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Editor-in-chief:
Vassilios Sabatakakis
vassilios.sabatakakis@klass.lu.se

Space in Texts and Space as Text: A new approach to Byzantine spatial notions

Myrto Veikou
Uppsala University

It is more or less impossible to imagine a narrative that has neither spatial nor temporal setting. Whether we are dealing with the legendary Hyksos Sea People in Egypt in the 1,600s BCE or a distant Galaxy around 10,000 CE, a story needs to be placed within a spatial and temporal context in order for an audience to be able to imagine it. Immanuel Kant first argued on this need in 1781, by considering time and space as *a priori* conceptual representations that condition our ability to understand the world around us. His idea became foundational in the Humanities and Social sciences.[1] And yet, while time has been seen as central in the studies of historical societies, space had not received the same focus. That condition generated the movement known as the *Spatial Turn*, gradually developing over the last two or three decades.[2] With this development, historical research on spatial paradigms and practices has expanded, gaining much attention across disciplines and in the study of vastly different periods.[3]

In this paper, I will, first of all, argue that the scant interest in the Spatial Turn in Byzantine studies needs to be enhanced, because several ideas produced within this movement can help us understand Byzantine

[1] Kant 1781. Cf. the concepts of time-geography (Hägerstrand 1970; Lenntorp 1999; Neutens, Schwanen and Witlox 2011) and time-space in human geography (May and Thrift 2001; Massey 2005: 177–95) as well as chronotope in literature (Bakhtin 1981; Crang andThrift 2000: 71–88).

[2] See Soja 1989. For explanations and accounts of this research see: Soja 2010: 7–20; Warf and Arias 2009.

[3] Cohen and Prat 2014.

spaces. Second, I will suggest that Henri Lefebvre's analytic category of 'lived spaces' can serve as a useful tool in that direction. I will explain the way in which it is currently being used within the new research project "Byzantine Literary 'Lived Spaces' through the Study of Hagiographical Texts", conducted at the Department of Linguistics and Philology at Uppsala University.[4] In order to better exemplify this methodological approach, I will discuss these spatial notions on the basis of one hagiographical text, the eleventh-century *Life of St Lazaros from Mount Galesion* by Gregory the Cellarer.

1. Byzantine studies – what Spatial Turn?

The long history of modern philosophical debate on the nature of space has involved the investigation of distinctive ways of comprehending its function in human life – not only as an absolute, but also as a relative and a relational concept.[5] Within the Spatial Turn in the Humanities and Social sciences, space has been further attributed a very complex involvement in historical development: it has been suggested that social space is constituted as a concept by the integration not only of the triad of aspects mentioned above (absolute, relative, relational) but also involving another, materially sensed, conceptualized and lived space.[6] A clear interest in these spatial notions has been displayed within western Medieval studies, in the form of a limited number of theoretically up-to-date, specialized works, focusing mainly on spatial reconstructions and representations and literary spatiality,[7] along with substantial publications, doctoral projects and international conference sessions.[8]

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[4] See http://www.grekiska.net/byzantine-narrative/projects-in-uppsala/veikou-project/ (view date: 7 June 2016).

[5] See e.g. the discussions by Crang and Thrift 2000 and Harvey 2009: esp. 133–40, as well as the overview by Castree, Kitchin and Rogers 2013: s.v. space.

[6] Lefebvre 1991; Harvey 2009: 133–34, 141–44; Soja 1996; Massey 2005; Crang and Thrift 2000.

[7] Cassidy-Welch 2001, 2003, 2005, 2010, 2011; Woshinsky 2010; Classen and Clason 2012; Cohen and Prat 2014.

[8] Bendon Davis 2007; Howes 2007; Goodson, Lester and Symes 2010; Cassidy-Welch 2010; Wolf 2010; Waller 2013. Indicative conferences and conference sessions: "Colloque Représentations et Conceptions de l'espace dans la culture médiévale" (Fribourg

By contrast, the Spatial Turn – in the way it was experienced in other fields – has been essentially absent from Byzantine studies. This is not easy to discern at first glance, because Byzantinists (mainly archaeologists and historians) did turn to investigations of spatial aspects of Byzantine culture during the last two decades or so, as an echo of the general tendencies in other fields. However, in comparison with other fields, Byzantinists have in general displayed a restricted interest in these issues as well as a significant reluctance to consider, employ or argue against recent interdisciplinary methodologies and theoretical concerns.[9] Accordingly, the great majority of their studies of spatial issues are theoretically limited and not equally brough up-to-date; in fact, most historical and archaeological studies still insist on what is essentially structuralist approaches and thus miss the entire theoretical developments which generated the Spatial Turn in the first place.[10] As far as literary studies are concerned, spatial dimensions of performances have indeed often been acknowledged and seriously considered,[11] and yet spatiality and its roles in Byzantine narratives and our respective metanarratives have not so far added up to an object of literary criticism per se.

The very few exceptions to this rule, discussed at length elsewhere[12] and including Ann Marie Yasin's work on Late antique art and architec-

2009), published as Suarez-Nani and Rohde 2011**; "**Medieval Enclosure and Spatiality in Anglo-Saxon Literature" (44th International Congress on Medieval Studies, University of California, Davis, May 7–10, 2009); **"**Crossing Borders: Delineations of Space in Medieval and Early Modern Literature" (Northeast Modern Language Association 46th Annual Convention in Toronto, Ontario, April 30–May 3, 2015); "The door of the sanctuary: a place of transition" (VU University Amsterdam, 27–29 May 2015).

[9] These issues are certainly not the only ones neglected, since theoretical interests have been very limited in many areas of research about Byzantium; for the field of Byzantine archaeology, see Veikou, "The Future of Byzantine Archaeology" (forthcoming).

[10] E.g. Koder 1984; Koder 1998; Hunger and Belke 2000.

[11] Agapitos 1999; Nilsson 2000; Constantinou 2005: 165–92.

[12] For extensive discussions of exceptions within the fields of Byzantine spatial and field archaeology and historiography, such as the works by Ann-Marie Yasin, see Veikou 2009, 2010, 2012a–b, "The Reconstruction of Byzantine Lived Spaces" (forthcoming) and "The Future of Byzantine Archaeology" (forthcoming). Works by Adam Goldwyn (2015) and Veronica della Dora (2016) serve as good examples within literary studies.

ture,[13] have set the 'Byzantinist' background for the research project to be discussed in this article. This project intends to make use of experiences and ideas, gained in both Medieval and Byzantine studies and in other fields of the Humanities and the Social sciences, in order to open up new opportunities for combined research and work towards a new area of research on Byzantine spatialities. In order to demonstrate that, I will first explain the project's practical and theoretical background (sections 2–3). Thereafter (section 4), I will present the project's scope and methodology by giving an indicative example of conducted research on the *Life of St Lazaros from Mount Galesion*.

2. The need for an investigation of Byzantine spaces: from a Byzantine spatial archaeology to a Byzantine ecocriticism.

So, why is it that we *should* investigate space in Byzantium and do it now? The first reason for such an urgency in Byzantine studies is that, due to the absence of our own Spatial Turn, we are missing out on processing very useful information produced in other fields of the Humanities and Social sciences. Second, the more we ignore this information, the more this theoretical gap between Byzantine studies and other fields will increase and we will deprive the next generations of a dynamic interdisciplinary dialogue. Third, and perhaps most importantly, spatiality seems very likely to have been crucial for the Byzantines themselves in many ways, judging from both material culture and texts referring to everyday life in Byzantium. Both texts and archaeology reveal specific Byzantine strategies for the construction of settled spaces, ranging from the selection of location based on practical or symbolic concerns to the architecture and decoration of the buildings.[14] Surviving military texts (*strategika*) further describe in detail the processes related to inhabiting a place, which are further confirmed by material remains of Byzantine settlements such as their geographic and geomorphological profile, form and pattern as well as the construction methods used for their buildings.[15]

[13] E.g. Yasin 2005, 2012a–b, 2015.
[14] Veikou 2009, 2010, 2012a–b; 2015a–b.
[15] Veikou 2012a: 305–30.

This evidence has previously lead to my call for a) the theoretical insertion of space as a historical agent in Byzantium, in the form of a mechanism of sustainability and growth,[16] and, subsequently, b) the introduction of a Byzantine *Spatial Archaeology* (and thus a Byzantine 'Spatial History', in the same context).[17] How is that different from Landscape Archaeology and what exactly would be the precise subject of a spatial archaeology in the context of a historical culture (and in specific the Byzantine)? What kind of historiographical change of focus and concerns would such an archaeological research produce? A few theoretical tools for thinking about these issues are suggested in the following pages; yet, answers to these questions are to be discovered by future research, experimentation and scholarship.

An example from another new area of research in Byzantine studies – one with more limited focus, yet involving conscious and determined spatial considerations – is very encouraging: Byzantine *ecocriticism.*[18] Adam Goldwyn, in his recent discussion of ecocriticism's applicability in Byzantine studies, shows an excellent way of adopting approaches from other fields while theoretically updating them.[19] Goldwyn has achieved that by diverting this practice's theoretical framework, away from political connotations previously attributed to it by other scholars and towards a different, highly meaningful use in the investigation of historical cultures.[20]

3. Some theory: 'lived spaces' and performed spaces

A concept which reconciliates archaeological, historical and literary approaches and encourages interdisciplinarity in our comprehension of

[16] Ibid.

[17] The term is used in accordance with Wendy Ashmore's explication within a counter-modern theoretical framework: Ashmore 2002.

[18] Ecocriticism or environmental literary criticism is a literary practice sprung from the environmental movement, studying the depiction of the built and natural environments in literature. See Siewers 2009; Westling 2013; Goldwyn 2015: 66; Classen 2012: 24.

[19] Goldwyn 2015.

[20] Ibid.

spaces makes, I think, an ideal subject of research for Byzantine spatial studies: Henri Lefebvre's spatial 'trialectics', dating to 1974 and developed ever since, offers such a concept, consisting of *perceived*, *conceived* and *lived space*.[21] In his well-known work, *La production de l'espace*, Lefebvre suggested that space should be seen as the site of ongoing interactions of social relations, rather than the mere result of such interactions – a process of production rather than a product:

> The space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action; in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power; yet as such it escapes in part from those who would make use of it. The social and political forces which engendered this space now seek, but fail, to master it completely.[22]

Every society, Lefebvre wrote, produces a space – its own space. In that sense, Byzantine society cannot be understood as a collection of people and things in space; it had its own spatial practices and forged its *own*, *appropriated space*.

Lefebvre proposed the triadic dialectic model mentioned above as an analytical tool for establishing the process of space production. He considered every process a three-part dialectic between everyday spatial practices (which can be perceived), representations of space or theories of space (which can be conceived) and spatial representations which are the spatial imaginary of the time (and cannot be anything but lived). The third of these categories, lived space, is balanced carefully between the two poles of conceived space and perceived space by embodying both elements without being reducible to either. Two contemporary geographers, Stuart Elden and Zhongyuan Zhang, have explained this three-part dialectic with the example of an office building:

> On the one hand, we have an abstract space of pure mathematical figures and verbal messages – manifested in the design of offices, organisational rules and symbols, and so on; and, on the other, an all-too-material, and therefore indifferent space, consisting of the

[21] Cf. Klooster and Heirman 2013 for an application of this concept in literary studies of ancient and modern (but not Byzantine!) Greek as well as Roman cultures.

[22] Lefebvre 1991: 26.

> flows of labour, money, information and every physical movement of employees: their opening doors, sipping coffee etc. In between these two poles, there is the lived space, a space of pure subjectivity, of human experiences, of people's sense-making, imagination, and feeling – that is, their local knowledge – of the space as they encounter it. [23]

Space, as Lefebvre argues and Elden comments upon, may not change, but our perceptions of it do – they become more fine, more subtle, more profound, more differentiated.[24] Lefebvre associates the diversity of space with the changing perspectives of onlookers. Zhang has suggested that our understanding of Lefebvre's model can be enhanced with the notion of 'shifting perspectives'.[25] Conceived space, perceived space and lived space could be portrayed as the projected images of three cameras focused concurrently on any given event:

> through the first camera we read mathematical data, the height of a man, the length of a corridor, and so on; through the second we see the body movements of the man, his perambulations, his gestures; and through the third, we reach into his inner subjectivity, his feelings about the structures surrounding him. Each camera generates different data yet each, at the same time, refers to the overall space they come to represent. In other words, conceived, perceived and lived spaces overlap, and are not just juxtaposed.[26]

From an analytical standpoint, the spatial practices of a society can be revealed through the deciphering of its space; however, that is not so easy for representations of space and representational spaces. A combined study of material remains and historical sources allow reconstructions of spaces produced by the Byzantines from all three perspectives. Material remains are part of perceived spaces; textual evidence speaks about conceived spaces. However, neither material remains on their own nor texts alone allow us to approach lived spaces; only different interpretations of texts *and* material remains can help reconstruct Byzantine spatial experiences with the help of the analytical category of

[23] Zhang 2006: 221.
[24] Lefebvre 1991: 295–315; Elden 2004:182.
[25] Zhang 2006: 222.
[26] Ibid.

'lived spaces', and that is the aim of my research. I hope that this will allow me to perceive the way in which Byzantine people reacted and interacted with space and environment and, moreover, to better understand how they constructed their places and, basically, how they lived their lives. I have already argued elsewhere for the implementation of the concept of "lived spaces" in Byzantine field archaeology,[27] but what would be an appropriate methodology for approaching these Byzantine spatial experiences through an interdisciplinary investigation of 'lived spaces', by means of both archaeology and texts, combining tools from archaeology, history and literary studies?

The key strategy towards such an investigation of Byzantine "lived spaces" is to not simply consider them as static social constructions but, instead, as hybrid formations which were constantly becoming and which were performed in everyday life. The theoretical idea of space performativity is based on more recently forwarded ontogenetic conceptions of space; the latter have shifted the focus of the debate concerning the ontology of space from 'what space is' to 'how space becomes.'[28] According to such an approach, space is not ontologically secure – a fixable, definable, knowable, pre-determined entity; rather, space is always in the process of becoming, always in the process of taking place.[29] Here, space gains its form, function, and meaning through practice,[30] and thus the production of human spaces is connected with people's performances[31] and the perfomativity of social life in general.[32] Focusing on performance enables an analysis of how people consciously seek to create particular identities and own spaces, while performativity allows a focus on the unconscious, unintentional, citational performances

[27] Veikou, "The Reconstruction of Byzantine Lived Spaces" (forthcoming).

[28] Castree, Kitchin and Rogers 2013: s.v. space.

[29] Ibid.

[30] In this particular theoretical context, see Massey 2005: 177–95; yet the concept of practiced spaces had already been well argued by Michel de Certeau (1984: 91–110, 115–30) and it is in many ways implied in Lefebvre's theoretical construction (1991); as well put by Edward Soja, "the spatial turn begins in Paris" (2009: 17). See also Cassidy-Welch 2010; esp. 2, for medieval practiced spaces.

[31] Goffman 1959.

[32] Butler 1990.

of identity and productions of space.[33] In Gillian Roses's words "performed space is, therefore, space as a doing – i.e. space does not pre-exist its doing – and that doing comes as the articulation of relational performances".[34] Performed space, then, is a 'space in action'; this is what I intend to show in the next section, based on the example of a Byzantine hagiographical text.

4. Towards an investigation of Byzantine, performed lived spaces

The use of these theoretical tools from cultural geography has already proved efficient in the investigation of Byzantine spaces, allowing us to notice previously overlooked things and thus opening up a whole new world of spaces through new 'readings' of material remains, assisted by alternative readings of written sources. It has also allowed us to discern Byzantine spatial strategies which were extremely inventive and often more sensitive to natural space than our own. In some cases, it has brought forth new analytical categories (e.g. the *In-Between Spaces*, the *Third* or *Other Spaces*, or the settlement rotation) for the interpretation of some Byzantine settlement patterns and habitation strategies, such as the dispersed and non-nuclear settlements, the so-called *kastra* and *emporia, off-shore isles-of-refuge* as well as settlements that had both urban and rural attributes.[35] This development can take place because postmodern geography's ethics, in Lila Leontidou's words, "celebrate diversity, fragmentation, eclecticism and [instances] where culture and politics, not economy, demand center stage".[36] So these tools have succesfully integrated the ambiguous notion of hybridity as a spatial quality, with the help of Homi Bhabha:

> Hybridity to me is the third space that enables other positions to emerge. The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, new and unrecognizeable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation.[37]

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[33] Castree, Kitchin and Rogers 2013: s.v. performance, performativity.
[34] Rose 1999: 248.
[35] Veikou 2009, 2010, 2012a-b, 2015b.
[36] Leontidou 1997: 95–96; cf. Veikou 2009: 49–50.
[37] Bhabha 1990: 211; Bhabha 2006; Whatmore 1999; cf. Veikou 2009: 50.

Furthermore, they have allowed us to break out of our contemporary 'spontaneous' definitions within established interpretation schemes (e.g. Byzantine city – town – village – countryside) and mainstream bipolar schemes (e.g. urban vs. rural) through a critical interpretation strategy that Edward Soja has called *Thirding as Othering*, which, in his words:

> tries to open up our spatial imaginaries to ways of thinking and acting that respond to all binarisms, to any attempt to confine thought and action to only two alternatives, by interjecting an-Other set of choices. In this critical thirding, the original binary choice is not dismissed entirely but is subjected to a creative process of restructuring that draws selectively and strategically from two opposite categories to open new alternatives.[38]

In the same direction there has been an effort to identify Byzantine and medieval recurrent settlement strategies reflecting political and cultural practices yet deriving – or making use of – local spatial experience, such as the relation between insularity and the rotation of islands' capitals.[39]

However, archaeology backed up by written texts has its limits; instead, perhaps a deeper analysis and more thorough understanding of written texts, which provide representations of spatial experiences of everyday life, backed up by archaeology, may provide a further step in the search for Byzantine 'lived spaces'. A recent attempt at such an approach concerned the comprehension of late antique and Byzantine ports and harbours: following an investigation of their archaeology, geography and geomorphology,[40] their cultural features were reconsidered through relevant spatial experiences accounted for in Byzantine texts. Byzantine descriptions and narratives of ports and harbours were analysed in accordance with the spaces that Michel Foucault called "heterotopias",[41] where sea, ships and harbours are places in which time and space are experienced in ways different from 'normal' everyday life.[42]

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[38] Soja 1996: 5–6. Cf. Soja 1999; Veikou 2009: 50.
[39] Veikou 2015b.
[40] Veikou 2015a.
[41] Foucault 1984.
[42] Veikou and Nilsson, forthcoming.

The astonishing analogies between medieval and modern spaces speak for the existence of diachronic spatial experiences.[43]

Written texts providing representations of spatial experiences of everyday life – or, on the contrary, spaces being performed and space performances – constitute a very interesting area of study. The investigation of these experiences is the main focus of the new project "Byzantine Literary 'Lived Spaces' through the Study of Hagiographical Texts" at Uppsala University.[44] Its purpose is an application of a hybrid combination of academic methodologies and approaches, drawn from spatial studies and the humanities in general (in specific literary, historical and cultural studies), towards a comparative study of Byzantine hagiographical texts in terms of: a) representations of socially constructed spatial aspects of Byzantine everyday life; b) literary spaces reflecting social reality; and c) ways in which these spaces determine or affect the structure of the texts.

The project aims to understand literary spaces along two main axes, a historical and a narrative one: first, an investigation of literary spaces as representations of diverse spatial perceptions, conceptions, uses, functions, and experiences as well as their diachronic transformation, through the study of selected texts (and perhaps also their contemporary material and visual culture); second, an investigation and reconstruction of diachronic uses of space as a narrative device and of spatiality as a narrative strategy, as well as their functions and effects in these texts. Other issues regarding narrative space and place, such as those pointed out by Mieke Bal, will be also treated individually: 1) the senses through which characters experience space: sight, hearing and touch; 2) how spatial frames are filled with objects; 3) how these objects create an atmosphere; 4) how character movements mediate between spatial frames; 5) the intrinsic symbolic value of some kinds of places, such as the mountaintop or the *locus amoenus*; 6) description as the communication of spatial information; 7) actions that are performed not merely in space but with space, such as "walking into a wall".[45]

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[43] Ibid.

[44] See above, n. 4.

[45] Bal 1985: 93–99. These themes have been elaborated upon by Ryan, Foote and

The material for this research will be a selection of Byzantine hagiographical texts of different kinds, preliminarily dated to between the fourth and the twelfth centuries. These accounts of Byzantine saints' lives, that is of 'ordinary' people's routes to holiness and sanctification, have been selected because they provide an excellent opportunity for an investigation of lived spaces, by offering a generous and colourful palette of spatially and socially defined human agency as well as information on the rhetorical context in which the texts were used. These texts were addressed to a broad and varied audience and contain a genuine and dynamic expression of everyday life; they bring out the individual as well as both religious and secular culture, and they encounter the sacred in a number of different locations such as the human body, the church, the cell, the pillar, the open nature etc. They contain large amounts of topographic definitions of an ever-changing locality of action.

So what is the need for and the significance of this pronounced spatiality of human agency in such texts and what is its role in the narrative? For a start, we cannot disregard that even the original Greek word for the process to holiness through ascetism, which appears in hagiographical texts in the fourth century (ἀναχώρησις, deriving from the compound verb ἀναχωρέω, meaning 'to withdraw or retire from public life, from the world'; > ἀναχωρητὴς meaning 'an ascete living in the desert'),[46] is related to space and relocation in an interesting twofold way, through the individual original meanings of its components. On the one hand, it may well insinuate to 're-locate oneself or advance, upwards or against the stream'; on the other, it might also have a meaning of 're-making room for oneself, in repetition for improvement'.[47] In a way, ascetism

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[46] Liddel and Scott 1940; Henne 1955; Wipszycka 2001: 148–55; Choat 2002: 10–11. Wipszycka shows that until the eighth century the term ἀναχωρητὴς had developed into a more prestigious and honorific synonym for monk.

[47] Cf. Liddel and Scott 1940: ἀνα-χωρέω > ἀναχώρησις, ἀναχωρητὴς; ἀνὰ (+ verb): i) up to, upwards, up, arise!, ii) against the stream, iii) hence flows the sense of increase or strengthening, as in ἀνακρίνω, iiii) from the notion throughout, comes that of repetition and improvement, as in ἀνα-βλαστάνω, -βιόω, -γεννάω; χωρέω: i) to be in motion or flux, ii) to go forward, advance, make progress, iii) to have/make room for a thing, hold, contain. Pietro Bortone (2010: 231) suggests that the distributive meaning of

comes as an experience of social isolation, self-confinement within limited space and ample imagination. But again what comes as extremely surprising is the amount of relocations and mobility in these texts, as well as the attention drawn to spatial definitions and representations, which show that the sanctification experience of a person was built upon his constant discourse and renegotiation with a localized social environment, from which the saint is supposed to have wanted to isolate himself in the first place.

As a typical example of such discourse I will here use the *Life of St Lazaros from Mount Galesion*, written by Gregory the Cellarer. This hagiographical text, whose original version seems to have dated back to the eleventh century, survives in a fourteenth-century manuscript at Mt Athos.[48] Lazaros Galesiotes was a monk on the Mount Galesion near Ephesos in Asia Minor some time during the eleventh century, and his reputation for sanctity extended far beyond this region by the time of his death, in November 1053. In Richard Greenfield's words,

> he was for many people one of the brightest stars in the Byzantine monastic firmament. This, at any rate, is the impression given by Gregory the Cellarer, a disciple and trusted supporter of Lazaros, who wrote this vita, (…) by far the longest, most detailed, and most trustworthy source on the saint.[49]

On the basis of this lengthy text (covering 212 folios), I will suggest three ways of approaching Byzantine lived spaces through an analysis of narrative spatiality: first, by identifying different meanings of *narrative space* (i.e. "the physically existing environment in which characters live and move")[50]; second, by considering the text's *spatial form*[51] as

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ἀνὰ as an individual preposition seems to have prevailed during the medieval period, while its spatial meaning was now expressed by a new preposition (ἐπάνω); however, his study does not include the development of meanings of compound nouns and verbs, which had been formed and established in earlier periods.

[48] *Vita Lazari* with English translation by Greenfield 2000.

[49] Greenfield 2000: 1. On the surviving texts referring to Lazaros' life see: Greenfield 2000: 49–61; Lambropoulou 1988.

[50] Buchholz and Jahn 2005.

[51] Ryan 2014: §2.4.

narrative tool; and third, by analysing how this spatial form allows for the element of *relocation* to represent aspects of social interaction and reflect cultural practices.

To start with a brief explanation of what this *vita* is about, Lazaros was born in the vicinity of Magnesia on the Meander, as the fifth child of peasant parents, and set off for an adventurous journey to fulfill his lifelong dream of visiting the Holy Land at the age of 18.[52] That was the beginning of 25 years of circular wandering across Asia Minor and the Holy Land, living in different monasteries and visiting pilgrimage sites from Jerusalem up to the Pontus, before returning to his homeland Ephesus. Despite what one would expect, a new phase of wandering around Ephesos and the nearby Mount Galesion awaited Lazaros back home. He first settled at a small hermitage and began his career as a stylite. After his reputation had spread, a monastery was constructed to house the disciples who gathered around him. Yet, the conditions in this monastery beside the main road into Ephesus was not well suited to one who aspired to the ascetic ideals of hesychia, so Lazaros turned to the neighboring mountain, Galesion, which was barren and largely uninhabited. He settled down first in a cave and then on four different pillars, constructed for him higher and higher up on the mountain by his disciples who were just following him on his way up and settling around his pillars. I intend to show that, if Lazaros' first, intentional wandering phase meant a process of personal education, spiritual improvement and making of a new identity as an ascete, his second wandering involved a negotiation and performance of his identity as a holy man within his social environment.

To begin with a brief mapping of the *vita*'s narrative space, I will use some of Marie-Laure Ryan's different "laminations" – the *spatial frames*, *story space*, *narrative world* and *narrative universe* –, which help to shed some light on different aspects of the literary lived spaces.[53] More that 100 place names and geographical names compose the spatial frames of the narration (that is "the immediate physical surroundings

[52] A more detailed summary of Lazarus' life main events can be found in Greenfield's Introduction (2000: 1–14).

[53] Ryan 2014: §2.1.

of actual events, the various locations shown by the narrative discourse or by the image, the shifting scenes of action which may flow into each other"[54]). Zooming out, 189 topographic references and space descriptions accompanied by relocation verbs shape the *vita*'s story space (i.e. "the space relevant to the plot, as mapped by the actions and thoughts of the characters, thus consisting of all the spatial frames plus all the locations mentioned by the text that are not the scene of actually occurring events"[55]). Zooming further out, the eleventh-century Byzantine Asia Minor and Fatimid Palestine, with provincial cities, towns and countryside in which one may imagine ecclesiastical authorities and popular culture to hold a predominant position, constitutes the story's narrative world (i.e. "the story space completed by the reader's imagination on the basis of cultural knowledge and real world experience, conceived by the imagination as a coherent, unified, ontologically full and materially existing geographical entity"[56]). Last but not least, coming to the *vita*'s narrative universe (i.e. "the world presented as actual by the text plus all the worlds constructed by characters as beliefs, wishes, fears, speculations, hypothetical thinking, dreams, and fantasies"[57]), spaces seem to have more than one social and narrative function, since in addition to their original formal purpose they have acquired different and ever-changing meanings through their social function within a community. Churches and monasteries, for instance, stand out as polysemic and multi-functional social environments.[58]

Nevertheless, the most striking aspect of the *vita*'s narrative space concerns the *spatial form* of the text.[59] The entire account of this monk's life is an unending sequence of relocation verbs accompanied by spatial definitions.[60] In fact, the impression of relocation in the plot is so strong,

[54] Ibid. §2.1.a.

[55] Ibid. §2.1.c.

[56] Ibid. §2.1.d.

[57] Ibid. §2.1.e.

[58] Cf. Smith 2010; Jamroziak 2010; more extensively Cassidy-Welch 2001; see Cassidy-Welch 2005 for parallel ways to think about monastic spaces in the medieval West.

[59] Ryan 2014: §2.4.

[60] E.g. ch. 41: ὁ πατὴρ ἀναστὰς ἄνεισι πρὸς τὸ ὄρος […] ὡς ἤρξατο ἀνέρχεσθαι, δεῖν ἔκρινε ἀνελθεῖν […], ἐκεῖθεν ἀνήρχετο πρὸς αὐτὸν […] ἐπερωτῆσαι, εἰ ἔστιν ὁ τόπος

that one finds oneself wishing this man would stay still for a second in the next sentence! The entire text is *about* movement, and relocation serves as a narrative device to textually create it; visual change is also used as a sign of movement. This was evidently an important narrative strategy, but what was its purpose? While spatiality is often used as a sign of credibility (see for example §41 of the *Vita Lazari*, cited below), there are also other reasons. With the help of a handful of indicative passages, I will try to show that it served to construct a process of holiness through representing, first, the selection of residence that will allow this process to prosper, and, second, a construction of locality within the underlying contradiction between God's universal space vs. the human spaces owned or ruled by 'others', through a constant renegotiation of identity and difference accross social and geographical boundaries. In this interpretation, overlapping *perceived* physical spaces, *conceived* imaginary places and *lived* subjectively experienced spaces work together in the audience's minds to serve the desired effect of the text. This effect must have been a succesful communication of the sacred; as Veronica della Dora has shown,

> Byzantine geographical imaginations were captured in and shaped through the scalar tension between the multiplicity of the forms and places of creation and its ordered, harmonious totality – between *topos* and *cosmos*. Divine presence made itself manifest pecisely in and through this tension, between the seen and the unseen.[61]

So when it comes to residence selection, Lazaros' status as a holy man was based chiefly on his extraordinary perseverance as a pillar ascetic or stylite. An immense, overwhelming impression was made upon

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πρὸς τὸν αὐτοῦ σκοπὸν ἐπιτήδειος, ὥστε ἐκείνου ἐξελθόντος αὐτὸν εἰσελθεῖν. […] βαδίζων πρὸς τὸν στυλίτην ἀπῄει […] πρὸς τὸ μέσον τῆς πέτρας ἔφθασεν […] ἄφνω πέπτωκε. […] Ἀναστὰς τὴν πέτραν κρατῶν, κατὰ μικρὸν βαδίζων ἀπῆλθε πρὸς τὸν στυλίτην· […] Κατελθὼν οὖν ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἀρξάμενος τοῦ ὄρους ἀνήρχετο. Ὡς δὲ ἔφθασεν εἰς τὴν Πέτραν, ἔνθα ἐστὶν ἡ πάνυ στενοτάτη διάβασις […], τὸν τόπον παρῆλθεν. […] Φθάσας δὲ ἐν τῷ σπηλαίῳ καὶ εἰσελθὼν καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸ καὶ ἀρεσθεὶς ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ, ἔμεινεν ἐν αὐτῷ μῆνας ἕξ. Ἐξερχόμενος δὲ καὶ περιπολεύων τὸ ὄρος, πάλιν ὑποστρέφων εἰς αὐτὸ εἰσήρχετο.

[61] Della Dora 2016: 255.

visitors by the sight of the gaunt old man standing on the top of his pillar, dressed in the tattered leather tunic as his sole protection from the elements.[62] Unbelievers are said to have converted to Christianity on the spot, while for the pious he provided a living and demonstrable proof that a frail mortal could indeed successfully imitate on earth the life of the angels in heaven; he had become a "living icon" in line with his legendary predecessors in the earlier Christian tradition.[63] The outstanding feature of his ascetic practice was his confinement on an open pillar for more than 40 years, which was suitable for his performance of sanctification.

He occupied a total of four pillars, all built to order and all similar in their basic features. These pillars seem to have been constructed so as to be liminal spaces between his body and the nature, the land and the heaven, himself and his community. They were completely open to the elements, lacking a roof as shelter from wind and rain, or shade from the sun. However, a wall of some sort enclosed the top of the pillar, creating a confined "cell" in which Lazaros lived. This wall was high enough to obscure him from the view of anyone standing on a platform that had been built adjoining the cell, but when Lazaros stood up, he could be seen by those below and in front of his pillar; he in turn could see a great deal of what was going on within the monastery and in some of the surrounding area. The cell had no door, just a small window giving access to the platform; Lazaros could open it to speak to visitors and receive food, but it could also be secured from the inside. It provided a limited view of the area immediately outside, yet it was large enough for him to lean out of and for a visitor to thrust his head through to examine the interior. Access to the window was gained by a ladder leading up to the platform.[64]

Furthermore, finding the right spot for setting his pillar was never an easy task for Lazaros. Gregory shows that the selection of the place of residence comes as a result of divine instruction through symbolic signs either connected to nature or associated with the attitudes of local people

[62] Greenfield 2000: 2.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Greenfield 2000: 17–20.

and the availability of life resources (food and drink):

> Since our father Lazaros, as has already been made clear, was contemplating the ascent of the mountain, he got up in the night without the knowledge of any of his companions and went up toward it. But as he began to climb up he decided that he ought first to go up and see the stylite who was on Petra above the village, for he was ascending from there and had heard that this man wanted to leave his pillar. For this reason Lazaros was going up to him to ask if the place was suitable for his purpose so that, when <the stylite> left, he might move in himself. <Lengths of> wood had been fastened to the rock with other <slats> lying flat on top of them (indeed the peg which is still now to be seen fastened to Petra bears witness to this), and there was a rope tied at both ends on either side, which those going up used as a guide. The father, using the same method, thus started up toward the stylite, stepping on the <slats> of wood; but, when he had already reached the middle of the rock, the rope he was holding with his hand as a guide suddenly broke and he fell on his face onto the <slats> of wood. This was all the work of the Evil One and a contrivance <designed> to kill him by making him fall down from there. But the grace of God, which was always with him and kept him safe everywhere, rendered that <Evil> One's devices useless, for Lazaros stood up and, holding onto the rock with his hands and going little by little, set off <again> toward the stylite. When, <however>, he saw and spoke with the man, he learned from him that the place was unsuitable for spiritual peace, "For I myself," said <the stylite>, "am about to withdraw from this place for this <very> reason." He advised Lazaros to set off for holy Paphnoutios' cave, and so, after he had come down from there, he started up the mountain, singing as he climbed. But when he reached the rock where there is the extremely narrow passage, he finished the office he was singing and, being about to say the prayer, stretched out his right hand and made the sign of the cross on the rock; he kissed it, said his prayer, and <then> passed the place. The cross is still visible now carved <in the rock>, for it was engraved afterward on the father's order as a phylactery for those passing by there. When he reached the cave he went in and looked round and, since it was to his liking, he stayed in it for six months. He used to go out and wander around the mountain, but return to it again and go inside.[65]

[65] *Vita Lazari*, §41; tr. Greenfield 2000: 127–28. For Greek wording used to denote movement and relocation, see n. 59 above.

Accordingly, holy people kept relocating themselves until the place felt right for their construction of local identity linked to their sanctity within the social context of an immediate or wider community:

> Because the father was living in this superior way and thus drew everyone to him like a beacon by the brilliant illumination of his lifestyle, and because the monastery was near the road, everyone that passed by there used to go up to him (διὰ τὸ εἶναι τὴν μονὴν πλησίον τοῦ δρόμου οὐκ ἦν τινα ἐκεῖσε διερχόμενον μὴ ἀνελθεῖν πρὸς αὐτόν), one for spiritual help, another out of physical need, and another again due to some crisis in his life; but not one of those who went up to him was <ever> seen to return from there without having received the proper medicine for his sickness. For all who went up to him grieving over their particular misfortunes joyfully returned home from him, giving glory to God (Πάντες γὰρ … ἀνερχόμενοι … ἐξ αὐτοῦ πρὸς τὰ οἰκεῖα ὑπέστρεφον). When, however, Lazaros saw himself being mobbed in this way by everybody every day, and especially because the monastery, as has been mentioned, lay near the road, and his ears were thus ringing with the voices of travelers and overseers and farm workers in the fields, he began to seek a quiet place that would enable him to get away from the annoyance of this mass of people. Now Mt. Galesion stood right there, and it happened not only to be impassable and craggy and very rugged, but was in addition waterless, and for these reasons was able to offer much tranquility to the person who went there (Τὸ γοῦν ἄντικρυς κείμενον Γαλήσιον ὄρος, δύσβατον καὶ πετρῶδες καὶ λίαν τραχὺ τυγχάνον, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις καὶ ἄνυδρον καὶ διὰ ταῦτα πολλὴν ἡσυχίαν τῷ ἐκεῖ γενομένῳ παρέχειν δυνάμενον, ἀρεστὸν ἑαυτῷ καὶ ἐπιτήδειον κρίνας, δεῖν ἔγνω εἰς αὐτὸ ἀνελθεῖν κἀκεῖ τὴν κατοικίαν ποιήσασθαι, καὶ μάλιστα ὅτι καὶ παρὰ πολλῶν ἐμάνθανε σπήλαιον ἐν αὐτῷ ὑπάρχειν). Lazaros thus decided that it was just the right place for him and he knew that he had to go up onto it and make his home there, especially because he learned from many people that there was a cave on it in which, many years before, a monk called Paphnoutios had ended his days in asceticism. <Now> I have decided that it is appropriate to add the story of this holy man like some seasoning to the present work for the edification of my readers, just as I heard it from our holy father Lazaros himself. [66]

[66] *Vita Lazari,* §36; tr. Greenfield 2000: 122–23.

What other purposes could relocation have fulfilled? Lazaros traveled to the Holy Land and back, visiting reknowned pilgrimage sites to worship local saints. And yet, he repeatedly described coming to places and finding their inhospitable inhabitants denying him food and water:

> When daylight came, Lazaros decided not to leave the village (ἔκρινε μὴ ἐξελθεῖν τῆς κώμης) that day until the divine liturgy had been celebrated, <partly> because of the solemnity of the day, as it was the feast of the Forty Martyrs of Christ, but at the same time as a test of the uncharitable people <who lived> there (πρὸς δοκιμὴν τῶν ἐκεῖσε ἀνελεημόνων ἀνθρώπων). When the time for the liturgy had come, however, and the divine service had been celebrated, <still> no one had given him even a crumb of bread to eat. Then Lazaros realized that they had no concept at all of sharing. He did not get angry or shout insults at them, but raised his hands and his eyes toward heaven and offered up some such words of thanks to God <as these>: "Lord, I give you thanks; and if you should consider me worthy to live in some place where it is clearly your will <for me to do so> (ἐὰν δέ με καταξιώσῃς ἐν τόπῳ, ὅπου δηλαδὴ τὸ σὸν θέλημά ἐστι, τὴν κατοίκησιν ποιῆσαι), I will not eat by myself the bread that you send me, but I will also serve it as food to all those, rich and poor, who come to me in your name." After he had said this, he left the village (ἐξῆλθε τῆς κώμης). As he saw a small chapel somewhere nearby, he went to it (πρὸς αὐτὸ ἦλθεν). He found a nun established in it who, when she saw him, got up and brought him bread and water and made him take some food. After he had partaken of <this> nourishment, he gave thanks to God (for he did everything to the glory of God and, if anything ever happened to him, whether happy or sad, it became an occasion for him to thank God) and then also blessed the nun, before setting off on his way (τὴν ὁδὸν ἐστέλλετο τὴν αὐτοῦ).[67]

In a way, relocating allowed Lazaros contact with unknown people outside his own community network, and thus a chance to test their real faith unobstructed by social conventions. Such a strategy is expectable by a spiritual man seeking social knowledge; at the same time, those people's sense of locality produced unfriendly behaviour against the 'others' and the 'foreigners', including Lazaros:

[67] *Vita Lazari*, §28; tr. Greenfield 2000: 112–13.

Lazaros entered (εἰσελθών) the town and then left <again> (ἐξελθὼν) after praying in the church of the Theologian. Led by <God>, who was directing him, he traveled on (ἐπορεύετο), and came (φθάσας) to a village called Malpadeas. As the day was already <lengthening> into evening, he turned off the road and went into <the village>, where he was taken in by a priest called George. After this man had generously entertained him, he was asked by Lazaros if there was a monastery in the area where he might take up residence (ὅπως ἐν αὐτῷ ποιήσηται τὴν κατοίκησιν). <George> led him (ὁδηγηθεὶς ἔρχεται) to the monastery of the most holy Theotokos, which is above the village of Kepion and is called <the monastery> of Appion. Lazaros went into this <place>, but did not like living there <and so>, directed by the superior of the monastery, he came to the foothills of the mountain called Koumaron where there was a spring and also a small chapel <dedicated to> that victorious martyr for Christ, Marina. Here two monks were living, brothers by birth called Hilarios and Leontios. These men took Lazaros in and they both decided that they should live together (ᾑρετίσαντο ἀμφότεροι τὴν κατοίκησιν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ποιήσασθαι). After a while, Lazaros persuaded the monks to construct a roofed pillar for him (πείθει τοὺς μοναχοὺς στύλον αὐτῷ ὑπωρόφιον οἰκοδομῆσαι); he moved onto this and spent some time on it, but then decided to take the roof off and live in the open air on this <pillar>, in imitation of the wondrous Symeon. And so he did (εἰς ὃν καὶ εἰσελθὼν καὶ χρόνον τινὰ ἐν αὐτῷ οὕτω ποιήσας, ἔκρινε τοῦ ἆραι τὴν στέγην καὶ αἴθριον αὐτὸν ἐν τούτῳ τελεῖν κατὰ μίμησιν τοῦ θαυμαστοῦ Συμεών· ὃ καὶ πεποίηκεν).

Within a short time Lazaros' reputation spread almost everywhere and many people, rich and poor, began coming to him from the villages and towns nearby (ἤρξαντο πρὸς αὐτὸν φοιτᾶν ἐκ τῶν πέριξ κωμῶν τε καὶ πόλεων). He received these people kindly, <thus> fulfilling the vow to God that he had made earlier on; for he would break up and distribute to them the bread that He sent him for his nourishment through the Christian faithful. The monks who were there before <him> saw this <happening> and that the people who lived there were showing more respect for Lazaros, who was a newcomer, a stranger, and unknown, than they were for them, who were locals and well known (βλέποντες καὶ ὅτι ἐκεῖνον, νέηλυν καὶ ξένον καὶ ἄγνωστον τοῖς ἐκεῖσε ὄντα, ὑπὲρ ἐκείνους τοὺς ἐντοπίους καὶ γνωρίμους τιμῶσι, προσελθόντες αὐτῷ λέγουσιν). So they went to Lazaros and said, "Either stop welcoming everyone and giving away to them in this reckless fashion the things God sends for our use, or

else go away from here. If you won't, then we will have to leave ourselves!" (Ἤ ἔκκοψον τὸ ὑποδέχεσθαι πάντας καὶ τὸ οὕτως ἀφειδῶς παρέχειν αὐτοῖς, ἃ εἰς τὴν ἡμῶν ὁ Θεὸς χρείαν πέμπει, ἢ τῶν ὧδε ὑποχώρησον· εἰ δὲ μή, ἡμεῖς ἀναχωρῆσαι ἔχομεν.) The father replied to them, "It's impossible for me not to receive all these people and not to offer them <a share> of what God provides for us; nor am I going to leave here for such a reason (οὔτε πάλιν τῶν ὧδε διὰ τὴν τοιαύτην αἰτίαν ἀναχωρῶ). As for you, do whatever seems right to you!" When the monks heard this from the father, they considered <their position> carefully and then, after discussing it thoroughly with each other, left Lazaros there and went away (καταλιπόντες αὐτὸν ἐκεῖσε ἀνεχώρησαν). They went off to the hill called Hypselos, above the village of Legos; they found a place where there was a spring, and there they built a monastery (ἀπελθόντες εἰς τὸν βουνὸν τὸν καλούμενον Ὑψηλόν, ἄνωθεν τοῦ χωρίου τῆς Λήγου, εὑρόντες τε ἐν τόπῳ τινὶ πηγὴν ὕδατος, οἰκοδομοῦσιν ἐκεῖ μοναστήριον). It is still standing today and bears the name of the monk Hilarion.[68]

Very different and most interesting is the other relocation strategy of Lazaros, on Mount Galesion, where he moved his pillar three times, higher and higher on the mountain, always attempting to escape from the attention of the community, who was simply following him on his way up, forming monasting settlements around his pillars. Every resettling meant a reconstruction of his own locality through a process of constant renegotiation of his identity and his difference accross social and geographical boundaries that are very clear in the *vita*:

After the father had spent twelve years at the <monastery of the> Savior, he left there and went up (ἀπάρας ἐκεῖθεν πρὸς τὸ ὑψηλότερον μέρος τῆς φάραγγος ἀνῆλθε) to the higher part of the gorge. I must speak about this matter <now, and explain> the reason why he came to leave the <monastery of the> Savior and go off there (δι' ἣν συνέβη αὐτῷ ἐκ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἀναχωρῆσαι καὶ ἐκεῖσε ἀπελθεῖν), as I have learned it from those who know. The aforementioned blessed woman [Irene] used to go up to Lazaros <even> more frequently (συχνοτέρως πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπήρχετο) after she had been tonsured. One day, when she was there and was standing in the church, the father was standing up on his pillar with the brothers standing round it, (ἐκεῖσε αὐτῆς

[68] *Vita Lazari*, §31–32; tr. Greenfield 2000: 117–19.

οὔσης καὶ ἔνδον τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἑστώσης, τοῦ δὲ πατρὸς ἐπάνω τοῦ στύλου ἱσταμένου καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν πέριξ τοῦ στύλου παρεστώτων) and he was rebuking one of them for some fault; this was that, when he was eating a piece of fruit, he had peeled off the skin and thrown it away as no good. But this man, instead of humbling himself as he should have done and prostrating himself so that he might receive forgiveness, dashed off brazenly from the place where he had been standing and went running into the church; there he seized the nun by her scapular and led her out of the church (ἰταμῶς ἐξ οὗ τόπου ἵστατο ἐκπηδήσας δρομαίως εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν εἰσῆλθε καὶ τὴν μονάζουσαν ἐκ τῆς ἐπωμίδος δραξάμενος τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἐξάγει). He brought her before the father (καὶ ἐξαγαγὼν ταύτην ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ πατρός) and said, "It is this woman who is hurting me and these <others>," indicating to Lazaros the brothers who were standing there, "and not the things for which you are apparently rebuking me." The other brothers backed him up <and confirmed> that this was the case. The father was not upset by that brazen fellow's shameless outspokenness, but grew a little sad, and replied to them calmly and coolly in a sad voice, "It is not this woman who is hurting you, but I, for she only comes up here on my account." (καὶ γὰρ αὕτη οὐ δι' ἄλλον ἀνέρχεται ὧδε, ἀλλ' ἢ δι' ἐμέ.) After saying this to them, he turned to the nun and said, "Go back to your cell and don't come up here any more." (καὶ ταῦτα πρὸς ἐκείνους εἰπὼν στραφεὶς πρὸς τὴν μονάζουσαν· Ἄπελθε, φησίν, εἰς τὸ κελλίον σου καὶ μηκέτι ὧδε ἀνέλθῃς.) She prostrated herself and then went down the mountain (κατῆλθε τοῦ ὄρους), weeping and wailing at being deprived of the father.

Several days later the father summoned one of the monks who knew about construction and told him to go up to the higher part of the gorge with two other brothers; he indicated the place to him and <instructed him> to cut down the wild olive tree that stood there and to make a pit near it for burning lime. In the place where the tree stood Lazaros <told him> to build a pillar for him rather like the one on which he was, <that is> elevated and without a roof. (προστάσσει αὐτῷ μετὰ καὶ ἑτέρων δύο ἀδελφῶν ἀπελθεῖν πρὸς τὸ ὑψηλότερον μέρος τῆς φάραγγος, διδάξας αὐτὸν καὶ τὸν τόπον, καὶ ἐκτεμεῖν τὸ ἐκεῖσε ἑστὼς ἀγριέλαιον δένδρον καὶ πλησίον αὐτοῦ λάκκον ποιῆσαι εἰς καῦσιν ἀσβέστου, ἐν ᾧ δὲ τόπῳ τὸ δένδρον ἵσταται, κτίσαι αὐτῷ στύλον παρεμφερῆ τῷ ἐν ᾧ ἦν, καὶ αὐτὸν ἀνώφορον καὶ ἄστεγον.) When the brother had finished the pillar just as the father had ordered, <the latter> left his previous pillar one night, without any of the brothers there seeing him, climbed up to the newly built pillar,

and got onto it (μιᾷ τῶν νυκτῶν ἐξελθὼν ἐκ τοῦ προτέρου στύλου, μηδενὸς τῶν ἐκεῖ ἀδελφῶν ἰδόντος ἀνελθὼν πρὸς τὸν νεοπαγῆ στύλον εἰσῆλθεν). When the time came for hammering <the *semantron*> for church and the brothers realized what had happened, they all went straight up to him (εὐθὺς πάντες πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀνῆλθον). They saw him and then went down again to the <monastery of the> Savior, leaving him there alone (κατῆλθον πάλιν πρὸς τὸν Σωτῆρα, μόνον αὐτὸν ἐκεῖσε καταλιπόντες). So Lazaros was once more *as a sparrow dwelling alone on a roof* there;[69] he had wandered far off and had lodged in the wilder places (ὡς στρουθίον μονάζον, φυγαδεύων καὶ αὐλιζόμενος ἐν τοῖς ἐρημοτέροις τόποις), and was awaiting God Who would save him from faintheartedness and from the tempest of the wicked demons and Who would drown the malicious and ill-intentioned designs and contrivances with which they were attacking him every day. For as <soon as> the first night fell, they draw near too (παρέστησαν καὶ αὐτοί), intending to terrify him from the start, and began to throw stones at him; and they continued doing this not only on that night and the following one, but for many <nights> until he put them to flight by hurling prayers at them like rocks (ἕως οὗ καὶ αὐτὸς τὰς εὐχὰς ὡς λίθους κατ᾽ αὐτῶν ἀφιεὶς φυγάδας τούτους εἰργάσατο).[70]

So Lazaros decided to relocate himself in order to draw boundaries between himself and both Irene's and his disciples' behaviours, which he found perhaps coercing or ill intended. He clearly was not unhapphy with his former place of residence (since he ordered for the new pillar to be similar to the old one) and he left for the new place unseen, at night, allowing the people left behind time to think about what had happened. At the end of this negotiation, his disciples obviously respected Lazaros' decision to live alone, since there is no mention in the text of their asking him to return to the Savior, and the name of the nun, Irene, does not reappear in the text.

5. Epilogue

Despite his astonishing reputation as a holy man, his endless visitors and even his repute as the intermediary, or actual possessor of superhuman

[69] Psalm 101 (102), 7: translator's note (Greenfield 2000: 146, n. 278).

[70] *Vita Lazari*, §57–58; tr. Greenfield 2000:145–46.

powers (due to numerous stories of miraculous acts, healing, exorcism, protection, insight and foresight), the flourishing community of some 300 monks, who had sprung up around Lazaros on the barren and inhospitable mountain, was viewed by the author as the greatest miracle Lazaros ever performed.[71] Some of these monks carried impressive reports of Lazaros' sanctity on missions to Constantinople and brought recognition from the imperial court itself, in the form of grants of land and money. The reputation of this particular style of monasticism, as well as of its originator, thus spread beyond the confines of Galesion itself. At the same time, this reputation was established by the respect and veneration that Lazaros and his monastery gained among holders of some of the highest political offices in Asia Minor, and this led, in time, to recognition from the imperial court itself.[72] Support from the emperor Constantine IX Monomachos and his mistress Maria Skleraina appears to have assured the survival of the community that Lazaros created on Galesion, and, as this endured and eventually came to be ranked along with the other great holy mountains of the Byzantine world, the memory of its founder's sanctity was upheld.[73] And yet, Lazaros' good reputation as a holy man was by no means universally accepted. The *vita* reveals a distinctly negative attitude toward him among members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Ephesos, in neighboring monasteries, and even within his own monastic community. Stories circulated that he was a fraud, or at least that his asceticism was seriously exaggerated for the benefit of visitors, and rumors depicted Lazaros either as a tyrannical despot or as an incompetent and idle superior.[74] The real reason behind this? The Church officials in Ephesos turned out as considerable opponents to Lazaros' Galesiote monastic communities: they considered that these communities were illegally intruding their own space of economic interest and authority, expressed through the competition of a neighbouring monastery of Vessai.[75] It is easy to imagine that Lazaros was simply running away from them all.

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[71] Greenfield 2000: 22–29.

[72] Ibid. 4.

[73] *Vita Lazari*, § 230; Greenfield 2000: 4, 41–48.

[74] Greenfield 2000: 4–5, 27–28.

[75] Ibid. 34–41.

In this article, I have proposed an interpretation of the Byzantine world by assertively foregrounding a spatial perspective. The ultimate incentive behind this perspective is to allow the bridging of 'spatializing' and 'historicizing' by "an attempt to develop a creative and critically effective balancing of the spatial/geographical and the temporal/historical imaginations".[76] In the example of the *Vita of St Lazaros* (just as in so many other paradigms explained by historians and geographers in the *Spatial Turn*), the author describes space in order to communicate culture. In Michael Rustin's words, "the changes in the meaning and experience of space, and the transformations in human relationships to it, become one of the most powerful metaphors for explaining what was going on".[77] I have tried to show ways in which this metaphor is promising towards our understanding of Byzantine culture through a "Byzantine historical *cultural* geography" and also a "historical *geography of Byzantine narrative*", that is through looking at 'space in texts' and at 'space as text'.[78]

[76] Soja's definition for The Spatial Turn (2009: 12).

[77] Rustin 2013: 57.

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