

EROS AND THE CITY: MAKE THE CULTURAL URBAN-SCAPE FLOURISH!

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Abstract

We shall present 'Eros', as a metaphor of our need and desire to encounter others and, moreover, as a metaphor of an instinctive force that social ethics and social morality continuously attempt to control. Nevertheless, despite this controlling effort, new desired drives emerge, challenging social controlling indications.

*In our text, the title 'Eros and the City' seems provocative enough. However, what is even more provocative than the reference to the bodily contact may be the comment that besides your or others' top-down restriction, bottom-up desires will attempt to 'flourish', definitely. It was in the late 19th century that Charles Baudelaire described in his *Les Fleurs du Mal*, his erotic gaze to a seductive lady, in the Parisian urban context of important cultural and political transformations. Were his political aspirations, his political 'Eros' more important than his love fantasies? It is in central Athens that a contemporary Greek composer sees his own female image of attraction, "αυτήν που περνάει – the one passing by"; she makes the neutral Athenian streets blooming. I could probably ask for a real garden embellishment of the urban-scape, or for the 'blooming' of the collaborative osmosis of the citizens.*

In comparison to the previous poetic descriptions, I prefer to insist on the most impressive metaphor of erotic urbanity, on our love for our city itself, or, on our effort for the cohesion of the urban population as presented in three examples:

- *a collaborative urban formation of transcultural coexistence in a student's project under the title Plato's Gardens,*
- *a 'post-processual' historic itinerary from Kerameikos ancient cemetery to the Islamic temple of Eleonas, and finally,*
- *a proposed hybrid guided visit of cultural and political narratives, in the twin central squares of the Kaisariani municipality.*

Keywords: *Eros, city and cultural urban-scape, 'erotic' urbanity, bottom-up, top-down, urban coexistence, transcultural coexistence, collaborative urban gardening.*

An introductory comment:

The following text was presented as a conference lecture on February 14th, on St. Valentine's Day. Nevertheless, at the time that the subject of the text and its title were decided the author did not know about the exact date of its presentation. Was it a strange coincidence?

Eros as a general metaphor of our need to encounter others

Is this a poetic approach or a scientific one? We shall return to this question at the end of our presentation.

We shall present 'Eros', as a metaphor of our need and desire to encounter others and, moreover, as a metaphor of an instinctive force that social ethics and social morality continuously attempt to control. Nevertheless, despite this controlling effort, new desired drives emerge, challenging social controlling indications. Is 'open-air' urban-scape the par excellence space for the expression of social common desires? **'Open-air', terms associated**

with the subject of the conference in which this text was presented, terms associated with the extended public urban identity.

In our text, the title ‘Eros and the City’ seems provocative enough. However, what is even more provocative than the reference to the bodily contact may be the comment that besides their or our top-down restriction, bottom-up desires will attempt to ‘flourish’, definitely. It was during late 19th century that Charles Baudelaire described in his *Les Fleurs du Mal*, his erotic gaze to a seductive lady, “à une passante – to a passer-by lady”, in the Parisian urban context of important cultural and political transformations (Baudelaire, 1861 – Benjamin, 1955 & 1994). Were his cultural and political aspirations, his cultural and political ‘Eros’ more important than his love fantasies (Bataille, 1990: pp. 43-45)? Were those erotic fantasies projected in the seductive urban environment of the Parisian arcades, during his poetic “flâneries”, his leisurely poetic stroll – during his leisurely walk in the ‘porosity’ of the city?

It is in the context of an analogous urban phantasy, in the center of Athens that a contemporary Greek composer sees his own female image of attraction, “αυτήν που περνάει – the lady passer-by”, probably in correlation to the previous Beaudelaire’s poetical description; she makes, according to him, the neutral Athenian streets ‘blooming’; or the Athenian streets are not neutral anymore. What invigorates the composer’s erotic gaze, is the intensity of urban life, in relation to a part of the city full of commercial stores and coffee shops, at the vicinity of active academic buildings, where the passing-by young lady, a university student at the School of Philosophy, is directed. I could probably ask for a real garden embellishment of the urban-scape or is it even more interesting to ask for the ‘blooming’ of the citizens’ conduct in general, for collaborative osmosis of the citizens, in the ‘open-air’ part of the city.



Img. 1: Charles Baudelaire described, in his *Les Fleurs du Mal*, his erotic gaze to a seductive lady, “à une passante – to a passer-by lady”, probably in the context of the Parisian arcades - “The deafening street roared on. Full, slim, and grand... A woman... Noble and swift, her leg with statues matching” (upper line of images). In an analogous context, the Greek rock musician, singer, and songwriter Phoebus Delivorias, describes his own erotic urban fantasy (bottom image).

The space and social ‘porosity’ of the city

Let us move from the terms ‘open-air’ to the term ‘porosity’, as introduced by the middle 20th century German intellectual Walter Benjamin, ‘Porosität’ in its initial German application, is etymologically correlated with the Greek words ‘porodis – πορώδης’ and ‘poros – πόρος’. In materials science, a porous medium or a porous material is a material containing pores, voids. In Benjamin’s theoretical approach ‘porosity’ may also describe the voids existing in the city formation, voids among the buildings or even voids in the interior of them being in immediate conduct with the exterior ‘open-air’ city. Analogous ‘porous’ city-scape formations as those noticed by him during his visit to the Italian city of Naples (Demetz edit., 1986), may offer to the city life intense conduct among the citizens, by corroding the barriers between secluded privacy and social life. It is the same result that Benjamin attributed to the porous formations of the commercial arcades, ‘les passages couverts’ in French, characteristic of many important Western cities (Benjamin, 1997 – Buck Morss, 1991 - Moraitis, 2024: pp. 305-367). Though strongly related to commercial needs, the arcades created a positive urban environment, an important urban cultural landscape, an important urban-scape, ‘open’ to passers-by and protected in the same time. An open and protected urban environment, characterized by ‘la fantasmagorie’, the phantasmagoria as a crystallization of collective desires and phantasies, motivated by the illusionary halo of commercial promotion.



Img. 2: On the right, the ‘porous’ quarters of Naples. There, Asja Lācis (upper left) and Walter Benjamin (left down) firstly conceived the importance of urban porosity.

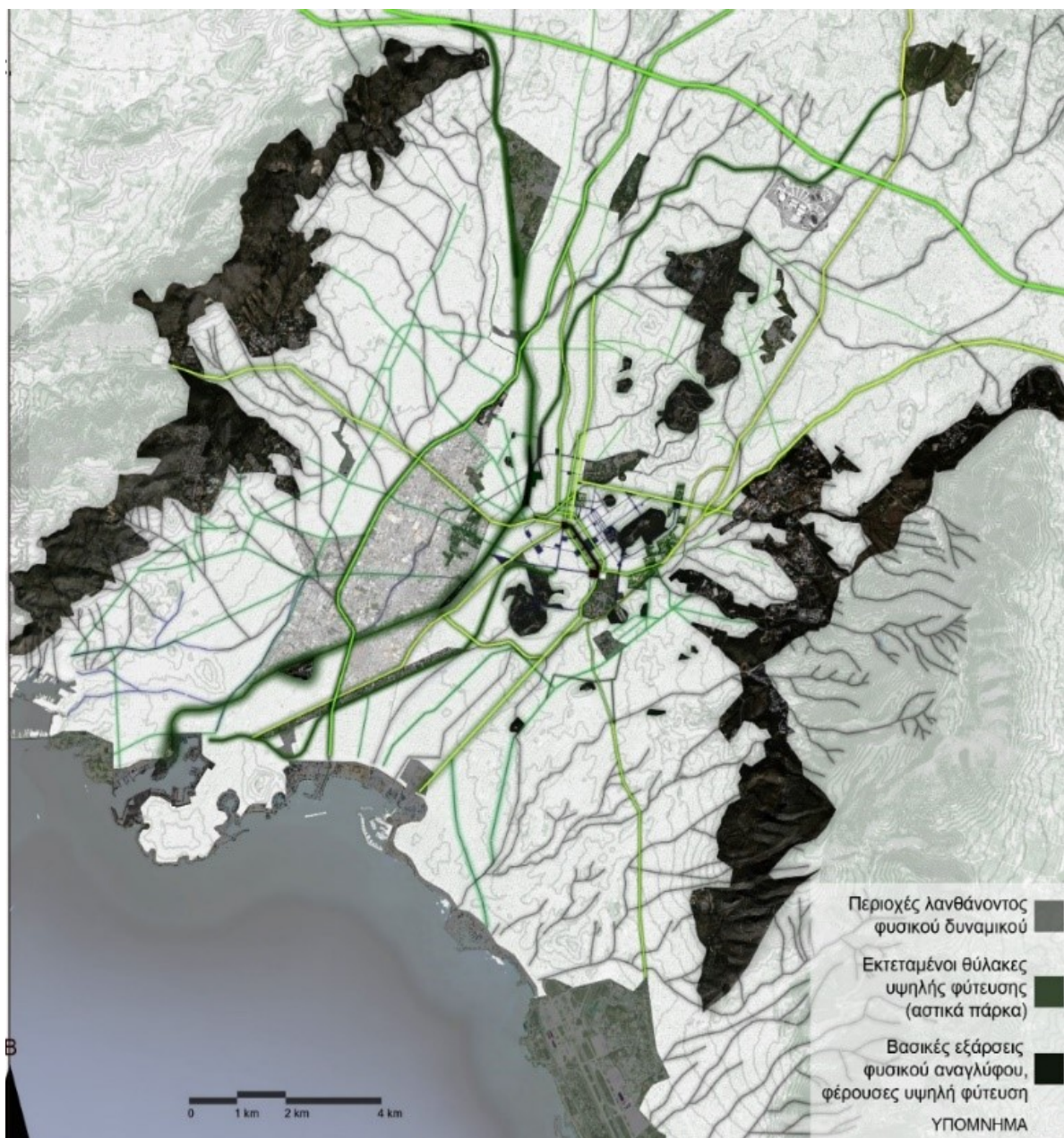
Commercialized or not, the urban porosity seems to me an important quality of the city, not solely a material quality but rather, as Benjamin described it in correlation with Naples, a social quality, a quality related to the social conduct, thus culturally and probably politically crucial. A cultural quality that could be considered as socially important in general, even outside its commercial appropriation; or to use a better statement, a cultural quality whose general social importance is exploited by commercial promotion.

In 2010, working on a research program concerning the Central Areas of Athens and Piraeus and more precisely their cultural landscape and their environmental upgrading, we decided to work on the approach of the Athenian porosity, firstly analyzing the continuity of the open spaces, and the arcades or the covered walkways of the city ¹. Then we decided to focus on a specific type of urban porosity, using the terms ‘green porosity’, and insisting on a proposal for a Landscape Network, in the Metropolitan Territory of Athen. We could thus go back to an initial 19th century approach characterized by the famous American landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, under the description “Emerald Necklace”; needless to explain that emeralds are precious stones of green color. Olmsted’s emerald necklace, proposed in the general context of the 19th century ‘park movement’, referred to the territory of Boston, insisting on the central concept that park, park ways or ‘green corridors’, constitute a democratic right of the urban citizens (Chadwick, 1966 – Beveridge & Rocheleau, 2005: 96-108).



Img. 3: Porosity in the metropolitan area of Athens: the continuity of the open-air urban places and their correlation to the interior of historic and important building complexes.

¹The proposal presented was elaborated as part of the research program “Changing Characters and Policies in the Center of Athens and Piraeus”, a program assigned to the School of Architecture NTUA, by the Hellenic Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (scientific responsible prof. P. Tournikiotis, Athens 2010-2011). In this context the author, in collaboration with architect S. Mouzakitis, principally investigated the network of the open-air parts of the city, in the central urban area of Athens and, in addition, the possible plantation ‘green’ network in the Athenian metropolitan territory.



Img. 4: ‘Green Porosity’ in the metropolitan area of Athens.

Eros, according to ancient Greeks was “the first among the gods - πρώτιστος... θεών... πάντων”, as described by the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Parmenides, in a fragment of his poem “On Nature – ΠερίΦύσιος” (Karagiannis, 2019: pp. 43-44). “Of all the gods, firstly Eros was contrived”, the one participating to the formation of every existence, the one who initially fertilized nature helping “the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the sky that is common to all, and the Milky Way, and the outermost Olympos, and the burning might of the stars (helping all those substances to) arose”.

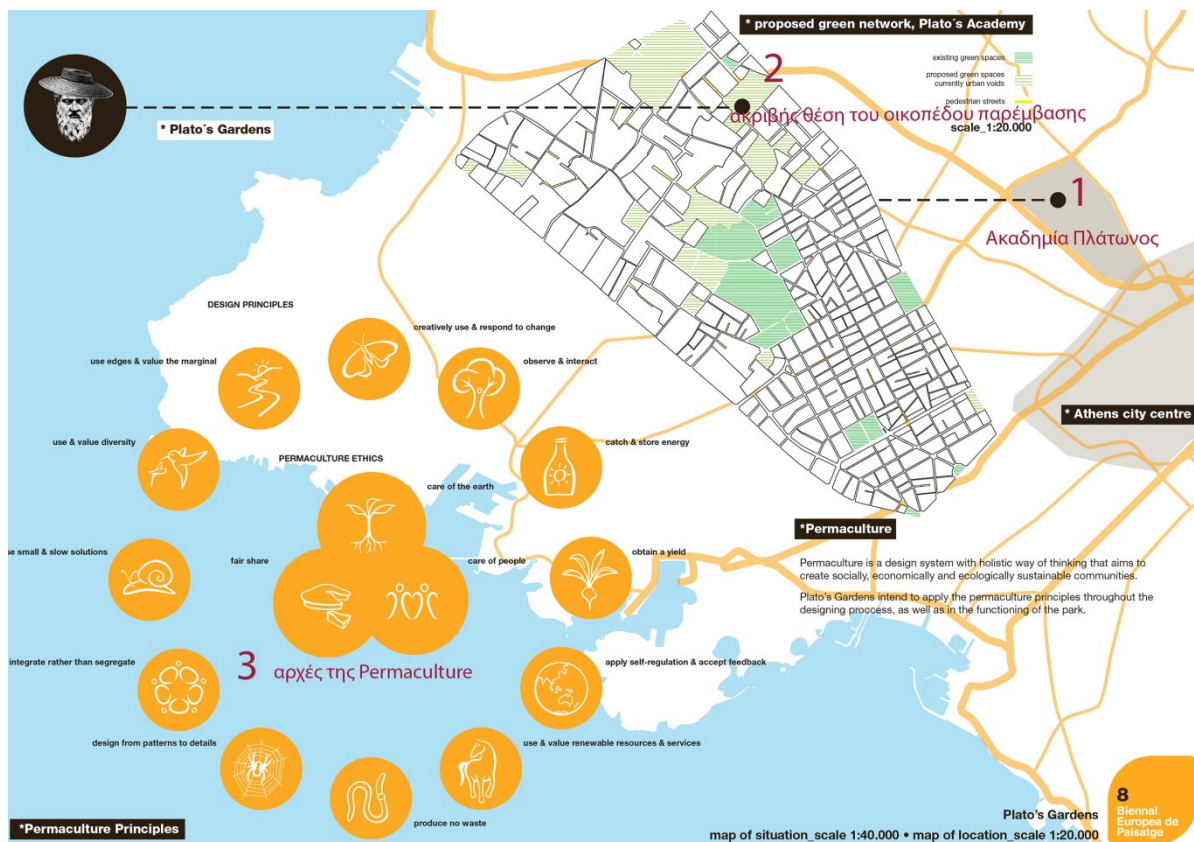
Surely, Eros also invigorated the existence of human communities, driving humans to embrace each other. In closer to us presentations, Eros strongly evolves in urban context, in the porosity of the cities, in the porous urban context of Naples, where Benjamin firstly impressed by the social importance of the ‘open-air’ parts of city, in its porous correlation with built structure, in the porous correlation seductively described in the well-known film by

Vittorio de Sica “Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow - Ieri, Oggi, Domani”, a film with Sophia Loren, and Marcello Mastroianni. You may find analogous reference of erotic fragrance and intense community contact in a film of Greek neo-realism, under the title “A neighborhood named Dream – Συνοικία Όνειρο”, by Alekos Alexandrakis (Moraitis 2024, pp. 316–318). An intense community contact, existing in the poor neighborhoods of the past, nevertheless lost in the richer, nowadays urban context.



Img. 5: Upper image, “Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow - Ieri, Oggi, Domani”, a 1963 film by Vittorio de Sica, with Sophia Loren, and Marcello Mastroianni; Italian neorealism in the ‘porous’ quarters of Naples, where Lācis and Walter Benjamin firstly conceived the importance of urban porosity. Bottom images, neo-Hellenic, post-war Athenian social and erotic porosity: “A neighborhood named Dream”, by Alekos Alexandrakis.

“Plato’s Gardens”, a complex of collective self-managed gardens at the territory of Plato’s Academy



Img. 6: The site proposed for the formation of the *collective self-managed Plato’s Gardens*, at the territory of Plato’s Academy, and the schematic description of the important principles of *Permaculture*(bottom left).

Is erotic desire an important part of human behavior? Is it an important part of human nature to live in communities? Is it this, communal existence, an important expression of human nature? As a consequence, is urban landscape important for human communities, for communal human nature that there, this communal human nature, may be ‘planted’ and ‘germinate’, in the open-air parts of the cities and in their correlation to the porous build environment? Trying to respond to this aporia we shall present a proposal for the formation of a complex of collective self-managed gardens, under the name *“Plato’s Gardens”*, at the territory of Plato’s Academy, a complex of collective self-managed gardens organized on the principles of Permaculture ². Let us explain that *“Permaculture”* is an approach to land management and settlement design that adopts arrangements observed in flourishing natural ecosystems. It includes a set of design principles using *whole-systems thinking*. *It applies these principles in fields such as regenerative agriculture, town planning, rewilding, and community resilience.*

²The project was presented as a pre-graduate diploma thesis, in the School of Architecture of the National Technical Univ. of Athens by Chryssa Golemi, under the title “Plato’s Gardens: collective self-managed gardens in Plato’s Academy territory in Athens” (October 2013 – didactic guidance, professors E. Klampatsea and K. Moraitis); participation to the Barcelona “Biennale of Landscape– Biental de Paisaje”, in 2014.



Img. 7: General masterplan describing the proposal of Plato’s Gardens. Winery (1), open-air market dedicated to the sale of the Gardens’ products (2), installations of experimental hydroponic horticulture (3), pre-existing archeological site (4), vegetable gardens (5), greenhouses (6), vineyards (7), fruit gardens (8), educational vegetable garden (9), zone at the periphery of the site dedicated to olive trees (10).

The term ‘Permaculture’ was coined in 1978 by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren, who formulated the concept in opposition to modern industrialized methods, instead adopting a more traditional or close to nature approach to agriculture. Let us insist on the remark that the term ‘permaculture’ may refer to the ‘*per*-manent agri-*culture*’, as well as to the “*per*-manent human *culture* in general”. We have previously described permaculture as a whole-systems way of thinking, associated with community resilience. ***It is thus a matter of eco-productive as well as of socio-cultural demand. Its correlation to an important cultural- archeological territory, such as Plato’s Academy, may be considered extremely stimulating.***

The general masterplan of the proposal for Plato’s Gardens describes several possible functions. An openair market dedicated to the sale of the Gardens’ products, installations of experimental hydroponic horticulture, a pre-existing archeological site, vegetable gardens, greenhouses, vineyards and a winery associated to them, an educational vegetable garden, fruit gardens and finally a zone at the periphery of the site dedicated to olive trees. Moreover, Plato’s Gardens constitute a promenade area for the inhabitants of the nearby neighborhoods, as well as an area of trans-local importance correlated with the archeological site of the nearby Plato’s Academy.



Img. 8: Plato’ Gardens: 3D depictions of the proposal (on the left) and description (on the right) of the hydroponic procedure.

A first ‘Symposium’, of Collaborative Permaculture in Plato’s ‘Khôra’

In Plato’s dialogue *Symposium* (Plato 2013 & 2018), Eros is recognized both as an erotic reference and as a phenomenon capable of inspiring courage, valor, great deeds and works, and vanquishing man's natural fear of death. It is seen as transcending its earthly origins and attaining spiritual heights. I shall not dare to propose feasts like the one depicted by Anselm Feuerbach, presented in our text. I may, nevertheless, propose in a much more modest way continuous community coexistence, a love of community coexistence, correlated with the ‘cultivation’ of social values. *More precisely, in the case of Plato’s Gardens, or in Plato’s ‘Khôra’³ we may refer to community coexistence that may bring together citizens of different ethnic, cultural and religious identities as those living today, side by side, in the territory of Plato’s Academy.*

³ ‘Khôra’ (also ‘chora’; ‘χώρα’ in [Ancient Greek](#)) is the space that gives a place for [being](#). The term was used by [Plato](#) again, in another dialogue of his, [Timaeus](#), to designate a receptacle, a formless interval, alike to a [non-being](#), in between which ‘[Forms](#)’ were received from the intelligible realm and were shaped into the transitory forms of the sensible realm ([Πλάτων](#), 2014: 48e4).



Img. 9: Plato's *Symposium*, as depicted by Anselm Feuerbach (1869). Symposium, a banquet where the participants were drinking the precious wine of ancient Attica; precious wine as the one which could probably be produced in the winery of the promising Plato's Gardens.



Img. 10: Or, instead of a symposium dedicated to the philosophical approach of Eros, we could expect cultural activities, presented in the context of a garden environment. In an analogous context, the ancient Thespis' Chariot gave historical birth to the cultural performance of Eros, to the theatrical praxis, in the agricultural periphery of ancient Athens. *Thespis' Chariot*, by Gustav Klimt (Burgtheater, in Vienna).

Let us insist on the last part of our sentence: ***community coexistence that may bring together citizens of different ethnic, cultural and religious identities as those living side by side, in the territory of Plato's Academy.*** Could we insist on this multicultural coexistence? To this aim is also dedicated the next project to be presented, a 'post-processual'⁴ historic itinerary from Kerameikos ancient cemetery to the Islamic temple of Eleonas, in Athens.⁵

⁴ 'Post-processual': Correlated with non-ordinary, conventional proposals of the 'supposedly' objective (nevertheless ideologically pre-determined) archeology. "Post-processualists suggest that we can never confront theory and data; instead, we see data through a cloud of theory" (Johnson 1999, p. 102).

⁵ The proposal was presented as a post-graduate diploma project, by architect Doito Bonotulshi, under the title "Introducing the Multi-temporal and Multicultural notion of space from Kerameikos to Academy of Plato". It was achieved under the didactic guidance of prof.

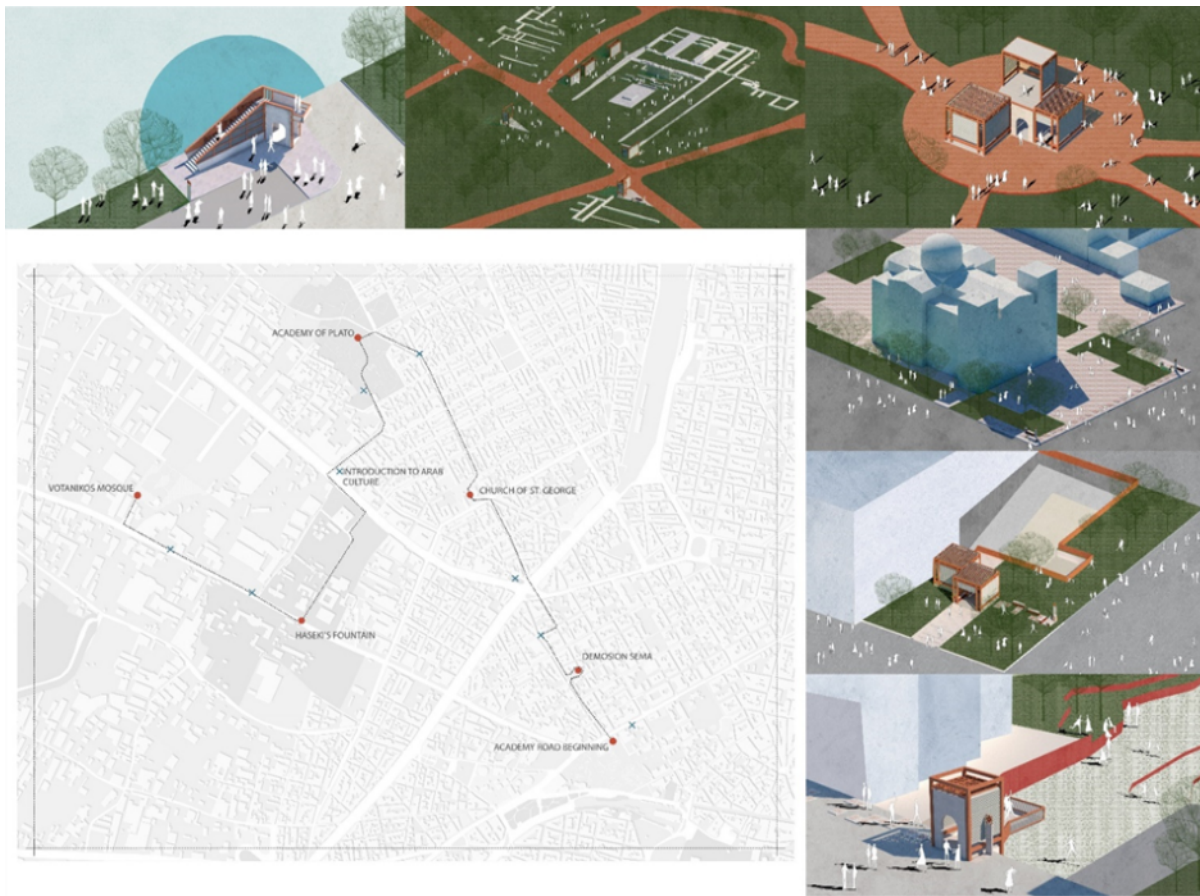
Let us insist on the correlation between Hellenic and Islamic civilization: a second 'Symposium' of cultural and political dialogue, focused to the positive coexistence of different ethnic groups

In Ancient Greece the symposium (*sympósiōn* or συμπόσιον in Ancient Greek language) was the part of a banquet that took place after the meal. The participants were drinking together, but they could also discuss serious subjects, like those related to philosophical approaches. It is in this context that Plato's *Symposium* was dedicated to a philosophical dialogue and that, in modern usage, the term has come to mean an academic or scientific conference, a serious dialogue of cultural value. A wine-drinking banquet could probably be alien to the Islamic habits, nevertheless a cultural and political dialogue could be extremely important, for both sides, westerners, Greeks in our case, and people of Islamic origin.

It is common for a big part of the Western population, to refer to the controversial relations between their own civilization and the Islamic East, or to interpret the latter in a distorted 'orientalized' way. A different way of approach could signalize the important influence of it to the Europeans, during an extended medieval period, through important intellectuals, mathematicians and physicians, through their Arabic libraries of the medieval Spain and, in relation to a sensitive landscape approach, through their delicate design as those in the case of the Arabic gardens of Alhambra.

Analogous cultural correlations may be described in the case of the Byzantine civilization, in its contact with the adjoining Arabic populations and, through this conduct in its intimate approach of the Arabs with Hellenic references in general. We may guess that Plato's *Symposium* could not be easily accepted by Islamic communities of the past and the same is rather true for the Islamic communities of the present day. Nevertheless, a great number of ancient Hellenic canons were saved by Arab scholars, who were especially interested in the Neoplatonic philosophy. The Arab dynasty of the Abbasids was interested in reorganizing the middle-ages Bagdad in a circular form, in accordance with the Plato's description of the Universe, and Sinbad the Sailor in one of his legends imitated Ulysses' ruse in order to be saved by a monstrous cannibal similar to the Homeric Polyphemus. The most important legendary hero of the Byzantine era, The Border Lord, is a fearless warrior of double origin, son of a Christian Byzantine mother and an Arab war lord. The construction of his villa and garden in the Euphrates River territory, described in a 12th century folksong, precedes the Tuscan Medici's villas and gardens for two centuries (Moraitis, 2018).

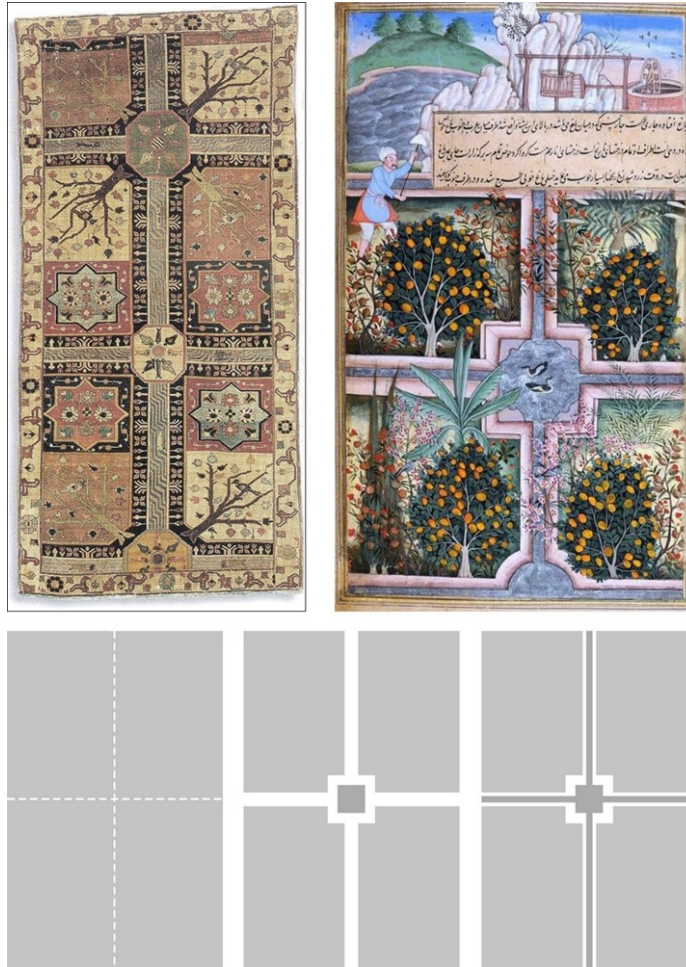
K. Demiri and K. Moraitis in the School of Architecture NTUA (acad. year 2021-2022), in the context of the Erasmus Plus Joint Master Course "Architecture-Landscape-Archeology" (organized by the Sapienza Univ. of Rome, the National Technical Univ. of Athens, the University of Coimbra and the University of Naples).



Img. 11: Focus Areas – Kerameikos, Plato’s Academy, Votanikos Mosque and the proposed Nodal Points. Emblematic structures – ‘folies’, installed on focal places could signalize the continuity of the visiting itinerary and could offer, to visitors and inhabitants of the city, guiding didactic narratives in hybrid form, written notes and digital guidance.

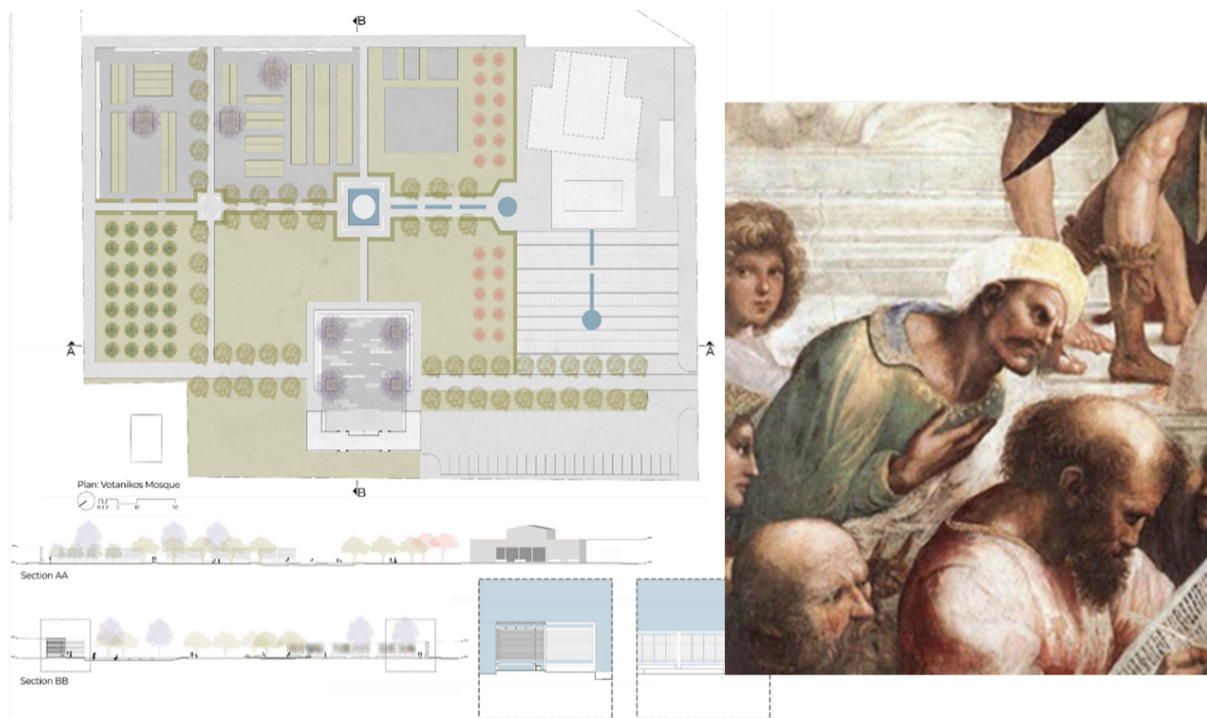
The diploma project presented insists on the previous context. It refers to the formation of a visiting itinerary, connecting the territory of the ancient cemetery of Kerameikos, in Athens, with the newly established mosque in the territory of Votanikos, through the archaeological site of Plato’s Academy. The project according to its own description “attempts to create interaction spaces between heterotopic enclaves”, those of the archaeological sites, the mosque’s site and the nearby quarters of the housing of immigrants; many of them are of Islamic origin. “These (heterotopic) spaces are politically aware, mnemonic, and create an opportunity of sensorial inquiry that offers engagement with multi-temporality”, with multiculturalism and multi religious approach as well, “as opposed to a disinterested and ‘objective’ reconstruction of a selected past”.

The main goal of the research was to enhance the relationship between Greek locals and Arab immigrants, to re-evaluate and democratize the archaeological remains as multicultural and multitemporal spaces. It attempted, firstly, an ethnographic study, to record the social life of the modern inhabitants. Through this analysis, the research aimed to create a dialogue and a holistic narrative relatable to the differentiated ethnic references: the classical Greek, the contemporary urban practices and the post-migration imaginary of the immigrants. The second objective of the project was the integration of open-air places, as urban activity generators, which would provide equal opportunities for communication and expression for the different groups of inhabitants.



Img. 12: Charbagh (Four- Square) Garden as described in traditional Islamic tapestry or in micrographs (upper images) and its formal schematic analysis (bottom images).

The design strategy begins with an analysis of a path that can be used as backbone for the narrative to continue from Kerameikos to Votanikos Islamic Mosque area. The thematic path is characterized by a set of nodal points which have been selected based on a previous thorough contextual and historical analysis of the focus area. Emblematic structures – ‘folies’, installed on those focal places could signalize the continuity of the visiting itinerary, and could offer, to visitors and inhabitants of the city, guiding didactic narratives in hybrid form, written notes and digital guidance. Finally, the thematic path arrives at the newly created Islamic Mosque in the territory of Votanikos. There, the open-air public space, in front of the Mosque, was composed in reference to the four squares formation of the Islamic Garden, as described in the traditional tapestry or in micrographs of analogous depictions. The central idea of the project was thus declared in the optimum possible way. *Islamic and Hellenic cultures may co-exist, side by side as in the depiction of Raphael’s “The School of Athens”. There, among the important ancient Greek philosophers, the Arab intellectual Averroes is presented, side by side with Pythagoras.*



Img. 13: Votanikos Mosque Garden composed, according to the previously presented principles of the Islamic Garden Design (on the left) - Averroes and Pythagoras as depicted by Raphael in the famous fresco of *The School of Athens*, in Vatican (on the right).

An erotic Saturday night at the Athenian symbiotic municipality of Kaisariani

We finally arrived at the third project presented in our text. It insists, as the two previous proposals suggest, on several contemporary social, cultural, and political demands concerning urban co-existence. Nowadays, the need for landscape urbanism and urban environmental sustainability is quite evident. Nevertheless, such an ‘ecosophical’ approach could not be successful, but only under a simultaneous social and political contribution based on democratic extended participation. Insisting on this final term, ‘participation’, we may reach a second important, contemporary urban condition already described in our text: the recognition, already previously presented, that urban populations, in most contemporary cities, in the majority of them, are not uni-cultural. On the contrary, mixed urban communities of differentiated ethnic, cultural, and religious identities must co-exist, living in the same urban realm, often featuring contradictory interrelations. It is in this context that we insist on the terms ‘eco-social sustainability’: our societies could not survive or claim their natural existence, their natural sustainability, unless in correlation to their social sustainability. The principal ecological quality of social formations has to do with their social quality. The evaluation of their natural context of existence seems to be intrinsically associated with their political and ethical integrity, even if this demanded integrity is not the result of a passive stabilized tranquility. It is rather the result of an energetic mutation of the social formations, of their ability to infiltrate historic social transformations and, more precisely, in correlation to contemporary reality, to be able to accept their multicultural approaches and evolve. In a meta-Darwinian description, societies that may accept and positively incorporate unavoidable changes of their social environment, would be ‘the fittest to survive’.

‘Hybrid’ urban place as a combination of real and virtual urbanity

We have reached again the central object of our presentation, the importance of the urban public domain as par-excellence place of social communication. It is in this same public common environment that we may create the most attractive conditions for a positive dialogue, among differentiated urban communities. Nevertheless, one of the most crucial problems of this desired communication, has to do with the functional differences of spoken and written languages and, furthermore, of differences concerning the educational background and the differentiated cultural concern, among groups of different ethnicity, religion, and age. ***In which way could we facilitate and ensure positive contact among all these different groups, using different languages and means of communication?***

Could hybrid guidance, in real and digital space, contribute and facilitate our urban co-existence? Digital response to our questions could offer a possible multi-formal solution, using many parallel narratives as answers to our urban anxiety. We could thus dream, for example, of a real urban public place of communication, a real urban square co-existing with a virtual condition of publicity and, moreover, we could design real urban public place – ‘real urbanity’ together with the proposed ‘virtual urbanity’. ***We could thus propose a holistic approach to ‘hybrid’ urban public place, to ‘hybrid urbanity’.*** Such an approach was used in the project for the rehabilitation of the central public squares of Kaisariani⁶, in the homonymous municipality in the metropolitan area of Athens. The case study seems to be extremely interesting, because of the specific cultural and political identity of the site.



Img. 14: A map of the western Minor Asia coast, wherefrom the first inhabitants of the contemporary municipality of Kaisariani arrived, as refugees, during 1922, would be formed on the floor of the central square of Kaisariani municipality. QR codes inscribed on metallic plates inlaid on the square floor, at the exact locations of important Minor Asia origin places, would offer to the visitors, passing by, narratives concerning the historical and political past of the municipality.

⁶ The project presented was the result of the collaboration of the Arsis Architect’s Design Team with the Technical Service of the Municipality of Kaisariani (end of the study, 2022). The author participated to the Arsis Architects’ design team, together with the architects A. Chelidoni, V. Kolikai and R. Bakopanou. Unfortunately, the project had not materialized in its initially proposed form.



Img. 15: The execution of the members of the Hellenic Resistance, by the Nazi occupation troops, in the Kaisariani Rifle Range, on 1st May 1944.

‘Hybrid’ public contact in the central squares of Kaisariani; a dialogue between urban groups of differentiated ethnicities, of immigrants and refugees of past and present



Img. 16: 1922 - the seaside of the city of Smyrna at the Minor Asia coast, full of Greek and Armenian inhabitants, trying to save themselves. The world was going up in flames, but those flames were not new to our dead and, moreover, they were not the last to burn our hopes. Warfare, environmental and economic destruction will not stop driving populations to exile roads.

The contemporary municipality of Kaisariani, was created on the place of a refugee camp, formed in 1922, to house refugees from the Greek cities of Minor Asia; refugees that were trying to survive under conditions of extreme poverty. Later on, the first built structures were produced and a municipality at the periphery of Athens was created. Nevertheless, the important historic adventures of the territory did not stop. During the Second World War the installations of the Rifle Range, existing in the municipality of Kaisariani as an athletic center, were used by the Nazi forces occupying Greece as an execution place. There on the 1st of May 1944, two hundred members of the Hellenic Resistance were shot; we refer to an incident able to inscribe its place of reference in the historical and political memory of the world.

In addition to the previous historical references, Kaisariani municipality was characterized by a third important association, a cultural one, regarding neoteric Hellenic folk-culture. Rebetico song is a cultural production, created after 1922, by refugees of Greek ethnicity, arriving in Greece, from their initial places of millennia's-long installation in Minor Asia. The refugees brought their musical modalities and singing traditions of Asiatic cultures. Then mixed those ancestral approaches with the folk music of the Greek mainland inserted in the industrial territories of the big Greek cities by the internal immigrants, arriving there in search of work. Reputed as such a testimony is a place in Kaisariani, strongly correlated with Rebetico song; the tavern 'Χάραμα - Dawn' in Greek, where famous Rebetico composers, bouzouki players and singers appeared.

In the case of Kaisariani, it would be a promising possibility to correlate all previous references with the everyday life of citizens, harmonizing everyday amusement or regular everyday public contact, with a promising navigation in the turbulent 'sea' of the cultural and political identity of the place. It could also be extremely invigorating for the immigrants and refugees that reached Athens during the previous decades, to be reminded that their recent to us historic-political adventures are not isolated in the history of Europe, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean territory, and that the Greek population of Kaisariani was partly created by analogous previous historic incidents. Thus, we ought to insist not on contradictions among differentiated historic identities, but on the similarity of historic events that reformed, in the past, indigenous culture through mixing and juxtaposition, through cultural osmosis. Being historically precise, we must accept that culture in general is the result of analogous osmotic symbioses, 'erotic' symbioses in our allegorical description, and that such a condition will undoubtedly continue in the decades to come. Warfare, environmental and economic destruction will not stop to drive populations to exile roads, and the acknowledgment of this reality is of utter importance for the indigenous citizens in our countries and newcomers as well, in Europe and in the entire world.



Img. 17: Correlating a possible night out at the Kaisariani square as presented in the above 3D presentation, with a famous Rebetico song under the title 'Saturday night in Kaisariani'; a song with both political and erotic references – *could the death, the execution, efface the seduction, the warmth of his eyes?* On the contrary, according to Plato's *Symposium*, Eros may vanquish human's natural fear of death...

Creating a map of cultural and political guidance

The floor level of the Kaisariani square was designed based on the previously presented approach, reproducing the map of the eastern parts of Mediterranean, describing the eastern Isles of Greece and the west coastline of Turkey. Metallic plates would be inlaid on the places of the map where important urban settlements of the past flourished, or present cities exist; metallic plates with QR codes inscribed on them. Passersby could be attracted by the plates and QR codes and be invited, through digital navigation, to several differentiated narratives. That being so, we chose to insist on the exemplary historic incident that we already previously mentioned, on the 1922 extended genocide and forced immigration of Greek and Armenian refugees from Minor Asia, which decisively influenced Hellenic history, the political, cultural, and urban history of modern Greece. Evidently it was important for us to refer to a historical incident well known for our country that immediately influenced the life of our ancestors and consequently our own cultural and political feeling as well, our own cultural and political existence. We refer to a historic event, which radically transformed the 20th century Greek cities being infused by an extended number of Minor Asia refugees' quarters; a historic event which deeply influenced both the centralized urban Greek civilization and the neoteric Greek folk-culture.

Nevertheless, our effort in our proposal for the design of the Kaisariani square would prefer to use the reference to the destruction of the Hellenic part of the Minor Asia in 1922, principally as a pretext, not intended to be associated with a nationalistic approach, or to an effort to revitalize nationalistic confrontations of the past. We should like to abstain from an analogous vulgar confrontation. What we would really desire is to offer a requiem, dedicated not only to the inhabitants of the pre-destroyed Smyrna, or to the actual victims of analogous extermination, but also to the continuous massacres and urban destruction that have not ceased to exist, that continue to take place, till now, in a large part of our 'civilized' world.

Coming back to the 'eco-social sustainability' and multi-cultural coexistence, through our hybrid, real and 'smart' approach

Using as an exemplary case the previous 1922 reference, we could then try to present through our virtual navigation narratives, contemporary refugees', and immigrants' movement, in the Mediterranean territory principally from Asia and Africa to southern European countries. An analogous presentation could be offered to the multiple visitors of the Kaisariani square, in many different languages that could facilitate the communication with refugees and immigrants, whose languages are not in common usage in contemporary Greece. As a next step we could then imagine multidirectional communication, incorporating in the digital data of our guidance system, the comments, criticism, and statements form the part of the multicultural, multiethnic visitors of the territory. Songs and music of multicultural origin could greatly enrich the communication system and create a place reference that could attract a multiplicity of visitors.

It would be in such a communication context that the cultural validity, the socio-political echo of the place would be multiplied (Moraitis, 2023); real place itineraries and, in parallel, digital continuous navigation, 'in situ', in real place, as well as through distant internet navigation.

The previous 'augmented' possibility of multicultural and multilevel urban communication is what we would like to correlate with the key concept of the 'eco-social sustainability', a concept to which we would like to insist again at the conclusive part of our text. The important condition of the sustainability of our human communities has primarily not to do with the sustainability of their natural environment, but rather with their socio-

political sustainability, a condition that must be considered as principal for both natural and social preservation. Urban landscape, the public urban landscape, the public urban place must be recognized as the place 'par excellence', where the need for our 'eco-social sustainability' may be performed and preserved, through the densest possible communication. It is in this context that we have insisted on a place formation, promoting historic and political memory and multicultural positive co-existence through a hybrid, real and 'smart' approach...

We could finally conclude the previous description, insisting on the erotic seduction of a Saturday night, a summer or spring Saturday night at Kaisariani. "Saturday night at Kaisariani", being the title of a song with erotic and political connotations, well known to the late 20th century Greek audience.

Epilogue

Was this a poetic approach or a scientific one? Moreover, could poetic approaches contribute to the scientific conception, if not to managerial proposals, at least to my design visualization? Does psychoanalytic theory explain not solely individual psychopathology but, in addition, cultural and even political formations? If psychoanalysis may explain the way that individual behavior is formed under the social transformation of erotic instinctual drives, then the psychoanalysis of the city would be a field of interest that would obsess me during the next few years of my life.

Plato, in his *Symposium*, describes the dialogue between Socrates and Diotima, the priestess from Mantinea. According to this dialogue, Eros equates neither to perfectness nor to imperfectness, but to the in-between condition, to the desire to move from a lower state of deficiency to a higher state of accomplishment. It principally refers to the power of desire, in our case to the desire for the positive formation of the urban communities, expressing itself in the open-air urban context.

I think I could not wait anymore... I shall dare to pronounce, NOW, the final conclusive statement of the above, promising, future theoretical expectation of mine.

Although Freudian psychoanalysis focuses on the predominance of the erotic libidinal instinct, eroticism is not crucial because of its hedonistic orientation principally. It is rather important because it seems to be an instinctual force, which could easily be controlled, thus 'educating' immature young humans to accept the imposition of societal ethics and morals. It is thus a 'politically' crucial, constitutive blind force that has to be formed through the enforcement of societies. Surely, individuals or even parts of the involved communities may react, and the controlling pressure may be transformed and even collapse. An analogous theoretical approach was suggested by Herbert Marcuse, in his book on *Eros and Civilization* (Marcuse, 1998); not 'Love and Civilization' but going back to the ancient Hellenic term 'Eros and Civilization'. ***What our proposal suggests in addition is that the important place formation where this controlling procedure or its bottom-up denial occurs is urban place in general and in an even more exact indication, the open-air part of the city.***

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