



POLITECNICO  
DI TORINO

# Honors thesis

---

ARCHITECTURE FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY DESIGN

*Abstract*

**Travelling through historical trails**

**A proposal for urban regeneration in the neighbourhood of  
Psyrrri, Athens**

*Tutor*

Silvia Gron

*Co-tutor*

Jean-Marc Huygen

Roberto Giordano

*by*

Miriam Quassolo

February 2018

---

Especially considering its location within the ancient urban borders, Athens is a *boiling* organism. The building density, the limited environmental policies, the low awareness of themes about global warming, the unstable economy and, as a consequence, the social marginalization and segregation (just to mention some of the widespread problems) reveal a critical and worrying picture, which inspired this thesis work. The work began during the double degree program at the ENSA of Marseilles, where we employed survey tools and micro-planning responsive to the material traces of the ancient European city.

An interdisciplinary approach for the Athenian urban issue is justified by the complexity of the case study and the context in which it is located. The disciplines covered concern the Architectural Composition and the Technology of Architecture, without overlooking themes related to social, economic and historical aspects.

The project site is settled in the Psyrri district, on the northern slopes of the Athenian Acropolis. The indented aims are to trigger a process of social awareness concerning the *sustainability* - not only the environmental side - and then to spread, through material means, respectful attitudes towards the current context and the future one. It is therefore a matter of making both local inhabitants and *outsiders* - those who decide to take care of the place - more autonomous and responsible.

This *empowered autonomy* can be reached through the systematization of existing activities, in order to produce more stable and local micro-economies. The project is also aimed at the social component of Psyrri, through a gradual process leading to the recognition and identification of the citizens themselves in the neighbourhood.

A responsible community is more inclined to respect the environment, to be conscious in their use of the local resources and to accept the compromises which could limit their anthropogenic polluting footprint.

The current urban layout of Psyrri is the result of the sequence of eras. Comparing the historical cartography with the contemporary planimetry it turns out that urban viability has developed through an additive process: modern and contemporary roads have been added to the oldest ones, so the original structural change is limited. This means that the road structure is closer to a historical schematization of the neighborhood, in which, in place of toponymy, one could indicate the historical chronology, erasing the temporal barrier altogether. Walking through its streets is an alternative form of visiting: the static nature of the archaeological sites is accompanied by the perception of stratified anthropic artifacts, which are instead dynamic.

The present situation is the result of a first elaboration at the urban scale, meant as a set of various neighborhood entities, dynamically connected to each other to constitute a single coherent organism.

The ensuing project is based on a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the reality of Psyrri. The results illustrate the urgency of a sustainable urban transformation planned in the environmental, economic and social fields. The transformation takes place through the restructuring of the oldest historical axes, identifying three nodes (in Leokoriou, Pallados and Adrianou) which can generate a new local dynamism, reorganizing the urban environment both with artifacts of interest and public use, and through strategies for the improvement of the microclimate - indissociable factors.

The rehabilitation of the two historical traces is the principle of a method focusing on the regeneration of the entire district, in order to make it a *city in the city*, through innovative repetition - with contemporary forms and languages - of traditional responses to perennial problems, which, today more than ever, are rooted in the identity loss of the local society.

---



For further information please contact:  
Miriam Quassolo  
[miriamq@hotmail.it](mailto:miriamq@hotmail.it)