the law, the architectural space and the space inhabited. We conducted a retrospective comparative examination of the legislation and the official documents, of the texts about prisons and prisoners and of the architectural drawings of the built structures. In other words, we have used tools from the fields of legal science and anthropology alongside architectural tools, aiming simultaneously on the field of architectural design and on the broader field of social sciences.

The paper is organised in four parts. In the first, entitled: "Towards the creation of agricultural prisons", we present the state of the play in the field of Correctional Services in Greece, the influences of Western models and the administrative actions taken for the creation of rural prisons. The second part presents the methodology followed. The third part includes the discussion of the findings of the research in relation to the three conceptions of the field mentioned above and in the fourth part we conclude on the heritage value of these settlements and on the contribution of our original methodology to the renewal of the research field.

2. Towards the establishment of agricultural prisons

The beginnings of the Greek state's attempt to follow the Western European penal reforms is marked by the enactment of the first decree on prisons in 1836. By this legislation, features of the Western mixed prison system are adopted and it is, undoubtedly, an intention of the Greek State to adopt to Western Prison's theory and practice. In other words, it seems to be the intention of the Greek state to adopt the mature penal system that developed in the Western world and could be described as a new social condition whereby offenders and criminals doing time in Modern Prison's Building that offers organization, order, security, reformation and surveillance, would be transformed into moral human beings and useful citizens. At that time, and specifically in the year 1840 that the French philosopher Michel Foucault named as "...the date of the completion of the penitentiary system...", the Mettray prison complex was officially inaugurated in France. The settlement was described as an agricultural penal colony (*colonie agricole et penitentiaire*) and the architectural design was created by the French architect Abel Blouet. This forced a great influence on the French philanthropist Benjamin Appert who visited Greece, in the year 1855, possibly at the invitation of the Greek government and in particular of the Minister of Justice Paul Kalligas, with the vision of creating an agricultural penal colony in Peloponnese, in the fortress of Methoni. The idea was to reuse the remains of the medieval structure -after restoration works- and, indeed, an architectural plan has survived, showing the new buildings within the existing fortifications and ensuring the influence of the Mettray case (Bassez, 2015: 195). Eventually, the complex was not built, possibly because of the financial weaknesses of the Greek State, but it is significant to note that an agricultural colony was chosen as the first ideal Greek prison, among all different paradigms of Western Modern Prison architecture.

For the next fifty years, no new prison buildings were built. The progressive decree of 1836 could not be implemented and later Greek criminologists characterized it as a blind imitation of foreign systems. It seems that there was great difficulty in transforming this legal and social condition into a spatial condition which, according to the textbooks of Greek criminologists of the 19th century, is attributed to two main causes: a) the insufficient finances of the State and b) the lively personality of Greek people. Regarding the first one, efforts were made to awaken the Greek bourgeois class to care for prisoners, resulting in the development of philanthropic actions and economic donations that contributed to the construction of the first modern Greek prisons, in the late 19th century. However, none the complexes erected at that time, hosted agricultural activities as a form of penitentiary work, although it was the State's main productive domain. On the other hand, since Greek society had not participated in the progressive socio-political processes that took place in the West from the mid-18th century, people maintained customs and activities that had a strong connection to the natural element and rural life. In the textbooks of Greek criminologists of the 19th century, these characteristics of Greek society are noted as the main problems for the implementation of solitary confinement. Therefore, the second cause indicates that Greek society was not ready to adopt the strict correctional systems that had already matured in the Western societies. It seems that this observation acted as a hindrance in making decisions regarding the establishment of the Greek correctional system and its representative buildings. However, it also has a positive aspect in that it introduced the human factor into the public discourse on the topic of Greek prisons and highlighted the necessity of improving prison life in the existing built structures. In addition, it seemed as an opportunity for the inspiration of the unique type of Greek Rural Prisons: their establishment and operation took place many years later but the foundations and discussions that led to this political decision had already been laid in the last decades of the 19th century. An outstanding example is the scholarly work of Professor Damianos Vorres: "Studies on the various prison systems" published in 1881, in which he attempts to determine the most suitable system for Greece (Vorres, 1881: 57). The author believes that, up to that time, legislative acts were a blind imitation of the institutions of other, foreign societies. He discusses the prison systems developed in the West, identifies the pros and cons of each one and judges the Irish one as the most satisfactory of all because it "...combines isolation with communal imprisonment and is the product of deep study and experience" (Vorres, 1881: 56). Vorres, in the introduction of the corresponding chapter, connects the

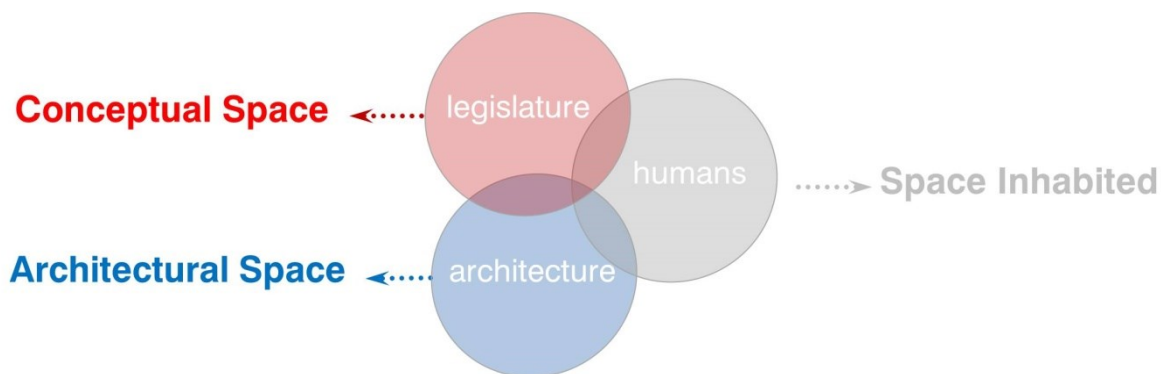
successful application of the "excellent in theory institution" (i.e., modern prison and the sentence of imprisonment) with the customs and needs of the society where it is intended to operate, with the racial character and temperament of the people, with their history, and with the climate of the location. He also notes the struggle between the American systems (Barnes, 1921: 55), as he attempts to identify the system that will be reformed in a way that aligns with the "cheerful and lively character of the Greek People" (Vorres, 1881: 58). He proposes a variation of the progressive - Irish system and specifies agricultural outdoor works as the most suitable type of employment (rather than industrial ones) as a measure to promote the education of land cultivation, as greek convicts, mainly, belonged to the agricultural classes. In contrast to the schematic application of Appert, Vorres' proposal constitutes the first scientific approach to the concept of rural prisons, which is based on actual social and geophysical data (Vorres, 1881: 100-102). However, it seems that this theoretical background was not convincing enough for the architectural study of such complexes, as it was not included in the study on the models of Greek prisons by the engineer Antonios Manarakis, who published in the year 1900 the first and only book on greek prison architecture. Manarakis adopts American standards and locates the institution of inmate labor in an industrial-type architectural complex, an extensive walled ensemble, with heavy building structures and no outdoor spaces for the use of the convicts, providing in addition specific constructions for the absolute control of prisoners' mobility. The first significant legal measure taken by the Greek State towards the establishment of agricultural prisons, was the 1911th Penitentiary Act, and it will be the starting point of our research on the examination of the legal framework and the legal concept of this particular prison space.

3. Material and Methods

Our research specializes in the study of Pre-war Greek Agricultural Prisons' space considered to be the physical implementation of the modern central penal service of the Greek state, in terms of Western Modernity. The aim of the research has an interdisciplinary reference, concerning: a) the field of architectural design as we are investigating the architectural and urban features of these public institutional constructions and, b) the more general field of the social sciences, as the research highlights the relationship between these constructions and the quality of the legal and political culture of our country.

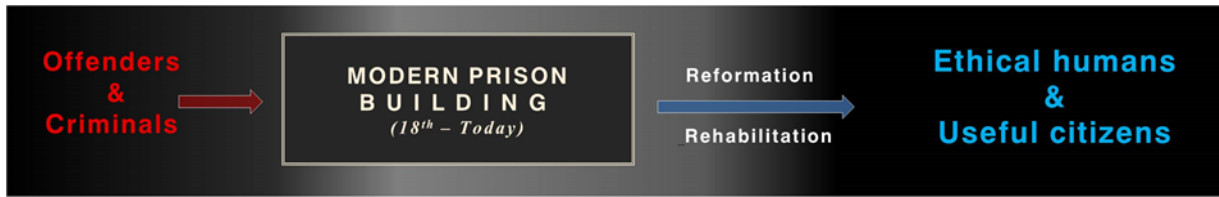
The main research question could be phrased as follows: if prison buildings constitute the spatial framework of the new social condition that set civilizing terms in the treatment of social problems and the political set up of Western societies, then their architectural investigation and the criticism that we -as architects- can exercise is linked to the continuous changes in the overall cultural and political field of the Society. The examination of the penitentiary space - as it is geometrically and perceptually defined – links the "prison building" to the quality of the legal and political culture of a State.

We followed a comparative methodology that consists of a retrospective examination of the quantitative and qualitative criteria of prison space in Greek rural prisons, taking into account the three main parameters of the establishment, construction and operation of these public buildings: a) the legal framework, b) architectural theory and practice, and c) the users' experience.



Essentially, we refer to three conceptions of the prison space as a public institutional space and a comparative methodology was followed in which we attempted to explore the relation between the space predicted by the legislation, the built space and the lived space. So, we used research and documentation tools from the fields of law and social anthropology alongside architectural tools which are the legislation and the official documents of the period under consideration, the texts on prisons and prisoners, and the architectural drawings of the built structures. This interdisciplinary architectural investigation introduces a strong emphasis on the human factor and employs a qualitative method to explore the issue of "rehabilitation through confinement" using socio-physical tools in a complex strategy.

The research design of this distinctive approach, assumes that the correctional function is a legal and social "condition" that has a physical structure (as the spatial condition) and refers to the confined life, as the lived condition.



Consequently, this "condition" is defined by three parameters that are briefly referred to as: Penal Legislature – Prison Building – Human Experience. and are examined using a comparative methodology in which the space predicted by Penal Legislature is related to the space that was constructed and the space that was inhabited.

The criteria for the co-examination of these three concepts of space are: organization, order, security, reformation and surveillance, which were defined in the doctoral dissertation Greek Public Prison Buildings, 1836-1940, by the author Efthalia Kavyri, that were extracted after thorough examination of the Western Modern Prison's theory and practice. So, from the beginning of our research we were in fact searching for the characteristics or the degree of organization, order, security, reformation and surveillance in the specific space of the pre-war Greek Agricultural Prisons.

Data collection: Collecting data, on such a complex context, required an extended investigation of bibliographical and archival sources. Research and documentation tools used, are a) the legislation of the period under examination which includes laws, regulations, and other legal and official documents related to the construction and operation of prisons, seeking into different greek archives. b) The architectural plans of the built structures: These plans provide information about the layout, size, and other features of the prisons and, c) The texts about prisons and prisoners: This includes a wide range of materials, such as academic articles, journalistic reports, and personal accounts. On top of that, the authors collected data from the in-situ visit of the sites.

Data analysis includes both qualitative and quantitative indicators in order to define the features of organization, order, security, reformation and surveillance within the prison space. Architectural analysis includes:

1. Spatial and urban planning data provided by maps, such as the location of the settlement, the distance of the nearest urban settlement, roads and other means of accessibility to the site.
2. Distribution by region of the country: This metric shows the number of prisons in each region of Greece.
3. Geometry and size of the complex: This metric measures the overall shape and size of each prison complex.
4. General floor plan form – typology: This metric classifies the overall layout of each prison complex according to a set of typologies.
5. Ratio of built to unbuilt space: This metric compares the amount of space that is covered by buildings to the amount of open space within each prison complex.
6. Coding of interior and exterior spaces by functions. This involves assigning codes to different spaces and functions within the prison to facilitate analysis.
7. Transforming the original (archival) plans into abstract diagrams highlighting the places of security, reformation and surveillance. This involves creating simplified diagrams of the original architectural plans to highlight key features and relationships.
8. Defining centers, paths and zones of interest within the prison totality.
9. Creation of diagrams of boundaries, spaces, functions (grouped), and circulation (movement). This involves creating diagrams that show the boundaries of different areas, the layout of spaces, the distribution of functions and the human mobility patterns within the prison.
10. Relative sizes – ratio of enclosed spaces per function: This metric measures the relative sizes of different types of enclosed spaces within each prison complex, such as cells, classrooms, and workshops.
11. Space ratio per inmate (built and unbuilt): This metric measures the amount of space that is allocated to each inmate, both inside and outside of buildings.
12. Length of paths: This metric measures the total length of all the paths that inmates can take within each prison complex.
13. Form of paths: This metric describes the shape and layout of the paths that inmates can take within each prison complex.
14. Materiality of boundaries (size, construction material that refer, through their durability and permeability, to security): This metric examines the materials used to construct the boundaries of each prison complex, mainly considering how these materials relate to the criterion of security.

We also organized the legislative and anthropological writings upon the above five indicators, seeking mostly for comments on the spatial features of the prisons described either by the law or the writers. We mostly achieved quantitative comments on these features and we took into consideration any criticism provided by the Greek criminologists' references, as hermeneutic tools. We mainly used the texts of the journalist Petros Pikros (1926) and the criminologist - President of the Appeal Court, Ioannis Petrounakos (1935). They both visited the prisons and describe long discussions with the inmates. Pikros, in particular, describes his work as a great anthropological research on the topic, which was rare for that time. Although he had not used specific questionnaires –as contemporary anthropologists do- all his comments or testimonies that he documents, are well structured and clear. Both of them seem to have had great care on the matter of incarcerative life, additionally to the matter of modernizing the greek prison system. Their texts provided to our research all the complementary information to the drawings in order to get a full image of the prison space-time at that time in Greece and –for today's researchers- they stand as valuable sources on any further investigation.

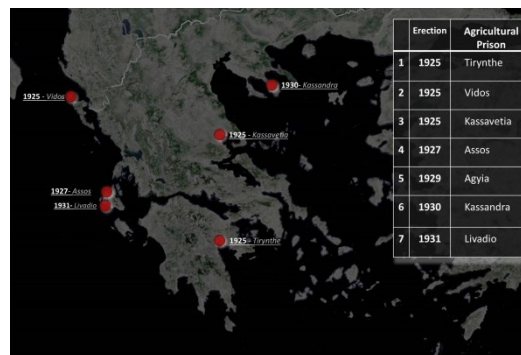
4. Results and Discussion

The results of the research will be presented organized by the research's parameters under the three conceptions of space: legal, architectural and anthropological.

The conceptual space (legal)

Firstly, we will present the main laws/ regulations that provided the institutional framework for the creation of rural prisons and the indication for the development of legal culture in Greece, through the modernization of the treatment of prisoners and the recognition of rights to them and the spatial data that were obtained from the legislation. The first significant law was the 1911th Penitentiary Act, which acknowledges a special type of correctional treatment in agricultural prisons but, provides only general guidelines regarding the location and the number of the enclosed population. The purpose of these prisons was to accommodate convicts who had demonstrated good behavior, those who had already served 20 years of a life sentence, or those who, due to health problems, could not be confined to an individual cell. Some of the spatial characteristics that were established by law included the location of construction and the number of inmates, which can be used to estimate the required area of enclosed spaces. It is also mentioned the congregative prison system of communal living, which refers to the application of communal dormitories as the type of accommodation (not individual cells as the solitary system). The above constitute general guidelines for the capacity and operation of rural prisons, which were specified in more detail almost fourteen years later, in the year 1925, with the State Regulation. From this legislation, and especially from the reference to the responsibilities of the Technical Director (Articles 12-29), it can be deduced that in rural prisons, inmates were engaged not only in outdoor cultivation works but also in sheepfolds, piggeries, cowsheds, stables and warehouses and in general in livestock facilities. In addition to these buildings, the regulation refers to their accommodation in common cells (Article 40), to their moral instruction in the church and to their education in the prison school (Article 39). It therefore refers to a composite building complex, without however giving instructions or specifications for the specific typology of these constructions. We extracted information about the necessary spaces and the notion that the prison-farm would be a set of well organized activities within a composite environment. However, based on the number of spaces mentioned, it seems that the intention was for the complexes to have a strong reformatory character, including moral instruction and education (church and school) or through work and the provision of supplies to convicts to facilitate their reintegration.

With this legislative framework, during the period 1925-1930, seven rural prisons were established in various regions of the country, in areas that were relatively far from the then urban centers/urban complexes. The first rural prison to be established was in Peloponnese, in Tirynthe, in 1925, within the facilities of the older Kapodistriian agricultural station. In the same year, the prison of Kassavetia (also an agricultural station) and the island of Vidos, in the Ionian Sea, were founded, which practically gave the island itself the character of a "prison".



Finally, they were founded in Agia of Chania, Crete (1929) and in the Kassandra region of Halkidiki (1930). Therefore, a dispersion of these facilities is observed throughout almost the entire pre-war Greek territory. Among them, we

chose to conduct the architectural analysis on the prisons of Tirynthe and Vidos, because firstly they are fully documented and, secondly, they are the first two to operate.

The built space (architectural)

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, we transformed the original architectural plans into abstract diagrams of functional units, associating each particular room to one of the three main functions of modern prison theory, revealing the places of security, reformation and surveillance, in order to evaluate their spatial distribution. Outlining also the built from the unbuilt spaces, we see summarize the results as follows:

a) The plots have an irregular geometry, an extremely large size and a ratio over built-to-unbuilt space of 3%, which is a rather sparse distribution.

b) The ratio over built-to-unbuilt spaces is about 3%, so they are extremely sparsely built complexes,

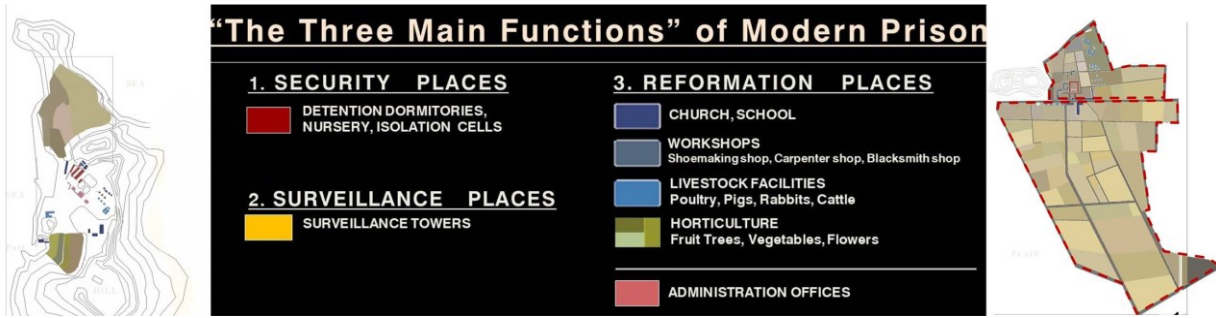
c) (External boundaries and the criterion of security) Their external boundaries were formed by a common wire fence (or completely missing) and the impression given is that of an ambiguity as to the perimeter of the whole or of a diffusion of the prison premises towards the natural environment. Examining, in particular, the topographical diagram (1954) of Tirynthe complex, we notice that although the intermediate routes for the service of agricultural activities are clearly visible, the boundaries of the property -and consequently of the penitentiary function- are not clear (an observation which inevitably refers to the critique of the primary criterion of security set by the founder of the penitentiary John Howard (1777) and which influenced the architecture of modern prisons by defining specific materialized demarcations with their surroundings). The case of the Vidos rural prison is even more interesting, because the penitentiary function could be developed throughout the island area and the prison was practically "walled" by the sea, assuring security by the location itself, as Pikros characteristically mentions "...not our soldiers guard it (the prison), as long as the sea..." (Pikros, 1926: 18).

d) (the absence of a regular outline and the criterion of organization): According to the French pioneer architect Louis-Pierre Baltard (1829), a totally normal outline was important in prison design, in order to achieve a well organized arrangement of the prison buildings. So, the site we examined give the impression of random placement of the constructions, with no obvious organization rule. Observing carefully though, we noticed that, the spatial distribution of the new facilities necessary for the prison function followed the structure of the physical setting and some of the pre-existing structures. In the early example of the Rural Prison of the island of Vidos, the most flat area was chosen for the initial location of the penitentiary function, almost in the middle of the island and, in the overall organization, an almost square, central set is found, to host the administrative center of the prison. This area is recognized as the functional "core" of the prison and was well-controlled accessible from the island's harbor. The single-storey accommodation wings consisted of chambers and formed, together with their internal courtyards, an overall arrangement in the shape of a "fan". All subsequent buildings were constructed either following the contours of this central space or following the slopes of the ground.

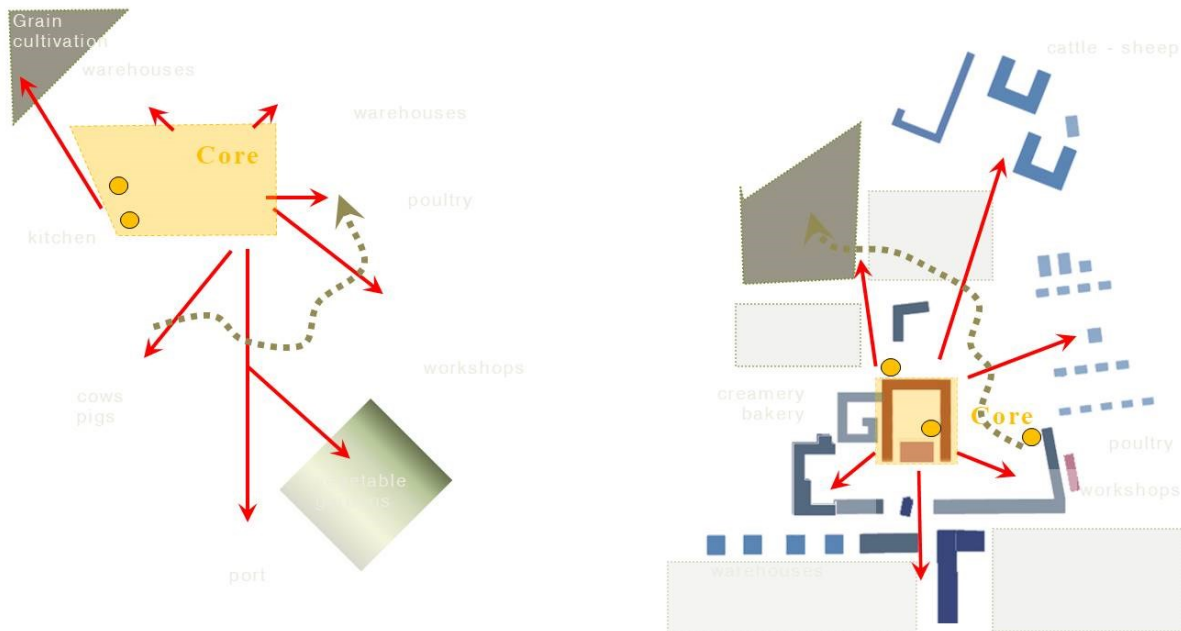
The Agricultural Prison of Tiryns is located in a very large area that includes the Argos - Nafplio road. All the main facilities are arranged further north of this road axis. The part of the field further south of the road is practically unstructured, apart from the sporadic appearances of small rural auxiliary buildings. The general arrangement of the built spaces is based on a nuclear orthonormal arrangement of wings that includes the administrative spaces and the dormitory spaces, again a "core". From this core, the individual buildings with different typologies are developed in different directions (sheep sheds, pig sheds, cattle sheds, stables, warehouses, etc.).

e) (Spatial arrangement and the criterion of order): The rotation of the canvas and the transposition of similar shapes offers a rhythmic repetition of forms that ensures local unity and, while maintaining the central annex as a starting point, it also gives the impression that these structures can be continuously extended into the open rural landscape. It is presented as a set of structures with greater freedom of development of its buildings and with coherence ensured by the geomorphological factor. A rhythmic repetition of the individual units is observed which maintains the coherence of the whole and a "looseness" of their connections that refers to the possibility of main and secondary routes in the daily life of the prisoners: the transitions from the dormitory spaces to the individual functional work units are developed in various directions and their character and form in general depend on the particular use they host (citrus trees, vegetable gardens, pastures, etc.). Getting further from the core of the settlement, one has a more sparse environment.

f) (The distribution of functional units and the criterion of reformation): From the core, various working areas spread towards different directions, following the structure of the physical setting and forming working zones such as the Workshops (Shoemaking shop, Carpenter shop, Blacksmith), the Livestock facilities (Poultry, Pigs, Rabbits, Cattle) the Horticulture (Fruit Trees, Vegetables, Flowers). Most of the area of the prison site is covered by all these zones, highly increasing the proportion of reformation places over the security ones, pointing out a clear reformative character of the prison rather than a constrained one. In addition, the detention dormitory wings are arranged around a communal courtyard, to which the prisoners had direct access -without the interference of a well-controlled corridor. So, this architectural choice is in contrast to the autonomy observed in the case of closed prisons and leads to a spatial organization that is related to an enclosed life of a more communal or collective character and to a different quality of human movement and activity.



g) (Human mobility and the criterion of surveillance): In the case of rural prisons, the transitions from the core areas to the individual functional work units are developed towards various directions and their character and form generally depend on the particular use they host (citrus trees, vegetable gardens, pastures, etc.). The connections between these functional modules are not made by means of a predetermined or forced route, such as the 'sealed corridors' designed for the model Greek prisons. The general layout therefore offers the possibility of choosing alternative routes within a wider network whose configuration is determined mainly by the geomorphological factor and the use of land.



As the boundaries were implemented with the usual constructions applied to the neighbouring farms, they were not differentiated from their surroundings and did not emphasise the closed character of the host prison function. Conversely, it could be argued that, -from the diagrams- there is a diffusion of the correctional function in the open rural landscape and a condition of extended freedom of movement, which in no way resembled the suffocating environment/condition of the enclosed courtyards. It is also evident that, in this spatial condition the concept of central control is practically non-existent. In the end, it is a spatial condition that was not attempted to be diagrammatically rendered both because of its spatial characteristics and because of its changeable character depending on the movement intentions of the people operating in these spaces. Moreover, instead of the architect's interpretative diagrams of this environment, the research sought and quoted written references which constitute representations of the prison space and present the management of space and time from the inmates' point of view. The lived space (anthropological)

In order to examine the relation between the spatial properties of the buildings and the humans' (criminals') living inside them, we extracted valuable documentation for the day life of the inmates by the texts of the journalist Petros Pikros and the President of the Appeal Court Ioannis Petrounakos, who both visited these prisons in the years 1926 and 1932. Most important for our research was to extract information through the comments on the spatial characteristics of the settlements and to compare to the information given by the architectural drawings and the law instructions. We also organized the information according to the relative references to the prison criteria of organization, order, security, reformation and surveillance. A general comment is that many of the convicts' activities differed from what was predicted by the law but they were favoured by the structure of the physical settings.

According to Petrounakos, the inmates of agricultural prisons had a satisfactory diet based on the products of their labour, which is emphatically mentioned in contrast to the closed prisons starving condition (“...2000 outcasts of society eat abundant and sweet bread, which they produce by their labour, and bless God because they live free embraced by Mother Nature...”, Petrounakos, 1935: 85). Pikros, though, mentions that the detention dormitories and the accommodations in general, were of poor quality, “...Miserable, rotten and crumbling slums, with a stifling and foul atmosphere, constantly poisoned by the disgusting fumes of a wretched latrine at the bottom of each slum...” (Pikros, 1926: 96). In addition he notices the lack of natural light and air: “[for the windows]...miserable iron-barred holes, which, with all the sunshine outside, the sun can't even see them ...dark corner ...damp ...”(Pikros, 1926: 108). He uses hard descriptions in order to urge the authorities to restore them, as he strongly believes that it is worthwhile to improve the living condition because: “...there's a huge amount of work going on in Vido... places bare, unused, abandoned to their fate, thanks to the prisoners were and still are transformed into fertile lands”, referring to the results of the outdoor working of the convicts (Pikros, 1926: 98 & 188).

He also states that: “...they work from dawn to dusk ... they work with their hearts - because they prefer the countryside to the cells of the penitentiary, they work without even the need of the sad companion of the guards ... (Pikros, 1926: 97), revealing that they are willingly working for many hours per day. Prisoners had taken on responsibilities as they worked in the open air spaces without the close supervision of the prison's officers and they earned the trust of the authorities: “...to win at the same time the esteem of his fellow inmates and the trust of the prison authorities...” (Pikros, 1926:116). Although they were aware of the loose boundaries, they did not attempt to escape: In the contrary, Pikros saves through his writings that the convicts were well aware of their debt to the society by doing time in prison: “...in what relation is he to his conscience?-...! owe and I pay!...” (Pikros, 1926: 124). Discipline, collective life and solidarity observed, led Pikros to propose a prison model based on a cooperative system, totally managed by the prisoners: “...the agricultural prisons ... it would be more advantageous ... to be transformed into a kind of colonie penitentiaire based on the cooperative system...” (Pikros, 1926:113). Petrounakos confirms the economical profit for the State proven by numbers (Petrounakos, 1935: 79). Eventually, he states that, in the agricultural prisons, along with the cultivation of plans, the cultivation of prisoners was achieved and they were in fact reformed into useful citizens who were able to pass on the arts learnt in prison to the society after their release, due to the “... beneficial and miraculous effects of Labor” and “ ... The miracle of our agricultural prisons leads me to believe that the day is not far off when these stigmas of civilization will disappear completely from the land of Greece and only the horrible memory will remain ...” (Petrounakos, 1935: 96).

5. Conclusions

Summarizing the results of the three parameters' investigation, it can be deduced that a) the concern of the Greek state for the protection of their operation as they had, from their "birth", a special but quite flexible legal framework for their establishment and operation, b) by deepening the analysis of their particular spatial characteristics, it was established that, on the one hand, they are differentiated from conventional modern prisons and, on the other hand, they constitute a set of complexes with a particular identity as they have common architectural elements in their structure and operation and, c) the written reports agree on the beneficial effect of the outdoor work and the feeling of freedom and creativity experienced by the prisoners. In total, agriculturals' prisons' environment favoured the rehabilitation of the inmates for their social reintegration acknowledging the value of the prisoners' life and promoting a decent sentence for the convicts: “Rural prisons, as an alternative way of serving the sentence, for about 100 years of their operation in Greece, embodies and at the same time serves the essence of the concept of modern prison”, as it is noted by the Greek sociologist Panagiotis Schizas (2013). The above findings lead to the establishment of the research question and to verify that the examination of the agricultural prisons' space - as it is geometrically and perceptually defined – links the "prison building" to the quality of the legal and political culture of a State.

It is of most significance to notice that, the architecture of these complexes concretized a prison life model and also a way of rehabilitation which seems more acceptable by the prisoners. The Greek State's quite flexible legal framework made possible to arise “an architectural field consisted of relatively heterogeneous elements that the human activities unify them in a coherent world” (Schulz, 1971: 62). Centers, paths and zones we mentioned, work together to form a dynamic totality where any spatial expression is possible, “... a continuous flowing space, almost freed from defined centers and from the distinction between inside and outside...” (Schulz, 1971:66).

So, if the theory of Western Modern Prison has contributed to the creation of a centrally organized civilization, then the cultures of these enclosed communities released its practical application, managing a dynamic spatial condition that gives the pre-war Greek Agricultural Prisons the identity of an "open" correctional space, as the ones in Scandinavian Open Prisons of the meta-War era, achieving the main goal of all penal reforms: reformation for the social reintegration of the convicts. This new meaningful world was developed by the peaceful co-existence of land's culture alongside “man's culture” and appears as a mixed, nature & man-made landscape that deserves to be protected and studied from the humanistic perspective, which –as Yi Fu Tuan notes- is the study of a people's spatial feeling and ideas, in the stream of experience (Yi Fu Tuan, 1977: 8-18).

The main goal of all penitentiary reforms in Western societies, reformation for social reintegration, seems to have been achieved in the prisons we investigated, eventually setting civilizing conditions for dealing with crime and delinquency. It still is the factor by which, even today, the quality of penitentiary policy is assessed, which refers to the quality of legal and political culture. In any case, it is considered that valuable lessons are being transferred to 'today'. Based on the foregoing, and in terms of protection, conservation and care for this cultural value, the 'phenomenon' of Greek rural prisons deserves further interdisciplinary investigation, from its origins to its present-day operation.

The contribution of our research on the field of architectural and heritage conservation studies is that this interdisciplinary, threefold architectural investigation introduces a strong relation among the architects, the criminologists and the anthropologists, with emphasis on the human factor. Applying a mixed qualitative-quantitative method, we can explore the issue of "rehabilitation through confinement" engaging the theoretical fields of criminology and anthropology and offering them socio-physical tools. So, any contemporary interdisciplinary research on the complex phenomenon of the reformatory spaces and procedures could achieve immediate results by using the above socio-physical tools (rather than using statistical data) as they are directly related to the rich capacity of nature's structures to receive meaningful contents, pointing out, in addition, the profit that humans have when working along with nature's general principles. Consequently, it presents a complex strategy that can be analogously applied to the examination of modern correctional facilities, of any kind, as well as to the investigation, evaluation, and design of all kinds of Institutional Buildings, since every public building's establishment, operation, and construction encompasses the three parameters of legislation, architecture and the human activity. Furthermore, it refreshes the field of architectural research by incorporating content analysis methods from the social sciences for the processing of primary textual sources. This provides the architectural researcher with the flexibility to utilize unexpected research tools and represents a convergence of legal science and architecture, introducing the human parameter with emphasis.

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Conflict of Interests

The Author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest.

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