
EDITOR'S DESK

As a Byzantine Eagle

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Welcome to the seventh special issue of the international journal *Ekistics and the New Habitat: The problems and science of human settlements*. On behalf of the Advisory Editorial Board, I would like to briefly introduce the present special issue: Ekistics-Related Research in Greece (Part 1 of 2): A Critical Approach to the Ekistics Legacy.

This issue is dedicated to Panayis Psomopoulos (1926-2017), a legendary figure in Ekistics whose efforts to lead the organisation and the journal *Ekistics* secured its legacy and laid the foundation for the current journal. It is in his memory that the contributions to this issue have been prepared.

Our guest editor for these two issues, Ms Myrto Exacoustou is an architect and researcher from the Ministry of Culture in Athens. As the God Daughter of Panayis Psomopoulos, Ms Exacoustou has solicited contributions from contemporary scholars and practitioners working in relation to ekistics throughout the world. This issue has all the hallmarks of a labour of deep love for the ekistics legacy and Panayis himself.

Ms Exacoustou has created an issue that skilfully looks in two directions at once, just as a Byzantine eagle would. The image, much appreciated by C.A Doxiadis, was used to highlight the importance of paying attention to one's roots as well as one's future when acting in the present. For Doxiadis, such double vision was crucial for grasping the principles of ekistics and understanding the importance of continuity and rupture in relation to the historical legacies within human settlements. On this view, the past is a repository of exemplars that can illuminate our understanding of the fundamental problems of human settlements, as well as their attempted solutions. But more than a just focus on the past, ekistic practice has always focused on engaging with the present surroundings and the 'new' forms that these fundamental problems take – forms which are all too often the result of new technologies and / or a failure to recognise their essential characteristics.

This focus on appraising both our pasts and our futures captured within the present is reflected in the contributions to this issue. These articles engage with ekistics as one theory among others in the post WWII era, tracing its development and underlining its distinctive characteristics, as well as the role played by key figures such as Jaqueline Tywhrrit and Panayis Psomopoulos. Other articles focus on ekistics as collection of historical case studies that highlight the challenges faced by Doxiadis and other Ekisticians, some of which face planners and architects today. However, ekistics is also explored through a lively debate over the current realisation of Ecumenopolis – Doxiadis' posited 'universal city' – in relation to Greece and the world. While some contributions engage with the concept of 'Entopia' in its relationship to Space Syntax, others honour Panayis Psomopoulos' memory or call for greater attention to be paid to the material legacy left by Doxiadis in Greece.

Overall, it is hoped that readers will enjoy this special issue which plays an important role for *Ekistics and the New Habitat* by providing an account of the historical development of ekistic theory, the World Society for Ekistics, and debate over some of its key concepts such as 'Entopia' and 'Ecumenopolis'. Just like a Byzantine eagle, the issue presents a range of studies that are historical in nature but of contemporary relevance. The combination of memory, theory, case studies and analysis form a synthesis from a range of perspectives that embody the critical attitude of ekistics and reveal the vitality of its legacy today.



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