THE KARYATES ASSOCIATION LOTTERY DRAW

The Karyates Association Lottery draw for the completion of the Karyes Memory and Culture Centre held on February 20, 2022 in Athens in the hall of the “Agiasos Lesvos Progressive Association” offices at 39, 3rd of September Street.

The draw took place in the presence of the notary Mrs. Dimitra Kakari-Kranioti, while the member of the Audit Committee of the Karyates Association Mrs. Elina Prekeze was also present. From the Board of the Association were present Messrs. Michael Repoulis, Dimitra Mermiga, Lefkothea Latsi and Evangelia Kopsiafti.

The results of the draw are as follows:
- Lottery no. 4.940 (£ 500) Mr. Greg Atkins (L.A.), resident of Spartanburg, South Carolina.
- Lottery no. 0.301 (£ 500) Ms. Georgia Kon. Latsis, resident of Charlotte, South Carolina.
- Lottery no. 1926 (£ 1,000) Mr. Achilles (Archie) Xouris, resident of Greenville, South Carolina.

The Board warmly thanks all the Caryatans and the dear friends of S.A.K. who bought lotteries, thus significantly strengthening the effort of the KARYATES ASSOCIATION to complete the Memory and Culture Center on time.

THE COMPATRIOTS SUPPORT THE VISION OF THE KARYES MEMORY AND CULTURE CENTRE

The Board members of Karyates Association want, once again, to express their gratitude for the continued support of the Caryatans and the friends of the Karyes for their donations.

These financial contributions are a practical proof of trust for the Association, which during its more than 50 years of existence has proved to be an organization being characterized by its transparent and absolutely healthy financial management.

All the board members feel responsible for all the money that our compatriots donate to the Association and therefore they guarantee that every dollar or euro will be spent solemnly for the purpose of the creation of the Karyes Memory and Culture Centre.

In this issue, as we always do, we publish the names of the donors of the last period:
- Stefanos Ardamis € 30-
- Anonymous donor € 500-
- Angeliki Panousi € 1,000-
- Aristotle (Arthur) Kakaris € 100-
- Konstantina (Constance) E Voukidi € 100-
- Paraskevas Douvis in memory of Giannis, Telis and Stratos Kostalas, Christos Androu Douvis, Nikos Hatzidakis, his brothers Andreas, Zacharias, Elias and his parents of Christos and Kalirroe € 500-

INVITATION TO A GENERAL ASSEMBLY

To the members and friends of the Karyates Association

The Board of Directors of the Association during its meeting on 03.03.2022 decided to convene an emergency General Assembly.

Therefore, all the members of the Association are INVITED to a General Assembly that will take place in the Hall of the “Agiasos Lesvos Progressive Association”, at 39, 3rd of September Street, (1st floor) on Monday 28 March 2022 at 11 p.m.

In case the quorum provided by the articles of association is not reached, the General Assembly will be held definitively, regardless of the number of members, on April 3, 2022, Sunday at 11:00 am, at the same place and with the same issues.

AGENDA

1. Making a decision for the sale of three offices no. 5, 6 and 8, owned by the Association, texts on the 5th floor on 48 Stadiou Street apartment building.
2. Various Announcements.

The presence of all members of the Association is absolutely necessary. You can vote by proxy with a power of attorney with the authenticity of your signature certified by K.E.P., Police Department, the online service gov.gr or another Public Authority.

With patriotic greetings

The President
Michael Repoulis

The Vice Presidents
Annette Prekeze
Demetra Mermigna

The General Secretary
Charal. Konstantopoulos

The Treasurer
Lefkothea Latsi

The Members
Christos Prekezes Evangelia Kopsiaftis Nikolaos Trakas Helen Trakas

DID WE PAY OUR ANNUAL MEMBER SUBSCRIPTION?

Dear Compatriot,

Due to the pandemic, we were not able to organize the events we hold every year in order to meet, discuss and have fun. For this reason, it was impossible to collect your contributions that every year you always willingly give us and thus thank you from the bottom of our hearts. "But every obstacle is for good" our people say. For this purpose, since we live in the digital era, each of us may pay his/her annual subscription easily through internet banking.

The cost of the annual subscription to the Association is only € 5.00. / US$ 6.00

Payment is optional. The Association does not necessarily ask for anything.

The number of accounts is (IBAN):
GR 560110 662 00000 66200 228709 KARYATES ASSOCIATION SWIFT (BIC) ETHNGRAA NATIONAL BANK OF GREECE

The same account is available to anyone for donations and any financial support he/she wishes for the purposes of the Association.

Regarding the postal sending of the Newsletter, although the cost of the postal delivery is high, it will be free of charge.

However, each of your contributions helps us to cover the costs and gives us strength to keep going.

Thanks in advance everyone.

With patriotic greetings,

the BoD of the Karyates Association

News Bulletin Spring 2022 1
A COLD WINTER

This winter has proved to be heavy for Greece and that has affected the weather in Karyes too. Although last winter was mild and arid, this year, on the other hand, the snow has decorated houses and roofs several times in white. With the new year and almost every week until the 20th of March, it snowed with the culmination of the bad weather called “Elpis / Hope” which hold a record of snowfall for the last years.

Although the Sparta Municipality cleaned the main road to enable the access of the village with the city of Sparta, it did not clear the streets inside the village, making it very difficult for the daily life of the residents, the visitors and especially the movement of the buses that transported the excursionists. Fortunately, significant help came from the permanent volunteer of the village, Mr. Spyros Sioutos, who on his own initiative and means (tractor) cleaned part of the square and many streets.

Religious Celebrations

The “fota” (Jesus Baptism)

The Karyes, residents and visitors from all round Greece celebrated our Lord Baptism at the Divine Liturgy that took place at the St. Andrew Church in Karyes on January 6, 2022.

At the photo Father Leonitos, the new Karyes Priest.

THE DONATION OF THE "STAVROS NIARCHOS" FOUNDATION FOR THE NEW SPARTA HOSPITAL HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GREEK GOVERNMENT

The donation of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation for the design, construction and equipment of the new General Hospital of Sparta I.S.N. was ratified.

The law includes all the necessary actions for the implementation and faster possible completion of the General Hospital of Sparta I.S.N. construction and operation.

The new hospital will meet modern standards and will upgrade the health infrastructure of the Regional Unit of Laconia, but also of the Southeastern Peloponnesian region.

With the implementation of the new General Hospital of Sparta I.S.N., the Ministry of Health and the “Stavros Niarchos Foundation” (I.S.N.) aspire to create a modern health unit that will be a model of hospitalization and health care with the implementation of innovative systems of organization and operation. The aim is to create a new modern nursing example, based on best international practices, which as a model of good medical nursing and functional practices will contribute to the improvement and sustainable development of the Greek's National Health System.

The new General Hospital of Sparta I.S.N. will provide a wide range of medical and nursing services for the adult and child population of the Southeastern Peloponnesian region and in particular of the Laconia Regional Unit. The new facilities will enable the development of the digital operation of the clinical services, the modern management and maintenance of the hospital, as well as its connection with other collaborating Health Units. At the same time, training and research in new technologies will be developed with the aim of continuously evolving the capacity, ability and efficiency of the staff towards the creation of a modern hospital that utilizes the advantages of digital technology in the progress of its quality and operation.

Technical Works Tender Completion for Works in Karyes

At the beginning of the year, the open electronic tender for the project “ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND TECHNICAL WORKS OF THE KARYES LOCAL COMMUNITY 2021”, was completed containing a total Budget of € 74,668.36 + VAT. (total amount € 92,588.77). The financing of the project is from Sparta Municipality’s own resources and the total deadline for the execution of the project is set at one hundred and eighty (180) days from the date of signing the contract. The essential features of the project are the following:

1. Demolition of old cement pavements on the municipal road from the property of Paraskova Georg. Koloukos to the property of heirs Petroulias. Construction of new concreting in sections of the road with a total length of 100m. about and width about 1m. In front of the property Paraskova Georg. Koloukos, a new concreting will be done in the form of clamb in a length about 13m. and width 2.5-5m. Outside the hotel “Ta Petrina” will be demolished old cement paving and new concreting will be about 12m. long and width 1m.

2. Asphalting of the road (in sections) from the Karyes central square (owned by Theodoros Koutsoyorgos) to the intersection to the property of Despo Voukidis with a total length of approximately 90m. and variable width from 4-7m. Placing handrails along the road.

3. Demolition of an old cement pavement and new concreting on a municipal road perpendicular to the Provincial Road to Varvitsa between the properties of Marigoula Bakou and heirs Zacharias Leventakis in a length of approximately 35m. and a width of about 4.5m. Care will be taken for the smooth assembly (altitude) of the municipal with the Provincial Road.

4. Partial demolition of an old cement pavement and new concreting on a municipal road and new concreting on a municipal road perpendicular to the Provincial Road to Varvitsa between the properties of Marigoula Bakou and heirs Zacharias Leventakis in a length of approximately 35m. and a width of about 4.5m. Care will be taken for the smooth assembly (altitude) of the municipal with the Provincial Road.

5. Reconstruction of a collapsed retaining wall supporting a main municipal road, next to a useless building owned by the heirs of Theodorus Harakas, approximately 7m. long and a total height of 5m.

6. Demolition of an old cement paving and new concreting in a section of a municipal road in front of the properties of Konstantinos Diamantourou and Despos Diazikis, with a total length of about 27m. and about 2m wide.

7. Cement paving of a part of a common area in front of the house of Efstathia Pitsou in a length of approximately 5m. and a width of about 3m. The surface call will be such that the rainwater will be removed from the house.

8. Demolition of old concreting and construction of cobblestone on the municipal road from the central square of the settlement to the property of Panagiotei Georgopoulou, approximately 43m. long and 5m. wide.

9. On the municipal road north of the Holy Temple of Apostolo Andreas and near the central square of the settlement, the paving of a common area approximately 14m. long and floating width 2-4.5m.

10. Demolition of an old cement pavement from the property of Thomas Kontalonis to an intersection in front of the property of Georgios Devekos, approximately 40m. long. and 4-5m. wide. Construction of paving which will be extended to an adjacent common area 12m. long about and 2.5m. wide.

11. Demolition of a section of road paving next to a house owned by Andreas Christopoulos in a length of 14m. about and width 1m. New concreting of this section with a slope towards the center of the road.

12. Kennel lining with concrete next to the property of Ioannis Velonis in a length of about 20m.
The story of the three brothers Constantine, Demosthenes and Agamemnon, sons of Anargyros and Marina Leventakis (par. Kapilos) could in itself be a novel or even an adventure film.

In Arachova of 1860, only 30 years since the end of the Greek Revolution War, three young brothers live. Their father Anargyros is poor and so he decides to send Demosthenes to Sparta to learn the art of shoemaker. The young man becomes a good craftsman, but as he is restless, he fights with his boss and returns to the village. The shoemaker looks for him because he is a good craftsman and arrives in Arachova to meet his father. But Demosthenes does not even want come back to him.

As a result his father decides to send him to Piraeus where there are some Arachovites live and work to find his way. At that time the railway had not been built yet and the journeys were made by sea from the town of Astros. When Demosthenes arrived in Piraeus (port city of Athens), he settles there and although at the beginning he practices the same profession, (shoemaker), after a while he finds a job in a bakery.

The arrival in Africa

After a while his brother Constantine come from Arachova and join him. It was a time when many compatriots were migrating to the Balkans and Russia. However the two brothers learn that there were opportunities in British-occupied Egypt. So they took the decision and sailed by ship, arriving in Alexandria, Egypt in 1866. There Demosthenes finds work as a silversmith, while his brother works wherever he can.

The daring plan and the arrival in America

However, for Constantine things are not very good. During his stay in Egypt, he understands that the British are treated differently from the rest of Europeans and so he creates a daring plan in his mind: To reach the U.S.A., to get the American Citizenship and to return in Egypt as an American citizen! Having met Ioannis Lykouras from Vassaras, Laconia, they sail and after crossing two oceans, the Indian and the Pacific a long journey, they face the coasts of California in 1867, arriving in San Francisco.

In order to understand the era we are talking about, the California State was liberated from Mexico and integrated into the Union just 17 years ago, while just 2 years ago it ended in the eastern U.S.A. the American Civil War! There, the two pioneering Laconians will remain selling fruits and vegetables as itinerants in order to raise money and obtain Citizenship.

The adventures of Demosthenes in Sudan

Back in Egypt, Demosthenes learns that British General Gordon is campaigning in Sudan and that there will be opportunities for him. So he takes the big decision and follows the British Army reaching the capital city of Khartoum. There, he will work as a baker and seraphim. The years pass and Demosthenes thrives since as a baker he is well known among with all the white civilians and our compatriot too, boarded ships in order to settle in America.

But in 1885 things got difficult. The Sudanese Arab Rebellion cuts off General Gordon’s forces, which are surrounded and the Europeans are in danger. The British army, taking among all the white civilians and our compatriot too, boarded ships in order to settle in America.

After some months, the administration of the camp becomes once at the end of the week they ha

The return of Constantine to Alexandria

Meanwhile, after a stay in San Francisco, Constantine manages to raise some money and taking American citizenship, completes his purpose by traveling back to Egypt. Arriving in Alexandria in 1874, however, things changed: His brother lives in Sudan and the new local governor (Pasha) expels all non-British foreigners, who were forced to find work within 24 hours. So the two Laconians are forced to leave for Greece as quick as they could.

The return to America

But Constantine is a restless spirit and he is not concerned with family but adventure. So he decides to go to America with Lykouras again. After arriving they wander together in different cities of the Wild West. In fact, during one of their visits to Chicago, he meets his first cousins, Vassilios and Panagiotis Leventakis (par. Fafoutis) who were officially the first Arachovites in America as they arrived in Chicago in 1887.

The adventure in China and the shipwreck in Japan

In 1889, however his nephew Demosthenes, who as we mentioned in 1875 in Karyes he had married American citizenship, completes his purpose by traveling back to Egypt. Arriving in Alexandria he will work as a baker and seraphim. But a few years later, in 1898, their things changed: The British have taken control of the country and all non-British foreigners are expelled.

In order to unders

Arrival of the niece and the years in Hawaii

In 1890, however his nephew Demosthenes, who as we mentioned in 1875 in Karyes he had married American citizenship, completes his purpose by traveling back to Egypt. Arriving in Alexandria he will work as a baker and seraphim. But a few years later, in 1898, their things changed: The British have taken control of the country and all non-British foreigners are expelled.

In 1905, Constantine will return to Greece to retire as he is now almost 60 years old and he will live in Karyes until his death in 1920. A few years later, his nephew Demosthenes will return too.

Epilogue

How many daring journeys and adventures did the protagonists of our history go through on 4 continents and 4 oceans? Anyone should admire them for their boldness and their mood for adventure.

It is worth noting here that the family adventures in the U.S. will not stop. Although the nephew has settled in Karyes, where he marries Barbara Nik Harakas in 1912 and has a son Konstantinos (named after his uncle) in 1913, the “American Dream” is always on his mind. So in 1914, he leaves again and settle in Austin, Texas. Next year his wife arrives with his son.

In 1916 they have another son, Anargyros (his grandfather name), and finally they move to Charlotte, North Carolina, along with the rest of Arachovites. There, his wife will give birth to another son John and four daughters: Marina (spouse Papadou), Paraskevi (spouse Retsey), Vasiliki (spouse Truedsale) and Anastasia, all residents of Columbia, North Carolina, except Paraskevi who stayed in New York.

According to the Karyatika VOL. 1 (1950), their two eldest sons will have children, the first a daughter named Barbara in 1944 from his marriage to Elizabeth Maxwell and the second Barbara and Konstantinos (Gus) from his marriage to Dimitra Georgiou Manos in 1945.

In fact, the success of our compatriot motivated his two other brothers Anargyros and Georgios Agamemnon Leventakis also to immigrate to the U.S.A. and settle in New England (Middletown Connecticut). Only their two sisters were left behind in Greece.

\[ All the data have been taken from the “KARYATIKA” volume I. \]
THE “ATRAPOS” CHOOSE KARYES

The well-known throughout Greece alternative tourism company ATRAPOS chose the beautiful village place of Karyes in order to celebrate its 25 years of operation and at the same time to cut its New Year’s pie for 2022.

The company aims to highlight, promote and protect the special natural, historical and folklore features of the mountainous areas of Greece and to promote mild and alternative forms of tourism.

The event took place on January 29 and 30 and the program was essentially a two-day hiking trip to and from the neighboring villages of Vourvoura and Varvitsa and the Caryatides Trails.

The excursionists started from Athens on Saturday morning and arrived in Vourvoura from where they started a ~3½ hour hike to Karyes in combination with the “Water Trail” from the Caryatides trails. Then they followed the “Village Trail” from the Caryatides trails around Karyes to meet the most important sights of Karyes. This was followed by a visit to the “Caryatides Monument” and a stop at the cafes and taverns for coffee, tsipouro and light lunch.

In the afternoon they arrived at “Arachovitika Kalivia” Hostel for accommodation, where in the evening followed a dinner and the cutting of the New Year’s pie (vasilopita) and the birthday cake of ATRAPOS.

On Sunday morning the walkers arrived in Karyes from where through a combination of paths “Kastania” and “Velanidia” lasting 4 hours they reached the village of Varvitsa. A circular route followed around Karyes on the same paths lasting 2 hours. At noon they returned to the hostel to enjoy a traditional meal and left for Athens in the evening.

It should be noted that in the previous days there had been significant snowfall in the village and visitors enjoyed a snow-covered landscape.

THE CLUB NEWS

KARYES CHURCH COUNCIL
NEW YEAR’S PIE

The “cutting” took place on Sunday, January 30, 2022, after the end of the Divine Liturgy at the Church of the Apostle Andreas in Karyes.

The members of the Karyes Ecclesiastical (Church) Council wish to all the patriots and friends of Karyes a happy and blessed year.

“KARYATIS” SPORTS CLUB
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly of the “KARYATIS” SPORTS CLUB took place on Sunday, February 13, 2022 in the ground floor (Event Hall) of the Community hall in Karyes.

The members were informed about the current issues of the Club, while they also approved the amendment of the Statute, which was necessary to become suitable with the new Sports Law (L.4726 / 2020).

FESTIVITIES IN KARYES

EXCURSION OF ACHARNES ATTICA NATIONAL MOUNTAINING ASSOCIATION IN KARYES

Another excursion on the Caryatides Trails was made in Karyes by a mountaineering team.

Specifically, on March 13, Acharnes Attica National Mountaineering Association visited the beautiful village and walked on its paths.

"MOREAS WINTER TRIAL": REGULARITY MASTER HISTORIC CAR RACE IN PARNONAS AND TAYGETOS MOUNTAINS

A new car event took place in Laconia on January 15 and 16, 2022. The Municipality of Sparta in collaboration with the motors of Argolis Classic Car Club and A3, co-organized the race of historic vehicles. This new race in the field of the historic car aspires to be established and to be included in the annual motorist’s program and the Municipality too.

The picturesque routes to the mountains of Parnonas and Taygetos, under winter conditions, gave great interest. On the first day, the cars that had started from Argolida upon entering Laconia arrived in Karyes at noon, followed by a route to the Mountainous Northern Laconia and specifically to the villages of Parnonas Varvitsa, Vamvakou, Vresthena and Sellasia to pass through Taygetos and the villages Kastoreio, Laganiko, Soustianoi, Trypi and Mystras to finish in Sparta at the statue of Leonidas on Saturday from 18:00 -20:15.

The next row was Central Laconia and specifically again Parnonas and the villages Chrysafa, Agrani, Polydroso, Vassaras and Voutiani, the valley of Evrotas with the villages Skoura, Xirokambi, Polovitsa, Gorani, Liantina, Potamia and Amykles and Taygetos with the villages of Anavryti and Agios Ioannis finishing at the Sparta Central Square from 13:30 - 17:00.

KARYES AT THE PUBLIC TELEVISION’S (ERT1 - ERTWORLD) MORNING SHOW

Filming in Karyes was carried out by an ERT crew from the show “Me Nea Matia” to advertise the Caryatides Monument and the village too.

The show is broadcast by the first channel of Greek Public Television (ERT1) and was an initiative that was added to many others that have been made in recent years as a part of the efforts to Karyes Touristic promotion.

The members of the Karyes (Church) Council wish to all the patriots and friends of Karyes a happy and blessed year.

FESTIVITIES IN KARYES
THEY PASSED AWAY

Nikolaos G. Hatzidakis passed away at the age of 82 in Athens Greece, husband of Ms Panaghiota (Pota) Koutsogeorga. His funeral took place at Kallithea cemetery in Athens.

They passed away

Nikolaos G. Hatzidakis passed away at the age of 82 in Athens Greece, husband of Ms Panaghiota (Pota) Koutsogeorga. His funeral took place at Kallithea cemetery in Athens.

The deceased was born in Kalami, Chania, Crete in 1940. He studied at the Greek Military School, from where he graduated in 1963 as a Lieutenant of the Supply Corps (S.E.M.). Among other things, he served as Commander of the 865th and 866th Air Mission Battalions in Aspropyrgos, Attica and Larissa, respectively, in the 781 General Transport Battalion in Thessaloniki and at the Training and Transport Center in Sparta.

He was the Director of Transport Supply in the Special Forces Division and in the G.E.E.F. Cyprus and then served in the G.E.S. as Deputy Director in the Transport Supply Division and as Director in the Material Selling Division.

He studied, during his service, in all the schools of his weapon and in addition in the Infantry School, in the school of the War Material Corps, in the Technical Training Center, in the School of Military Information, in the School of Foreign Languages, in the School of Paratroopers, in the High School of War and at the School of National Defense.

He was honored with the following medals and medals for the services he offered to his homeland:

- Medal of Military Value II Class,
- Officer of the First Class,
- Successful Administration A Class and
- Interim Leadership Formation.

He was also honored with the GOLD CROSS OF THE ORDER OF HONOR, while he was also named BRIGADE OF THE ORDER OF PHOENIX.

With his wife, they had two children, Manolis and Zenovia (Zina).

Helen Boukides-Cringa died in Scarborough Ontario Canada at the age of 97 on January 24, 2022.

George Hondros passed away in Joliet Illinois U.S.A. at the age of 92 on March 1, 2022. He was the son of Elias Chondros and Marigo Poulakofalos. He left behind his wife Katina from Episkopi, Tegea, Arcadia and his three children Elias, Maria and Sophia.

John Karachalios died suddenly in Karyes on March 5, 2022. He was the retired village’s taxi driver and one of the liveliest presences in the village square.

Our heartfelt condolences to the families of our compatriots Helen Boukides-Cringa, George Hondros and John Karachalios.

TELLING STORIES AND TRADITIONS FROM THE VILLAGES OF NORTHERN LACONIC PARNON

Annita Prekeze’s book available for everyone

This book, published three years ago with the kind sponsorship of the Municipality of Sparta and our expatriates Panos and Voulas Kopsiatitis, is the work of the well-known author Anita V. Prekeze (genus Glekas) and which the author dedicated to the Karyates Association.

The first edition was sold out, as the books became literally a hit and much loved. For this purpose, the Association proceeded to a second edition and now there are copies available for everyone. We believe that it is a book that all patriots should have in their library, since in its pages is written in an exceptional way the life in our villages with so much love and nostalgia during the 20th century and not only.

Copies of this valuable book can be obtained from all members of the Board of our Association.

For more informations call at 6985-120559, or at karyates.association@karyes.gr

REQUEST

Those who wish to receive this news bulletin via e-mail, please inform us by sending your e-mail address at E-mail: karyates.association@karyes.gr

DO YOU WANT TO BE ADVERTISED IN OUR NEWSPAPER?

Contact us at 0030-6974-720909 or at the email: karyates.association@karyes.gr

ANNOUNCEMENT

Do you deal with the arts (art, painting, music-song, dance, theater, photography, video, floristry, crafts)?

The Karyates Association invites you to contact us in order to present your work to our compatriots and to the visitors of our village in the summer, either through an exhibition of your creations, or through a cultural action.

Contact now at the email address karyates.association@karyes.gr, or at the phones 6944-784563, 6974-720909.

All the previous news bulletin are at your disposal in digital form at WWW.KARYES.GR

At the WEB SITE WWW.KARYES.GR NEWSPAPER DIGITAL ARCHIVES 1986-2010

Karyates Association News Bulletins
THE KARYATID’S RETURN

Article by “modern” Caryatid Ms Daphne Martin on the return of the Parthenon sculptures

An excellent article by the “modern” Caryatid Daphne Martin, daughter of Aigli Zafeirakou, originally from Karyes, was published in the newspaper TA NEA. The article deals with the request for the return of the Parthenon sculptures to Athens and refers to its place of origin and the place of origin of the Caryatids.

Daphne Martin is an archaeologist, a graduate of Yale University and a PhD candidate in the Department of Classical Studies at Cambridge University.

Following is a republication of the article in the newspaper “TA NEA”, dated 24.01.2022.

Walking across Euston Road in London to go to the Subway I face a well-known image.

The Caryatids statues of St Pangras Church are staring at me from above. These elegant statue figures take the role of a classical column supporting the historic building. No one else seems to give them the necessary attention.

But I am personally standing for a while to admire them. Six ancient Greek women are standing proudly like they are observing the London traffic.

I feel proud as I stare them. I know them very well. Not only from the Acropolis as an Athenian, but also from my small village in Lakonia, Greece. You see Karyes, this small village is supposed to be their homeland.

The famous traveler of the 2nd century Pausanias describes how the girls from Karyes (Caryatids) danced in favor of goddess Artemis (Diana) at the local temple of the Caryatids Artemis.

Therefore, on my village there is a Replica Monument of the Caryatides at the top of a hill where I remember myself visiting as a little girl. The monument has been built at the top of the slide “guarding” the village and giving to the visitor a spectacular view. Its purpose is to underline the Laconian origin of these statues that no one can deny.

On the contrary, at the Acropolis Museum in Athens among the 5 Caryatids there is an empty space. You see, the 6th sister has been stolen by Lord Elgin in 1802, while Greece was still occupied by the Ottoman Turks and was brought in London. The Acropolis Museum and her sisters await her in order to be united again.

As a PhD candidate of Classical Art and Archeology at the Cambridge University, I place great emphasis on the importance of unification. That’s the essence of the matter. The sculptures that were removed from the Erechtheion temple at the Athens Acropolis are integral parts of the monument.

Greece is their homeland. Once the ideal location for them to be exposed is now ready (the Athens Acropolis Museum that has been built since 2009 has already prepare its halls which will enhance the impact and value of the sculptures due to its visual proximity to the Acropolis) there is no excuse for no returning them so as the visitors to be able to admire them near their original place. The outcome from the reunification of the gables and the frieze of the Parthenon would be marvelous. For the first time after 200 years, it would be able to give us the true glory of the Monument.

The compromise proposed by Greece, i.e. the display of archeological treasures in the British Museum that have never left the Greece’s coast is something more than fair. To be precise, it could be used as an opportunity to discuss the positive impact these objects had on British archaeologists and intellectuals. Neoclassicism was a current so strong that it pushed personalities like Lord Byron to shed their blood for a country that was not their bloody homeland (although certainly out of love therefore the term friend of Greece “Filellinas”). This is something for which we Greeks will be eternally grateful, as the celebrations for the 200 years of the Greek Revolution have shown. I believe that the exhibition of other treasures would highlight this special relationship between Greece and Great Britain in a way more equal, than to keep these sculptures as a trophy. This would be a sign of true philhellism, something that would make Lord Byron really proud.

The British museum has the opportunity to make the right decision, the moral one, at the ongoing negotiations. As an institution dedicated to the preservation and promotion of human history through its art and culture, I have no doubt that the Museum and its commissioners will have taken the time to understand the lessons of history. In this light the six caryatids could finally be reunited.