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Author(s):

Charitonidou, Marianna 

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The Fictional Addressee of Architecture as a Device for Exploring Post-colonial Culture: The Transformations of the Helleno-centric Approaches

Marianna Charitonidou^a

^aPostdoctoral Fellow, Chair of the History and Theory of Urban Design, Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta), Department of Architecture, ETH Zürich, Stefano-Franscini-Platz 5, Zürich, CH 8093, Switzerland

Postdoctoral Researcher, School of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens, 42 Patission Street, Athens, 10682, Greece
Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Art Theory and History of Art, Athens School of Fine Arts, 256 Pireos Street, 18233, Greece

This research project examines the relationships between architecture's epistemology within the Greek and international contexts, scrutinizing their interdependences. It is focused on the analysis of three case studies: the travels to Greece of the Villa Medici *pensionnaires* in the 19th century, the trajectories of the architects of Mataroa, and the different approaches of bridging Helleno-centricism and modernism within the Greek context. The study aims to examine the following hypothesis: in periods of crisis what appears as the main domain of attraction regarding the 'image' of Greece is nature and its archetypal character, while in periods of normalization the ancient monuments constitute the main point of reference of the 'image' of Greece. Through the juxtaposition of the different 'images' of Greece and the way its antiquities and the travel to Greece are conceived as part of the 'Grand Tour' by the French, English, Italian and German architects and archaeologists, the project will trace a genealogy of the different conceptions of philhellenism within a transnational context. The understanding of how the conception of philhellenism has been transformed throughout time in relation with the politics corresponding to each era under study will be useful for understanding the different forms that the Helleno-centricism has been taking. Since the exchanges regarding the conception of the 'image' of Greece by the Greeks and the non-Greeks are interrelated, the method employed aims to understand both parts in a dynamic way. This methodological choice will offer us the opportunity to better conceive how the addressee of architecture changes throughout time in Greece and how its transformations are related to the different expressions that takes the Helleno-centric approach, which, despite its hybrid nature, can inform us regarding what is at stake at each historical time regarding the relationship of Greece with the exogenous models.

The objective of the research is to shed light on the reasons for which the architectural production and thought in Greece has been characterized by the need to re-define its stratus and its modes of production in

relation and as a response to the exogenous models, which were presented as dominant at each historical time under study. In other words, an argument underlying this study is the thesis that the architectural production within the Greek context, instead of conceiving its addressee in a way that pays more attention to the prospective inhabitants and the citizens, is characterized by a need to conceive as its addressee the exogenous models. What this research aims to show is the problematic nature of such a mode of conceiving architecture within Greek context. Such an understanding of the relationship of the modes of production of architecture in Greece and those prevalent within the international context is problematic in the sense that it is based on the preconception of an inferiority in regard to the exogenous models, which, according to such an understanding of the connections between Greece and the exogenous dominant models, should imitate or incorporate or adapt or negate the prevalent modes of production of architecture in an international scale. What I claim is that even the need to reject these models that are conceived as prevalent at each historical time is based on the pre-eminence of the need to respond to exogenous parameters. What is at the heart of my study is the hypothesis that this attachment to the need to understand the meaning of the architecture production in conjunction with the exogenous parameters is not fertile for establishing modes of conception and production of architecture capable to re-articulate reality.

Following Jacques Rancière's thought, we could claim that only through the liberation of such need and the invention of modes of understanding architecture beyond the sentiment of a necessity to respond to exogenous parameters, which in a way are rigid and abstract if they are conceived from a position that presupposes the provinciality of the Greek context in relation the other contexts that appear as most dominant, we could establish modes of producing architecture that not only provide a new spatial ordering, but more mainly offer ways to produce a new ordering of thought with emphasis on the perpetual questioning of the limits defining the aesthetic appropriation of things in the built environment. Of great significance for understanding the importance of the above-mentioned claim is Rancière's position that social emancipation is not related to the mechanical reproduction of an archetype. My research will aim to shed light on how we could conceive the relationship between the modes of interpretation and production of architecture in Greece, including the way its antiquity are re-semanticized at each historical time by the Greeks and by the non-Greeks, through the problematization of the issues that were central regarding the cross-cultural exchanges between Greece and other European countries, such as Italy, France, U.K. and Germany, regarding the Hellenocentric ideals and philhellenism. In other words, tracing the trajectories of the fascination of the non-Greeks with

Greece and the re-semanticizations of this fascination, on the one hand, and the endeavours of the Greeks to re-define their identity as far as the interpretation of architecture is concerned, I will try to unfold moments that the modes of aesthetic appropriation and production of architecture went beyond the mechanical reproduction of an archetype. The mechanical reproduction of an archetype is based either on an understanding of nature as main point of reference or on a conception of the hypostasis of the ancient monuments as main terrain of fascination. Through the unfolding of such episodes of reinvention, I will try to decipher what were the parameters of thinking and producing architecture that permitted such an emancipation from the archetype.

The first part of the postdoctoral research project, which is entitled “The Greek Travels of the Villa Medici *pensionnaires* in the 19th Century: Perceiving Ancient Monuments between Architecture and Archaeology”, will have as its main objective the analysis of the collaborations between the residents of Villa Medici in Rome and the members of the French School of Athens². Its point of departure is the fact that the second half of the 19th century was indeed a time when exchanges and collaboration between archaeologists and architects acquired a dominant place, and Athens was the place par excellence where the meeting between these two fields prospered. An important case of such collaboration is that between the archaeologist Charles Ernest Beulé and the architects Denis Laboutheux, Louis Victor Louvet and Charles Garnier. Beulé received the help of the above-mentioned resident architects in his excavations of the Propylaea. One of the aims of my research is to show how the revelations of archaeology, actively disseminated by members of the French School of Athens, the “Athéniens”, had an important impact on the approach of certain *pensionnaires* who decided to devote their *envois* to the ancient monuments of Greece³. In parallel, my study intends to shed light on the methods by which the *pensionnaires*-architects of the Villa Medici in Rome appropriated the archaeological discoveries concerning Greek antiquities. Particular emphasis will be placed on analyzing the impact of these exchanges between architects and archaeologists regarding the restored views of ancient Greek monuments by the *pensionnaires*-architects of Villa Medici. Two questions to which my paper aims to respond are: how did the architect-residents of the Villa Medici in Rome appropriate the archaeological discoveries of Greek antiquities, and what was the impact of their exchanges with the members of the French School of Athens on their restored views of ancient Greek monuments?

My aim is to examine the role that the trip to Greece played for the residents of Villa Medici in the 19th century. Instead of interpreting the drawings produced for their *envois* during their stays in Greece in an internalist and formalistic way, what I wish to do is to illuminate how their exchanges with archaeologists and

specialists of other disciplines and belonging to other cultures influenced their way of producing representations of ancient monuments. My intention is to capture, through the examination of the way the *pensionnaires* of the Villa Medici (Theodore Ballu, Alexis Paccard, Jacques Tétaz, Charles Garnier among others) drew their *envois* devoted to ancient Greek monuments, the successive changes in the way they interpreted the image of ancient Greece. The fascination induced by the Greek journey should be understood in conjunction with the interest aroused by the works of Jacques Ignace Hittorff on ancient polychromy. Garnier's colouring of his watercolour of the Panhellenian Temple of Jupiter in Aegina constitutes a representative of the application of Hittorff's theory (fig. 1). Apart from the drawings of the architects-*pensionnaires* an ensemble of drawings by certain painters-*pensionnaires* will also be included in this research, as Dominique Louis Féréol Papety's *Le duc de Montpensier visitant les ruines du temple de Jupiter à Athènes* (1847) (fig. 2), painted after his return from a travel to Greece in 1846, the year of the opening of the French School of Athens. An important component of this study will be the task of understanding architects' interactions with archaeologists, but also with the social and intellectual environments with which they engaged during their stays at the Villa Medici and in Greece. This effort to analyze the influence of archaeological discoveries on architecture during the 19th century, with a focus on the Villa Medici's resident architects and their trips to Greece, will be based on the belief that cultural and aesthetic mutations concerning the way of perceiving ancient monuments goes beyond the field of the history of architecture or archaeology. For this reason, they can only be grasped by broadening the analysis of these reorientations to the realms of political and cultural history. By comparing the different approaches of French, English, Italian, and German architects and archaeologists, I will explain how their ways of constructing and interpreting monument designs are related to the political and cultural issues that correspond to the historical moments examined. Additionally, I intend to illuminate the affinities and differences between 19th-century travel to Greece for architects and the idea of the 'Grand tour' and the various forms taken by this 'return to Arcadia', to borrow the expression of Christine Peltre⁴, in the case of the French architects and painters of the 19th century.

My aim is to capture, through the examination of how the *pensionnaires* of the Villa Medicis drew their *envois* devoted to ancient Greek monuments, the successive changes in the way they interpreted the image of ancient Greece. A paradox that will be scrutinized is the fact that while the French Academy in Rome, since the 17th century, had the mission of initiating its residents to the aesthetic appreciation of the ancient monuments, Greece was not allowed as a destination for the *envois* until 1845, although it is a particularly

important source of antiquities. This endeavour to analyse the influence of archaeological discoveries on architecture during the 19th century, with a focus on the Villa Medici's architects-*pensionnaires* and their travels in Greece, will be based on the belief that the understanding of cultural and aesthetic mutations concerning the way of perceiving ancient monuments goes beyond the field of the history of architecture or archaeology. For this reason, they can only be grasped by broadening the analysis of these reorientations to the realms of political and cultural history. This also explains why, in the framework of this project, I also aim to juxtapose the different points of view of the 'image' of Greece in the fields of archaeology and architecture corresponding to different national contexts. By comparing the different approaches of French, English, Italian, German and other architects and archaeologists, I will try to understand how their ways of constructing and interpreting the drawings of ancient monuments are related to the political and cultural key issues that correspond to the historical moments examined. I am particularly interested in revealing the reasons why the forms of philhellenism changed after the independence of Greece, and how the meaning of travel in Greece has been transformed. My intention is to examine closely the role that architects and their collaboration with archaeologists have played for these transformations regarding the perception of philhellenism. One aspect that I would also like to examine is the comparison in a trans-European network - especially with regard to the French, Italian, English and German contexts - of the different ways of perceiving at ancient monuments and the travel to Greece with particular emphasis on exchanges between civilizations and different disciplines.

The second part of this research project, which is entitled "The Architects of Mataroa, Convergences and Divergences of Trajectories: Their Interest in Urbanism and their Affiliation with Le Corbusier, André Lurçat and Auguste Perret", is inscribed within the field of studies on France-Greece relations and is centred on the analysis of the role that played the interaction of the Greek architects-passengers of Mataroa with the French context for their trajectories. On December 22, 1945, at the end of the Second World War and at the beginning of the civil war, more than 130 Greeks embarked on Mataroa and left Piraeus for Italy and from there to Paris. This instance constitutes, therefore, a decisive moment regarding the migration of Greek students to Paris. The mission of Mataroa, which should be interpreted in conjunction with the context of the Greek Civil War, played an important role in the evolution of Franco-Hellenic artistic and intellectual networks. This part of the project is inscribed within the field of studies on France-Greece relations and its main objective is to examine closely the mythical character of the Mataroa's voyage by attaching particular importance to the role of the architects-passengers. My choice to study the work of the architects of Mataroa is based on the fact the Mataroa

expedition constitutes the most important event in the history of Greek student migration in the 20th century, as Nicolas Manitakis supports. One parameter that has played a considerable role in this strengthening of migratory movements from Greece to France, and should not be underestimated, is the fact that the “Anglo-Saxon” powers had a direct involvement in the Civil War in contrast with the policy of France, which maintained a much more neutral position than that of Great Britain or the United States. Special attention will be paid to the episodes that preceded and followed the mission of Mataroa, since their close examination will allow us to better understand the impact of this mission on Franco-Hellenic exchanges regarding the artistic, intellectual and scientific scene during the post-war era. One aspect to which this research will pay particular attention is the fact that most of the architects returned to Greece in the mid-1950s. One of the objectives of my project is to examine closely the reasons for which each of these architects decided to return to Greece. Many of the architects-passenger architects of Mataroa, after their return to Greece, have held important positions in the public domain.

The examination of the architects of Mataroa will be developed around the following three axes: a first axis concerning the analysis of the differences between the didactic strategies employed at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris and the School of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens, a second axis focusing on the role of Greek architects in the architectural office of Le Corbusier and a third axis centred on the interest of the Greek architects in urban planning and their studies at the *Institut d'urbanisme de l'Université de Paris*. Particular attention will be paid to the analysis of the trajectories of the architects who returned to Greece after their stay in Paris and the positions they occupied in Greece. The main objective of this analysis of the architects' trajectories after their return to Greece will be to understand the specific role that played in their careers and trajectories the knowledge, skills and interpersonal relationships that the Greek architects that travelled on Mataroa acquired during their stay in Paris or in other countries. In parallel, I will also examine to what extent they tried to maintain their professional and interpersonal relations with the French scene after their return to Greece. Central for this part of the study will be Panos N. Djélépy, who had studied at the *Ecole des Beaux-Arts* in Paris, had maintained his relations with the Parisian artistic and intellectual scene after his return to Greece, but travelled back to Paris and was the team leader of the architects who travelled on Mataroa. His article entitled “*Les maisons de l'archipel grec observées du point de vue de l'architecture modern*”, published in 1934 in *Cahiers d'Art*, is of major importance for the Franco-Hellenic artistic relations⁶. After returning to France, he published two books published by *Cahiers d'Art*.

Several architects of Mataroa shared their interest in urban planning. Many of them, as Provelengios, studied at the Institut d'urbanisme de l'Université de Paris. Particular attention will be paid to the analysis of the affiliations of the Greek architects of Mataroa with the Institut d'urbanisme de l'Université de Paris. Of great significance for this study is, therefore, the comparison between the didactic methods employed at the Institut d'urbanisme de l'Université de Paris and those elaborated at the School of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens at the time. Another passenger of Mataroa who is important for understanding the fascination of the Greek architects with urbanism is Antonios Kriezis, founder the Centre for Urban Studies at the School of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens, which was responsible for several urban studies in Greece, including that of Peloponnese (fig. 3). Kriezis distanced himself from the principles of modern town planning and was critical of Le Corbusier's urban planning approach. An important component of my research will also be the analysis of the approach of the French historian and urban planner Pierre Lavedan on Kriezis understanding of town planning. The influence of Lavedan, director of Institut d'urbanisme de l'Université de Paris and the journal *La Vie Urbaine*, on Kriezis is quite evident in Kriezis' book entitled *Greek Town Planning* (1965)⁷.

The point of departure of the third part of this postdoctoral project entitled “Diagnosing the Transformations of the Osmosis between Helleno-centricism and Modernism through the Study of Hybrid Architectural Drawings” is the fact that a dual localist and internationalist dimension characterizes the dialogue of modern architecture with nature in Greece. This ambiguity of the incorporation of the concept of nature and the Greek landscape into the architectural discourse is evident in the approach of Aris Konstantinidis. He perceives man and the landscape as a starting point, referring to the “man-people who speak [...] the language of nature”⁸ and associating the spiritual beauty of the Greek natural landscape with the necessity of architectural solutions that “nourish” the landscape (fig. 4). In parallel, he considers that it is possible to combine “primitive” and modern techniques and materials under the condition of maintaining contact with nature, blaming that modern architects and modern society have lost their connection with nature. The main objective of this part of the postdoctoral project will be to shed light on how an ensemble of architects, such as Dimitris Pikionis, Periklis Sakellarios, Patroklos Karantinos, Ioannis Despotopoulos, Aris Konstantinidis, Constantinos Dekavallas (fig. 5) and Kyriakos Krokos (fig. 6) among others, perceived the osmosis between the Helleno-centric and modernist approaches. Special attention will be paid to the role that the conceptualization of the nature played for these endeavours to blend localism and internationalism.

Special emphasis will be placed on the analysis of the relationships of interdependence between the Greek dominant models of representation in architecture and those corresponding to exogenous models. The comparisons that will arise between the approaches of Greek architects who have studied abroad and those who have studied in Greece will provide a fertile field for the analysis of the interaction of the Greek architectural production and thought with exogenous models within an international context. The aim of the research is, firstly, to diagnose the transformations of the dominant features of the osmosis between Hellenocentricism and modernism in architecture within the Greek context and, secondly, to relate the transformations of how that connection between Hellenocentricism and modernism is conceived at different historical times to the mutations the relationships between the architectural discourse in Greece and the institutional and geographic contexts I examined in my doctoral dissertation. The importance of analysing the transformations of the fictions accompanying the ways the addressee of architecture is conceived lies in the fact that it can shed light on the ideological features that are at the centre of Greek society at the different historical times under consideration.

As Keith L. Eggener underscores, in “Placing Resistance: A Critique of Critical Regionalism”, the notion of critical regionalism, coined by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre in “The Grid and the Pathway: An Introduction to the Work of Dimitris and Susana Antonakakis” in the early 1980s and was also employed by Kenneth Frampton, in “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance”, but also in “Prospects for a Critical Regionalism”⁹ among other texts, is problematic because of the fact that it identifies “an architecture that purportedly reflects and serves its locality, buttressed by a framework of liberate, empowering rhetoric, critical regionalism is itself a construct most often imposed from outside, from positions of authority”¹⁰. The research methodology employed in the framework of the project is based on the so-called “altermodern” approach, as employed by Nicolas Bourriaud in his homonymous essay and Okwui Enwezor in “Modernity and Postcolonial Ambivalence”, on the one hand, and on the transnational methods of historical analysis, on the other hand. The main characteristic of the *altermodern* approach that my research will adopt is the interest in the elaboration of a reinvented understanding of modernity that aims to go beyond the attachment of social and cultural reality to Western standards. The reason for which I am convinced that the *altermodern* approach is valuable for this research project is its attempt to challenge cultural standardisation, massification and nationalism. The postcolonial discourse contains an implicit critic against comparative methodologies and favours the methods of transnational history. One of the main features of the

transnational method of historical analysis is the rejection of any form of ethnocentrism. At the same time, the transnational method of historical analysis focuses on understanding transnational interactions as central forces for historical processes. Therefore, when one attempts to ‘transnationalise’ the historical discourse, it is like trying to re-shape and redefine the terms of understanding the cultural exchanges between different nations. These methodological choices will provide a fertile terrain for analysing the transformations of the addressee of architecture changes throughout time in Greece. In parallel, they will help us comprehend how these transformations are related to the different formal expressions that takes the Helleno-centric approach, privileging processes and dynamic models of interpretation of socio-cultural reality.



Figure 1. Charles Garnier, Chromolithographie, Façade angulaire du temple, pl. 24, *Revue générale de l'Architecture et des Travaux publics*, Vol. 16, 1858 (Source: Paris, Bibliothèque de l'INHA, collections Jacques Doucet)



Figure 2. Dominique Louis Papety, *Le duc de Montpensier et sa suite visitant les ruines d'Athènes*, 1847 (Source: RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Versailles))



Figure 3. Meeting at the Center of urban studies at the School of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens in October 1966 for the study of Peloponnese. In the center of the photo we can see Antonios Kriezis (Source: Archives of the School of Architecture of the National Polytechnic University of Athens)



Figure 4. Aris Konstantinidis wrote: “In Greece life is outdoors!” (Source: Leatherbarrow, David, *Uncommon Ground: Architecture, Technology and Topography*. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2000.)

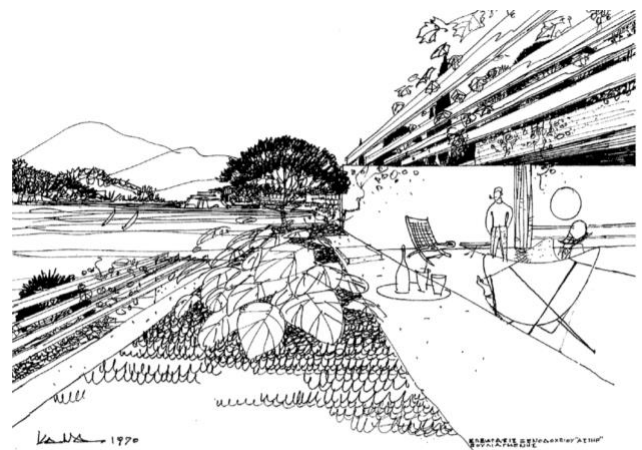


Figure 5. Constantinos Dekavallas’ perspective sketch for the expansion of Hotel Astir Vouliagmenis, 1970 (Source: Archives of Dimitris Kalapodas)



Figure 6. Watercolour by Kyriakos Krokos for his proposal for the Acropolis Museum

¹ See Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott. London: Verso, 2009.

² See Marie-Christine Hellmann, Philippe Fraisse et Annie Jacques, eds., *Paris-Rome-Athens: travels in Greece by French architects in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1982.

³ The *envoi de Rome* was the obligatory exercise of the holders of the Prix de Rome during their Italian stay at the Academy of France in Rome. See Pierre Pinon, François-Xavier Amprimoz, *Les envois de Rome (1778-1968). Architecture et archéologie*, préface de Georges Vallet et Charles Pietri. Rome: École Française de Rome, 1988.

⁴ Christine Peltre, *Retour en Arcadie. Le voyage des artistes français en Grèce au XIXe siècle*. Paris: Klincksieck, 1997.

⁵ See Νικόλας Μανιτάκης, Servanne Jollivet, eds., *Ματαρόα, 1945. Από τον μύθο στην ιστορία*. Αθήνα: École française d'Athènes/Εκδόσεις Ασίνη, 2018.

⁶ Panos N. Djélépy, “Les maisons de l'archipel grec observées du point de vue de l'architecture moderne”, in *Cahiers d'Art*, no. 1-4, 1934, p. 93-98.

⁷ Anthony Kriesis, *Greek Town Building*. Athens: National Technical University of Athens, 1965.

⁸ See Άρης Κωνσταντινίδης, *Δυο χωριά από τη Μύκονο και μερικές πιο γενικές σκέψεις μαζί τους* (1947). Κρήτη: Πανεπιστημιακές Εκδόσεις Κρήτης, 2011.

⁹ Kenneth Frampton, “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance”, in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post-Modern Culture*. Seattle: Bay Press, 1983, p. 16-30; Frampton, “Prospects for a Critical Regionalism”, in *Perspecta* 20, 1983, p. 147-162.

¹⁰ Keith L. Eggener, “Placing Resistance: A Critique of Critical Regionalism”, in *Journal of Architectural Education* Vol. 55, no. 4, 2002, p. 228.