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The Entrancement of Ruins



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# RUIN THROUGH PHOTOGRAPH

## THE CASE OF KAZARMA: KAIAFAS, ILIA

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Figure 3: Current view of the Kazarma. Source: Odysseas Marinos Lambros : Kazarma in Kaiafas must be saved ([odisseasml.blogspot.com](https://odisseasml.blogspot.com))

### ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the concept of ruin and abandonment through the accompanying photographic material as through also through the understanding of the reality of the photograph itself. Each ruin has its testimonies, traces, findings, photographic evidence, and more. All these unfold before us its history. The research along with the photographic material, compile the narration of the ruin. The main purpose its recognition in the world.

Initially, the research site is located in the wider landscape of Lake Kaiaphas in the Gulf of Kyparissia. The events that contributed to the abandonment are recorded. The ruin of Kazarma on Kaiapha beach, in Ilia, is chosen as the main focus of the research.

Then, are analyzed the aspects related with the meaning of the ruin and its value through the borrowing of its traces in the area. The photographic material is proposed as a methodology for understanding the ruins, so we can compose a narrative. Finally, as a result of the above, is presented the progression of the research, revealing facts and findings which... have a story to tell.

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#### Keywords

ruin, photography, nostalgia, memory, trauma, narrative

## 1. FROM THE GOLDEN AGE TO ABANDONMENT

*Loved the sea only for the storms  
and the green meadows, when the  
monotony was broken by the ruins.*

Gustav Flaubert, 1821-1880, French writer



Figure 1: The location of Kazarma. Source: Odysseas Marinos Lambros : Kazarma in Kaiafas must be saved (odisseasml.blogspot.com)

We can find a cultural geography of the past trauma in the remaining ruins of the war. The range of ruins' destruction, seem to be greater than our Nation. In this paper, we will focus on the southwestern side of the Peloponnese, specifically in the prefecture of Ilia, in a protected area of natural beauty and goodness, part of the Kyparissia gulf, which is known for its extensive dune belt,



Figure 2: The view from the hill of Greek color, where the acropolis of historical times is located.

From this point, the passage from the southern Trifylia is controlled, while the whole northern part of the Kyparissia gulf is supervised. Source: [https://aristomenismessinios.blogspot.com/2013/12/blog-post\\_11.html](https://aristomenismessinios.blogspot.com/2013/12/blog-post_11.html)

pine forest of Strofilia, long narrow basin of Lake Kaiafas, and Lapitha mountain range. Kazarma breaks the "monotony" of the endless sea of June and dunes.

The fortress of Kazarma (Nikoletzos, 2020), is dated from the Venetian and Turkish occupation. It is probable that it is part of the fortifications of the Acropolis, i.e. the three hills in Kleidi. A visual inspection of the entire plain was carried out from this area. This explains the continuous habitation of the area from prehistory to modern times.

Today, the Municipality of Zacharo, the Tax office of Antiquities, and the Region of Western Greece have not take action as comes to the restoration of Kazarma. Its ruin is located in the same area to this day.

This is the feature of Kaiafas beach, which is collapsing and in a short time there will be nothing left than a pile of stones.

It is a place which people love to visit and take pictures. Dated from 1203, now is left to the ravages of time.

The photographs are an indisputable witness of its gradual collapse and abandonment.

## 2. THE RUIN THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

*We do not see things as they really are.  
We see them according to who we are.*

Khalil Gibran, 1883-1931, Lebanese-American poet and philosopher

Through remains, human history, as though and a previous existence, the trace of human activity witnessed. Value then exists through historicity and not in material existence. The ruin is resurrected at present, indissolubly connected to the landscape and the urban area in which it is located. Its value decreases as it is far from its natural area. Its modern image reveals the identity of the city. The signs of decay, the traces of human existence are some things that are preserved and not the original image of the monument.

### photography

Creating images means creating what we want to experience in the future or we are afraid to experience. In this case the photograph has a primary reason of existence, and specifically the image of the photograph which replaces a reality which does not exist. The photograph of a loved one on our cell phone or in his grave, complements this reality. This confirms that in order for the image to exist, the absence of reality is required. So, the image is not in line with reality.



### **\_death, abandonment**

The most common reason we photograph something is to keep it in our memory and not forget it. So, the present moment can be transferred and experienced to the future. In its broadest sense, this means that it is related to death. This is the reason why someone wants to capture a moment through photograph, knowing that this specific moment will be lost over time.

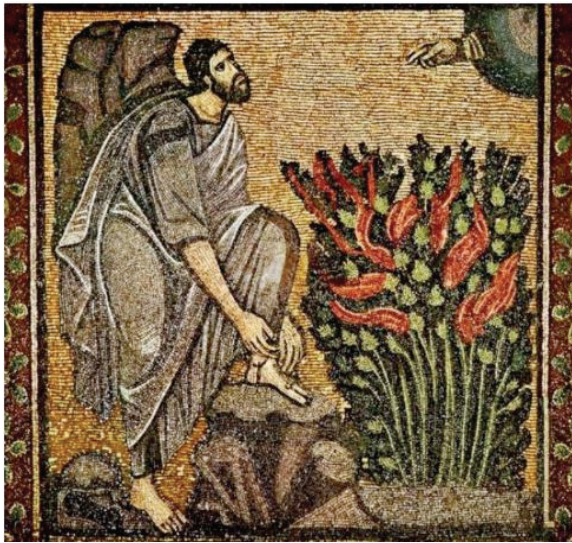


Figure 4: Moses and the burning bush. Byzantine mosaic in the Monastery of Agia Aikaterini on Mount Sinai. Moses through the bush (nature) comes in contact with God (divinity). Man inside the abandoned building (nature) conquers his lost Transcendence. Source: <https://www.akg-images.com/archive/-2UMEBM216FPI.html>

So, we claim a part of life from death. But that we claim and earn in the end, is not life. For the photograph to exist, it is necessary that what it captures does not cease to exist over time. The photograph chronically distracts what we want to photograph so as a result of which it goes beyond the time limits.

It is the only means we have to maintain something, that is, the image. When the image restores reality, then the photograph has fulfilled its role.

### **\_the memory of the photograph**

The mistake we all make is that we have the impression that photograph saves life itself. In reality, however, it simply saves the memory, something that in reality does not exist. Photograph creates its own memory and reality. It does not capture and does not want to capture reality as it was but in the way it can capture the reality of that given moment. In this sense, photograph replaces our memory with its

own memory. So now as a memory we have the image of the photograph and not our own images, those that we could have from our own memory. Thus, the image of a photograph could be a tool for knowing the ruin, which is an artistic and exploratory stimulus, creating **nostalgia, memory and trauma**.

### **\_nostalgia**

The concept of nostalgia, although it has been considered negative for its attachment in the past. In fact, it is a complementary concept that helps us to understand the present moment. A representative example is an architectural ruin. "In this we can find the past, in the remains of the ruin, but at the same time something that is not present as it is no longer accessible"[2].

The "distress" of emotional memory for the loss of the past is expressed and at the same time the reflection of critical thinking on the recovery of aspects of the past, with the ultimate goal of knowledge for a better future perspective.

### **\_memory**

The memory of a photograph is the memory of a photograph. Our memory is our memory. The one that we can selectively remember something, forget something, or mythologize something when we do not remember, depending on what we want to remember.

Photograph, too, does not always represent the truth. It could be considered a distortion of reality, whether conscious or not. So, the memory of photography is different from the memory of human. The memory of photograph erases



Figure 5: Gaffiti in the abandoned Kazarma. Source: Odysseas Marinos Lambros : Kazarma in Kaiafas must be saved (odisseasml.blogspot.com)





Figure 6: Screenshot from the film: *Honeymoon*, by George Panousopoulos, in 1979.

the memory of human. So, it could be described as anti-memory. In this way it ultimately helps us to forget.

For the meaning of memory, Kouros (2004: 83-86) characteristically states that *"the transfer of space for memory is not the historic monument, but the ruin, an unstable ephemeral collage of moments concerning the aesthetic part. Not the statue, but the graffiti depicting the statue."*

This phrase shows the importance of the imaginary conception of the lived space that Bachelard (2010a: 25) has pointed out, writing that space as captured by our imagination has nothing to do with space as perceived by a geometer. It is an experienced space. Experienced not only in terms of its positive way but also including all the biases of the imagination. Its characteristic is that it almost always fascinates us.

So, it seems that the process of remembrance is a reconstruction of things, a memory of memory. This is because we never recall parts of the past as they are, but constructed parts of it through a dynamic recall process that depends on the circumstances of the present.

The collective memory works in a similar way, which determines and is determined by the wider social whole in the context of a place, such as the space studied in this paper. Collective memory, as Stavridis (2006: 13-36) states, *"is essentially the means that defines the common recognizable meanings and therefore the various social behaviors but also the*

*dialectical relationship between duration and an instantaneous moment, thus determining the outcome of the present, since it essentially "restores" in a way the past to the present."*

Space according to human logic is associated with a sense of stability and therefore with the depiction of continuity and duration. This duration implies what does not change. Therefore, for a social whole a place, a correlation of space can function as a fixed point of finalization and memory of the past against the wear and tear of time.



Figure 7: Crossing the Strofilia Forest and passing between dunes, memories are created in man by analogy. Oikonomopoulos, 2006.

As Bachelard (2010b: 35) points out, *"space serves to keep time concentrated."* Thus, from the moment that human lives in a space with a certain duration, that is, for a set of moments, it can be considered that he "produces" the space himself, since duration and stability are connected with the space itself. The various formations of space therefore have substance every time in the present through the actions of people, but also through the collective memory that is also related to the past.

However, despite the stability of the place, the people inside it are changing. Thus, the photograph also changes, because in the end, the way everyone sees it also changes. How we see things is always related to specific point we are in time. This enables us to have a glimpse of the past, which varies from time to time depending on which time point we are.

#### **\_trauma**

*"The ruined monument may therefore have been the result of natural decay, for which we often do not know the exact details of how it took place, or as the*



Figure 8:  
Now, it seems to be  
a work of nature and  
time, but in the end,  
it's a man's work.  
Konstantinidis, 2020

result of a sudden catastrophic action. In this second case, what was saved is "supported" through the criticism of an attitude towards the actions that led to its demise. In addition to its "remnants", the monument also exposes the events that have taken place. "Sometimes more dramatic than the reasons that caused its construction."

From the words of Metaxas (2005a: 29-30), it is understood that for each ruin the way in which it ended up in the specific situation is decisive since it is the element that differentiates it from a simple ruin and often gives it a different identity and character. Monuments that were demolished over time due to social-economic changes are different from those that were destroyed with violent and sudden way.

#### **\_fragments of the past**

The need of modern human to preserve the fragments of the past is linked to his deeper need to connect with the past. The value of the ruins and the special importance of their nature, as fragments

of the past, is also pointed out by Metaxas (2005b: 25) emphasizing that *"The image of the ruins seems to outline what no longer exists. But the rhetorical rendering of their image may be more suggestive. Every ruin inadvertently constitutes an art form and thus participates in the aesthetic part not only of the "past" but also of the present."*

For the reading of the image of the ruin by human, Metaxas (2005c:31) adds: *"The look of the mind does not search completely freely, but in a certain direction. The preserved remains or fragments often possess something enigmatic and at the same time more suggestive than the lost pieces."* How this is integrated or not, in the world, through the observer, is what characterizes it.

The ruin is always there. But what ruin? The world has only the image of the ruin. The ruin desperately tries to prove its existence. In our age, when political discourse is disappearing, the photograph of ruins acquires a dimension of protest, activism, self-existence. In this world where ruins are ignored and leveled. A statement of presence is made: "I am here, I exist and I claim my existence through photograph". And the essence is the meaning that will be given each time by the one who photographs the ruin. From the moment the ruin has been photographed, its existence is automatically proved.

#### **\_ photographic traces in the area**

Traces of the ruins hide and reveal. They reveal social experiences. The place where ruins are is what reveals them. The photographer acts as a space detector which will help in drawing indications and traces. Through the photograph of the ruins, we are led to an activity of collecting items, which can produce an archive. And as Foucault (1987: 245) notes, the archive is characterized by the possibility of decentralization, *"the common tactic of the ability to critically distance oneself from one's own traditions."*

Benjamin, through the archival practices of collection, controversy, and classification, established a *"literary montage"* as he called it. In other words, an attempt would be made to understand the construction of historical objects through the image, which of course encloses the memory of the image itself and cannot be delimited within a clear narrative form. Thus, an image of the file is revealed where one



Figure 9:  
Every summer the beach hosts thousands of tourists and campers in order to enjoy the beauty of nature and write their own stories around the Kazarma. Source: Odysseas Marinos Lambros : Kazarma in Kaiafas must be saved (odisseasm1.blogspot.com)





Figure 10: The quality of the space is expressed by the aging of the materials. Source: Odysseas Marinos Lambros : Kazarma in Kaiafas must be saved (odisseasm1.blogspot.com)

can move constantly changing paths.

The Atlas of Warburg Memory, a wordless art story, an atlas of 60 paintings with over a thousand photographs, is moving in a similar direction.

Warburg attempted, through the creative arrangement of reproductive images, to form a model of expression of collective memory, a photographic reproduction file collected in a systematic and comparative manner, which aimed to present a wide range of experiences and images (forms of passion), such as they are represented in the works of antiquity and in the paintings of the Renaissance.

The "photographic" archive is a method of interpretation, a manual for compiling surfaces, including objects and research subjects. This recognizes both the pathology and the events that frame these ruins. The concept of trauma contained in each place of existence of the ruins, is recognized and accepted through a photographic archive. But how could we live in reality if there were a past that is constantly emerging before us as something traumatic?

The photograph reminds us of what it shows us, without any possibility of escaping from the memory, as it is offered as memory. But wisdom comes through "affliction", and we are called to review the past, that is, to give it a new meaning. To give it a meaning with which we will be able to coexist, without poisoning the present state of our lives and without compromise our future.

### **\_When the ruin speaks us...**

*"The ruins inspire narratives. This is the observation of Benjamin (2003: 178), that "allegories are in the realm of the imagination while ruins are in the realm of things". The narratives that the ruins are called to convey to us are almost always stories of power. Through fragments, the ruins meet greatness."*

I was built in 1203 and my name is Kazarma, (from the Venetian, casa = home, chariot = weapon), to watch our area for pirates. I endure over the years, the difficult conditions, the conquerors. I stand arrogantly but with many wounds gazing at the beautiful beach of Kaiaphas with its natural beauties, as a guardian, so you can see me and I can meet the next generations. I am desperately trying to prove my existence to all of you who have been photographing me all these years. I reveal myself but I show nothing. I exist only because I exist as an image. I triumph as an image as if it were a success, in the way modern society understand success. In my old corpse and in my arms, a wild fig tree started grown up, before 15 years, stronger and younger than me. With its hands pushes me away and breaks what is left from me.

Nevertheless, my image and through it the encroachment of the place around me does not stop. People look at the image of reality and not reality itself! I ask for your help so that we can coexist together in life and in the memories that it offers us. "My value may be small, but my cultural heritage is great."



Figure 11: around nature. Source: Odysseas Marinos Lambros : Kazarma in Kaiafas must be saved (odisseasm1.blogspot.com)



## INSTEAD OF EPILOGUE

*"Seeing is one thing. Seeing what you look at is another matter. Understanding what you see is different. Learning from this is something else. But acting on what you learn is what really matters."*

Winston Churchill, 1874-1965, British Prime Minister, Nobel Prize 1953

In this paper, we did not want to stand on the dereliction of Kazarma or the ruins as a whole. However, it could be a subject of discussion from now on.

Thus, I considered it important to stand in each example and narrative, and in any kind of photographic collection, as a basis that will provide us with critique. An opportunity to re-examine the ruins.

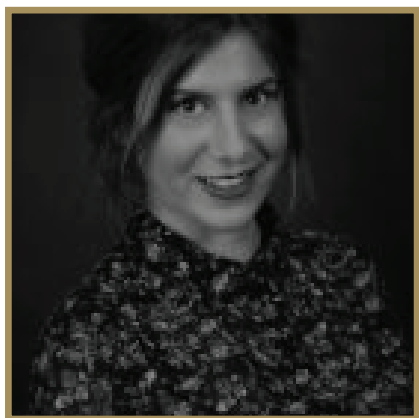
Through the excavation of the catastrophe and the revelation of historical, emotional, and aesthetic aspects... maybe we will be rewarded!



Figure 12: Entropy: The higher the value that a system receives, the greater its disorganization and which is equivalent to the cessation of its life or its evolution since energy is maintained by changing form. Kolaiti, 2020.

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Ioanna Kolaiti was born in Patras. She studied at the Department of Civil Engineering of the School of Pedagogical and Technological Education in Athens from where she graduated in 2017. For the next two years she worked for a big brand name in sports as a Visual Merchandiser. In 2019 she started her postgraduate studies in the Department of Interior Architecture: Sustainable and Social Design, at the University of West Attica. Since 2020 she has been working as a Supervising Engineer for a Technical Company based in Athens. Her last participation was in the project: "Olympic Museum of Athens - GOLDEN HALL".

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