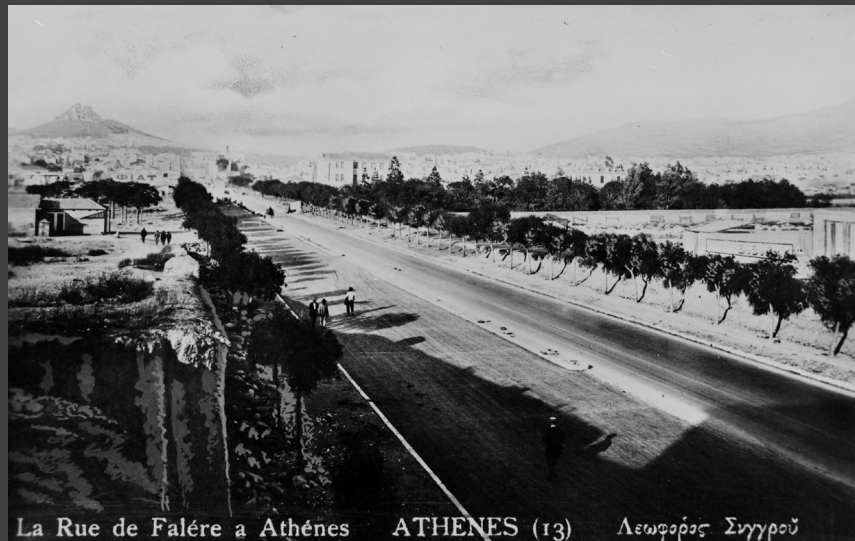




FETISHIZING THE ROAD

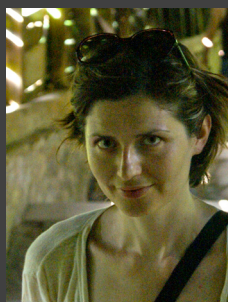
SYNGROU AVENUE IN ATHENS AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY



1_Syngrou Avenue, Map collection of Greek Parliament

2_Syngrou Avenue_ Athens_1920_ Benaki Museum's Historical Archive

It is generally accepted that roads and mobility infrastructures have a major effect on economic and spatial development, and, in many cases, this effect is considered to be a positive and, furthermore, a causal one. This implicit assumption has also a great impact on the cultural and aesthetic perception of road infrastructures. The objective of this paper is to show that the perception of road infrastructures differs in countries of the European periphery such as Greece, where, for years the discussion on road infrastructures went along with the rhetoric of progress and modernization and was, in most cases, presented as a national issue. The paper explores the technological, social and cultural changes that have occurred in relation to the construction of new road infrastructures in Greece from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th. Taking the emblematic case of Syngrou Avenue in Athens as an example, this paper examines the story of roads, how they were conceived, planned and constructed and the impact they had on urban form. At the same time, it analyzes the transfer of technique and technology, their reception and appropriation, as well as the road - making practices in Greece during that period. The final aim of this paper is to define the social dynamics and the spatial characteristics that made Syngrou Avenue a symbol of Greek modernization.



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