

The City's Regulatory Plans in the First Half of the 20th Century

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Abstract

The aim of this work is to throw light on the regulatory plans of the city of Korça. Based on the researches done in the press of time and in the relevant institutions as well, it comes out that the city had a regulatory plan for its development. It is documented in the press of time since 1875 making it an early document for both the city and Albania in general. These data derive mainly from the press of time published in Korças they have had a great impact on the social and economic life of the city. The ever documented regulatory plan is that of 1931 in co-operation with two foreign engineers and approved by the Albanian Ministry of Infrastructure. Based not only on the press publications, but also on what we have inherited up to nowadays, we conclude that this plan has never been implemented. The only "new thing" this plan brought is the "Pirro Boulevard" or the today known "Skenderbe", (Scanderbeg) which joins the Shen Gjergj Blvd with that of "Republikës" (Republic). In the end, based on archive researches we can deduce that the city of Korça has been among the first cities of Albania having a regulatory plan. A concise and definite fact is the article of 1910 which speaks of "the City Card" (Chart).

Keywords: Korça, regulatory plan, first half of the twentieth century, road, engineer Kohler, Bertold, engineer nostos, D.Pilika, engineer Armenante

Introduction

From what we have presented so far in this paper is undeniable the general development of the city of Korça and without neglecting its architectural and urban development. The development of the city in this respect is normally done on the basis of a regulatory plan for the city. There is a lot of documentary evidence for this fact, but unfortunately not so numerous in terms of mapping materials and detailed plans. Evidence provided by the press of the time gives us an idea of the concept of regulatory plans of that period. (figure 1)

But there is no doubt that the construction of new quarters under the well-known orthogonal scheme has been a pre-established criterion and the absences of a binding official act or a regulatory plan would have led to deviations from this scheme and the construction would be subject to spontaneity if we refer to the long time of its implementation since '50 of 19th until the beginning of the 20th century. The rigorous pursuit of this scheme for such a long period of the time allows us to assume the existence of an act or plan that has disciplined city constructions during this period (Thomo, 2012).

"but when we look at it we have noticed that it is just a plan that show that

the city was divided forty and a half years ago. Many places where today are set up big years on the plaque are marked for ...crops and diara lands ”

(“ Korça without Plan“ , 1929).

This earliest data tells us of a plan dating from 1875!!! I say maybe because the article of the 14th of September 1929 “ *Korça without Plan* ” is about bringing into light the old city plan to make new constructions. Based on the order issued by Mr. H. Mosi, perfecter of Korça, at that time, the old city plan come into use. In the late '20-s, as the article itself describes, areas of the city were filled with dwellings, which at the time were considered just “ *... crops and diara lands!!!*” I would consider this as the first testimony to a regulatory plan or just the city’s “ *map* ” as was it stretched out. This marks an important point for our city and especially for its urban development, which according to the article leads to the existence of a “ *plan* ” for the city in the middle of the second half of the 19th century. This is simply a datum derived from my research in the press of the time issued in Korça city.

Evidence for the progress and evolution of the city plan is especially impressive in the 20-30s of the last century. In the 1910 (1326), the famous article “ *Map of our city* ”, mentions that the city plan was compiled whereby the opening and arrangement of old roads with width of 8-12 m was foreseen. The article writer criticizes the plan, especially when it comes to settling old quarters, according to which many homes had to be broken, or to extend the roads from the hills and the river, from the first were steep, where cars could not pass, while the latter would be short and serve a limited number of families. (figure 2)

Apparently, from the beginning of the 20th century, there would be a need to draft a new city plan to meet its growth needs. But we do not know if the plan has been implemented since, as it emerges from the article, it was a mechanical application of the orthogonal system, intervening even in the old neighborhoods with a structure already formed and in inappropriate terrain (Thomo, 2012).

Later due to the growing pressure of social opinion, the need for drafting city’ s regulatory plan become urgent. In the article “ *Korça, a new town* ”, the drafting of the plan is strongly established. Apparently these demands were related to the rapid expansion of the city at that time, which the old plan would not have foreseen (“ *Korça, a new town* ”, 1920)

The next testimony comes to us in the distant year 1928. In the article in question we distinguish the initiative of the Municipality to prepare a new city plan that would solve many problems compared to the old plans that were used till then. This article tells us about blocking some areas where it will not be built because constructions should be made according to the new future plan. While “ *... in the other parts of the city it was decided that the construction would be free with the condition to be noted by the Municipal Technical Office in the country and to enjoy the plan of the building. This decision was approved by the Administrative Advisory* ” (“ *City plan*”, 1928).

The above mentioned article recalls the speech verbatim:

“... The most important point for decorating a city is the plan. Almost all the cities of Albania have made modern plans and the Municipality of Korça decided to make the city plan and since 1923 has appointed from time to time tree engineers and until now there is no plan. It’s been

two years now, since a foreign engineer was appointed to compile a plan and he has opened two roads only. Whatever you say seems to us to be superfluous. Time is up, we need the plan asap. The municipality needs within this year to have the city plan in every way ” (“ Korça without Plan, 1929).

These discussions in the press of the time are due to the fact the City Hall in 1928 brought an engineer from Vienna to draft the plan. The design of the plan lasted three years and ended in 1930. He holds the signature of eng. Kohler and Bertoldi (Thomo, 2012). But even though we have this information on the time and progress of our city plan, in a latter month’s article we find the “ *Korça Plan* ”, “ ... we are notified that the Prefecture has appointed a commission of engineers to investigate the case of the plan of the city, ie what has been done so far, why the plan is not over yet, what is the job done by the appointed engineer till now, how long does it take for Korça to have a plan and at what costs ” (“ *Korça Plan* ”, 1929).

From this second article it follows that after “ the little stinging article ” made by Korça citizens against the Municipality and its measures for this plan, even though the author says that they had “ hired ” two engineers from Vienna for this plan, it shows that there engineers had taken the job not seriously, as it turns out that the engineers in question, had finished only two streets of the city!!! What makes the situation worse is that the engineers in question started working from 1928 till the end of 1929 with only two roads finished in return. Some may view it as criticism of the leaders of the time but there are merely the ideas of Korça citizenship who were only interested in “ the prosperity of the city ” and were not worried about anything else and also wanted the Municipality to do its job and not take jobs so “ slowly ” as the city really needed a plan, as most of the work and constructions were forbidden until the formulation of the new city development and construction plan.

We can even say that an article of October 1929 “ *City Plan* ” shows us a fact that we had not read before “ ... to finish the city plan as soon as possible, the Municipality also agrees to hire “ *The Maliqi Company* ”, to work with the municipality’s helper and finish until the end of March 1930 ” (Ibid. 2). So in this article, as I said above, it comes out that for the drafting of the city plan there are no foreign engineers who started to deal with its design, but the engineers of the Municipality and the engineer of “ *Maliqi Company* ”. The fact that the article writer does not mention the two Viennese engineers may be considered as a lapse. But it seems to be inconceivable not to mention them or even the lapse itself. Considering that the city’s own engineers had taken care of the 1930’ s city plan, we can say this is an urban achievement of the city marking also a point in the city development in this respect as well.

The 1930 Plan found Korça formed as a territory, as a structure and in the path of further development of urban concepts. This plan fixed the existing situation, making adjustments, adjustments to shafts and road extensions in the existing structure, and foresaw the expansion of the city by defining new construction plots. The expansion of the city was based on the same criteria of the orthogonal system, so it was a mechanical continuation of the existing structure. Regarding the arrangement of the existing structure, the plan was extended to the old neighborhoods of the city, in Varosh and Kasaba. But these proposals were difficult to implement, as they related to numerous breakdowns and high costs, and all these did not favor any significant functional or urban improvement (Thomo, 2012).

But what happens during the 1930’ s in the city of Korça and how is this plan expected not only by the ordinary citizens, but also the engineers of that time and the workers of the city.

Thus, from the data we always get from the press, we see the fiery discussion of the plan and the general concerns about the urban development of the time in our country. Thus, the article " City Plan " dated 1 April 1930 states that the name of the roads is over, and the road regulation plan will be completed " by Saturday ", upon completion will be sent to a special man in Tirana, so that it can be approached as soon as possible by the Ministry and return to implement. So, it turns out that the city plan was over in the early days of April and was sent to the capital for approval. But a few days later we come across another article that speaks of a telegraph sent by the workers of the city of Korça who ask the competent ministry to approve this plan as soon as this would lead to the unlocking of works and creating jobs for them. Because this state of affairs in the city has led this part of the population into drastic measures as they are the only ones who get work and keep their families. In another article, " *The Workers Advocate for Delaying the Plan* " (1930) emphasize that " ... because of the design of the new plan, the construction of the new buildings within the city is banned ... ", " ... this morning all city workers gathered in front of the City Hall demanding that construction permits be issued in confrontation with the new plan before being approached by the ministry. Workers gathered today are in a bad financial crisis and their prayers have been presented to the ministry telegraphically " .

While at this stage when the city plan was sent to Tirana we also have such cases where engineers of the time gave an idea how to act and how should our state legislate to determine how maps should be drawn up, " *casting measurements on paper* " " ... it will be necessary for our parliament to draft such a law for the cities of Albania, so that they may walk modernly even in this branch on the road towards civilization " ("On city plans", 1930,) and all this article " on the city plans " is all formulated by Nastas D. Pilika. (figure 3)

By comparing the 1930 plan with the present state of the city, we see that only a small part of it was implemented in later years. This has to do with some extensions and routes and with the addition of the some plots. Proposals for regulating the urban structure of old Korça, Varosh and Kasaba ensembles, as well as the addition of the new parcels in the some parts of the city, such as the slopes of the hills, etc., did not find any application (Thomo, 2012).

But after a year we come up with this article " *City Plan With Errors* " (1931) which points out that " *implementing the new city plan that was drafted a year ago, we noticed some important mistakes, which in order to decorate the city make it to look shaken. In order to make the necessary repairs, the Municipality invites Mr. Eshraf Frasheri to make proper observations and corrections* ". So the plan was again with errors and this is not only distinguished in articles published in the press of time but also in a review of the city plan " *Correction and modification of errors appearing in the regulatory plan of the city of Korça* " Tiranë, 3. VII. 1931, " ... on June 17, 1931, I flied to Korça by airplane to make action on the order received from it P. T. Minister as well as for checking the parts. The regulatory plan that is being implemented, as well as the part of the Commission, appointed by the Concil of Ministers for the assignment of Maliqi Lake Conservation Limits. According to verbal agreements with the Mayor, I was assigned from the Municipality (Letter No. 999 dated 30/ 6/ 931) to be interested in the case, regarding some points of the regulatory plan Eng. Armenante " .

In this correction we see the changes that take place on different streets in the inner quarters of the city and especially those located in the old part of the city as well as some streets in the " New Neighborhood ", these roads have simply and only changes and zoom roads by taking territories from the outskirts of the apartment and extending it and being fairer and more

open to the free movement of cars and people, as the roads in the part of the city are known to be a little tight. There are also seen in the notes made by the engineer assigned to arrange the plan where the changes made in certain roads and on the walls of the dwellings are made in red and green. They are marked in order to be changed and make the streets as good as possible.

But again in 1934 we have a mistake highlighted by the constructions that were happening in that area we see that “ ... *the Municipality noticed that the city’s plan had big mistake because the newly built dwellings did not come into a straight line. Then, Mr. F. Koller, who designed this plan, was contacted. He found that the first measurements had not exactly been marked on the plan. So the old lines of this path on the plan are incorrectly marked. After this finding was corrected and the plan was sent to the Prefecture, whose administrative Council had proven it to be true, was sent to the Ministry of Infrastructure to give the definitive approval. But, the council of the prefecture, in the country, formed the idea that this correction will again have the error and therefore asked engineers from the Ministry of Infrastructure to come here and investigate the case (“ An error in the city plan” , 1934).* But even this brought problems about the implementation of the 1930 plan.

Another evidence that has come in hand as a map is the existence of a “ *Plan* ” in 1937. This information is from a former employee of the City Hall before the 1990s, who has this material. From the conversation I realized that this map dated this year. Talking to me about a plan for the city this year, as well as from the good research at the AQTN in Tirana, I found a plan that the employees there told me that it is in 1937. The city of Korça in the late 1930’ s also has a new plan that can possibly elevate the city to an even higher stage due to the fact that the existence of this plan has been made for improvement and development even more of the city.

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Figures



Figure 1. Panorama of Korça



Figure 2. The first article about regulation plan in our city



Figure 3. Article of Eng. N. Pilika in the press of tim