

A reader on ekistics, thirty years after Constantinos A. Doxiadis

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Source: *Ekistics*, Vol. 72, No. 430/435, A reader on ekistics, thirty years after C.A. Doxiadis (January–December 2005), pp. 27–30

Published by: Athens Center of Ekistics

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43619502>

Accessed: 01-02-2018 00:51 UTC

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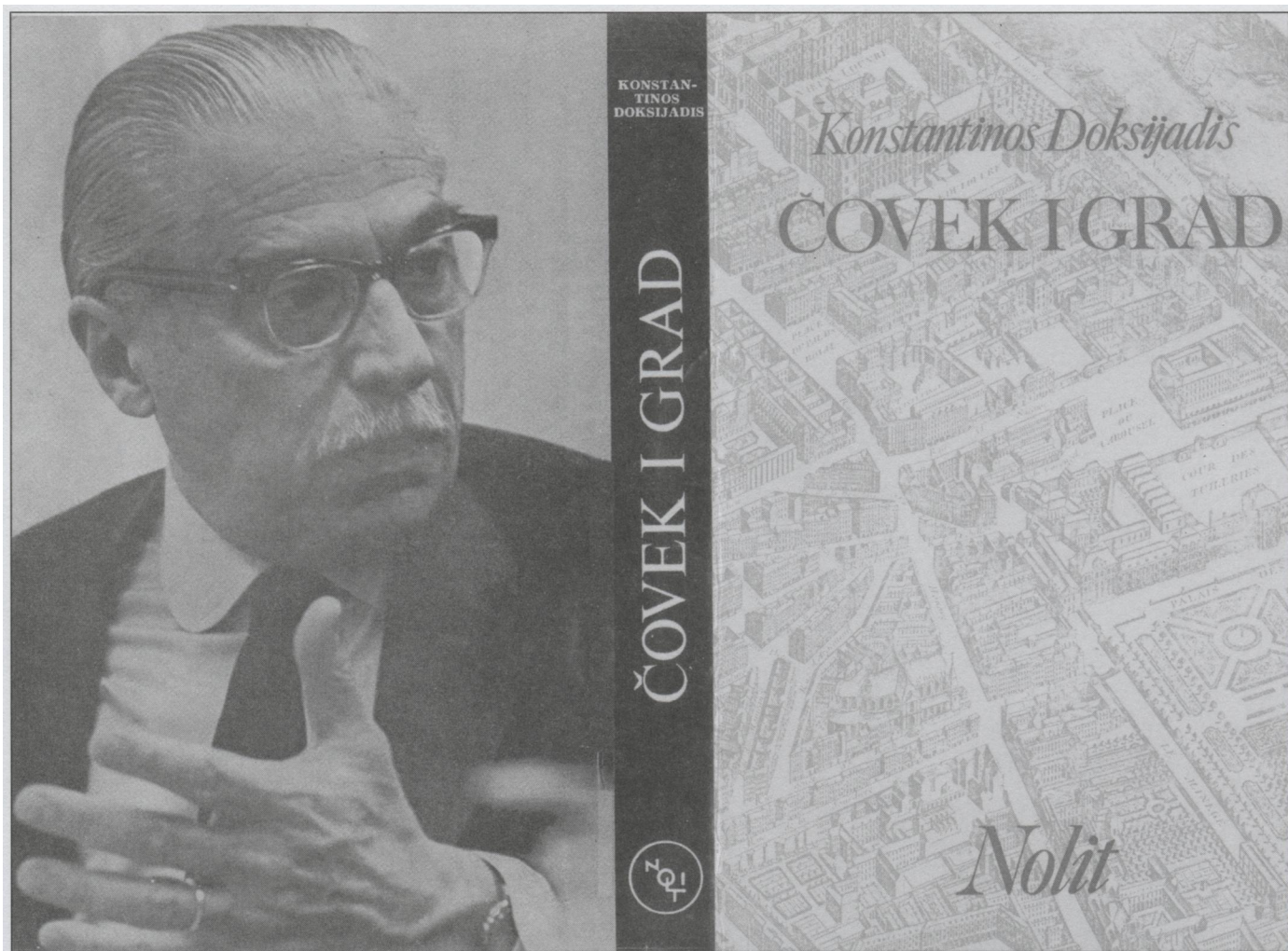
The C.A. Doxiadis Reader

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1. Introduction

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The jacket of Miloš Perović's book entitled *C.A. Doxiadis: Anthropos and Polis* (Belgrade, Nolit Publications, 1982), in Serbian.

A reader on ekistics, thirty years after Constantinos A. Doxiadis

The guest-editor's foreword

Miloš R. Perović

Dr Perović, guest-editor for the present volume, is Professor of History of Modern Architecture at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade. He is a member of the World Society for Ekistics. More about the author can be found on pages 6-9.

● Coming from a multi-ethnic family, I felt that in my youth I had more opportunities than most of my colleagues and friends. My mother was of Greek descent and my father was a Serb.

As a student of the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, I used to spend my summer holidays in an apartment in Karneadou Street next to Kolonaki Square in Athens, Greece. In the evenings, I used to sit in the then fashionable Ellinikon Café/Restaurant in the northeastern corner of Kolonaki Square. That is where I learnt, for the first time, about Constantinos A. Doxiadis and his ekistic theory. A few years later in the Kaufmann Bookshop, Stadiou Street, I bought Doxiadis' book *Architecture in Transition*. Simple phrasing and the power of arguments made me instantly one of his admirers.

● When I applied to join the Graduate School of Ekistics of the Athens Center of Ekistics, Doxiadis' reputation as a thinker and practicing planner was at a peak in Belgrade due to the work he had done in Skopje and to the fact that he had been decorated by the Yugoslav government. Now that I am approaching the end of the seventh decade of my life, I can say that the almost three years that I spent at the Athens Center of Ekistics of the Athens Technological Organization were the best and most creative part of my life.

● When my student days were over and I returned to the City Planning Institute of Belgrade, thanks to Doxiadis' prestigious reputation, I was immediately assigned important tasks, i.e. staging plan for the development of Belgrade, for the period 1976 to 1985; research into alternative urban models; study for the reconstruction of the central part of new Belgrade; and staging plan for the development of Belgrade for the period 1981 to 1990; etc.

In all these projects I used Doxiadis' ekistic theory and methodology.

● In order to facilitate communication between me, as a project manager, and my collaborators, I proposed the publication of a Doxiadis Reader to one of Belgrade's publishing houses, suggesting that the book also be used in other parts of the country.

Once printed, the book under the title *Anthropos and Polis* became an immediate success. The first edition of 4,000 copies – which is an enormous figure for a small country such as Yugoslavia – was quickly sold out, and thereafter the book went through many reprints.

When I was invited to leave the City Planning Institute of Belgrade and to join the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade, as a full professor, I learnt that for more than a decade this publication had been a major textbook at the faculty's Department of Town Planning. Most probably, it was also a major one in other centers of higher education in Yugoslavia.

Bearing all this in mind, it is now much easier to understand the structure of the book. It reflects the relevance of its contents to the major town planning problems and issues at that time in Belgrade and the rest of the country, and to the search for remedies through the media of *Ekistics* in texts where practical proposals and concrete solutions prevail over the more abstract notions of Doxiadis' many-sided personality.

● Needless to say, how happy I was to accept the invitation of the Editor of *Ekistics* to act as guest-editor for a special volume of the journal on "A reader on ekistics, thirty years after C.A. Doxiadis" based on this work.

● There are two major changes from the 1982 Serb edition of the book. I thought that the editor's introduction to the Serb edition more than a quarter of a century ago should be omitted for this commemorative publication. Constantinos A. Doxiadis established *Ekistics* 50 years ago, he was a frequent contributor, and he is well known to its readers. The second major change is the increased number of illustrations than those in the Serb edition to reflect more accurately the author's original intentions.

● Now, as we are commemorating the thirtieth year of Doxiadis' death, an initiative that comes from Belgrade for a new edition of *Anthropos and Polis* and also the present volume of *Ekistics* derive from the immortality of his legacy.



C.A. Doxiadis lecturing at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, USA, 27-28 February, 1968. (Source: © Constantinos A. Doxiadis Archives of the Constantinos and Emma Doxiadis Foundation).