



The Hellenic Society Prometheas

Newsletter 29

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Greek Letters Day: January 30 at St. George

The Celebration of the Greek Letters Day was held as scheduled on Friday, January 30 2004 at 8 pm at St. George Greek Orthodox Church. Despite the very cold weather, over 200 (members, students of Greek schools and parents) gathered in attendance. Mrs. Lena Petropoulos, the principal of Greek schools, honored the Three Hierarchs with a brief presentation. Professor Alexander Kitroeff, the main speaker of the event, delivered a well documented and original lecture on the modern Olympics and the Olympic Movement accompanied by a series of rare pictures mainly of the 1986 Athens Olympics. The main lecture followed presentation by Prometheas and the Education Office of the Greek Embassy of awards to students who excelled in the **Olympic Games** competition recently organized by the Greek Embassy and Certificates of Attainment in the Greek Language to the successful students of the 2003 exams held for the Greek schools in the Washington Metropolitan Area. At the end, Prometheas cut its traditional Vasilopitta. During the reception, Professor Kitroeff signed his newly released book *Wrestling with the Ancients :Modern Greek Identity and the Olympics* (New York, 2004).

Prometheas Dance (25th Anniversary Masquerade Ball), February 7, 2004

The 25th Anniversary Masquerade Ball was held with great success on Saturday, February 7, 2004 after a three-year hiatus. According to comments of old timers who attended this and past dances of Prometheas, this was the most successful not only because of high participation (close to 250), but mainly because of the great fun and the uninterrupted dancing until 1 o'clock in the morning. The food was excellent, the price most reasonable and the fun and the music unsurpassed. Awards were given to the most imaginative costumes for groups (the Athens Olympics volunteers) , couples, single men and women, and even young participants. The organizers were congratulated and the participants left with a promise to come back again next year all dressed up. KAI TOY XRONOY. Pictures from the dance will be posted in the website during the month of February.

Greek Cinema

"A Touch of Spice" (Politiki Kouzina)

They cringed at My Big Fat Greek Wedding, quietly fumed at Captain Corelli's Mandolin, and have grown heartily sick of the theme tune from Zorba, but after decades

starved of a major international hit, Greek cinema is finally celebrating a film of its own which looks set to be a world beater.

A Touch of Spice, a bitter-sweet epic about the travails of the embattled Greek minority in Istanbul, has knocked American blockbusters such as *Pirates of the Caribbean* from the top of the box office in Athens.

In a little over a fortnight it has sold 700,000 tickets, putting it on course to be the biggest Greek film of all time, and forcing Hollywood to sit up and take notice of a film being billed as the Mediterranean answer to *Like Water For Chocolate*.

Like the Mexican cult hit, *A Touch of Spice* is about cooking and family, but packs a historical and emotional punch that leaves you weak at the knees.

Even in Greece, the story of the 30,000 Greeks who were in effect deported from Istanbul in 1964 is something of an untold story. Which is why director Tassos Boulmetis, whose family was uprooted from the city that was its home for countless generations, decided to tell their story after making a painful return to his childhood home.

Made partly in Turkey, and starring one of its best-known actors, the film is also being seen as a part of the slow and uneasy rapprochement between the two enemies who have spent most of the last 80 years perched on the precipice of war.

The film confronts prejudice in both countries. Boulmetis, whose family was thrown out of the city Greeks still call Constantinople when he was seven, claimed: "We left Turkey as Greeks and we were greeted here as Turks. We were caught in the middle, confused and ill at ease in a homeland that wasn't really our home."

Unwelcome among Greek officialdom as the country plunged into military dictatorship, in the film the family clings to the traditions and most of all the cooking of the old Byzantine capital, now home to fewer than 2,000 Greeks.

The son, based on Boulmetis himself, finds himself a job as a cook in a brothel when his family bans him from the kitchen in an attempt to turn him into a "proper Greek".

"It took me a long time to realise it but I did not really feel whole until I went back to Istanbul. Going back changed my life," he said. "As a seven year old I spoke fluent Turkish, but in the trauma of leaving I lost it. I went to our old house in Kadikoy on the Asian shore of the Bosphorus. But I couldn't bring myself to ring the bell. Just going back changed my life."

But one of his actors, Tassos Bandis, another Istanbul Greek who plays his grandfather in the film, did take that step, and was welcomed into his old house for dinner.

Boulmetis said some nationalists were furious with him for "going easy" on the Turks. "They say they are animals. That we should have shown them that way... My own father

is still angry about what happened, but I can't be. The film will be shown in Turkey in March and I want them to feel what we felt and not see themselves as cartoon monsters."

The success of *A Touch of Spice* comes as Greek film, so long the whipping boy of European cinema, is on something of a roll, with a new generation of directors taking a cleaver to that most revered of Greek sacred cows, the family.

None more so than in *Matchbox*, in which a grasping, foul-mouthed clan tear themselves and their friends' lives apart in the maddening heat of an Athenian summer. While the film has been cheered as a revolution in Greek film-making at the Salonika film festival, and an antidote to the schmaltz of *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, middle-aged audiences have been choking on their souvlaki and one critic was so incensed he refused to review it.

Its young Cypriot director, Yannis Economidis, who has been compared to a younger Mike Leigh on speed, makes no apology for his liberal and imaginative use of the Greek swear word *malaka*. "Let's face it, the characters in the film are *malakas*," he said. "They are low-class dogs, and I say that with love. If it was set in Sweden it would be all meaningful silences. But here life is straight and brutal and more honest.

"To me it is a political film - the last 20 years of Greek democracy is all there inside this flat, the racism, sexism, chauvinism and materialism.

"People laugh at me when I say it, but to me it is a film about love. It is about a man who loves his woman and he is suffering for it."

Misc Artciles of Interest

"Give Back the Elgin Marbles"

London's EVENING STANDARD, Tuesday, January 13, 2004

British former foreign secretary Robin Cook, *in the attached full-page article* in London's "Evening Standard" newspaper's Tuesday, January 13, issue, call on the British government to return the Parthenon Marbles to Greece in light of the publication of an opinion poll on Wednesday, according to which, 80 percent of Britons agree with their return.

"The curators of the British Museum can react personally to the return of the Marbles, but they have no right to ignore the wishes of the citizens whom they represent as curators of the Museum," said Mr. Cook, adding that it is not reasonable nor wise of the curators of Museums to undermine London's effort to contest the 20012 Olympic Games with their refusal.

“This year is the year in which the Olympic Games will be held in Athens and, at the same time, the campaign of candidate cities for the Olympiad of 2012 will begin,” he writes in the article. He also states that returning the Marbles will restore the unity and integrity of the splendid cultural monument of the Parthenon.

“If they had dismembered our statue of Nelson and had left us only with the stomach and his legs and his remaining body somewhere else, I do not think that anybody would be at ease until the reunification Since, therefore, the Parthenon cannot be moved to Russell Square, where the British Museum is, the solution is for the Parthenon Marbles to return to Athens,” stressed the former foreign secretary.

For more info, see Web site of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

http://www.mfa.gr/english/satelites/parthenon_marbles/

The origin of philosophy in Greek literature

Carlos Montemayor

The cultural and intellectual life of mankind changed dramatically because of ancient Greek literature. Maybe we will never see again such a drastic and marvelous change as the burst of creativity that produced such perennial works of art as Sophocles' *Antigone*, and Plato's *Republic*. Today, more than two thousand years from such intellectual revolution, we must celebrate what happened then, because it shaped forever the way we talk and think to each other and to oneself. This is why we are all in some sense ancient Greeks.

At the center of such intellectual revolution is a very important Greek question, that since then, became the human quest for the sense of life. It is the question for the totality of being, which is implicit in Greek literature and art. This question fosters a variety of artistic and philosophical concerns. Before the Greek philosophers, it was the task of the poets to address the issue on the totality of being, the search for truth and justice and the meaning of life.

Although many literary styles and artistic expressions were developed in that poetic atmosphere (comedy, tragedy, fables, theater, etc.) the search for truth was always a religious affair. It was in the decisions and actions of divine creatures where writers found the meaning of life. Life has a religious meaning in the works of the poets and their act of creativity aims at capturing the secret deeds of gods and goddesses through metaphors and literary perfection.

It was very fortunate that the search for truth became a stylistic affair. The amount of beauty contained in the Iliad is incommensurable. However, according to the poet, all that beauty was a reproduction of divine deeds, captured in Greek and written with human hands. Thus, Homer begins the Iliad with the solicitation: Sing, O goddess, the

anger of Achilles son of Peleus, that brought countless ills upon the Achaeans.¹ Literature reached a level of perfection in Greek literature, but the collective affair of education was determined by religious conceptions.

It was in the midst of this literary activity that a new style of literature emerged. The most important concern of such literature was education (*Paideia*) as a discipline for the search of truth. Thus, Thales formulates the question for the totality of being and answers not with a quote from the poets or by invoking a God. Rather, he answers by noticing that water is everywhere in nature and that it is possible that everything is composed of water. This is the origin of a new style of thinking and writing. It is the origin of Philosophy.

Presocratic philosophers start writing in this new and refreshing style. Their ideas were deep and original. Two of them in particular, Parmenides and Democritus, presented ideas about nature that have never been considered before. Parmenides said that the world we live in is a world of appearance, and that there is a single substance which is a whole unit, where nothing changes. His student, Zenon, denied the existence of movement and change, formulating paradoxes that had enormous repercussions. Democritus, on the other hand, said that everything is composed by indivisible units. Atom, the Greek word for “without parts” appear in the intellectual and scientific landscape, and since then, it became a crucial term in scientific theories.

However, it was not until Plato that the issue of education became the as important as the search for truth. For Plato, both are actually the same problem. To find the truth we need intellectual discipline. We can only see the truth, as Plato says, with the eyes of the soul. And only a good soul can see the truth. Therefore, using Plato’s allegory of the cave, the soul must be well trained and mature in order to leave the cave of appearances and see the ideas that shape everything. Education is crucial to find the truth, and the truth is not only good in itself, but also the goal that liberates us from our slavish condition.

Plato starts his revolution, a scientific and philosophical revolution, by attacking the poets. He compares them with puppeteers that manipulate the chained souls of the prisoners of the cave. The souls of those prisoners have never been used, they do not know the truth and they do not even know they are enslaved. The puppeteers promise them gifts, offer them the paradise and threat them with chimeras and horrible monsters. Imitation and reproduction are the chains that keep all the prisoners inside the cave.

Plato liberated humanity by comparing it to an enslaved crowd. His attack shook the very foundations of Greek culture and opened new routes of inquiry. In his dialogues, Socrates asked apparently simple questions that everyone quickly answered. When Socrates’ interlocutors realized they did not know the answer to such questions they were ready to start training their soul, because they knew that their knowledge was a product of reproduction, their ideas were the ideas of the poets and their science was religion.

¹ Translation by Samuel Butler

Socrates gave birth to souls. This is the function of the teacher and the philosopher. Plato's teacher, Socrates, gave birth also to a discipline that starts by asking the right questions, impeding quick answers and inquiring into the genealogy of ideas. The importance of this analysis is that it is through it that we reach our freedom, because our soul can see the ideas that shape everything. However, in thinking about the problem of imitation, Plato faced an enormous difficulty.

There is only one idea of chair, but there are infinitely many actual and possible chairs. They all participate in the idea of chair but by reproduction we can fabricate as much as we want. However there is only one Socrates and we can never reproduce or imitate him. Where does this difference in being come from? Why instruments have a different existential condition than Socrates or Alcibiades?

It is in this context that the issue of instrumentality, nature and life became crucial to the mightiest student of Plato, Aristotle. This is very relevant to understand why his book on nature (the *Physics*) is essentially concerned with instrumentality, a theme that connects all of Aristotle's work. This is why it is important to acknowledge the cultural background Aristotle's work presupposes by referring as much as possible to the original Greek meaning of the words he used.

In the writings of Greek philosophers we find not only a new way of writing and thinking, but also an expression of the wonders of language. Language is like a tool because we use it to do things, but it is also like a living creature because, for example, we can talk to Plato and Aristotle through it, bringing them to life. The language in which these new ideas that revolutionized human history were expressed, Greek, will be forever part of our common heritage.

CARLOS MONTMAYOR ROMO DE VIVAR
Η ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΟΙ ΟΙ ΚΑΤΑΒΟΛΕΣ ΤΗΣ

(Ομιλία στον κεφαλληνιακό σύλλογο Νέας Υόρκης “ΚΕΦΑΛΟΣ”, την “Ημέρα των Γραμμάτων”, με την ευκαιρία παρουσίασης του δίγλωσσου βιβλίου του για τον Αριστοτέλη, σε μετάφραση του Ρήγα Καππάτου)

Η πολιτιστική και διανοητική ζωή της ανθρωπότητας άλλαξε ριζικά χάρη στην αρχαία ελληνική φιλοσοφική και λογοτεχνική δημιουργία και σκέψη. Ποτέ ο κόσμος δεν έζησε πριν ή μετά από αυτές μια τέτοια θαυμάσια και ολοκληρωτική αλλαγή, όπως εκείνη της εκρηκτικής δημιουργικότητας που μας έδωσε αθάνατα έργα όπως, για παράδειγμα, την *Αντιγόνη* του Σοφοκλή, την *Πολιτεία* του Πλάτωνα, τους *Πέρσες του Αισχύλου*. Σήμερα, πάνω από δύο χιλιάδες χρόνια μετά από αυτή την πολιτιστική έκρηξη, πρέπει να γιορτάζουμε αυτό που έγινε τότε, γιατί διαμόρφωσε για πάντα τον τρόπο που μιλάμε και τον τρόπο που σκεφτόμαστε. Επίσης για αυτό, κατά μίαν έννοια, είμαστε όλοι λίγο πολύ Έλληνες.

Έκτοτε, και ίσαμε σήμερα, στο επίκεντρο αυτής της ελληνικής πολιτιστικής επανάστασης, βρίσκεται το σημαντικότερο ερώτημα για την καταβολή και το νόημα της

ζωής και της ολότητας του *είναι*. Αυτό ήταν και παραμένει το αντικείμενο της ελληνικής σκέψης και τέχνης. Και αυτό το ερώτημα γεννάει με την σειρά του διάφορα άλλα φιλοσοφικά, καλλιτεχνικά και επιστημονικά ερωτήματα. Πριν από τους Έλληνες φιλοσόφους, εναπόκειτο στους ποιητές να διερευνήσουν την υπόθεση για την καταβολή της ζωής, την διερεύνηση της αλήθειας, της δικαιοσύνης, και του νοήματος για την ύπαρξη αυτής της ζωής.

Παρ' όλο που δημιουργήθηκαν διάφορα λογοτεχνικά είδη μέσα σε αυτόν τον εκρηκτικό δημιουργικό οργανισμό των αρχαίων Ελλήνων (κωμωδία, τραγωδία, επική ποίηση, μύθοι, κλπ.), η έρευνα για την καταγωγή και την αλήθεια αποτελούσε ένα θρησκευτικό στεγανό. Ήταν στις αποφάσεις και στις ενέργειες των υπερφυσικών δυνάμεων, όπου οι ποιητές απέδιδαν και έβρισκαν την ερμηνεία για το νόημα της ζωής και του κόσμου που κατοικούσαν. Γι αυτούς η ζωή είχε μια θρησκευτική σημασία, και στο επίκεντρο της δημιουργίας τους εντοπιζόταν η προσπάθεια σύλληψης των μυστικών βουλών θεών και θεαινών, μέσα από την αλληγορία και την ποιητική τελειότητα.

Ήταν ευχής έργο που η έρευνα για την αλήθεια αποτέλεσε για αυτούς μόνο μια υπόθεση ύφους, όχι ουσίας. Πάνω σ' αυτό, η ωραιότητα του λόγου που περικλείει η *Ιλιάδα* παραμένει ανεπανάληπτη. Ωστόσο, κατά τον ποιητή, όλη αυτή η ομορφιά αποτελούσε μια αναπαραγωγή θείων πράξεων, διατυπωμένων στα ελληνικά και γραμμένων από θνητά χέρια. Έτσι, ο Όμηρος αρχίζει την *Ιλιάδα* με την επίκληση στις θεϊκές Μούσες: “Μούσα, τραγούδα το θυμό του ξακουστού Αχιλλέα, / τον έρμο που όλους πότισε τους Αχαιούς φαρμάκια” (κατά την μετάφραση του Α. Πάλλη). Η ποίηση και η λογοτεχνία γενικά άγγιξαν αξεπέραστα ύψη τελειότητας στην ελληνική γλώσσα, αλλά η συλλογική εργασία της μόρφωσης των ανθρώπων ήταν θέμα θρησκευτικών αντιλήψεων.

Μέσα σε αυτή την ποιητική-λογοτεχνική δραστηριότητα εμφανίστηκε ένα νέο είδος γραπτής έκφρασης, που κύριος σκοπός του ήταν η μόρφωση: η ελληνική *Παιδεία*, δηλαδή, μια διανοητική άσκηση για την αποκάλυψη της αλήθειας. Έτσι, ο Θαλής ο Μιλήσιος σχηματίζει πρώτος το ερώτημα για την αλήθεια γύρω από την ολότητα του *είναι*, και απαντάει όχι με την θρησκευτική έμπνευση των ποιητών ή επικαλούμενος την θεϊκή Μούσα, αλλά με την παρατήρηση ότι το νερό υπάρχει παντού στην φύση, και πιθανώς τα πάντα αποτελούνται από νερό. Αυτό αποτέλεσε την απαρχή ενός νέου ύφους και τρόπου σκέψης. Σ' αυτό έχουμε την αρχή της Φιλοσοφίας και των θετικών επιστημών.

Οι προσωκρατικοί φιλόσοφοι αρχίζουν να εκφράζουν τα ενδιαφέροντά τους μ' αυτό τον τρόπο έκφρασης και έρευνας. Οι ιδέες τους είχαν βάθος και πρωτοτυπία. Ιδιαίτερα δύο από αυτούς, ο Παρμενίδης και ο Δημόκριτος, εξέφρασαν τις ιδέες τους για την φύση με τρόπο που δε έγινε ποτέ πριν. Ο Παρμενίδης είπε ότι ο κόσμος στον οποίο ζούμε είναι ένας κόσμος φαινομένων, και ότι υπάρχει σαν μία και μοναδική ουσία ολότητας η οποία παραμένει αναλείωτη. Ο μαθητής του, Ζήνων ο Ελεάτης, αρνήθηκε την ύπαρξη όχι μόνο της αλλαγής αλλά και της κίνησης, σχηματίζοντας φιλοσοφικά θεωρήματα που είχαν μεγάλη επίδραση στην ανθρώπινη σκέψη. Ο Δημόκριτος, από την

άλλη μεριά, λέει ότι όλα είναι υλικά και αποτελούνται από αδιαίρετα άτομα, ή άτομα, ένας όρος που πρωτοστατεί έκτοτε σε ένα μέρος της επιστημονικής θεωρίας.

Ωστόσο, ήταν με τον Πλάτωνα που η υπόθεση της *Παιδείας* έγινε εξ' ίσου σημαντική όσο και η επιστημονική έρευνα. Για τον Αθηναίο σοφό και τα δύο αυτά συνθετικά αποτελούν μέρος του ίδιου προβλήματος. Για να εντοπίσουμε την αλήθεια χρειαζόμαστε διανοητική παιδείση. Ο μόνος τρόπος να δούμε την αλήθεια, λέει ο Πλάτωνας, είναι μέσα από τα μάτια της ψυχής. Και μόνο μια ενάρετη ψυχή μπορεί να δει την αλήθεια. Ως εκ τούτου -για να χρησιμοποιήσουμε την πλατωνική αλληγορία τού σπηλαίου- η ψυχή πρέπει να είναι καλά παιδευμένη και ώριμη για να εγκαταλείψει το σπήλαιο των φαινομένων και να δει τις ιδέες που σχηματίζουν τα πάντα γύρω της. Η παιδεία είναι απαραίτητη για την αποκάλυψη της αλήθειας, και η αλήθεια δεν είναι μόνο χρήσιμη για την ίδια την παιδεία, σαν αυτοσκοπός, αλλά αποτελεί και στόχο απελευθέρωσης του ατόμου από την κατάσταση της δουλείας που το υποτάσσει η έλλειψή της.

Ο Πλάτωνας αρχίζει την επανάστασή του, μια φιλοσοφική και επιστημονική επανάσταση (ήταν ο κατ' εξοχήν μαθηματικός φιλόσοφος) επιτιθέμενος στους ποιητές. Τους παρομοιάζει με μαριονέτες κουκλοθέατρου που χειραγωγούν τις αλυσοδεμένες ψυχές των δεσμοτών τού σπηλαίου. Οι ψυχές αυτών των φυλακισμένων δεν χρησιμοποιήθηκαν ποτέ, δεν γνωρίζουν την αλήθεια και ούτε καν γνωρίζουν πως είναι φυλακισμένες. Οι κινούντες τα νήματα των μαριονετών, οι ποιητές δηλαδή, τούς υπόσχονται παραδείσια δώρα, χείμερες και κόσμους ονείρων και τεράτων. Ο μιμητισμός και η αντιγραφή είναι τα δεσμά που τους κρατάνε φυλακισμένους στο σπήλαιο.

Ο Πλάτωνας απελευθέρωσε τους ανθρώπους, παρομοιάζοντάς τους με ένα σύνολο δεσμοτών. Η θέση του κούνησε συθέμελα το οικοδόμημα της ελληνικής παιδείας και άνοιξε νέους ορίζοντες έρευνας. Όταν οι συνομιλητές του Σωκράτη αντιλαμβάνονταν ότι αγνοούσαν την απάντηση σε τέτοιου είδους ερωτήματα, ήταν έτοιμοι για την παιδείση της ψυχής τους, δηλαδή τού εσώτερου είναι τους, γιατί ήξεραν πως η γνώση τους ήταν απόρροια της αντιγραφής, οι ιδέες τους ήταν οι ιδέες των ποιητών και η επιστήμη τους ήταν η θρησκευτική δεισιδαιμονία.

Ο Σωκράτης ήταν μαιευτήρας ψυχών. Αυτή είναι η λειτουργία τού παιδαγωγού και τού φιλοσόφου. Ο δάσκαλος του Πλάτωνα ήταν και ο δημιουργός της μόρφωσης δια των σωστών ερωτήσεων, αντιτιθέμενος στις πρόχειρες απαντήσεις και εμβαθύνοντας στην γενεολογία των ιδεών. Η σπουδαιότητα αυτής της μεθόδου έγκειται στο ότι μέσα από αυτήν αποκτάμε την ελευθερία μας, επειδή η ψυχή μπορεί να διακρίνει τον σχηματισμό των όντων και των πραγμάτων δια μέσου των ιδεών. Ωστόσο, φιλοσοφώντας γύρω από το πρόβλημα της μίμησης, ο Πλάτωνας βρέθηκε αντιμέτωπος με μια μεγάλη δυσκολία. Π.χ., υπάρχει μία ιδέα καθίσματος, αλλά υπάρχει ένας άπειρος αριθμός καθισμάτων. Όλα αυτά τα καθίσματα ανήκουν στην ιδέα κάθισμα αλλά δια της μίμησης και της αναπαραγωγής μπορούμε να κατασκευάσουμε όσα καθίσματα θέλουμε. Ωστόσο, υπάρχει μόνο ένας Σωκράτης και δεν μπορούμε ούτε να τον μιμηθούμε ούτε να τον αναπαράγουμε. Από τί προέρχεται αυτή η διαφορά ύπαρξης;

Γιατί τα όργανα έχουν μια διαφορετική υπαρξιακή υπόσταση από έναν Σωκράτη ή έναν Αλκιβιάδη;

Είναι μέσα σ' αυτόν το συσχετισμό που η υπόθεση της λειτουργικότητας, της φύσης και της ζωής απέκτησαν υπέρτατη σημασία στον πιο ζακουστό από όλους τούς μαθητές του Πλάτωνα: τον Αριστοτέλη. Αυτό είναι σημαντικό για να κατανοήσει κανείς γιατί το βιβλίο των *Φυσικών* ασχολείται κυρίως με την λειτουργικότητα, ένα θέμα που ενώνει όλα τα αλλά έργα του μεγάλου φιλόσοφου. Είναι επίσης γι αυτό που έχει ιδιαίτερη σημασία η αναφορά στο πρωτότυπο της αριστοτελικής ελληνικής γραφής, για μια πληρέστερη διευκρίνηση του νοήματος. Έτσι, οι προσωκρατικοί βάλανε τα θεμέλια για την επιστημονική και την φιλοσοφική σκέψη και έρευνα. Ο Πλάτωνας και ο Αριστοτέλης αποτέλεσαν το κορύφωμα αυτής της σκέψης. Με αυτούς η ελληνική φιλοσοφία διαδόθηκε και επιβλήθηκε σε όλον το γνωστό τότε κόσμο, ενώ το ενδιαφέρον για τις θεωρίες τους δεν μειώθηκε ίσαμε σήμερα. Κατά δε τον Βρετανό φιλόσοφο Ουάιτχεντ: "Όλη η ιστορία της φιλοσοφίας είναι σημειώσεις στον Πλάτωνα και στον Αριστοτέλη".

Στη γλώσσα των Ελλήνων φιλοσόφων, τα αρχαία ελληνικά, δεν υπάρχει μόνο ένας νέος τρόπος έκφρασης και σκέψης, αλλά σ' αυτά υπάρχει και το θαύμα των εκφραστικών δυνατοτήτων μιας μοναδικής γλώσσας. Αυτή είναι ένα εργαλείο το οποίο χρησιμοποιούμε για να κάνουμε διάφορα πράγματα, να αποσαφηνίζουμε ιδέες, είναι όμως και ένας ζωντανός οργανισμός, αφού, π.χ., μπορούμε να συνομιλούμε με τον ίδιο τον Πλάτωνα και τον Αριστοτέλη, ζωντανεύοντάς τους μέσα από την γλώσσα που εκείνοι μιλούσαν. Η Ελληνική γλώσσα στην οποία εκφράστηκαν και έγιναν γνωστές αυτές οι επαναστατικές, καινούριες και ανεπανάληπτες ιδέες και θεωρίες, αυτές που ανανέωσαν ριζικά την ανθρώπινη ιστορία και τον τρόπο του ανθρώπινου σκέπτεσθαι, αποτελεί και θα μείνει για πάντα κοινή κληρονομιά όλων μας. Όπως το ίδιο κοινή κληρονομιά της ανθρωπότητας αποτελούν οι θεωρίες και οι ανακαλύψεις των αρχαίων Ελλήνων στον χώρο της τέχνης, των επιστημών και όλους τους τομείς της ανθρώπινης δραστηριότητας και σκέψης.

Κάρλος Μοντεμαγιόρ Ρόμο ντε Βιβάρ

THE TURKISH OCCUPATION IN THESSALY AND MAGNESIA AND THE ROLE OF THE CASTLE OF VOLOS

By Kostas Liapis

Series Editor: Achilles G. Adamantiades

The Turks Conquer Thessaly and Magnesia

In 1396-1397, the Turks conquer, after a negotiated truce, the largest part of Thessaly, which includes the region of the old Dimitriada. However, that occupation did not last for long because, after the defeat of the Sultan

Bayazit by the Mongols of Tamerlane at the battle of Ankara (1402) and after the negotiations of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Palaiologos with the new Sultan Souleiman, the regions of Thessaly and Central Greece, which were under the Turkish occupation, devolved again to the Byzantine Empire.

But that liberation of Thessaly from the Turks was proved to be temporary, because, after a few decades, the troops of the new Sultan, Mourat the 2nd, reconquer the Thessalian region.

When the Turks, under General Tourahan Bey, reconquer Thessaly and Magnesia in 1423, they show no interest in the almost uninhabited mountainous Pelion; the mountain, with its wild vegetation, absence of productive settlements and lack of substantial arable lands does not present any particular financial interest for the Turks. Therefore, they limit their occupation to the richer, flat and semi-mountainous areas, namely, the basin of Volos, the small plain of Koropi, the rich corner of Zervochia and the arable flat region of Argalasti. Later, they conquer also the fertile plain of Lechonia, after the final expulsion of its Venetian exploiters; that event occurred in 1470. In these areas, the Turks established the families of the Turkish Officials (spahides), to whom they distribute the rich grounds of these productive regions. In these same regions, the Ottomans will transferred, after the removal of the Greek residents, many poor Ottoman families that were earlier installed in the Peloponnese and mostly from the island of Skiathos; these Ottoman settlers will take over the cultivation of the rich lands. It has been said that the transfer of the Ottomans of Skiathos to Pelion took place during the era of Sultan Souleiman the 2nd, on the initiative of the prominent Ottoman Sheik Souvar Bey. He is thought to have been the one that reestablished the almost destroyed old Byzantine Castle of Volos; a Turkish guard settled in that Castle, from the beginning of the Turkish occupation in Thessaly and Magnesia. Sheik Souvar Bey took also care of the construction of the mosque Souloumanie in the Castle.

The occupation of Thessaly and Magnesia by the Turks forced most of the few Greek residents, who were even before the Turkish conquest, serfs and working hands of the local or Venetian masters, to gradually abandon their houses and to take refuge, together with their entire families, in Mount Pelion, where sparse incorporations of monastery tenant farmers or free farmers had existed.

There, away from the greed and arbitrariness of the Turkish despots, the residents of the coastal zone of Pagasitikos will create their initially shabby houses in regions where there were already installed a few farmers, cattle-breeders, and growers, and will fight hard for their survival, trying to subjugate the forested mountain and its wild nature.

These early and shabby habitations, which were founded on the pattern of the first farming community, evolved with time after the arrival and installation on Mount Pelion of fugitives from the rest of the occupied country, in permanent and well organized centers of economic activity and social life. By the end of the 16th century, one encounters on Mount Pelion the first structured and organized communities.

So, one and a half century after the conquest of Thessaly and Magnesia by the Turks, the almost uninhabited mountainous Pelion acquires many organized communities, which will later evolve, thanks to the privileges obtained from the Turks, into outstanding, autonomous, and self-governing settlement units.

The Administrative and Tax Framework in Thessaly and Magnesia under the Turkish Occupation

From the beginning of the Turkish occupation, all of Mount Pelion, which was then known as “the Mountain of Zagora”, belonged to the properties of the Crown. Later and until 1655, the region of the old Mountain of the Centaurs was divided by the Turks, as far as taxation was concerned, in five large parts or in 24 “ziamets” or “timars”; from those 24 timars derives the often used appellation of “24 villages of Pelion”. This means that by 1655 all the large villages of Pelion had been established. It is also historically confirmed that before 1614, a large part of Pelion was conceded by a sultanic firman to the military commander of Constantinople, the Aga Hatzi Moustafa; on his initiative, a new sultanic edict was issued. By this edict, the ownership of the region that belonged to Aga Hatzi Moustafa passed to the Sultana Asma Hanoum (the queen mother) and, as far as taxation was concerned, the rights passed to the “Vakouf” (property foundation) of the two holy towns, Mekka and Medina.

However, similar sultanic edicts that determined the administrative and tax status of the villages on Pelion, were issued during the 17th century; consequently, the villages of Pelion were divided in dependent (“Vakouf”) and independent (“Hasia”) villages.

The first category, which was dedicated to the holy institutions of the Ottoman government (Pyli), was the most numerous. In that category belonged the villages of Makrinitza, Argalasti, Metohi, Bistinika, Siki, Bir, Drakia, Aghios Lavrentios, Aghios Georgios, Pinakates, Visitsa, Lafkos, Promiri, Mouresi, Kissos and Makryrahi. These villages depended on the conqueror and enjoyed particular privileges. Daniel Filippides and Grigorios Konstantas wrote in their “Modern Geography”: “The Turks are not allowed to enter in these villages and impose their brutality”. The villages were self-governed by the village elders (or kotzambasides), who were elected

every year on the day of Saint George through democratic procedures by universal suffrage, which nevertheless were not always irreproachable.

The elected (usually two) elders assumed, during their one-year service, the responsibility to take care of everything that was happening in town and represented the people of the land in its relations with the Turkish authorities. They were responsible for their actions only to the legal representative of the queen mother (known as the Voevodas of Pelion), to whom they also transferred the residents' taxes which were collected on the basis of an official list by a tax collector nominated by them. His base was in Argalasti, but later, Makrinitza became the capital of the independent villages on Pelion and, for a short period of time, also Aghios Georgios.

Contrasted to the independent villages, Ano Volos, Katichori, Portaria, Milies, Propan, Labinou, Neochori, Niaou, Tsangarada, Zagora, Pouri and Anilio were privately-owned and did not have any administrative autonomy. These villages depended on military or political timar-holders (saipides), who were usually chieftains (spahides) of Thessaly, Roumeli, Macedonia and Thrace. During the first years of their classification in the category of privately-owned villages, they had to pay heavy taxes. Later on, the administrative and tax status in these villages changed for the better and there were periods of time when the central Turkish authorities treated both categories of villages in almost the same manner.

Of course, the Castle of Volos, which was controlled and inhabited exclusively by Turks (as was the village of Lechonia), had nothing to do with the administrative and tax status that was in force in the villages on Mount Pelion, at least until 1840. The Castle, having no administrative power during the first centuries of its occupation by the Turks, became the base of a sub-prefect who was in charge of the administration; he exercised a general and discreet administrative supervision and intervened, at least before the Revolution, only in cases of serious state issues.

The Castle of the Old Golos: a Turkish Military Center

When Taharan Bey conquers Thessaly and Magnesia, in 1423, he immediately recognizes the strategic importance of the old Byzantine Castle of Golos (today's Volos).

Built, according to one version, by the Emperor Justinian around a low hillock in the Gulf of Pagasitikos (in today's region of "Palaia"), the old Castle constituted the continuity of a very old life and history; that fact is also proven by the many and different archeological findings that were discovered by the excavations in the region. The archeologists named the

region “the Citadel of Iolkos”. When the Turks completed the occupation of the region, they must have demolished all the old fortresses that had been built by the local lords of Thessaly and Magnesia for the protection of their subjects from the pirates. The Turks reconstructed the old Castle and used it, until the end of their military presence in Thessaly and Magnesia, as the only military center in all of Southeastern Thessaly.

From the beginning of the Turkish occupation, and after the Christian residents of the Castle had been expelled, the Ottomans installed in the Castle a permanent powerful guard, headed by a Castle Master (Mouhavouz), as well as the Agha of the Castle (the ruler of the Castle), who later ceded his place to the sub-prefect, a policeman, a tax-collector, a harbor-master, a chief customs officer and other officials with their families. They, little by little, built their summer lodgings, in the form of fortified towers (pyrgospita) in the lush green gardens of the today’s Ano Volos.

The area of the Castle interior comprised about 13,000 square meters (13 stremmata); its perimeter, as drawn on a plan by the famous Venetian cartographer Vincenzo Coronelli, dated 1668, had the shape of a trapeze with its eastern side broken and its angles curved, two of which led up to round towers. The Turks built another 25 towers and between them many ramparts and battlements, over which they placed, for the first time, tens of cannons. In order to ensure the complete defensive capability of the Castle, the Turks opened, at the foot of the rampart, a wide ditch which they filled with water. The northeastern side of the Castle was the most reinforced one as a last resort Acropolis, with the building of a second, interior wall; today, that spot is occupied by the Christian church of Aghioi Theodoroi.

Inside the Castle, the Turks built or repaired about 100 houses in order to lodge their Ottoman families; they also constructed barracks for the guard, food storehouses, a powder house, public baths and three pumps for supplying water to those who lived in the Castle; the water was flowing through underground earthen pipes from Ano Volos. They must have also constructed a few wells inside the Castle, as well as outside it, mainly on the western side.

At least one century after the capture of the Castle, one or two temples of the “new religion”, are constructed according to the archeologist N. Papachatzis. The minaret of one of them (if there were indeed two mosques, which is highly doubtful) survived in a semi-destroyed state to the year 1955, when it collapsed during the earthquakes of that year. It should be mentioned that the Castle communicated with the port and its region through two arched gates. The bigger one was decorated with marble columns and was situated in the middle of the southern side of the wall, communicating directly with the port. The other gate, known as

the “Black Gate”, was situated in the middle of the northern side of the wall and communicated with Mount Pelion and the interior of Thessaly. That was in general terms the picture of the Castle during the centuries following its capture and reconstruction by the Turks. It was small but strong and was used by the Ottoman conquerors as the sole military center in Thessaly and Magnesia during the period of the Turkish occupation.

The Port of Volos during the First Three Centuries of the Turkish Occupation

The Castle, despite its direct contact with a significant port that was suitable for the development of commerce and therefore, a natural gate for the exportation of agricultural products, did not evolve in proportion to its privileged location, because neither did the particular port evolve proportionately to its potential during the first centuries of the Turkish occupation. The slow pace of life that the indolent Turkish administration imposed in the Castle and its region, the frequent prohibitions for exporting wheat which the Turkish administration imposed in periods of shortage or of war, and the general indifference of the Turks toward commerce, had a negative influence on commercial activity and on economic development in the region. During this time, the climate of stagnation is reflected in the Port of Volos where all economic activity is almost completely dead until the middle of the 16th century. The Turkish geographer and seaman Perry-Reich typically describes the decline of the region in 1521, one century after the installation of the Turks in the Castle. In particular, he does not find any town or port in the cove of Pagasitikos, except for the Castle which is in a constant state of war preparedness! Things start to get better during the second half of the 16th century, as far as the Port of Volos is concerned; the Port begins, little by little, to acquire significance analogous to its location as a transport center. Wheat is transported from the Thessaly interior despite the fact that large wheat quantities are stored in the Castle’s storehouses, which the Turks intend to use in difficult times of the Ottoman Empire – for the supply of Constantinople, in particular- but also for the feeding of the Turkish armed forces. Except for the Greek and foreign (mainly French) merchants, the Jews contributed significantly to the commercial and economic development of the Port of Volos. The Jews are installed, with the permission of the Turks, in an area northeast of the Castle. Having rented most of the shops and storehouses inside and outside the Castle, they became the most active and vital part of the Castle (since Greek people were not allowed to live in it) and the Port, thanks to their commercial acumen. As is written in a document of 1587, the Jews first appear in Volos at the end of the 16th century. It is possible that they were settled near the Castle much earlier. They came from the prosperous Jewish community of the Two Almyri. During the 12th century, that community counted, according to the Spanish Jewish traveler Rabbi Benjamin, about 400 residents. During the following

years, the Port of Volos acquires some significance that brings it to international recognition, despite the fact that it has no wharf to speak of. On the 2nd of January 1625, Vailo, a Venetian, from Corfu, composes a confidential report in which he states: "Our confidential emissary, who was sent to gather information about the movements of the Spanish King's spy in Thessaly reported that Volos is not a town, not even a village, but a big port where many boats approach".

The significance of the port is also presented in another confidential report—thesis of the French diplomat and ambassador of France in Constantinople for 15 years, Sieur De Brèves. His thesis had a Greek-style title: "Concise essay on the sure ways for the destruction of the Ottoman leaders". The author sent in his thesis to the French King, Louis XIII. The thesis was published in Paris in 1628 and among other interesting things, it states: "It is known that the largest part of the supplies, which are destined to go to Constantinople, comes from Volos. If that region is conquered, Constantinople will collapse because of starvation. A boat will not risk the transport of rice, sugar and other necessary supplies from Egypt, if the passage from Aegean is prohibited".

Despite all the above, the commercial and maritime activity in the Port of Volos was not, during all these years, proportional to its full potential. Consequently, the Turkish market town near the Castle shows no signs of progress or development.

This lack of progress must be attributed to the lack of any interest and political will on behalf of the Turkish occupiers. The Turks were not interested in commerce, development, progress, or culture.

Pirate and Venetian Raids on the Coastline of Pagasitikos from the 15th to the 17th Century

The low interest on the part of the Turks for the development of maritime commerce and the profitable exploitation of the Port of Volos was due, during that particular period of time, to an additional reason. That reason was the intense and destructive action of pirate ships, which, during the 15th and the 16th century, constituted a real scourge for the commercial ships inside and outside the Pagasitikos Gulf. Those pirate ships were coming from a variety of countries, such as South Africa, Spain, Italy and Turkey. For instance, in 1539, a Turkish pirate ship that was commanded by Hereindin Barbarossa, seized the island of Skiathos and used it as a base of operations and sea raids.

An official report, written by Venetian diplomatic agents states on the issue of pirate raids against the Port of Volos: "Constantinople, 7 September 1587: a big pirate raid took place against the town of Volos. The pirates

caused great damage on the land and the ships that were anchored in the Port of Volos. The pirates captured all the men who were on commercial ships ready to load wheat, including some Jews. The boats that suffered that pirate incursion were French and Venetian. On the other hand, the pirate ships were from Spain, Genoa and Florence”. In addition to the raids by the pirate ships, the Turkish ships and the entire of Pagasitikos Gulf coast under the Turkish occupation, the Port and the Castle of Volos suffered also frequent incursions by the Venetian fleet; Turks and Venetians were, during these years, in a permanent state of confrontation. One of the first incursions took place in 1469 when the Venetian Admiral Nicolo Kanali ravaged the coastline. Another incursion took place in 1647; the Venetian Admiral John the Baptist Grimani gave chase to the Turkish fleet inside the Pagasitikos Gulf.

The Siege and Conquest of the Castle of Volos by Morozini

This episode took place during the 25-year war between the Turks and the Venetians (1645-1669). During that period, Crete was the apple of contention. During that war, the most serious episode in the long history of the Castle of Volos took place.

Specifically, on the 13th of March 1655, the Castle of Volos receives a violent attack by sea from 25 galleys of the Venetian fleet, which appeared suddenly in front of the Port of Volos; its Admiral was the famous “doge of the seas” Francisco Morozini. What was the purpose of that attack? Vincenzo Coronelli will later give the answer through a chronicle. Coronelli utilized the pictorial and literary notes of the engineers and technicians that accompanied the Venetian war operations and thus gained the reputation as the best and official cartographer and map engraver of the Venetian Republic.

Referring to the Morozini expedition against the Castle of Volos,. Coronelli wrote in his book “Description Géographique et Historique de la Morée reconquise par les Venitiens” (Paris, 1686): “The Castle of Volos, which was named by the Latins “Pagasai”, occupied a large area and was supported by archaic walls (these are probably the walls of the old Dimitriada)... The Port of Volos is good and spacious. It is situated in the region of Thessaly that is named Magnesia... behind the Gulf of Golos that Plinius calls Pagasitikos. In this region, the Turks constructed storehouses for war supplies, crackers and flour taken from neighboring provinces, which were extremely fertile. General Morozini, Commander of the Army of the Venetian Republic, after the conquest of Aigina, in 1655, decided to campaign against Volos, in order to take its food supplies, which will relieve his troops for a long time to come. His arrival amazed the residents who did not expect him there. Without delay, he bombarded the Castle and consequently, those inside the Castle became utterly desperate as they

had to either flee or fall into bondage. In the meantime, the Venetians brought onshore Colonel Briton who was the leader of the attack. He managed to wedge an explosive missile in the gate that gave onto the Port and ordered his men to go up to the wall by a ladder placed in another location of the Castle wall. Their enemies did not have the strength to resist and tried to save themselves by fleeing and abandoning the passage free to the Christians at those two places. The Pasha who governed the Castle, together with the Agha, retreated to another place of town that was more fortified (possibly, the Citadel of the Castle). But, when they saw that they had lost everything that could be used for their defense, they chose to escape rather than be killed. The expedition was successful, as Morozini had wished. He loaded his boats with more than 4 millions pounds of hardtacks, many war supplies and 27 canons. He put fire on everything that was left behind, storehouses, homes, and mosques and, before leaving, brought down all the walls”.

These tragic incidents took place in March 1655; The Cretan Marinos Tzane Bounialis describes these incidents in a chronicle in verse.

However, historic facts do not exactly correspond with the descriptions of either the Venetian cartographer or the Cretan versifier, at least as far as the complete destruction of the walls and of other buildings is concerned. This can be proven by the fact that, during the decade of 1660, the Castle of Volos exists in full, with all its canons turned towards the Port. Its walls and all the other “burned out” buildings (houses, mosques, storehouses, etc.) do not give the impression of having been demolished and reconstructed, as Coronelli had written.

The Turkish traveler Evliya Tselebi visited the Castle in 1668 and wrote: “The Castle is on the seaside, is five-sided and made of stone. It is very robust and solid. Because this high Castle is founded at the edge of a bay that opens to the White Sea (the traveler means the Aegean Sea), its gate gives to the northeastern direction... But its canons are not very big and the Castle, as it is an old building, has many delapidated parts. Inside its walls, there are houses and a mosque, while at the lower side of the Port, huge storehouses can be found...”

The same traveler, when referring to the incursion of the Venetian fleet, which he transposes to the time of his visit to the region (unless he refers to another incursion which has not been recorded), talks about the pillage of food and of any other precious objects inside the Castle, but does not mention any destruction of the walls or of any other buildings by the Venetians. The complete destruction of the Castle, as Coronelli has described it, is refuted by two detailed drawings of the Castle that were made by Coronelli himself.

The first one is entitled “Prospetto di Volo” (A view of Volos) and shows the port with its rudimentary wharf, and the Castle with its ramparts and towers, the buildings inside the Castle, the mosque and its minaret, and the shops, storehouses and the huts on the coastline outside the Castle.

The second drawing is entitled “Plan della Fort di Volo” (A Map of the Fort of Volos) and constitutes a view of the Castle; it depicts accurately the perimeter of the exterior and the interior wall, the towers, the ramparts, the two gates, the wharf and also the wells that were outside the western side of the Castle.

These two engravings made of copper by Coronelli, constitute unique documents describing the Castle in the middle of the 17th century and are included in many more recent research publications; the first and older publication is the one of the Dutchman Oliv. Dapper, in 1703.

These two engravings in which Coronelli and his collaborators reflected the plans of surveyors and others technicians who participated in the incursion against the Castle on March 1655, prove that the Castle was not completely destroyed.

The Most Important Events of the 18th Century in the Region of Thessaly and Magnesia and in the Castle of Volos

After the incursion of Morozini, the renovated Castle of Volos continued its stagnated course and its role as the only Turkish military center in the region of Thessaly and Magnesia up until the end of the 17th century (and even after), with no other dramatic events happening. The chronicler of Volos, Athos Trigonis, emphasizes that “The Turks repaired (therefore, did not have to reconstruct) the destroyed Castle. Thus the little Castle continued its undistinguished and uneventful life. It was so insignificant indeed that today we have no more than some obscure information about its evolution from the middle of the 17th until the end of the 18th century”.

From the beginning of the 18th century and while the Castle of Volos continues its quiet life, a real cosmogony takes place in the self-administered villages on Mount Pelion, which was the result of a new demographic explosion; thousands of new residents enter this favored area of Thessaly and Magnesia.

The basic reason for that inflow was the significant privileges that shielded the villages of Pelion from the Turkish conquerors and that were in force until the Revolution of 1821 spread to Pelion. The privileges were so significant that, in combination with the other incentives, mainly the existence of rich and unexploited lands, that they constituted strong points of attraction for a large number of oppressed slaves from all parts of the

enslaved country.

The largest flows of new immigrants and refugees came from western Thessaly and were installed on Mount Pelion during the 17th century, mainly after the suppression of the revolution of Bishop Dionysios of Triki (today's city of Trikala), in 1616. They also came from the region of Agrafa after the predatory raid in the region by Liberakis Gerakaris (1696). A similar event also took place during the second half of the 18th century, when new inflows of refugees arrive on Mount Pelion from Northern Epirus after the destruction of Moshopoli (1768-1789) or from Roumeli and Western Thessaly (1770) after the Albanian hordes that were chased from Morea became a real scourge to the occupied population of Central Greece.

As a result of the installation of all these thousands of refugees in the villages on Mount Pelion and of their vital contribution to the economic development of the area, a new period of economic growth is observed, which will offer a new dynamic to the self-governed Mount Pelion. Thus, not only an economic, but also a cultural miracle” appears in the villages on Mount Pelion; the villages revive through the rapid evolution of their primitive economy into handcrafts and retail commerce and the appearance of the new and classes of merchants, tradesmen, and seamen. It is a period during which new perspectives open up to the until then closed economy of Mount Pelion; moving now from mere production to the processing of the raw materials, the economy makes the big leap and passes into the area of handcraft production, which is distinguished by the manufacture of silk and heavy woolen cloth. Thanks to the commercial acumen of the native dealers, the new economy extends its reach, as the above-mentioned famous products of Pelion are transported by the “boats of Zagora” and are marketed to all the big ports of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. As the wealth is brought in from foreign ports, the same commercial agents who handle the retail economy import also into Pelion the new ideas of the European Enlightenment and Liberalism. These are ideas that do not take long to transform the villages of Pelion into intellectual and cultural hives, thanks to new schools and a large number of other public works (such as the construction of churches, mansions, squares, fountains, bridges, pavements, etc.) that give to these small, and self-governed democratic societies of Pelion a distinct European dimension. During the same period of the prosperity, the exclusively Turkish Castle of Golos continues its stagnated life, with only small surges of activity at the port; these activities are owed to the Greek and Jewish retailers and merchants of the region, but also to the other foreign merchants (from France, Venice, and Genoa) who were busy with commerce or with the smuggling of cereals from the Thessalian plain, but also with the handling of handcrafts, mainly silk products, threads, and thick woolen clothes from the villages of Portaria and Makrinita.

The trading of the handcraft products was free; it flourished during the second half of the 18th century, when, from the port of Volos and the other ports on Pelion, the exported silks alone came to 30.000-35.000 okas (this Turkish unit of weight, which was in use in Greece until the 1950s, was equivalent to about 1,28 kilograms) every year, according to the testimony of the Swedish traveler Jacob Bjornstahl (1779). The largest quantities of exported products from the Port of Volos were those of cereals from the Thessalian plain, despite the continuous, explicit, and stern prohibitions for their trading by the Turkish administration. The smuggling of cereals that flourished during the Turkish occupation under the nose of the Turkish officials of the Castle of Volos (who were regularly bribed with hefty sums of money), had spread during the first decades of the 18th century, to the point where the Turkish government felt compelled to appoint, in 1737, a special guard at the Port of Volos in charged of inspecting the boats' loadings and empowered with the imposition of high fines – reaching up to 25.000 piasters per illegal loading -- to the offending captains and wheat merchants. However, by the granting of special authorizations, the trading of cereals from the Port of Volos was frequently allowed, particularly to foreign merchants. From 1757 and for many years afterwards, a Frenchman named Berthelemy was appointed Vice-Consul of Venice in Volos and was even entitled to collect legal consular fees for the export of cereals.

The fact that the granaries of the Castle of Volos were always full, combined with the frequent presence at port of cargo-boats that were loading cereals, constituted a serious provocation for the maritime powers that were in a state of war with the Turks, like the Venetians and the Russians, during the period of 1768-1792. In connection with the particular Russian-Turkish war, two Russian incursions have been reported against the Castle and the Port of Volos. The first took place on November 1771; the Russian fleet seized all cereals stored in the coastal warehouses of the Castle. The second took place on the 16th of February of the following year; again the Russian fleet captured a lot of large and small cargo-boats, which were anchored in the Port of Volos and were loaded with cereals and legumes. The Ecumenical Patriarch Kallinikos the 3rd, who was exiled in Zagora, reported that the Russian boats shot many canon-balls in the air, in order to terrorize the Ottomans and the other residents.

As the Ecumenical Patriarch Kallinikos the 3rd reports, the two warring parties (Turkey and Russia) were involved in fights at least twice in the area of the Castle of Volos during this same war. During the first battle (in the summer of 1774), the Castle of Volos came close to being attacked by the Russian fleet. The Turks in Larissa were obliged to reinforce the Castle's garrison and to outfit a frigate to watch over the port. That Turkish reaction angered the Greek leader of the Russian fleet, Antonis Psaros, who was stationed on the island of Skopelos. He ordered the Turks in

Volos to stop reinforcing the Castle's garrison and to burn or deliver the frigate to him. The Turks defiantly rejected his call. Consequently, the Russian fleet attacked the Castle on the 24th of July. The besieged were able to resist successfully inside the Castle and forced Psaros to withdraw empty-handed. After a few days, however, he returned determined to seize the Castle if the Turks did not pay him a war indemnity. He succeeded in that and so lifted the siege.

The last important event of the 18th century regarding the Castle of Volos, took place on the 1st of June 1789; five ships under Lambros Katsonis, bearing Russian flags, laid anchor at the Port of Volos. The immediate reaction of the Turkish officials— who were certainly afraid that the villages in Thessaly and Magnesia could be encouraged to rise up at the appearance of the hostile (to the Turks) ships -- was to demand the presence of the heads of the village communities in the Castle, a clear declaration of loyalty to the Turkish government and the dispatch of residents who would be able to carry arms, would be well equipped, and placed between the guard of the Castle. These measures on the part of the Turks were proven unnecessary, as the presence of the Katsonis' ships in front of the Castle of Volos proved to be merely a show of military force. After a few days, all ships put off, without engaging in any hostile action against the Castle.

The Castle of Volos Before the Revolution

At the beginning of the 19th century, the villages of Thessaly and Magnesia were at the height of their economic and cultural development, as opposed to the miserable area of the Castle of Volos. This latter, despite the significance of its location and its direct access to one of the most important ports of the enslaved country, continued to live in the same stagnation and immobility that reflected the life style and mentality of the Ottomans that were enclosed in it.

At the end of the 18th century, Daniel Filippides and Gregory Konstandas wrote about the downgraded image of the Castle: “The location of the Castle has pre-ordained that Volos should be a big commercial town. However, one cannot expect such a feat from Turkey. The Turks have preserved the spirit of their ancestors and have tried to devastate all areas they occupy rather than civilize them”.

A Prussian traveler, Jacob Bertholdy, is disappointed by the Castle and writes, in 1805, about the unhealthy climate and the marshy land of Volos. He refers with horror to the narrow and miserable streets in the Castle, which are covered by horrible mud, despite the season of summer and the drought. He underlines that the Castle was poorly fortified and totally unremarkable.

Four years later, this situation had not changed. The English traveler William Leake confirms this situation and describes his unflattering impressions of the Castle. He writes that Volos, under the Turkish occupation, is much different from the villages on Mount of Pelion. In Volos, the customs, the narrow roads that are impassable because of the dirty waters and the filth, the ruined and wretched houses, the square whitewashed wall that is called the Castle, but which in reality it is nothing but a short wall with loop-holes, and which includes a mosque and a few Turkish houses, makes you understand very well the main features of the Turkish administration. He finishes by saying that the little village is called "Castle" by the Greeks and "Golos" by the Turks. Argyris Pilippides, a writer from Milies, describes in less disappointing terms the Castle; he does this because, in contrast to the previously mentioned foreign travelers, he had not visited any other significant Castle of that period. In 1815, he writes that the Castle is well built and looked after. In the Castle, there are soldiers, janissaries, a chief gunner, a commander of the irregular militia, and two gates. There are more than 100 Turkish families that worship in a mosque. From the plain of Trikala, Farsala and Larissa, they gather the wheat. Like in all Castles, there are canons. Outside the Castle, there are vendor shops, craftsmen's shops, bakeries, inns, and the like. There is also the customs office of Volos where you could find the chief customs officer. The customs office is located at the edge of the sea, in front of the port where boats anchor. Every Saturday, a good open market takes place (bazaar); all the villages are represented and the merchants open their wares in a special area called tsarsi (market place).

The Role of the Castle of Volos in the Suppression of the Revolution of 1821

Despite their privileged treatment by the Turks, the residents of Thessaly and Magnesia participated in the revolution of 1821 against the Ottoman rule. When the Ottomans who lived in the Castle heard, in the spring of 1821, of the events in Southern Greece, they decided to take a series of measures. They reinforced the ramparts of the Castle and Pefkakia, the area opposite to the Castle. From Pefkakia, they controlled the entrance to the port with strong gun emplacements, while at the same time, they stocked the Castle storehouses with food and the powder house with war supplies in order to withstand an eventual long siege.

Later on, when the situation became harder for them, as the eventuality for the revolutionary movement spreading into Thessaly and Magnesia became more and more likely, they confined themselves in the Castle, taking with them all their movable belongings. The Ottoman residents of "Perivolia" in Ano Volos and those from Lechonia who did not feel secure in their tower houses (pyrgospita) sought refuge in the Castle.

The development of the revolutionary movement of 1821 in Thessaly and Magnesia and of similar movements that followed in the course of the 19th century will be described briefly as the author will limit his remarks to the events that have direct relation with the role of the Castle during the Turkish occupation. The revolutionaries from Pelion started the siege of the Castle of Volos on the 8th of May, the day following the declaration of the Revolution on Mount Pelion by the fiery Archimandrite Anthimos Gazis in Milies. The leader of the revolutionary movement was the man-at-arms (armatolos) Kyriakos Basdekis. The attack took place at the northern gate of the Castle (Kara Kapou), while at almost the same time three military ships from the islands of Hydra and Spetses came to support the movement and bombarded the Castle from the port.

The besieged defended themselves effectively and, consequently, the three ships raised the siege and withdrew. Almost at the same time, a numerous military corps (consisting of 20.000 foot soldiers and 6.000 horsemen) came from Larissa to offer support to the guard of the Castle and to suppress the revolutionary movement. Their leader was Mahmut Pasha Dramalis who easily dispersed the attackers and set on fire Makrinitza and many other revolted villages of Pelion.

The Revolution appeared to be put out, but two years later the Thessalian and Macedonian fighters of Southern Pelion rekindled a fire of war. Turkish and Albanian troops returned to Pelion from Larissa. This time, their leader was Pasha Kioutachis, who, despite the initial glorious victories of the revolutionaries at Alata, Gatzea and Trikeri, suppressed once again this revolutionary movement by destroying entire villages, such as Promiri, Siki and Bistinika. In 1827, a third revolutionary movement, ended up also unsuccessfully. Despite the fact that the Thessalian and the Macedonian revolutionaries crushed once again in the troops of Nourka Servanis and Deirim Konitzbey in the region of Trikeri, they did not succeed in bringing to a happy conclusion their revolutionary struggle and they were left isolated and helpless.

During these revolutionary movements in Thessaly and Magnesia, until the end of the Revolution of 1821, the Castle of Volos and its port played an important role in military operations. During this period, the Castle of Volos was a camp, a base of operations, but also a center of supplies for the Turkish army that came from Larissa and fought against the revolutionaries, while the Port of Volos was used as a supply base for food, war supplies and soldiers, carried by Turkish boats from the port to the regions of Southern Greece, where the revolution continued. Dimitrios Tsopotos, a historian from Volos, wrote about the significance of the Castle and the port of Volos during the Revolution of 1821. In particular, he wrote that the permanent presence of Turkish ships in the port of Volos was not

accidental or illogical. The Turkish ships contributed to the defense and protection of the Castle from the sea. The boats were always on standby and, if necessary, rushed to assist the Turks. The Provisional Administration of Greece had understood the critical role that the Port and the Castle of Volos played in the progress of the Struggle of Independence and, through the Ministry of Naval Affairs, ordered the Greek fleet to prevent Turkish ships from entering in the Pagasitikos Gulf. The Greek fleet had to burn or destroy, utilizing surprise incursions, all the Turkish ships that were anchored in the Port of Volos. Greek warships chased three times the Turkish ships all the way to the port of Volos. The first two incursions took place in 1823 and in 1824 respectively. Leading these incursions were captains of the so-called “fire boats” (pyrpolika) from Psara, who, however, did not succeed in completing their mission. The third incursion was successful.

Specifically, the third incursion took place in the spring of 1827, during another blockade of the Pagasitikos Gulf by ships from the islands of Hydra and Spetses. During that operation, a squadron of the Greek fleet arrived at the Port of Volos and sunk or captured many Turkish ships. At the head of the Greek squadron was the first steam-driven Greek warship that was given the name “Karteria” (Endurance). The chief of the Greek fleet was the English philhellene Hastings. Also participating in that naval operation were the Greek warships “Aris” and “Themistocles” and the support naval vessels “Panagia” and “Aspasia”. “Karteria” bombarded and destroyed parts of the Castle of Volos; many of the Ottomans that were enclosed in the Castle ran for their life panicking at the mere sight of this wheel-driven warship.

This was the last major episode that took place at the Castle of Volos, which stayed under Turkish control during the War of Independence of 1821. It was a fight that ended happily for the lands of continental Southern Greece but left outside the borders of the newly-formed Greek state Thessaly and Magnesia as well as Epirus and Northern Greece.

The New Town of Volos

At the end of the Revolution of 1821, the Castle of Volos continued, after upgrading, its familiar role, that of military and administrative center of the Turks. The administration of the Pelion villages, stripped now of their privileges, devolves, in 1830, exclusively to the Ottoman leader whose role was later upgraded to that of Under-Prefect of Volos. As the writer Ioannis Leonardos writes, many Greeks came and built in Volos (on the coastline and a little east of the Castle) storehouses and shops and as a result, commerce and the economy of Volos thrived. After 1840, many new, beautiful and modern houses were built in Volos. That activity caused the envy and worry of the Turks, the Jews and some residents of Pelion who

sympathized with the Turks as they were renting the old shops located outside the Castle. The enemies of the new town tried to prevent its establishment and expansion arguing that with the building of taller and more solid houses than the Castle itself could make their owners and renters arrogant and hence dangerous to the Turkish administration.

However, the hostile representations of those who wished to stop the establishment of the new town had only temporary success. The new town of Volos was on its way of development and nothing could stop its growth. So, in the middle of the 19th century, the first neighborhood, called “Magazia” (shops), of the new Greek town was ready; it overshadowed, with its beautiful presence on the seaside, the miserable and stagnated Turkish township of the neighboring Castle. During the following years, the expansion and development of the new town was rapid and its dominance over the old town confirmed the fears of those who had opposed its establishment. The “conquest” of the old Turkish township of the Castle by the neighboring unfortified new town of Volos took place without the need for battle. The unceasing activity and open and progressive spirit of the settlers of the new town were adequate ammunition for this conquest. The new settlers put away the arid conservatism, the ossified beliefs and regressive mentality of those who resided or worked in the old Turkish township of the Castle. That old township has kept to our day, its telling name; it is called “ta Palia” (the Old).

The Castle of Volos during the Revolutionary Movements of 1854 and 1878

In March 1854, a new revolutionary movement breaks out on the mountain of Pelion spurred by the Turkish-Russian war, known as the Crimean War. The Castle of Volos finds again for some months its war-time role. The Turks use the Castle as a concentration camp, as center of supplies, but also as a base of operations. The Ottoman troops arrive again from Larissa in order to suppress the latest rebellion. That movement met with no success, on account mainly of English and French opposition, and was eventually suppressed in the beginning of the summer of that same year. The Castle of Volos then becomes the center of a particularly oppressive Ottoman rule for the subjugated people of Pelion and particularly for the residents of the new town who had to cope with the predatory attitude of the unaccountable guard of the Castle and the unbearable tax surcharges that the Turkish officials of the Castle imposed on all the residents of Thessaly and Magnesia. Despite that unbearable situation, the new town of Volos (from 1856 the new town of Volos is an official community) spreads continuously and its population is increasing very fast, in contrast to the decreasing population of the Castle where only about 300 Turkish families are still living. The poor conditions at the Castle are portrayed by Greek and foreign travelers, like the French Alfred Mezières, the French

Emil Isambert and the Greek Nikolaos Magnis. These three visitors offer an extremely disheartening image of the Castle as they portray the place as “fit for pigs rather than for rational beings”.

The new Turkish-Russian war begun in 1877 and encouraged the residents of Thessaly and Magnesia to free themselves from the Ottoman yoke. However, the war caused many trials and tribulations for the new town of Volos, even before the outbreak of the last revolutionary movement in the region. This was so because the unruly hordes of the Zeimbeks and Bashi-Bouzouks that the Turks enlisted to come to Volos in support of the Castle's guard, spilled in the new town ravaging and pillaging houses and shops and badly mistreating the unfortunate Greek residents. The Italian Vice-Consul in Volos tried in vain to prevent those violent acts. During the last Pelion rebellion, in 1878, the dilapidated barracks of the Castle of Volos hosted once more the Turkish troops that came from Larissa under Iskender Pasha. An army of 10.000 men who were helped by a Turkish fleet under the command of the Turkophile English Admiral Hobbard, who bombarded relentlessly the Greek rebels, and also assisted covertly by English diplomacy, managed to suppress that last rebellion on Pelion. It was a rebellion that took place on the rough slopes of Mount Sarakinos, overlooking today's Volos. A national local historic song extols the exploits of the women of nearby Makrinitza who participated in the big battles of that war:

"Turks and aghades, get out of the Castle

and see the kind of war that your slaves are waging,

hear the noise of Makrinitza's rifles and flintlocks

that explode like chestnuts and make the aghades fall "

Epilogue Three years after that last revolutionary movement, that much-desired freedom came to Thessaly and Magnesia. On the 2nd of November 1881, the Greek Army entered in triumph the new town of Volos and its Castle, which, after 458 years of uninterrupted Turkish occupation was now being given over to the Greek authorities. Eight years later, after the Ottoman residents of the old township left their homes, the definite end of the history of the Castle's of Volos history came to pass. The local authorities, following orders of the government (under Prime Minister Harilaos Trikoupi) demolished to the ground the largest parts of its walls. Those old walls were now considered useless in modern warfare and, besides, the region was meant to be reconstructed and modernized, so that its look would match the look of the new town.

Thus, Volos lost, mercilessly and unnecessarily, as Dimitrios Sisilianos, a

historian from Pelion said, one of its most important historical monuments.



Evening Standard

Tuesday, 13 January 2004

Victims of the victim culture

PROPOSALS TO reduce the growing cost of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, published yesterday by the Home Office, would impose a £5 surcharge on drivers guilty of speeding and other motoring offences — thus raising the cost of being caught by a speed camera to £65. Under the Home Office's new plans for consultation, the surcharge will be put into a "victims' fund", which will pay for the often valuable counselling and support of people who have been affected by crime. The fine will apply to every motoring offence except parking. Offending drivers will find themselves in the same boat as rapists and murderers who will pay a surcharge of £30 for a custodial offence, raising the money while working for victims' charities in prison. There are wider changes. Employers would be responsible for paying compensation to their workers if they become victims of crime in the course of their duties. In addition, the Tube and train companies would have to pay compensation to employees who are traumatised by people committing suicide on the tracks. Meanwhile the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) will be able to sue offenders to recover cash paid out to their victims, thus adding to the legal circus of the compensation culture. There has to be something intrinsically wrong with a system where the number of applications for state compensation in France in 2001-2 was 13,500, in Germany 9,700, and in Britain a staggering 78,100. Having helped to create the most overblown, expensive compensation system in Europe, the Government is now trying to find a way of making the public foot the bill for it. The proposed advice to judges and magistrates to make greater use of compensation orders may be worthwhile. However, there are two reasons why the proposals are unsatisfactory. Firstly, Mr Blunkett's moves will shift compensation costs on to employers, even though they are not responsible for committing the crimes concerned. That is unfair. The employers will either have to absorb the cost, or else put up their prices and fares to pay out compensation to staff. Secondly, though victim support charities often do an excellent job, speeding drivers paying a surcharge that goes to mugging victims will not necessarily see this as a painless, acceptable act of charity. Instead, they may resent this involuntary extra cost. It would be unfortunate if public support for the important work of victim support charities were in any way undermined.

GCSEs that count

THIS THURSDAY, with the publication of secondary school league tables, parents and pupils will find out the latest information on how their local schools are performing. For some, decisions will be made that will shape children's lives, whether by requiring them to travel long distances in search of better schools, or even by prompting the family to move house or assume the heavy cost of private education. Yet the very basis of these secondary school league tables is a benchmark which is inadequate. League tables measure the proportion of pupils achieving five good GCSEs, defined as A* to C. But the compilers do not insist that those five should include English and maths. They can include subjects with higher pass rates, which are widely deemed easier. Employers typically insist on maths and English GCSEs as minimum evidence of literacy and numeracy. Many parents who think they are sending their children to a school that turns out perhaps half its pupils with five decent GCSEs would be disappointed to learn that in fact many of those 16 year olds had failed, or not taken, the core subjects. As the Confederation of British Industry suggests, Mike Tomlinson, the curriculum chief currently devising a new system of school leaving qualifications, must ensure that the five subjects surveyed for the league tables include the two qualifications without which a pupil cannot be considered to have had an all-round education. This will not only ensure schools focus on the basics of literacy and numeracy, without which other skills count for little. It will also give pupils a better chance of meeting employers' requirements. At a time when nearly half of pupils are still not achieving five decent GCSEs, the schools standards minister, David Miliband, must recognise that to continue to allow this basic benchmark to differ from parents' and employers' reasonable expectations would be to undermine his claims of rising educational performance.

Britain needs allies for its Olympic bid. So is it time to return our most controversial museum possession to the Greeks?

Give back the Elgin Marbles

TOMORROW Marbles Reunited is launched by a number of British citizens who believe that the proper place for the Parthenon Marbles is back at the Acropolis, where they stood for 2,000 years until Lord Elgin pulled them down. The campaign starts with the favourable wind in its sails of an opinion poll that confirms public support by a wide margin for restoring the Marbles to Athens.

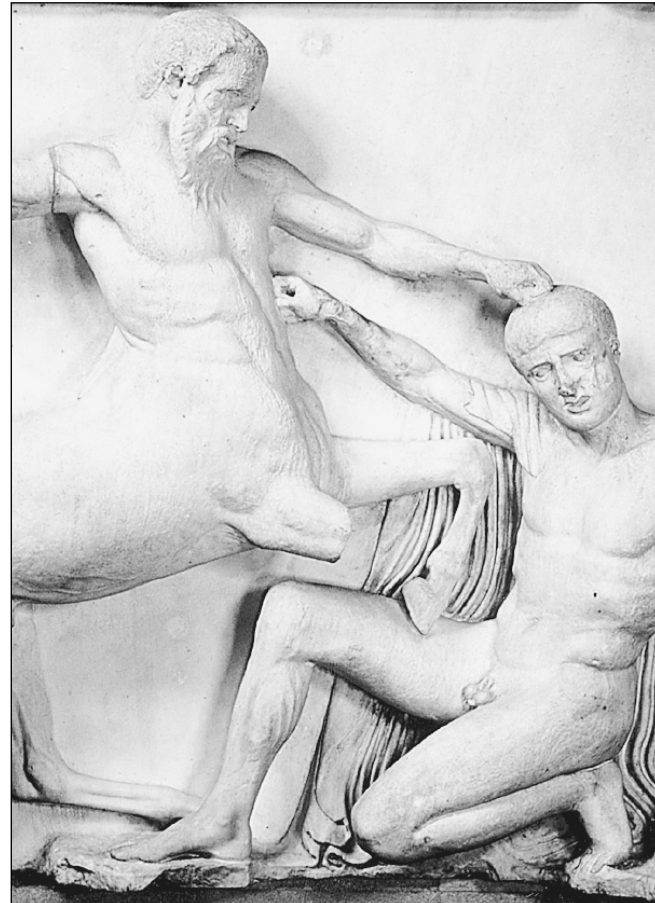
That should prompt some serious heart-searching among the trustees of the British Museum. It is one thing for them to resist demands of Greek governments. It is quite another for them to defy the wishes of the British people on whose behalf they act as trustees.

Nor would wise trustees want to risk being seen to undermine London's bid to host the Olympics. This is the year the games return to Greece, and that will also be the moment when lobbying gets underway for the venue for 2012.

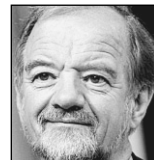
What a dramatic launch pad it would be for London's bid if Tessa Jowell, as minister for both heritage and sport, could demonstrate Britain's cultural co-operation by announcing that the Parthenon Marbles would also be coming home to Greece. By contrast what a disastrous start to the London campaign it will be if at Athens every Olympic dignitary is shepherded by their Greek hosts around the new Acropolis Museum with a long blank wall where the Elgin Marbles should be.

WHATEVER arcane dispute there may be over who had legal title to the Parthenon Marbles, there is no denying that they belong in Athens. The panels were designed to be an integral part of the Parthenon, and are best appreciated in the setting of the Acropolis. The building was erected as the most sacred temple of Athens, and the panels provide an extended frieze of the ancient religious rites. It is this unity of site and sculptures that makes the case for returning the Marbles so compelling and unique.

The panels tell narrative stories of the mythical battles of the gods and the religious procession on feast days. Those narratives, though, cannot be followed as a whole as long as



Going home? There is no denying the Elgin Marbles belong in Athens



by Robin Cook
Former Foreign Secretary

half the panels are in London and the rest are in Athens. Even individual figures are divided. Athens retains the head of Iris, but we have her torso. The heads of centaurs are separated from their bodies and horses' flanks from their legs.

Imagine that someone had hacked Nelson's Column in two and left us with only the great admiral's stomach and legs. Does anyone believe that we would rest until the statue was restored as a whole? As the Parthenon cannot be moved to Russell Square, the only way of reuniting the Parthenon sculptures is for the Elgin Marbles to be returned to the Acropolis.

It is not as if Athens is in the back of beyond. Greece is displacing Spain as the number-one holiday destination of British tourists. It is perfectly possible that, displayed alongside the top tourist draw in all Greece, the Parthenon Marbles will still be seen each year by just as many British

citizens, and they will get a much better sense of the meaning of the carvings there than in the British Museum.

Moreover, those tourists will be able to take pride in visiting an annexe of the British Museum, because the latest proposal would leave the Marbles under the ownership of the British Museum. Many top museums are now developing an international dimension to their work through an overseas annexe. The American Guggenheim and the Russian Hermitage have both opened foreign annexes. There is something curiously dated in our cosmopolitan world for the British Museum to insist that it can only protect European culture by displaying its exhibits in Bloomsbury.

Paradoxically, by returning the Parthenon Marbles the British Museum would increase the access of Londoners to Greek antiquities. The proposal by the Greek government is that, in exchange for

the location of the Marbles in Athens, Greece would mount in London a rotating exhibition of sculptures and archaeological finds that have never before been seen in Britain, nor indeed outside Greece. It is an exciting prospect for the future which would enhance possibilities for both visitors to the British Museum and tourists to London.

It would be an honourable close to a chapter that opened with a dishonourable act of vandalism. Lord Elgin's sole authority for dismantling the Acropolis was a firman from the Turkish sultan to whom he had been appointed British Ambassador. It was not conduct we would condone today. While Foreign Secretary, I would have taken a dim view of any of my ambassadors who abused their access to acquire possessions from the priceless heritage of unoccupied territory. Nor would any of them have dreamt of doing so.

Lord Elgin's actions were controversial at the time. Byron, a champion of Greece's struggle for freedom, denounced Elgin as a plunderer and a robber.

The best that could be said for Elgin is that he removed the Marbles from what was then a war zone and took them in trust for their own protection.

BUT that defence has evaporated with time. Modern Greece is a stable country and our partner in the European Union. The gallery it is building as a safe home for the Parthenon Marbles is a state-of-the-art design prepared by a world-renowned architect. Even Lord Elgin himself, if he were alive, might recognise that there is no longer any reason why the friezes should not be reunited at the Acropolis.

The refuge of successive British governments on this issue has been to shelter behind the legal nicety that the Marbles are under the ownership of the British Museum. That is technically correct but does not absolve government from promoting the public interest and speaking up for public opinion.

It is time the British Government accepted that returning the Marbles in exchange for a world-class exhibition of Greek antiquities in Britain would be good for the British Museum, good for London and excellent for our Olympic bid.

'If someone hacked Nelson's Column in two, leaving us his stomach and legs, we would not rest until the statue was restored as a whole'