



# GREECE (Grèce)

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## INTRODUCTION

Ancient Greece, a country placed in the crossways of the Mediterranean Sea, developed a very important civilization which influenced all the countries of Europe and we may say the whole world. The Greeks said the first and the last word in all the area of letters, education, civilization, politics, poetry, epic poetry, history, tragedy, philosophy, sculpture, architecture, painting, and all the arts. Being a poor country in material things, Greece developed a high-quality civilization thanks to the high intelligence of its inhabitants, their high mental ability and efforts to invent ways to achieve what they wanted to succeed. As Herodotus says “τῇ Ἑλλάδι πενίη μὲν αἰεὶ κοτε σύντροφος ἔστιν” (Hdt. 7.102.1), the Greeks travelled to various countries in Europe, Asia, Africa for economic reasons, made colonies and developed an admirable civilization. They visited European countries of the north, centre and south Europe. Their important achievements are visible until today.

In this chapter, five examples of Greek achievements will be presented:

1. “Odysseus, the Civilized Man”;
2. “Pericles and the idea of Democracy”;
3. “Prehellenic and Greek presence in European culture”;
4. “The Greek Colonies in Magna Graecia”;
5. “Greek culture in south Italy and Sicily under the Byzantines”.

### 1. ODYSSEUS, THE CIVILIZED MAN



Fig. 1: Francesco Primaticcio, *Odysseus returning to Penelope*, XVI cent. Nevers, musée municipal Frédéric Blandin (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Odysseus#/media/>)



Let us begin with the influence of Greece on Europe through the voyages of Odysseus/Ulysses. We'll follow the cultural route of Ulysses' trail. Who has not heard or read of the Trojan war and of Ulysses, that resourceful hero of the Greek history and myth and the Homeric epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, among the most famous works of all the time? All the museums of Europe and the world and most National Galleries exhibit paintings referring to Homer's epic poems. The heroic king of Ithaca has been a world symbol and of course an ideal guide for a voyage between the imagination, history, myth and reality, travelling in various seas, famous and delightful places, where the very ancient narrations about Ulysses continue to be vivid and inspire their inhabitants. Let's consider the characterization of the hero in Homer:

### 1.1. HOMER, *Odyssey*, 1.1-10

(A.T. Murray–G.E. Dimock (edd.), *Homer: Odyssey*, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts [1919], 1952)

Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ  
 πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν·  
 πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,  
 πολλὰ δ' ὃ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,  
 ἄρνυμενος ἦν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἑταίρων.  
 ἄλλ' οὐδ' ὡς ἑτάρους ἔρρυσάτο, ἰέμενός περ·  
 αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο,  
 νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἥελιοιο  
 ἦσθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ.  
 τῶν ἀμόθεν γε, θεά, θύγατερ Διός, εἰπέ καὶ ἡμῖν.

Odysseus is portrayed as crafty and resourceful, patient (“τλήμων”, *Il.* 10.231, cf. *Il.* 5.670), very tormented “πολύτλας”, *Il.* 8.07, 10.248), the famous (“κλυτός”, *Od.* 9.364), the magnanimous (“μεγαλήτωρ”, *Od.* 5.355), the prudent (“δαίφρων”, *Il.* 11.482), (“πολύφρων”, *Il.* 18.108), the intelligent (“ποικιλομήτης”, *Od.* 3.163, 13.293), and before acquired also another characteristic (“πολίπορθος”, *Il.* 2. 278, that means conqueror of castles, or simply “conqueror”)<sup>1</sup>.

The cultural route of the *Odyssey* is an everlasting source of inspiration in all fields of culture and civilization. We may refer only to some examples in the field of literature: DANTE (1265–1321) presents Ulysses punished in his *Divine Comedy* (*Hell* 86, 94-100); TENNYSON (1809-1892) presents Ulysses to soliloquize; Nikos KAZANTZAKIS translated the *Iliad* into modern Greek.

<sup>1</sup> See the introduction of the Collective work, *Στα Χνάρια του Οδυσσέα. Ταξιδεύοντας ανάμεσα στο Μύθο και την Πραγματικότητα*, Cultural Foundation of the National Bank, Athens 2003, pp. 14-55.

Ulysses' narration remains always contemporary in spite of the decline of the heroic epic poems. It continues to feed Greek and Roman literature and art. The dramatic poets in classical Athens represent him in their tragedies, the Alexandrian authors mention him at every possibility as well as the Romans, and the orators of the second Sophistic period and the epic poets of post-Christian times.

Through the Romans, Greek history and mythology become known to the West. Later with the Renaissance and Classicism, until now, Odysseus and his fate is a beloved theme in all the fields of literature, music, science, applied and fine arts, visual arts, marketing. Let's remember some examples: opera and ballet as *Penelope* of B. GALUPPI (1741), *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* of Monteverdi (1641), incidental music to *Ulyse* of Ponsard by GOUNOD (1852) and the ballet of the *Odyssey* of NEUMAIER with music of KOUROUPOS (1996); the painting of *The Return of Odysseus* by PINTURICCHIO (1459-1513), *Odysseus and Nausicaa* by RUBENS (1577-1640), *Odysseus and Calypso* of M. BECKMANN (1943); theatrical plays of *The Wandering of Odysseus* by H. SACHS (1555); *Odysseus from Ithaka* of L. HOLBERG (1723); *The Bow of Odysseus* by G. HAUPTMANN (1914); *Odysseus, Return Home* by I. KAMPANELIS (1966); novels such as *Elpénor* by Jean GIRAUDOUX (1919), *Ulysses* by James Joyce (1921) and *Homer's Daughter* by R. Graves (1955); the sonnet by Joachim DU BELLAY, "*Happy he, who like Odysseus*" (1552), *The Lotus Eaters* (1833) and *Ulysses* (1842) by A. TENNYSON, the world famous poem *Ithaki* by Konstantinos KAVAFIS (1911), the *Rhapsody* and *Penelope* by K. PALAMAS (1902); *Odyssey: a Modern Sequel*, by N. KAZANTZAKIS (1928); in cinema and television there are *Ulysses* of PONTI and DE LAURENTIS (1954), and the recent *Odyssey* by A. KONCHALOVSKY (1997). All the above examples and the innumerable children's or popularized illustrated adaptations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* keep alive the tradition of the "resourceful" seaman, showing the incomparable fascination and vitality of the Odysseian myth<sup>2</sup>.

According to different versions and interpretations, Odysseus travelled not only through all the Mediterranean Sea, but also through the Pillars of Hercules, from Gibraltar to the coastal regions of Africa, to the Canary Islands, to Portugal, England, Iceland, or the Scandinavian Peninsula. In some of these regions the inhabitants believed that they were his descendants or that he was the founder of their city, as we can see in the legend of the foundation and the name of Lisbon (see chapter about Portugal).

Strabo the geographer believes that myths and events referred to by Homer are traces of real persons and events:

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<sup>2</sup> See *ibidem*, pp. 19-21.

### 1.2. STRABO, *Geography*, 1.2.14

(A.L. Jones, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts [1924], 1964)

Χωρίς γὰρ τῶν λεχθέντων περὶ τοῦ τύπου τῆς πρεπούσης Ὀμήρω μυθοποιίας καὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν συγγραφέων τῶν ταῦτα θρυλούντων, καὶ τῆς κατὰ τοὺς τόπους ἐπιχωριαζούσης φήμης διδάσκειν δύναται, διότι ταῦτα οὐ ποιητῶν πλάσματά ἐστιν οὐδὲ συγγραφέων, ἀλλὰ γεγενημένων ἴχνη καὶ προσώπων καὶ πράξεων.

Odysseus is the civilized person, who “πολλῶν δ’ ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω” (Od.1.3), and on the contrary the Cyclopes are considered to be wild because of their isolation:

### 1.3. HOMER, *Odyssey*, 9.125-129

(A.T. Murray–G.E. Dimock (edd.), Loeb Classical Library, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts [1919], 19952)

“οὐ γὰρ Κυκλώπεσσι νέες πάρα μιλοπάρηοι,  
οὐδ’ ἄνδρες νηῶν ἔνι τέκτονες, οἳ κε κάμοιεν  
νῆας ἐυσέελλμους, αἶ κεν τελέοιεν ἕκαστα  
ἄστε’ ἐπ’ ἀνθρώπων ἰκνεύμεναι, οἷά τε πολλὰ  
ἄνδρες ἐπ’ ἀλλήλους νηυσὶν περόωσι θάλασσαν”.

## 2. PERICLES AND THE IDEA OF DEMOCRACY

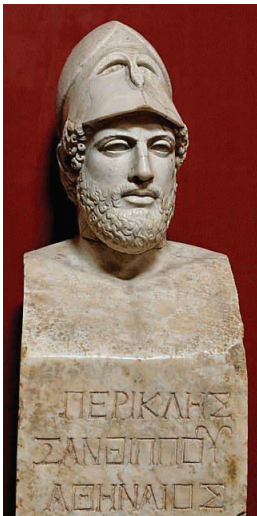


Fig. 2: Pericles

(<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Pericles>)

As it is known all over the world the principles of democracy, freedom of speech or expression, and the Athenian democratic constitution have been a source of inspiration for all the countries of Europe and of the world. Athens has been

the cradle of the above concepts which have been the specific forms of political conduct and were first devised and practised in Greece, in the ancient city-state of Athens. The way for democracy had been paved by the legislative work of Solon (c. 630-c. 560 BC) and the progressive administration of Peisistratus (600-527 BC). It was more thoroughly consolidated under Cleisthenes (c. 570-c. 508 BC) and his constitutional reform vindicated with the Athenian victories in the Persian wars (492-449 BC). Lastly, with Themistocles (524-c. 460 BC) Athenian democracy achieved its classic form, to reach, shortly afterwards, the height of political and cultural glory under the inspired leadership of Pericles (495-429 BC)<sup>3</sup>.

Thucydides, the greatest Greek historian of the world, being present when Pericles, the great Athenian politician, was deputed to deliver the Funeral Oration over the fallen Athenians at the end of 431 BC, following the first campaign of the Peloponnesian war between Sparta and Athens, wrote down this excellent Funeral Oration. Athenian democracy as exemplified in this text is the regime, to which our contemporary world aspires regarding its archetypical institutions and political aim. It is one of the most important contributions of Hellenism to humanity, as we can see in following text:

### **2.1. THUCYDIDES, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 2.37**

(Ch. F. Smith (ed.), Loeb Classical Library, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts [1919], 1962<sup>4</sup>)

Χρώμεθα γὰρ πολιτεία οὐ ζηλοῦση τοὺς τῶν πέλας νόμους, παράδειγμα δὲ μᾶλλον αὐτοὶ ὄντες τισὶν ἢ μιμούμενοι ἑτέρους. καὶ ὄνομα μὲν διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐς ὀλίγους ἀλλ' ἐς πλείονας οἰκεῖν δημοκρατία κέκληται, μέτεστι δὲ κατὰ μὲν τοὺς νόμους πρὸς τὰ ἴδια διάφορα πᾶσι τὸ ἴσον, κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀξίωσιν, ὡς ἕκαστος ἔν τῳ εὐδοκιμῆι, οὐκ ἀπὸ μέρους τὸ πλεόν ἐς τὰ κοινὰ ἢ ἀπ' ἀρετῆς προτιμᾶται, οὐδ' αὖ κατὰ πενίαν, ἔχων δὲ τι ἀγαθὸν δρᾶσαι τὴν πόλιν, ἀξιώματος ἀφανεία κекώλυται. ἐλευθέρως δὲ τὰ τε πρὸς τὸ κοινὸν πολιτεύομεν καὶ ἐς τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους τῶν καθ' ἡμέραν ἐπιτηδεύματων ὑποψίαν, οὐ δι' ὀργῆς τὸν πέλας, εἰ καθ' ἡδονὴν τι δρᾷ, ἔχοντες, οὐδὲ ἀζημίους μὲν, λυπηράς δὲ τῇ ὄψει ἀχθηδόνας προστιθέμενοι. ἀνεπαχθῶς δὲ τὰ ἴδια προσομιλοῦντες τὰ δημόσια διὰ δέος μάλιστα οὐ παρανομοῦμεν, τῶν τε αἰεὶ ἐν ἀρχῇ ὄντων ἀκροάσει καὶ τῶν νόμων, καὶ μάλιστα αὐτῶν ὅσοι τε ἐπ' ὠφελία τῶν ἀδικουμένων κείνται καὶ ὅσοι ἄγραφοι ὄντες αἰσχύνην ὁμολογουμένην φέρουσιν.

### **3. PREHELLENIC AND GREEK PRESENCE IN EUROPE**

The presence of the Prehellenic, Myceneans and Greeks, mainly establishing merchant stations at the seashores of the Mediterranean Sea, is extended from

<sup>3</sup> See the Preface by Apostolos Kaklamanis, President of the Hellenic Parliament, in Φ.Ι. Κακριδῆς, Ευρ. Αμπατζῆ (edd.), *Pericles' Funeral Oration. Thucydides' History* 2.35-46, Hellenic Parliament, Athens 1998, p. 13.

the prehistorical period to the whole Europe, including North Europe and the famous and utopic Hyperboreans:

**3.1. PINDAR, *Pythia*, 10.29-30**

(W.H. Race (ed.), *Pindar* [vol. I], Loeb Classical Library, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1997)

... ναυσί δ' οὔτε πεζὸς ἰών <κεν> εὖροις  
ἐς Ὑπερβορέων ἀγῶνα θαυμαστὰν ὁδόν.

**3.2. PINDAR, *Isthmia*, 6.23-24**

(W.H. Race (ed.), *Pindar* [vol. II], Loeb Classical Library, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1997)

... καὶ πέραν Νεῖλοιο παγᾶν καὶ δι' Ὑπερβορέους·  
οὐδ' ἔστιν οὔτω βάρβαρος οὔτε παλιγγλωσσοσ πόλις, ...

Regarding the Hyperboreans inhabitants, Diodoros Sikeliotis says that Apollo and the other gods are honoured by them continuously, which sounds like a legend or myth (“μυθολογοῦσι”):

**3.3. DIODORUS SICULUS, *Library of History*, 2.47.2**

(C.H. Oldfather (ed.), Loeb Classical Library, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, [1935] 1967<sup>3</sup>)

διὸ καὶ τὸν Ἀπόλλω μάλιστα τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς τιμᾶσθαι· εἶναι δ' αὐτοὺς ὥσπερ ἱερεῖς τινὰς Ἀπόλλωνος διὰ τὸ τὸν θεὸν τοῦτον καθ' ἡμέραν ὑπ' αὐτῶν ὑμνεῖσθαι μετ' ᾧδῆς συνεχῶς καὶ τιμᾶσθαι διαφερόντως... .

Diodoros Sikeliotis also mentions that the Hyperboreans (Ὑπερβόρειοι) have a Greek dialect<sup>4</sup>:

**3.4. Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 2.47.4-5**

(C.H. Oldfather (ed.), Loeb Classical Library, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, [1935] 1967<sup>3</sup>)

Ἔχειν δὲ τοὺς Ὑπερβορέους ἰδίαν τινὰ διάλεκτον, καὶ πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας οἰκειότατα διακειῖσθαι, καὶ μάλιστα πρὸς τοὺς Ἀθηναίους καὶ Δηλίους, ἐκ παλαιῶν χρόνων παρειληφότας τὴν εὐνοίαν ταύτην, καὶ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τινὰς μυθολογοῦσι παραβαλεῖν εἰς Ὑπερβορέους καὶ ἀναθήματα πολυτελεῖ καταλιπεῖν γράμμασιν Ἑλληνικοῖς ἐπιγεγραμμένα. ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῶν Ὑπερβορέων Ἄβαριν εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα κατανήσαντα τὸ παλαιὸν ἀνασῶσαι τὴν πρὸς Δηλίους εὐνοίαν τε καὶ συγγένειαν».

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<sup>4</sup> L. DE ANNA, *Conoscenza e immagine della Finlandia e del Settentrione nella cultura classico - medievale*. Annales Universitatis Turkuensis Ser. B, Humaniora, Akateeminen kirjakauppa, Turku 1988.

According to the tradition, Heracles obeying the orders of Eurystheas went to take the golden apples of the Hesperides in the northern countries (Ἵπερβόρειες):

**3.5. APOLLODORUS, *The Library*, 2.5.11**

(J.G. Frazer (ed.), Loeb Classical Library, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1921)

... τελεσθέντων δὲ τῶν ἄθλων ἐν μηνὶ καὶ ἔτεσιν ὀκτώ, ... ἐνδέκατον ἐπέταξεν ἄθλον παρ' Ἑσπερίδων χρύσεια μῆλα κομίζειν. ταῦτα δὲ ἦν, οὐχ ὥς τινες εἶπον ἐν Λιβύῃ ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τοῦ Ἄτλαντος ἐν Ἵπερβόρειοις.

Heodotus also refers to the “grypes” who keep the gold, and far away from them are the Hyperboreans (Ἵπερβόρειοι):

**3.6. HERODOTOS, *The Persian Wars*, 4.13.1**

(A.D. Godley, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1922, 19636)

Ἴσσηδόνων δὲ ὑπερὶ κείνῃ Ἄριμασποὺς ἄνδρας μονοφθάλμους, ὑπὲρ τούτων τοὺς χρυσοφύλακας γρύπας, τούτων δὲ τοὺς Ἵπερβόρειους κατήκοντας ἐπὶ θάλασσαν...

**4. THE GREEK COLONIES IN MAGNA GRAECIA**



Fig. 3: Greek Colonization in the Archaic Period ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Maps\\_of\\_the\\_Greek\\_colonies#/media/File:Greek\\_Colonization\\_Archaic\\_Period.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Maps_of_the_Greek_colonies#/media/File:Greek_Colonization_Archaic_Period.png))

Magna Graecia is a historical and geographical term, referring to the Greek colonies of South Italy and Sicily during the archaic and classical period.



After the foundation of *Pithecusae* and *Cumae* near Naples, the main Greek colonies of Magna Graecia started to be founded c. 750 BC in Calabria, Sicily, and Apulia, having the typical form of the city-state, being in close contact with their metropolis, and having the right to participate in the Panhellenic Competitions. Dorian cities had been *Taras*, *Kallipolis*, *Lokri Epizephyrii*, *Syracuse*, *Gela*; Ionian colonies as *Region*, *Naxos*, *Elea*, *Kymi*; while the cities *Metapontio*, *Sybaris*, *Kroton* and *Poseidonia* had been Achaian<sup>5</sup>.

The cultural contribution of the Greeks of Magna Graecia was very important. The written logos that the Romans adapted comes from the western Greek area of *Kymi* (Cumae). The end of the flourishing of Magna Graecia was caused because of the imperialist policy of Rome. In 272 BC *Taras* was destroyed but Magna Graecia continued being a spiritual and cultural creation and even nowadays a part of the civilization, morals and traditions and the Greek language exists in south Italy.

Sometimes the natives caused some other problems to the Greek colonies and some other times they cooperated in a friendly way with them as it happened with *Massabia* and *Naucratis* participating in the Panhellenic athletic competitions and the religious festivities<sup>6</sup>. In all the countries where the Greeks settled down and in southern Italy, they transferred the Greek way of life and thought and enriched it. The colonization that started in the first half of the 8th until the 6th century BC and transferred the Greek civilization to the whole Mediterranean area and created a lot of Greek cities at the seashores of the three continents, from the Iberian Peninsula and Libya until the Crimea, especially in Sicily, South Italy, Propontis and Euxeinos Pontos where Greek populations were concentrated.

All the Greek colonies became multi-populated dynamic centres through commercial, naval and cultural development. This colonization in Magna Graecia contributed to the development of European civilization. In Italy, Sicily, Sardinia and the whole world Greek centres became wealthy and new classes appeared in the Greek cities: the merchants and the sailors. This wealth, along with the relationship of the Greeks with the natives contributed to the flourishing in all the fields of science, art, philosophy, architecture, etc.

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<sup>5</sup> See Maria Eleftheria G. Giatrakou, “Η Μεγάλη Ελλάδα”, *Ιστορία Εικονογραφημένη*, 421 (7/2003), pp. 82-89, *Encycl. Papyros Larousse Britannica*, vol. 10, s.v. ἀποικισμός. Selene Psoma, “Greece of the millennium and the world”, *Greek an everlasting Modern Language*, Ministry of Culture, Athens 1979. Roberto Aprilie, *Κάτω Ιταλία, Μεγάλη Ελλάδα, Ινφογνώμων*, Athens 2003.

<sup>6</sup> M.-E G. Giatrakou, “Cultural relationships of Greece and South Italy from the very ancient times, during the Byzantine period and the Modern times”, in “Η Μεγάλη Ελλάδα”, *Ιστορία Εικονογραφημένη*, 421 (7/2003), pp. 82-89.



Fig. 4: Greek Temples in Sicily: Agrigento, Selinunte, Segesta ([https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a5/Greek\\_temples\\_in\\_Sicily-Agrigento-Selinunte-Segesta.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a5/Greek_temples_in_Sicily-Agrigento-Selinunte-Segesta.jpg))

The remains of temples and sculpture show the high level of the artistic development of all the colonies of the Greeks in the Mediterranean areas. In *Aegistha* (Segesta) we admire the Doric Temple of the 5th century BC. This temple informs us of the building arts of this time. In *Ereiki* there is the temple of Aphrodite. In *Selinounta* (Selinunte), one of the outstanding centres of Magna Graecia, we are impressed seeing the multitude of the temples; one third of the area of the city is devoted to the pantheon of the Olympic Gods: temple of Apollo, of Hera, of Dimitra Malaforos. In *Akraganta* (Agrigento) is the large Doric temple of Concord, which has been changed into the first Christian basilica of the first Christian times, has been saved intact. Empedocles the philosopher used to say for his compatriots that they were living as if they were going to die next day and used to build as if they were going to live forever. The area of Agrigento is named “Valley of the Greek Temples”. The very beautiful city of *Syracuse* with its imposing archaeological museum and the archaeological zone shows the presence of the Corinthians (733 BC) in the most powerful colony of the Mediterranean. On the temple of Athena was built the modern cathedral of the city, where rituals took place from the 7th century AD. There the fountain of *Arethousa* at the seashore of Ortygia, the remains of the temple of Apollo, and the well-preserved ancient Greek theatre<sup>7</sup> prove the presence of Greeks far away from Greece.

<sup>7</sup> “Manos” Travel Agency, *Europe–Mediterranean 2000–2001*, Athens 2000, pp. 94-97.

The mirror of the Greek language and thought are the coins of the Greek colonies of South Italy: the celery on the coin of *Selinounta* and other Greek cities; *Sybaris* with the symbol (ΣΥ); *Kroton* with the letters (ΚΡΟ); *Metapontion* with the word (ΜΕΤΑ), *Ακράγας* (ΑΚΡΑ), etc. Many metropolises and cities will show their civilization and rituals by the images on their coins. Later they will substitute the letters and the acrophonic symbols with national names in genitive plural, e.g. ΣΥΡΑΚΟΥΣΙΩΝ<sup>8</sup>. In Sicily and South Italy there is a charming custom to write the names of the local river gods or nymph near the figure of GELAS, APHAGETAS, LEUKAPIS, PARAS<sup>9</sup>. In Italy is adapted the Euboean alphabet, perhaps through *Kymi* (of Campania) and this had beneficial results for the further development of these areas<sup>10</sup>.

## 5. GREEK CULTURE IN SOUTH ITALY AND SICILY UNDER THE BYZANTINES

Byzantium also had influence on South Italy. According to an epigraph of the 9th century, the emperor Basileios I the Macedonian (867-886 A.D.) built the city of Bari and also the temple of St. Demetrios. Bari had been for two centuries the centre of the Byzantine Italy<sup>11</sup>.

Byzantines occupied the island *Meliti* (nowadays Malta), *Syracuse*, *Sicily*, *Calabria*, *Taranta*, and the Byzantine domination was established thanks to the important victories of the emperor Nikiphoros Phokas, who reoccupied Calabria and established Logovardia with the capital city *Bari*, and so Byzantium with these achievements had been an important Italian power<sup>12</sup>.

The Byzantine regal princess Theophano, daughter of Romanos II, married the emperor Otho II (978-983) and transferred the emperor's ideas and the customs of the Byzantine palace and contributed to the development of the Arts<sup>13</sup>. Theophano was brought up in Greek culture through the Greek monk from Calabria Ioannis Philagathos, and Otho III had an excellent relationship with the Byzantines until the end of his life. The monk Philagathos with the favour of the empress Theophano became Archbishop of Plakentia<sup>14</sup>. Greeks also built the city of Troy in the position of the ancient Aicon, in the entrance

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<sup>8</sup> Selena PsOMA, "Greece of the millennium and the world", *Greek an everlasting Modern Language*, Ministry of Culture, Athens 1979, pp. 57-71.

<sup>9</sup> As above, p. 63

<sup>10</sup> As above, p. 64.

<sup>11</sup> Dionysios ZAKYTHENOS, *Byzantine History, 324-1071*, Ed. Myrtidi, Athens 1972, p. 261, and footnotes 2 and 3.

<sup>12</sup> As above, pp. 261-262.

<sup>13</sup> As above, p. 402, footnote 4.

<sup>14</sup> As above, p. 406.

of Apulia. Hellenism which flourished in Italy has the stamp of the Byzantine spirit<sup>15</sup>.

The Greek element had been alive in Sicily and South Italy from the ninth until the fifteenth century. Until 1071 the Hellenism of Italy was developed under the emperor's government. Even the Byzantines contributed to the flourishing of art as the Christ of Carpignano in the "thema" of Logovardia. The Ecclesia with the hierarchy, the centres of worship and the monastic foundations had been the main centres of Italian Hellenism. In 754 Illyrikon, Sicily and Calabria left Rome and were united with the Patriarchate of Constantinople<sup>16</sup>.

In 800 AD a Metropolis was established in Syracuse, which was transported to Catania when the Arabs occupied the cities of South Italy and then in 800 the archdiocese of Calabria was established, which flourished and supported the monastic life in Sicily and the whole of Italy. There are 265 Byzantine monasteries in this area. In Italy there is today a centre of Byzantine Studies, Musicology, Codicology and in the archives of Italy there are many Greek diplomatic texts, which enrich the material of the byzantine diplomacy<sup>17</sup>. The origin of the famous hymnographers of Byzantine period such as Josef Hymnographer (816-886) is Sicily and Italia. There is also a famous literature of hagiology and these texts are important for the history of the Byzantine Italy and its society.

The contribution of the Greeks in the Italian Renaissance is great and was continued during the Turkish occupation. In the village Cargeze or Karges in Corsica, a Greek settlement was established by the Greek Maniates who went there. The names of the streets and monuments retain something Greek. Many cities in Italy use the Greek dialects. In a distance of some kilometres from Reggio (Ρήγιο) Calabria and from Lecce there are linguistic small islands with about seven communities each. They are named Bovesia and Grecia Salentina. And researchers call their inhabitants "nephews of Homer"<sup>18</sup>. The Greek speaking community of Salento, totally named Greece Salentina, consisted of nine communities. The Greek speaking population teaches the Greek language orally from generation to generation. According to a research of the municipality of Kastrianians in nine communities of Grecia Salentina, in 2,525 families with children of school, in totally 13,531 families, 95.5% of the inhabitants believe that the Greek language and civilization must be kept and taught. The wish for the revival of the special linguistic and cultural heritage has been stronger

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<sup>15</sup> Ciro GIANNELLI, "L'ultimo ellenismo nell'Italia meridionale", in *Scripta Minora*, RSBN, Roma 1963, pp. 307 ff.; *L'Italia meridionale nell'alto medioevo e i rapporti con il mondo bizantino*, Atti del 3° Congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo, Spoleto 1959, pp. 275-298.

<sup>16</sup> André GUILLOU, "Notes sur la société dans le Katépanat d'Italie au XI siècle", in *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire*, vol. 78.2, École Française de Rome, Rome 1966, pp. 439-65.

<sup>17</sup> See ZAKYTHENOS, *op. cit.*, p. 411.

<sup>18</sup> G. DA COSTA-LONILLET, "Saints de Sicile et d'Italie meridionale aux VIII<sup>ème</sup>, IX<sup>ème</sup> et X<sup>ème</sup> siècles", *Byzantion*, vol. 29/30 (1960), pp. 29 ff.



during the last years. Recently an arrangement has been signed between the nine communities of Grecia Salentina for forwarding a common cultural identity<sup>19</sup>. These dialectic linguistic pockets, in spite of the time, are maintained and are the real signs of the Greek tradition and its undoubted continuous cultural presence in Magna Graecia<sup>20</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, the aim of this paper was to present in an effective way Greece's immense contribution to the cultural and spiritual progress of Europe and mostly to the global civilization. Ancient Greece developed a high standard of thought which has influenced almost all modern countries in various ways. Being inhabitants of a region with few resources, archaic Greeks travelled to distant locations of Europe, Asia, Africa for economic reasons, founded colonies there and developed local admirable cultures.

Odysseus, the resourceful hero of the Homeric epics has gradually become a world symbol, especially nowadays that social conditions force more and more people to migrate. Furthermore, the cultural route of *Odysseia* is an everlasting source of inspiration, a fact reflected in all fields of culture and art. According to different traditions, Odysseus reached the last frontiers of Europe. In some of these regions the inhabitants believed they were his descendants. The presence of the Prehellenic Greeks at the seashores of the Mediterranean Sea was thus progressively extended even to Northern Europe and the famous and utopic Hyperboreans.

However, the great heritage of Classical Greece to the modern world can be found in the Athenian democratic constitution, where the principles of democracy, freedom of expression, the right of equal speaking and the love of peace shaped the most overwhelming state of all ages. Solon's legislative work, after the progressive administration of Peisistratus and Cleisthenes' reforms, finally reached the height of political and cultural glory under the inspired leadership of Pericles (495-429 BC). Athenian democracy is the regime, to which our contemporary world aspires regarding its archetypical institutions and political aims.

In parallel, the cultural contribution of the Greeks in Magna Graecia was very important. Local Greek communities of South Italy gradually formed a spiritual and cultural creation and even nowadays are recognized as part of

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<sup>19</sup> Olga PROPHILI, "The Greek in Southern Italy", in A.-Ph. CHRISTIDES, Maria ARAPOPOULOU, Giannoula GIANNOULOPOULOU, *Dialects enclaves of the Greek language*, Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, Athens 1999, p. 31.

<sup>20</sup> See M.-E. G. GIATRAKOU, "The cultural relationships of Greece and South Italy, from the very ancient times, during the byzantine period and the Modern years", in "Η Μεγάλη Ελλάδα", *Ιστορία Εικονογραφημένη*, 421 (7/2003), pp. 82-89.

the domestic civilization. Traces of the Greek language, ancestral customs and traditions still survive in South Italy.

In all the countries where they settled down the Greeks have transferred a Greek way of life and a piece of thought which became enriched, if we consider the high level of the artistic development of most Greek colonies in the Mediterranean.

South Italy was highly influenced by Byzantium as well. Bari had been the centre of Byzantine Italy for two centuries, and the Greek element had been quite clear in Sicily and South Italy during the last two centuries. The contribution of the Greeks in the Italian Renaissance is evaluated as great and remained uninterrupted during the Turkish occupation. Street-names and monuments remind us of something Greek even nowadays. Many cities in Italy still use the Greek dialects and renowned researchers call their inhabitants “nephews of Homer”. The Greek speaking population continues to teach the Greek language orally from generation to generation, maintaining the gist of their ancestral past and wishing to transmit it to the future generations and the rest of the world.

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