



## 5<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL STUDENT CONFERENCE

3-4 May 2022

### *Call For Papers*

## Challenging Athens: urban development and human interaction at a Mediterranean crossroads

Athens—ancient and modern—can be a challenging city in which to live. Its dense urban core has always seemed to battle against the natural landscape, and the population has struggled to move about and interact with the infrastructure of transport networks, streets, waterways and public spaces. And yet it is also a city of solutions, taking bold steps to solve long-term issues or to address emergency situations, sudden influxes of migrant populations, clearing up from and lessening the impact of natural disasters, adapting to the topography of its hills and rivers, and devising plans to get people from A to B. We invite young CYA scholars to present their original research on these themes across a range of disciplines. The conference will be divided into three sessions, with four or five papers selected per session by the organizing committee.

**Chair: Robert Pitt**

**Deadline for the submission of abstracts: 25 February 2022**

### **Session 1: Challenges of natural topography**

Wandering along streets flanked by tall apartment buildings, we often fail to notice the shape and contours of the natural landscape in which the city was laid out. In Classical times, the Athenians used the hills of the city for defensive purposes, linking them with great walls to Piraeus so as to be connected to its life blood: the sea. The rivers of Athens have always needed to be tamed: the ancients canalized the Eridanos as it flowed through the urban center, and in the 20th century the Ilissos was covered over and converted into a storm drain which in recent years has reasserted itself on the landscape by swallowing cars. Papers in this session will deal with the human interaction with the natural topography of the city.

### **Session 2: Challenges of migration and mobility**

Athens has a long history of absorbing immigrant populations. In the 5th century BCE it formed a maritime empire to which foreigners flocked to take up prime positions in commercial activities. The Peloponnesian War brought waves of people from the countryside, and the cramped conditions were a contributing factor to the plague that followed. In the 20th and 21st centuries, wars in the Eastern Mediterranean, Middle East, and beyond have sent waves of migrants to and through Greece, creating multiple challenges, practical, structural, and ethical. Papers presented in this session will concentrate on the movement of peoples through Athens across a range of interconnecting economic, political, and social challenges.

### **Session 3: Challenges of urban development and planning**

The speed at which Athens has developed in order to respond to increases in population, vehicular traffic, and the needs of a large commuting workforce has at times been both staggering and stagnant. The system of antiparochi in which plots of land were exchanged for homes within large apartment blocks has largely created the city we see today; immigration has necessitated the construction of cheap housing at various points in the city's history; and the Olympic Games in 2004 forever changed the way we move around the center. The city is currently investigating and implanting plans for further major changes in the way we drive, cycle and walk around town, and papers in this session will investigate these challenges.