

# **The re-use of post-industrial space and waterfront development:**

## **The case of the Stone Loft (Maritime Tradition Museum) in Piraeus**

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### Summary

At our paper we present the framework of the re-use of industrial space, especially in the case of port cities. More particularly we refer to the port city of Piraeus and the problems faced in its heritage policy due to the lack of support by the state and the harbour organisation. We stress on the general lack of coordination that could transform the harbour of Piraeus to a harbour of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation and the inefficient protection of its industrial monuments. We refer to the possible ways to familiarise and unify the city with the harbour, a relation that has been unclear for many decades. This, we argue, can only be succeeded by preserving the industrial heritage and history in a way that it will become a factor of regeneration and urban pride. Finally, we try to analyse the reasons that undermine and constrain the efforts of various city actors towards this direction. We use the case of the former industrial site of the Vasiliades Shipyards a part of which today hosts the Maritime Tradition Museum as a case study for our arguments.

### Key words:

post-industrial space, waterfront development, cultural heritage, maritime museum, regeneration, port city, place identity, Piraeus

### 1. Re-use of industrial sites

The subject of reclaiming and reusing derelict or contaminated brownfield areas fascinates and arises series of conversations since it has a major influence on the planning and reshaping of the districts of the contemporary city. The future of industrial sites, factories, manufacturing plants that have reached the end of their productive life and now form physically degraded, environmentally disturbed and – sometimes – chemically contaminated space is a priority in the agendas of cities, municipalities and local policy agents, as they seek the best way to reclaim and reuse them.

A main question that arises is how can this space be transformed to a culturally energetic space in a social, historical and environmental sustainable way? How can cities, stakeholders, inhabitants and policy makers reclaim this space and at the same time protect its very important cultural and civic value?

The buildings and the machinery in many cases are of great historical and aesthetic value. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a new tension arose in Europe which demanded that industrial sites should be built according to the up to date prestigious

architecture. This fact had as a consequence the building of very interesting industrial buildings all over Europe.

The use of industrial space after it completes its life cycle can be divided in the following categories<sup>1</sup>:

- a. Complete alteration and transformation to new technological and production methods without keeping any of its characteristics or its demolition.
- b. Re-use for cultural, entrepreneurial or other uses without keeping any of the main characteristics (machinery, etc.), except of the main morphological plan of the buildings.
- c. Re-use for cultural, entrepreneurial or other uses, where the characteristics of the building are used only for decorative uses (e.g., music clubs that use the machinery as decoration).
- d. Re-use for cultural, entrepreneurial or other uses with full respect to its original characteristics and its historical and educational role.

A major question is what is selected to be conserved as “built heritage”. There are certain processes that affect built heritage as a dominant mean of place identity. As a result built heritage<sup>2</sup>:

- a. Tends to be almost meaningless to the contemporary urban societies due to their increasing multi-ethnicity.
- b. Tends to be single-dimensional and poor in mean to post-modern European urban societies dominated by the ideas of diversity and differentiation.
- c. Tends to homogenize urban landscape in European cities rather than create distinctive place identities and in this sense it becomes insufficient to consolidate local culture and promote economic tourism development.

The re-use of industrial space and built heritage in general in the context of an urban cultural strategy is related to the discussion on contemporary urban cultures. Featherstone and others give an extended description of how cultural consumption has been transformed and gained importance in the post-modern city: the emphasis is given on prestigious architecture and design, on local vernacular styles, on cosmopolitan diversity and urban sociability; the key elements are the aesthetisation of everyday life, spectacles, authentic experience and stylistic bricolage<sup>3</sup>. Zukin describes this new reality for the role of culture and its symbolic power as following<sup>4</sup>:

“... a collective belief in the growth of the symbolic economy of art represents belief in the growth of the city’s economy. Visual representation became a means of financially representing the city. By the 1990’s, it seemed to be official policy that making a place for art in the city went along with establishing a marketable identity for the city as a whole”.

The importance of urban cultural policies in this context is crucial and special emphasis is given on their catalytic effects on urban regeneration. These policies can have many forms and objectives, varying from preservation of historical buildings to the creation of new museums or theatres, from the support of artists to the organisation of street events. The decision-making procedures for the re-use of industrial space are often part of these policies. In contemporary cities one can find

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<sup>1</sup> See ETBA, Historical Industrial Machines in Greece, Athens 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Gospodini A., “European Cities and Place Identity”, Volos 2002, page 27.

<sup>3</sup> Featherstone M., "Consumer Culture and Postmodernism", London 1991 and

Olalquiaga C., "Megalopolis", Minesota, 1992

<sup>4</sup> Zukin S., "The Cultures of Cities", Cambridge 1995., page 23

many different models and examples of re-using industrial space. In Europe one of the most characteristic examples is the Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA) Emscher Park, a former mining and heavy industry region in the northern part of the Ruhr in Germany along the valley of the river Emscher. The planning strategy used at IBA was a result of an initiative of the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen and achieved to give new cultural uses to industrial heritage<sup>5</sup>. Another interesting example is the Westergasfabriek (West gas Factory) in Amsterdam where since the early 1990's the former gasworks hosted cultural activities<sup>6</sup>. Despite the planning problems due to the many actors involved (municipality, district council, real estate developers) the project has been successful as it combines cultural venues, an urban park and cultural enterprises without losing any of the historic characteristics of the industrial uses. The Cable Factory in Helsinki is another characteristic example: a wire industry of 20.000 m<sup>2</sup> by the sea has been turned in a space where artists, cultural businesses and sport clubs can rent space on the basis of cheap, short-term, flexible contracts. Soon an artistic community was created with the support of the Cultural Office of the city of Helsinki<sup>7</sup>. Many other examples can be mentioned as the number of cities in the industrial world that are finding themselves with tasks like these is increasing, as factory sites, marshalling yards, docks, etc are waiting for new functions.

In Greece in the late 80's some urban areas –mainly in Athens- started to show signs of regeneration where industrial, manufacturing and retail buildings were used for culture, leisure and housing and were turned into “cultural quarters” (e.g., Psiri, Gazi in Athens and Ladadika in Thessaloniki). The gasworks in Athens (Gazi), created by the French Gas-Light Company, forms one of the most popular examples. After it closed down in 1983 and became property of the city of Athens, there was a lot of speculation on what should be done with it: there were proposal to tear it down and create a park, to build an opera, to turn it in a museum. Finally, it was decided to turn it into a complex with multiple cultural functions and installations without altering its historical identity. Unfortunately the original plans of the rebuilding were not followed and many of the buildings lost their initial character<sup>8</sup>. There are quite a lot of other examples spread all over Athens (Hat Factory of Pillopoulos, Athinaida, BIOS and other) and Thessaloniki (Mylos).

Port cities form a separate and unique category regarding the issue of industrial heritage and post-industrial space. Policies and practices that consider the re-use of industrial space for cultural purposes and waterfront developments for the regeneration – rehabilitation of harbour seafronts are priorities in many urban seaside areas in the world. Already from the 50's the first projects of this kind were implemented with great results; some of the most characteristic examples are the ones of Baltimore, Boston, Rotterdam, London (the docklands), etc. Bilbao is a unique example of a declined harbour city that succeeded to change its image by a visionary strategy regarding the brownfield areas. The Guggenheim museum is the flagship project of this strategy, but it was not the only important project. Rotterdam is also a characteristic example of a harbour city where there is no evidence anymore within

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<sup>5</sup> [www.iba.nrw.de](http://www.iba.nrw.de)

<sup>6</sup> Koekebakker Olof, Westergasfabriek Culture Park, Transformation of a former industrial site in Amsterdam, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Makela L, Vuorinen M., Siruala L., Kaapelitehdas taloudelissen ja kulyuurisen muutoksen ilmentajana (english summary), Hesinki 1994

<sup>8</sup> For example, the municipal radio moved in two buildings and completely changed their character. There has also been a lot of criticism on the cultural planning choices of the city, which have not succeeded to attract attention

the city that it is a harbour – the biggest in the world. The regeneration strategy of the city has been mainly based on cultural consumption, but also on the notion of industrial tourism. Barcelona, Liverpool, Glasgow, Porto are other characteristic examples of harbour cities that have been regenerated.

In Greece, despite the academic interest and the fact that many urban centres are situated beside the sea, there are only a few examples of waterfront development. Thessaloniki, being the European Cultural Capital in 1997, transformed one of the docks that was not in use in a cultural axis and used the industrial buildings for new creative uses. Another four Greek harbour cities (Patras, Alexandroupoli, Kavala and Volos) have recently conducted studies in order to regenerate abandoned parts of their harbour sites. Some years ago an architectural contest including ten harbour cities was conducted without though having practical results. Generally, in all these cases derelict industrial space holds the key role in the planning, without though being treated in most cases as a cultural heritage asset<sup>9</sup>. There is no clear vision or policy strategy for the recommodification industrial heritage of port cities and this is more than evident in the main port city of the country, Piraeus.

## 2. Piraeus: “Manchester” of the South

The city of Piraeus was at the center of the Greek industrial development of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Piraeus’ recent history starts after the Greek Independence War of 1821-28 when its few houses and facilities are ruined by it. In 1833 refugees from Chios, who had been relocated to Syros, asked to be permitted to move to Piraeus and continue their entrepreneurial activities. Since most of them were merchandisers, with many European connections, their claim was accepted by the Greek State and they were given land. At the same time sailors from Hydra moved to Piraeus, due to the decline of their shipping. Hence, the first settlement of Piraeus consisted of the above two groups.

In 1834 Athens was proclaimed the capital of Greece and in 1835 the city of Piraeus was founded, by a royal edict, while at the same time the construction of the Athens-Piraeus road began. The two architects who drew the Urban Plan of Athens, Kleanthis and Schaubert - with the assistance of Klenze - devised a plan for Piraeus, which envisioned a thriving city of 15.000 inhabitants and royal courts (which were never actually built). The city was gaining importance over its rival cities, Syros and Patras, due to its connection with the capital. The first urban functions of Piraeus were commercial and led to the financial and demographic development of the city. The industries founded during the next few years were based on the commercial capital of the first citizens that came to Piraeus, from all parts of Greece and foreign countries. The three-year occupation by the French and English armies, during the Crimean War, is considered as a turning point for the city’s history. With about 11.000 inhabitants, small industries were created, supplying the market with ship ropes, all kinds of glassware and building materials for the increased needs of the citizens. Also flour mills utilizing imported Russian wheat were operating, for the needs of the shipping lines. In the decade of 1850 the annual number of ships that use the harbour is estimated at about 7.000 a year. In the next few years the first insurance companies

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<sup>9</sup> Machairas S., *Industrial Athens in Industrial Archeology* in Epta Imeres, Newspaper Kathimerini, 7 January 2001

were founded and by 1882 many shipping companies started operating (e.g. the Pan-Hellenic Company, the Austrian Lloyd, the Egyptian Kevidie).

As Piraeus was being established as the most important harbour of Greece, the rapid growth of the manufactories in the city centre forced the government in 1864 to expand the Town Plan and regulate the expansion of the building zone to the north. The building of the Athens-Piraeus railway in 1869 was of significant since it created a dividing axis for the city. During the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, more factories were founded in the industrial zone so the settlement expanded northeast and, by royal edict so was the town-planning. Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Piraeus Street, the road connecting Athens and Piraeus became an extensive industrial zone.<sup>10</sup> This industrial zone, and its turning into a cultural axis, is at the centre of conversation nowadays.

In the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the industry of Piraeus overcame the crisis of 1883 and the economy flourished again. Nevertheless, the structure of the industry had changed, due to the construction of small steam-driven industries which were in need of intermediate products. Two important factors helped this. The first was the expansion of the railway network towards the Peloponnesus and the other one was the construction of the Corinth canal (ships due East and the Black Sea passed through Piraeus)<sup>11</sup>. The rapid development of Piraeus' docks led to the establishment of shipyards in order to satisfy the increased demand.

Until the Balkan wars, some factories were still founded in the city, while others were settled near the port.<sup>12</sup> At the same time factories producing consumer goods, were also established towards the Athens road. In 1903 the Greek Electrical System Corporation of Thomson-Houston established the first electrical factory. In the greater area of Athens and Piraeus cement-factories, breweries, tobacco-factories and generally factories for constructing materials were founded.

During WW1 the industry of Piraeus developed and was still the largest industrial city of the whole country. After the Greek-Turkish war in 1922, over 100.000 refugees from Asia Minor settled in the greater Piraeus area and introduced their way of making new products. They formed the bulk of the city's working force and were acknowledged to play a great role to the local economy. WW2 was a dramatic period: a great part of the houses and port infrastructure was destroyed by bombing.

The 1950's find the city striving to a painful comeback. Rebuilding the city and its facilities was an absolute must so destruction of most of the neoclassical housing buildings as well as the industrial ones was a necessity. The modern had to be built on the ruins of the old and the change continued well into the next decade with multistory units. This turning point in the city's history resulted in the loss of all its unique color and personality. Especially its beautiful factory buildings ended up either as small shops or municipality truck garages. Also the development of a new method of goods transportation, Containers, started to transform the port itself. A new mercantile port entry was needed hence the development of the Neo Ikonio Container Transfer Station. The late 60's and early 70's witnessed a short-span boom, which lead to the rise of the Perama shipbuilding and repairing area. But the city's Administration decided to finish what had already began in the 50's. Transforming or

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<sup>10</sup> L Dracaki, A Karaganis, "The Rise and Fall of Industrial Activity of Piraeus", paper presented at the Conference "Power, Knowledge and Society in the City" Edinburgh, 5-7 September 2002

<sup>11</sup> N. Kalamitsis, *op. cit.*, 53-54 and 58-59.

<sup>12</sup> Some of them were the joint-stock companies of chemical products and fertilisers (Drapetsona 1909) and the company of cements and colour paints "Piraeus SA".

tearing down the waterfront buildings was not enough<sup>13</sup>. The monstrosity of a skyscraper started being erected, as a sign of the city's dominion over the port. The end of that era left both the port and the city devastated, economically and environmentally, although some of the locals still recall the 70's as the "clean port" times.

Today the port of Piraeus boasts<sup>14</sup> a 19.000.000 passenger transfer which positions<sup>15</sup> it 3<sup>rd</sup> globally, while mercantile activity places it in the 47<sup>th</sup>. It's a port thriving with activity night and day, looking forward to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The only thing that's missing in the equitation is the local vernacular that would suggest that the port and the city are quite different than another Athenian suburb by the seaside, a unique city by its own right.

### 3. Place-identity and urban regeneration in Piraeus

#### *a. Contemporary Piraeus in search of a place-identity*

It is generally acknowledged that the main problem of the port-city is the lack of a regeneration programme for the transformation of the coastal area of Greece's largest port<sup>16</sup>. The main aspects of the problem are:

- a. the lack of a place promotion strategy in relation to an image that Piraeus wishes to adopt.
- b. the residents and the shipping community situated in Piraeus cannot commit themselves to a certain image of the city
- c. the lack of an actor that will hold the coordination of a city marketing strategy.

Of course the problem is far from local and concerns the bulk of Greek merchant marine which operates territorially in an area - Piraeus - without the Ministry of Merchant Marine, the port, the City Hall, the citizens or the shipping companies collaborating organized<sup>17, 18</sup> as in the case of other successful Western European Port Clusters<sup>19</sup>.

The modern city of Piraeus exhibits an orientation crisis as it wholeheartedly wishes to become, according to all official statements years now, a global maritime centre, without even at least being able to achieve it.

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<sup>13</sup> [http://www.olp.gr/main\\_history.htm](http://www.olp.gr/main_history.htm)

<sup>14</sup> Nowadays the PPO (Piraeus Port Organisation), is a S.A. imported in the Athens Stock Market (the Greek State being the major stockholder) controls a port area which extends far beyond that of the City of Piraeus. In the main port dock the passenger and cruise ships while at the coastal facilities of the municipalities of Keratsini, Dραπεstona, Perama and Salamina are housed the mercantile and shipbuilding and repairing activities of the port.

<sup>15</sup> Source: Port of Piraeus Organization (statistical data)

<sup>16</sup> This is stressed not only in scientific papers and publications, but mostly in the local press

<sup>17</sup> Ranis Spiros, Shipping is not only the ships, Special Edition, Apogeumatini Newspaper, June 2004

<sup>18</sup> During this years "Poseidonia Exhibition", a global maritime exhibition attracting thousands of interested parties at PPO's exhibition centre (a rough estimate of the height of agreements closed at the premises runs to Euro 350.000.000 and more according to the President of Poseidonia Exhibition, Mr. T. Vokos – Source: T. Vokos, Poseidonia 2004, Participation Record, Express Economic Newspaper, Greek shipping 2004, Special Edition, June 2004 ), the municipality of Piraeus decided to conduct large scale road works, just outside the centre.

<sup>19</sup> Drs. P.W. de Langen, *A framework for analysing seaport clusters*, Academic Paper, Erasmus University Rotterdam, 2001

The majority of Greek shipping companies (which still control the largest fleet in the world)<sup>20</sup> reside in Piraeus but both London and the North and South suburbs of Athens continue to distract the shipping community from its traditional setting. The long lasting problems of access, lack of communication infrastructure, parking space, building equipment, but also other problems having to do with living standards in the city (total lack of free spaces and parks, absence of theatres or modern cinemas) have lead shipping and shipping related companies but also high salary staff away from Piraeus. This exodus has pushed down objective housing prices not only in the city itself but its suburbs (Agia Sophia, Kokkinia and other) as well, having as an effect their becoming ghettos since economic immigrants find it financially attractive to live there.

The Port is primarily interested in upgrading its more lucrative business, container transportation, in which it faces serious imperfections and weaknesses<sup>21</sup>. These facts in combination with the pressure applied globally for the application of the International Code for the Security of Port Facilities (ISPS Code) of the International Maritime Organization and the stricter rules the E.U. wants to enforce, isolates the port from the city - with the aid of thousands of meters of wire frame and police guarding. Even the picture of waving your loved ones goodbye from the dock is going to be greatly restrained, if not eradicated, for precautionary safety reasons and financial since from September 2004 a Ministerial Ruling of 1997 comes into action posing levy for anyone entering the port. In Heraclion, Crete, this measure has already been in use creating great reaction by the local community<sup>22</sup>. These restrictions are predicted to influence negatively the development of activities (cultural, educational) beyond the sheer port ones which in turn will lead to the decline of the historical buildings of the port, the Maritime Tradition Museum and any other such initiative.

#### b) *The 2004 Olympic Games as mega-event*

The 2004 Olympic Games in Athens formed a major turning point for Piraeus. The fact that Piraeus is part of the metropolitan region of Athens and is not seen separately has always been a main characteristic of the city. The massive transformation of the whole city of Athens because of the Olympic Games affected city life dramatically. Nowadays, a scientific conversation on the urban identity of the contemporary Greek city is going on where many interesting opinions are exchanged, especially concerning the role of cultural heritage in the contemporary urban culture. Obviously this is an opportunity for Piraeus to redefine itself. The conversation for establishment of an archeological park linking the different archeological sites together within the historic center will give a very particular character to the city center as a space of cultural tourism consumption. Industrial heritage is not the most popular topic; still increasingly more new ideas are being heard in that field. Still, industrial heritage and economic history should be involved in the urban planning

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<sup>20</sup> Greece -World Shipping Power – 3.370 ships (9,1% of the world ship tonnage), Express Economic Newspaper, Greek shipping 2004, Special Edition, June 2004

<sup>21</sup> This is stressed in articles by the Greek & International Shipping Press and Official Letters of the Greek Shipping Community (Shipping Owners, Shipping Agents etc.) to the Ministry and Port Organization.

<sup>22</sup> It has to be noticed that in Heraklion the port is outside the main housing settlement and the problems are obviously not as important as in Piraeus

strategy of Piraeus in a way that it will become the main factor of regeneration and urban pride.

According to a recent PPO's bulletin<sup>23</sup> about 40 million Euros have been spent in the last few years for the ports redevelopment in view of the Olympic Games hosting. This has been invested in the construction of new port facilities (cruise ship docks), passenger stations, environmental infrastructures (main drainage systems) and of course port security. Although the original Master Plan<sup>24</sup>, but also the following ones, called for the creation of 2 luxury hotels in the port area, academic centres, museums, recreational areas e.t.c., actually none of the above were realized while it is considered extremely difficult, for Greek standards (since there will not be any immediate pressure such as the Olympics) to effectuate such programmes henceforth. Even the scheduled placement of the Ministry of Merchant Marine inside the port area in a reconstructed loft has been postponed while press articles are talking of abandoning the idea.

Public works conducted in the city because of the Olympic Games were limited only to access availability to it and, regarding the port (as mentioned above), to the improvement to the infrastructure of cruise ship service. The combination of the two improvements might, in the future, increase urban tourism not in the city of Piraeus but to that of Athens. Piraeus seems unable to show something of its earlier history or even of its modern way of life, something that will attract tourists, new dwellers, keep old residents in the city. Ancient finds, as little remain in their natural state and place, are not properly displayed while being literally overshadowed by the 60s and 70s blocks of apartments, the constantly diminishing numbers of neoclassical buildings (houses of bourgeois, ship-owners and traders) thanks to multi-story buildings while the remaining remain unused (as the Municipal Theatre of Piraeus) and lastly the industrial buildings and lofts (which cover an extensive area next to the port) are being demolished to become office blocks and shopping centres or are transformed into nightclubs, gyms and other.

#### 4. Maritime Tradition Museum: Best practice with many problems

Within this historic, social and economic city context the Maritime Tradition Museum appears as a particularly interesting case. Near the "Vasiliades Shipyards", within the Piraeus harbor lays the Stone Loft which hosts the Maritime Tradition Museum<sup>25</sup> and forms an example that could serve as typical case that shows the opportunities and threats that built heritage faces in Piraeus. The history of the building starts when the first large-scale shipyard of Piraeus was built by George Vasiliades. His entrepreneurial activities in the city had started earlier with the creation of a chair manufactory and flour mills, at a time that the flour industry of Piraeus supplied the whole country. The shipyard he built has been associated with the local history and was in full operation for almost a century.

The structural changes of global industry and the transfer of the commercial centre of Piraeus to Perama (Neo Ikonio) have given to the Stone Loft no reason of survival. Thus the Loft for years, even before 1997, was a big "dumpster" for Piraeus Port Organisation's (PPO) obsolete machinery and trash.

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<sup>23</sup> Nauteboriki Newspaper, *Port of Piraeus transform with 40 million euros*, 25/08/2004

<sup>24</sup> Imerissia Newspaper, *Port Piraeus Organization: Plans investments over to 75 billion drachmas*, 20/02/02

<sup>25</sup> The Stone Loft hosts the Maritime Tradition Museum since 1997, when the great earthquake which shook the land destroyed the private displaying area of the Museum.



The Museum has accomplished to turn a historic part of the docks of Piraeus in a space of culture, education and research and as a non-governmental and non-profit institution it is considered to be perhaps the largest maritime museum in Greece. It is the only Greek maritime museum which is situated inside a port and thousands of visitors have passed through it.

The Maritime Tradition Museum was founded in 1992 by a number of people who love the sea and the maritime history. The Museum is a non-profit organisation and is funded mostly by sponsorship, especially by its Members of Board of Directors (ship-owners, naval architects, judges etc.). The Maritime Tradition Museum's collections comprise about 2.500 items, bought from private collections. The Museum has the world's most important exhibits on Greece's history and maritime history from Ancient to modern times, including maritime art, cartography, engravings, ship models and plans, scientific and navigational instruments, time-keeping and astronomy, Byzantine maritime art, traditional art, warship collectibles and many other categories. Moreover, the collection of maps, charts and engravings of Greek area from 16th - 19th Century (260 items) is probably one of the biggest in Greece. It has built and keeps a series of medium - size (length: 12 - 14m) traditional ship models, like "Athenian Trireme" and "Psariani Galiota", etc. It operates a lab and employs a team of traditional shipbuilders to produce and conserve the medium - size boat collection. Also, a number of experts in maritime history, archaeology, art and technology work in order to develop the Museum's "production".

The Museum conducts researches in collaboration with the Institute of Maritime Studies & Research (INMER) and other European and U.S Universities and Institutes to develop its exhibits and its scientific works. Moreover, the Maritime Tradition Museum has a very interesting maritime library. It has one of the Greek largest maritime historical reference libraries (1.000 volumes) including books dating back to the 15th century.

The Maritime Tradition Museum also offers educational courses. These programmes use the Museum's settings to provide to students a visual and hands - on lesson in a variety of maritime subjects including mapping, shipbuilding, maritime history and technology. The Maritime Tradition Museum, publishes a bimonthly magazine (5000 copies) entitled: "Sea and Art" containing historical and general maritime subjects.

Furthermore, it has a very innovative character since it doesn't only have an exhibition function, as it travels its displays globally participating in worldwide exhibitions and cultural happenings and it also hosts (except the educational programmes, research programmes in experimental naval archeology and ship construction, etc) music and theatrical performances,. The last three major happenings, which hosted hundreds of guests, have been a great musical concert with a literary award handing-over in memoriam of the Greece's great sea poet Nikos Kavadias, the grand that Minister of Commercial Shipping gave for his high guests (Royals, Prime Ministers, Ministers and such) and the exhibitors of the global marine exhibition, Posidoneia 2004 and last - but not least - the ceremony of the passing of the Olympic Flame to the crew of the replica of the ancient trireme, which was docked outside the Museum, to be delivered to the main port of Piraeus.

At the same time it preserves the historic aspects and uses of the building, without altering its form and design. The re-use of the building forms a best practice for the city. Without any modernist interventions to the building and by keeping its

“rough” industrial character<sup>26</sup>, it serves both educational and cultural purposes. Still, the future of the museum is not secure since it can be thrown out of the building anytime.

The Museum relying on its own funds cleared and transformed the 3.000 m<sup>3</sup>, with no government grants (another 500-600 m<sup>3</sup> of the Stone Loft still used by PPO as storehouse). Still the place needs serious changes to be said to fulfill modern Museum architectural requirements. The Museum possesses the funds, but it requires from PPO, with no positive response so far, the exclusive use of the Loft - in document form - with an appropriate price for a period of 30-40 years, as to invest without fear that it may be evicted at any possible moment. During the period that the Museum has been housed in the Loft, the many administrations that have been in charge of PPO have, amongst others demanded of it to vacate the area, to utilize only half of the spaces and to utilize the rest as a trade-union centre of workers, to use it as passenger area-museum, to demolish half of the building in order to construct an extra dock and other<sup>27</sup>. The prudence and the pressures of many actors, both of shipping and culture, prevailed resulting to have the Museum of Maritime Tradition to continue providing its high class cultural services, which are recognized worldwide by its thousands visitors and the media<sup>28</sup>.

## 5. Conclusions

Many of the conditions that are being faced by the port-city of Piraeus are common to most Greek cities which are part of their search for a new local identity. The case of the Maritime Tradition Museum is not unique, since other museums or cultural institutions in other cities face similar problems<sup>29</sup>. The most important unique characteristics of the port-city of Piraeus are the following:

- a. The city has always been associated with the city of Athens as part of a wider metropolitan area and hasn't got an autonomous political, economic, cultural or tourist image.
- b. Until today almost all the city promotion strategies are based on the promotion of the port services and the shipping community.
- c. The city has been transformed to multiethnic urban community with many social problems.
- d. Many different actors are involved in the policy making procedures (municipal authority, port authority, university, cultural organisations).

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<sup>26</sup> The building has many times been the subject of research papers and dissertations of architecture, political science and urban history students as a characteristic and unique example of architectural and technical planning of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The building has also been extensively used by advertisers, film-makers, photographers, etc.

<sup>27</sup> Next to the Stone Loft a much bigger loft was demolished, a typical example of multistory lofts that had an immediate height contact with ships, for faster loading and unloading during the time that no technology assisted the movement of containers.

<sup>28</sup> e.g. Periodicals: De Facto - May 2000, BOATING - June 2000, NAUTELLINAS - July 2000, ARGO - May 2000, MILLENIUM ELNABI - July 2000, AEROPOS - September / October 2000. Newspapers: TA NEA, 28/4/2000 & 23/1/1999, ETHNOS TIS KIRIAKIS - 7/5/2000, APOGEYMATINI TIS KIRIAKIS, 11/06/2000, KATHIMERINI TIS KIRIAKIS, 2/6/2000 & 7/4/2000 etc.

<sup>29</sup> The Industrial Museum of Syros is another interesting example with many similar characteristics to the Maritime Tradition Museum (*Industrial Archeology* in Epta Imeres, Newspaper Kathimerini, 7 January 2001).

The example of the Maritime Tradition Museum reflects the problems and the particular characteristics of the local place promotion strategy, especially regarding brownfield areas. The most important problems are:

- a. Lack of direct support by the municipal and port authorities.
- b. Absence of a general urban tourism plan for the city which will cover equally the different time periods (ancient, neoclassical, industrial).
- c. Uncertain operational context of the city waterfront regarding the port services.
- d. Unwillingness to promote and re-use industrial heritage sites as part of the modern city.

Although the city of Piraeus seems to have objectives, with the most important one being its establishment as a modern global maritime centre, it does not have a comprehensive programme nor does it seem to search for one. They believe that by erecting huge steel-and-glass monstrosities of office blocks it will attract modern shipping and shipping related companies and business, while throwing away the ancient, neoclassical or industry-related history is quite strong.

We do not know whether this was a conscious effort or just a means of extra income through advertising (or even both) but the covering of two of the ports most distinctive industrial buildings, the lofts with the clock and the silos, with giant posters during the Olympic Games is a proof that Piraeus cannot see its modern face through its history.

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