

Representations of the Greek-German relationship in the decade of crisis (2008-2018): a case study on the Greek public history magazine “The Illustrated History”¹

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Abstract

Germany’s tough negotiating tactics during Greek economic crisis, in which harsh austerity measures were imposed in Greek citizens, had produced a bad mood between the relations among the two states and their citizens. This mood is strengthened by the mass media, changing the Greek conception about Germany and E.U. in general. In this research we study on the magazine named as “The History Illustrated” which is the first Greek magazine of public historical material published since 1968 by Papyros editions. Public history as a “nonacademic narrative” plays an important role in the modern construction of national or historic consciousness which create the image of the “other”. The research material is analysed as a multimodal, narrative and visual “text” which describes the past events in many diverse forms of historical narratives. We focus on the choices of the editor using the method of narrative analysis, so as to exact results about what image is formed about Germany and Europe. The research material is structured on (5) references-covers and 15 historical texts that are representing the Greek-German relationship (Issue 506: August 2010, 524: February 2012, 535: January 2013, 540: June 2013, 544: October 2013).

Keywords

crisis, public history, Greece- Germany

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As an introduction

History has been commercialized independently of historians, and by understanding the communication and consumption processes that have been subjected to a modern, popular engagement with the past, we will be able to understand this phenomenon. If historians want to protect the historical consciousness of the public, they must first understand how this public is informed. Public culture is under constant conflict and evolution, and the representation of the history is part of this evolution. Heritage consumerism is also a problematic, destructive force, but at the same time these historical products bear within them a potentiality for introducing new ways of conceptualizing the individual and the social knowledge. Consumption practices influence what is packaged as history, and work to define how the past manifests itself in society (Groot 2016: 6). It is very important to be researched the impact on how the past is displayed in magazines, what is the kind of historic knowledge the media company sets out to acquire about the potential readers. Knowledge about audiences is also crucial to the success of media companies and statistic is an important scientific tool to produce that knowledge (Axelsson 2012). The diversity of articles suggests an audience able to investigate in a number of historiographical styles and complex historical contexts. So, the target group has a university education and belongs in middle class. (Groot 2016: 50; Axelsson 2012: 282).

Public History interprets the past in multimodal fields, spreads it, and disseminates historical knowledge to a wider audience who may not read a historical scientific book. It is, therefore, capable of establishing or shattering collective identities. It allows us to understand the relationship that modern society holds with the past, a past that remains unchanged, but changes on the basis of the new questions we are asking, the new interpretations we seek (Flaiser, 2008). The public versions of history are symbols that produce meanings by which people perceive themselves as members of a national, local, political or other community, and be placed facing the difference, the diversity, and organize their lives as social subjects.

The growing interest of the past for public consumption of history has been combined with increased media - including monuments, museums, television, films, magazines and national parks - and practices - such as local history, family history, genealogy, autobiography, which are considered to constitute cultural memory and social expression. Easy access to written, visual and audio archives has given by new technologies. In this way, the relationship between history and the media has become stronger. Media have even more fundamental importance in shaping collective memory while rendering obsolete the traditional, meticulous historical knowledge provided by the books. Such an important change brings the question of undermining or not the role of academic history. We know that more and more often, new sources, ideas and forms of historical knowledge are created outside the universities. We also know that public historians work as non-

university professionals not only to spread history to the public but to use their professional skills to make a significant contribution to make conclusions about how we think about the past and what its meaning. Therefore, there is no history outside of historical practices, nor, a practice is considered more historic than another (Ashton 2010: 11-12).

The Researching Material

The public history magazine titled “The Illustrated History” is the first monthly special history interest magazine in Greece, which has been published for 50 years constantly, a fact that makes it the longest post-war magazine in the history of the Greek press.

The inspirer was the journalist and editor of historical publications of the publishing house “Papyrus” Nikos Aggelis, who presented the idea of a magazine in the standards of the very successful Italian history magazine “Storia Illustrata”. The idea was a magazine with light historical themes, with graphics and richly illustrated. In July 1968, during a tough period for the Greek free press because of the dictatorship (1967-1974), the first issue was published in collaboration with Greek and foreign historians and journalists. Up to now the issues of the magazine have reached in 609. Throughout this period, articles cover the period from prehistoric to the 20th century in Greece and international. Subjects, apart from the pure historical refer to archaeology, folklore, art, language, sociology, technology etc. Except from the magazine’s contribution to the readers, its contribution to Greek historiography is important. It is a useful scientific aid and tool of knowledge for students, researchers and historians. The sobriety in discourse, the plurality of opinions, the use of sources, the probe of the aspects of each historical event, the important academic work of many contributors gives to the magazine the function of a refined popularization and the valid academic knowledge.

In this research, we study this magazine focusing on its illustrations as well as on its titles of historic events selected, analyzing it as «a public historic discourse».

We apply Barthes (1978) analysis on its covers from 2008 to 2018, which refers to the relationship among Greece and German. Among 120 magazine’s cover-images there are only (5) covers, which present and cover the topic of Greek-German relations and 15 articles.

Methodology

We are dealing with the narratives of the 21st Century Public History about the Greek-German relations-We apply Barthes (1978) analysis as he identifies three main levels of description for a narrative: *function*, *action*, and *narration*. Narratives are also composed of chunks which can be identified, and they are

structured in a meaningful way which can be studied. We classify the functional units into four functions: *nuclei*, *catalysts*, *indices*, and *informants*. The nuclei form the core of the story in the sense that deleting one fundamentally alters the story. A catalyst makes an event happen, an index unit integrates more diffuse information like the atmosphere, and informants identify a location in time and place for the narrative. We focus also on its illustrations, analyzing it as a public historic representation constructing a discourse about greek-german relationship. According to Fiske (1992) and to Fillmore & Snow (2002) we can analyze the linguistic material using the different techniques that form the public discourse, such as the meaningful, the pragmatist, and the propaganda logic. Thus we use both the magazine's linguistic and visual representations in order to reveal its public narrative about the Greek-German relationship. Barthes (1978) remarks that images can truly function as of conveyers of meaning given that they are essentially imitations. They constitute a language and prove the meaning work of this language. In the linguistic message of an image, there is a special function, which he calls it "anchorage". Images are prone to multiple meanings and interpretations. Anchorage occurs when text is used to focus on one of these meanings, or at least to direct the viewer through the maze of possible meanings in some way. We also use the visual typology from Burke's work, who reviews the graphics, the photographs, the films, and other media from many countries and periods and he analyses their pragmatic uses. In developing a richer mode of visual interpretation, Burke focus on the religious icons and narratives and also on political propaganda, as the posters, the caricatures, and the maps. Thus, Burke helps us to understand the promise and the pitfalls of using visual evidence in the writing of history.

Public Greek discourse during the period of crisis 2008-2019

A misunderstanding gap started to mark Greek-German relations. This misunderstanding widely penetrated public opinion in both countries.

In particular, a poll organized by VPRC in February 2012 shows that 32.4% of Greeks associated Germany with Hitler, Nazism and the Third Reich and 77% agreed that the country exerts a "Fourth Reich policy". Moreover, a survey conducted by Harris Interactive in August 2012 demonstrates that 54% of respondents in Germany did not then believe that Greece should stay in the common currency, 26% strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that Eurozone members should do more to help Greece and 74% were not confident that the country will ever repay its bailout loans.

A Public Issue survey shows that 78% of respondents in Greece considered Germany negatively and 80% regarded interests of the two countries different. From another perspective, the ZDF Politbarometer demonstrates that 70% of respondents in Germany did not want more EU concessions on Greece and 51% wanted the country to leave from the Eurozone (Tzogopoulos, 2015).

The research material



image 1

The cover's topic (August 2010, number 506) refers to Greek-German relationship in literality. Text A is written by Sotiris Rizas "Greece and German in the WW1", pages 6- 13. Text B is written by Fedra Koutsoukou, "The Greek- German relations during the dictatorship of Metaxa". Pages 14-21 . The text C is written by Dimitris Apostolopoulos "The Greek- German relations after the WW2", pages 22-33. Text D is written by Popi Lazaridi, "Germany's position for the Greek economical crisis", pages 34-41. Text E is written by Andreas Stergiou, "The story of a division and the reunification of the German State", pages 42-54.

In this image we remark that the ancient Greek bust to profile- refers to the value of ancient Greek ideals. The Aphrodite is presented in a wounded profile without an anchorage to the title using the two national flags for background- with the Greek one on the top. The titles and the historic texts reproduce a traditional historic narrative about the great European wars in the 20th century until the modern financial crisis. The function, the action, and the narration can be identified.

The texts

- The narrative is about the conditions that led Greece to World War I on the side of Entente. Since the Greek Revolution, Greece has had diplomatic relations mainly with England, France and Russia. After the enthronement of King Constantine, a policy of Germany's approach to the Greek political scene begins. After the Balkan wars, Greece found itself territorially and politically victorious. Although the king Constantine and his military and political circle were favorably disposed towards Germany, the territorial balances in the Balkans are not to be overlooked. Moreover, Germany's approach to Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire made the choice of neutrality in the war preferable. The minister Venizelos, on the other hand, advocated participation on the side of Entente because he believed that Greece would come out victorious. In Greece, there was a modernist ideology favored by participation in the war on the side of Entente. Greece was also a coastal country and Britain as a

sovereign naval force could intervene more easily in Greek territory. These were the main reasons for participating the war with Entente.

- This is a negative signified on Greek-German relations.
- Thus we classify in these articles the functional units according to Barthes analysis as the a) nuclei which form the core of the story as the militaristic conflicts in national and European context: in specific the story is about the conditions that led Greece to World War I on the side of Entente, b) the catalysts which form the political, the geographical and the financial causes: in specific is about the role of the King Constantine and the minister Venizelos, c) the indices is the atmosphere itself, about the modernist ideology which favored by the participation in the war on the side of Entente, d) the informants is about the time and the place which form the specific context, such as the countries of Greece, England, France and Russia, the Ottoman empire and the Balkan area.
- The second article describes Greek-German relations during the dictatorship of Metaxas. They are characterized by Germany's economic and cultural influence on Greece in its attempt to build a safe area for Nazism in the Balkans. Nevertheless, Greece in Germany finds a consumer for its agricultural products. This will benefit both countries. Western powers seem not to react to this German policy as Hitler had no territorial aspirations, still. A British policy had been followed by Greece since 1937, and until the end of World War II, the relations between the two countries have been in reverse. It should also be noted that the conversion of Metaxas to England has to do with the fact that although dictatorial politics ideologically fit with Nazi and Hitlerian ideology, the Metaxas dictatorship was unable to follow Reich's national socialist course. This is a positive financial signified on Greek-German relations.
- The third article deals with the post-war and German occupation, when Greece is financially and organically damaged, but Greek-German relations have been characterized by a framework of friendship and cooperation ever since. Germany is Greece's most important trading partner and Germany serves its financial interests in the Balkans. Of course, we are referring to West Germany as relations with the German Democratic Republic are absolutely minimal. The issue of war criminals was solved diplomatically by the Greek governments. One issue that is still unresolved today is that of war allowances and landlords. Note also here that good relations persist even during Papadopoulos' dictatorship. Although West Germany condemns the government, it seeks to safeguard its financial interests. Finally, Germany's support for Greece's

accession to the EEC was significant. This is a positive financial signified on Greek-German relations.

- The fourth article shows nowadays Germany's refusal through Chancellor Merkel to provide financial assistance to Greece's economic stalemate. Merkel expresses her skepticism about the implementation of the financial assistance program in Greece at all EU summits and consultations. In doing so, she pursues her own interests in strengthening Germany's political arena and strengthening German power. On the France-German axis that dominates Europe. The solution to Greece's financial problem appears to be Merkel's success in safeguarding German interests. This is a negative financial signified on nowadays Greek-German relations.
- In the fifth article we find a brief historical account of the separation of the total German state into West and East Germany, from the end of World War II to November 10, 1981. The separation of Germany it seems to be due to competition between the USSR and the US. In this article we do not find reference to Greek-German relations.
- Thus the representations of the Greek-German relationship in these articles and in these images seem to be in the negative context, focusing on the victimization of Greece by both, its internal and external policies.



image 2

The cover's topic (February, 2012, number 524) refers to German Foreign Policy in the 21st century. Text A is written by Filippou Proedrou, "German Foreign Policy in the 21st century", pages 32-44.. Text B is written by Sotiris Petropoulos, "Greek communities in German", pages 45-57.

The realistic zooming picture of Angela Dorothea (Kasner) Merkel is a profiled one which is getting imposed on us as spectators with total anchorage to the title in a synecdoche level. The titles and the historic texts seem to reproduce a modern historic narrative about the German Foreign Policy in the 21st century and the Greek communities in German as historical populations. The indices and the informants are identified on these narratives.

- In the first article, the author outlines German foreign policy, as evolved since World War II, to this day, as well as the role it is called to play in the future. Germany, though torn apart by World War II, due to US support for US rivalry with the USSR, is becoming Europe's most important accountable force. Germany seems to be pursuing a Euro-centric foreign policy and leading the way in Europe, but on the other hand it is commented on the fact that it might serve German interests. The Nord Stream agreement with Russia on the gas pipeline appears to be an agreement that serves both sides exclusively with respect to the eastern European countries. Germany also refuses to play a decisive - leading role in the Greek crisis. These moves jeopardize European stability and divert Germany's foreign policy from the euro-centric. This is a negative political and financial signified on nowadays Greek-German relations.
- The second article is a brief historical account of the Greek immigration to Germany and the role of the German Greek communities. From 1950, and mainly from 1960-1980, the outflow of Greek immigrants to West Germany increased. Greeks were looking for better living conditions. West Germany was also looking for unskilled or low-skilled staff something that Greek immigration could offer. At first the living and working conditions were not satisfactory, because wages were low, in many cases living in factory congregations and German policy didn't favor the integration of Greeks into German society. The establishment of Greek communities had an important role in the integration of Greek immigrants into German society. In addition to trying to bond with Greece, they helped to learn the German language and culture, to create trade unions in order to defend the labor rights of Greek immigrants, significantly improving their position. This is a positive political and financial signified on historic Greek-German relations.



image 3

The cover's topic (January 2013, number 535) refers to Occupational governments in Greece in 1940. The text A is written by Konstantinos Alexiou, "*Collaborationism and occupational governments in Greece in 1940*" pages 80-94. The text B is written

by Dimitris Filippis, "Rescue lists for Spanish and Italian Jews in the occupational Greece" pages 95-105.

The realistic image is a photographic historic documentation with total anchorage to the title. It is a militaristic/politic male image representation in the typology of power. There are many indices and informants on these title narratives, such as: *the formation of collaborationist governments and the stimulation of political and social groups to this direction was one of the basic conceptions of the German occupation policy in all occupied countries. In Greece, three collaborationist governments were formed during the Occupation.*

- In the first article the author refers to the three occupation governments, Tsolakoglou, Logotetopoulos and Ralli, who played an important role during the occupation. The choices of the rulers and their executives seem to be mainly the choices of the Germans and to be determined by the competition between Italy and Germany in Greece. Governments wanted security to safeguard their territorial integrity and solve Greece's problems such as economic stalemate, food and famine. They portray the Germans as patrons, who want cooperation and legitimacy from the Greek citizens. During these governments, there has been a strong trend of anti-communism, especially under the Ralli government, with the creation of security measures against the EAM. After the end of the occupation, the author states, that the collaborators with the occupation forces were not punished, as happened in other European countries, but they were even exploited by Greek politics. This is a negative political signified on nowadays Greek-German relations.
- The second article refers to the Jews of Thessaloniki who came from Spain and Italy. From 1922 onwards anti-Semitic activities have been observed in Greece, but due to religious differences. Since 1935 and mainly after the intervention of the Germans in Greece the scenery has changed. Concerning the Spanish Jews, the "Serfadites", Franco showed no particular interest in rescuing them. The Jews supported "Red Spain" and Franco's political opponents. On the other hand, Italy seemed more tolerant as the Italian Jews were important economic players in Thessaloniki and influenced the Balkans in general by their economic and commercial activity. Of the approximately 60,000 Jews in Thessaloniki, only 350 were Jews of Italian nationality and 360 were of Spanish descent. This is a negative political signified on nowadays Greek-German relations.

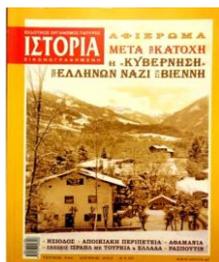


image 4

The cover's topic (June 2013, number 540) refers to the Greek Nazi government in Vienna. Text A is written by Vaios Kalogrias, "After the occupation, the Greek Nazi government in Vienna" pages 28-36. Text B is written by Iakovos Chodromatidis, "The government of Tsironikos and the Greek Hitlerians in Vienna 1945", pages 37-54.

About the Greek Nazi government in Vienna, we remark the naturalistic geographical image that is used as a historic documentation with a partial anchorage to the title.

One of the lesser-known chapters in the history of World War II is the one concerning the activities of the so-called Greek "national" government of Vienna, which the Axis only supported and acknowledged. The Greek National Socialists were given offices (initially at the Lomboschis Palace in Vienna) to house the ministries and services of the exiled "donor" government.

- The first article lists the conditions under which the Vienna government was created. Those who collaborated with the occupation forces, after the Germans had left, tried to escape travelling for Kitsbihel, where there were also other national socialists, former collaborators of Germans from Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania, and Albania. Thus, an exiled occupation government was formed but, after the collapse of the Reich, it failed to survive and its members were accused of being betrayers.
- This is a negative political signified on nowadays Greek-German relations.
- The second article refers to the government of Tsironikou and the Greek Hitlerites of Vienna. At the end of the Occupation and before the Germans left Greece, a group of Greek Nazis, the escaped from Greece and settled in Vienna, where they organized and set up an informal banished government led by Hektor Tsironikos. The activity of this government was limited to propaganda appearances and contacts with other nazistic governments. With the end of the war and the beginning of the political, civil war in Greece, many of them returned to Greece to join the police and the army vs to the "Communist danger".

This is a negative political signified on historic Greek-German relations.

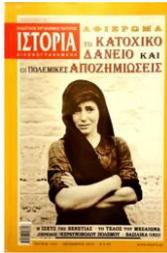


image 5

The cover's topic (October 2013, number 544) refers to the forced loan and the war reparations. The text A is written by Maria Sabatakaki, "The Greek- German relations" pages 9-18. The text B is written by Dimitris Apostolopoulos, "The forced loan and the war reparations" pages 19-31. The text C is written by Andreas Stergiou, "The issue of remedies and the Greek-German relations" pages 32-47. The text D is written by Sotiris Petropoulos, "The German debt and the Conference of London" pages 48-56.

In this image we perceive a poor woman's symbolic realistic representation, in a front position, gazing on us, asking for support with a partial anchorage to the title in a synecdoche level. The texts also reproduce a postmodern narrative about the forced loan and the war reparations vs German politics function, action, and narratives in a postmodern level are identified.

- The first article refers to Greek-German contacts from the time of the Bavarian authority until the 1950s. The first contact by Greece was in late 1821, when Greek negotiators signed two loan agreements. In 1833, the newly established Greek state became the monarch of Bavaria Otto (Óthon), thus creating future conditions for Germany's influence on Greek territory. During the First World War I, Greek aspirations were confronted with those of the Germans, and so Greece decided to support England and France. During the interwar period, Greek-German relations gained solid foundations in economic terms, as Germany became Greece's most powerful trading partner. The Second World War brings Greece vs to Germany with huge negative repercussions on the Greek economy, infrastructure and human lives. Finally, the 1950s brought close cooperation between Greece and West Germany in the fields of trade, energy and telecommunications.
- This is a positive financial signified on historic Greek-German relations.
- The second article deals with the problem of German allowances and home loans, two issues that remain open to this day. The London Agreement postpones the settlement of damages for many countries including Greece. The prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis receives financial assistance from Germany and puts an end to war issues between the two countries. In 1960, Germany decides to compensate some of the victims, as a move of goodwill. Another major issue is the ownership loans Germany took from the Nazistic

Greek government and were never repaid. These two issues are a thorn in the two countries' relationship as Germany rejects them.

- This is a negative financial and political signified on historic Greek-German relations.
- The third article also refers to the issue of reparations and Greek-German relations. After taking a historical course on the Greek claims against the Germans on the issue of redress, the article concludes with legal and political arguments on both sides. Germany's arguments are that the German state has already paid billions in damages, paid a huge price for its involvement in World War II by accepting the loss of one-third of its territory. Moreover, in the context of NATO and the EU, it has provided significant assistance to Greece which should be offset by its debts. The Greek side argues that the compensation given is disproportionately small than the actual debt, because German aid has benefited the German economy as well. In addition, compensation is a fundamental principle of international law and as a consequence of international responsibility, the institution of limitation is a foreign body in international law. Finally, the ownership loan that Greece has never given up is a bilateral transnational agreement and therefore the classic *pacta sunt servanda* principle applies.
- This is a negative financial and political signified on historic Greek-German relations.
- The fourth article deals with German debt and the London Agreement. The narrative is about, how a country that has been defeated in two world wars has today become so financially prosperous. This is explained by the Communist threat and East Germany, which has shifted the interest of the states involved in favor of West Germany, leaving behind the logic of punishment. In this way West Germany was considered as a friendly country and was helped by the boom of the German economy.

This is a negative political signified on historic Greek-German relations.

Results – Discussion

According to Burke (2001: 13) images allow us to “imagine the past more vividly” because of their capacity to create impressions in our thinking, in terms of mental representations.

Thus, the typology which is applied on the covers' analysis reveals the images of Power (Burke, 2001: 59-80), that function as visual propaganda, portrayed and created the “public image” of the rulers. They were designed to subvert a given

political order. In specific in these covers, the images of famous and anonymous individuals have been chosen, both men and women (1,2,3,5), using mythological and historic persons in order to represent the historic conflicts between Greece and German. There is only one landscape image (4) that is used as a historic documentation.

As a sociologist, Comte applied the positivist approach to history, believing that historians would in due course uncover the laws of historical development. History, as a science, has failed to generate these sorts of laws leading modern positivists to seek historical explanation through the correct application of generalizations derived from other disciplines supposedly based on scientific method such as economics, sociology, and psychology (in Tosh,1999). The most articles in the historical journal we analyze (besides one neutral) seem to represent the positivist historical narrative, applying a negative political signified on historic Greek-German relations.

Positivist historical knowledge was considered to be objective, and the historian was not allowed to pass judgement on the facts. This meant that history was only of external events (Boucher, 1984).

Positivist historians amassed large numbers of atomistic facts, but they rarely moved on to generalizing laws. Their methods also constrained them to primarily political history, as they were incapable of acquiring or dealing with the sorts of facts required by other forms of history. According to Collingwood, "The legacy of positivism...is a combination of unprecedented mastery over small-scale problems with unprecedented weakness in dealing with large-scale problems" (Collingwood, 1994: 133).

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