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## JOURNAL OF BIOURBANISM

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The **Journal of Biourbanism JBU** is a biannual peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, international online journal. The journal takes an incisive look into the bios/life of urbanism through perspectives in architecture, planning, environmental studies, and other social sciences. The journal aims to critically review and define the notions of biourbanism. Assessing human-centered or need-based design sensibilities is a predominant concern, while attempting to address the disconnect between theory and practice in participating disciplines. The journal publishes cutting-edge research, methods, and innovative design approaches on biourbanism.

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## **L'Appennino**

I

*La luna, non c'è altra vita che questa.  
E vi si sbianca l'Italia da Pisa  
sparsa sull'Arno in una morta festa*

*di luci, a Lucca, pudica nella grigia  
luce della cattolica, superstite  
sua perfezione...*

Pier Paolo Pasolini  
*Le ceneri di Gramsci*

## **The Apennine**

I

*The moon, there's no other life than this.  
And Italy whitens from Pisa  
shedding onto the Arno in a happy death*

*of lights, to Lucca, modest in the gray  
light of its own Catholic, surviving  
perfection...*

Pier Paolo Pasolini  
*Gramsci's Ashes*



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# Editor's Note: Killing the God Janus

**Stefano Serafini**

*International Society of Biourbanism, Italy*

*To Sylvan Janus*

By pioneering, among other views, biophilic design more than 15 years ago (Salingaros, 2006) biourbanism has been nonconformist and, I dare say, for the good. However, we never lacked the awareness that a consistent “biowashing” would have followed our and others’ research and educational work. Nowadays, in fact, biophilia has become the fashionable equivalent of last decade’s “drawing trees on top of skyscrapers,” as Tim De Chant (2013) wittily put it. What was once an exoteric theory looked down upon by most academic architects is now burgeoning in newspapers, journals, and on social media, letting us contemplate the misinterpretation of our intention. The ultimate salvation doctrine even proclaims that the urban future cannot be but biophilic in order to balance the original sin of hosting too many humans (McDonald & Beatley, 2021), which reminds one of Le Corbusier’s totalitarian *cité radieuse* with its green spaces for *machines à habiter* to keep their hygienic distance.

The doctrine of Friedrich Nietzsche must have taught all of us that a deification is needed to accomplish a deicide. Possibly, this is why the city has become the latter, minor deity of our time—the “urban century” (Ibidem, pp. 1–22), where 68 percent of the world’s population is going to live by 2050, *et cetera*. The impression is that biowashing is the last shroud of this lesser god’s cadaver, meant to delude us with a hope for resurrection.

The *Journal of Biourbanism* has already devoted an issue to this matter: *The city smells of decay* (2016). Let me take a step forward here, reminding that the death of the city is two-fold.

First, we observe the death of the city precisely in what the majority presents as life’s evidence, i.e., growth. Of course, nowadays, cities not only keep burdening this planet but also sprawl, expand, and absorb life—as cancer does, monstrously. This is more than a metaphor. Ryan and colleagues (2010) found significant morphofunctional homologies between urban sprawl and the invasiveness of a tumor. On the other hand, Sepp and colleagues (2019) studied the cancerogenicity of the urban environment even on wildlife, suggesting to use “urban wild animal populations as models to study the association between environmental factors and cancer epidemics in humans” (Ibidem). The way modernism broke up traditional urban organisms into organoids that fight each other to death was sharply diagnosed by al-Sabouni (2016).

Modern urbanism ripening into gigantism is a deadly process, an omnivore rupture of boundaries and identity inside and outside the city. Megalopolises and their fluxes of energy, matter, and humans follow the extrinsic impulses of a corrosive urban decay that is also killing the planet. This self-consumption masquerading as progress and endless growth

evidently affects the environment, the inhabitants, and, above all, any biourban dynamics. Its social markers are solitude, fear, conflict, deconstruction of any civic language and memory, and, finally, war, uricide, and omnicide.

Sergio Los has explained how contemporary cities lose their internal “organs.” These organs—Los calls them the “eight institutions”—have been dislocated outward on a global level (Los, 2019, pp. 126–139). For example, the megacity outsources its own food production to faraway countries, its defense to an international organization, etc. This way, the city loses its autonomy and freedom, and its inhabitants their common purpose. The city is emptied for consumption fluxes to fill it all.

This hollowing process explains the second aspect of the global city death: as an empty shell inhabited by the hermit crab of immaterial capitalism, it offers no room for citizens. For over a century, modern urban singularities have attracted land, money, and labor beyond their horizon of events into the inescapable kernel of an economy of simulation (Baudrillard, 1993), where the sign is all that matters. Karl Polanyi (1944) stressed how the transformation of human institutions into tradeable “fictitious commodities” deprives communities of their chance to participate in making the world. In the end, a marketed landscape reduces humans to nothing other than passive consumers dependent on an urban structure that, in turn, depends on a global network based on the power of signs. No decision about the city comes from inside the city itself. Urban people are no longer citizens but stuff—exactly as the goods that circulate the city system to serve the invisible master. Communities are atomized into individuals that cannot produce meaning and are subjected to a monistic signification that predates them. A city without citizens is a *machine à consommer* that consumes itself.

The evidence of this final form of decay is not just the collapse of every civic, moral, and political production but its brutal substitution by simulacra.

From a political point of view, contemporary cities are the stage for the global oligocracy to disguise itself as local democracy. This includes the mimic of voting for unknown, pre-set “representatives,” after the eventual discussion of pre-set “opinions.” Indeed, people have neither the chance nor the drive to make decisions, because they have been stripped of their linguistic ability to co-create local-based worlds (Los, 2019, pp. 10–25).

From an ethical point of view, cities permit the dramatic exhibition of every shade of moralism, reducing morality to fashion and a show of outrage and rancor. Data production and consumption in a self-representing virtual space have taken on the role of moral action and responsibility.

From a civic point of view, the dead city has banned communitarian work and language by establishing an impermeable exchange interface, an ineluctable economy of signs and spectacles. This has brought the real subsumption of living matter to capital (Bontempelli, 2008) at the level of good intentions. “Local, regional, and transnational collective action,” which is “the ‘favored child’ of official development agencies,” has substituted political engagement “to integrate individuals into markets, to deliver welfare services, and to involve local populations in development projects” (Fisher, 1997, pp. 439–440; 442; 443). New forms of charities and NGOs have emerged consistently with the global rise of neoliberalism. Their technical solutions to technical problems have been implicitly endorsing and making the

unquestionable, political background invisible (Ferguson, 1990). In our field, the simulations of “tactical urbanism” and “placemaking” confirm the complete commodification of space in a very different context than Jane Jacobs’ time. They replace civic architecture to decorate the one and only system of consumption.

For example, it is no surprise that the Placemaking movement (originally meant to favor creative, spontaneous, and bottom-up participation) has been coopted in the greenwashing of the Saudi autocratic regime, which seeks to “jumpstart the kingdom’s non-oil economy” (Daraghai & Trew, 2020) by investing in the immaterial value of “smart,” “human-centered,” and “biophilic” urbanization. Laudatory articles, such as those by Helmy (2020) or Mohamed and colleagues (2020), speak for themselves. So does the visit of Fred Kent—the founder of the Project for Public Spaces who partnered with UN-Habitat—to the Prince Sultan University in Riyadh in 2019; and so does the role of Ken Wallace, as the master planning director of Neom and the “director of placemaking” at the MiSK Foundation in Al-Riyadh.

Slogans, smiles, and advertising hide a dreadful, stale reality. The self-serving construction of Neom, a city of one million, into a 105-mile long straight line over nine years turned out to be linked to the killing of Abdur-Rahim al-Huwayti and to the displacement of the Howeitat people (Malekafzali, 2021). This is just a repetition of the evictions occurring all over the world (Bissen, 2017) and it relates to the assassination of Yaqub Musa Abu alQi’ and the death of Erez Levi in Umm al-Hiran, Israel (Forensic Architecture, 2019); the forced uprooting of millions in Syria (al-Sabouni, 2016), or the urbicide of Sur in Turkey and the building of “a new Toledo” on the rubbles of its ancient heritage (Lepeska, 2016; Ortona, 2018, and Nistiman, n.d.).

It is obvious that Neom’s urban “ideals” are mostly fake and crooked, but that is not the point. Nor is the political extreme of the Saudi Kingdom at stake here. In fact, no good idea is enough for producing good urbanism without a civic context. We cannot pretend that such a civic context falls outside of our consideration and responsibility as designers or that it exists *per se* somewhere else within the 21<sup>st</sup> century global machine. Imagine if any other state or corporate power invited biourbanists to design a city. By accepting, we would not lead: rather, we would serve a destroying “capitalistic urbanism” that is the opposite of biourbanism.

A final note on tourism is due. Tourism represents the peak of urban immaterial consumption and is already on its way to morphing into an AR virtual “experience.” The transformation of the city into a spectacle, “*capital* to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image” (Debord, 1992 [1967], I, 34, p. 32), iconically represents our exile as citizens from our own places and history. As the former inhabitants of gentrified historical city centers, pushed away by tourism, we no longer inhabit our own lives. Rather, we experience our own existences as tourists do with our former cities by looking at them, trying to own them in their representations—consuming them.

These trivial observations about a crystal-clear phenomenon aim at stressing that the relevance of the border between the dead and the quick is also evident. We need to go back to the threshold of our roots to rethink the entire direction of our society and the concept of design itself. The repurposing of simulation, commodification, and exploitation can happen only if the original intention gets lost. The interface of the sign traps and kills it in a mask that pretends to represent, while indeed, it misleads.

The ancient Roman and Italic religion had a mighty, ubiquitous god for beginnings, ends, and boundaries who was accordingly invoked before making a sacrifice to any other deity: Janus. Represented with two, three, and sometimes four opposite faces, young and old, he was believed to guard trust and borders, especially in rural fields and urban passageways. He represented the eternally fresh flow of becoming from the eternal sphere of being, a balance that our current civilization seems to have lost and even reversed.

Janus is keen to the rural environment from where the primal cities have been born. While the omniscity/omnicide looms on the imaginary horizon of capital, we shall look at the other side: the global *ager effatus* where signs have no reach. There rise shantytowns, illegal squatting, semi-abandoned *borghi*, rural villages, and repurposed, churning spaces where megalopolises fall apart under their own material waste. There, the center has already been reversed. There, peasants of the world (“oblivious to their own non-existence,” see *infra*, p. 18) are farming cities of silence by perfectly disregarding the smart, “perfect crime” of the dominion of the object.

This work calls for the silence of design. Homecomrades are those who trespass the fences of interfaces, stop mourning the simulacrum, and design the lifeworld.

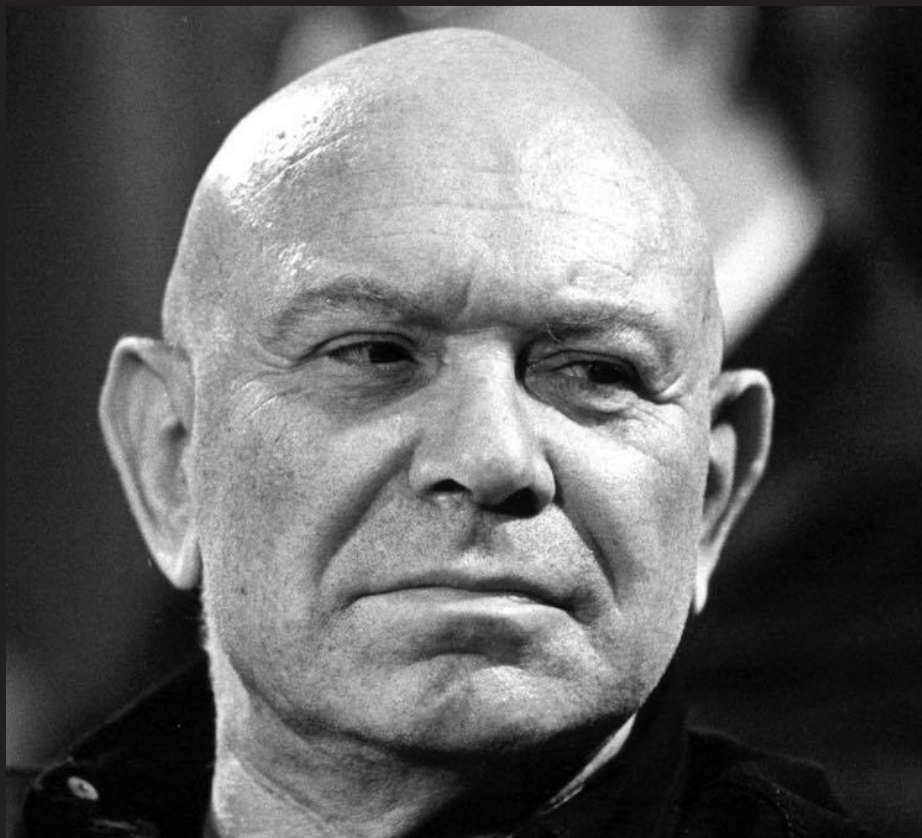
The doors of the temple of Janus are open. We, the peasants, are silently harvesting every meaningless code. We will even scythe the two-faced god himself, if we meet him on the path.

Long live Janus.

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In Memoriam

Teodor Shanin OBE (1930–2020)

Courtesy of the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences

# The Immensity of Teodor Shanin

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## **ABSTRACT**

The late scholar, Teodor Shanin (1930–2020), shed light on the anthropological, social, and economic reality of peasantry and rurality. This reality is the fundamental otherness of urban modernity. Shanin’s work is of great inspiration for understanding how “all cities start in mud” and for interpreting the receded roots of industrial urbanism. Here, two elements of Shanin’s work are in focus. First is his view on late Marx and the “underbelly” of capitalism. Second is Shanin’s critique of the entire idea of progress.

**Keywords:** Teodor Shanin, peasants, rural, late Marx, uneven development, progress

That man is made of earth is without doubt the frankest reason for his nobility.  
—Malaparte, 2007, p. 61

## **THERE WILL BE NO MORE, ARE NO—NEVER WERE ANY PEASANTS**

Through his seminal work—*Defining Peasants: Essays Concerning Rural Societies, Expolary Economies, and Learning from them in the Contemporary World*—Teodor Shanin gave peasants their rightful place among the living. As he wrote, they “have been a mystification mainly to those who are prone to become mystified” (Shanin, 1990, p. 73). In fact, peasants around the world, oblivious to their own non-existence, keep going despite any mystification (T. Shanin, personal communication, December 26, 2016).

Peasantry is a process between past and future social forms that are neither capitalist nor state-defined. Not only do peasants exist, they go beyond the so-called modernizers’ hostility that has been seared throughout history’s limitedness and categorical sanitization. Shanin noted that peasant life and any deepening of relevant economy and consciousness are mutually supportive (T. Shanin, personal communication, December 23, 2016). Peasantry, he said, “manifests itself not only as a distinctive social group, but as a dominant pattern of social life which defines a stage in the development of human society” (Shanin, 1990, p. 27).

Shanin extensively studied the Soviet agrarian economist, Alexander V. Chayanov (1888–1937) (*see* Chayanov, 1966; 1986 [1920s]; Shanin, 1990). This scholar of rural sociology challenged both Marxian economics in Russia and classical and neoclassical economics in the West based on his labor–consumer balance between the satisfaction of family needs and the drudgery of labor (Chayanov, 1966 [1920s], p. xv). Shanin also analyzed how late Marx had challenged the biased Marxist orthodoxy on peasantry and rurality (Shanin, 1983b). These shifts defied the “tendency to treat peasantry as a bodyless notion” (Shanin, 1971, p. 13) and set the foundation for a transnational, pre-capitalist viewpoint of rural social relations through peasant studies. Shanin questioned rigid associations to unearth new empirical and analytical value within the field that he defined. He even noticed that the future of peasant studies moves toward finding peasantry in other forms (Shanin, 1990, p. 85; pp. 142–148): family farms of the so-called developed societies, urban decay, migrants, and the diffuse protagonists of expolary economies of megalopolises may all represent new epitomes of the same concept (Bissen, 2014). They not only transverse our historical period of advanced capitalism and age of unreason but also hint at our future.

## **MARX AND THE PEASANTS: RETRACING A LOST THREAD**

Capitalism’s regressive features disprove the single, inevitable thread of social progress. In a case, *Late Marx and the Russian Road: Marx and ‘The Peripheries of Capitalism’*, Shanin (1983b) and several authors discuss rurality’s heterogeneous paths (*see also* Shanin, 1990, pp. 313–318). Here, peasantry emerges as an ‘irregularity’ produced among sub-worlds and sub-economies within a capitalism-centered world (Shanin, 1983a, p. 14). Shanin shows how



Marx's thought on the social transition of non-centers that lie beneath the horizon of capitalism was unacknowledged. Peasant spontaneity, that is, the opposite of historical inevitability, diverges not just from a unilinear progress but also a unilinear interpretation of Marx (Shanin, 1983a, pp. 29–33).

Shanin traced how global unevenness had influenced the work of Marx, who, in the *Grundrisse*, had already considered peasant agriculture and land ownership within pre-capitalist modes of production by 1857 (Ibidem, p. 14). With Western Europe in crisis, the Russian peasant commune and the populist tendencies within the country sparked debate among the Russian *intelligentsia* (Ibidem, pp. 8–25). On this subject, Marx received a letter from Vera Zasulich, a member of the Black Repartition and later the Emancipation of Labor, in 1881. She asked for Marx's view on the agrarian question and the future of the rural commune in Russia, which happened to be a "life-and-death question" for her party (see 'Vera Zasulich: a letter to Marx', Shanin, 1983b, pp. 98–99). Essentially, Zasulich asked if Russia needed to pass through all phases of capitalist production as the precondition for revolution (see 'Marx–Zasulich correspondence: letters and drafts', Ibidem, pp. 97–126).

Zasulich's letter and Marx's response broadly dealt with "socialists facing non-proletarians and pre-capitalist social structures in a world in which capitalism had already made its powerful appearance" (Ibidem, p. 97). In fact, in his reply, Marx expressed that primitive accumulation, as analyzed in *Capital* (specifically the 1875 French edition, see Ibidem, pp. 48–49), no longer applied to Russia (see 'Karl Marx: the reply to Zasulich', Shanin, 1983b, pp. 123–124). Marx even saw the rural peasant commune as "the fulcrum for social regeneration in Russia" (Ibidem, p. 124) and an advantage over global capitalism. He wrote: "[the rural commune] may open a new chapter that does not begin with its own suicide" (see 'K. Marx: drafts of a reply (February/March 1881)', Ibidem, pp. 112 and 121). This is a crucial point in the urban-rural divide, which Shanin illuminated while observing Marx move away from Western Europe (Shanin, 1983a). Marx closed his reply to Zasulich by stating that "the harmful influences assailing it [the commune] on all sides must first be eliminated, and it must then be assured the normal conditions for spontaneous development" (see 'Karl Marx: the reply to Zasulich', Shanin, 1983b, p. 124).

Surprisingly (or maybe not), despite Zasulich's request to make Marx's views known, the letter remained hidden until 1911 and was first published in 1924 in *Arkhiv K. Marks'a i F. Engel'sa*, vol. 1, translated from the French original (Wada, 1983, pp. 41–42). Indeed, just two years after her letter to Marx, Zasulich decided that all directions pointed toward the disintegration of the peasant commune and wrote: "Russia's whole economic development is too closely bound up with the development of Western Europe, and there the days of capitalism are already numbered" (Ryazanov, 1983, p. 131).

Shanin did not use all of this as an ideological cage. His work—not only *Defining Peasants* and *Late Marx* but also *Peasants and Peasant Societies*, *The Awkward Class*, *Russia as a 'Developing Society'* and *Russia, 1905–07: Revolution as a Moment of Truth*—opens up a multiplicity of rural roads through a global interdependence of societal transformations. These are based on a complexity whose valorization has yet to come. Shanin said: "ideas of limitless linear growth blinded us to the complexity of the social world—to the diverse and parallel forms which operate side by side without being transitory; the so-called informal or expolary family economies of survival within the 'post-industrial' world" (Shanin, 1997, p. 70).

## PEASANTRY AND URBAN PROGRESS

Here enters the biased categorization of the urban-rural divide where “the peasant” is rather a counter-label to build modernity’s own identity and, ultimately, one’s own social status (Elias, 2000 [1939]). Hence, today, as in the Renaissance, peasantry is still synonymous with backwardness, ignorance, and despicability. But as Debord put it, “*le délire s’est reconstitué dans la position même qui prétend le combattre* [madness reappears in the very posture which pretends to fight]” (1992 [1967], p. 209). Shanin said that as “the ‘advanced’ societies were showing to all the rest their own futures ... the only questions that remained to be asked were: Who is the most progressive? Who is to set the example to the others? Which utopia will bring about human bliss?” (Shanin, 1997, p. 68). In fact, as “society’s center becomes increasingly empty of human content” (Ibidem, p. 70), consumerism, war, and the destruction of the planet aim to erase De Martino’s ‘*età del pane* [age of bread]’ (Pasolini, 2008 [1975], p. 53). In a few words, rural eradication has always been a feature of modernity (Elias, 2000 [1939]; Shanin, 1997).

On progress, Shanin said:

Those who wish to face up to the substantive failure of one total theory that mankind adhered to in the last two centuries, and to do so without surrender, should probably begin where it all began to disintegrate: with the issue of the human content of social structures and entrenched ideologies—that is, matters of choice. We all know the limitations of human choice within contemporary society. We have to comprehend better and learn to put to use the limits of such limitations. (1997, pp. 70–71)

It is generally taken for granted, when not openly praised, that humankind is in the process of being urbanized like never before. The base of this process is the consumerism of goods and services that represent links to a global system. This even happens by engineering seeds and listing water on the stock market. The city comes to the rural by making everyone less autonomous. Yet there is no urban independence without the rural. As a matter of fact, by leaving for the city and becoming standard consumers, peasants disappear and the rural diminishes across the world. Then what is or could be the actual contribution of the rural to the evolution, resilience, and humanistic transformation of the urban? What is the social and political relevance of rurality?

First of all, we cannot forget the source in both the historical and survival sense of the city. As Robert Neuwirth said, “all cities start in mud” (Neuwirth, 2005, p. 179). The design fashion of “urban agriculture” (Badami & Ramankutty, 2015) may well be the unconscious and impossible desire to get rid of such a source. Second, and as a consequence, the lymph of the surviving urban cannot be but the churning rural (Neuwirth, 2005, pp. 14–16; 2016), the urban “pig earth” (Berger, 1979; 1990). Great modern urbanization has shown that what gives life to cities comes from outside its walls: workers, food, and sources of energy—and with that, culture.

Even the symbolic survival of financial megalopolises is simply impossible without those who move the reality of soil. Financial capitalism, including its art and urbanism based on real estate assets, is still climbing the relics of recent crises. It is noteworthy that the rural environment is affected by an unprecedented rate of suicide all over the world, especially at the center of the empire (Rosmann, 2010; 2011). The farmers’ crisis seems the logical

counterpoint to the failure of a system based on debt bubbles which, at any rate, denies any evidence of peasants—even in the United States (Bissen, 2015; 2016; 2020). The power, with its financial markets that are more valuable than lives, is cleaner and sharper. But without this rural world, all of us will lose our survival (Bissen, 2017, p. 137).

John Berger wrote that “an intact peasantry was the only class with a built-in resistance to consumerism” (Berger, 1979, p. 210) and that “destroying the peasantries of the world could be a final act of historical elimination” (Ibidem, p. 213). He discusses a class of survivors where every individual is “a person who has continued to live when others disappeared or perished” (Ibidem, p. 199). This culture of survival opposes a culture of progress that anticipates future expansion and, at its most trivial, consumerism, to paraphrase Berger (1979, p. 204).

In contrasting a culture of survival to a culture of progress, Berger says:

First, we must note that the counting is done by the cities, according to an historical scenario opposing left to right, which belongs to a culture of progress. The peasant refuses that scenario, and he is not stupid to do so, for the scenario, whether the left or right win, envisages his disappearance. His conditions of living, the degree of his exploitation and his suffering may be desperate, but he cannot contemplate the disappearance of what gives meaning to everything he knows, which is, precisely, his will to survive. No worker is ever in that position, for what gives meaning to his life is either the revolutionary hope of transforming it, or money, which is received in exchange against his life as a wage earner, to be spent in his “true life” as a consumer. (1979, p. 205)

Pasolini, too, noted the immensity of the peasant world and its incompatibility with consumerism. When this world becomes compatible, it is over. When this world is not about a working life, survival, and doing every action for the future while staying rooted and adapting to every world change—even if one never sees that future, as echoed by Berger (Ibidem, p. 201)—then the acidic corrosion has won. The totalitarianism of consumerism is the real anthropological threat:

*È questo illimitato mondo contadino prenazionale e preindustriale, sopravvissuto fino a solo pochi anni fa, che io rimpiango (non per nulla dimoro il più a lungo possibile, nei paesi del Terzo Mondo, dove esso sopravvive ancora, benché il Terzo Mondo stia anch'esso entrando nell'orbita del cosiddetto Sviluppo* [It is such a boundless, pre-national, and pre-industrial peasant world, which had survived until a few years ago, that I long for. Not by chance I stay as long as I can in the countries of the Third World where such a reality still survives, even though the Third World is also entering the orbit of so-called ‘development’]. (Pasolini, 2008 [1975], p. 53)

The language of soil common to all peasants of the world can be summarized as the reference of every semantics, where labor and the means of production coincide in one subject. Here, there is no symbolic interface to establish division among properties and social classes. Rather, property is substantially one with human activity before taking on its modern meaning. Peasant survival is a way forward as opposed to a future of capital, which is meant to destroy the past. The language of soil is a human belonging, the justice that gives meaning to life, and the reality that balances the sign.

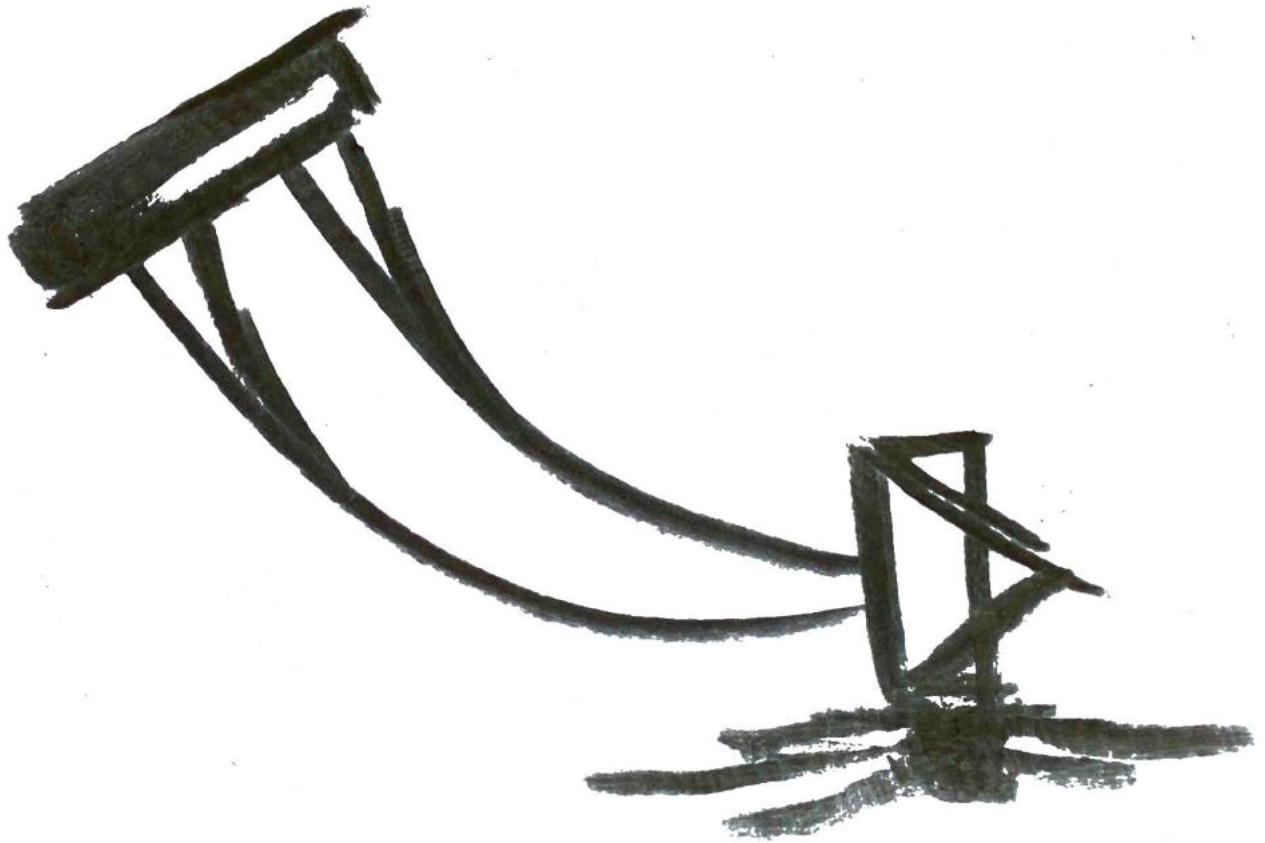
On the guardians of the rural world, Shanin noted the crux in transforming peasant societies: “it may be politic to report that the FAO world plan to modernize and improve agriculture could be implemented without painful reform, but it would not be true” (FAO ‘Land Reform as an Instrument of Progress’ *Land Reform*, I (1970) as cited in Shanin, 1990, p. 136). Working against the limitedness of history, Shanin made it possible to leave behind the “immense arrogance” of the idea of progress (Shanin, 1997, p. 68). The noble *humus* of peasants can teach how peasantry is relevant in its own economic, social, and historical process to overcome this world of financial megalopolises, perhaps with a peasant city of trust and a common, farmed, and soil-based language. He added, “even in our ‘dynamic’ times we live not in the future but in a present rooted in the past, and that is where our future is shaped. And in the present as in the past, peasants are the majority of mankind” (Shanin, 1990, p. 48). Understanding the rural is vital in our urban world. It requires understanding the language of soil and its living exchange. By moving away from the current rule of signs, it leads the future of this world from its own roots.

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*...uncique puer monstrator aratri,  
et teneram ab radice ferens, Silvane, cupressum...*

P. Vergilius Maro, Georgica, I, 19–20

*...and you, fresh finder of the curved plough  
also bearing from its roots a young cypress, Silvanus...*

P. Vergilius Maro, Georgics, I, 19–20





# Introduction to the Translation of ‘Farmers and a degrowth economy in Russia’: On Surprises and Doubts

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The following original interview with Teodor Shanin was published in Russian in 2016, and it took me by surprise. First, there is very little discussion on degrowth in the context of Russia or in the Russian language. Degrowth, however, provides a frame for this interview. Second, Shanin was surely a renowned person, but he had not worked on degrowth. In Russia, he is most famous for the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences—a university that he founded in 1995—known simply as “Shaninka.” In academic circles, he is known as a great peasant studies scholar due to his work on the Russian peasantry and peasant economies. He is, however, largely unfamiliar to the international degrowth community. Thus, we found great importance in making this interview available in English. Oxana Lopatina translated it from Russian with great care.

Russia remains a blind spot for degrowth scholarship. This interview, however, expands the geographical scope of degrowth debates, locating the subject on new turf. New contexts, concepts, and theories emerge throughout the interview by focusing on peasants in parallel to the history of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and contemporary Russia. It offers new perspectives to any curious reader. According to Shanin (1997), positioning growth/progress/development (or any other modification of the grand idea of unilinear societal progress) as universal goals obscures the complexity of social worlds and economies that exist within them. This position connects to the critique of development that is central to degrowth thought: it sees the development discourse as a colonizing attempt to bring all ways of living under one paradigm.

Again, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, Shanin inferred a similar argument in the work of Marx, thus illuminating a lesser known period of his work and challenging dogmatic thinking. *Late Marx and the Russian Road* (1983 [2018]), edited by Shanin, brings attention to the thought of

Marx after *Capital* and during the late period of his work. While Marx did not publish major works during that time, Shanin argues that Marx's notes and letters show a deep process of thinking—and doubting. He points to Marx's interest in the *narodniks* in Russia—a movement of Russian *intelligentsia* from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that engaged with the Russian peasantry and saw them as a revolutionary force. Marx's letter and four drafts preceding it (all from 1881) to Vera Zasulich, a representative of this broad, conflicted movement, are at the core of *Late Marx*, accompanied by other texts and commentaries. Shanin notes that the letter to Zasulich, as well as another letter to *Otechestvennye Zapiski*, were left unpublished by the groups they reached, perhaps ironically censoring the real Marx for not being Marxist enough. The argument Shanin makes is that by examining the 'peripheries of capitalism,' with the Russian Empire being one of the first societies referred to as 'developing,' Marx saw problems with not only uneven development but also the diversity of revolutionary forces. He implied that reaching advanced capitalist stages was unnecessary to overcome capitalism, and that the 'peripheries' could find their own ways to revolution.

Shanin's own work, such as *The Awkward Class* (1972), contributes to understanding the complexity of the social world of the Russian peasantry, arguing that it operated according to a logic different from capitalism. It could not be explained simply through class divisions. He draws on the work of Russian agrarian economists, including Alexander Chayanov, and offers a rich description of the organization of peasantry from 1910–1925. At the center of the peasant economy was the *commune*—a self-governing territorial unit consisting of peasant households and legally owned common land. It acted as both the lowest level of local authority and the center for economic organization and administration. The communal gathering of the commune was the space where key collective decisions, including the redistribution of land among peasants, were made. While characterized by cohesion, egalitarian relations, and consensus, the peasantry's power relations and informal hierarchies still shaped these spaces in various ways. For example, although women contributed substantially to both the household and the fields, they were considered second-class members of the community. World War I, from which many men did not return, resulted in women taking on more active roles in the commune. This shift was also supported by equal rights for men and women that were granted by the Soviet government.

The state of things changed only to a certain extent, thus reminding us of the power of informal social roles. Communes had existed before the Bolshevik Revolution and survived until collectivization. During these time periods, they passed through transformations and integrated differently into the country's institutional structures. In fact, peasants would often ignore such structures in order to preserve the key role of the commune. However, the peasants' inability to join forces beyond their own communes weakened them in shaping the Soviet state.

Overall, Shanin's work showcases an intimate engagement with the economic and social organization of the Russian peasantry. At the same time, it does not slip into adoration. Shanin's work presents insights and his approach can inform the thought on peasantry. It is a transformative force and, with it, degrowth alliances can be built. Fortunately, such a discussion has already started (Gerber, 2020).

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...ἔρχεσθαι δὴ ἔπειτα λαβὼν ἐνῆρες ἐρετμόν, / εἰς ὃ κε τοὺς ἀφίκηαι οἳ οὐκ ἴσασι θάλασσαν / ἀνέρες, οὐδέ θ' ἄλεσσι μεμιγμένον εἶδαρ ἔδουσιν: / οὐδ' ἄρα τοί γ' ἴσασι νέας φοινικοπαρήους / οὐδ' ἐνῆρε' ἐρετμά, τά τε πτερὰ νηυσὶ πέλονται. / σῆμα δέ τοι ἐρέω μάλ' ἀριφραδές, οὐδέ σε λήσει: / ὅπποτε κεν δὴ τοι συμβλήμενος ἄλλος ὁδίτης / φήη ἀθηρηλοιγὸν ἔχειν ἀνὰ φαιδίμῳ ὦμῳ, / καὶ τότε δὴ γαίῃ πῆξας ἐνῆρες ἐρετμόν...

*...then do thou go forth, taking a shapely oar, / until thou comest to men that know naught of the sea / and eat not of food mingled with salt, / aye, and they know naught of ships with purple cheeks, / or of shapely oars that are as wings unto ships. / And I will tell thee a sign right manifest, / which will not escape thee. When another / wayfarer, on meeting thee, shall say that / thou hast a winnowing-fan on thy stout shoulder, / then do thou fix in the earth thy shapely oar...*

Homer, *Odyssey*, 11.121–129 [Transl. Samuel Butler, 1900]



# Farmers and a Degrowth Economy in Russia

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## **ABSTRACT**

The global crisis gives a chance for a new model of living to emerge: an economy of degrowth. This interview by Vladimir Emelyanenko with the prominent British-Russian academic, Teodor Shanin, focuses on degrowth in the Russian context, reflecting on the role that agriculture can play in the global slowing down of consumption. Accordingly, it enables new audiences to gain an insight into the perspective on degrowth from Eastern Europe and, in particular, Russia, which have been underrepresented in degrowth debates.

**Keywords:** Teodor Shanin, degrowth, economy, farming, *zemstvo*, kulaks, city-countryside link

Teodor Shanin (1930–2020) was President of the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences and Professor of Sociology at the University of Manchester. He was one of the originators of contemporary peasant studies and also made a significant contribution to the fields of historical sociology, social economics, epistemology, political sciences and rural history. In his work, Professor Shanin focused on Russian society and the further development of the methodology of peasant studies in Russia. Central to his vision and analytical work were efforts to challenge the over-simplification of the theories of progress. In his later works, Teodor Shanin put forward the term ‘expolary economy’ to describe the informal economies that challenge neoclassical economics and the modern forms of social and political planning informed by it. He also played an important role in developing new forms of academic education in Russia. The list of his books published in English includes *Peasants and Peasant Societies*; *The Awkward Class: Political Sociology of Peasantry in a Developing Society: Russia 1910–1925*; *Late Marx and the Russian Road: Marx and the Peripheries of Capitalism*; *Russia as a ‘Developing Society’*; *Russia, 1905–07: Revolution as a Moment of Truth*, and *Defining Peasants: Essays Concerning Rural Societies, Expolary Economies and Learning from them in the Contemporary World*.

This interview was originally published in Russian in *Lavka Gazeta* on April 8, 2016. It was then translated into English by Oxana Lopatina, edited by Ekaterina Chertkovskaya, Santiago Gorostiza and Riccardo Mastini, and published on *Degrowth.info* on November 9, 2020 (<https://www.degrowth.info/en/2020/11/farmers-and-a-degrowth-economy-in-russia/>). We are grateful to Degrowth.info for the permission to reproduce it here with minimal editing.

*Vladimir Emelyanenko*: How realistic are the predictions of some economists, including yourself, that the era of economic growth will be followed by economic degrowth?

*Teodor Shanin*: Everything grows—trees, people. Growth is natural. However, we often forget that the question is not only about growth, but also about its end. And this particular process cannot be controlled by humanity. We like to think that economic growth makes us more affluent—this idea is pleasing to the ear. However, the sense that the economy is growing while we are not prospering emerged a long time ago. A person also grows constantly, but this growth is finite. Indeed, a capitalist economy is a good way to produce growth, but what comes after?

*V.E.*: But why degrowth? Does it mean the end of growth, a decline of humanity or civilisation?

*T.S.*: No. Simply it turns out that the economy is not the only structure of growth. The theory and practice of growth as a paradigm of progress remain. At the same time, many thinkers realise that, if not today, then tomorrow, a new economic model will emerge. It is sustainable development<sup>1</sup> through degrowth—when the economy is not based on global trade relations and the availability of mineral resources. Instead, the economy and human life return to the local level, agriculture provides food for the local population, the workday is shortened as a

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<sup>1</sup> While from the degrowth perspective the term ‘sustainable development’ is seen as an oxymoron, Shanin uses it (‘устойчивое развитие’) throughout the interview multiple times. This could be explained by the less developed discourse and vocabulary on the topic in the Russian language and/or fewer or less defined negative connotations attached to the term compared to those in English.



result of the renouncement of excessive production, and disposable objects—as an irrational waste of resources—are eliminated. The priority of degrowth is to renounce excessive production in favour of personal development and the consumption of cultural products instead of material ones.

*V.E.*: Is this not a utopia? If I am not mistaken, this idea was formulated in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russia by the authors of the ‘moral economy’ concept, and the term itself was coined by Leo Tolstoy.

*T.S.*: This is not a utopia. Sprouts of this new reality can be seen in the new Russian farming countryside. These sprouts are weak. Sometimes they perish, but something germinates. And this ‘something’ deserves an opportunity to develop.

You are right, in old Russia this was called a ‘moral economy’, but the author of the scientific term ‘moral economy’ was Alexander Chayanov<sup>2</sup>—in my opinion, an underestimated Russian economist of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But Chayanov is only a fraction of a whole movement of agricultural economists who were smashed in the U.S.S.R. by the repressions of the 1930’s. However, it is more correct to talk not about personalities, not about farming, but about the institution of *zemstvo* (a system of local self-government in the Russian Empire that existed from the 1860’s until the October Revolution of 1917—translator’s note), which begot the institution of farming. And it was in Russia where this happened. *Zemstvo* as an institution of civil society laid the foundation and formed a series of statistical instruments for the scientific estimation of social stratification and its causes. In *zemstvos*, there was the so-called ‘third element’—this is the code of a certain social group. The first element was represented by civil servants; the second by landowners and nobility; and the third by the *intelligentsia*—doctors, teachers, priests, retired military personnel. In this environment, a new understanding of the economic and social reality was maturing. It was them who estimated and calculated how the rich grow richer, and the poor, if nothing is changed, are doomed to marginality. This was an entire stratum of Russian scholars who created and developed a series of methods for evaluating social polarisation—they called this ‘dynamic studies’. Their level has not been attained in most countries of the world even today.

It was Chayanov and the Russian agricultural economists who, based on the example of the organisation of living in rural communities, realised that a rational economy moving away from overconsumption and excessive production was the future. Such an approach was organically taking shape in small rural communities—*zemstvos*—which gradually developed into solid *kulak* (independent, affluent peasant farmers in the later Russian Empire—translator’s note) farms, and in the U.S.S.R. into a no less powerful cooperative movement.

*V.E.*: Is it possible to revive the countryside today based on their experience, for example, through farming?

*T.S.*: This experience on its own will not suffice anymore. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Russia was leading the world in the field of agricultural economics and sociology. There was no other place in Europe where the advancement of the ‘moral economy’ would take such an interesting course as in Russia, and later in the U.S.S.R. It is a paradox but Russians tend to

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<sup>2</sup> Alexander Chayanov (1888–1937), Russian and Soviet economist, sociologist, social anthropologist, globally recognised founder of peasant studies, science fiction author and utopian. Author of the term ‘moral economy’.

claim to be the first and the best in everything, however, when they actually lead the world in something, this remains unnoticed by them. They were so busy promoting communism and later, exploring space, that they did not notice they had the keys to future development, in which they advanced way further than anyone else. The price they had to pay for such carelessness was the world embracing the Russian experience and moving on, whilst the U.S.S.R., through collectivisation, destroyed the institution of *zemstvo* and the people who represented the elite of the cooperative movement, i.e. the local leaders. Now Russians have to learn farming from those who originally learned it from them. This is the new reality.

*V.E.*: What about the experience of *kulaks*—will it come back?

*T.S.*: I do not think that it is worth bewailing or reanimating *kulaks*... although I am convinced that on the genetic level the economic streak of Russians originates from *kulaks*. But why was agriculture in the U.S.S.R. inefficient? Because the villagers who best understood the local environment—the climate, the psychology, the patterns of crop rotation or cattle breeding—were *kulaks*. They were destroyed as a class and as a way of thinking. Meanwhile, the agricultural thinking in the world outgrew the farming tradition that had been emerging in Russia and that almost does not exist here anymore. It now needs to be relearned.

*V.E.*: But this is exactly what is happening today—our farmers go to advanced farms in Italy, Spain, Germany to learn and bring back experience and technologies.

*T.S.*: These people are rather the exception that proves the rule. Note that usually the advanced farmers are former ‘red directors’ (Soviet management and industrial elite who kept their managerial positions in post-Soviet Russia—translator’s note) or members of their teams, the creative elite, doctors or even scientists. City people. Countryside people, on the other hand, send their children to the city, and those who stay do not want to work in farming. They also regard farmers as the bourgeoisie, the new *kulaks*. Neither do they adapt well to the role of hired farm labour force. What does this mean? The economy of degrowth is very alien to the Russian countryside. The country is still not interested in recognising this thinking—people have not had enough of capitalism yet. Moreover, degrowth is not a product of pure thinking. It is an element of the evolution of capitalism, by which many in Russia are enchanted due to poverty. However, the same as from the enrichment of oil emirs in the Arab world, the population does not receive any oil dividends from Russian oligarchs. The economy is developing poorly because almost no effort is being made to advance other elements of it besides hydrocarbons. Agriculture, farming is exactly the economic element that is needed for sustainable development.

*V.E.*: When will the descendants of *kulaks*, ordinary countryside residents, see their future not in megalopolises but in farming?

*T.S.*: I am quite pessimistic, but not entirely. In general, the process of integrating farming is yielding some good sprouts. It is just that there are too few farmers. On elite farms, people are learning advanced technologies—a scientific approach to crop rotation that does not harm the soil, cheese making, growing vegetables and fruits that are exotic for the Russian latitudes—all that forms elements of sustainable development. A different question is—when will these

people have the desire to become farmers, if at all? We can only count on the wisdom and patience of the people bringing the ideology of new *zemstvos*—farms—back. Russia, in my opinion, is not one country, but about 40 countries. And this diversity—climatic, ethnic, economic—gives Russia a chance. Some parts of the country are suitable for developing farms, some for community farming, some for growing cranberries and wheat, some for corn and apples, and some for tending herds of sheep or deer by individual farmers or, on the contrary, by revived *sovkhozes* (state-owned farms in the U.S.S.R.—translator's note). Such new *kulaks*—selective, pragmatic, open to different forms of management as dictated by the climatic conditions and the degrowth economy—will revive the caring attitude towards the land and save Russia.

And if someone comes and proposes a universal plan for Russia's agricultural development, I am suggesting they should be chased away as a charlatan and a fool. Because in a country like Russia there should be 40 of such plans. Or at least 25.

*V.E.:* One of the contemporary ideologists of the concept of degrowth, Serge Latouche, professor at Paris-Sud University, prioritises the issue of food production and the restructuring of agriculture from the industrial format to farming households. You started your scientific career with peasant studies—what could you reply to him?

*T.S.:* I would want it to be so, but I do not agree with Latouche. I think he represents a radical current of degrowth. His thinking is effective and extraordinary, but to what extent can we expect people of the industrialised world to suddenly and en masse start shifting to a rural lifestyle? I do not believe in this. Today in developed countries a bit over 5% of the population are employed in agriculture. Under certain conditions of degrowth advancement, this number can go up to 8–16%, but no way up to 30% as predicted by Latouche. This would go against the logic of economic and social development.

*V.E.:* And in Russia?

*T.S.:* The global economic crisis and the economic sanctions that followed gave a chance to Russian agriculture, and farming in particular. But we need to admit that objectively this is not happening everywhere. A small zone of the Central Chernozem region, to the Volga, a part of the Transvolga region and the plains of the North Caucasus—14% of the territory is so fertile that if you plant a seed it will grow by itself. That is it. Paradoxically, other territories develop through megapolises and their industrial potential. Agriculture, and particularly farming, are at this stage growing only in some regions and in some small urban foci. Why are the best agricultural farms usually adjacent to Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Rostov-on-Don and other big cities or their suburbs? You could say, what does a cow or a goat have to do with a city? But the link is very direct—animal feeds are of course better in the remote countryside, but there is no one to tend to the cattle. Whilst suburbs imply opportunities for farms and collective agricultural producers, both in the sense of labour resources and markets for their farm and agricultural produce.

I am convinced that this link between the city and the countryside is objective. On the other hand, a balance of power needs to be found. For this, the economic potential of agriculture and the desire of people to make a living through peasant labour need to increase.

*V.E.*: If civilisation remains predominantly urban, what place will farms and farmers hold in it—an exotic element or a type of economy?

The emphasis needs to be shifted here—from the decline of rural life to a rural economy of sustainable development. And this is not a matter of goodwill or a concept developed by a few smart people. This is a matter of internal processes taking place in various countries, where sprouts of traditional wisdom and modest living exist or have been preserved. Such an understanding of the economy still remains globally peripheral. However, it was originally traditional for humanity, which has always aspired for a life in harmony with nature, seen as a subject rather than an object of human activities. These values, albeit slowly, are reviving everywhere in the world. However, as soon as economic revival begins, in Russia or the U.S., it is blocked by rising prices of oil and other primary resources, leaving the countryside with the role of a secondary, tertiary or maybe even backup resource. As a result, the restoration or economic development does not happen, even though the world is persistently seeking ways to reach it.

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...πᾶσι δ' ἐπὶ προβάτοισιν ἀνάσσειν κύδιμον Ἑρμῆν, / οἷον δ' εἰς Αἴδην τετελεσμένον ἄγγελον εἶναι, / ὅς τ' ἄδοτός περ ἐὼν δώσει γέρας οὐκ ἐλάχιστον. / οὕτω Μαιάδος υἱὸν ἄναξ ἐφίλησεν Ἀπόλλων / παντοίῃ φιλότῃτι...

Εἰς Ἑρμῆν, 571–575

*...and over all sheep shall be lord Hermes, / and he only shall be appointed messenger to Hades, / who, though he takes no gift, will give him no mean prize. / So much the lord Apollo loved the Son of Maia / by all manner of friendship...*

Homeric Hymn to Hermes, 571–575



# Using an Ecosystem–based Approach to Green Space Conservation in Nigeria

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& Emoshioke Julia Omoayena**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Well-preserved natural systems such as forest and stream corridors provide many benefits to people and communities. Traditional land use planning and regulation are powerful tools for local governments to conserve green space, fight ecosystem damages, and improve participation in community development. This paper advocates a combined effort of ecosystem-based and traditional land use planning for our natural environment to improve conservation initiatives.

**Keywords:** ecosystem-based approach, traditional land use planning, green space, Nigeria

## INTRODUCTION

Economic and social changes, particularly after World War II, have continued to radically alter landscapes in most parts of the world, including Nigeria (Lewis, 1995). Some of these significant changes involve the development of mass transportation systems; improvements in communication and information technology; a shift from an industrial to a service-based economy, and a growing suburbanization of people and capital. Most of these changes have no doubt fueled a new type of development in our society. The strip mall and horizontally sprawling suburban and rural settlements are the spatial representation of this development, which can be described as the “Galactic city.” Sprawling housing and development infrastructure have been blamed for numerous environmental problems, such as decreased biodiversity, recreational opportunity loss, aquifer contamination, and the fragmentation, isolation, and destruction of both human and wildlife landscapes (Hylton, 1995, p. 9). Simpson (1998) affirms that the lack of green space planning means increased public costs for services and disaster recovery, a drop in community reputation, lower property values, and increased public distress. Unplanned development and sprawl furthered by the lack of inter-municipal cooperation has continued to compromise opportunities for green space. It is on this backdrop that this paper stresses the relevance of an ecosystem-based approach (EBA) and traditional land use planning for conserving green infrastructure upon which sustainable environmental management and maintenance rest.

## TRADITIONAL LAND USE PLANNING: A LOCAL MODEL FOR GREEN SPACE CONSERVATION

Traditional land use planning and regulation can conserve green space with tremendous impacts on the social characteristics of any community. Its functions range from forming a comprehensive plan to formulating and updating zoning and other ordinances. It coordinates local development activities by reviewing, modifying, and providing information to guide decision-making, as well as empower public involvement in community development decisions through public education, hearings, and committees (Luloff & Hodges, 1992). The comprehensive plan, zoning, and subdivision ordinances are important planning tools. The former is a growth management plan used to depict future growth. A comprehensive plan provides guidance for future growth and development by identifying and considering community development alternatives (George, 1999, pp. 41–46). The comprehensive plan outlines what, when, and how something needs to be done in the statement of vision, goals, and strategies for community development. The plan provides a logical basis for zoning, other ordinances, and a long-term guide for use in understanding and reviewing current development proposals. Roberts (1974, pp. 213–221) affirmed that zoning on its own is not planning but an implementation tool for the comprehensive plan. Zoning and ordinance are enacted after a comprehensive plan is completed to help ensure that the location and types of land use outlined in the plan are realized. Conventional zoning ordinances specify the height of buildings, percentage of the parcels that may be developed, the density of development, and the use of land. On the other hand, subdivision ordinances provide standards for subdivision design, such as a sequence for permit processing, and required improvements for adequate lots, such as utilities, streets, and sewage. It is glaring that land use planning and regulation coupled with dedicated public involvement could work greatly in conserving large green space systems. However, the process should first overcome the following bottlenecks as listed by McHarg (1994, pp. 64–78):



- lack of desire by local planning authorities to initiate/complete inventories of natural resource and other information supply that are essential for comprehensive planning—green space conservation, therefore, becomes a residual of development planning;
- legislation that enables but does not require local planning authorities to develop comprehensive plans—local planning authorities practice negative planning by enacting ordinances and reviewing proposals with no comprehensive plan to provide vision and direction for development;
- resistance to reviewing and revising inadequate zoning and subdivision ordinances;
- inadequate professional planners and local expertise in growing rural areas because of poor development review and modification;
- inadequate funding of the most comprehensive plan that is inclusive of green space acquisition;
- lack of education and information on the benefits of multi-jurisdictional cooperation and quality, natural environments, plus on the cost of poor land planning, and
- lack of awareness and involvement on behalf of residents in community development decision-making processes.

Further, significant concerns arise from the planning process. In fact, planning often lacks ecological awareness, is centered on individual authorities, and offers inadequate inter-communal cooperation, if any. The latter is important because ecological, social, and economic systems are often large scale, and there are cross-jurisdictional and property lines. Thus, land use and development efforts in one jurisdiction can have a serious impact on the ecological, social, and economic system in others.

### **THE ECOSYSTEM–BASED APPROACH (EBA) CONCEPT AT A GLANCE**

An ecosystem–based approach (EBA) was developed to promote and support green space involvement in broad-based environmental and social issues (USDA, 1994). It is noted as a revolutionary process similar to a conservation system approach, which set specific standards of conservation for areas through careful observations, historical studies, and scientific research, followed by monitoring and evaluating the impacts and effects. EBA is an expanded land use planning process designated to facilitate the integrity of broad-scale natural and social systems in community development. EBA provides a planning process that can confront discrimination, racism, classism, ageism, and other issues of equity. By proactively improving people’s involvement, EBA increases the opportunities for open participation in decision-making for those who suffer discrimination, thus supporting community action and aiding the process of community development (Wilkinson, 1991).

EBA features the following characteristics:

- decisively includes and empowers diverse people, including the marginalized, in decision-making processes;
- recognizes the natural environment as a crucial component in community development;
- strives to build on municipal cooperation and partnership;
- recognizes natural rather than jurisdictional boundaries, and
- works to resolve conflicts and build collaboration.

## **SUPPORTING TRADITIONAL LAND USE PLANNING WITH EBA**

An EBA can be used to support the ability of traditional land use planning to conserve green space by recognizing and including important natural sections in decision-making, working to build inter-municipal cooperation, and increasing the awareness and involvement of diverse people. Some of the tools that can be used for this purpose include focus groups, empowerment, public/private teams, multi-jurisdictional planning, natural resource inventories, inclusive comprehensive plans, and program ordinances. The focus group in this sense is a low-cost means for involving people and collecting information for a particular purpose. As the name implies, a focus group is an informal discussion among 8 to 10 people who examine a topic on their own terms with guidance from an expert in moderating group interaction. Empowerment has to do with public issue forums, committee work, participatory research education, et cetera. With respect to the public/private teams, contemporarily, it is possible to cultivate major corporate and private foundation support for planning, land acquisition, and educational programs. In this area, however, land conservancies and municipalities should work together to plan for and acquire green space. Multi-jurisdictional planning engages all adjoining municipalities in forming powerful and functional partnerships with joint comprehensive planning and joint power agreements.

Considering the aspect of natural resource inventories, the following resource categories can be used: significant wildlife habitat; scenic areas; river and riparian corridors; recreational resources; productive agriculture, and forest. Other categorizations include woodlands and natural areas; special or unique landscapes; wetlands; floodways and plains; historical and cultural resources, and vulnerable landscapes and soils. Finally, there are moderate and steep slopes, view sheds, contiguous blocks, and corridors for the passage of wildlife and other natural elements (Arendt, 1997, pp. 34–38). Inclusive, comprehensive plans recognize natural systems as a core community value by including green space and conservation chapters and recognizing natural categories on official maps. By means of progressive ordinances, zoning can encourage the conservation of green spaces in development. Subdivision ordinances can be drafted to mandate the completion of natural resource inventories, allow for conservation subdivisions, and impose green space in developments or fees to be paid for acquiring off-site green spaces. Together, these policy vehicles provide for innovative and site-specific grading and site plans.

## **PROBLEMS WITH EBA**

Much scientific bantering has occurred over what ecosystems are, whether boundaries can be placed around them, and how data collecting, monitoring, modelling, and other operational aspects can take place. The concept has been criticized for placing the non-human biological and physical attributes of nature ahead of human advancement. As a process that seeks to understand and monitor land use, it has been perceived as a threat to the unlimited use of private properties. The USDA Forest Service (1994) affirms that most municipal planning agencies, especially in Nigeria, are not ready to use an ecosystem approach to land use planning because of its stringent and expensive demands for staffing, data collection, and monitoring. Further, EBA deals with jurisdictions and conflicting stakeholders. Conflicts over specific conservation, land use, and regulation objectives are common. Further, they involve inter-municipal connections in a context where cooperation is hard to obtain.

## CONCLUSION

Findings from residential preference and value surveys continue to reveal a high appreciation toward the small town community (Arendt, 1994, pp. 16–17). The natural landscape is an important component of Nigeria, and both local and multi-jurisdictional planning efforts are required to conserve it. In such an effort, land use, planning, and regulation must consider individual and contextual elements while trying to inform and involve citizens and leaders. Green space cannot be conserved across jurisdictional lines without cooperation among stakeholders and planning agencies. Therefore, multiple municipalities, agencies, organizations, and stakeholders need to come together in a partnership and work toward mutually agreed upon planning goals. The values of local autonomy and self-sufficiency, although important, can represent a weakness in a world of increasing economic and environmental interdependencies. Local autonomy must be balanced with actions that show concern for others and a commitment to broader socio-environmental values in order to conserve large and contiguous green space systems. Relevant professionals (besides physical planners) like foresters or arborists, biologists, and landscape architects can help support green space conservation by understanding and becoming involved in land use planning and decision-making. Considering the velocity and nature of current growth, it is important that foresters, in particular, think more broadly about the natural environment and the people who interact with it. As society continues to grow, it is urgent to broaden the present conservation ethics and reconsider the impact of subdivisions and other land use on the natural environment. The goal is to enhance and re-establish the importance of green spaces.

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*The fact is that Chartres, no less than the simpler farmhouse, was built by a group of men, acting within a common pattern language, deeply steeped in of course.*

Christopher Alexander, *The Timeless Way of Building*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 217.



# The Journey of a Greek Peasant Architect

**Fotios Katsaros**

*Architect, Greece*

## **ABSTRACT**

Fotios Katsaros, architect, poet, and politician, reflects upon his education and career to show that one can be neither an architect nor a dweller without the nostalgia for home.

**Keywords:** architecture, gate, home, Greece, democracy

## FROM HERE I STARTED, FROM THE ARCHED GATES OF THE ANCIENT WALLS OF ACARNANIA

During my second year of architecture at the University of Naples in Italy, Ezio De Felice, Professor of Art History and Style, asked me the following question: “Since you’re from Acarnania, can you tell me where the first example of an arched gate in the history of architecture is located?” I had no answer.

He told me that the first example is found in the ancient city of Sauria (today, Paleomanina), whose walls’ gate looks toward the Achelous river. He also told me to bring him a photograph when I came back from Greece, or else he would fail me the next academic year. I brought it to him.



**Figure 1:** The gate of ancient Sauria (Palaio-manina).  
Photo by Epoxy.gr.



**Figure 2:** The gate today. Photo  
by the Author.

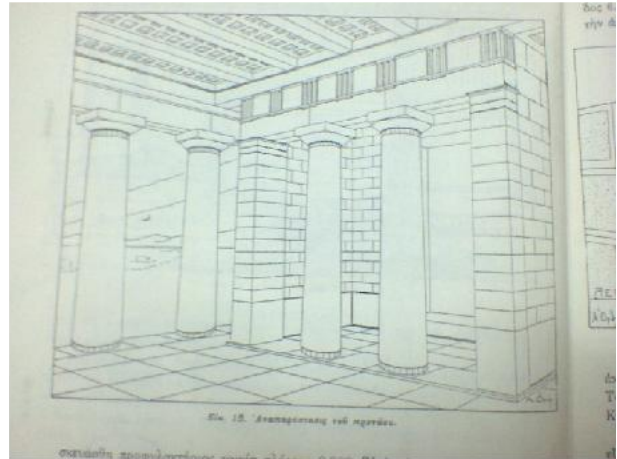
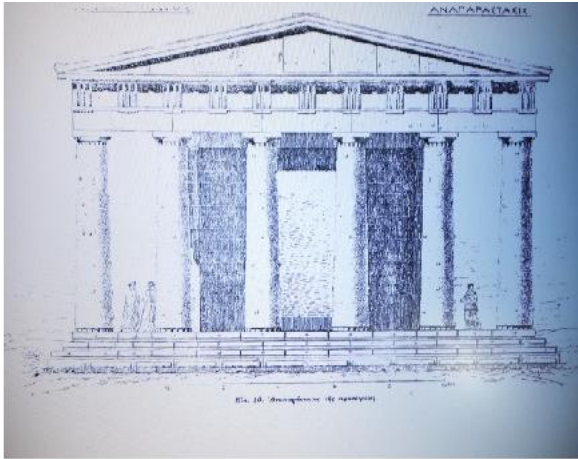
From that moment on, I have been interested in the arched gate. I grew curious as to why it featured two stones and not one—why was it arched and not trilithic? I looked for an explanation, but the various books I studied only referred to static issues and never mentioned the reason for the arched structure. I was very interested in this topic but could not find an answer.

One day, I happened to be at the office of the Historical and Archaeological Circle. There, my gaze fell on the reconstruction drawing of the temple of Zeus in the ancient city of Stratos. It was made by the architect and archaeologist, Anastasios Orlandos.

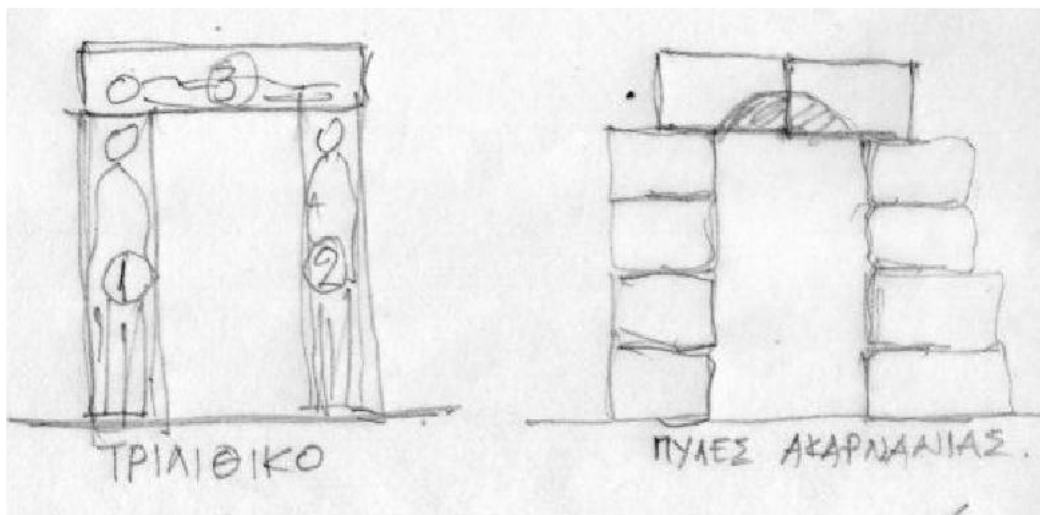
To me, the temple’s column seemed odd and particular. I then asked Ioannis Nerantzis, Archaeology Laureate at the University of Athens: “Why didn’t the grooves cover the whole column? Instead, they stop just below the echinus and repeat when meeting the plinth.” “That’s how they liked it,” he replied.

From the archaeologist’s answer, I immediately realized that there was a relationship between the door and the column. This is how I started untangling it all.





**Figures 3 and 4:** Representations of the temple of Zeus in Stratos, headquarters of the League of Acarnania (after A. Orlandos, *Ο ἐν στρατῷ τῆς Ἀκαρνανίας ναὸς τοῦ Διὸς*, 1924).



**Figure 5:** Trilitic wall gates. The trilitic system corresponds to the imperial oligarchic regimes. Stone 1 and 2 support the third one. A gate is called πύλη (púlē) in ancient Greek (drawings by the Author).

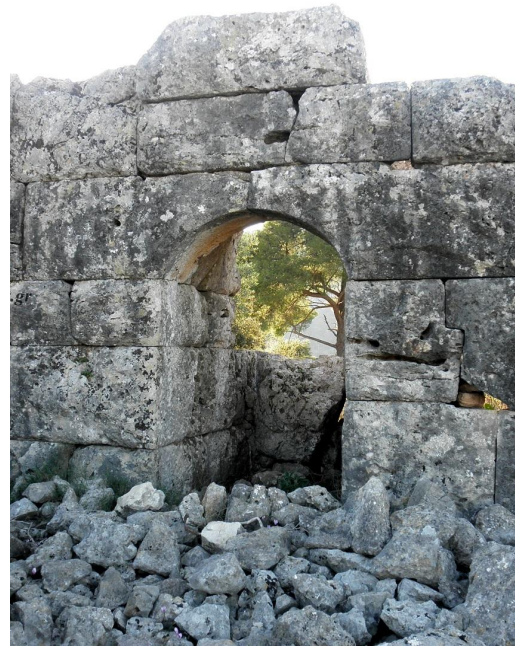
In Mycenae, the Lion Gate (Πύλη των Λεόντων – *Púlē ton Leonton*) is similar to the entry of the Tomb of Atreus—the father of Agamemnon (1350–1250 B.C.). The difference lies in the content of the triangular shape: the tomb features no lions, meaning the symbols of power are missing. Since this has always been important, the empty triangle reflects the loss.

If these considerations are correct, then our way of life determines how we build our houses, palaces, and fortresses. From skyscrapers to the humble house of my village, the system is trilitic because we live in imperial democracies. The columns of the Parthenon have grooves throughout, from the top to the base. Power transmits burden to the people in an elegant way.

In the temple of Zeus in Stratos, the grooves stop just below the echinus and repeat just above the base, leaving the column's bust rough.



**Figure 6:** The walls' gate of the ancient city of Stratos, headquarters of the League of Acarnania (450 B.C.). Photo by the Author.



**Figure 7:** The walls' gate of Limnaea (Acarnania, 400 B.C.). Source: Geo 69, Wikipedia, <https://tinyurl.com/evp4fwu6>.



**Figure 8:** The walls' gate of the ancient city of Oiniades (Acarnania, 550 B.C.). Photo by Takis Sergiou.



**Figure 9:** The walls' gate of the ancient city of Palairos (Acarnania, 550 B.C.). Photo by the Author.

The League of the Acarnans (το κοινόν των Ακαρνανίων – *to koinon ton Acarnanon*) was the common power of the cities that had formed the league (το κοινόν – *to koinon*) and seemed to represent a socially stratified society. Its socio-political-economic model was, therefore,



different from others. Its democracy was not the same as that of Pericles' Athens. The arched gates in the walls of Acarnania confirm this.

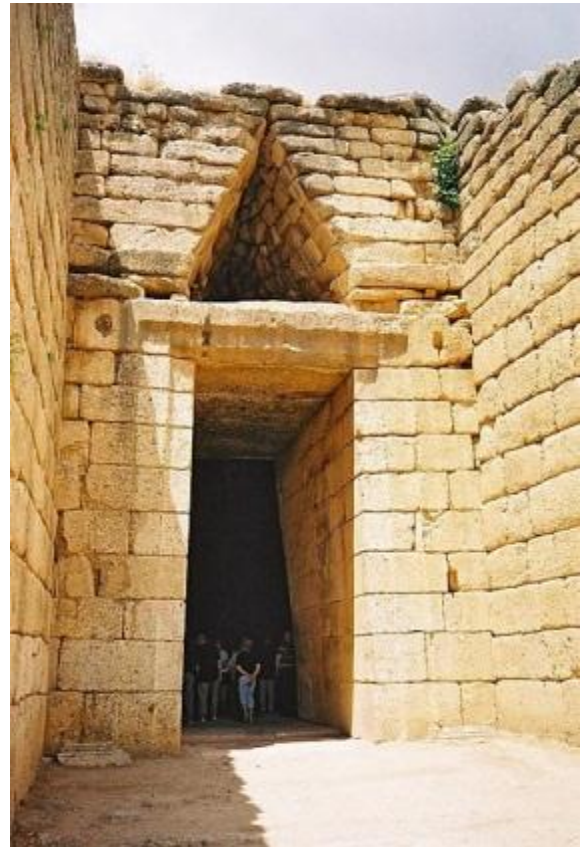
They could have put a single stone on it. That would have been easier. Why did they not do it? Because they thought and reflected on the commons differently than any other city-state.

They had a different social structure, and they carved it into their works. They used two stones rather than just one and rounded their corners with a chisel. They had to work hard for obtaining such a result. But this way, they took the weight off of the stones like their society had been taking the weight off of people.

The power expressed by the columns of the temple and by the doors of the fortresses was truly democratic—elegant, I would say. It is not by chance that the Romans and then the Christians made the arch of Acarnania their own defining mark. Perhaps that is why we like arches: the arch is a distinctly democratic form. This sounded like an explanation, so I wanted to send it to my professor in Naples. But I delayed too much and missed the chance.



**Figure 10:** The Lion Gate, Mycenae. Photo by David Monnieaux, Wikipedia, <https://tinyurl.com/u6p85jk> (detail).



**Figure 11:** The Tomb of Atreus, Mycenae. Source: Wikipedia, <https://tinyurl.com/xnzb8jz4>.

My research on doors has made me look back, to return to my country, to go to my house, to the church, and to once again observe the gates from the ancient walls. The gate of De Felice was the stimulus for the architecture that I would have done in my land.

I returned to the place of my childhood. I started my life there, and I am reminded of my journey from my youth to now.

My space started with my house, extended out into the neighborhood, and reached the church, especially its interior. The panorama of the valley and its hills with the oak forest added to the images in which I have referred. The ears could enjoy ecclesiastical and traditional songs.



**Figure 12:** My house (Agrinio). Photo by the Author.



**Figure 13:** My neighborhood (Agrinio). Photo by the Author.



**Figure 14:** The church of Agrinio. Photo by the Author.



**Figure 15:** View of the interior of the church of Agrinio. Photo by the Author.

As I grew, so did my space. It extended throughout the town, the valley, the oak forest, and the ancient walls of the neighboring villages, reaching the city. From high school trips, I had filled the archives of my mind with these images. As I left the lived space of my childhood and early youth, my habitat changed. This upset me for a long time. Studies and technology, new things, images, and music from all over the world could add to my new spaces, which were Naples and Venice in Italy.



**Figure 16:** The valley. Photo by the Author.





**Figure 17:** View of the village from the oak forest. Photo by the Author.



**Figure 18:** View of the village from the valley. Photo by the Author.



**Figure 19:** The oak wood. Photo by the Author.



**Figure 20:** The city of Agrinio. Photo by the Author.



**Figure 21:** The city of Agrinio. Photo by the Author.

I had distanced myself from my land for many years. When the architect asked me where I worked in Italy and about my intentions after graduation, I replied that I wanted to go back to Greece, to my village, to my home. To tell the truth, he did not expect such an answer. So I asked him if he ever wondered why Ulysses had ventured for 10 years and never settled in any place that hosted him. The question seemed odd to him, yet very interesting. Amazed, looking at me, he agreed when I told him that Ulysses wanted to go back to Ithaca at any cost because he had a kingdom there. He was king. Later, I told him that Homer had long been whispering in my ear: “Return to your kingdom, even if it’s poor.”

I went back and began to work in my kingdom, in my city. Tragically, after 2,000 years, I was the only architect in nearly six regions. Time passed by and near the middle of my life, I realized that I was living in a forest of bricks, concrete, and steel trees with plastic or iron flowers and fruit. I did not like them, so I stopped. I felt like I was in hell. All of a sudden, I made the sign of the cross: “What the f... are you doing, Fotios? Is it right to plant trees in this bleak forest?”

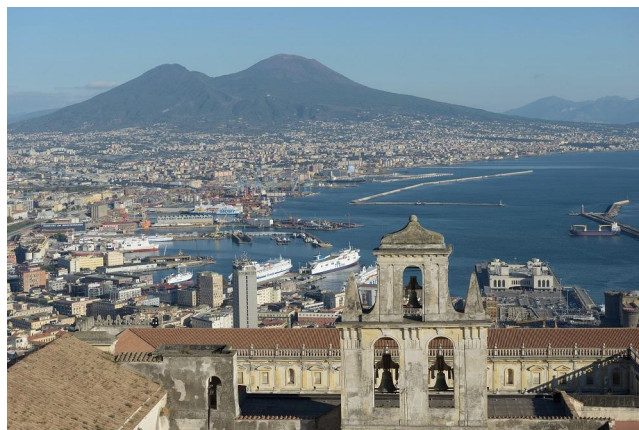
Instinctively, my mind went back. As if it were an oracle, I saw the gate of De Felice, the ancient walls, their gates, my village, the church, and my home. Memories, forgotten images, voices, and ecclesiastical songs filled my mind. Shivering, I turned around, seeing and hearing these things, and began to walk. I stopped in the lived space of my childhood.



**Figure 22:** The Acropolis of Athens. Photo by Carole Raddato, Wikipedia, <https://tinyurl.com/867smeph>.



**Figure 23:** Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, Turkey. Photo by Arild Vågen, Wikipedia, <https://tinyurl.com/hj5ah654>.



**Figure 24:** Naples, Italy. Photo by Wolfgang Moroder, Wikipedia, <https://tinyurl.com/u4v7tze2>.





**Figure 25:** Venice, Italy. Photo by Luca Aless, Wikipedia, <https://tinyurl.com/saj36d5x>.

Despite the long journey and the effort I had made, I set fire to the long shadows' forest with its shrieks of iron reptiles. I did so to make all of the traces disappear.



**Figure 26:** The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, U.S.A.  
Source: Wikipedia, <https://tinyurl.com/v634d7cp>



**Figure 27:** The National Parliament House, Dhaka, Bangladesh.  
Photo by MD Saiful Amin, Wikipedia, <https://tinyurl.com/n2s8jtb2>.



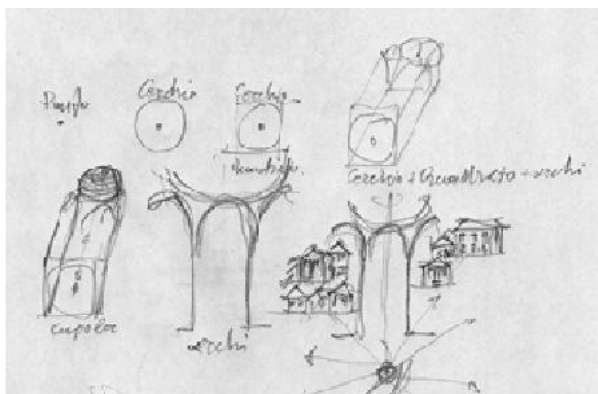
**Figure 28:** From Deconstructivism to Parametricism and Digital Morphogenesis.  
Collage by the Author.

Although I saw the ashes, smoke was still coming out of the Guggenheim Museum and the National Parliament House. Under the faint shadow of the acacia in my courtyard—the place where our genetic memory is deposited—I began to think and hum.

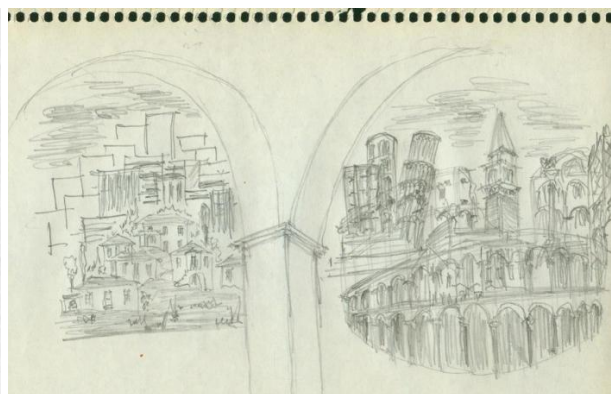
Through my imagination, I entered the church and stopped under the dome in the center of the circle.

This single point became the pivot that connected everything. I stopped there and looked toward the ancient walls, their gates, my town, my house, and my life. Then on top of the dome, I saw De Felice, God. Either we are born at home or in the hospital, but we are given our name at that point in the church. We crown ourselves there as man or woman. In the same spot, people wish us a happy life. Wherever we die, we will receive the last goodbye at that very same point. Our social life begins and ends on that point. It is there where we become part of society.

This point with the arches supporting the dome became my architectural acacia. I began to write what I now wanted to do. I saw these extraordinary arches as heavenly—joining the earth to the sky, gathering fears, joys, desires, and hopes. The arches that support the dome supported my memories, my images, and everything I wanted to do. Within them, I framed the houses of my country, the city, the Italian bell towers, and all that I desired to see.



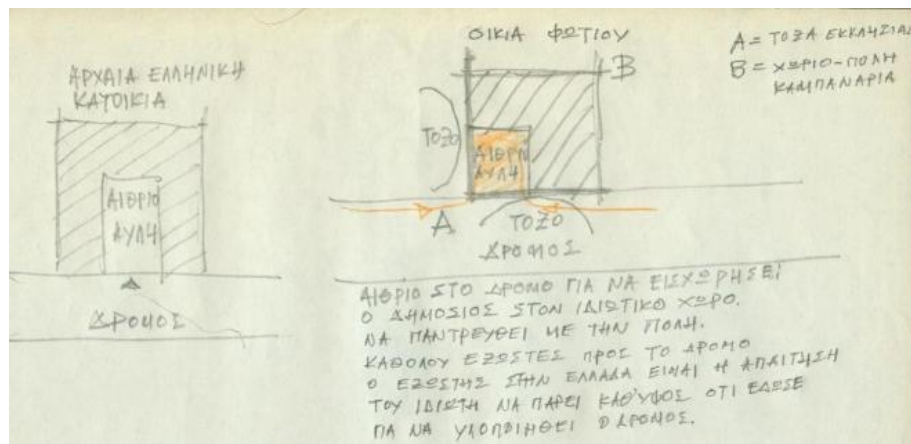
**Figure 29:** Point, circle, square, and arches. Sketch by the Author.



**Figure 30:** Home, city, and Italian bell towers. Sketch by the Author.

I brought the arches outside to marry the sun, to make them talk with such a perfect point of creation. Everything, from the arched doors of the ancient walls to the arches of the church,

had a continuity. My past fit correctly with the present. The ancient gates offer protection, and so do the triumphing arches.



**Figure 31:** Plan of the Greek *domus*. The right angle A contains the arches. The right angle B contains the village, the city, and the bell towers of Italy. Everyone in Greece wants balconies over the street to recuperate the space that was given to the community for roads to be built. Sketch by the Author.

I started writing. Then, I tried to transform my writing into work. I started with sketches, humming to create atmosphere. Despite the atmosphere, it was difficult to move from writing to designing architecture.

I was forced to consider constants that had to be satisfied. The constants were the following:

- 1- the square, which is the base of the dome;
- 2- the arches toward the street;
- 3- I moved the atrium of the *domus Ellenica* to the side of the street so that it could marry the public space, making it optically enter the private space;
- 4- the sides adjacent to the arches needed to refer to what is my country, the city, and the Italian bell towers;
- 5- no balcony was allowed on the sides of the arches so as not to bother them, since they are the protagonists, and
- 6- the roof.

Despite the constants, the solution grew difficult and complex. The result was not what I had in mind. For any house, public building, or other project, the writing was far superior to the sketches.

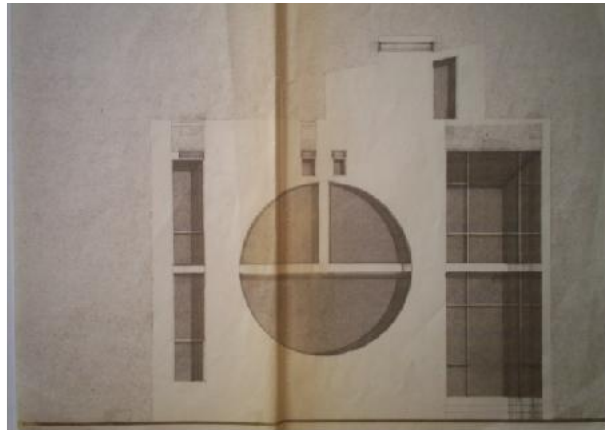
I was wondering what I had done. The answer was: “nothing.” However, I could not do anything better. I persisted until exhaustion. I was desperate.

On the one hand, I lacked the representative capacity. On the other hand, I was not interested in the classical style, because I had not participated in the feasts of the goddess Athena (*Panathineia*) nor the Eleusinian or Dionysian mysteries. I had never experienced that feeling.

I insisted, though, because I could not be modern, post-modern, nor deconstructivist-parametricist. In fact, I was not born in a skyscraper or house that had no courtyard or acacia. I had not walked on long shadows. I could not deform what I saw on the monitor, and so, I did not want to deform myself.

My houses or public buildings do not stem from techno-science. They are made of bricks, concrete, and plaster coming from the sand of the nearby Achelous River.

The following figures tell the story of my journey. Besides memories and image collages, these remind me of music, and I like them. The following images show my first projects.



**Figure 32:** Hotel (1973). Drawing by the Author.

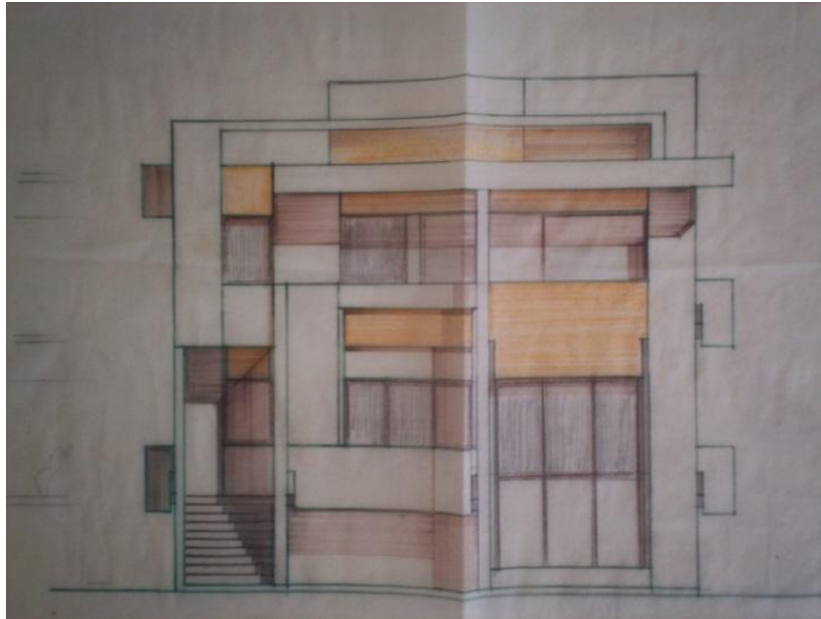


**Figure 33:** Seaside house (1973). Drawing by the Author.



**Figure 34:** Bathhouse (1974). Drawing by the Author.





**Figure 35:** House and studio, Agrinio (1975). Drawing by the Author.

What follows are constructions and sketches after the path that I have described.



**Figures 36, 37, and 38:** Mastrogeorgiou House, Agrinio (1980). Photos by the Author.



**Figure 39:** Papahellea House, Agrinio (1985). Photo by the Author.



**Figure 40:** Papahellea House, Agrinio (1985). Photo by the Author.



**Figure 41:** Tsapakidi House, Agrinio (1988). Photo by the Author.



**Figure 42:** Tsapakidi House, Agrinio (1988). Photo by the Author.



**Figure 43:** Malamos House, Agrinio (built 1989). Drawing by the Author.



**Figure 44:** Malamos House, Agrinio (built 1989). Drawing by the Author.



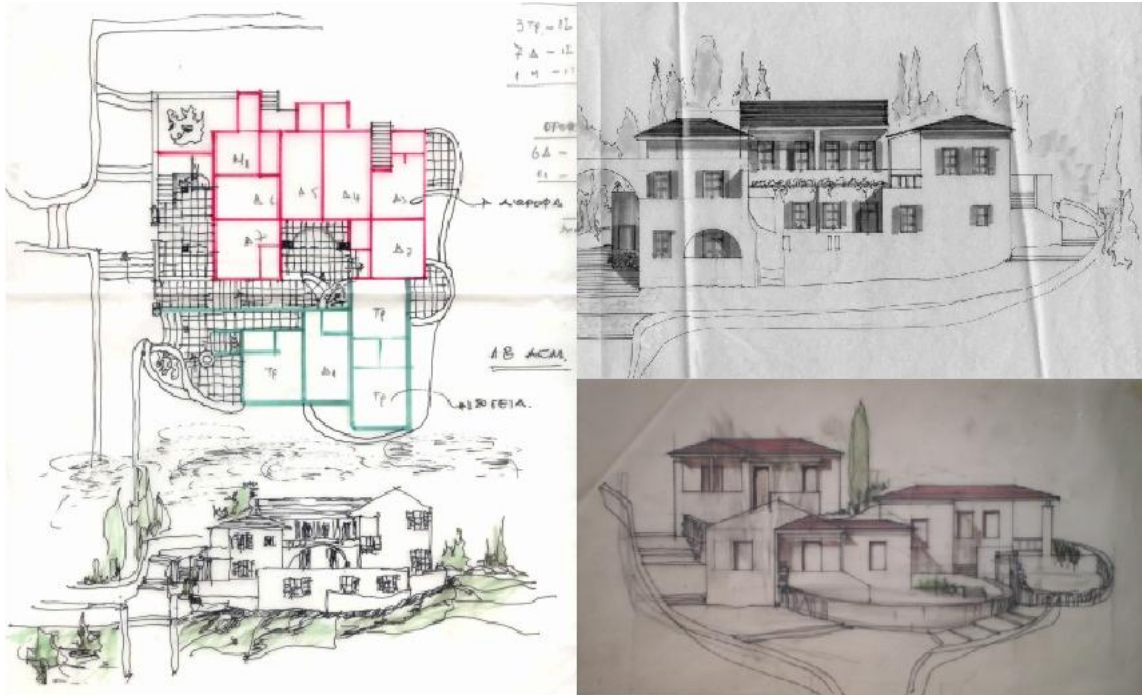


**Figures 45 and 46:** Proposal for a house in Patras (unrealized). Drawings by the Author.

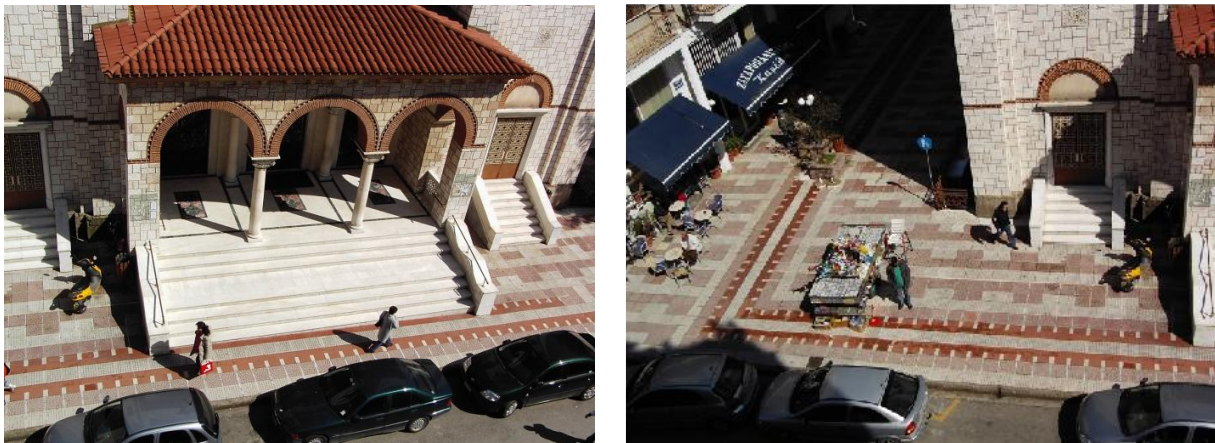


**Figure 47:** Pappas House, Agrinio. Sketch and photos by the Author.

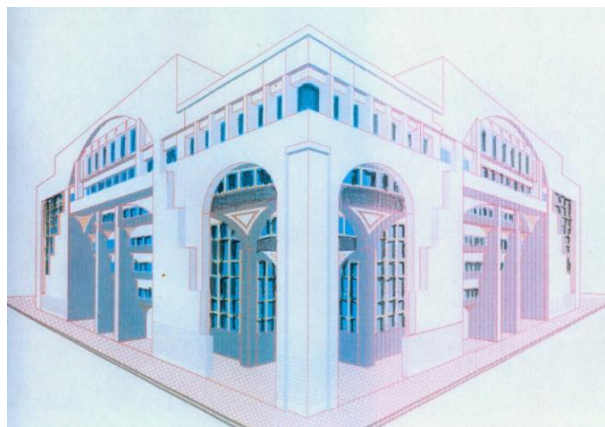




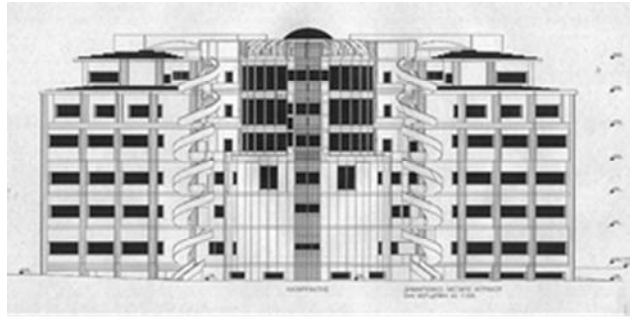
**Figures 48, 49, and 50:** Hotel complex in Pogonia, Acarnania (1986). Drawings by the Author.



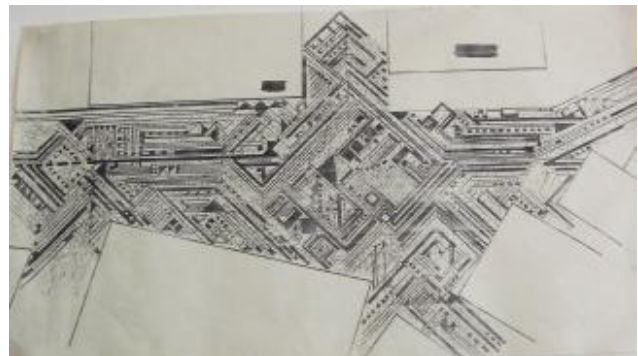
**Figures 51 and 52:** Flooring of the Cathedral of Agrinio (1989). Renderings by the Author.



**Figure 53:** Proposal for a church in Agrinio. Drawing by the Author.



**Figure 54:** Proposal for a town hall in Agrinio. Drawing by the Author.



**Figures 55 and 56:** Sketches for a coffee shop inspired by a Turkish house in Arta, and for the paving of the main square of Paleomanina (Ancient Sauria, 1992). Drawings by the Author.

After this reflection, I would now like to tell the reader: do not think that I made only arch houses. Clients mostly wanted toaster-like houses with a concrete floor under their feet and a concrete floor above their heads. When the temperature rises over 40 °C in the summer, these buildings turn into toasters.

### **GREEK VILLAGE CHURCHES EMERGE AS THE PARTHENON DOES IN ATHENS**

The cathedrals with their domes and minarets that used to dominate the cities as signs of divine power have disappeared. They are more and more hidden by the new cathedrals of human power—the cathedrals of money. The pope and the imams are replaced by the head of the World Bank: its throne is on the top floor of the highest skyscraper. Religions are victims of the atomistic-individual salvation. Power still uses them as a shock absorber. The technology of money has triumphed. The gods have moved to the cosmic Olympus.



**Figure 57:** Galaxidi, Phocis.  
Photo by the Author.





**Figure 58:** Machairas, Acarnania. Photo by the Author.



**Figure 59:** Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence, Italy. Photo by Gary Campbell-Hall, Wikipedia, <https://tinyurl.com/32xsxvr3>.



**Figure 60:** The skylines of New York City and Dubai. Collage by the Author.

When my sinful friends died, Saint Peter did not want them to enter heaven. He stubbornly refused them: “My dear Fotios, salvation is an atomistic-individual matter, not a collective one.” “But, my saint,” I replied, “do not destroy the community. It will turn against you.” He did not listen to me and is now unemployed. Heaven is closed.

As an architect, I was born in Palaiomanina (ancient Sauria). My first cry outside the city door, my umbilical cord to the city walls, and what I did—I owe it all to the ancient Sauria (Paleomanina). I am her son, and I have realized almost all of my works in Acarnania and Aetolia.



καὶ τότε Ἀθηναίη στιβαρῆς ἀντέσπασε πέτρης / σκαιῇ, δεξιτερῇ δὲ διαμπερὲς ὥσε φέρεσθαι. / ἢ δ' ἰκέλη  
πτερόεντι μετήορος ἔσσυτ' ὀιστῶ.

Ἀπολλώνιος Ῥόδιος, Τὰ Ἀργοναυτικά, 2.598–600

*Then Athena with her left hand thrust back one mighty rock and with her right pushed the ship through; and  
she, like a winged arrow, sped through the air.*

Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica*, 2.598–600



# From the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Traces in my Mind

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## ABSTRACT

Places of memory are vital for people to identify themselves and navigate the world. The Author recognizes shared patterns of tragedy, shame, silence, beauty, and joy, as well as mourning and civic murmur through the rhizome that spreads from his Anatolian home to the Balkans. He finds Sarajevo, the martyr city, to be a singularity that recalls the singularities of Diyarbakır and of all the other unnamed singularities whose places of memory are long gone. Sarajevo turns into a potential biourban paradigm flower because it can keep the voice of other places of memory alive.

**Keywords:** identity, place of memory, Sarajevo, Diyarbakır, Istanbul

On November 3, 2019 at 3:40 p.m., our plane took off for Sarajevo from Istanbul after a short 15-minute delay. When forgetting the day-to-day, the bird's eye view of our homeland seemed nothing but good. As we flew higher, all the negative things remained beneath...

As I stepped onto the plane, I was hoping that someone who spoke Turkish and had been to Sarajevo would sit next to me. Would this be the first time I felt closer to Turkish people? Is it possible to develop a momentary intimacy after so many painful memories? "Do not speak Kurdish among yourselves!" The caliper denailing torture; being forced to say *paper* instead of *zaper*; the line where I wanted to curl up and die in the face of the humiliation of my identity under those civilized, lying glances in Adana, where we had been forced to migrate from our village, and so many other things... How could I forget all these so quickly?

All in all, my fellow travelers had not shown up by the time I passed all the rows and sat down in the last one. At each person with a familiar voice and silhouette, my expectation was that he or she would come and sit by my side. Yet when the last familiar person sat down next to the window in the other row, my fate was forged with a middle-aged couple. Unfortunately, the couple was too anti-social to accept a third wheel between them. Busy among each other, they wasted such a wonderful chance to play the best fellow traveler. I could have asked whether the Euro was used in Sarajevo or how to exchange the Bosnia and Herzegovina convertible mark, what was the best way to get to the city, et cetera.

The passenger sitting on the other side began reading a book by İlber Ortaylı, and I came full circle. We chatted a bit when meeting at passport control, and he said something about İlber Ortaylı's love for Bosnia. I was unsure if I should feel happy for this overlapping of my humble faith with that of İlber Ortaylı, even in Sarajevo. In his words, "East and Southeast Anatolian students are cheaters, meaning inadequate students get into good schools" ("Prof. Ortaylı'dan," 2010) rang in my mind. I mean, I understand him. Who do these Kurdish kids think they are, daring to reach the beautiful Bosphorus, enter the country's most elegant university, and be an eyesore to our professor instead of becoming construction workers?

Once, in my secondary school years, I earned a score from a general exam. After finding out, my class teacher extended her hand to me. I extended my hand back with my all human emotions and naivety to accept her appreciation. However, as it turned out, she was reaching for the paper with the results in my other hand to verify if the score was real. From then on, I could no longer succeed in her class. Racism got in between my favorite classes, mathematics, and me. Did you say competency, professor? Do you have any idea how much we had to give up before arriving at your doorstep?

We split after passport control, and I went looking for an exchange office. It was not difficult to find one since the Sarajevo International Airport was far from gigantic. Based on my experience in Turkish airports, where everything is more expensive, I bet that the commission would be rather high. So I exchanged just enough for my first day. In fact, there was no point in being so anxious.

My experience of Sarajevo was wonderful, even though it was limited to autumn. A short cab ride brought me through magnificent views. Nature was contributing so mightily to the route that I felt as though I was traveling Van Gogh's paintings. Sarajevo, enclosed by mountains and decorated with yellow leaves on the roads, could easily be the place I would love to settle in. As soon as I stepped out of the cab, my host, Lejla, gave me a warm welcome. We went to



the house together, and then she left me alone with my fate and her pastries after briefly walking me through the house, the Wi-Fi, sightseeing, and restaurants.

Since the house was central and parallel to the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I walked the distance of three bus stops and even found it easily on my first day. Sarajevo is a small city compared to Istanbul. You can walk everywhere, even though it is like a gigantic museum. I was watching how each place left a mark throughout the traces in my mind.

### **VJEČNA VATRA: THE ETERNAL FLAME**

I left the house and passed the Marijin Dvor church, whose chiming bells made me happy everyday, and went downstairs to find the Markale market. Then, the Eternal Flame welcomed me. This monument, representative of the fire that burns inside the people who had witnessed the war, was built in 1946 to commemorate the lives lost to World War II. A group of people tried to put it out in 2011, but the inhabitants rekindled it. Burning since 1946, the Eternal Flame has not only kept the memories of the deceased warm but also welcomed the homeless. Although slightly colder than Istanbul, Sarajevo was not as bitterly cold as people say. But sometimes the wind blew so harshly that I was happy to come across such a warm spot along the way. While passing through precious memories, I left my frosted heart and the mask of my face dried by the wind into the fire of the Eternal Flame. Some warmth caressed my face, the ice melted, and my heart softened.

Let me also say this: on April 6, 1945, Sarajevo was liberated from the Nazi occupiers, making this date the “City Day.” Every sixth of April, people gather around the Eternal Flame to remember the victims of both the siege and the Nazi occupation. Another misfortune upon the city is that the wick of World War I was lit here. The Serbian Gavrilo Princip killed Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, near the Latin Bridge over the Miljacka River during his visit in 1914. The bridge was renamed the Latin Bridge after the Yugoslavian period, when it was known as the Gavrilo Bridge. The Eternal Flame is just a few minutes away—a few minutes between the First and the Second World Wars...

### **MEMORIAL FOR CHILDREN KILLED DURING THE SIEGE**

I left the Eternal Flame behind and walked toward the museum along the avenue dedicated to Marshall Tito, the founder of Yugoslavia. Then, I came across the Memorial for Children Killed During the Siege in Veliki Park. Out of 11,541 people killed during the Sarajevo siege, which lasted 44 months, nearly 1,600 were children (for a discussion of these figures, see Ball, Tabeau, & Verwimp 2007). The monument bears the names of 521 children killed between 1992 and 1995. Their footprints and tombs make one feel all the heaviness of war. How nice it was from faraway... You could sense the beauty of Veliki Park even before reaching it. The roads were covered and the banks were lost under the leaves, with whom the wind designed quick spins as if an invisible couple was dancing. The prettiness though had not really impressed me until it sparked a trace in my mind, when I saw the children’s tombs and the monument with their names and little footprints... That was the clearest evidence of how far the almighty human being could go. The sight of the monument to Nermin, who

screamed for all the children detached so early from life by their killers, silenced the storm. My anger was extinguished.

The shadow of Uğur Kaymaz, who was deemed worthy of 13 bullets at the age of 12, haunted me and froze my life. He was detained with his father, Ramo, while saying words like, “we aren’t doing any harm.” No news of them was heard thereafter, until an excavation team found both father and son near a mass grave in 2008.

Ahmet Kaymaz, the father, and Uğur Kaymaz, the son, were shot up and bid farewell in Kızıltepe, Mardin on November 21, 2004 (Human Rights Watch, 2007, pp. 19–20). The murderers did not refrain from putting a big Kalashnikov next to his small body just to make it look like a skirmish. The years he spent in this world were less than the bullets lodged into his small body. A monument, just as small as his body, was built in remembrance of Uğur. Since they could not even bear his memory, Uğur’s monument was removed by the trustee appointed to Kızıltepe Municipality on June 11, 2016 (BIA News Desk, 2017). Then, another trustee appointed to Derik Municipality also erased the name of the park named after Uğur (Akin, 2019). They did not want to remember the 12-year-old Uğur that they deemed worthy of 13 bullets.

The Roboski airstrike took place under the eyes of the world (Butler & Villelabeitia, 2011). Thirty-four people, including children and adults, surrendered their souls to the bombs falling down from the sky. The perpetrators did this while Uğur stood there, staring into their eyes. Did they avoid eye contact? No! Did they feel ashamed? No! “Shame is already revolution of a kind,” said Marx (1975 [1843]), and we can say that they are the furthest from revolution. When Nihat Kazanhan was launched into eternity on January 14, 2015 (“Nihat Kazanhan’ın ölümünde,” 2015), 11 years after Uğur’s death, the background of deaths was complete and the war was fast approaching. It was raining tanks, guns, and mortar bombs. I did not care about the rain. I left Nermin’s screams behind me and kept walking without giving a shit about getting soaked on such a rainy day. Nevertheless, at one point, my feet stopped. I saw it: a Sarajevo Rose. How could I have missed it! So many memories in one place... the Markale market, children’s tombs, footprints, and monuments inscribed with names from 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1995... I might have noticed it without fully realizing what it was yet. My mind might have been full of war memories.

## **SARAJEVSKA RUŽA: THE SARAJEVO ROSE**

It was raining bombs on Sarajevo during the siege. As confirmed by the United Nations, 329 bombs on a daily average hit the city. On July 22, 1993, Sarajevo was struck with 3,777 bombs (United Nations Security Council, 1994, p. 45). From May 2, 1992, the siege lasted 1,425 days and most of these bombs had claimed their share of wounded or dead. Each and every bomb left its mark on the buildings. When hitting the asphalt, the marks resembled flowers. Filled with red resin, these signs were called “Sarajevo Roses” and became the symbol of the lives taken in Sarajevo and their valor: people in line waiting for water distribution; children cheerfully playing, and bleeding survivors with no way out.

Eight people lost their lives while waiting in line for water on January 15, 1993. Fifteen more were killed and 80 wounded during a soccer match that the same year. Mortar shells fell down on the most crowded places during an afternoon in 1994 and took 68 lives.

The bleeding bodies fell on the streets, avenues, and in the middle of the road where they were covered in stones just to keep the cats and dogs from eating them. It was then when another mortar shell targeted a home's yard in Silopi and a little girl, sheltered in the basement, saw her father and three more people die. How many times had I heard in Cizre that "it was as if it were raining." One of these raindrops caught 10-year-old Hüseyin inside his house. When Fatma Ateş went to the yard for morning prayer in Sur and while Melek Apaydın was preparing breakfast for her children in a house where they sheltered with three other families to feel more safe, the mortar took their lives, too. Also that memory ended up engraved in our minds, buried into us. Diggers and bulldozers came and destroyed the places marked by tanks, guns, and bullets. Here, Azrael finished the job he had left unfinished in Sarajevo.

Places trigger people's memory, because memory expresses the absence of people who once lived there and witness that they once existed.

While Sarajevo turned into an expression of the past, a shared place for both the present and the future, Sur had become the placelessness of present and future—where the traces of the past were removed. First, the Giaour<sup>1</sup> left, then the Syriac, then the Kurds... earth moving tracks carried the engraved space and its traces to the dumpster of memory. No traces of the people who once lived there can be seen anymore. The fading roses of Sur, Cizre, Nusaybin, Şirnak, İdil, Silopi, and Yüksekova blossom in Sarajevo.

## RIDDLED BUILDINGS

There are traces of destruction, riddled buildings, and bullet and mortar marks everywhere in the city. During the siege, Sarajevo was targeted by mortars but also by far reaching snipers. They snuck into the pathways of their victims just like hunters going deep into the forest. Sarajevo is crossed by the Miljacka River and surrounded by green mountains. Tanks, guns, and weapons replaced such greenness and the water of Miljacka turned into death during the conflict. The tram routing parallel to the river was renamed the Russian roulette. People needed to sit in the right seats to survive as snipers targeted them on the ride. Some avenues were crossed only by running for one's life. Many photos of the siege reflect this hustle. Sarajevans learned how not to be the third passerby through these dangerous streets, since Serbian snipers followed the first person, targeted the second, and shot the third.

We ran breathlessly. Our town, an Armenian village, was sieged again in 1993. We surrendered at the same time as Sarajevo. I heard this story from my grandmother. I heard what happened to the Armenians. I heard of pregnant women whose bellies were pierced by cold steel. I heard of houses set on fire all together. I heard the stories of those saved secretly and of others who had escaped and migrated... Now, they were coming for us. However, what hurts me more than anything is not their irruption and robbery, nor my mother and grandmother pulling their hair and scratching their faces when they kidnapped someone from the household. It was neither their torture nor that they set our house on fire, nor that they turned our existence into the lives of fugitives. What hurts me most and never

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<sup>1</sup> After dropping in numbers, they became like fingers on one hand. Previously, they had accounted for 60% of Diyarbakır's population. The Armenians used to say: "first the Giaours went away, and then the neighborhood went away." They would then smile upon such a remembrance.

fades away is that, when they were coming, I ran to the house to let my family know. In doing so, I attracted their attention to our house.

Does running mean getting farther from danger or trying to do something hopeful? Only those who take action can get over the trauma. Silence makes the trauma imprisoned eternally. I interviewed the women from Kuruköy (Xerabê Bava), a village in Mardin's district of Nusaybin, about the pillaging of their village and the slaughter of four people. They were proud to tell me how they launched stones at the soldiers and did not allow them to detain any woman. God only knows how many times their houses were searched and their village pillaged! God knows how many deaths they witnessed! However, they did something real, and that was a healing spark for the future. Getting over the trauma in the future is only possible by taking some action in the past. According to Heidegger, "doing something" builds a moment of value (Bora, 2009, p. 65). Only because of this action can people build their belonging in the universe and realize themselves as "somebody" with identity and history.

They began digging for hope, maybe with just two shovels. They dug the Tunnel of Hope five meters below the surface where 200 mortar bombs were falling every day in order to reach the International Airport, which was as far as 800 meters and under control by the United Nations. This changed the fate of the war and created a healing trace for both the body and the mind of Sarajevans.

The image of someone bowing down and offering his head to the hangman must have impressed me so much that I walked toward the gun. My memory did not record what happened afterwards, as it seems. Ambulance sirens, the doctor yelling, "I am in charge here!" shouting, screams... That is okay, running felt good. Nevertheless, Sarajevans were shot so many times while running. Running was inadequate and drew so many shrouds over risky streets. Water and electricity were cut; there was no gas for cooking. They burned the city's trees for fire. Since chimney smoke was a kind of death call in Sur, the solution for a little warmth was the body heat of diabetics. This, though, did not work in Yüksekova where the bitter cold winter came to freeze these apple-scented bodies. The sweet smell arose from their cold bodies first. Recognizing the smell meant that they could not prevent their own death in the middle of winter. Good heavens! As much as I carve my memory, reminders come out.

My walk between the house and the museum lasted 20, maybe 25 minutes, but it became an eternal wound of memory. While I passed the bells, the Markale market, the Eternal Flame, the Ali Pasha's Mosque graveyard, Nermin's scream, the footprints, the death engravings all with the same date, the Sarajevo Rose and its associations in my mind, and buildings punctured by snipers' bullets 25 years ago, other traces came to me. I passed through Şırnak, Cizre, İdil, Silopi, Sur, Yüksekova, and Nusaybin and arrived at the museum.

## **THE HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

Bullet holes on the walls and ruined or missing steps showed that the Historical Museum of Bosnia Herzegovina had its share of the Sarajevo siege. When I entered, a colorful stained glass artwork welcomed me with its message, "Smrt fašizmu sloboda narodu" (Death to fascism, freedom to the people). Inspired by the resistance against fascism and the World War

If Nazi siege, this panel was made by Vojo Dimitrijevic in 1966 and placed in the museum in 1973. It reflects the people's struggle to save their country as well as their desire to live in freedom. Its glass was cracked during the siege.

## Respect

Turning left, I faced a board with the word “respect” repeated in every language: *hurmat, postivanje, pagarba...* It covered the big wall almost completely next to the symbols of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, which stood together with the symbol of eternity. Three chambers described three heavens and a central ring represented the connection among these antithetic elements, creating the necessary balance and harmony for the renewal of society after a common spiritual longing. The invitation, “respect,” indicated the first necessary action for people of different cultures, religions, and political credos to come together. However, respect has a slim chance of being effective in real life. I went out of the train station and sat near a kiosk for a quick bite. The owner told me, “this is halal, we are Muslim. Tuzla is a little bit confusing, but Sarajevo is Muslim.” It was a welcoming show of respect, yet somewhat ironic. While I sipped the beer of Sarajevo, the owner's effort to emphasize his identity signaled an underlying tension. Although church bells and *azan* blended in the air, everyone lived in his or her own circle here. Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian neighborhoods were separated. Invisible boundaries divided Sarajevo, and you never knew which area you stepped into. Sarajevo is the legal capital city of both the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Serbian Republic, whose de facto capital city is Banja Luka. Do not confuse the Serbian Republic with Serbia itself. The Serbian Republic is one of the two autonomous regions that make Bosnia and Herzegovina. The flow of Sarajevo life, which was likened to a ticking time bomb by French President Macron (Niksic, 2019), is rather in balance than based on respect—just like our lands where we stood heart by heart with our brothers. Thus, when İbrahim Çay posed with traditional Peshmerga clothes in Muğla and shared the photograph on Facebook, his neighbors lynched and dragged him to kiss an Atatürk monument in blood and mud (Şefkat, 2015). This was far from being the first time respect died. There is no way to wish for any resurrection or keep our hopes high. Yazidis who survived the massacre by ISIS did not want to return to their home. The reason was not ISIS but their Arab neighbors, with whom they played, wandered around, spoke, and ate until they turned into dignity hunting monsters. People gave up hope. Respect had long faded in our lands, and a large part of it was not meant to return. I lived in Mersin at that time. The refugees who were fleeing there to save their lives were shocked by the fact that others were still having weddings and fun. I remember a young voice crying because he did not want to return: “Those streets aren't there any more. Not my friends, not my memories. My whole past is destroyed. Everyone is like a bloody hell. Why should I go back there? Is it my neighborhood any more? Why should I hope to return where there is no respect?”

The corridor unfolded before Michelangelo Pistoletto's scream for “Respect” showed the disrespect to Sarajevo through Jim Marshall's photographs taken right after the siege in 1996. These pictures reminded me of the exhibition *Mostar 92: Urbicid* (Šego, Ribarević-Nikolić, Jurić, Kolopić, et al., 1992), which exposed the horror of that siege to Europe. The term “urbicide” then entered the literature to express the biggest crime against a city, its people, and its cultural heritage.

- Sarajevo was hit with 329 bombs on a daily average.
- On July 22, 1993 alone, 3,777 bombs exploded.

- 10,000 buildings were destroyed or severely damaged.
- 500,000 people and 100,000 buildings were hit.
- Severe damage involved 23% of the city's buildings and low to medium damage affected 64%.
- Only 13% of buildings did not report damage after the siege.

After Jim Marshall's photographs, I came across two more halls and a room for the visually impaired. They hosted many exhibitions, workshops, and movie screenings for participants of any age. The museum became lively thanks to a group of 10 and a crowd of students. Omar and Elma offered an overview at the entrance, talked about the exhibitions, then answered questions.

### **From the conscious to the unconscious**

Sarajevo was bombed and then occupied by the Nazis during World War II (the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division took the city on April 15, 1941). The city was then bombed by the Allies from 1943 to 1944. Josip Broz Tito founded the museum in 1945 as a revolutionary propaganda site. Sarajevans' love for Tito is more evident here. Avenue Tito, Café Tito, Tito magnets... All these pictures, portraits, busts, and statues of the leader kept his soul around the city. If the establishment of Yugoslavia and the city's liberation from the Nazis began with Tito, then Tito's death and dispersal of Yugoslavia would bring another disaster to the city. The 1992–1995 siege (officially declared over by the Bosnian government on February 29, 1996) surrendered the whole memory of Bosnia together with the site. Thus, the city itself and its museums had to become the carrier of this memory. After 1990, the socialist revolution exhibitions, materials, portraits, and busts were moved into the museum's basement. Here, allowed in by Omar, I could see portraits and war equipment of Bosnians who lost their lives during World War II; revolvers, rockets and grenades; busts and photographs of Tito, including some picture where he was visiting the museum. The museum basement seemed to me like its unconscious. Visitors see witnesses of resistance to the Serbian siege on the official floor, but the underground part involves the struggle against the Nazis. The setting recalls barracks with all these tanks, guns, and military materials used in World War II... After the visitors left, Omar, just like a soldier, checks the equipment, counts the guns and grenades, and locks the door.

### **SARAJEVAN ROMEO AND JULIET: BOŠKO AND ADMIRA**

If Romeo and Juliet died, then it is high time to leave the city. Snipers trapped them before love could provide its warm welcome. Then, love won again as the city died. It became night for the enslaved. One occupation was replaced with another.

On November 25, State Day since 1943, I noticed a new activity in the museum. The exhibitions on the entrance floor had changed. The respect wall was replaced with a red and white shirt. I went upstairs to meet the smiling faces of Boško and Admira, then the image of their bodies knocked down.

They met during the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo when they were just 16 years old. Boško's father had lost his life before the Bosnian War and his mother and sibling migrated

at the beginning of the Siege of Sarajevo. Boško, instead, stayed to share the same fate with Admir. Admir once wrote these words for Boško, "My dear, Sarajevo is at its best at night. I cannot live anywhere else if I do not have to. Nothing can divide us." They were shot dead on May 18, 1993 while passing the Vrbanja Bridge hand in hand. Their bodies remained on the ground for seven days. Seven used to be my lucky number. But as it turns out, it might also bring bad luck.

Taybet İnan, the mother of 11 children, was killed by a bullet in the neighborhood of Nuh in Silopi while walking home. Her body stayed in the middle of the street for seven days. A son of hers published a letter, which says:

My mother lay in the street for exactly seven days... None of us slept so we could protect her from dogs and birds. She was laying there while we were dying 150 meters ahead of her... ("Cansız bedeni yedi," 2016)

The U.S. war reporter, Kurt Schork, let the world know that Romeo and Juliet had died in each other's arms and that their dead bodies lay there for seven days. During an attack in Sierra Leone, Schork lost his life, too, and went to meet the Serbian Boško and the Bosnian Admir.

The Zabranjeno Pušenje rock band composed these lyrics for them:

It was a long time ago / in a country that cannot be found now / Something protected the time / Something forgotten by people... who did not belong to the same tribe / who did not have the same God / but they had each other / and the dream of escaping out from under it all... (Zabranjeno Pušenje, 2013)

## **PAIN THRESHOLD**

"What have we been through!" exclaimed the 80-year-old woman that I met in the village of Budaklı in the district of Midyat (Mardin). She talked about how they surrendered to soldiers and tanks. "People were thrown out of helicopters and nothing of them could be found... So those whose bits could be found were considered lucky."

It was a round up operation, back in 1995. The houses were raided and the villagers were pounded like so many times before. Her head and arm were broken. Her husband and three relatives, arrested, forever disappeared. It took 18 years for an investigation team to inspect the village and find the evidence of the bullet marks on the houses ("18 yıl sonar," 2013).

What have we been through! Is there any limit to it? Each condition determines its own threshold for pain, and the more one lives the higher the threshold. But resistance grows, too. Life keeps flowing. The exhibition hall right across from Boško and Admir witnesses the living drive of Sarajevo people in adversity. I was attracted by the stoves, big and small. Wheelbarrows loaded with wood signaled Sarajevo's bitter cold. As for the photographs, they always depicted people running to survive. Those who cannot catch life bite the dust as others pass by. The number of graves increases and names and stories written in chalk fill the blackboard. A caricature book in the hall said everything: "War is a game and the aircrafts drop smiles." Interestingly enough, the denser the tragedy, the higher the humor. All the bullet holes on the museum walls became white stars. People held on to life like this during the

siege—by blending humor with pain. “This is not Serbia, this is a post office you fools,” answered the graffiti on a wall where Serbian soldiers had written: “This is Serbia.” For a moment, I remembered the young ladies from Cizre smiling and saying, “they wrote on our shoes with our lipstick. What a foolish thing to do!” Is stupidity intrinsic to occupiers as humor to resisters?

The Philharmonic Orchestra performed by candle light and even managed to arrange a festival. The Sarajevo Film Festival, one of the biggest and most important in the Balkans and Southwest Europe, was meant to move public opinion against the siege and the war in 1995. If you ever wonder about life in Sarajevo under the bombs, here is your answer from an 18-year-old woman I spoke to in Sur: “The silence was more frightening. At least, we knew what was happening when bombs exploded. My father and I were closer than ever, telling everything to each other.” The war also has positive aspects, it seems. Sarajevan people cuddled each other. Many died or migrated, but the rest banded together.

### **FORGETTING... COULD IT GET ANY BETTER?**

Sarajevo has plenty of memories. Even though I had passed next to it several times, I noticed the monument to Nermin only when somebody put a bunch of roses on it. The dead seem to be as much a part of life as those who come to the park to enjoy the last fall sunbeams and the lovers who meet and take pictures. As long as I know, no other city in the world shows the same entanglement between death and life. The white graveyards of Sarajevo look like patches of white snow that resist the melting at the end of nowhere or on the skirts of a mountain. Can such a strong remembrance heal? As Michael Colborne says, “in Bosnia, forgetting could mean a brighter future” (2018).

### **Heaven of memories**

I came to another country and another city to remember and, at once, forget a little. But I ended up finding myself in another heaven of memories. Do not get me wrong. No milk rivers flow here. The Republic of Turkey sent its old public transportation vehicles to Sarajevo, and I happened to get on the same tram I used when living in Konya years ago. All of a sudden, I remembered that the name of my neighborhood in Konya was Bosnia-Herzegovina. And how many Ziraat Bank branches did I come across? More than in Turkey. I saw the Yunus Emre Institute offering an exhibition on July 15, Qur'an classes, and Turkish courses... I really could not feel like a stranger in Sarajevo. Maybe these traces of my homeland did not help the trauma I had gone through over the past 4 years. Space carries the memories of people. The mind carries the memory of the space. If one is absent, others may still be there.

The man is a third-generation Canadian who had never visited Turkey before... He came to Diyarbakır six or seven years ago but had not seen Diyarbakır even once... He went to the street of the church and stood right in the middle of it. We were all watching him. He extended his hand out to the street and said the street was narrow, adding that it was the entrance to Surp Giragos. He had never been to Turkey, but look at his connection to the space. Immediately, he said that Pasha Hammam must be two streets below. Oh yes, Pasha Hammam is still there. So he asked whether Pasha Hammam was still working, but they replied that the hammam was closed. He sighed and told me that he wished he could have a bath there. They told him he could go to



some other luxurious hotel bath, but he said no, adding that his mother and father went to that old hammam and had a bath there (Kibar, 2017, p. 74).

Unfortunately, places are not precious in the mind of occupiers. This is why Adana, Manisa, and İzmir burned...

In 1915, so many massacres in so many places happened, but the greatest was in Diyarbakır. Raşid Bey, the governor, did not want a single person to survive. The bazaar in Sur burned for days. They still call that it *Çarşıya Şewiti* [Burnt Bazaar]...<sup>2</sup>

While the world sentenced Serbian commander Ratko Mladić, known as the “Bosnian butcher” for war crimes and crimes against humanity, governor Mehmed Raşid Bey, the notorious “Diyarbakır butcher” of the Armenian genocide still carries the title of “National Martyr.” The memories of the Kurds are blended with those of the Armenians. Villagers still go to sit, squatting on the ruins of their village. Yet, Hasankeyf has just been destroyed (“Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan açılışını”, 2020). Oh, fair memory! What is your relation to the space?

Collective memory theorist, Maurice Halbwachs (1950), argues that our past gets lost if we do not preserve it in the material environment. Space may support our memory and, on the other hand, memory can be based on space. As Edward Casey (2000, p. 189) puts it, memories function selectively in a space and look for special places that may fit their own *naturas* and content, becoming their place. This way, space becomes a sort of *mise en scène* of our memories.

A place may embody a relative that we have lost or be simply a spot that carries a name.

The curiosity for the spaces where memory becomes salient and settles is about the specific time of our history. (Nora, 2006, p. 1)

### Site of memory

Pierre Nora argues that a place of memory is made up of the memories and the past of those who are no longer there. Nora says:

If we had experienced their hidden memories, these places would be unnecessary. And if history did not besiege memory ruining, destroying, and petrifying it, then there would be no place of memory. Indeed, it is this dynamic that produces these places: moments of history torn away from the movement of history, then returned. (Nora, 2006, p. 15)

Since we have lost our places of memory, Sarajevo functions as such for Sur, Cizre, Nusaybin, Şırnak, İdil, Silopi, and Yüksekova. However, Martine Hovanessian states that memory can only exist as long as the spaces and works it refers to keep existing. The impairment of the old brings the “fragmentation” of memory. A piece of work disconnected from its own tradition loses its own language and, therefore, the capacity to express itself. She recalls her grandmother’s teaching that human beings are like “mulberry leaves” that stain themselves: one will be mistaken if looking to heal their own wound someplace else. Healing one’s wound rests in his or her own arms (Hovanessian, 2009, p. 1).

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<sup>2</sup> Erkek, interview by the Author, Sur (Diyarbakır), December 13, 2016.

## THE RELATION BETWEEN SPACE AND HUMANS

The relation to space is like a black mulberry stain. You search for a trace of your memory in another space, but it is only a matter of projection. People build bonds with certain places based on the feeling they inspire for developing their own identity which, in turn, provides belongingness. Proshansky (1978) defines this process as “place-identity.”

Ryden, Alden, & Paulhus consider that, to a certain extent, people cannot express who they really are without the space that supported their identification (2000).

According to Heidegger, being situated in the world is possible only by building to dwell (1971). We arrange space and objects to envelope our activities. After doing so, space, things, and people build relations to each other: “A forest becomes meaningful only after a hut is built in it, because then the forest has a reference point” (Bora, 2009).

### Space determines our social roles

Social life is built in space. This space interacts with human beings and lays the foundation of society and culture. Individual roles and judgment standards are shaped within this construction. Space does not reflect individual infrastructure formally, but in accordance with its usage and order. Behavior in space reveals confidence, privacy, socialization, sensitivity to distances, et cetera, and it relates to social roles and worldviews (Yalçınkaya, 2015). If forced to disconnect from their places, then people tend to re-construct those places in their memory with the help of the behaviors that characterized their interaction with the space.

Commitment to place includes the ability for people to relate to their cultural milieu. People relate to space through all their senses. These perceptions are encoded in long-term memory and build strong bonds with places. Different societies use historical places to define the past. These places, which we can define as material culture, build connections between people and the physical world. Their existence affects people's actions about the future (Jones, 2007, p. 26). While places trigger memory among those who share the past, they also communicate this past to those coming to learn, allowing people to experience what has happened in the past. Thus, reflections about present events can stimulate individual memory.

In arguing for the importance of visual images in traumatic memories of the German occupation of two Tuscan villages during World War II, Francesca Cappelletto says:

...images are emotional experiences in visual form and the importance of emotional experience in the shaping of memory must be emphasized since this experience has influence on long-term memory. (Cappelletto, 2003, pp. 251–252)

### Places carry people's traces

Place is a human product, both physically and socially. Therefore, it carries the marks of people. According to Lewin's field theory, behavior is the product of the interaction between the individual and the environment (Göregenli, 2015, p. 3). Culture is an important determiner. Individuals mimic what they see and hear around themselves while adapting to society without even realizing it (İnceoğlu, 2010, p. 145). The individual is engaged with an

interpretation activity where both environmental conditions and personal traits play a role. As Barbara A. Misztal stresses, the destruction of places of memory is a way to impose oblivion as much as censorship or re-writing history (Hovanessian, 2009, p. 1).

Following the aforementioned reasoning of Heidegger, human beings can dwell the world after they mark a point of reference. If that point gets erased, then they are displaced, and the world becomes invisible. However, if that point turns into a site of memory, it can keep reminding us of who and where we are.

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*And I think I know how a soul feels when it sees its body buried in the ground and lost.*

John Steinbeck, *The Pastures of Heaven*. London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1938 [1923], p. 217.

# **Is it Possible to Rehabilitate a Peri-urban Sprawl? A Green Project for Bari, Italy**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Industrial urbanism has missed the grasp of *space per se* in favor of objects and processes that occur in space, thus providing for alienating environments. A brief proposal for rehabilitating a specific peri-urban area located south of Bari, Italy aims to show that even seemingly uncontrolled urban sprawl can be turned into a more human environment.

**Keywords:** rehabilitation, peri-urban, green space, wilderness, Bari

## INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that contemporary urban planning and design in general do not produce urban spaces where people can feel at home. Slowly, this has become the dominant state of matter since World War II. When we look at the majority of the global suburban and peri-urban environments nowadays, we need to admit that urbanized places are alien to humans. Would it be possible, and how, to remake these urban spaces globally and turn them into spaces keen to human beings?

As we believe that understanding the cause can lead to a solution, we first need to find the reason that has produced the problem. This is what we will attempt to do in the first part of this article by means of a historical review. In the second part, we will sketch a brief proposal for rehabilitating a specific peri-urban area located south of Bari, Italy, trying to show that even seemingly uncontrolled urban sprawl can be turned into a more human environment.

## THE PROBLEM

Alienating urban, suburban, and peri-urban spaces and landscapes constrain the everyday life of people who inhabit or try to inhabit them. Inhabitants cannot identify with their own places, which have been designed ignoring the wholeness of dynamics that compose life. In fact, housing and social security are not enough for meeting people's need. This is true even when designers put sustainability at the core of their project, focusing on nature and resources. In my opinion, urban planning as a discipline, as well as urban design, failed in involving all the needed dynamics because of a paradox: they missed the *space per se*.

### Urban planning

Urban planning became a scientific discipline in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, if we look at it precisely as a scientific paradigm, then we find that it has developed into a compilation of other scientific disciplines since the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This includes social sciences, economics, politics, geography, psychology, ecology, et cetera, with the clear aim of covering as many dynamics in space as possible.

Notwithstanding, as James Gleick (1987) argued, the models produced by economists, sociologists, psychologists, and urban planners—especially when aiming at strictness into the research of different systems changing over time—turned into caricatures of reality. Traditional urbanism analyzes, studies, and researches demographic, economic, and ecologic layers, different uses of space, water flows, green systems, traffic, et cetera, in order to get as much data as possible. Then, via computer programs, it tries to get a strategy for the future development of a place. It is a common experience that none of these efforts achieved any improvement in the alienation induced by the urban environment. It seems that, unrealistically, urban planning has been dealing with space without seeing it.

### The blind field

Henry Lefebvre (1970) stated that the urban praxis is a blind field for urban planners. The theory and praxis of industrialization hinder both their vision and concepts. Urbanists have been educated to think fragmentally and analytically, hence to see only a part of reality. They consider space from an exclusive mental and visual perspective in order to resolve it into a homogenous and absolute Cartesian “common sense” system. This turns the *space per se* into an abstraction, an available emptiness that technocrats can easily control. In doing so, though, they forget that



the *space per se* is not the product of a mental act, and dealing with it as an abstract, homogenous, and hermetic reality leads to destructive effects (Lefebvre, 1991).

### **Responsibility of urban planning and urban design**

The disciplines of urban planning and urban design bear a big share of responsibility for the alienation from space. An attitude centered on abstraction and sight contributed to putting aside the sense for the *space per se*. This has led urban planners to focus rather on objects and processes that occur in space without being it. Space has become a missed dynamics. Such a lost recognition of space and the consequent ignorance of its inherent characteristics might be one of the reasons for people's estrangement in contemporary urban spaces.

### **When and how did this happen?**

Lefebvre (1991) compares the industrialized contemporary space with what he calls "absolute space," as acknowledged in ancient Greece. Some pre-Hellenistic examples, such as the theatre of Epidauros (built in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and with a capacity of 14,000 spectators), the theatre of Dodona (3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C., 17,000 spectators), and others show us that Greeks had a sense of the divine in the landscape. The whole theatre with its auditorium embraces the space, which was recognized as a divine entity. The Olympic gods settled down in that space to protect the people. Even more, the characteristics of space were considered features of divine creatures, to whom temples were raised as a proof that humans had recognized the space and its protectors.

Such a sensitivity toward space seemed to start changing during Hellenism, when land became an increasingly desired subject of strategy, politics, and economics. This process of oblivion of the divine space reached its acme during the Enlightenment. Nature and landscape, here, definitely became objects of research and aesthetic admiration on one side and profitable market securities on the other.

### **Modernism**

The utopian socialists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century responded to the disastrous living conditions of the working class with ideals of freedom and democracy. They were the initiators of Modernism, which also produced innovation in the field of urbanism. The *Charte d'Athène* (Le Corbusier, Giraudoux, & de Villeneuve, 1943) defined (only) four urban functions: work, housing, recreation, and traffic. The urban models of Modernism addressed serious issues of both the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They introduced the concept of healthy living in airy, green, and sunny environments, free for each individual.

All modern urban models considered the topography of sites and landscapes. Nevertheless, a deeper study of these models proves that in general they all treat space as an abstract object. Technics can redesign such an object at will, for the sake of the Idea.

One of the early critics of modern urban planning was Eliel Saarinen (1945). Many theoreticians and architects followed him later, during the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Those include the aforementioned Henry Lefebvre, Jane Jacobs (1961), Kevin Lynch (1970), and Christopher Alexander (2002–2005), to name just a few. They all criticized the two-dimensionality of urban planning as a misunderstanding of the complexity of space.

## SCIENCE ABOUT SPACE

Curiously enough, modern urban planning did not take into account the scientific paradigm shifts occurring in mathematics and physics and their consequences on the concept of space. While nineteenth-century science based the concept of space on Euclidian geometry, Nikolaj Ivanovič Lobačevski, Janos Bolyai, and Bernhard Riemann established non-Euclidian geometries at the same time. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Albert Einstein disproved that space is an object or that it is made of particles. He showed that matter influences space and space influences matter. Analogically, we could think that urban space is not made of architecture but architecture influences space and it is affected by it in turn. Therefore, design should consider the influence of space on architecture. As Edmund Bacon said, “architectural form is the point of contact between mass and space” (Bacon, 1974).

Knowledge about space was further developed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, defining space as a chaotic system (Gleick, 1987) that requires a new heuristic approach. Although important scholars introduced complexity into planning (Portugali, Meyer, Stolk, & Tan, 2012), most of practiced urban planning failed in implementing it.

## IS URBAN PLANNING SCIENCE OR IS IT ALSO ART?

If urban planning is a science, then it should shift its paradigm in accordance with the contemporary knowledge about complex systems. Yet, is urban planning just science or is it also art?

A merely scientific approach to solving urban issues through analyses and simulations proved its incapability of providing creative solutions, even if we introduce the latest cognitions of contemporary discipline into it. History, however, abundantly shows how art and science have always influenced each other in their understanding of the world, contributing rationality, methods, intuition, imagination, and inspiration.

In his paper, *Die Kunst und der Raum*, Martin Heidegger argues that art is being in accord with dwelling man, place, and truth (Heidegger, 1969). Could there be a more beautiful and exact definition of the role of urban planning and urban design if we consider place also as *space per se*?

## THE SOUTH PERI-URBAN AREA OF BARI, ITALY: A BRIEF PROPOSAL

Bari is a city of southern Italy located on the western coast of the Adriatic Sea, which, as many other cities, has sprawled into its suburban and peri-urban areas. In 2018, the Municipality of Bari proposed a competition focused on the southern coastal area that goes from the city border down to the San Giorgio neighborhood. This area is characterized by a beautiful marine landscape. A road (Via Giovanni Gentile), a straight highway (part of *Strada statale 16*), and a railway run parallel to the coast. The existing planning provides for rectangular grid of streets, roads, and urban blocks. This grid dissolves in the peri-urban sprawl, especially along the highway and Via Giovanni Gentile.

A closer look shows scattered and unfinished urban blocks with no relation to neighboring plots of land and other urban blocks in the vicinity. In the longitudinal sprawl, we find farmlands, vegetable gardens, orchards, and sparse pieces of architectural heritage like *torre* (towers), *masseria* (farm buildings), and other typical agricultural constructions. The land is flat. Several slow brooks and small rivers cut through the topography by finding their curved way to the sea. The space has much potential but looks degraded and chaotic.

The possibility of a new highway extending Via Caldarola, which already crosses the ring highway Strada statale 16, threatens to devastate the cultivated landscape. The tendency of the municipal urban planning could be read in the space: if the continuation of Via Caldarola were built parallel to the existing highway, then the resulting rectangular grid between the two highways would spread the city into the agricultural south. However, this is not necessary until all the empty urban gaps inside the ring are filled. In fact, the preservation of agricultural land makes the city self-sufficient in food besides representing an economic resource.

Although there are so many potentials, the space looks degraded and chaotic.

There are many questions posed to an observer:

- How to make the beautiful coast accessible to people in a democratic way?
- How to organize green sequences from urban blocks toward the coast, a sequence of green public spaces (parks, gardens, et cetera) through the agriculture land?
- How to cut the longitudinal urban sprawl into smaller districts with their own identity to help people orientate to the space better and be able to identify with the district?
- How to incorporate the topography of brooks and small rivers and the agricultural land on the West side of the highway into a compact urban tissue?
- How to sew the scattered urban blocks of the peri-urban South of Bari so that they get an inherent relation to each other and make a more readable urban space?
- How to connect the architectural heritage of the landscape with the city and the coast?

### **How to make the beautiful coast accessible to people in a democratic way?**

The municipality has already taken the decision to remove the railway that runs along the coast to enter Bari from south. This will provide an important benefit to the site and will reactivate several of its potentials. To add a value to it, we propose a redefinition of the coastal road, turning it into a pedestrian and cycling lane shadowed by indigenous species of trees. An electric tram will eventually accompany the lane and connect Corso Trieste in Bari to Lido San Giorgio. We envision the longitudinal southern coast as a potential natural reservation for walking, cycling, swimming, and sunbathing. The backside of the coast would therefore be mostly green, composed by edges of forest trees, gardens, and agricultural fields.

### **How to organize sequences of green public spaces (parks, gardens, et cetera) from the urban blocks toward the coast through the agriculture land?**

Our sketch presents an organic grid of shadowed pathways stemming from the coastal lane. The grid leads through gardens and fields to the edges of urban blocks, where people live and work. Hence, it provides easy access to the cultivated nature and to the coast. Since the railway is removed and cars and heavy traffic are prohibited to run through the coastal road, paths to the coast find no hindrance. People can wander in the paths among the gardens and cultivated fields, which form a sort of cultivated park.

### **How to cut the longitudinal urban sprawl into smaller districts with their own identity to help people orientate to the space and identify with their own district?**

To cut the longitudinal sprawl along Via Giovanni Gentile continuing into Strada statale 16, we propose a series of longitudinal forest belts running perpendicularly to the highways. New districts are developed from the already existing, scattered urban tissue. The forest belts fill the empty spaces

between the urban blocks. This way, the new districts gain definition while receiving the positive environmental, climate, and biophilic advantages of the green areas, which are parks, gardens, agriculture fields, and green corridors leading to the coast.

**How to incorporate the topography of brooks and small rivers and the agricultural land on the west side of the highway into a compact urban tissue?**

The forest belts are perpendicular to and cross the highway, following the landscape, brook, and river patterns. They enter the agricultural area of Bari toward the west by means of wide green bridges for people and animals. They connect the coast to the agricultural land on the west side of the Strada statale 16, border and define urban districts, and offer a recreational shadowed zone for pedestrians and cyclists. People could manage to commute from their homes to organic farms and to the beach.

**How to sew the scattered urban blocks of the southern peri-urban area of Bari so that they get an inherent relation to each other and make a more readable urban space?**

Small compact urban districts can be created out of the sparse urban sprawl between two forest belts all along the eastern side of Via Giovanni Gentile and Strada statale 16. The existing main road is also the main connection for public transport. Each district with its own identity has an access to the main road on one side and to the greenery and the coast on the other side. All new districts are connected to each other not only by the main road but also by the inner, slow-traffic street system.

**How to connect the architectural heritage of the landscape with the city and the coast?**

The system of paths and streets is multi-layered. It incorporates connections between all the architectural heritage buildings, important landmarks, the coast, and the core of the city.

## CONCLUSION

Bari is not an exception to the general situation of suburban and peri-urban degradation and requires a process of rehabilitation. These places are usually chaotic. Their development has usually followed individual initiatives that are unrelated to the wholeness of a space. The result is an alienated space that does not offer a feeling of belongingness.

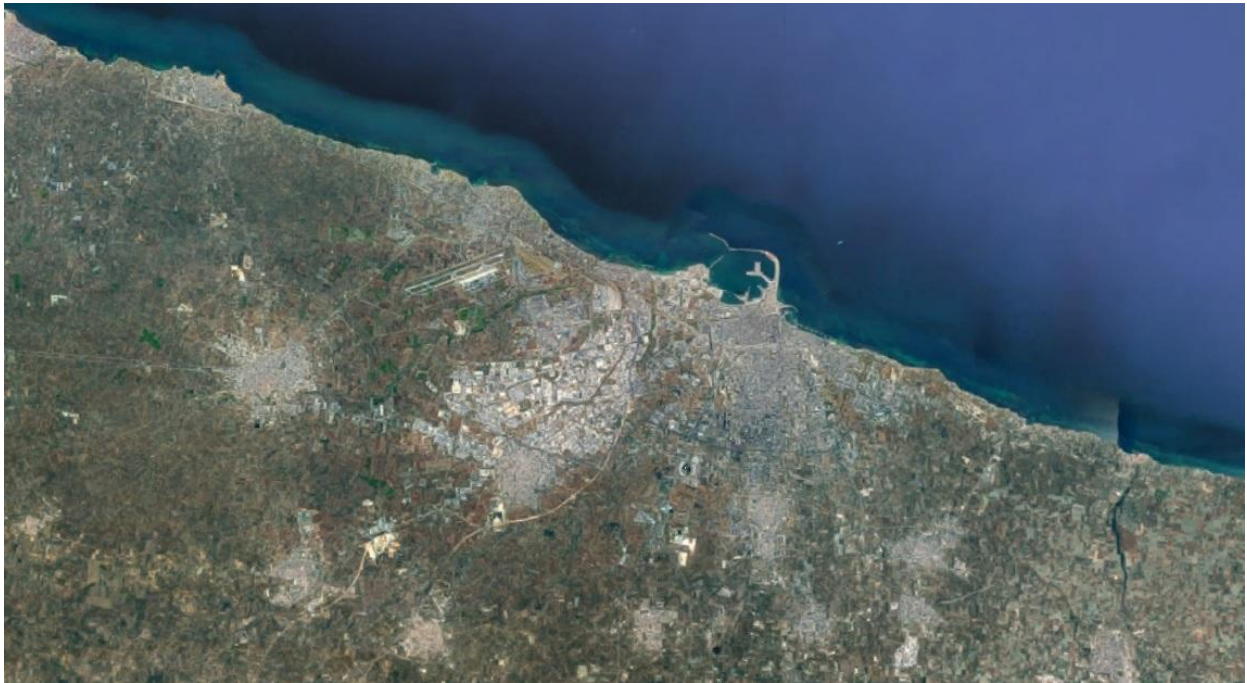
Is there a way out? Is there a way to rehabilitate such spaces?

We consider the only way out is to confront the reality of degraded space and recognize all its potential hidden in its characteristics. Potential can be found at different scales. In the case of the southern peri-urban area of Bari, the potential is hidden in the following features: general topography; slow brooks and rivers, which sometimes flood the surroundings and form their own eco-systems; patterns of agriculture fields; a grid of paths that cross the fields; flatness of the land; the coast with its Mediterranean fauna and flora; the smell of the blossoming Mediterranean trees and bushes and of ripe fruits in the orchards; the hot sun burning resin of pine trees, and the sounds of insects, wind, and sea waves.

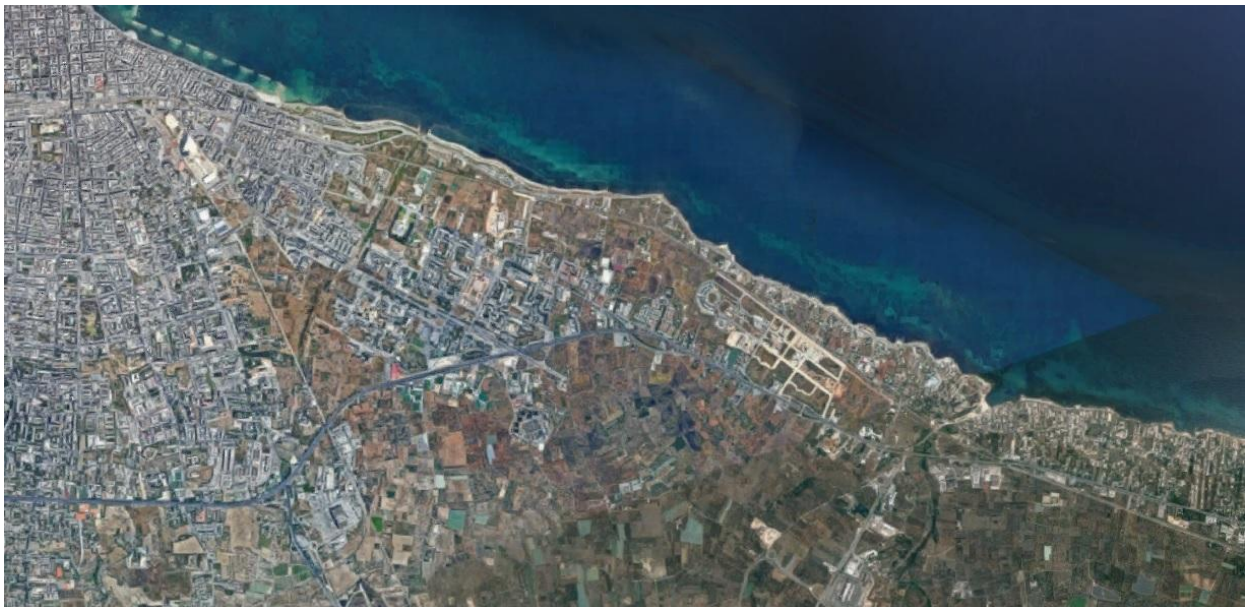
There is even potential in the diverse patterns emerging from the built structures, albeit scattered without any seeming order. These patterns are kernels of new urban districts that can emerge by adding new structures and filling gaps in such a way that the new urban forms become readable, logical, and adaptable to the layers of the urban and landscape palimpsest present in a place. Finally

yet importantly, the architectural heritage spread in the southern Barese landscape makes one of many invisible grids ready to materialize.

The presented conceptual urban proposal takes advantage of the already existing potential in the seemingly chaotic urban sprawl. It considers the layers of palimpsest written in the landscape throughout time. The work is in the scale 1:5000, in order to differentiate and define some layers of the palimpsest. For example, the forest belts follow the existing scratches that agriculture fields, vegetable gardens, and orchards have already traced in the landscape. However, the more we zoom in, the more layers and potential we can find. Key is considering the previous landscape writings and trying to upgrade rather than substitute the existing situation.

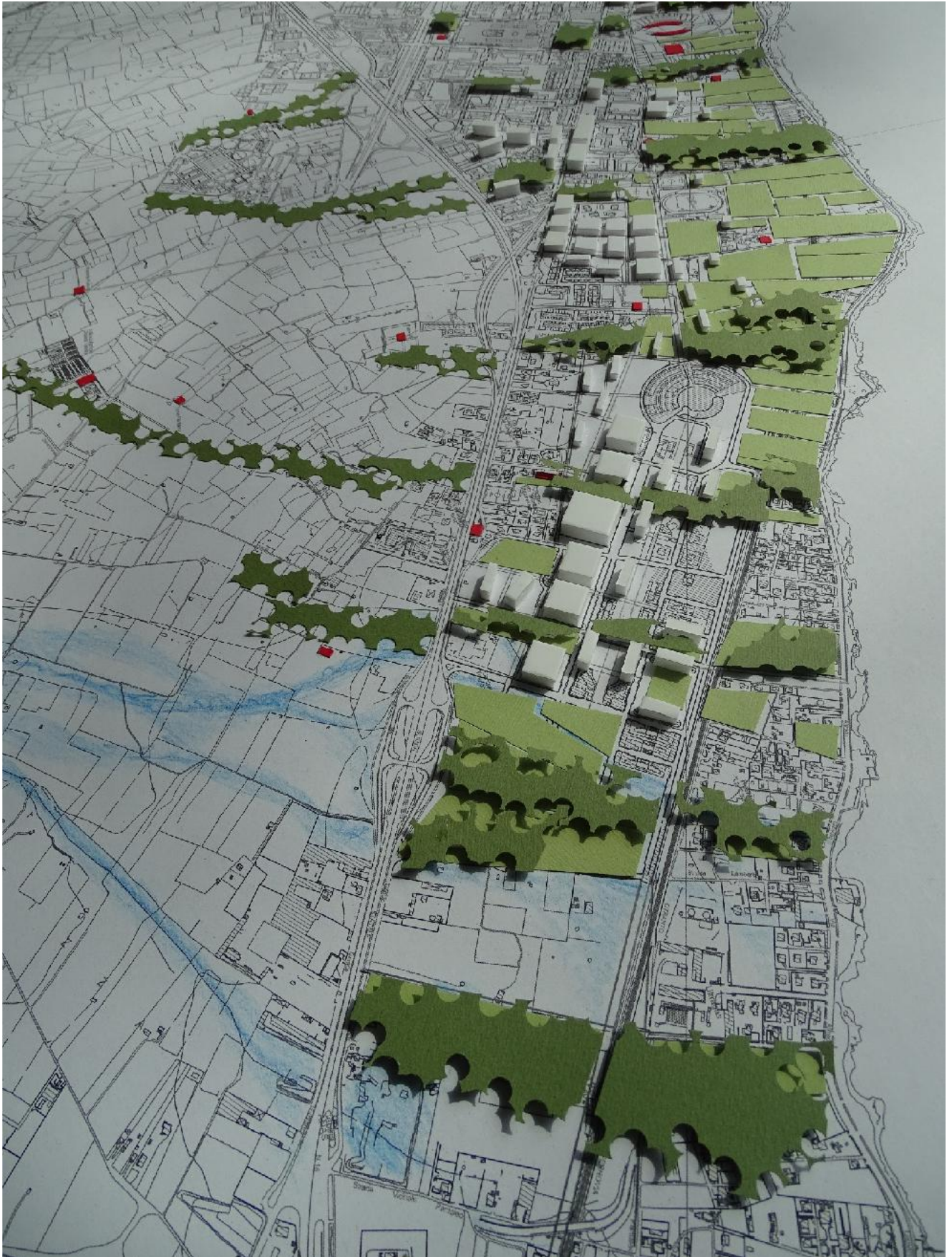


**Figure 1:** Bari and its southern coastal area, which is the subject of the project (Google Maps).



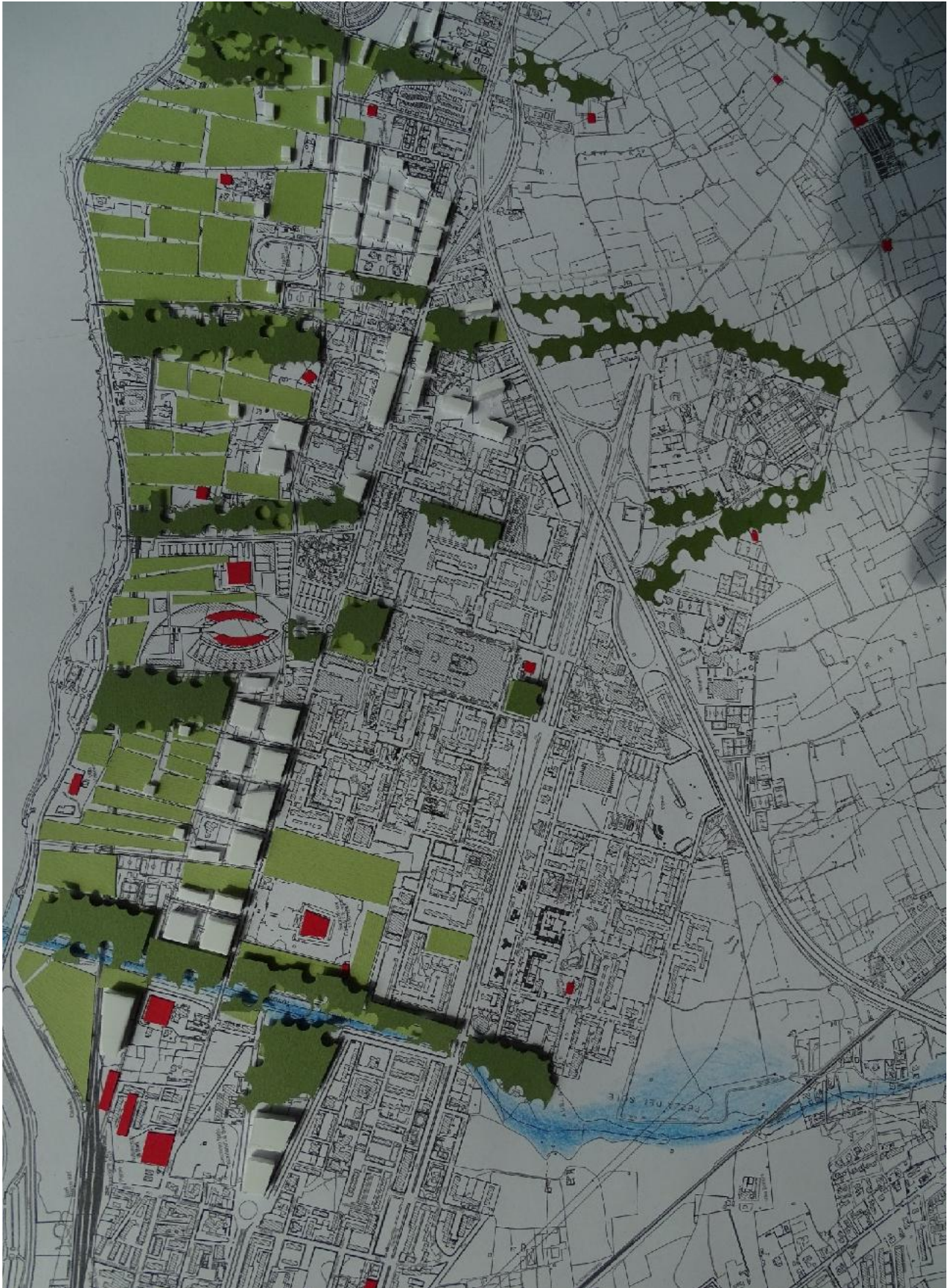
**Figure 2:** Detail of the southern coastal area, which is the subject of the project (Google Maps).





**Figure 3:** View of the project. Dealing with the breakage of space imposed by the two main motorways. Model, scale 1:5000, photo Tatjana Capuder Vidmar.





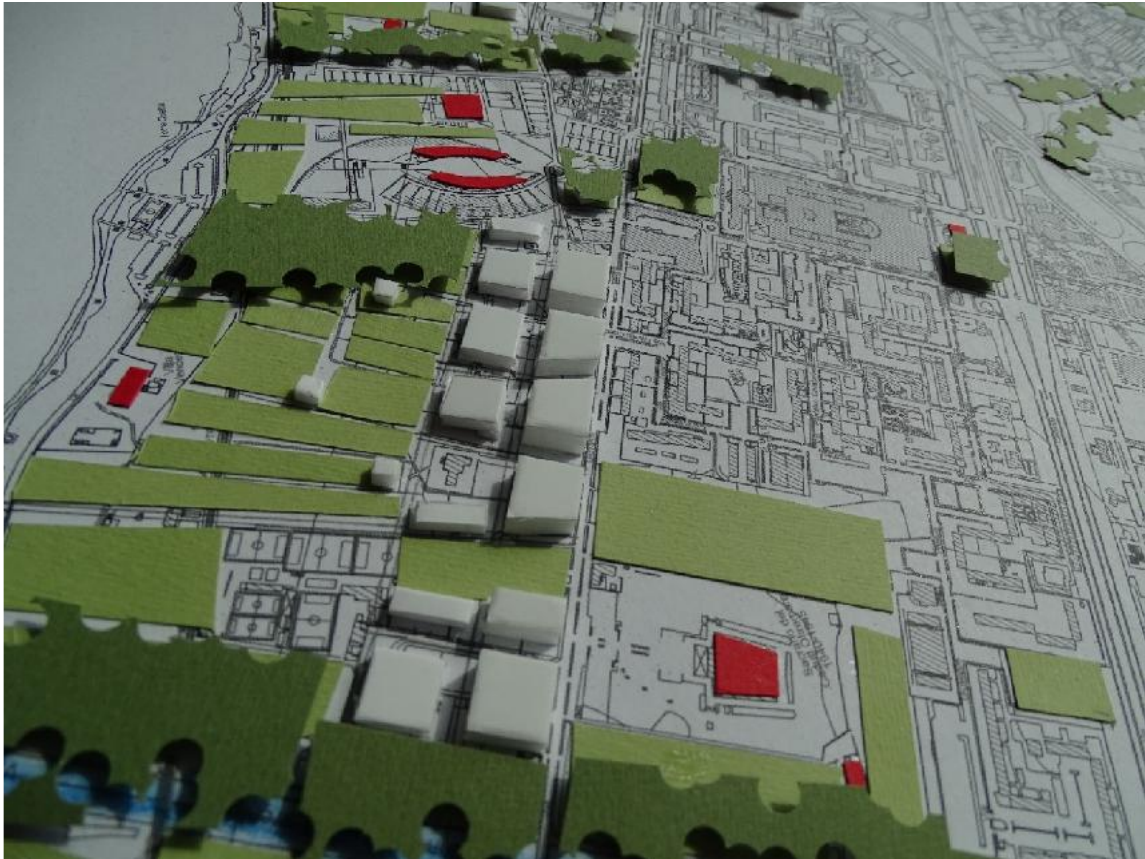
**Figure 4:** View of the project. The city and the agricultural park harmonically unite.  
Model, scale 1:5000, photo Tatjana Capuder Vidmar.





**Figures 5 and 6:** The geography of the place rules the rhythm of the agricultural park.  
Model, scale 1:5000, photo Tatjana Capuder Vidmar.





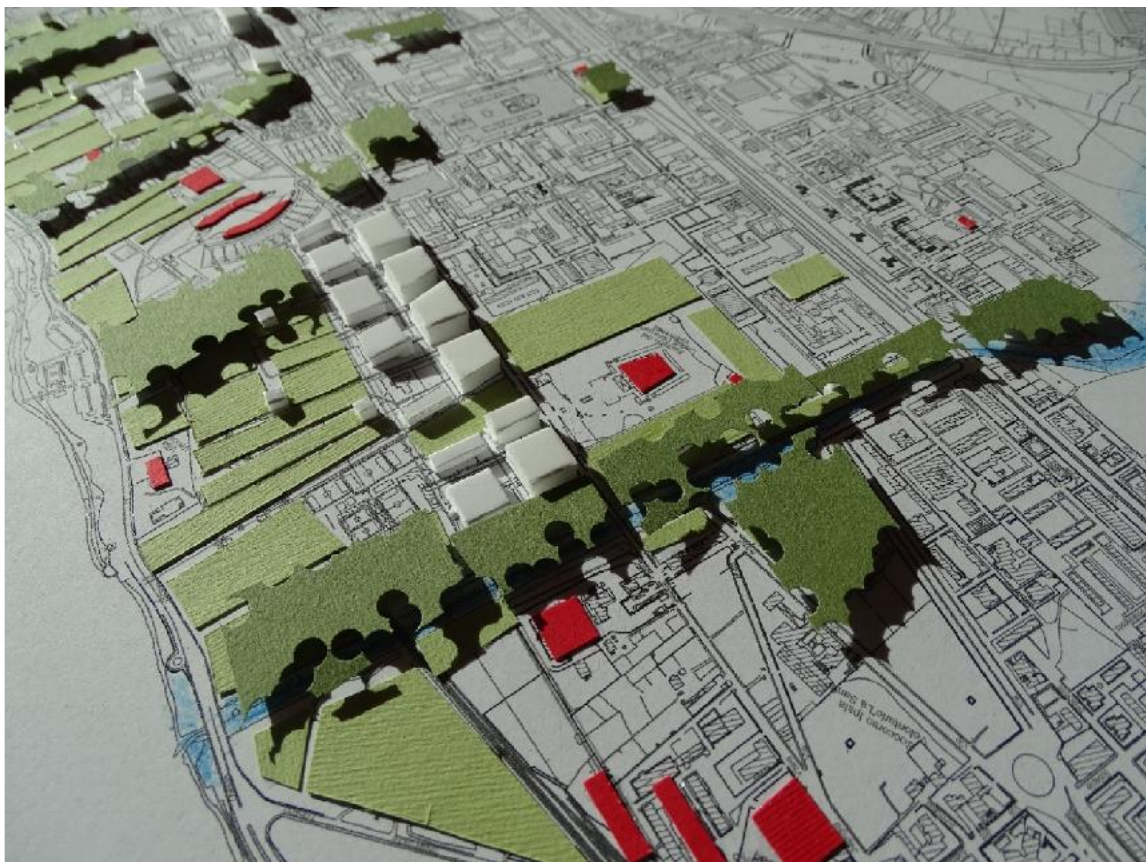
**Figures 7 and 8:** Leveraging on the existing buildings and infrastructure for a progressive regeneration. Model, scale 1:5000, photo Tatjana Capuder Vidmar.





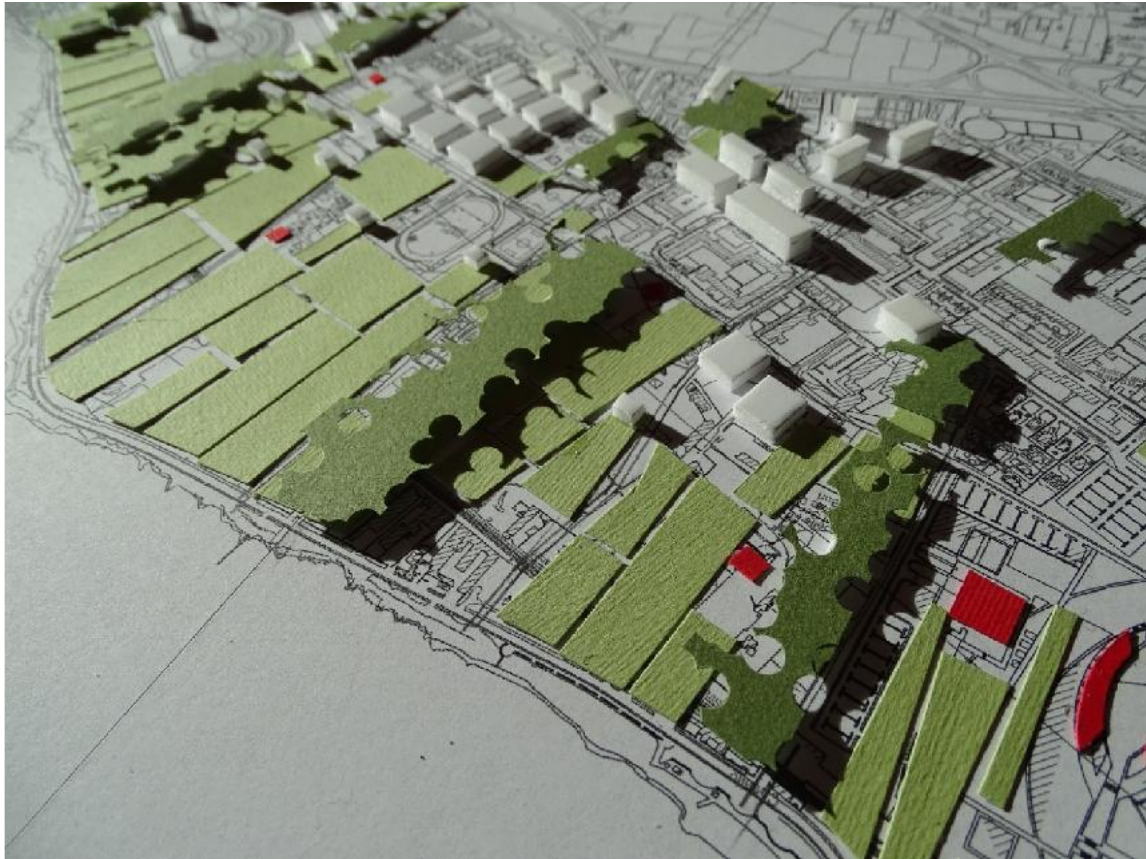
**Figures 9 and 10:** The green intervention goes beyond the transportation border into the hinterland. Model, scale 1:5000, photo Tatjana Capuder Vidmar.





**Figures 11 and 12:** Green corridors for humans, green species, and wild animals.  
Model, scale 1:5000, photo Tatjana Capuder Vidmar.





**Figures 13 and 14:** A fractal order repeats itself at different scales.  
Model, scale 1:5000, photo Tatjana Capuder Vidmar.

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# Erbaş's Shell of Provincial Memory: Translator's Note

**Derick Mattern**

*Washington University in St. Louis, United States of America*

Şükrü Erbaş, one of Turkey's most prominent and beloved contemporary poets, was born in the fall of 1953 in a small town deep in the Anatolian countryside. Raised in Yozgat and educated in Ankara, he spent over twenty-five years as a civil servant for a branch of the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture. Although he has been publishing since the early 1980s, Erbaş's work is only now beginning to appear in English. Author of more than twenty books of poetry and essays, his work has won numerous accolades in his home country, including the Golden Orange Prize for his book *Bağbozumu Şarkıları* (*Songs of the Vineyard Harvest*, 2012). He now makes his home in the southern city of Antalya.

In his time as an official for the Turkish Grain Board in Ankara, Erbaş would certainly have had ample opportunity to overhear many conversations of the type he recreates in "Why Should We Kill the Peasants?". The poem reads as though it were concatenated from notes he jotted down during his early years at the Ministry; indeed, it was written in 1988/1989, and first published in *Kimliksiz Değişim* (*Unidentified Change*, 1992). The anger and the irony come through clearly, so unsurprisingly it is one of Erbaş's most celebrated poems, establishing him as one of the central figures of *taşralı* (provincial, rural) poetics in Turkey. His work directly links the provinces to memory, and memory forms the core of his poetics. The "Literary Manifesto of the Provinces" (*Edebiyatın Taşradan Manifestosu*), of which he was a co-composer, makes this explicit: "The provincial memory (*hafıza*) no longer exists, but memory (*hatıra*) of it remains. Like a shell. Wherever people go, that shell is with them. ...The rhythm of that memory continues to endure by echoing through texts." His poems are often more subtle in their politics—not unusual for a poet in the generation following Turkey's coup d'état of September 1980. Poet-critic Şeref Bilsel calls him a socialist poet without slogans, who doesn't say "I need to speak" but rather "I have heard", according him a status similar to a poet of witness. Erbaş's experience on both sides of the urban/rural divide affords him a unique perspective, allowing him to witness not only the peasant, but also those who deride them.

Derick Mattern's translations of poems by Haydar Ergülen, Şükrü Erbaş, and Cenk Gündoğdu have appeared in *Gulf Coast*, *Modern Poetry in Translation*, *Copper Nickel*, *The Common*, *World Literature Today*, *Berlin Quarterly*, and elsewhere. His work on behalf of contemporary Turkish poetry has received support from the British Centre for Literary Translation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Banff International Literary Translation Centre. He is a PhD student on the international writers track in comparative literature at Washington University in St. Louis.





*Selling things all day, or working forty-five hours a week in a factory is no life for a man — jobs like that lead to ignorance... Working is a way of preserving the knowledge my sons are losing. I dig the holes, wait for the tender moon and plant out these saplings to give an example to my sons if they are interested, and, if not, to show my father and his father that the knowledge they handed down has not yet been abandoned. Without that knowledge, I am nothing.*

John Berger, *Pig Earth*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1979, p. 75.

# Why Should We Kill the Peasants?

Şükrü Erbaş

Why should we kill the peasants?

Because they are slow-tempered men  
In the face of a changing world  
Stolid as mud-brick walls  
Enduring drought like thistles  
Living lives of hardy resistance.  
They are stupid, shifty, and vulgar.  
They lie with ease and confidence.  
Even though they have money  
They have a knack for appearing poor.  
They make light of everything and swear at everyone.  
Rain, wind, or shine  
They can't go a day without  
Thinking about their crops...  
And trying to expand their fields  
By plowing over each other's borders.

Why should we kill the peasants?

Because they beat their wives  
And their tone of voice is none too soft.  
They are as oppressed within as they are without.  
They do not read newspapers and only stand  
Against injustice if they suffer it themselves.  
Even though the villages all have a spring at every turn  
Their clothes are never clean and they always  
Go about with their beards at hands-length.  
They are unable to raise their children well.  
Their houses have no books or music or pictures.  
They do not brush their teeth even for a day  
And only take off their hats for bed.

# Köylüleri Niçin Öldürmeliyiz?

Şükrü Erbaş

Köylüleri niçin öldürmeliyiz?

Çünkü onlar ağır kanlı adamlardır  
Değişen bir dünyaya karşı  
Kerpiç duvarlar gibi katı  
Çakır dikenleri gibi susuz  
Kayıtsızca direnerek yaşarlar.  
Aptal, kaba ve kurnazdırlar.  
İnanarak ve kolayca yalan söylerler.  
Paraları olsa da  
Yoksul görünmek gibi bir hünerleri vardır.  
Her şeyi hafife alır ve herkese söverler.  
Yağmuru, rüzgarı ve güneşi  
Bir gün olsun ekinleri akıllarına gelmeden  
Düşünemezler...  
Ve birbirlerinin sınırlarını sürerek  
Topraklarını büyütmeye çalışırlar.

Köylüleri niçin öldürmeliyiz?

Çünkü onlar karılarını döverler  
Seslerinin tonu yumuşak değildir  
Dışarda ezildikçe içerde zulüm kesilirler.  
Gazete okumaz ve haksızlığa  
Ancak kendileri uğrarlarsa karşı çıkarlar.  
Adım başı pınar olsa da köylerinde  
Temiz giyinmez ve her zaman  
Bir karış sakalla gezerler.  
Çocuklarını iyi yetiştiremezler  
Evlerinde, kitap, müzik ve resim yoktur.  
Bir gün olsun dişlerini fırçalamaz  
Ve şapkalarını ancak yatarken çıkarırlar.

Why should we kill the peasants?

Because they fight when their dogs fight.  
They only visit each other's homes  
For weddings and funerals.  
They are embarrassed by songs and sadness.  
Laughter is shameful and fun is weakness.  
Only in their cups do they grow emotional and cry.  
Their hearts flicker like kerosene lamps  
Covered in a shell thickened over thousands of years.  
They cheat each other constantly  
For fear of being cheated.  
When they have to go somewhere together  
They walk at least ten steps ahead of their wives  
And beat them in front of everyone  
As a sign of their manhood.

Why should we kill the peasants?

Because they vote for the wrong party  
They make fun of their own  
And strangely believe in others.  
The state is the land office, bank loans, and hospitals.  
They fear the state and swindle it the most.  
As conscripts they're brave enough to beat their officers  
But in the presence of a state official—this too is strange—  
they collapse, crumple, in defeat, crushed.  
As for inflation, they only know the prices of wheat and fertilizer.  
They lean on the wall of a mosque, or a coffeehouse, or a tree  
And spend eleven months waiting for blessings to fall.  
They live in pious terror of hellfire  
But they're randy enough to make out  
A woman's breasts just from seeing her heels.  
Once a year after the threshing's done,  
They go to town!

Köylüleri niçin öldürmeliyiz?

Çünkü onlar köpekleri boğuşunca kavga ederler.  
 Birbirlerinin evlerine ancak  
 Ölümünde ve düğününde giderler.  
 Şarkı söylemekten ve kederlenmekten utanırlar  
 Gülmek ayıp eğlenmek zayıflıktır  
 Ancak rakı içtiklerinde duygulanır ve ağlarlar.  
 Binlerce yılın kalın kabuğu altında  
 Yürekları bir gaz lambası kadar kalmıştır.  
 Aldanmak korkusu içinde  
 Sürekli birbirlerini aldatırlar.  
 Bir yere birlikte gitmeleri gerekirse  
 Karılarından en az on adım önde yürürler  
 Ve bir erkeklik işareti olarak  
 Onları herkesin ortasında döverler.

Köylüleri niçin öldürmeliyiz?

Çünkü onlar yanlış partilere oy verirler  
 Kendilerinden olanlarla alay edip  
 Tuhaf bir şekilde başkalarına inanırlar.  
 Devlet, tapu dairesi, banka borcu ve hastanedir.  
 Devlettten korkar ve en çok ona hile yaparlar.  
 Yiğittirler askerde subay dövecek kadar  
 Ama bir memur karşısında -bu da tuhaftır-  
 Ezim ezim ezilirler.  
 Enflasyon denilince buğday ve gübre fiyatlarını bilirler.  
 Cami duvarı, kahve ya da bir ağaç gövdesine yaslanıp  
 Onbir ay gökyüzünden bereket beklerler.  
 Dindardırlar ahret korkusu içinde  
 Ama bir kadının topuklarından  
 Memelerini göreceğ kadar bıçkındırlar  
 Harmanı kaldırdıktan sonra yılda bir kez  
 Şehre giderler!

Why should we kill the peasants?

Because they take off their shoes on buses  
 Sprawling across the seats and suffocating everyone  
 With their mouths and feet stinking to high heaven  
 While rambling on and on about their daughters' misfortunes  
 And their good-for-nothing sons.  
 Even though they're mired in poverty, they're grateful  
 Believing that this is a gift from God.  
 And as though bringing it up in passing  
 They take every opportunity to mention with secret pride  
 Their rich relation who lives in the far-off city.  
 They are refined enough to know how to dine in a restaurant  
 But as soon as they step out into the street  
 They hock a spit on the ground...  
 And then in astonishment speak about how clean and orderly  
 It is in the city and how good it is to live there.

Why should we kill the peasants?

Because they go to bed as soon as it is dark.  
 They have no passion for contemplating other worlds  
 While gazing at the stars in the middle of the night.  
 They love the sky if it brings rain in spring  
 And the summer sun if it suffices for their crops.  
 Their imaginations are meagre and no innovation  
 —Even a high-yielding seed—  
 Is believable until they've seen the results.  
 They have nothing to contribute to world progress.  
 They love property to such a merciless degree  
 A country's future is mortgaged  
 Under their miniscule fields.  
 And each one stands like a piece of rock, impervious  
 To the deep rivers of time...

SO TELL US HOW, HOW  
 SHALL WE SAVE THE PEASANTS?

Köylüleri niçin öldürmeliyiz?

Çünkü onlar otobüslerde ayaklarını çıkarırlar  
 Ayak ve ağız kokuları içinde kurulup koltuklara  
 Herkesi bunalta bunalta, yüksek perdeden  
 Kızlarının talihsizliğini  
 Ve hayırsız oğullarını anlatırlar.  
 Yoksulluktan kıvrandıkları halde, şükür içinde  
 Bunun, Tanrının bir lütfu olduğuna inanırlar.  
 Ve önemsiz bir şeyden söz eder gibi, her fırsatta  
 Gizli bir övünçle, uzak şehirdeki  
 Zengin bir akrabalarından söz ederler.  
 Kibardırırlar lokantada yemek yemeyi bilecek kadar  
 Ama sokağa çıkar çıkmaz sümküre sümküre  
 Yollara tükürürler..  
 Ve sonra şaşarak temizliğine ve düzenine  
 Şehirde yaşamının iyiliğinden konuşurlar.

Köylüleri niçin öldürmeliyiz?

Çünkü onlar ilk akşamdan uyurlar.  
 Yarı gecelerde yıldızlara bakarak  
 Başka dünyaları düşünmek gibi tutkuları yoktur.  
 Gökyüzünü, baharda yağmur yağarsa  
 Ve yaz güneşleri ekinlerini yetirirse severler.  
 Hayal güçleri kıttır ve hiçbir yeniliğe  
 -Bu verimi yüksek bir tohum bile olsa-  
 Sonuçlarını görmeden inanmazlar.  
 Dünyanın gelişimine bir katkıları yoktur.  
 Mülk düşkünüdürler amansız derecede  
 Bir ülkenin geleceği  
 Küçük topraklarının ipoteği altındadır.  
 Ve birer kaya parçası gibi dururlar su geçirmeden  
 Zamanın derin ırmakları önünde...

KÖYLÜLERİ, SÖYLEYİN NASIL  
 NASIL KURTARALIM?





## REVIEWS



# Learning Sustainability from Mediterranean Wisdom

Besim Selim Hakim (2008). *Arabic-Islamic Cities: Building and Planning Principles*. EmergentCity Press.

## Review by Antonio Caperna

*International Society of Biourbanism, Italy*

Besim S. Hakim's book *Arabic-Islamic Cities: Building and Planning Principles* represents one of the first structured and coherent studies about a new approach to traditional cities (Islamic, in this case). Through an extensive analysis of ancient historical manuscripts, such as the fourteenth-century manuscript of Ibn Al-Rami and site visits, the author achieves three main goals: identify and understand the organizational rules of the traditional Islamic city; evaluate these rules and principles in the context of the contemporary urban environment, and understand the benefits of this approach.

The book shows the emergence of a deep and intimate interconnection between the cultural context and the regulatory system that shaped urban neighborhoods within the Maghreb region of the Mediterranean basin. The case study is analyzed in detail. It focuses on the existing traditional Arabic-Islamic city of Tunis and its Medina. Thus, chapter by chapter, the author helps the reader understand how the traditional city and its general meta-principles regulate the planning process, and how its practical rules guide the building process.

From a methodological point of view, one of the most significant aspects concerns the structure of the legal system based on proscriptive rules. It differs from contemporary systems, which are based on prescriptive-imposed law. The difference is extremely important in the growth process of the city sectors. The prescriptive, top-down rules tend to eliminate the local character and make the various parts of the city similar to each other. Instead, the proscriptive method illustrated by Hakim has the ability to respond freely and creatively to local conditions and requirements. Built environments that adopt proscriptive meta-principles encourage the development of local character with a complex geometrical space syntax.

Recent researches, from several scholars, show the intimate mathematical character of traditional cities (Alexander, 2002; Batty, 2007; Salingaros, 2006). These urban environments adopt meta-principles that work according to scientific laws, such as those indicated by fractal geometry. The creation of this built environment is based on complex dynamic rules that unfold the various parts of the city. The components of the system are based on a hierarchy of identifiable urban and building scale elements that function together as a versatile design language. Here, aspects such as the road system, housing clusters, or the position of religious and commercial structures are generated by a morphogenetic process and structured on principles, rules, and archetypes that combine equity, social inclusion, and the reinforcement of life.

This process has a generative character, as illustrated by a morphological analysis of the urban core of Tunis' Medina. This case study offers a qualitative and quantitative interpretation of the building process. Examples are selected at both the city and neighborhood scales.

Of significance in the planning process are the practical rules adopted to facilitate neighborhood relationships. For example, we can find rules that regulate walls between neighbors that are designed to protect the rights of all parties. The fundamental principle is able to ensure that no damage to neighboring properties occurs during the construction processes of adjacent buildings. Similarly, feedback between neighbors is an important part of the process so as to promote balance and fairness in the relationship between both individuals and public/private sectors. In addition, the negotiation and mediation process between property owners and master masons is managed, when necessary, by the local court and its judge. This demonstrates an interesting example of mediation to reduce conflict.

The law's system, based on meta-principles and social values, constitutes a whole within a set of constructive archetypes. This mix unfolds a flexible and dynamic built environment, where the construction process is able to combine design freedom, equity, and geometrical coherence. This is the magic of the traditional built environment, which is able to support and reinforce life in its several expressions.

In conclusion, Hakim's study shows the importance of meta-principles and rules in the process of building that can be translated into mathematics of complex dynamic systems. This scientific approach can also be found in other traditional contexts, where harmonic built environments unfold through generative processes. In turn, these link with the socio-economic and cultural context, thus creating beauty. The study constitutes a fundamental basis to understand the legal system that facilitates a sustainable process. This reviewer recommends Hakim's book for both researchers who intend to understand the fundamental aspects of traditional cities and builders/stakeholders interested in supporting sustainable processes.

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# The Viridity of Heaven

Michael R. Rosmann (2011). *Excellent Joy: Fishing, Farming, Hunting, and Psychology*. North Liberty, IA: Ice Cube Books.

## Review by Sara Bissen & Stefano Serafini

*The Ruralist Body, United States of America & International Society of Biourbanism, Italy*

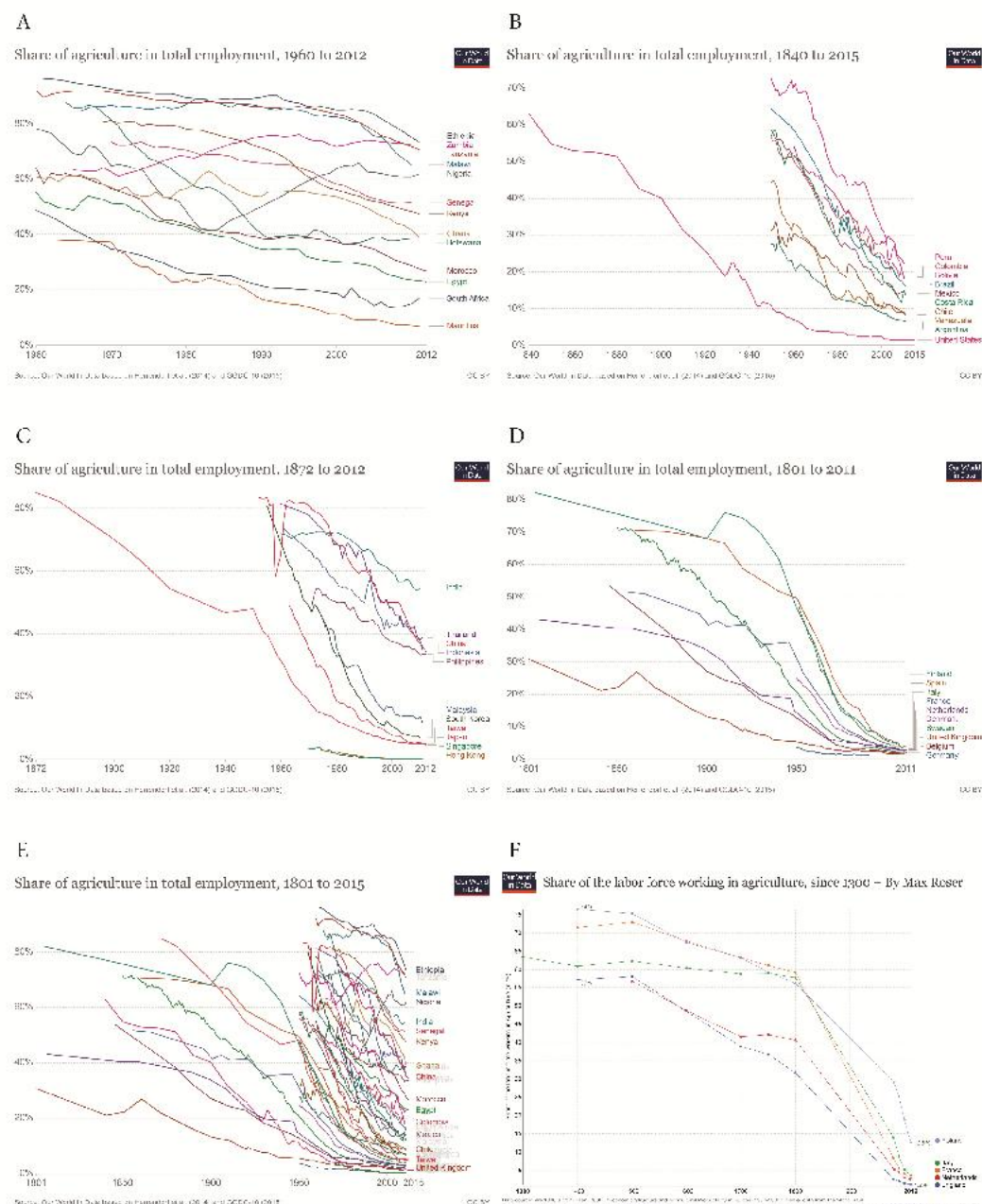
At the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992, the then U.S. President George H. W. Bush reportedly declared that “the American way of life is not up for negotiations. Period.” Thirty subsequent years have shown that such a statement is far from belonging to just American exceptionalism. Rather, the “American way of life” has been the actual model for and aspiration of the entire planet’s mainstream economics: a general movement toward objects and self-objectification.

As Frederick L. Kirschenmann points out in the foreword, quoting Kaplan (2008), the U.S. had been “a rather frugal society” before the “gospel of consumption” transformed it into a consuming machine (Rosmann, 2011, p. xi). Once again, unfortunately, this describes a global trend.

People often misinterpret frugality as poverty or avarice. In fact, frugality indicates neither a condition nor a fault, but rather the moral skill to keep aiming at one’s happiness without confusing it with the material means to achieve it. Frugality is the attitude of focusing on what really matters, adhering to one’s deeper desires, seeking self-sufficiency, and balancing one’s existence with the world and others while being able to support and care for them. It is a strategy of meaningful survival for our subjectivity and sociality.

The power of industry to churn out more products than frugal people could ever consume has led to the creation of artificial human desires. This deflects humankind on the never-ending search for satisfaction in useless consumption—the socio-economic path of unlimited growth. This has become a downward slope toward ecological ruination, global injustice, and future jeopardy. It leads to self-destruction, not to mention spiritual degradation. To keep up with the obsessive lie that wealth produces happiness, crass materialism is promoted to the point of dulling our civilization. Our impressive technological progress could have relieved humankind from hunger, toil, and the most basic needs. Following mechanization, industrialism, and tertiary growth, the labor force share of U.S. agriculture has dropped from 63 to 1.4 percent over the past 180 years with a similar plunge emerging all around the world (Figure 1). Yet today, people devour their own time in strife and competition, including war, for an ever-increasing quantity of unnecessary material resources. Urban necropolises promote constant transience and the exchange value of floating, rootless ideas and things. Here, work is no longer work. The responsibility of taking care of the land becomes meaningless, and life is exchanged on the level of economic value. Consumption even dictates where, when, and how much disappearance needs to happen. The end of the rural seems like a need for progress—be it capitalist or socialist—that has little to do with needful production and human goals.

Son of a third-generation immigrant farmer, Dr. Michael R. Rosmann was an Assistant Professor of Psychology at the University of Virginia in the 1970's when he felt the urge to contribute to the social minority he came from. His instinct made him acutely aware of the high existential pressure suffered by those who, while providing society with the most essential, occupy the bottom of an upside-down productive pyramid. He decided to abandon his academic career and moved back to his native Iowa to farm and counsel, literally, in the field. In doing so, he contributed to the birth of a new branch of psychology: agricultural behavioral health. "Understanding the behavior of farm people is my life's work," he wrote (Rosmann, 2011, p. 150).



**Figure 1:** The plummeting pattern of agricultural employment over the past 200 years (based on available data)—**A:** Africa **B:** The Americas **C:** Asia **D:** Europe **E:** Global **F:** Europe since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Elaborated after Lippolis, 2015 (A–D) and Roser, 2012 (E).

*Excellent Joy* collects memories from Rosmann's journey into the guts of a partially resisting and partially imploding "frugal" country, and its ideal according to which it is better to give than to get. In fact, even the proverbial Western individualism fades in front of the productive cycle established between nature and the farm family.

I believe my generation is the last in rural America in which the needs of the family farm took priority over the desires of the children and, 'what is good for their development.' (Rosmann, 2011, p. 44)

This is of much interest for us, as it points to the other side of the exploding and decaying urban world. Here, important life principles, such as the *agrarian imperative* to survive with a purpose emerge against urban competition (Rosmann, 2010). Fine episodes, like the story of the little black fly, embody a rural sense of improvisation, trial and error, evolution, and a healthy relation between the self and the world (Rosmann, 2011, pp. 14–21). However, Rosmann also deals with the epidemic of farmers' suicide, showing the scars of a deep, anthropological malaise, which again is not limited to the U.S. (Bissen, 2020; Rosmann, 2010). This malaise emerges at the border between rural life and its values (real production, natural constraints, planning for the future, community, and family) and the "gospel of consumption" with its consequences (economy of the immaterial, overcoming boundaries, immediacy of enjoyment, and individualism).

The book also witnesses a scientific methodology. In fact, Dr. Rosmann did not lean toward Iowan farmers to bring benevolent cosmopolitan solutions to "hayseeds" who need to be fixed (a common attitude we see, for example, in political activism). Rather, he became a member of the community. We think this is key in his capability of connecting with people who are often unwilling to open up, and then helping them. As one of his patients said, "you are a farmer like us... you understand" (Rosmann, 2011, p. 143). This resonates with the biourban critics of the distance between designers and dwellers—be it social, cultural, or spiritual. Despite their own need to dwell, so few architects have their "skin in the game" when it comes to building a home or a place for someone else to belong.

Readers will not find any romantic idealization of rural life in this work. However, they will receive an insider explanation of what makes it the place for "excellent joy" to sprinkle where nature and culture, that is, the tame and the wild (Ibidem, p. xii), are one world. This is also the author's perspective on the future of farming. Industrial farming, with its excess of commodity, pollution, and cruelty, is on the wrong track. Sustainable farming involves conservation of resources, diversity of production, and "farming as a way of life" (Ibidem, p. 150). The latter is a self-sufficient unit entirely looked after by just one farmer, eventually with the help of his or her family. Surprisingly, this description reflects 74.86 percent of current U.S. farms, which declare no hired labor (as one can extract from NASS, 2019, Table 1, p. 7 and Table 71, p. 106). This adds to the fact that 85 percent of farms are under 500 acres (Ibidem, Table 1, p. 7).

The rooster pheasants beating their wings and crowing to the harem of hens still in the spruce and pine windbreak tells me that this rich farmland produces bounty for wild and domestic alike. (Rosmann, 2011, p. 45)

In such a context, wilderness is a complexity that we need to protect because we belong to it. "If nearly everyone detracts from the good of the whole, the system will collapse," explained Rosmann (Ibidem, p. 61).

One might think of the eighteenth-century century Italian landscape that Wolfgang Goethe found so keen to artistically represent because humans and nature had co-created it for ages. Nowadays, an excess of roads, pointless architecture, bad urbanism, trash, and billboards corrupt that landscape, which looks as ugly as the civic and moral decay that spoiled it in less than 80 years (Settis, 2010). The current, wide debate on how to preserve and recover the beauty of the country is intertwined with initiatives and discussions on how to repopulate rural Italy and reuse its land and buildings. Belongingness timidly emerges from this discussion, which has long been dominated by the delusion of consumeristic development (Los, 2019; Marchetti, Panunzi, & Pazzagli, 2017; Pucci, 2021). This book may suggest the relevance of another forgotten element that is both individual and communitarian: the cultivation of the soil of virtue.

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