

Where the Byzantinesque Meets the Urbanesque: Architectural and Hagiographic Elements of Greek Orthodox Urban Reterritorialization in Germany

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Introduction

The presence of Greek Orthodox communities in Germany has over time become more transparent and in tune with the spatial-cultural particularities of the receiving state, a result of inevitable adaptation to the country of residence which gradually became their homeland, allowing for a bond to develop with their corresponding cities in particular. What is more, this occurred organically and includes their church, the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Germany and the areas under its jurisdiction where an array of church buildings and frescoes depict the aforementioned phenomenon, that is, the integration and reterritorialization in the city which has been embraced even via forms of art and local architectural endorsement where the urbanesque interpretation of religiosity meets the byzantinesque aesthetic expression in a unique way. Notably, the church was not a mere spectator but a pioneer in this process as it paved the way for Greek migrants to change their status and attitude towards what came to be their new home. Through this, their own spatial narrative emerged; the spatial point of reference in collective self-articulation, is demonstrated by formerly heterodox, converted buildings where religioscapes intersect, newly built churches in harmony with the dominant spatial aesthetic, hagiographies that depict the cities where communities reside and by byzantinesque inscriptions in German.

Reterritorialization in the (German) City

The decade of the 1950s was a gruesome period for Greece as the country came out of the two successive wars of the previous decade. The defeat of the communists on August 30, 1949 brought the civil war to an end and solidified Greece's place in the Western bloc, while at the same time it signified the beginning of the postwar period for the country (KOLIOPOULOS & VEREMIS 2009: 127). The devastating effect of this conflict extended way beyond the thousands of civilian casualties, as, in a total population of 7.5 million, one million were left with no shelter and nearly ten percent of the population became internally displaced. At the same time more than two million people were dependent on public welfare. Around 150 thousand houses suffered damages, being partly or often completely destroyed, while at the same time the total of damaged property was amplified by an additional fifteen thousand or more agricultural buildings, such as stables and silos, which were in no better condition. The number of villages and towns that had been looted approached eight thousand, while at the same time two thousand had been destroyed. In total, one quarter of all buildings in Greece had been partly damaged or completely destroyed, but most importantly the already limited arable land had been further reduced by more than twenty-five percent, delivering a decisive blow to the farming industry. Two thousand or more major acts of sabotage against transportation and communication had

contributed to the state's post-apocalyptic scenery. Under such circumstances industry came to a standstill, resulting in a halt to almost all exports, and a ninety percent reduction of all imports compared to prewar levels (SHRADER 1999: 252–253).

During the 1950s on the other hand, West Germany experienced the *Wirtschaftswunder*, the economic miracle, and by the 1960s it had earned its place as one of the world's richest states. While West Germany was developing, the East German regime dedicated a great deal of its efforts toward preventing the population from fleeing, and did so by making immigration to the West a perilous ordeal. By the late 1950s, the number of migrant workers from East to West Germany had progressively decreased, until it was stopped completely by the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961. To solve the problem of labor deficit, which threatened its unparalleled economic development, and to maintain the flexibility of its labor supply, the West German government signed bilateral agreements authorizing work permits for selected foreign individuals. Those migrants were acknowledged as *Gastarbeiter*, guest workers, a term indicative of their temporary position in Germany (BRAUN 1990: 165–169).

The collapse of both farming and industry, paired with the destruction of infrastructure described earlier, resulted in the sudden urbanization of the population in Greece and the reconstruction of the economy. That important step towards modernity brought with it socially crippling unemployment, which in the case of women was often double that of men. The seriousness of the matter is difficult to put in numbers, as statistics from that era fail to grasp the depth of the problem. Under those socioeconomic circumstances Greece became the third country to sign the bilateral agreement with Germany, on March 30 1960, and it encouraged people to leave by advertising immigration as the solution to individual poverty. In what was probably the biggest wave of emigration Greece has ever seen, more than two million, or approximately one fifth of the country's 1974 population left (CHARALAMBIS, MARATOU-ALIPRANTI & HADJIYANNI 2004: 165, 174), with three quarters of them moving to Germany and of those, the majority, namely fifty-eight per cent, were women (DETSCH 2012).

The German Committee in Greece opened two recruitment offices, the first in Athens, at Viktoros Ougko (Victor Hugo) Street near Omonoia Square, and the second in Thessaloniki at Dodekanisou Street, creating a very efficient system for allocating guest workers to potential employers in Germany. First, the employers had to apply to their local employment office in Germany, specifying the number of workers they needed and the desired skills of those individuals. The employment office would first search among those workers registered with them in the country, and only when they could not find enough suitable employees, they would contact one of the recruitment offices abroad. The most common route to Germany started at the port of Piraeus where the newly recruited migrants boarded the ship Kolokotronis, which would take them to Brindisi in Italy in order to continue their journey by train. From Thessaloniki, special train services would take passengers to Munich's Central Station (RIMPA 2010a: 4). Whatever the route, the three-day-long journey would end at Platform 11, allegedly named 'platform of hope' by Italian immigrants, where newcomers would eventually meet with the representatives of their future employers. Until 1973 the recruitment of foreign workers remained essentially unre-

stricted, with the only exception being the 1967–1968 recession period, during which the German government refrained from extending work permits (MEYERS 2004: 127).

What the vast majority of the newly-arrived Greek migrants in Germany – if not all of them – had in common, was their collectivist Eastern Orthodox cultural background and their lack of urban imagery and mentality; most of them had not even experienced the belated and partial version of urbanization in Greece, let alone the limitations caused by their own poverty: “I met those people when they arrived”, we are told; “they did not even have suitcases, they carried their things in sacks” (G. A. 2014). Obviously, this had a huge impact as they had to adapt to a social and cultural environment that was different to their previous certainties in almost every conceivable way. Hence, their first proper experience of urbanity was German; their own first city was German.

The Emergence of the Architectural and Hagiographic Archetype

Before we proceed in presenting our case and the corresponding examples where necessary, it would be best to provide a brief outline of what the architectural and hagiographic standard is nowadays, and how it has come to be, so that to highlight the adaptability that permeates this aesthetic, which has allowed for the hybrid byzantinesque/urbanesque model to emerge in Germany. In that way, we will be in a position to better appreciate the change that has transpired and evaluate the phenomenon while bearing its background in mind. Typically nowadays, and particularly in the second half of the twentieth century when the *Gastarbeiter* migratory currents from Greece occurred, churches back in the homeland, built during that period, present a somewhat homogeneous pattern. But this has not always been the case.

Clearly, the early, typical architectural examples of the fourth century were heavily influenced by Greco-Roman aesthetics, which were dominant in the respective area anyway. However, several examples demonstrate how the church building was subject to change, such as the church of St. Demetrios in Thessaloniki, which was built around 412–413. It was destroyed and rebuilt in the seventh century, then destroyed by fire in 1917 and reconstructed between 1918–49; a large church, majestic in size, in the shape of a basilica without a dome (Cavarnos 1995: 21), as is Panagia Acheiropoietos – which means not made by hands – i.e. also a basilica without a dome (CAVARNOS 1995: 30), or the church of St. George, a museum nowadays, which is a circular building initially intended for a mausoleum (around 310) and then converted to a church around 400 AD. The mosaics there depict martyrs without halos as the art of iconography was not yet fully developed and the halo was eventually included from approximately 500 AD onward (CAVARNOS 1995: 45, 49–50).

From the era of Emperor Justinian (reign: 527–565), the diverse architectural tendencies allowed for an array of prototype syntheses to emerge. So, from the paleo-Christian versions of basilica and then to the *pericentric* buildings (those having a topologically centralized point of reference), the evolution to the Justinian Basilica with a dome produced the monumental church of Hagia Sofia in Constantinople. This was a departure point at which the differentiation between Eastern and Western Christianity was clearly attested by architecture. Even though the rectangular basilica remains the standard typology in the West, *pericentric* structural designs, domes, and an emphasis on the vertical axis of the church became increasingly popular in the

East, and eventually paradigmatic. Not to mention the role of worship and theology in the perception and conceptualization of the general architectural framework (KILDE 2008: 46–58). Hence, the ecclesiastically acceptable architectural guidelines were regulated at the seventh Ecumenical Synod in 787 when particular types of buildings were established (FEIDAS 1981: 423; KRAUTHEIMER & ĆURČIĆ: 1998). In fact, this canonization by and large regulates the church building standards ever since. After the iconomachy and the restoration of the icons, the domed cruciform type was the paradigm that dominated the mid-Byzantine and later period; it may have been implemented variably and in accordance with several local schools, but in any case the cruciform design of the roof under a dome was typical (GIOLES: 1992; KRAUTHEIMER & ĆURČIĆ: 1998). In fact, the aforementioned regulatory framework renders the Orthodox architectural tradition “a codified container of ritual, iconography, and symbolic meaning” (KOURELIS & MARINIS 2012: 163).

Further, as regards Greece particularly, after the Ottoman period was over and the modern state of Greece was founded, previous restrictions that covered essentially all aspects of church buildings, ranging from size to height and bell towers were self-evidently abolished (KOURELIS & MARINIS 2012: 165). The new church buildings reflected the Hellenic-Christian cultural principles that ought to permeate the newly founded state. So during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century a revised architectural version was introduced, the main tendencies of which were *byzantinism*, where the architectural model clearly took after the Byzantine era and the Middle Ages, and *Hellenic-byzantinism*, where classical elements were introduced and incorporated, thus forming a coexistence of aesthetics and epochs, while being in tune with the neoclassical spirit of the nineteenth century – something that was Bavarian in origin and introduced by king Otto. Later, during the Interwar period a turn towards *byzantinism* can be observed, but from the second half of the twentieth century it is difficult to determine architectural tendencies; one may endeavor to point out inclinations towards either innovation or conservatism, expressed on the one hand via the use of new materials and an industrialized approach in terms of the techniques of building, and, on the other hand, opting for the easy solution of the ‘by the book’ architectural approach. Of course the commitment to rules and predetermined guidelines stems from the inescapable weight of theology through symbolisms, aesthetics and ecclesiastic tradition; the building in sum, with all its distinguishing exterior and interior attributes, constitutes a microcosm where, for example, the dome symbolizes heaven whereas the floor symbolizes the this-worldly, earthly domain (FEIDAS 1981: 423; KILDE 2008: 57–60).

However, this does not mean there was a lack of architectural flexibility. Indeed on the one hand one observes similarities in Byzantine design and architecture between two or more buildings, as is the case with the Athonite church-building of the mid-Byzantine period (MAMALOUKOS 2003: 119). On the other hand though, there exist such variations of cruciform churches from one region to another that strict categorization would not be appropriate, given that, one observes that architecture is responsive to and reflective of spatial, functional and decorative differences. From that perspective, Byzantine architectural patterns demonstrate a dynamic, transformative element and not a formulaic repetition, whereby religious necessitation and architectural variability for reasons of artistic merit coexist. Hence, parallel to the liturgi-

cal standardization of the narthex, *naos* and sanctuary, for example, decorative articulations and proportional variations have been present as well (OUSTERHOUT 1996: 25). However, over time, planning and building typology yielded new forms, but the basic archetype remained throughout, given the adaptability of the cruciform shape when particular requirements surfaced and liturgical necessities imposed their own constraints, rendering this blueprint typologically dominant in that sense, but not exclusive (OUSTERHOUT 1996: 27).

The contemporary dominant style in Greece takes after the paradigm of the Middle Ages and the post-Byzantine traditional tendencies and it would not be amiss to consider it normative, observable in most major Greek cities and periphery capitals. Typical examples include basilica variations, usually cruciform pericentric buildings, with one or two prominent bell towers and of course the ever present dome; but then again this does not mean that permissiveness and variability are not observable in recently built churches in Greece – and elsewhere for that matter – as we have already mentioned (See images 1 and 2, for example, where architectural differences are quite obvious).



Image 1: St. Luke in Lamia, photo: G. E. Trantas

We are arguing, therefore, that the regulative background notwithstanding, architectural variability and adaptability to building blueprints, materials and shape parameters are not uncommon, but in fact quite the opposite. Regardless if there exists a dominant pattern that leans towards homogeneity in newer, prominent buildings in the homeland, the transformative element is nevertheless integral in that sense.



Image 2: Dormition of the Virgin Mary in Stylida, photo: G. E. Trantas

As regards the art of hagiography, the importance of it cannot be stressed enough; suffice it to mention that its sole purpose is to portray sacred themes such as saints and biblical scenes; and, what is more, to do so in a very particular artistic style and technique, in accordance with the Eastern Orthodox tradition and canons. It ought to not just decorate or stir the emotions of the beholder due to its artistic merit; rather, it is expected to contribute to the exaltation of the soul; to teach and educate, as the historicity of the depicted scenes is thought of as an authentic narration of themes of the faith and its teachings, serving even as books for the illiterate but also for the body of the faithful in general. Not least, to spread the Christian message of salvation. It is then a means to particular ends and as such it is deemed by the church; as the liturgical art that conveys colorfully the divine *logos* and its teachings, complementing the works of the Church Fathers. Clearly, hagiography is theologically essential, for, in short, it is in its own right “*iconistic theology*” (FEIDAS 1981: 415–416) a means – not an object in itself – of worship.

In passing we ought to mention that this form of art has not been established effortlessly and without controversy, both theological and political, during the first and second period of the iconomachy in the eighth and first half of the ninth century and the tergiversations thereof, considering synodical decisions and repudiations upon the matter no less. The crux of the matter was the embedding of this type of imagery representation within the cult of saints, whereby icons were essentially presumed relics of the holy, a phenomenon that emerged around 680, facilitating a new means towards accessing the divine. This was something that served the need for appeasement within the context of sociopolitical unrest and anxiety of the late seventh century; not to mention that those relics – might we add, contrary to the *Acheiropoieta* (Gr.: *Αχειροποίητα*) which are not man-made or made by hand – could be reproduced. By the end of the seventh century, religious imagery was canonically legis-

lated for the first time at the council of Constantinople in 692, only to be repudiated around 720, and finally in 754 iconoclasm was officially declared (BRUBAKER and HALDON: 2011). The Quinisext Council of Hieria, Chalcedon (754) dealt with the matter of religious art and the ways it ought to be regulated, so that to determine what forms were acceptable. Its conclusions were rejected, however, by the Seventh Council of Nicaea (787), only to be reaffirmed in turn by the local council in St. Sophia (815); finally the Triumph of Orthodoxy, the victory of the iconolaters, was marked by the Constantinopolitan Synod of 843 (CORMACK 2000: 86–87). Thereafter, the end of the iconomachy (843) constitutes self-evidently a departure point for Eastern Orthodoxy and of course marks the canonical establishment of hagiography from that point forward. That is, by setting the rules and regulations that permeate this form of religious art, essentially rendering it ecclesiastically acceptable, according to the resolutions of the seventh Ecumenical Council. This meant that, given the by all means fundamental perception of the church building as a microcosm containing the earthly below and the divine above, hagiography should reflect this accordingly through a hierarchical iconographic programme that ought to serve this very notion. This programme unfolds on the surfaces of the church in the form of frescoes and is distributed in thematic circles and predetermined positions within them, and, depending on the symbolisms that they bear and the themes they depict, they are hierarchically classified; this actually applies as hagiographic canon (FEIDAS 1981: 422–423).

Indeed, in that sense innovation and invention were axiomatically rejected as pagan practice and it had been a point of dispute, recorded for example by John of Thessaloniki and quoted in the council of Nicaea (787) as an excerpt from a dialogue between a Christian and a pagan, where invention is explicitly out of the question for the Christian (MAGUIRE 1999: 190). Be that as it may, to demonstrate room for permissiveness in an otherwise highly regulated practice, suffice it to mention the presence of, even the profane, imagined imagery in Byzantine art, which was not restricted to secular, extra-ecclesiastical and this-worldly forms of artistic expression, but was also found in churches; mythological imagery ranging from Pan to the Sirens and the centaurs (MAGUIRE 1999: 192). So, even though constraints applied, some few condemned forms of the pagan past found their way into the Byzantine artistic creativity, regardless if this was conducted in a controlled manner within the church's margin of discipline (MAGUIRE 1999: 204). One could mention the 'recycled' pagan building materials or transformed Hellenic temples extensively, from Delphi to *Gorgopikeos* in Athens and over a time-span of centuries (MAKRIDES 2009: 126–128). The only reason we mention this is merely to demonstrate that however much they were regulated, a permissiveness and adaptation of existing resources was not out of the question.

It is neither uncommon nor irregular for hagiography to *mutatis mutandis* adapt and feature themes and representations that are relevant to the political and societal circumstances of the time. From the post-Byzantine period, popular elements, for instance, have been incorporated into hagiographies in the Eastern Orthodox Balkan region during the Ottoman rule; the latter was obviously a major shift in the socio-political status quo and by and large, a new order of things. This is consequently reflected by the frescoes' themes of time. The prophets on the dome are no longer still

and immobile, but extend a hand towards Jesus and appear to be pacing with winged feet. The warrior saints are now an increasingly popular theme; their stride is broad and determined; their garments are waving and their swords unsheathed. The horseback warlords St. George and St. Demetrius appear as leaders of the folk, as popular desires and hopes affect hagiography (FEIDAS 1981: 434–435). Another example is the famous fresco that covers a major part of the southern wall in St. Demetrius basilica in Thessaloniki, which contains a theme that presents on the left the triumph of a leader and on the right the passion – in the sense of suffering – of a city. A man with a halo enters the city on horseback with his entourage on the left. The identification of the city is verified by the ending *-KI* (Gr.: *-KH*), meaning the name of the city, written amongst the male riders. Among others it contains the stadium of Thessaloniki and on the right a rider with blazing spear charges while an angelic form in motion oversees and implies the final stage of a heavenly coming to the space of the church. In general, it is consolidated that on the left an emperor is returning from a victorious campaign while on the right an assault on the city is taking place (VELENIS 2004: 375). Therein then, among others, the spatial element is clear to the observer.

But apart from that – beyond the religiously permeated interpretation of such imagery as cult objects, to which Schmitt and Cormack object anyway – a social, cultural and political dimension is present in the Byzantine aesthetic (NEGRÄU 2011: 64). Such examples can be seen in the historical references of post-Byzantine art where aspects of political culture add an element of ambivalence as regards the thematic possibilities of iconography with the secular – in the form of rulers, for instance – and the otherworldly (NEGRÄU 2011: 73). In sum, the point is that the Byzantine aesthetic has not been impervious to change and adaptation over time, influenced by the exigencies and particularities that social and political change brought about, above and beyond Harnack's (1902) stereotypical essentialization of traditionalism.

Byzantinesque and Urbanesque

We have provided a framework on the archetypal aesthetic in order to demonstrate that the corresponding mutation that followed de- and reterritorialization constitutes a differentiation within the bounds of the permissiveness and adaptability that given guidelines delineate, in conjunction with what existing conditions and communal necessitations impose. Right from the outset we have suggested that the Greek migrant urbanesque typology of church buildings presents a differentiation that is suggestive of the mutation that communities have undergone in the spatial bonds they developed.¹ There are ample examples of this, but a few outstanding ones may very well serve as cases in point, as they encapsulate the transformative elements of interest that demonstrate a relationship with the facet of urbanity and a differentiation from the spatial link with the homeland. What is more, a form of it is originally foreign, yet eventually embedded in the hybrid typology that emerges from a marriage between alien paradigms.

1 This term is used as a convenience. It is not meant as a teleological process, which ought to ultimately lead to a paradigmatic, ideal type social model; but rather as a constantly under construction sense of identity, subject to change due to the fermentation of pre-existing particularities and social experience.

First and foremost it should be stressed that upon arrival and during the first few years, Greek migrants had no church buildings of their own, hence they resorted to worshipping in those belonging to heterodox Christian denominations. Yet this does not mean that later on, after having established their status and residence in Germany, they discarded the buildings altogether. On the contrary, it was not uncommon for several communities to still utilize formerly heterodox churches for their purposes; often they purchased them and thereafter converted them permanently to satisfy more or less the Christian Orthodox criteria. Simply put, they grew accustomed or fond of the aforementioned buildings. Places of weekly habit, worship, ritual, but also meeting places of the communities now organically became their own. Notably, the urbanesque aesthetic is intrinsic in modern buildings used by those otherwise immersed in religious tradition, namely, the Greek Orthodox communities; that is, church buildings may serve as symbols of modernity when their architectural character is taken into account. People often proudly recommend a visit to their 'modern' church as an example of uniqueness.

A case of a formerly heterodox building would be the church of St. Paul in Bielefeld (Ger.: *Kirche des Hl. Apostel Paulus zu Bielefeld*) (see Image 3).



Image 3: St. Paul in Bielefeld exterior, photo: E. D. Tseligka

This is quite a remarkable building in terms of shape, given that it does not resemble a Greek Orthodox church building at all, not even remotely; it comes closer to giving a paleo-Christian impression, comprising of two main overlapping circular shapes that determine the floor plan. There is no prominent bell-tower, but only the discrete presence of a bell, and no dome. Likewise, there are no stained glass windows, but a modern, extensive vertical glass surface that lets the light in instead (Image 4).



Image 4: St. Paul in Bielefeld glass pane, photo: E. D. Tseligka

The exterior brickwork is also an aesthetic element uncommon in Greece – particularly today’s churches are built of concrete – and the exterior is in harmony with the surroundings. In fact, were it not for the informative sign and the cross on the outside, the uninformed by-passer would not suspect that this building houses a church, but most probably it has a mundane function and purpose.



Image 5: St. Paul in Bielefeld interior, photo: E. D. Tseligka

On the inside of St. Paul, a major difference is that there is no strictly gender-segregated seating arrangement left and right, given that there are also seats located in the middle, which was the case in the previous denomination's usage of the church. Impressively enough, the outside brickwork is also prominent on the inside, instead of extensive frescoes and hagiographies; there are but a few of those. And the iconostasis is very different too, as it has only one entrance into the sanctuary, the Beautiful Gate (*oraia pyli*, Gr.: *Ωραία Πύλη*), with no Deacon's doors. In sum it contains only the bare necessities (see Image 5). This trait is evident everywhere, inside and outside of the building, reflecting a different religiocultural worldview which allows room for the previous, Protestant background to be visible. If one were to describe the afterthought that on the whole this aesthetic instigates, it would certainly be an impression of architectural modernism/minimalism, being coupled with traditional Greek Orthodox elements, strategically set to make a statement of mutation but mostly, of hybrid predisposition.

But if St. Paul in Bielefeld is a modernist/minimalist statement, then the Greek Orthodox Church of Apostle Andreas in Düsseldorf (Ger.: *Kirche des Hl. Apostels Andreas zu Düsseldorf*) would be the embracement of the city in full. Here, the church building is a *par excellence* statement of the Greek community being at home. From the outside, the shape of the building is in keeping with the Byzantine tradition, that is, cruciform basilica with dome, and the church itself is well-sized and striking compared to the surroundings. The church is complemented by an equally impressive bell tower, which, separate from the main building, stands prominent. Yet, taking a second brief look after this first impression suffices to spot the elements that harmonize the building with its location. The building materials, roofwork and brickwork may be uncommon in Greece but it is quite the opposite in Germany, which renders them fitting to the surroundings (Image 6). The same applies to the windows, where instead of the usual stained or tinted glass, plain glass panes on multiple frames have been installed. But the most outstanding signs of cultural syncretism and reterritorialization of the outside view are located elsewhere: on the four sides of the bell tower. Four prominent outdoor hagiographies that contain passages from Greek Orthodox psalms and liturgies translated into German and crafted in a byzantinesque font styling.² Clearly, here, the byzantinesque aesthetic and form, combined with the linguistic adaptation, constitute an invitation to all the inhabitants of Düsseldorf regardless of ethnic origin, as well as an attempt to communicate with the general population while placing a highly prominent religious marker in the public sphere (see Images 7 and 8).

2 The hagiographies bear corresponding images and passages and read: Blessed be the Kingdom of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Ger.: *Gesegnet sei das Reich des Vaters und des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes*); Lord how great are Your works! In wisdom You have created all (Ger.: *Herr wie groß sind Deine Werke! Mit Weisheit hast Du alles geschaffen*); Come, take light of eternal light and glorify Christ who from the dead has risen (Ger.: *Kommt, nehmt Licht von ewigen Licht und verherrlicht Christus den von den Toten auferstanden*); Abide in my love (Ger.: *Bleibet in meiner Liebe!*) Repent! (Ger.: *Kehrt um!*).



Image 6: Apostle Andreas in Düsseldorf, photo: E. D. Tseligka



Image 7: Apostle Andreas in Düsseldorf bell-tower fresco, photo: E. D. Tseligka



Image 8: Apostle Andreas in Düsseldorf bell-tower fresco, photo: E. D. Tseligka

The interior of the Apostle Andreas church is aesthetically impressive, containing a fully laid-out hagiographic programme, where among others, ecological, multicultural and ecumenical traces are evident in the frequent portrayal of nature, in line with the environmental priorities of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. It has depictions of saints from all over the Christian Orthodox world, regardless of ethnicity, as well as an effort to incorporate as many women as possible in the frescoes and thus make a symbolic statement *a propos* gender. Notably, the hagiographic programme in its entirety was crafted by Cretan nuns (PSARAKIS 2006: 15–17, 111–114).

Yet, most outstanding of all is the marriage of the byzantinesque and urbanesque as portrayed in one particular and noteworthy fresco: the one located on the inside of the sanctuary, right on the upper central apse. This particular part of the church is out of bounds for laypeople and certainly of utmost importance and sanctity as it contains the altar, among other things. There, on the upper curve of the wall for all to see, the Madonna (*Panagia*, Gr.: *Παναγία*), the Holy Mother, is depicted holding her Son on her lap, with an angel by each side. At the bottom where their feet touch the earth, lies the city of Düsseldorf. The river Rhine runs through the whole fresco, and on the visible bank the observer can easily identify well-known city landmarks: apart from the church building itself that is clearly part of the city, one sees the Rhine Tower (Ger.: *Rheinturm*), the industrial quarters where the first generation Greek migrants earned their living (making that area part of their collective narrative), heterodox church buildings; in general the fresco conveys an impression of what this riverbank actually comprises (see Image 9). It is self-evident that the city here is upheld and considered a special place in the church and its community. The latter has appropriated the city, hence the fresco reflects this narrative, and what is more, reproduces it for the next generations. At the same time the endorsement of the urban

element brings together the community's own narrative and spatial reference with the byzantine artistic medium that is supposed to convey territoriality, hence affirming the end-result of reterritorialization as a fact of the particular landscape's and religioscape's historicity.



Image 9: Interior Fresco of Apostle Andreas in Dusseldorf, photo: E. D. Tseligka

A case that bears a *mutatis mutandis* similarity to the aforementioned one is that of the church of St. John the Baptist (or Forerunner) in Brühl (Ger.: *Kirche des Hl. Johannes der Vorläufer zu Brühl*). Externally the building is quite fitting to the urban landscape. From a distance, the overall architecture is marginally differentiated from the neighboring buildings by the dome which is actually moderately sized. Otherwise the roof is quite typical of the local paradigm. The shape is that of a cruciform basilica, the arches of which are only visible from the inside, given that the outside shape of the roof does not reveal them. The windows are arched too, bearing an elaborate decoration, which comprises of excerpts from religious liturgical orthodox text in both Greek and German, as well as the 24 letters of the Greek alphabet from Alpha to Omega (STADT BRÜHL 2014). There is a bell, but no bell tower, let alone an exaggerated one, as is often the case with newly built churches in Greece.

Amidst this fusion of variable elements, byzantine and urban, rests the hagiographic epitome of the phenomenon thereof: prominent on the façade of the building, just above the front entrance, rests the hagiography of St John the Baptist or *Prodromos* (Gr.: *Πρόδρομος*), a fresco crafted by the hagiographer Makarios Tauc (STADT BRÜHL 2014). As a patron saint would, he is depicted holding the city protectively in his arms. The overall style of the hagiography is quite representative of the byzantine technique as described earlier, as is the case with the way John the Baptist is portrayed. The inscription stating his identity on his left and right at the height of his head is also typically styled in a Byzantine manner. The city appears to

be protectively wrapped in cloth, allowing the former to be visible though. The recognizable details within it are prominent buildings, such as churches of other denominations as well as the church of St. John the Baptist in Brühl itself. At the bottom of the fresco there is an inscription in German, with the effort to resemble the Byzantine font style being quite obvious; therein, St. John is upheld and praised³ in a self-evidently, linguistically inclusive manner. Inside, it appears that language is taken seriously as a unifying element, since the candle stand bears a bilingual message – German and Greek – reading “the light of Christ illuminates all”. The iconostasis was craftily made by Sotiris Karamalis in Trikala, Greece, and it is a typical example of its kind (STADT BRÜHL 2014). Here, the city is appropriated on the one hand in being depicted within a context of patronage, while on the other hand this byzantinesque signifier stands prominent in the public sphere, indicating the intersection of religious escapes within it. One could go on presenting examples *ad infinitum*. The aforementioned ones merely help demonstrate patterns of the byzantinesque within the urbanesque and vice versa. Yet, the crux of the matter is the hybrid model that has emerged and the dynamics thereof.

It appears that the stereotypical expectation that modernity would trigger secularization within the urban environment where the person is transformed into an individual while collectivism fragments has been an object of ardent critique, especially as of late, and not without good reasons; the city has in fact been the habitat of religious revival, where pluralism and displacement actually constitute opportunities and means of expansion, instead of hindrances to practicing bodies of believers (KISALA 2008: 271). After all, the multiplicity of modernities (EISENSTADT 2000), which is directly linked to their corresponding historical backgrounds, has been part of the cultural luggage that migrant communities have brought with them. Therefore, neither privatization nor decline in religious beliefs, as connotations of secularization (CASANOVA 2006: 7) need apply in the case in focus here. Needless to say, the empirically observable facts (such as those outlined earlier in the text) demonstrate this, and, what is more, they constitute tangible validation of the return of religion to the epicenter of the public sphere (HABERMAS 2006) at a symbolic level.

This applies fully to the Greek migrant communities of Germany, where the importance of religion and the church as an institution is a *sine qua non*. The church is not there to merely conduct weddings and funerals; it provides the venue, the facilities and the organization of communal assemblies where cultural activities are just as important as the practice of rituals. It is there for them at times of trouble such as illness, death, financial and family difficulties. But most importantly the church is the main purveyor of intercultural dialogue (DAMANAKIS 2008: 70–72), a fact attested by architecture and hagiography, where the ample signs of interculturalism instead of multiculturalism are evident. Communities and their churches are not introvert, isolated, cultural islands; rather, they are encouraged by the church to be in tune and communication with the broader cultural environment. More to the point, it is quite

3 It reads: Like a wild pigeon you loved the desert saint John the Baptist. Thou hast declared repentance and revealed Christ. (Ger.: *Wie eine Wildtaube hast du die Wüste geliebt heiliger Täufer Johannes. Du hast Umkehr verkündet und Christus offenbart*).

remarkable that it was the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Germany that was founded first (February 5 1963) and became a public legal person (October 1974), long before members of the communities – then they were merely *Gastarbeiter* – acquired legal status of permanent residence in Germany (TSELIGKA & TRANTAS: 2013). This rendered the institution of the church as central to the lives of Greek migrants too, who perceived it as a link with the receiving state. Hence their integration and urbanization passed via this channel, which enjoyed legal acknowledgement; after all, the Metropolis has an excellent relationship with the German state (G. A. 2014).

Their bond to their church is further attested by the fact that the latter's only income comes from its body of believers since the Metropolis of Germany refuses to make use of the church tax; it is seen as detrimental to the relationship with the community and incompatible with their philosophy to impose such a measure by law. That is why they make do with the means they already have and the support of the community (G. A. 2014). Further involvement in the lives of the communities has to do with the fact that the Metropolis has on numerous occasions visited factories and workplaces in order to get in touch with their employers, to be made aware of their problems and concerns and assist in their integration if possible. It appears that "the industry called for workers, and they brought Orthodoxy" (G. A. 2014). Their migration, i.e. deterritorialization, in which, as demonstrated above, religiosity was a central element of identity, allowed the church to emerge as a pillar of establishment and facilitated reterritorialization (TSELIGKA & TRANTAS: 2013). This fact, coupled with their first genuine experience of urbanity infused their original cultural narrative with new elements, including the spatial. Moreover, it is common among Greeks to ascribe a narrative to a location or a landmark, to assign a citation, the reference of which attributes content and meaning to the place (LEONTIS 1995: 4–5). Such symbolisms usually come in constellations of symbols and in their plurality they constitute a system, whether in the form of artifacts, rituals, or discourses, while at the same time each one is a sum – and more than that – of other symbols which render it a system of the latter. Additionally, a symbol is representative of the background (cultural, social, political) to which it adheres to and from which it stems, and it is edifying of the order of things and state of affairs it stands for in its passage "from historic contingency to sacralization and from institutional artifact to legitimizing abstraction" (FORET 2009: 314). In the present case it is the spatial parameter of belonging that is being legitimized via the aforementioned examples of religious symbolisms.

It ought to be mentioned that perhaps nowadays, in the globalized era of increased mobility, being in a spatial state of flux is a given for an array of social groupings. Yet this is not the case with the Greek migrant communities of Germany who sought spatial certainties, which, when acquired, were passed on to the next generations. Contrary to the current trend of religioscapes being essentially in a constant state of flux, this is not the case with regard to the Greek-Orthodox *Gastarbeiter* who formed communities during the 1960s and 1970s, because they wished to be anchored in-place. After all, the degree of mobility that one may observe nowadays, especially within the Schengen zone where the free movement of citizens is taken for granted, was not available back then, when work residence permits were a source of insecurity. The restrictions that permeated their status with uncertainty extended to

their livelihoods. Therefore the contemporary predominant perception of religioscapes “as subjective religious maps – and attendant theologies – of immigrant, or diasporic, or transnational communities who are also in global flow and flux” (MCALLISTER: 251) may be true, but it does not fully apply to that generation of immigrants and their mobility options, i.e. before the currents of globalization came to be; this is a distinction which is crucial to make.

Be that as it may, the phenomena of de- and reterritorialization as two interdependent movements in the mechanism of displacement, symbolically no less, did apply in their case (DELEUZE & GUATTARI 1972). In that sense, territorial autochthony and cultural demarcation do not need to be coterminous; therefore mapping their communities does not abide by the previous ethnographic certainties that are now being challenged; the deterritorialized sense of belonging is rather anchored in the cultural references that transcend physical proximity or regional cultural coherence (PAPASTERGIADIS 2000: 115–116). In turn the spatial parameter assumes significance anew, but in a different way. Globality advances, even shifts, the spatial frontier on the one hand, while it enhances the territorial relevance on the other, glocally; hence globality is constituted by a plurality of localities whereby, ultimately, globalization is spatially expressed by way of glocalization. In this context, namely the glocal, religion finds its place as a global polar opposite determinant of differentiation amidst an otherwise cultural continuum (BEYER 2013: 43–44). This is something which applies to the Greek Orthodox communities of interest that demonstrate their locality in a twofold manner: they project their religiosity in the public sphere and intersect their religioscape within the existing one, while endorsing the corresponding locality, which is urban more often than not. That is not to say that their transnational aspect is made obsolete, in the sense that they still partake in a multilayered structuration process (ROUDOMETOF 2005: 127). But the crux of the matter is that ultimately it is the religious space that signifies and is being signified in turn, for, being dynamic, it is subject to change and reinterpretation. It exceeds the constraints of housing ritual and assumes in itself the role of message and meaning conveyor; it demarcates community no less, and likewise church buildings demonstrate this dynamic as agencies of religious space themselves (KILDE 2008: 5), and in the process religioscapes may intersect and transform.

Macroscopically, it may be Germany that Greeks migrated to, but actually it is above all their respective cities that became part of their hybrid narrative. Wherever they may be established in Germany, they form corresponding communities named after their particular location. The examples are ample, accessible via the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Germany where the numerous community parishes are published (GRIECHISCH-ORTHODOXE METROPOLIE VON DEUTSCHLAND 2011). It follows that most frequently a community is linked to its respective local parish. The evidence of city appropriations outlined above, demonstrate locality in a way that allows room for their cultural particularities and vice versa. As Leontis puts it, “in its topographies, a nation accrues symbols, pictures, narratives, and reports of its physical presence. Topographies are substantive markers of a homeland. They seem to affix culture to place” (LEONTIS 1995: 2). The long-term goal of this would be to achieve *entopia*; that is, to aesthetically determine autochthony, whereby, to securely localize their culture and spatially establish their sense of belonging. That is done via the

symbolisms of churches and hagiographies, which, as conveyors of the community narrative, reproduce the latter and infuse it for the next generations. In this way, the bond that the collective psyche has developed with the spatial aspect in the symbolisms is legitimized and grounded in place; and in that way, the discourse that has been enriched with new imagery, such that attests the glocal with the embedded notion of locality, gives rise to a new community narrative and symbolically legitimizes its spatial correlations.

Concluding Remarks

The church, the host of the *ecclesia*, is not merely a sign of establishment for Greek migrant communities in Germany. Central to their sense of belonging, it bears and combines not only the qualitative traits of their roots but also of their hybridization in their new urban environment, being the purveyor of both and a legal person that links them with the receiving state; what is more, before the era of freedom of movement and the intense migratory waves, which rendered the formation of religioscapes fluctuating, thus spatial certainties were sought for. On the other hand, integration in the German urbanity, a sociocultural habitat that until their deterritorialization was unknown to them – being in their majority a foreign rural folk – triggered and facilitated a fusion that set them apart from their archetypal paradigm. The result of their unique and unprecedented experience was the emergence of a new, hybrid narrative, where the temporal and spatial aspects of defining the ‘self’ collectively allowed the byzantinesque church aesthetic to meet the urbanesque, hence the symbiosis of different architectural elements that many buildings demonstrate, as well as spatial themes organically interwoven within hagiographies. What is more, the place, the city, now appropriated in a context of sanctity, is telling of the phenomenon thereof: the epitome of spatial appropriation is the attribution of a patron saint to city.

Neither the function of hagiography nor architecture hampered adaptation, within reason of course, especially considering the permissiveness and the changes thereof in the lapse of time. On the contrary, featured themes adapt to circumstances and particularities diachronically, and reveal a degree of mutation as the church institution, being in touch with the social condition, demonstrates its inclusive faculties architecturally, aesthetically and linguistically. The urban space is appropriated and in turn becomes the recipient of the aforementioned fusion of byzantinesque and urbanesque. As such it hosts this phenomenon in the form of symbolisms in the public sphere, thus manifesting openly the spatial legitimation and by extension the entopic fulfillment of Greek migrant communities, in short, by identifying the home, the city, with the church and the one within the other alternately and mutually.

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