

The editor's page

● For a long time I have considered any opportunity to collaborate with Dr Ingrid Leman Stefanovic a privilege. This time the opportunity was offered by the international Symposium on "The Natural City" sponsored by the University of Toronto and the World Society for Ekistics which took place on the campus of the university and was organized and chaired by her on behalf of both sponsors.

I wish to thank her for having accepted to act as guest editor for this volume of Ekistics in spite of her very heavy commitments due to her role as Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Centre for Environment, University of Toronto.

I also wish to express my admiration for her inspired and inspiring introductory statement on the concept of the natural city (see pp. 8 and 9).

● In this Symposium, an international and interdisciplinary group of approx. 100 experts and a fairly large number of other participants and students held a very intensive three-day program – 4 plenary and 28 special sessions, with several papers and discussions in each (see p. 2) – determined

● to challenge the erroneous but still prevailing perception of "human settlements" and "nature" as independent of each other; and,

● to stress the need for the general adoption of the integration of these two notions – which is inherent in the approach of both convenors of the Symposium.

● The 38 papers contained in this volume, most of which were made available at the Symposium and a few of them at a later date, are organized in two parts, i.e.

● Part 1: Canadian issues of international relevance (vol. 71, no. 424/425/426, January/February-March/April-May/June 2004)

● Part 2: International issues of relevance to Canada (vol. 71, no. 427/428/429, July/August-September/October-November/December 2004).

The papers focus chiefly on the relation of nature and its basic components – from vegetation and all other resources to climate – with the other elements of human settlements, i.e. Anthropos, Society, Shells and Networks. Emphasis is on the desirability for a conscious effort towards maintaining a constant balance between all five elements of human settlements, taking into consideration the dynamic changes identified at present and/or anticipated for the future. On the other hand, the feasibility of such an effort is supported by encouraging cases of success in high-income and technologically advanced communities, particularly at scales from "house group" to "metropolis" – and much less on larger scale human settlements.

For more specific information, in addition to the table of contents, the reader may also refer to the Ekistic Grid (pp. 145-148) for each individual paper and to p. 298 for the entire volume.

● I wish to thank all contributors to this volume of Ekistics and Mrs Noriko Doi who provided all the photographic material from the meetings.

● However, I must also express my apologies for the very long time it has taken for these issues to be printed for a variety of reasons – most of them beyond our control.

In addition, I personally wish to ask the guest-editor and the following authors – David Etkin, James Gray-Donald, Natalie Helferty, Hazel McCallion and David Selby – to forgive us for using their papers in this pre-dated volume. These papers were written and made available to us much later than the time of the 2004 Symposium – in fact three of them were presented at the second Symposium on "The Natural City" in 2006 focusing on "Success Stories." Their attractive topics represented essential contributions with new dimensions to the Natural City concept and I could not resist the temptation to make them part of the present volume.

P. Psomopoulos